

TRANSDISCIPLINARY MULTICULTURAL DANCE EDUCATION:

TEACHING CHINESE AMERICAN STUDENTS

CHINESE CULTURE THROUGH LION DANCING

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A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT

OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THE

TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF PERFORMING ARTS

PROGRAMS IN DANCE

BY

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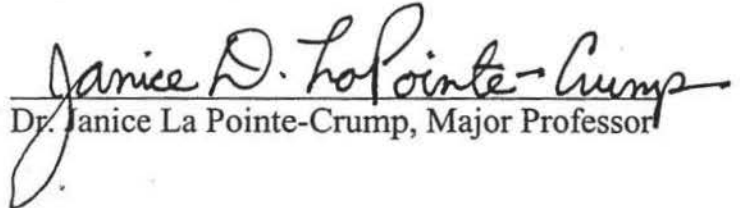
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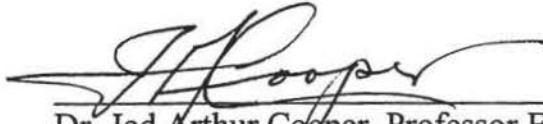
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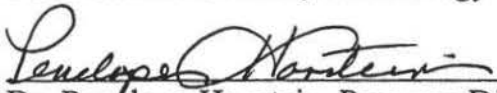
I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Mei Hsiu Chan entitled "Transdisciplinary Multicultural Dance Education: Teaching Chinese American Students Chinese Culture Through Lion Dancing." I have examined this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy with a major in Dance and Related Arts.

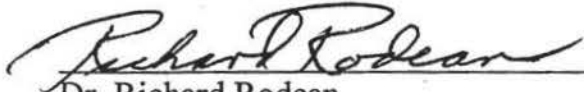
  
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## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to:

The memory of my mother, Chuang Yuea Chan, who, through personal practice, taught me the unlimited potential and power of a woman to overcome all difficulties; who made me feel “special”; and who was always proud of me and valued that I honored the Chan family until she passed away at the age of 90 in 1998;

The memory of my father, Chung Shin Chan, who did every thing he could to support my dreams until he passed away at age 68 in 1972;

The memory of my older brothers Shen Chun Chan and Shen Gin Chan, who were proud of me as an individual and were proud of my accomplishments.

My second older sister, Mei Kuei Chan, who always loved, encouraged, and supported me, and who remained confident that I would complete my Ph.D. degree;

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My lovely daughters, Yin Zu Chen, Hsi Hou Chen, and Hui Jung Chen of whom I am proud; and

My loving husband, Lung Hsi Chen, who recommended that I pursue a doctoral degree as it would be valuable for a career in higher education.

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## ABSTRACT

### COMPLETED RESEARCH IN HEALTH, PHYSICAL EDUCATION, RECREATION, AND DANCE

Texas Woman's University, Denton, TX

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Peneloe Hanstein, Institutional Representative

Mei Hsiu, Chan. *Transdisciplinary Multicultural Dance Education: Teaching Chinese American Students Chinese Culture Through Lion Dancing*, Ph.D. in Dance and Related Arts, May 2001, 272 p. (J. LaPointe-Crump)

The purpose of this study was to document the process of change in overseas Chinese students' understanding and appreciation of Chinese culture through Lion Dancing workshop. It was confined to examining the methods used to teach 14 volunteer Chinese American students, ages 11-14, who live in the Dallas and surrounding area. The workshop was conducted at the Dallas Chinese Community Activities Center in Richardson, TX, in January 1998.

Lion Dancing, one of the most significant and popular traditional Chinese festival dances, has been an integral part of the Chinese culture for more than two thousand years. It is not only a symbol of power, but also a performing art capable of introducing overseas Chinese students to Chinese culture.

The methodology was qualitative inquiry and grounded theory which utilized the ethnographic procedure of participant observation for collecting and interpreting the data. I gave my subjects a pre-workshop questionnaire in order to determine their initial level of knowledge and understanding of Lion Dancing and its related culture. I divided the curriculum into seven categories: 1) historical background and literary sources; 2) mythological stories; 3) aesthetic/symbolic values and meanings of the props, masks, and costumes; 4) religious beliefs and ritual ceremonies; 5) musical meanings and exercises; 6) artistic dance techniques related to the Lion Dance; and 7) self/group creative process which was underscored by the traditional learning spirit of cooperation. The students had hands-on experience with how to play traditional Chinese music instruments and how to perform the Southern style of Lion Dancing. At the end of the workshop, I gave my volunteer students a post-workshop questionnaire.

Data collection took several forms: Class activities and subjects were videotaped; and I recorded personal notes after each class. Some students and parents were individually interviewed. I applied Glaser's and Strauss's four steps for analysis, and compared the students' class reactions of expression, observable behavior, conversation, and reflective responses. The pre and post-questionnaires were compared; and stated comments, observable behavior, my participant-observation findings, students' final lecture demonstration, performances, and the parental commentary were analyzed. The triangulation technique helped me examine the relationships and assess the reliability of the material to formulate my theoretical insights.

I also explored the history and significance of Chinese culture and religion to better understand the ongoing popularity of the dance as well as developed an examination of the concepts of multicultural education in the United States. Application of Wissler's the nine culture universals was the basis for organizing the curriculum content. I applied

Whitehead's and Dewey's educational concepts, and Gardner's theories into my lesson plans and pedagogy. Students learned and related to Chinese culture through comprehensive sensory media that focused on individual potential and learning styles.

The outcome of this study suggests the usefulness of a transdisciplinary pedagogy in cultural education, particularly related to dance and culture learned through positive, hands-on learning experiences. This study constitutes a first step in the development of an effective global educational paradigm that may diminish the cultural dissonance children experience when adjusting to a host culture. It is my belief that one mission for education is to build a sense of self awareness and respect by honoring the integrity of the child's native culture.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### CHINESE CULTURAL EDUCATION FOR OVERSEAS CHINESE STUDENTS

Throughout history, many Chinese living abroad have held deep affection and pride for their 5,000 year old history and culture (Liu, 1992d). For them, it seems that “deep in their hearts there always exists the desire to assume the self-designated responsibility of passing on the spark of Chinese culture” (Tseng, 1996, p. x). Authors like Amy Tan fictionalize the Chinese American’s emotional search for personal roots as a cultural anchor in a western world (1989 and 1995). In turn, wherever there are Chinese, you find a variety of Chinese programs or schools — that run from short, hourly weekend programs to formal, six year long daily schools (Lee, 1992). The mission of these overseas Chinese programs and schools is to teach the younger generation who live abroad about their ancestral history and culture through Mandarin language, literature, and cultural activities (H. H. Liu, 1992).

#### The Establishment of Educational Programs for Overseas Chinese

Originally, some parents started Chinese schools, believing in the importance of their children understanding the Chinese language. The curricula covered also the unique Chinese customs and Chinese living concepts. Even today, parents may volunteer as teachers and offer classes at temples, churches, Chinese organization offices, or at someone’s house (Yu, 1992). Those with more abundant financial resources establish



campuses and hire teachers to teach the children (Lee, 1992). As Cong Chung (1991) states “Overseas Chinese teachers shoulder a sacred mission of handing down the Chinese culture” (p. 21). The subjects taught are always related to traditional culture and living concepts, such as filial piety, brotherly love/cohesion, loyalty, trust, and knowledge of language, historical, symbolic, and aesthetic heritages (Chang, 1988; Chou, 1996; Lee, 1992).

Even though a network of Chinese programs and schools exists in the United States and elsewhere, in many circumstances, most overseas Chinese young people growing up in a main stream environment, are more familiar with their adopted host culture than with their indigenous root culture (Lee, 1992). Take the eccentric Confucian scholar Koo Hung-ming of the late Ch’ing Dynasty<sup>1</sup> for example. A descendant of a Malaysian woman and a Chinese man, Hung-ming, was born in Malaysia. Since his father was a Chinese, he inherited some traditional Chinese rites and customs — he wore traditional Chinese outfits at weddings and festivals — but he was thoroughly Malay. He could not even speak or write Chinese (Liu, 1992a). In another instance, described by Robert John Oh (1996),

Third generation Chinese in the Philippines have mostly assimilated with the local culture. It is therefore not surprising to see Chinese unable to speak their own language. While a few Chinese values are still intact, all these will be lost as time passes. Here, we are called Chinoy, which is short for Chinese Pinoy (Pinoy is short for Filipino). We speak fluent Filipino, eat Filipino foods and mingle with Filipinos. Even among our Chinese friends, conversations are usually conducted in Filipino. We prefer reading material written in English and we write in English. The Chinese language has become a second [or third] language spoken only when talking to our parents and grandparents. (p. 105)

The problem is repeated worldwide as many Chinese are unable to speak any Chinese, because, as the third generation of Chinese immigrants, they have mostly assimilated with their host culture.

It has always been very difficult for overseas Chinese children to understand and to accept the beliefs and practices of their parents. Not only is there a generation gap, but there are also many terminal, “local knowledge” (Geertz, 1973), high context cultural practices that dig huge chasms between the host country and the immigrant parents. This deeply embedded knowledge is that learned by children growing up in a particular place and worldview. Simply, the worldviews of elders and children are separated because they grew up in different locales. Here is an example depicting the generation and cultural gaps experienced by a mother and her only daughter (Tan, 1989),

My mother gave me my ‘life’s important,’ a jade pendant on a gold chain . . . . It was almost the size of my little finger, a mottled green and white color, intricately carved. To me, the whole effect looked wrong . . . . I stuffed the necklace in my lacquer box and forgot about it. But these days, I think about my life’s important. I wonder what it means, because my mother died three months ago . . . she’s the only person I could have asked, to tell me about life’s importance, to help me understand my grief. I now wear that pendant every day. I think the carvings mean something, because shapes and details . . . always mean something to Chinese people. (p. 221)

The excerpt from Amy Tan’s the *Joy Luck Club* indicates that Tan’s character Waverly did not understand the value of Chinese culture, or the significance of “life’s importance” through knowing the symbols of her culture. Waverly, born in the United States, grew up with American culture as her mainstream influence. She tended to adapt to her host culture more than her original root culture. Her local knowledge space was a landscape filled with western sights and sounds. She did not really identify with Chinese



culture at all, at least initially. This is borne out by the experiences she related concerning the jade pendant necklace given to her by her mother; jade being an important and symbolic gift in my culture. It represents good fortune and also protects its owner. To a traditional Chinese person a jade pendant symbolizes protection from ill fortune. In fact, the jade will absorb bad luck so that the owner is protected from misfortune. Waverly did not appreciate the significance of the gift when she first received it from her mother. She was just a young, naïve girl at the time and neither appreciated the aesthetic beauty nor the significance of the jewelry. Consequently, the necklace was not cherished since she did not understand the meaning of the jade pendant necklace. Not until her mother's death did she look upon it in a different light.

Likewise, she did not understand the way the Chinese looked at her. Waverly could not understand *why* her mother pushed her to play at the same piano recital where her mother's girl friend's daughter was playing too. Even more, she was overcome with embarrassment when her mother held up a magazine with her picture on the cover page to brag to everyone she met on the street about Amy being a chess champion. In Waverly's mind, the bragging and pushing evidenced overwhelming control. She did not recognize that her mother's behavior was a way to bring honor to the family. This novel illustrates the confusion that many second generation and overseas Chinese experience as they try to navigate between two different cultures.

Many Chinese parents living overseas in the United States, South America, Central America, Asia, Europe, and Africa are concerned that their children are losing many important elements of their native culture (Lee, 1992). It appears that as the children

become assimilated into the host culture, the honored attributes of traditional Chinese culture, such as filial piety, brotherly love/cohesion, loyalty, trust, and knowledge of historical, symbolic, and aesthetic heritages, diminish (Lee, 1992). Many overseas Chinese programs, schools, and organizations have requested support from the Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission (OCAC) of the Republic of China on Taiwan to help provide schooling in the soon to be lost cultural traditions.

Why are these overseas Chinese programs, schools and organizations asking the help of the OCAC of the Republic of China on Taiwan instead of running programs independently? To fully understand, we must briefly explore the historical relationship between the Republic of China on Taiwan and the overseas Chinese community.

As I stated earlier, overseas Chinese programs and schools were held first in churches, temples, and offices of Chinese organizations. According to a well-known author, Him Mark Lai (1992), early in 1882 some priests started Chinese language programs for Chinese children at their churches in Hawaii. In 1888, Da Ch'ing Shu Yuan, a formal overseas Chinese school in California was founded in San Francisco (p. 50). In 1897 Dr. Sun Yet-sen founded a modern overseas Chinese school in Japan. Most Chinese programs and schools were self-supported both financially and physically. Throughout the preceding century enthusiastic parents oversaw the majority of schools. Later, while Dr. Sun Yet-sen was traveling around Asia, America, and Europe advocating the revolution against the Ch'ing Dynasty, he strongly encouraged overseas Chinese to establish schools, newspapers, journals, and magazines. In 1910, due to Dr. Sun Yet-sen's advocacy, many overseas Chinese left their host countries to return to Canton to

fight for Chinese independence. Others provided immense amounts of funding. As a result, the Ch'ing dynasty ended and the Republic of China was founded in 1911.

Establishment of overseas Chinese language schools for children became an extremely popular movement among Chinese communities around the world between 1911-1926. Subsequently, the OCAC was founded in September 1926 to support the education of overseas Chinese. Later, in 1939, worldwide correspondence courses for studying the Mandarin language, culture, and practical techniques of baking and cooking were set up to fulfill the desires the overseas communities had for additional cultural contact with China (Huang, 1992).

According to Cong Chung (1991), there were 2,800 overseas Chinese schools as of June 1937. Then the dark age fell upon the overseas Chinese during World War II. After the Japanese invasions, all overseas Chinese schools in the Philippines, Hong Kong, Singapore, Laos, Malaysia, and Indonesia were forced to stop their Chinese classes, and, instead, teach Japanese. Although, some overseas Chinese parents hired tutors to teach their children the Chinese history and culture at home, officially the learning of Chinese history and literature was prohibited in Taiwan for 50 years during the Japanese occupation of Taiwan. According to my father, as a child he and some friends learned Chinese literature and history secretly (C. C. Chan, personal communication, 1960's). The war years slowed the growth of overseas Chinese schools. Nonetheless, a total of 4,860 overseas Chinese schools were established abroad by the end of World War II. In 1949, even though the Republic of China was exiled to Taiwan, continuous support in maintaining the mission of educational instruction to overseas Chinese was still upheld.

At the end of 1998, there were 2,916 overseas Chinese schools around the world (OCAC, 1999). Just as the overseas Chinese were recognized as the saviors, the overseas Chinese reciprocated their affection by faithfully citing the Republic of China on Taiwan as the "sweet, mother country."

During the entire period of cultural and political upheaval, where the Republic of China was physically transferred to Taiwan, overseas Chinese continued to send a great deal of financial support. Not only did the overseas Chinese community recognize the Republic of China (Taiwan) as the legitimate representative of China, they financially contributed to the Republic's success. For example, those living in the Philippines donated a Cadillac to President Chiang Kai-shek, and money was donated to rebuild schools in the areas hit in Miaoli following the floods in 1959. Then, past donors returned to Taiwan to study the growth of Taiwan's economic achievements. Furthermore, the overseas Chinese, from 80 countries, donated more than \$61 million to rebuild schools, hospitals, houses, bridges, in the cities and villages hit by the earth quake at the center of Taiwan in 1999 (Hwa Chao Shau Shin, February 16, 2001). These donations continue to the present day because education is considered the highest of virtues among Chinese.

Beginning in 1960, once Taiwan's economic system had revived and, at the request of the overseas Chinese community, the government sent teachers and specialists abroad to teach numbers of the younger generation the language and cultural aspects of their root heritage. In that year the Chinese radio station began broadcasting in Taipei, Taiwan and modernized its correspondence courses and educational materials for broadcast

worldwide. In 1999, the OCAC commissioned a worldwide Internet site that instructs overseas Chinese in all areas of the Chinese culture.

The Republic of China on Taiwan assumed the duty of providing services in order to acquaint and educate younger generations of overseas Chinese about their culture. As Dr. Sun Yat-sen, the father of the Republic of China, once said, "the Overseas Chinese are the mother of the revolution" (Yiu, 1991, p. 15). The political, financial, physical, and spiritual support of overseas Chinese residing in major cities of the world such as London, Honolulu, Paris, Hong Kong, and Tokyo, all contributed to the successful revolution. The relationship between the overseas Chinese and the Republic of China is very close, like a tree and its fruits. In the eyes of the Chinese, the Republic of China was established with the blood and tears of all overseas Chinese worldwide. Overseas Chinese provided the revolutionary birth of the Republic of China and thus they are an integral part of the Republic of China.

#### The Overseas Chinese Affair Commission (OCAC)

The Chinese government recognized the great contributions overseas Chinese worldwide since 1931, when the OCAC of the Republic of China was formed to actively supported overseas Chinese by providing Chinese literature and special versions of Chinese textbooks for overseas Chinese schools worldwide (Chaio Wu Wei Yuen Hui, 1984). In the last 27 years, the OCAC of the Republic of China (R.O.C.) government has sent Chinese teachers and specialists abroad to more than 30 countries. They teach overseas Chinese children traditional Chinese dance, visual arts, and martial arts, in addition to many other traditional activities. During the past seven years, I was invited

by the OCAC of the R.O.C. government to travel worldwide to teach overseas students Chinese dance and Chinese martial arts.

As a dance educator, I recognize dance as culture, and “culture as a coherent assemblage of received knowledge” (Keali’inohomoku, 1983 as quoted in Trend, 1992, p. 18). Chinese culture is permeated with traditional Chinese dances. I support David Trend’s (1992) argument that “culture and pedagogy are but two sides of the same coin. This is education as the production of values and identities” (p. 77). Consequently culture must be taught in a direct and obvious way. “A place of hidden dragons and tigers” is a commonly used Chinese metaphor to describe unknown territory that is full of great treasure (Schmitt & Pan, 1994, p. 32). For overseas Chinese students, Chinese dance is a place of hidden dragons and tigers since the essence of Chinese culture appears throughout this powerful medium of cultural cohesion and expression. Once one experiences Chinese dance, that person will have a non-verbal window into Chinese culture and on the Chinese soul.

### Description of the Study

Through Lion Dancing I taught the spirit of cooperation, some history and mythology, music, a simple introduction to Chinese calligraphy, costuming, dance, religion and funerary customs, and visual arts. Although, Lion Dancing has been described by other researchers and writers (Ho, 1970; Lu, 1986; Wang, 1985; Wang, 1991), none have recorded it as a primary educational vehicle, one that pays specific attention to the role and heritage of Lion Dancing in Chinese culture. In this study, the educational perspective refers to the teaching program’s design with its basis in pedagogy



or unique teaching strategies. The decisions made concerning which teaching approaches to apply were derived from the educator/scholar's point of view. Therefore, an educational perspective was used in this study. My focus was not merely an acquisition of knowledge and skills but on how to engage students more fully in their learning.

### Purpose and Problem of the Study

The purpose of this study was to document the process of change in overseas Chinese students' understanding and appreciation of basic elements of Chinese culture through the controlled observation of teaching one form of Chinese cultural dance. It was hypothesized that a description and analysis of the learning process would lead to an understanding of the value of dance in teaching Chinese culture to overseas Chinese students.

The study was guided by three problem questions:

1. Is Lion Dancing an effective medium for developing the knowledge of Chinese culture and values in an overseas Chinese school?
2. How can Lion Dancing be applied in teaching Chinese culture to American Chinese students in a way that maximizes its educative potential?
3. What changes in understanding and appreciation of Chinese culture are experienced by American Chinese students through participation in Lion Dancing and its related arts study?

### Overview of the Methodology

To accomplish the purpose and answer the three problem questions, qualitative methods and tools were employed in designing the program (see chapter Two) then assessing the effectiveness of the process (see Chapters Six and Seven). Moreover, with an educational perspective in mind, the study elucidates pertinent descriptive information

about the various styles of lion dance with costume, movement, music, props, and typical Lion Dancing ceremonial information, some of which has not been published in English.

This study was founded upon four key assumptions. First, culture is acquired through formal and informal learning (Henslin, 1998). Second, multicultural education is necessary for children to understand other cultures in relation to their own (Bennett, 1995). Third, it is possible to use dance to involve and motivate students in positive ways to learn not only the meanings and aesthetic qualities of the dance but also about its related historical background and their native culture. As Elliot W. Eisner (1998) states, "Arts [dance] education should enable students to understand that there is a connection between the content and form that the arts [dance] display and the culture" (p. 14). Finally, this study, through promoting increased cultural awareness and appreciation, may lead students and their families to develop a more positive image of themselves, to understand themselves as unique individuals, and to provide a sense of belonging to a community (Bennet, 1995).

The outcome derived from this study demonstrates the effectiveness and educative potential of Lion Dancing and an interdisciplinary arts approach as a means for developing traditional Chinese aesthetics and value, so that understanding and appreciation of Chinese culture is increased.

#### Lion Dancing as the medium of the study.

For this study, I selected the Lion Dance as a medium to teach overseas children about Chinese culture. The Lion Dance not only has been a symbol of power since the Han dynasty<sup>2</sup> (*Lion Dance*, 1999; Ho, 1970; Wang, 1991), but it is also one of the most



significant and popular traditional Chinese festival activities. It has always been an integral part of the Chinese culture and has been passed down from generation to generation. Lion Dancing is performed all over the world in Chinese communities today (Chang, 1993; Hu, 1994; Lu, 1994). I learned the children's version of Lion Dancing at the age of six and since then, it has been one of my favorite Chinese dances.

The Lion Dance was the focal point for teaching not only the movements of the dance but the history, significance, and mythology behind the dance. In addition, I planned to instruct them in elements of costuming, dress, and cultural icons through the use of the Lion Dance as well as introduce some Chinese calligraphy. I felt that these various elements would help the students to have a better connection with Chinese culture.

To fully understand Chinese culture, we must begin and attempt to agree on a definition for Chinese culture or cultures. Culture means many things to different groups of people. One definition of culture includes "a body of symbols and meanings in play in a given society at a given time" (Ortner, 1990, p. 59). Brown (1963) states, "Culture refers to all the accepted and patterned ways of behavior of a given people . . . . It is the sum total and the organization or arrangement of all the group's ways of thinking, feeling, and acting" (as cited in Cooper & Martin, 1991, p. 9).

In order to give the phrase "Chinese culture" some meaning and purpose, I applied Clark Wissler's proposition of nine cultural universals as part of my definition (cited in Cooper & Martin, 1991). Culture is a sense of people-hood that is evidenced by a group of historically related individuals who share some basic and consistent beliefs in the areas

of “language, material traits, family and social organization, government, religion, art, trade, mythology and scientific knowledge, and war” (p. 11), and their relationships to others in the world. This definition is not unlike that originally proposed by Max Weber in early 1920. Weber states that “an ethnic group was one whose members . . . entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonization and migration” (Weber, 1968, p. 389). Another part of my definition of a culture will be defined as the behavior patterns, symbols, institutions, values, and other components (Baruth & Manning, 1992; Phelan & Davidson, 1993) of a cognizable group. Ricardo L. Garcia (1991) defines cultures as “the totality of learned attitudes, values, beliefs, traditions, and tools shared by a group of people to give order, continuity, and meaning to their lives” (p. 68) and further comments that a culture is a distinctive way of life.

#### The voices of overseas Chinese students and parents.

The voices of my Chinese students and their parents describing their experiences during the learning and performing process was vital to the study. I chose to do a qualitative rather than a quantitative research strategy. Therefore I analyzed my success and/or failure based on student and parent anecdotes, my participant observations, the students’ final lecture presentation and performance, as well as the use of a pre and post workshop questionnaire to show specific types of learning. In order to locate participants for the study I looked in local Chinese communities for overseas Chinese families. In Dallas, TX, 10 Chinese weekend schools provide education to over 2,000 Chinese students. In these schools, students explore the Chinese culture mainly through

Mandarin-language study. The main drawback to the program is student expectation. Because the students are living within the dominant American culture, they experience teachers in American schools as friendly and entertaining in their classroom practices.

The Chinese schools' teachers are very strict and serious. Courses are taught in traditional Chinese fashion — the teacher talks and students are required to listen quietly. Many Chinese students do not find the traditional Chinese structure stimulating, therefore rebel against learning their root culture. In Richardson, TX, one eight-year-old boy said, "All you do is sit in class and read and write" (Y. Lee, personal communication, March 29, 1997). A 10-year-old girl claimed, "You get sleepy soon because it's so boring" (H. Chen, personal communication, April 4, 1997). Another 13-year-old girl from Plano, TX, related, "It's not that I don't care about learning Chinese culture, it's just not fun" (C. Wang, April, 9, personal communication, 1997). Robert John Oh (1996) sums up the frustrations of Chinese students' learning experience:

I spent almost 12 years studying the Chinese language, starting from kindergarten and ending the fourth year of high school. . . . Along the way, many students drop out because of lack of interest and motivation. . . . Among my brothers and sisters, it was only I that was able to complete the whole Chinese education.

Having been born here in the Philippines, third-generation Chinese like us should at least learn about the life, culture, and history of China in order to appreciate our identity. I believe that the latter objective has been somewhat met. We are at least aware of our rich culture, something that every one of us should be proud of. Unfortunately, the former objective, learning to read, write, and speak fluent Mandarin wasn't met.

The method of teaching has always been the same. We are taught one lesson from the book and are asked to memorize sentences. Without even understanding what we are studying, we can pass the course by simply memorizing every outline. Sad to say, this method is so ineffective that even after finishing twelve years of study, I can not read a Chinese newspaper or speak fluent Mandarin.

I am not alone in this predicament. Out of the 45 students in our class, only about five can read and understand a Chinese newspaper. The remaining students are like me. . . .

Looking back, I am so disappointed with the teaching method employed by Chinese teachers here in the Philippines. It is simply ineffective. (p. 105)

Students are dissatisfied with the traditional lecture format — they want to engage in a fun, active, and enjoyable way of learning. In his book, *The Aims of Education*, Alfred North Whitehead (1957) states, “The purpose of education is to stimulate and guide their self-development . . . the teachers also should be alive with living thoughts” (p. v). He points out that “education is the acquisition of the art of the utilization of knowledge” (p. 4). Whitehead also emphasizes the importance of learning experience in education. He says, “From the very beginning of his [and her] education, the child should experience the joy of discovery (p. 2) . . . . Interest is the *sine qua non* for attention and apprehension (p. 31) . . . without interest there will be no progress” (p. 31).

The core belief governing the present study concerned the blocking communication between the teacher’s pedagogy and students’ learning process. In the traditional Chinese ways of teaching, the teacher is the center of the classroom setting. Each student must keep quiet and listen to the teacher’s lecture, and respond exactly with the correct answer that the teacher finds appropriate. Students are required to completely obey and respect the teacher. If the teacher does not ask a student to answer a question, the student should not talk in the room. In the Chinese traditional classroom setting, the rule that “silence is golden” is strongly practiced. Students only learn, and they only learn what the teacher thinks is important and valuable to the students. Little or no consideration is

given to the students' perspectives and desires, and very little hands-on experience occurs in the classroom. Students are passive responders not actively engaged in their learning

Furthermore, the results of a 10-year research project examining "What do students want and what really motivates them?" (Strong, Silver, & Robinson, 1995), would seem to bear out these student attitudes. It was found that, overall, students are looking for something that motivates curiosity, permits creative expression, and fosters positive relationships with others (p. 8). Therefore, joyful learning experiences are those that foster and encourage curiosity and creativity. I believe these are important components in teaching Chinese culture to overseas Chinese youth whose local knowledge is imbued with American values of personal creativity and independence. As a dance educator and a Chinese school teacher, I believe that Lion Dancing can be a core activity by which to engage overseas Chinese children in the study of Chinese culture in ways that will enhance their curiosity, creativity, and understanding.

### Definition of Terms

The following definitions guided this study:

Chinese language -- is mandarin, the only language that is the official national language both in Taiwan, R.O.C. and Mainland China, P.R.O.C.

Chinese students -- refers to students of Chinese heritage, who live in a country where Chinese are a minority population having little exposure to Chinese culture.

Dance -- "is a complex art form that must be translated to actualize its multicultural aesthetic elements, functional features, and the various levels of expression available to dancers both as movers and viewers" (LaPointe-Crump, 1993, p. 52).

Overseas Chinese schools -- are schools established locally outside of Taiwan and supported by the Republic of China government.

Lion Dancing -- means to the same as the Lion Dance. (Refer to Chapter Three.)

### Delimitations and Limitations of the Study

This study was confined to examining the methods used to teach 12 volunteer Chinese students between the ages of 11-14, who live in the Dallas, Plano, and Richardson, TX, vicinity. The Lion Dance, including the Southern, Northern, and Taiwanese forms, was the only traditional Chinese dance that students learned in the study. Materials and lessons comprising the 24 hours of lessons were designed and organized to support the competent performance of all aspects of the Lion Dance complex. The technical performance of the students only focused on the Southern form of Lion Dancing and developing a public presentation. The workshop, the principal source of material for this study, was conducted at the Dallas Chinese Community Activities Center (DCCAC) in Richardson, TX, in January 1998. The study is limited by its focus upon a specific geographical, an urban center in the United States.

### Significance of the Study

Since 1985, the Office of OCAC for the Republic of China on Taiwan has invited Chinese dance teachers to travel and teach overseas Chinese students how to do and perform Chinese dances in their host countries. I have taught dances and martial arts to Chinese students in Western Europe and in South, Central, and North America for the past fifteen years. While the demand for such education has been consistently growing, no research exists on children's initial reactions to and thoughts about their experience of



learning Chinese culture through dance. Furthermore, although dance is universally acknowledged as a cultural commodity and as an attribute of national pride, little research of any kind exists on the role of Chinese dance in educational programs designed to impart cultural heritage.

My premise was that Chinese American students would develop a stronger connection to Chinese culture through my arts education program. Through this study overseas Chinese schools, parents, and I came to understand what changes in understanding and appreciation of Chinese culture are experienced by Chinese students through participation in a specific dance learning program, a program that was influenced by and prepared within the dominant pedagogy of the host nation.

The multicultural make-up of American Schools is changing. In Texas alone, the number of foreign born students vs. native American born students has risen to a 1 in 8 ratio. This study constitutes a first step in the development of an effective global educational paradigm that may diminish the cultural dissonance children experience when adjusting to a host culture. It is my belief that one mission for education is to build a sense of self awareness and respect by honoring the integrity of the child's native culture.

In upcoming chapters, I explore the research methodology and procedures, the history and significance of Chinese culture and dance as well as the concept of multicultural education. Following this, I will describe the transdisciplinary curriculum that I developed to teach cultural connections through Lion Dancing. The dissertation is organized in the following ways: Chapter Two, describes the qualitative research

methodology that I used for the study; Chapter Three, Chinese culture and dance, reviews the historical literature including a review of ancient Chinese literature, traditional documents which refers to studies written within the last two to three hundred years, scholarly reports, and present publications; Chapter Four tells of the significance of the Lion figure in Chinese culture; Chapter Five discusses multicultural education in the United States; Chapter Six concerns pedagogy and the teaching process; Chapter Seven details the method of data collection and analysis which I refer to as digging jewels from a treasure mine, and Chapter Eight concludes the study and includes suggestions for further study.

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#### Chapter One Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> approximately 1450 –1911 C.E.

<sup>2</sup> approximately 220 B.C.E. – 202 C.E.



## CHAPTER TWO

### HOW TO MINE: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study primarily employed the methodology of qualitative inquiry. Qualitative inquiry is based primarily on verbal description and interpretation derived from the researcher's experiences and focused observations. It is a painstaking process much like mining for precious stones. The perceptions of the subjects are respected and incorporated through a series of controlled interactions and activities (Creswell, 1994). Relying on such a method, I focused on the students' reactions, stated comments, observable behavior, my participant-observation findings, students' final lecture demonstration, performances, and on the comments of their parents to draw my conclusions.

I relied on the reactions and interactions of the subjects rather than focusing solely on my own perceptions. In this way I was best able to monitor their responses, aesthetic appreciation, and the cultural values which the students and parents expressed. Here, I intended to allow the voices of the students to speak so that I could separate their learning from what I had hoped to achieve. This, then, allowed for independence of thought. Bruce Berg (1998) states, "qualitative procedures provide a means of accessing unquantifiable facts about people that researchers observe or talk to" (p. 7). Inductive methods were applied to analyze the evidence and to formulate or reformulate my theoretical insights (Merriam, 1988; Ragin, 1994; Van den Hoonaard, 1996).

At the outset of the study I gave my subjects — young overseas Chinese students ages 11 to 14 — a pre-workshop questionnaire in order to determine their initial level of knowledge and understanding of Lion Dancing and its related culture. I divided the material of Lion Dance and its related arts into seven categories: 1) historical background and literary sources; 2) mythological stories; 3) aesthetic/symbolic values and meanings of the props, masks, and costumes; 4) religious beliefs and ritual ceremonies; 5) musical meanings and exercises; 6) artistic dance techniques related to the Lion Dance; and 7) self/group creative process. Subsequently through a series of lecture demonstrations, video, and movie sessions, the subjects learned the historical background, symbolic meanings, artistic concepts, and creative designs that are represented in the dance. The students had hands-on experience with how to play traditional Chinese music instruments, such as a big drum, cymbals, and gongs, used for Lion Dancing. They also studied the history and mythology of Lion Dancing and its relation to Chinese culture and religion in great detail and practiced specific steps and movements used in Lion Dancing. They also talked a lot about how they felt about their new experiences.

Data collection took several forms. To gain repeated observations and information gathering, all class activities and subjects were videotaped. From time to time, some students and parents were individually interviewed concerning their perceptions, responses, aesthetic appreciation, and cultural values. These conversations were tape recorded so that I could concentrate on the conversation and have a complete transcript. Interviewees were free to respond in either Chinese or English. Most of the students responded in English or in a combination of Chinese and English, whereas the parents

uniformly responded in Mandarin. I varied my language use. When talking with students, I invariably spoke English; while conversing with their parents, I spoke Mandarin Chinese. Following the study, all subjects completed post-workshop questionnaires.

Initially I pre-determined the type of student who I felt would best meet my criteria: students who were born in the United States or who came to this country when they were small. In order to assess the benefits of the Lion Dancing curriculum I needed to locate students who had little background in Lion Dancing. Then, since I wanted to determine whether the Lion Dance curriculum would aid in expanding the student's knowledge base, I selected American Chinese students who had some basic familiarity with Chinese culture. I determined this by choosing those ethnic American Chinese students who were attending an overseas Chinese school but who, based on parental statements, had limited knowledge of Lion Dancing. To further help in locating these students, I advertised in *Dallas Chinese News*, a community Chinese newspaper and requested help from five principals of local (Arlington, Plano, Irving, Richardson, and Dallas) Chinese schools in Texas.

I employed grounded theory, an ethnographic procedure that privileges participant observation as a means to collect and interpret the data which were derived from my observations of the students, the student responses to questionnaires, student and parent comments, and the students' final presentation. Relying upon this data, a grounded theory emerged in which I compared each datum in different combinations, explained

their relationships, answered the research questions posed, and formulated a conclusion.

Let me continue with a review of ethnography and grounded theory.

### Ethnographic Procedures

“Ethnography is an exciting enterprise” (Spradley, 1980, p. vii). It incorporates the art and science of studying a culture or subject (Burawoy, 1991; Ellen, 1984; Fetterman, 1989), and it is an interpretive research method used in describing culture (Fetterman, 1998; Spradley, 1980; Van Manen, 1990). Ethnography “usually . . . [involves] the intensive qualitative study of small groups through participant observation” (Ellen, 1984, p. 7) and generally refers to the report of human social practices. The word ethnography is based on the Greek root words for nation and writing, and, as a research methodology, it remains closely related to its root meaning (Hoebel, 1972, p. 11-12). Generally ethnography is any description of the populace, and is “both the process and the product” (Agar, 1980, p. 9). The central aim of the ethnographer is to understand the people from the insider’s perspective of their culture and of the world (Agar, 1980; Boyle, 1994; Hughes, 1992; Spradley, 1979) through a deepened awareness of “experience-near” versus “experience-far.”

Joyceen Boyle explains (1994), “ethnography is not only a research technique but the term also is used to describe . . . an investigation” (in Morse, p. 161). One research technique commonly used by ethnographers in fieldwork studies is participant observation. It also has been called “the hallmark of cultural anthropology” (Spradley, 1980, p. 16). Participant observation is derived from the idea that a researcher can gain particular insights and information about a culture and its people by being immersed in

an environment. Strategies are employed to reduce the distance between the observer and what is observed. "Observation . . . allows the inquirer [/researcher] to see the world as his[/her] subjects see it" (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 193). Through the researcher's participation and observation within a natural setting for a period of time, data build and become meaningful. This fieldwork approach involves immersing oneself in the environment and describing the characteristics of the culture and society from an internal, personal perspective (Fettermon, 1989; Van Manen, 1990; Spradley & McCurdy, 1972), although the merging of observer and observed is never the intent.

Accurate analysis is crucial and begins with effective recording of the interview via video and audio taping or by systematic note taking. The goal of data analysis is "getting an in-depth review of the study, giving the voice to the voiceless, giving the new perspective, revealing things that were hidden, bringing aspects of life to people" (Phillips, 1996). The process of the accumulation and analysis of data begins as early as the completion of the first interview (Creswell, 1994; Lofland, & Lofland, 1995). When the information is transcribed from video or audio tape sources, the researcher must "check the transcription word for word" (Yow, 1994).

Regardless of the chosen analytical method, data should always be organized around coding categories and defined domains (Phillips, 1996; Spradley, 1979). The coding must ensure that responses are consistently and appropriately assessed. It is crucial that the researcher account for personal bias at this point in the analysis so that all parts of the data are reviewed with equal vigor (Erlandson, et al., 1993; Phillips, 1996;



Spradley, 1979). The triangulation technique helped me to examine the relationships and assess the reliability of the material gleaned from students, parents, and myself.

### Grounded Theory

Grounded theory is one key ethnographic procedure that is attributed to Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (1967) who proposed that the data tell their own stories. In the last 20 years, grounded theory has often been the preferred theoretical research design applied in the collection and analysis of phenomenological data about the nature of perceptions or lifestyles of a particular group. Grounded theory is reliable in that it requires that hypotheses be based on directly observed phenomena rather than on some preconceived theory or hypothesis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Cynthia Baker, Judith Wuest, & Phyllis Stern (1992) argues that “grounded theory is one of the interpretive methods that share the common philosophy of phenomenology – that is, methods that are used to describe the world of the person or persons under study” (in Morse, 1994, p. 213).

In this study, the perceptions and voices of the overseas Chinese students provided the material from which there gradually emerged my hypothesis and, subsequently, my theory. Portions of the collected data were compared to one another and to previously known information. I then characterized the data and formulated a preliminary belief to explain how the pieces were related. The theory was revised with each portion or layer of new evidence, ensuring that the theory was always *grounded* or securely based in the base of information (Borg, Gall, & Gall, 1993), and therefore was consistent and reasonable.

In this study, both grounded theory and ethnography constitute very important tools that allowed me to investigate data from the participants' experience while they learned the Lion Dance from an American multidisciplinary arts pedagogical perspective. I collected and analyzed data pertaining to the *emic* perspective of students, opened my mind to their voices. Anya Peterson Royce (1977) distinguishes *emic* from *etic* within a cultural context. She noted that:

Labanotation records every movement the body makes, thereby giving the researcher an "*etic*" inventory of movement. Not all of these movements are meaningful to dancers performing within their own tradition. Those that are significant make up an "*emic*" inventory of movement. (p. 68)

According to Boyle (1994), an *emic* perspective is "the insider's view, or the informant's perspective of reality [and] – is at the heart of ethnographic research" (p. 166). *Etic* and *Emic* principles were first recognized in linguistics. Named by the linguist Kenneth Pike (1956), the concepts are based on how human beings identify in their native languages the sameness in the sets of phonetically similar but slightly different sounds. Thus individuals are able to sense the relationship between the smallest significant element of meaning (phoneme) and what is actually heard (phone). These concepts, extrapolated from the social sciences, serve as the basic, underlying constructs (Kaepler, 1967; Keali'inohomoku, 1994) to shed light on personal and communal meaning. Although studying the differentiation of realms of experience into *emic* and *etic* episodes has been traced to 1956, the role of the participants' direct experience has not been studied as much as the researcher's observation of the participants. What are the experiences that lead to cultural meaning making by children



of Chinese heritage? It is the personal (each student's) interpretation of the elements of communal meaning (emic) that is at the core of my research.

At each phase of the study, the "comparative analysis" involved Glaser's and Strauss's (1967) four steps for analysis: "(1) comparing the data applicable to each conceptual category; (2) integrating the categories and their properties; (3) delimiting the emergent theory; and (4) writing up the theory" (p. 105-115). The process continually circled back to the recorded responses and performances of the participants. What I found useful in this approach was the flexibility and open-endedness that supported my research with the goal of furthering understanding rather than proving or disproving a theory. However, I was still faced with the researcher's bias since I was personally involved in assessing how the data were related and in determining the overall meaning of the data. Aware of the pitfalls of reflective interpretive methods, I knew I had to balance my assessment of predominantly subjective data, the "experience near" and "experience far" positions (i.e., those involving emotional relationships and those of a more distanced theoretical stance).

As an insider in this study, I participated with the students. Their role allowed me to stay close to them and to invest in their activities firsthand. The insider position also enabled me to hear the students' conversations and reactions and then to record their perspectives in my journal at the end of each lesson. By involving myself as a participant in the study, I avoided the limited and traditional perspective of an authority figure or that of an objective observer. When dealing with students' comments, I purposely put myself in their shoes to think and rethink from their perspectives. From my informal and formal

interactions with selected participants, participant observation and interview were natural procedures of choice (Ellen, 1984; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Holy, 1984; Hutchinson, 1988; Yow, 1994).

As an ethnographer, I attempted to separate myself from the prior decisions I was used to making about what constituted literacy in the Chinese cultural tradition. I became more sensitive to how cultural values are constructed by students when they are separated from their root culture. This was a comfortable stance because I too am separate from my root culture. In the selection of suitable subjects, I recognized that one must be flexible to include a variety of people who can represent the whole community. Purposive subjects, participants who are members of a particular community, are preferable in qualitative research. Random or representative sampling is not recommended because it is the investigators' task to "maximize discovery of the heterogeneous patterns and problems" that occur within a discrete sample of people (Erlandson et al., 1993).

Although the students were well aware of my role as investigator, I was able to merge into their small community. I came to understand and appreciate the children's casual conversation, learning strategies and behaviors, and creative process. This approach was of great importance to my ethnography because this process attempts to capture and accurately portray the experiences of members of a particular culture. Through this delicate process, one demanding trust and respect, hierarchical positioning was minimized because the other participants had implicit permission to interact more naturally with each other, with themselves, and with me. In this study, my task was

twofold, “not only to collect information from the emic or insider’s perspective but also to make sense of all the data from an etic or external social scientific perspective” (Fetterman, 1998, p. 11).

Spradley (1980) suggests that when the researcher functions as a participant observer the following six essential processes be kept in mind: dual purpose; explicit awareness; “wide-angle lens”; the insider/outsider experience; introspection; and record keeping. In this particular situation, I was the *core* of the study. As a researcher and a member of the group, I functioned with dual purposes. While I was telling students stories about lions and their role in ancient China, I simultaneously observed their reactions from facial expressions and body language. Normally, it is easy for information to be ignored (such as natural actions or body movements) that, at first glance, may seem insignificant. When I was reviewing the class videotapes and collecting the data, I purposely kept the idea of “explicit awareness” in mind by paying attention to even the most minute details - such as the subjects’ body language, facial expression, and/or habitual actions. I recorded and remembered small pieces of information that potentially contributed later meaning to the study. I paid attention not only to the details, but also to the subjects’ activities with “a wide-angle lens” (Spradley, 1980, p. 56). In combining the concepts of explicit awareness and wide-angle lens in studying the videotapes, I found myself employing a variety of tools to coax and dislodge the hidden jewels from subterranean crevices to form substantive types of information for the study.

Introspection and reflection brought me close to the data gathered from the students, their parents, and myself. This became an important source for triangulation. In the data collection, I accumulated both objective observations and subjective feelings.

### Research Design

At the outset, the research design allowed me to foresee how to apply ethnological and grounded theory approaches to best advantage. Peltó states (1970) that the research design “involves combining the essential elements of the investigation into an effective problem-solving sequence” (p. 331). For me the research design was an idealized scheme to conceptualize how to conduct the work step-by-step. I was encouraged by Fetterman’s (1998) practical advice. The most important circumstances of fieldwork, he writes, is for a researcher to be “there to observe, to ask seemingly stupid but insightful questions, and to write down what is seen and heard” (p. 9).

In the beginning of the study process, my stance privileged a social situation in order to expand my tacit knowledge and to develop some sense of what was or was not significant (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These kinds of observations may be likened to taking pictures through a wide-angle camera lens so that “the here-and now interworkings of the environment” are revealed (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993, p. 94-95). Spradley (1980) states that social situations include situations of “a place, actors, and activities” (p. 39). In choosing a social situation for research, the investigator must have, of course, a compelling interest in the culture and activity represented by the situation or it will be perceived as phony and artificial. I also considered the practical requirements of investigating the particular environment. Lion

dancing is the most popular and deeply ritualized dance performed in Chinese communities around the world. Moreover, Lion dancing is a special dance to me. It was exciting to learn when I was a child, and I continue to enjoy performing it even to this day. In the last four years, I have studied Lion Dancing from an academic perspective and have found that Lion Dancing preserves many aspects of Chinese culture. It was a pleasure for me to design and conduct the study. And, I feel certain that my enthusiasm was contagious.

Although valuable information can be obtained through participant observation, it should not be relied upon as a sole procedure. To ensure the validity of my conclusions, it was important to layer my observations with other input. A researcher cannot perceive personal feelings and thoughts of other people. To collect specific information pertaining to the latter, a researcher has to resort to other methods, the preferred one being the interview. Indeed, for my study, interviewing students and parents to collect information about their opinions and feelings was essential to my research design.

#### Interviewing as a method for data collection.

In one of the earliest papers on interviewing as a research method, Paul Lazarsfeld (1935) claimed that “asking for reasons and giving answers are commonplace habits of everyday life” (p.14). We are asking and answering questions in our social lives all the time, whether or not we formally call it interviewing (Riesman & Benny, 1956). This is the basis for communication. However, while informal conversation offers an opportunity to exchange information, scholars agree that interviewing is a particularly important and sophisticated research tool, which allows for specific kinds of data

collection. As such it is another method of choice in fields such as ethnography, social and behavioral sciences, and historiography (Agar, 1980; Fetterman, 1989; LaPointe-Crump, 1999; Mishier, 1986; Spradley, 1979).

An interview is a focused conversation between people in which one person is directing the discussion to obtain some specific information (Bogdan & Bikien, 1982; Gorden, 1992). The interview process appears subjective but, when carefully designed, allows a relatively objective collection of facts, opinions, and feelings. Clearly, informants are crucial figures in an interview. Without a respondent there is no interview. As Erlandson et al. (1993) describe: "They [interviewees] are powerful figures because their perspective contributes greatly to the development of insight and understanding of phenomenon" (p. 21). In a qualitative inquiry, it is essential to select good respondents. A good interviewee is "one who can express thoughts, feelings, opinions, his or her perspective, on the topic being studied" (Merriam, 1988, p. 15). In this study, I considered such characteristics as the ability and the desire to communicate one's feelings and thoughts as well as the degree of involvement. From among the twelve students, I chose six who demonstrated these characteristics.

A comfortable and communicative atmosphere is critical. In preparing for these encounters, I knew I must be well prepared, focused, flexible, and, most importantly, able to respect the interviewees' culture. I therefore adopted the very informal, relaxed, and friendly attitude that characterizes teacher student relations in the American culture. I also provided positive feedback. Having a relaxed and comfortable attitude allowed me to better attend to the needs of my informants and to elicit from them more detailed



responses. While I understood that the interview protocol was an explicit procedure, I also offered encouragement and provided breaks when interest lagged (Epstein, 1985).

I found that conducting an interview as a part of a data gathering process was quite different from the conversations I usually had with my students and their parents. That aspect of the research design requires several skills and techniques. The basic procedure includes: (a) in-depth preparation before the interview, (b) pre-assessment of any ethical considerations that may arise in the interview, (c) calm and polished interactions during the interview, (d) careful recording of the interview, and (e) deep analysis of the information provided by the interviewee during the interview.

Full and meticulous preparation was essential. Preparedness in interviewing is particularly important, since there is often only one opportunity to question a particular subject. Any flaws in the interviewer's approach may cause the subject to be less forthcoming or even resistant. The major tasks in the preparation phase include studying about the topic, formulating relevant questions, and deciding how to establish a communicative and open atmosphere (Gorden, 1992). During the interviews, I demonstrated my personal interest in the interviewee by finding out their perceptions, perspectives, and comments. Before engaging in the actual interviews, I first practiced my questions with my colleagues, friends, and teenage daughters in order to ensure that I was comfortable with the protocol and material. I did not want to wear out or bore the person being interviewed. The questions were defined and formatted with the aim of directing my participants' responses. In addition, I thought about topics that would motivate and encourage the informant to express his/her views fully (Gorden, 1992). To



formulate a motivating question, Gorden (1992) suggests that it be structured to maximize recognition and empathy; minimize ego threat; provide the necessary verbal contextual clues; and present appropriate vocabulary. Therefore, I carefully planned questions appropriate for the students' levels of understanding and feelings about their Lion Dancing experience. For example, two of my questions were: (a) "What did you like the most in Lion Dancing workshop? Why?" (b) "What did you dislike the most in Lion dancing workshop? Why?" Having worked with the participants, I knew that these two questions would not be perceived as threatening.

I was also concerned with applying narrow, broad, direct, and indirect questions in the interviews. The nature of each of these questions is dramatically different and elicits a specific types of responses from informants. For example, the question "Have you ever seen Lion dancing?" is simple and direct while "What did you like best about lion dancing workshop?" is a broader, more open-ended type of question.

An important component of creating a communicative atmosphere was my awareness of my style of speech, facial expressions, body positioning and general appearance in relation to the students and their parents. Nonverbal behavior accounts for up to 65 percents of the meaning in communication (Harrison, 1982). I made special effort to present myself in a fashion that did not distract or threaten the informant and that was consistent with my role in Chinese American society. A general rule of thumb is to attempt to meet the expectations of the community and the individual being interviewed by being as much like them as possible. Moreover, the interviewer must actively practice body language and facial expressions that communicate openness and acceptance. When

the interviewee feels little pressure, he/she is likely to become more relaxed and willing to respond with honesty and depth. I found several helpful techniques for conveying acceptance and warmth to the informant through nonverbal and verbal interaction:

1. Facing the subject squarely and maintaining friendly eye contact;
2. Leaning toward the informant, when appropriate, to express interest in what is being said;
3. Responding repeatedly to the informant with phrases such as "I see", "Yes", and "I understand" to let the informant know you are attending to what is being said;
4. Using an expectant pause when you sense the informant has more to say;
5. Repeating the informant's response to clarify the informant's intended meaning;
6. Repeating and rephrasing questions when necessary. Expanding upon responses with phrases such as "Could you tell me more?" "How do you mean?"
7. Asking for clarification when necessary;
8. Maintaining a controlled rate and tone of speech; and occasionally encouraging the informant with friendly touching (see Gorden, 1992; Phillips, 1996).

Although cultural behaviors of traditional Chinese and overseas Chinese are somewhat different (ways of conversation), the above items are relevant to the overseas Chinese subjects who grew up in and have absorbed American culture. For the kids, I kept a friendly smile and facial expression during the entire interview.

Consequently I actively employed these methods so that my students would feel more relaxed. Let me compare American with traditional Chinese modes. I encouraged my students to maintain direct eye contact with me although such behavior is foreign to Chinese culture. Among traditional Chinese, only an extremely ill-mannered child would look directly at a teacher. Similarly, looking around the room is rude behavior. Other subtle differences between American and Chinese culture also became apparent during the interviews. In China, an interviewer would nod his or her head to indicate interest.

Here, in the United States, however, students are used to verbal cues and expect verbal reinforcement.

In interviewing the parents, on the other hand, I relied upon a traditional formal conversational style since I used telephone interviews. This style is indirect and does not pressure the informant to provide sought after the news. Telephone interviews were the best way to accommodate the parents' schedules since the parents all worked outside the home. In addition, I wanted to be sure that the children would not witness these interviews because I did not want the parents' responses to affect their answers.

After selecting the six students who most actively participated in the classes and openly expressed their feelings and thoughts during the class, I interviewed and tape recorded them individually; I also interviewed their parents. During the student interviews, the student's nonverbal communication was observed, and their physical and verbal responses were registered. Often the informant's body language revealed information that affected the progress of the interview (Gorden, 1992; Phillips, 1996). At the end of the interview I followed Richardson's recommendation (1985) to "keep the door open" for further communication with the students". I asked them: "Would you mind that I call you if I have a question?" This tacit permission for further contact proved useful since it was necessary in some cases to verify information and perceptions and to ask follow-up questions.

#### Ethical concerns.

Because a qualitative procedure requires a complex preparation process that involves the ethical concerns of recruiting subjects, it was crucial that I recognized and

owned my role in the study. I needed to admit and to understand my personal interest in the success of the study and to account for this interest by a continual cycle of addressing and questioning my assumptions. A precise procedure acts like a navigational map for an airplane or a ship during its journey. It kept me on the right track and validated my activities during data collection, analysis, assessment of the results, and constructing this report.

For this study, I carefully planned “to gain entry to the setting and to secure permission to study the informant or situation” (Creswell, 1994, p. 147). Therefore federal, state, and university policies were adhered to. I secured and received permission for the study from Human Subjects Review Committee (H. S. R. C.) at Texas Woman’s University (see Appendix C). Since the first requirement of any research protocol is the researcher’s honesty, the integrity of study was gained through candor with the participants (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Alien, 1993). My identity was clear to the students and their parents when the purpose of the interview and the informant’s rights to confidentiality were explained (Erlandson et al., 1993; Spradley, 1979). There were no tricks to lead informants in their responses (Phillips, 1996). Efforts were made to protect the informants. To that end, the informants chose special nicknames for the duration of the study, which were used in reporting their comments and any personal information obtained during the interview. Consent from the children’s parents was obtained because the students were minors (Erlandson, et al., 1993; Phillips, 1996).



### Preparation for the study.

With the research design in mind, I commenced with a literature review focusing on dance and dance as art education, dance as cultural history, dance pedagogy, and multicultural education. I clarified the key concepts that both Chinese and Western educators applied to dance and dance as art education and sought and considered the support for claims that dance is a reflection of culture. Concomitant with this, I studied the important status that Lion Dancing enjoys as a venerable cultural art, and undertook the historical study of the significance of Lion Dancing to the multi layered Chinese heritage by seeking validation from multiple perspectives. Next, I compared Chinese and Western teaching methodologies. In multicultural education, I investigated how the younger generation can develop a better understanding of their root culture as a means for attaining cultural identity and soul, and self-awareness. Similarly, I explored how this root culture could aid these students in enhancing their self-empowerment and allow them to share this cultural meaning, value, and history with others. I also studied how knowledge of their Chinese root culture could be used as a means to develop respect for others, retaining a Chinese based life model and ethos.

### Pilot study.

As a direct antecedent to the present research, I completed a pilot study in March, 1997, involving 50 students, their teachers, and parents during a teaching residency at Taiwanese Business Association Chinese School in Santo Domingo, the Dominican Republic. Questionnaires were administered to discover the extent of the students' knowledge of Chinese culture. The results were overwhelmingly dismal. The children

knew very little about Lion Dancing and its relationship to Chinese culture. My goal then was to find out how much Chinese students knew about their root culture as it relates to Lion Dancing. Again I gave questionnaires to the 50 overseas students. The responses were equally disheartening. The children knew very little about Lion Dancing.

### Selecting a site.

In doing a qualitative study, it was important to consider the best environment for the study. I believed the environment should be a public place which both the parents and I agreed would be safe as well as accessible and familiar. I support Burgess's (1991) idea that a researcher needs to seek the permission from some authority figure, a gatekeeper, who plays "a critical role in granting access to the site" before conducting a study. Besides, the researcher needs to have prolonged engagement to establish trust and build rapport with gatekeeper(s) and respondents in the site (Erlandson et al., 1993) in order to use the facility.

In my study, I selected the Dallas Chinese Community Activity Center (D.C.C.A.C.) located in Richardson, TX as my locus. There were several reasons for choosing the D.C.C.A.C. as my site. First, it is a public activity center, sponsored by OCAC in Taiwan, and provides cultural services for overseas Chinese and friends in the Dallas area. Second, it is located in Chinatown at Richardson, TX which is a safe area as well as being easy to access. Third, the D.C.C.A.C. has an area of approximately 3,000 square feet, a large clear room, and two classrooms. These met the needs for the study since there was one for lecturing and another for learning Lion Dancing: the larger room provided a place for the final presentation. Fourth, the D.C.C.A.C. has two lion costumes

and the Chinese musical instruments used in Lion Dancing. Fifth, the director of the D.C.C.A.C. had asked me if the volunteer students and I would perform Lion Dancing for the Chinese New Year ceremony at D.C.C.A.C.

I promised the director of the D.C.C.A.C. to make arrangements for all of the Lion Dancing performances sponsored by the D.C.C.A.C. for Chinese New Year in exchange for use of the facility to support my study. I also accepted the hours and dates that D.C.C.A.C. suggested and therefore received permission from the director to teach the workshop at the center.

Next, I carefully discussed this research proposal with my advisor and research committee and received their approval and subsequently that of the Graduate School. To recruit subjects, I contacted the principals of Sun Ray Chinese schools in the Texas cities of Richardson, Arlington, and Plano, the overseas Chinese school in Dallas, and the Great China Chinese school near Plano to arrange opportunities for me to announce my study to the parents and the students. In addition, the study was advertised in the *Dallas Chinese News* one month before it began with the aim of soliciting volunteer students who had little or no knowledge of Lion dancing. As a result of these promotional efforts, 14 volunteer students between the ages of 11-14, all of Chinese heritage and living in the Richardson, Dallas, Irving, and Plano areas in northern Texas, agreed to participate. There were seven Lion Dancing sessions, each four and a half hours long, held at the D.C.C.A.C. in Richardson, TX.



### The first meeting.

After accepting the students, I arranged a meeting for all parents and children to get to know one another and made arrangements for them to meet with my research advisor and me one week before the study was to begin. During the meeting, I identified myself and explained the purpose of the study, the methodology, process, and subjects' right to confidentiality. Consent forms were passed out and were required from all volunteer students and parents guardians before the study began. The students and their parents were informed that there would be no reward for participation other than a copy of the final performance video and an opportunity to perform at other events, such as Chinese New Year's festivities.

### My background.

Born in Taiwan, R.O.C. in 1951, I started taking dance lessons at the age of four. When I was eight, my father began teaching me Chinese internal martial arts, *Chi kung*. In 1973, I graduated from the five-year program of Dance and Music at the College of Chinese Culture. Three years later, from the Chinese Culture University, I graduated from the Theatre and Drama department with a Bachelor Degree in Arts.

Between 1962 to 1980, as a professional Classical Chinese dancer and a martial arts performer, I traveled and performed worldwide with Hwa Kung Chinese Dance Company, the Chinese Goodwill Mission, the National Chinese Martial Arts Goodwill Mission, and the National Chinese Acrobats from Taiwan. I then, taught at Chinese Culture University for five years.

In 1985, I came to the United States where I studied dance at the Arizona State University, graduating in 1988 with a Master of Fine Arts degree. Then, I founded the Mei Hsiu Chan Classical Chinese Dance Company in Tempe, AZ. My dancers and I then used Chinese dance in outreach performances to American audiences. Between 1988 and 1990, while I was teaching at Arizona State University, I was also on the Arizona Commission On the Arts (ACOA) roster as an ethnic artist and a dance educator. My company performed and taught traditional Chinese dance and shared the culture to more than 2,500 American elementary school students in Arizona through the “artist in residence program” sponsored by the ACOA.

In 1989, as the mother of three children, I enrolled into the doctoral program in dance at Texas Woman’s University. Since moving to Texas I have presented dance research papers, choreography, and both dance and Tai Chi workshops at numerous national and international dance conferences and universities and continue to perform traditional Chinese dance. I also taught overseas Chinese children traditional Chinese dance at Mei Hsiu Chan Chinese Dance School and six Chinese schools in Dallas, TX during the weekends. I was also invited by OCAC from Taiwan, to teach Chinese dance, martial arts, Tai Chi, and Chi Kung at many major cities in Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Dominican Republic, France, Netherlands, Paraguay, Spain, and the United States.

#### Pedagogical process.

As Claudine Sherrill emphasizes (1995, January, 25), “The benefits of literature review to the researcher include: (a) to understand what has been done in the research field; (b) to expand the knowledge of what the relationship of the research question is to

its related areas; (c) to provide an indepth, methodological preparation [or documentation] for the research.” Blending my 25 years of teaching experience, literature reviews, and pilot study, I designed the Lion Dancing curriculum and class schedule for the workshop.

I learned Lion Dancing as a child and performed it along with many other classical Chinese dances in Taiwan and the United States. Later, I observed it as it was taught in martial arts schools where the instructors limited themselves to only teaching proper technique and performance aesthetics. None of the teachers observed or encountered provided the Chinese historical, mythological, religious, and architectural information that related to Lion Dancing to me. Over a number of years I have come to believe that knowledge of the rich historical background of the dance is essential for a better understanding and appreciation of Lion Dancing. Ultimately this makes a more committed performance and personal fulfillment.

It was not until I spent four years studying and collecting historical and aesthetic descriptions of Lion Dancing that I fully realized the treasured position of Lion Dancing within Chinese culture. The study allowed me to better understand and appreciate the mysterious historical background of the dance, its mythology, various performing techniques, its aesthetic components, performer to performer and performer to audience relationship, and its symbolic and ritualistic meanings.

For my teaching process, a brief learning experience, I found it necessary to focus the information tightly. First, the materials included historical literature, Chinese cultural concepts, symbolism, meaning, and the values behind Lion Dancing. Second, the

students were given opportunities and information that required them to use critical and creative thinking in order to understand the material presented, and rethink the symbols, meanings, values, and Chinese cultural concepts in terms of the self. Third, they had hands-on experiences and engagement in the creative process for each part of Lion Dancing, that included drawing and making lion masks, playing musical instruments and actually performing Lion Dancing. Finally, the students created their own capstone group project. This required them to give both an informative lecture which demonstrated their understanding of Chinese culture as revealed in Lion Dancing and a public performance of their group choreography.

The complete workshop was recorded since “videotape provides the observer with the ability to stop time” (Fetterman, 1998, p. 68). With each viewing I uncovered new information and subtle layers of meaning that revealed and clarified patterns of the students’ communication.

#### Data collection and analysis.

I gathered the data principally from the pre-workshop questionnaires, my classroom observation of students’ reactions, conversations, behavior, the final lecture demonstration, public performances, my post experiences and perspective, and post-workshop questionnaires. In analyzing the data, the data was separated into different categories: pre-and post-workshop questionnaires; my personal observation notes; students’ voices; and parental comments. The data between the pre-and post-workshop questionnaires were compared. I also compared the students’ voices with their parents’ perceptions. I reviewed and studied the students behaviors, conversations, reactions, and

their relationship to others; and I observed the outcomes at the beginning, middle, and the end of the study. For reliability purposes the triangulation was applied in drawing relationships from the data, and my point of view prior to formulating a coherent theory.

After the analyses were completed, I wrote this manuscript describing the study and my findings. I also sent a summary report and a personalized “Thank You” card to each family at the conclusion of the study since this type of formal closure is important in Chinese culture. Finally, I arranged for the students to perform as a group at Chinese New Year’s celebrations, Chinese School events, and at a book signing party.

According to a Chinese saying, “a good beginning deserves a half way of success”. In other words, I found that careful preparation for my research was instrumental to the success of my study.

## CHAPTER THREE

### A PLACE OF TREASURE: CHINESE CULTURE AND DANCE

“A place of hidden dragons and tigers” is a common Chinese saying to describe unknown territory that is full of great treasure (Schmitt & Pan, 1994, p. 32). For non-Chinese, Chinese dance is a place of crouching dragons and hidden tigers since the essence of Chinese culture permeates the medium of Chinese dance. Once Chinese dance is understood, a window has opened into Chinese culture and the Chinese soul.

Let me begin the discussion by considering culture in general and by articulating a definition of the Chinese culture or cultures in particular. Clifford Geertz (1973) writes, “Culture is public because meaning is” (p. 12). Being public, it invites discourse, therefore, culture means different things to different people. More than 250 definitions of culture have been formulated by anthropologists (Aviel, 1990, p. 9), the fact of which creates a great deal of confusion in the field. Generally, culture consists of what one needs to know or believe in order to operate acceptably with indigenous members (Geertz, 1973, p. 11). As an example, Ortner (1990) defines culture as “a body of symbols and meanings in play in a given society at a given time” (p. 59). Brown (1963) states, “Culture refers to all the accepted and patterned ways of behavior of a given people. . . . It is the sum total and the organization or arrangement of all the group’s ways of thinking, feeling, and acting” (as cited in Cooper & Martin, 1991, p. 9).

For the purpose of the discussion, I have embraced the nine culture universals identified by Clark Wissler (as cited in Cooper & Martin, 1991, p. 9). The term refers us to a sense of peoplehood that is experienced by a group of historically related individuals who share basic and consistent beliefs in the areas of language, material traits, family and social organization, government, religion, art, trade, mythology and science, and war. This definition is reminiscent of the one proposed by Weber (1968) in 1920. He states that an ethnic group is one whose members “entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonization and migration” (p. 389).

Similarly, Judith Lynne Hanna (1987) maintains that an ethnic group is one that has a common cultural tradition and sense of identity (p. 54). Political boundaries are less important than the communal sense shared by a people, the sense that they, indeed, form a people that are separate and distinct from others in the world. In many ways, this definition invites ethnocentrism since the act of defining a group as separate may often lead to the assumption of “better” or a superiority by that group. Ethnocentrism entrenches Chinese history and is in fact characteristic of Chinese thought. Chinese scholars and other members of the Chinese culture often believe that they and their culture are superior to others. In ancient times outsiders were considered barbarians. Throughout Chinese history, the Han people referred to the people in neighboring territories as “non-educated” or “uncivilized” (Huang, 1980, p. 4).



### Multi Ethnicity of China

Chinese culture is not uniform because each ethnic group has its own language and customs. Rather than discussing Chinese “culture,” it is more appropriate to discuss Chinese pluralism since China itself is comprised of a majority of the Han people and 20 additional minorities (Sklarewitz, 1992). The Han, Manchu, Mongolian, Maio, Moslem, and Tibetan ethnic groups, all of which originated in different geographic areas of what is now mainland China, were the most influential in Chinese history (Chao, 1986; Ku, Hsi, Wong & Fon, 1980; Shao, 1995; Shei, 1978; Wang, 1991).

Originally, the Han people came from the area along the Yellow River [see Figure 1-1. Map of China and Taiwan]. From there, they expanded their territory south to the Yangtze River (Huang, 1980). The Manchu lived in today’s northeastern part of China bordering what we know as Korea and Siberia. The Mongolian people lived to the north of the Han people while the Tibetans came from the western part of China in what is today called Tibet, Sikang, and Tsinghai (H. H. Liu, 1992). Originally, the Maio lived in the central part of China, but this group relocated to the mountaintops in the southern and southwestern portions of the country (Kueichou province) after the Han people conquered the territory (H. H. Liu, 1991). The Moslems originally lived in the northwestern portion of the country (H. H. Liu, 1992).

More than any other, the Han were the most important people in Chinese history since most of the Chinese ruling dynasties were lead by the Han (Huang, 1980; Shei, 1978). Today, they constitute not only the most populous group, but they wield the greatest political control and the strongest cultural impact (Huang, 1980). In fact, the

only non-Han dynasties were those of the Manchu and Mongolian peoples with the Mongols establishing one of the best known dynasties under the leadership of Genghis Khan (Shei, 1978). This dynasty, known as the Yuan, unified all of Asia during the 13th century C.E. then expanded until it occupied parts of Eastern Europe (Shei, 1978; Wang, 1991). The Manchu or Manchurian dynasty was the last of the great dynasties, ruling China for more than 260 years until 1911 (Chao, 1986; Shei, 1978; Wang, 1991).

More than 2,000 years of social and cultural interaction among the 20 distinct peoples has homogenized into what today is called traditional Chinese culture. This unified official culture has been passed from generation to generation until the middle of the twentieth century. Even after the fall of the Ch'ing Dynasty, overthrown by Dr. Sun Yat-sen and his followers in 1911, and the founding of the Republic of China in mainland China, traditional Chinese culture continued to be cultivated and cherished (Shei, 1978). Following World War II in 1948, China was divided into the communist Peoples Republic of China ruled by Mao Tsetong and the democratic Republic of China in Taiwan led by General Chiang Kai-shek (Teng, 1994).

Between 1966-1976 the Cultural Revolution on Mainland China installed a plan to systematically eradicate traditional Chinese values and symbols. During this assault upon traditional practices, Taiwan remained stalwart, continuing to conserve and cultivate traditional Chinese culture. For this study therefore, "Chinese culture" refers to the conventional culture as preserved in Taiwan (Cayne, Lechner, & Bolander, 1987; Shao, 1995; Wang, 1991). (see Appendix A. The Map of China and Taiwan)

## Chinese Dance

Just as Chinese culture is not uniform, neither is Chinese dance. Dances reflect the diverse cultures that make up China (J. H. Ho, 1970). Its connection with the culture or cultures is so close that it can be considered a cultural institution and, regardless of how one defines dance, one must acknowledge that Chinese dance is ethnic.

According to Hanna (1973), dance is a purposeful, rhythmic, culturally patterned sequence of gestures and non-verbal body movements, which are shaped by the values, attitudes, and beliefs of the people within a “host” society. Hanna focuses on dance as a language or a system of communication in a particular time/space entity (p. 6). She defines dance as a “conceptual natural language with intrinsic and extrinsic meanings, a system of physical movements and interrelated rules guiding performance in different social situations” (Hanna, 1987, p. 5). The sociocultural context and movement of dance is formed within the psychobiological bases of a culture that generate the various movements and gestures comprising dance (p. 230). It has to be pointed out, though, that her main point of interest concerns dance universals and her aim is to apply models to develop a general theory of dance that makes a “contribution toward understanding humans” (p. 230). Even so, there is a problem with Hanna’s model. The problem relates to the lack of an adequate cross-cultural definition of dance which may be applied to all or even most situations along a time/space continuum (Keali’inohomoku, 1983, p. 541).

A more appealing definition is found in Keali’inohomoku’s work. Dance according to Joanne Keali’inohomoku (1983) is always connected to a group or a culture, and, as such, is always ethnic. Keali’inohomoku (1983) affirms that all dances are forms or

variants of ethnic dance. She defines ethnic as of a “group which holds in common genetic, linguistic and cultural ties, with special emphasis on cultural tradition” (p. 544) and concludes that every form of dance must be an ethnic form. That is best understood from the cultural codes infused in the dance. Keali’inohomoku (1983) finds that dance is “purposefully selected and controlled movement” (p. 541) but, unlike Hanna, she emphasizes the cultural patterning inherent in dance (Hanna, 1987, p. 22).

Despite their different focuses, both Hanna’s and Keali’inohomoku’s definitions categorize Chinese dances as demonstrably ethnic. Simultaneously these dances represent specific and generalized cultural traditions of groups of people who have distinct racial, genetic, linguistic, and cultural characteristics. Typical are the *Shin Jong*, a Moslem people living in western China, have a dance celebrating their way of life. Traditionally, these people have been dependent on horses for economic viability so the *Shin Jong* dance incorporates jumping and turning movements. The choreography gives the “feel” of riding on horseback that is known kinesthetically and kinetically by the dancers and viewers. This then allowed the dancers a way to demonstrate their collective social identity as members of the *Shin Jong* culture. In this sense the *Shin Jong* dance is ethnic. The term is still applicable despite the fact that some researchers consider it obsolete (Keali’inohomoku, 1990).

Even though Chinese dance fits the definitions the two authors posit, they do not provide ways to investigate these dances. Instead, we look to Drid Williams (1991) who insists that dance has to be analyzed in its cultural context and, more importantly, from the perspective of an insider or member of the group being studied rather than from the

outside point of view of the dance anthropologist (Williams, 1991; La Pointe-Crump, 1992).

For Anya Peterson-Royce (1977), dance is an aspect of human behavior (p. 212) and is “inextricably bound up with individuals and culture in a mutually affecting relationship”(p. 214). She posits that scholars must look at the form of the dance and the meaning it has for the people who create, watch, and perform it (p. 215). Suggesting that the cultural context of dance can be of varying importance (p. 216), she advocates that dance be viewed as an expression of culture. According to Royce-Peterson, dance cannot be separated from culture. She recognizes the problems inherent in studying dance because to “say anything at all about dance other than impressionistic statements one has to analyze it, that is, separate it from the rest of culture” (p. 13). This is a crucial concept in our discussion.

### Cultural Connections in Chinese Dance

In order to fully understand the cultural connections in Chinese dance, we must learn about them from a Chinese person. We must set aside the academic practice of looking at cultural dance forms through the theoretical studies of the Western scholars alone (LaPointe-Crump, 1999). And we must avoid trying to fit ethnic dance into a predetermined set of criteria or models that may apply in the Western world but be foreign to Chinese culture. As an example, applying the principles of cultural relativism to the study of Chinese dances is inappropriate. The concept reflects the Western culture of an orthodox anthropologist and is foreign to the Chinese culture. For Williams (1991),

anthropological terms would have no place in the study of Chinese dances since these terms are not part of Chinese thought.

Williams' approach is central to the proposition of this essay and to my research project. Whereas the "classical idea of culture as 'order'" (Gupta & Ferguson, 1997, p. 4) is well-established Western doctrine, dance scholars routinely colonize cultural attributes because unknown to them are the kinds of questions to ask that would reveal "how the cultural 'rules of the game' got made" (p. 4). As such, outside observers inadvertently appropriate and reinterpret instead of enacting culture. I strongly believe that in order to portray Chinese dance or any ethnic form, the dance researcher must be steeped in the culture. This makes it possible to correctly interpret the details, which are likely to be misinterpreted or unnoticed by a less knowledgeable researcher. An example of incomplete cultural understanding and misunderstanding can be in Royce-Peterson's (1977) discussion of *shui hsiu*. She refers to Strauss' (1975) monograph on the art of "the sleeve in Chinese dance" and describes Chinese sleeve gestures as part of a denotative system.

The *shui hsiu*, on the other hand, act as an addition or accompaniment to verbal exchanges, songs, and other body movements. The vocabularies of the two systems differ, therefore. The *shui hsiu* contain primarily gestures that act as verbs or modifiers, directing people or indicating how they feel. There are few, if any, gestures that act as nouns. (p. 195)

Peterson Royce misconstrues the meaning of the sleeve, as did Strauss before her. The *shui hsiu*, is an intrinsic part of the classical Chinese dance outfit and is used as the only props for Sleeve Dancing. The sleeve is a prop for the dance, but does not convey feeling; it is largely used for purely artistic effect. However, the sleeves are also part of



the Chinese opera costume for some male and female characters. During the performance, shui hsiu are accompanied by acting and singing in Chinese operas such as *Rr gin gon*<sup>1</sup> or *Tan mu*<sup>2</sup> to named a few. In the Chinese opera the artists move their sleeves in certain ways to demonstrate emotion. Thus, Royce-Peterson confuses the meaning of the sleeve in dance with the meaning the sleeve has in Chinese opera, thus suggesting a universal similarity where none exists (Ho, 1970; Liang, 1983). Thus misunderstood, the sleeve in Chinese dance illustrates the problem of cultural context. In order to analyze dance within a cultural context, the researcher must first intuitively feel its manifestation, that process of constructing identities and communal relations through implied symbolic and metaphoric references in the dance.

Even though the movements and dances can be examined for their intrinsic aesthetic qualities, ultimately Chinese dance is a visual embodiment of Chinese culture. Chinese dances serve more than one purpose (Ho, 1970). These dances reflect time honored religious, economic, educational, moral, and aesthetic facets of Chinese culture and are the means for preserving these traditions in the communities. In fact the dances help to construct the community. Historically, both classical and traditional Chinese dances were instructional as well as entertaining. Some were artistic performances (Wang, 1985) to entertain the court (Wang, 1991) to express religious beliefs (Ho, 1970; Wang, 1991) and to preserve the history and mythology of ancient China and its people (Ho, 1970; Wang, 1991). In addition, dances were used to illustrate or establish social connections, depict economic practices, expressing individual identity, and remind

communities of their heritage. More recently Chinese dance has been exported as part of cross-cultural goodwill missions.

To analyze Chinese dance we must remember that the different dances have different meanings. While they reflect distinct facets of Chinese culture, no one dance or dance style is synonymous with Chinese culture. Among all styles of dance, Lion Dancing is one of the most popular festival dances. I will describe several Chinese dances and fix these dances within their cultural contexts. Chinese dance employs traditional set patterns to express emotions. A dancer is required to pay particular attention to the smallest details, which represent the subtle characteristics of Chinese culture.

Generally speaking, Chinese dance focuses on simple activities and mundane tasks that are depicted with great precision and physical skill. The movements are as a mirror to reflect ordinary activities of the gendered daily life. For example, the threading of a needle is the central theme for a female's dance movement, as is picking up an item from the floor<sup>3</sup>. Many of the dances artistically invoke the importance of ordinary work and work associated movement<sup>4</sup>. Representing Chinese culture steeped in our Taoist training, the dances connect to our appreciation for the "smallness" or detail in society and the contributions that even underdogs or those without influence can make (Hoff, 1992). Bringing beliefs to life, some of our dances emphasize the beauty in commonplace activities, unlike Western choreography which frequently center on stories of romantic love, evil spirits (Keali'inohomoku, 1983), psychological trauma and personal power.

Often the female's dances, stress the importance of detail and smallness by using tiny subtle gestures. Finger gestures, eye movements, and, enigmatic smiles are compelling features of the dance (Liang, 1983). Small steps, paces approximately two to three inches (Liang, 1983), emphasize the sweet and shy qualities in a woman. The small facial movements and tiny movements of the body reinforce a visual shyness (Liang, 1968).

These movements are found also in Manchurian dances. Borrowed from the Han, they were incorporated in a popular dance that was performed during the Ch'ing dynasty for the Manchurian rulers. The dance, known as the Ch'ing Dynasty Court Dance, shows the influences of the delicate style of the female Han dance and is an example of the impact the Han had on other Chinese peoples (Chiang, 1978). The Manchurians themselves were people of big stature. Nonetheless, because the Manchurians were enamoured with Han culture, they adopted the dance style of the Han.

The Han engaged in foot binding as the highest standard of beauty of a woman, what is now considered a barbaric disabling practice. Consequently, Han women were only able to walk with tiny, mincing steps. Although the Manchurian women, who did not follow the practice of foot binding, were well able to take large steps, they appropriated the tiny mincing movements of the Han women into their Ch'in Dynasty Court Dance. For them, the tiny steps indicated aesthetic beauty in women and defined the feminine.

Most classical Chinese dance is literary. Each dance tells a story although the story may be quite simple. Each movement and each posture is fixed and codified with

specific terms (Ho, 1970; Liang, 1968; Liang, 1983). One movement used to point to an object is known as Orchid Fingers (Liang, 1983). If the dancer simply changes her hand position from holding her thumb on the knuckle of her third finger to holding her thumb on the tip of the third finger, the position changes from Butterfly Fingers to Orchid Fingers. Butterfly Fingers can be used to say "I" when the dancer gently touches her chest (Liang, 1983) rather than to point to an object.

### Characteristics of Dance

In looking at Chinese dance we need to focus on the construction of *emic* and *etic* realities in the dance. Robert Feleppa (1988) states,

The etic/emic distinction was coined by Kenneth Pike and is an adaptation or analogue of the familiar phonetic-phonemic distinction in phonology. Roughly, phonetics concerns the mechanically measurable features of human speech, while phonemics concerns the phonetic differences that language users discriminate as making a difference in meaning. (p. 62)

Let me restate that emic refers to the meaning given to an occurrence while etic refers to the observable phenomena (Keali'inohomoku, personal communication, December 26, 1995; LaPointe-Crump, 1995; Williams, 1991, p. xiv). Etic characteristics are overt, physical surface features able to be described by anyone. Thus, an ethnographer can descriptively analyze the actions of a dance with great precision. However, in order to understand the emic or meaning behind a dance, the observer must experience the culture. This is precisely the same view as that held by Williams. Richard Horwitz (1977) delineates the differences between etic and emic approaches in terms of varying criteria (p. 5). In order to understand the significance of Chinese

dance to Chinese culture we must emphasize the emic effect or we risk losing the cultural significance of the dance.

Let us look at one dance of the *Miao* people called “Jump Under the Moon.” This is a courting dance which continues for many hours and stops at midnight. When described from an etic viewpoint, the dance is simply a circle dance wherein a group of women dance accompanied by men playing music. From an emic approach, however, this is an established courting ritual that allows the young women within the culture to select their potential partners. The dance depicts the actual ritual of selecting mates practiced by the *Miao* people (Ho, 1970; Liang, 1968; Wang, 1991). During the dance a girl who fancies a young man may leave the circle for an encounter with her chosen beau. A boy plays beautiful mystical music on the *Lu Shon*, a harmonic flute and oboe like musical instrument, the sound reminds one of the modern organ, and tries to attract a girl’s attention. If interested, she responds by singing back or ringing the bells she carries around. The internal significance of these instruments is to identify the partner who will be in harmony with a particular person.

The “Chinese Flying Dance”<sup>5</sup> reveals the multicultural influences (Ho, 1970; Wang, 1985) of the Han, Tibetan, and Moslem cultures. This dance describes stories about Buddha and uses movements reminiscent of the Han people (Ho, 1970). The hand gestures and facial expressions replicate the orchid fingers previously discussed. The facial expression reflects mercy and calmness that is as important here as it is in the case of the Han dances. The dance also incorporates many turning, angular postures involving body twisting and large arm movements which are often associated with the Moslem

people living in the western part of China. The large movements of the arms contrast with the tiny motions found in the Han classical dances. The dancers don billowy pants made of flowing silk fabric to amplify the flying movements. Unlike the heavily embroidered clothing associated with classical Han dances, the Flying Dance relies on clothing styles associated with the Chinese influenced by western Moslems (Ho, 1970). From Tibetan dance forms we borrowed poses requiring the poised dancer to balance on one leg.

This dance is a creative re-enactment of cave paintings of Buddha in Dunhung and the individual movements of the dance depict the postures painted on the walls (Ho, 1970; Wang, 1985). The paintings and sculptures that formed the basis for the dance were created to ask for Buddha's protection for the travelers who were about to cross the desert (Ho, 1970). Buddha, however, is not originally a Chinese religious figure (Batterbury, 1968). Instead, Buddha came from India. The Flying Dance illustrates the level of impact that Indian religion had on Chinese beliefs and art.

While Chinese dances are very distinct and easily recognizable to Chinese people, Western viewers often confuse Chinese dance with those of other cultures or altogether misidentify Chinese dances. Many viewers in the United States confuse the Lion Dance with the Dragon Dance. This confusion often stems from stereotypes some Westerners have concerning Chinese symbols and culture, for example confusing the stylized lion images with dragons. The dragon has become for Western people the sole symbol of Chinese culture. Of course, dragons form a central part of Chinese mythology but not to the exclusion of other animals.



This stereotyping was experienced first hand when I was invited to do a presentation at the Dance Ethnology Forum in 1995 at the University of California at Los Angeles. After my presentation on how Chinese Americans can experience Chinese culture through Lion Dancing concluded, members of the audience queried me about the Dragon Dance that I had just presented. These American dance educators were not able to distinguish between the Lion Dance and the Dragon Dance. The props seemed similar to their unfamiliar eyes even though I dealt exclusively with the Lion Dance. In fact, the masks used in the dances are quite dissimilar. Even the design and length of the animals are different.

The dragon is a very long animal formed by many (from approximately 12-60) performers (Ho, 1970). Mythologically the dragon is formed from elements of five different animals with the dragon represented from the claws of a tiger, the scales of a fish, the horns of a deer, the jaws of an alligator, and the body of a snake. The lion, on the other hand, is a short animal and is danced by only one or two people (Ho, 1970). The head exaggerates a male lion's face with large eyes and nose, and sharp teeth. The dance scholars failed to notice these fundamental differences. Thus, instead of focusing on what they had heard and seen, the audience allowed their familiarity with a stereotype of a dragon to dramatically alter their perceptions.

Many Chinese dances are full of movements that mimic or symbolize the movements of animals because to the Chinese, animals are drenched in symbolic meanings. Tigers, for example, represent earth and power, while birds symbolize the sun and spiritual resurrection. The snake, because of its ability to shed its skin, symbolizes

the earth and its constant renewal (Battenbury, 1968). Animals are archetypal in Chinese martial arts dances since the animal's movements are the basis for the dance or dance movement. In movements such as *Swallow drop on the sand* or *Golden rooster stand on one foot* we see the movements of the animal repeated in dance form.

### Chinese Dance as High Context Culture

Besides specific and careful use of symbolism, Chinese dance exemplifies a high context culture. The term high context or thick context was originally isolated by Edward Hall (Hall, 1984; Keali'inohomoku, personal communication, December 26, 1995) and refers to a context that is complex, thus difficult for outsiders to understand. The intrinsic meaning may be obscure in that one needs a deep emic understanding in order to apprehend the inner meaning. Without an authentic emic understanding, the researcher is prone to interpret the meaning in terms of her/his own background and experiences rather than in terms of the meaning the item has in its natural culture. Recall our discussion of the *Mai* dances. These are high context dances because the viewer must understand the significance of the dance as a representation of the courting ritual in order to appreciate the dance. Without such deep-seated awareness the viewer will only be able to appreciate the purely visual impact of the dance such as its step units, choreographed patterns, musical accompaniment, and costuming but will lose the essential meaning of the dance. The concept of high context reminds us to approach dance from the perspective of the culture it reflects rather than from the perspective of the culture of outsider viewing the dance.

No discussion of Chinese dance is complete without including its purely aesthetic aspect. Dance is not just a part of culture but canonically evidences universal culture. This is not the place to argue the philosophical answer to the question “what is art.” Suffice it to say that it is an intrinsic artistic quality that distinguishes Chinese dance from martial arts exercise or a series of indiscriminate movements. It has to be pointed out that while in general terms Eastern and Western ideas pertaining to aesthetics are comparable; there are also differences between them — the differences that stem from essentially different cultural backgrounds.

Chinese dance, rooted in beliefs about nature, permits only a limited amount of personal creativity. Most of the subjects are representational, therefore the movements must remain fixed or the representation disintegrates. Each movement is prescribed and historically based. Neither the dancer nor the choreographer may vary the individual movements although the sequence of these movements may change. Most Chinese dances have props. The dancers must know the specific method for handling each type of prop (Liang, 1983). There are fixed ways to hold swords (begin with hold the sword behind or outside of the arm) which differ from the way the dancer is to hold a knife or a machete (start with hold the knife inside or in front of the arm). If one holds a sword the way of holding a knife, it shows the dancer’s arm may be cut off easily.

There is little in the way of scenery. The illusion of a backdrop is created solely by the dancer’s movements (Ho, 1970). Just from looking at the movement, the audience can tell that the dancer is on a mountaintop or in the water.

The costuming is also historically determined (Ho, 1970), with the patterns are established by tradition. Therefore, the costumes must be historically accurate to portray the felt experience of the dance. The style is predetermined, as are many of the colors. Those shades may vary, as can the specific patterns for the embroidery. Hairstyles may vary but only to a limited extent so that they are faithful to a specific historical or geographic tradition. We see these styles depicted in the paintings and sculptures which form the pool of potential styles from which the dancer can choose.

#### Chinese Dance vs. Modern Dance

Comparing Chinese dance with modern dance one finds striking cultural differences, yet the two forms have certain similarities. I have already mentioned the understanding of dance as an art form, an understanding that is common to both Chinese and modern dance. In contrast to Chinese dance, however, modern dance is non-canonical, based on creating something not seen before (Fraleigh, 1987, p. xxxii). The goal of a creative process in dance is to discover, reveal, uncover, or create images out of one's personal being. At its core modern dance is an ideology of free conscious will and personal freedom. There are no creative or formalistic limits in modern dance. Neither the dancer nor the choreographer is constrained by the requirements of one another. Originality and inventiveness form the heart of this dance style (Fraleigh, 1987, p. xxxiii), and there is complete freedom of choice in the use or nonuse of props, scenery, costuming, music accompaniment as well as the use of particular movements. Some modern dances interpolate mixed media and incorporate even the audience itself. Imagination is given free reign. Modern dance can reflect political or social themes or

no theme at all. Dancers may be encased within a full body costume so that they do not even look like dancers, as is the case with some of the Alwin Nikolais' dances. In many of his works, the

dancers rarely looked like dancers, but were cocooned in tubes of gauze or swathed in chiffon. Their limbs were extended outward and upward with ribbons and banners while their bodies were distorted with wire frameworks. The movement was no human movement. (Dodd, 1980, p. 183)

Imagination is, perhaps, the most important term in thinking about modern dance because modern dance is aimed at giving physical expression to the imagination.

Modern dance is described as movement which is "organized, integrated and objectified for individualized expressive and communicative purpose" (Lockhart, 1977, p. vii).

Modern dance and imagination are so intertwined that it is difficult to conceive of modern dance without simultaneously thinking of imagination and creativity. This genre allows for the exploration of movement free from the constraints of rules depicting the "proper" or "correct" way to perform. The freedom from rules allows the dancers and choreographers to explore and create new patterns that work and rework, space, energy, time, and flow. As such, modern dance reflects western, particularly American values.

How startlingly different are culturally-based classical dance forms in which pure imagination and personal freedom have a minor part. Since these are traditional dances, imagination comes into play only in the sequencing of the steps as well as in the unique illusions that may be created by the individual dancer's movements.

The classical Chinese dancer/choreographer must remain faithful to the traditional movements. One may wonder why freedom is given to the sequencing of the movements

and not to the underlying form or movements themselves. There is a historical explanation to this puzzle. In many instances, the originally defined order of the steps or sequence of a dance were lost during the Ch'in dynasty<sup>6</sup> (in part because of the Emperor's attempt to control the knowledge and thoughts of the people. Although the Emperor collected this information and created a private palace library, this library was destroyed during a popular uprising. While the Han dances ceased to be performed for some time, the poses, gestures, and individual movements were preserved through their depictions in the paintings and sculptures. Through these poses and the traditional steps, later generations were able to revive classical Chinese dance.

For both Chinese and modern dance the dancer is the medium for transferring the concept or thought and emotion or feeling of the dance to the audience. The dancer gives life to the choreographer's idea. Even when the dancer is not the choreographer he/she has a creative role to fulfill in the performance. While the creative contribution of a dancer is often quite obvious, it may not be as evident in Chinese dance, which is confined by traditional rules. Even so, a Chinese dancer contributes her/his own vision and transforms the largely formal and somewhat rigid dance form into an individual expression. Indeed, no two dancers will perform a piece in an identical fashion. We have come to expect these individualized differences in modern dance, particularly because modern dance allows for an extreme degree of individualism.

Chinese and modern dance differ in their formal properties. Form means the shape, structure, and contour of a composition (Lockhart, 1977). Chinese dance is literary while modern dance is primarily emotion-based. Modern dance is often abstract and allows for



free innovation in terms of the created movements. Chinese dance does not allow for these innovations. Modern dance allows the choreographer to respond to a random set of variables and to take change of change whenever and wherever she/he desires.

Innovation is not an aim of Chinese dance. Chinese choreographers lack this freedom since their work must reflect a traditional discipline.

The two forms differ also in the type of their messages and the manner by which they are conveyed. Chinese dance is rarely abstract, rather it is narrational; the stories involve people or animals. Modern dance on the other hand can be purely abstract or can portray raging social-political issues. With regard to gender roles, although a dancer of either gender can perform almost any role today, the character is specifically gendered in Chinese dance. The same is not true of modern dance where there often is no indication of a specific gender.

The use of space and time in a Chinese traditional dance is steady with a gradual build to the climax, usually coming at the end of the piece. On occasion, the dance will reach its climax in the middle of the piece and both the beginning and end will be respectively a slow build up to and the retreat from this climax. In contrast, for the most part modern dance has no predetermined pattern and may be anticlimactic

Both Chinese dance and modern dance share a common connection in terms of how they relate to the audience. Both forms are primarily theatrical (Hanna, 1983) in that they are performed by dancers. In both Chinese and modern dance the audience appreciates, financially supports, encourages the dancers, and attends performances to fulfill their aesthetic and cultural needs. In modern dance, the audience may sometimes

actually physically respond to what is occurring on the stage and their responses may become part of the choreography or dance itself. In contrast, the typical Chinese dance audience does not participate in the performance. There are, however, some exceptions to this general rule, as in the Aboriginal Dance from Taiwan where audience members may be invited to join the circle at the end of the performance.

Dance invites both audiences and dancers to react to the imagery that evoked by dance. Hanna (1983) reminds us that performances can charge both the performer(s) and the audience emotionally. This occurs in classical Chinese dance and in modern dance. There is a dialogue between the audience and the performer that is subtly palpable and observable. Initially the audience response is determined simply by their presence. The audience pays (though not necessarily in cash) the performer for performing and invests its time in each performance (Hanna, 1983).

Typically, the audience's approval or disapproval is usually demonstrated through their applause, comments, and willingness to support a particular dance group or choreographer. There are culturally determined differences in the manner in which the audience applauds at the performance. Chinese audiences applaud any time they are moved at any time during the dance. In fact, more frequent applause expresses the audience's higher appreciation of the performance. American audiences watching a modern dance are likely to wait for the conclusion of the piece before applauding.

Chinese dance preserves Chinese cultural concepts in a beautiful fashion that appeals to the senses through universal symbols and fixed metaphors. The form illustrates and integrates an idiosyncratic historicism unique to indigenous Chinese

culture. This art form retains its coherent place and respect in the Euro western influenced modern culture of Taiwan and China.

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### Chapter Three Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> *Rr gin gon*: The second time come to the palace.
- <sup>2</sup> *Tan mu*: Visiting my mother.
- <sup>3</sup> found in the Embroidery Dance.
- <sup>4</sup> e.g. picking grapes or picking tea leaves.
- <sup>5</sup> also known as Heavenly Musicians.
- <sup>6</sup> approximately 1450 C. E. – 1911 C.E.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DISCOVERING THE MINE AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE: THE LION FIGURE IN CHINESE CULTURE

#### The Lion as Myth and Metaphor in Ancient China

The lion is not a native animal of China (Tseng, 1997; Tu, 1988), but it is one of the nation's most cherished symbols. When did it appear in ancient China? Under what circumstances did the lion become a mythical figure? Moreover, why did the Lion Dance become the most popular dance in entertainment, festival, and ritual, as well as in ceremonial, artistic, acrobatic, heroic, and physical activities in the Chinese communities worldwide? These questions drive the mission of this chapter, let us start with some basic information about the lion and its relationship to Lion Dancing. This chapter answers these questions and considers the lion and its fundamental significance to Lion Dancing by way of Buddhist and Taoist arts.

Many stories about the lion exist in Chinese history and mythology. In a section on wild animals, in a key historical document edited during the Sung Dynasty<sup>1</sup>, *T'ai Ping Yu Lan* (Lee, 1936), several stories about the lion in ancient China are given. The Chinese people first learned about the animal through written and oral descriptions of its appearance, and came to know it as a ferocious creature with a large mouth, sharp teeth, yellow fur, and huge bright eyes. The first such description depicts the lion as a "fierce

wild beast” of yellow color, with the appearance of half dog and half fox. At the time *T'ai Ping Yu Lan* was written in the fifth century, few Chinese had seen a lion in real life. Therefore, the lion entered the imagination as a mythical figure (Lee, 1936).

Etymologically, “The [Chinese] word for lion ‘shih’, comes from the Persian ‘shir’ . . .” (Lee, 1952, p. 58). The “shir means lion in Persian” said by A. Villagomez (Personal communication, February, 19, 2001). Incidentally, the two words are pronounced in the same manner. Linguistically, the word “lion” took on the same pronunciation as the word “teacher” (Chan, 1994; Liu, 1981). Ancient Chinese knew that the lion was swift and that it killed and ate other animals; it was called “the king of beasts.” The lion became a symbol of authoritative power over all other animals. Even today the iconographic sign for “lion” consists of the sign for “teacher” and a directive root of animals (Chan, 1994; Liang, 1985).

It is this signification that aligns lion with teacher. Traditionally, the teacher is a person who receives the highest respect, higher than do all other professionals. There is Chinese saying, “Once your teacher, forever your father.” This saying indicates that a teacher, just like a father, is someone responsible for protecting and teaching the young as they grow up. It bespeaks of the teacher’s exalted position in Chinese patriarchal society. In the animal kingdom, the lion represents the authority of a teacher.

The first real lion was sent as a tribute from Yueh Chih country to Han Wu Di – the Emperor of Han Wu<sup>2</sup> country. When the Emperor asked about the origin of the lion, the attendant replied that the lion was born in K’un Lun which refers to the Western region of China. The Emperor then asked to hear the animal, so the attendant agitated the lion to

make it roar. The sound was like thunder and scared all other animals within hearing distance (Huang, 1967; Liu, 1981; Lou, 1936). In 87 C.E., the An Hsi country, Parthian Empire, sent a second “precious animal” to the Emperor Chang Di<sup>3</sup>. The lion was again brought to China as a gift of veneration from Su Lo country (Kashgar) in the reign of Shun Di<sup>4</sup> (see Appendix B, The Map of Historical Silk Routes).

Five hundred years later, a fourth lion was presented by the ambassador of Ta Shih country, one of the Arabic countries, to the Emperor Chung Tsung<sup>5</sup> of the Tang dynasty<sup>6</sup>. *T'ai Ping Yu Lan* (Lee, 1936) suggests that the lion was a great rarity and was a highly prized gift from foreign countries (Liu, 1981; Lu, 1986). Prime minister Yao Shou is said to have admonished the Emperor that the lion, a wild animal and a carnivore, required a great deal of meat. Stressing the difficulty of finding such large quantities of meat, Yao Shao suggested to the Emperor that he should be more dedicated to taking care of his people than this pet lion. Yao Shao also pointed out that it would ruin the Emperor's reputation to sacrifice other animals in order to keep a wild lion. In the end, Emperor Chung Tsung accepted his prime minister's advice (Liu, 1981). It is not known what happened to the lion, as there is no further mention of it in the documents.

Thus, the lion has been known in China for over 2,100 years. Over these twenty centuries lion mythology and the mystery surrounding the animal have become essential to Chinese culture. As early as the Tang dynasty, a brush painting created by Sung Ping entitled *Shih Tzu Chi Hsian T'u* depicts killing elephants. Writing about the painting, Liang Po Yu recounts that Sha Men Shih Tseng, a Buddhist monk from Tien Chu, India,



accompanying him to Ta Ch'in (see Appendix A & B) when the Sha Men Shih Tseng told him the following mystical story:

Suddenly he (the Buddhist monk) heard a horrible roaring sound from ten miles away. Shortly afterward, he saw animals running away. There were four giant elephants who rolled the mud with their noses to cover their bodies for several feet and stood still. There were three lions from the foothills, who [the lions] saw the elephants and fought against them. The elephants' blood sprang out like the spring fountain and the big trunk fell down like the bending of the grass. (Liu, 1981, p. 101-102)

The lion symbol quickly spread around ancient China. Buddhism greatly contributed to this phenomenon because by this time the lion had become an essential and indeed the dominant component in Buddhist art (Liu, 1981). Because of the connection between Buddhism and lion imagery to Chinese culture, it is significant to understand the roots of Buddhism and its introduction to China.

### Roots of Buddhism

The key prophet associated with Buddhism is Siddhartha Gautama, born in North India to the rulers of the kingdom of the Sakyas<sup>7</sup>, King Raja Suddhodana and Queen Rani Maya-devi between the 544 - 557 B.C.E. (Baynes, 1913; Ch'en, 1964; Herold, 1927; MacQuiitty, 1969; Rahula, 1986; Shaftel, 1974; Zurcher, 1962). Many years before his birth, a well-known Paramahansa, prophet, Kaladevila, predicted that the young prince would become an Enlightened One (Baynes, 1913; Foucher, 1963; Zurcher, 1962). Therefore, the king feared that his son would not become the ruling monarch he so much wanted his son to be. Thus, he arranged for Siddhartha to marry his cousin, the beautiful, young Princess, Gopa-Yasodhara at the age of 16. Until the age of 20, he passed his days

blissfully with his wife and his son, Rahula, spending his days in music, dance, archery, and song within his palace (Foucher, 1963; Jaspers, 1962).

Curious by nature, Siddhartha, resolved to find out what was outside the palace walls (Foucher, 1963; Rahula, 1986). Therefore, one day, he escaped the vigilant servants to explore “his” city where he thrice encountered the dark reality of life, birth, old, sick, and death, ultimately, the suffering of humankind. Confused, he wondered if aging and sickness always accompanied death, and whether it was the ultimate and unavoidable fate of everyone born. He set it as his goal to find out the truth, and so, one night, “he went out from his house-hold life into the homeless state” (Jurji, 1946, p. 93) in search of what he believed to be a higher goal than his comfortable life.

#### Truth and the enlightenment.

After Siddhartha left his kingdom, at the age of 29, he devoted himself to an ascetic way of life in search of “the way out of this universal suffering” (Ruhula, 1986, p. xv). Initially, Siddhartha followed two hermits Alara Kalama and Udraka Rajaputta with whom he practiced meditation. But he soon discovered that while the contemplative life as a recluse had great merits, his teachers had too little to offer him (Berry, 1967; Byne, 1913; Jurji, 1946; Robinson & Johnson, 1977). He continued his journey as a wandering recluse for six more years, accompanied by five men he met at the Uruvilva forest (Berry, 1967). Together, they fasted and prayed, until one night Gautama collapsed from a fainting spell. It convinced him that asceticism was the wrong method to search for the truth (Byne, 1913). So he went down to the bank of the river Nairanjara, ate some rice offered to him by a young girl, and bathed. Feeling refreshed and strengthened, he spent

the day meditating on the bank of the river, and, that night, went to sit under a ficus religiosa – a Bodhi tree, a kind of fig tree. There, at the end of seven days, he found the truth (Baynes, 1913; Feibleman, 1976; Jaspers, 1962; Zurcher, 1962). As Jriji (1946) states,

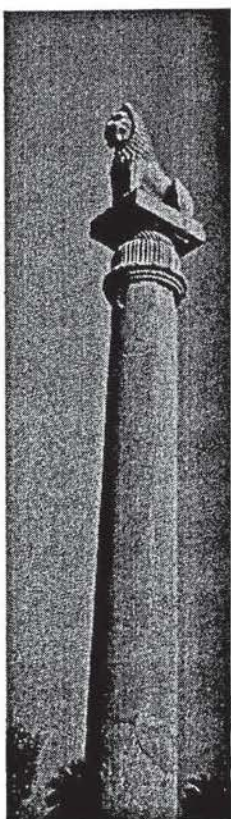
In me thus set free the knowledge of freedom arose and I knew rebirth has been destroyed, the higher life has been led; what had to be done has been done. I have no more to do with this world . . . . ignorance was destroyed, knowledge had arisen, darkness was destroyed, light had arisen, as I sat there earnest, strenuous, resolute. ( p. 93)

Siddhartha became known as the Buddha. The five recluses with whom he had practiced the rigors of ascetic discipline were his first converts (Baynes, 1913). For the subsequent 45 years, “he taught all classes of men and women – kings and peasants, Brahmins and outcasts, bankers and badgers, holy men and robbers – without making the slightest distinction between them” (Rahula, 1986, p. xv). Buddha’s teaching based on the Four Noble Truths is quite simple. Given the fact that the cause of suffering in life is desire, people should free themselves from all the longings. He died at the age of 80.

Initially, worshipping idols was contrary to the spirit of Buddhism (Chuang, 1997), Yet if the letter of Buddha’s teaching was followed, sculptures of Buddha would not exist. However, sometime in India, between 273 – 232 B.C.E., the great Emperor Asoka, King of the Peacock dynasty, collected Buddha’s ashes from eight different places and built 84,000 Buddhist pagodas and pillars for people to worship. What connects this story to Lion Dancing is the pillar. Each was topped with a sculpture of a lion or in some

cases of four roaring lions to serve as a metaphorical reference to the Buddha's authority (see Figure 4 – 1) (Donath, 1971).

#### Buddhism in ancient China.



According to *Cha Hsiang Shih Tsung Chao roll*, 13(n.d.), during the Epoch of the Warring States<sup>8</sup>, under the seven year reign of Yen Jou Wang<sup>9</sup>, Buddhist doctrine was introduced, to the Yen country of China from Northern India by a 130 year old monk named Shih Lou, after his five year long journey from his native country of Sen Tou<sup>10</sup>. Shih Lou's extraordinary mystical powers were demonstrated by conjuring towering pagodas; from his fingertips there arose the ten-layered Buddha, accompanied by beautiful, five-to-six inch angelic figures that danced and sang in human voices around the pagodas. This was the first recorded contact between Buddhism and China (Hsieh, 1978; Ssu, 1997).

Figure 4 –1. A sculpture of a lion on a pillar.

Buddhism was introduced also to Hsi Yu in the Western region of China, and finally to China, between the war of the Han people and Shoung Nu, during the period of Emperor of Kao Shu<sup>11</sup> (Ch'en, 1964; Donath, 1971; Seckel, 1964; Wangu, 1993). In 65 C.E., the East Han Emperor Ming Di sent officials to Hsi Yu to learn the Buddhist doctrines (Hsieh, 1978; Liu, 1978; Liu, 1881). Over the next four centuries, Buddhism enjoyed great popularity in China as the emperors of successive dynasties; East Han

dynasty<sup>12</sup>, the Three Kingdom<sup>13</sup>, and the dynasty of Chin<sup>14</sup> ardently promoted Buddhism (Goddard, 1932).

### Chinese Form of Buddhism

In China, Buddhism assumed its particular Chinese form as it merged with Taoism, Popular Religion, and the philosophy of Confucianism. A major change was from the monotheism of Sakyamuni Buddha to the polytheism of many Buddhas and Budhisattvas (Ho, 1991). Most favorite are four Budhisattvas: Budhisattva Manjusri; Samantabhadra; Avalokshattva (Kuan Shih Yin, or called as Kuan Yin); and Earth Store Budhisattva (B. Chuchche, personal conversation, April 11, 1999; J. Ger, personal conversation, April 6, 1999). By the end of the dynasty of the North and South<sup>15</sup> there were as many as 480 Buddhist temples across China (Ho, 1991).

One of the major concepts of Buddhism is karma, “the belief in rebirth and retribution of act” (Zurcher, 1962, p. 18). Buddhists believe that all is related to the present life. Be it success, failure, thoughts, or bodily appearance, there is a direct connection to the good or evil deeds which people have performed in their previous lives. Whatever is done in this life shapes ones future destiny (Ch'en, 1964; Conze, 1968; Zurcher, 1962). According to Walpola Rahula (1986),

karma literally means ‘action’ or ‘doing’. But in the Buddhist theory of karma has a specific meaning: it means only ‘volitional action’, not all action. Nor does it mean the result of karma, as many people wrongly understand it. In Buddhist terminology “karma”, never means its effect; its effect is known as the ‘fruit’ or the ‘result’ of karma, . . . . Volition is a relative concept, neither good nor bad in itself, just as a desire may be good or bad. Therefore, karma may be good or bad. Good karma produces good effects, and, conversely, bad karma produces bad effects. (p. 32)



Chinese people came to believe that if they practiced Buddhist principles and sowed good seeds during this life, the benefits of a better life would be reaped when reincarnated. Therefore, Chinese people venerated the Buddha. They built temples, made ceremonial instruments and sculptures, drew visual images, translated the scored Sutra from Hindu to Chinese and distributed copies of the sacred document to spread the teaching to others. Thus Buddhist arts emerged as arts of faithful worship (Chuang, 1997; Ho, 1991).

Royalty and nobility were among the most ardent believers. Over the centuries, most Emperors of the North Wei<sup>16</sup>, and Tang dynasties<sup>17</sup> designated a tremendous amount of manpower, wealth, and time to building temples. Here were housed several hundred thousand Buddhist sculptures in both the Yuan Kuang and Lung Men grottoes. In addition, many princes, nobles, and wealthy merchants traveling between China and Hsi Yu put their great fortunes into the Dun Huang grottos along the only path of the Silk Road (see Appendix A, the map of China and Taiwan). Hired artisans created thousands of sculptures and mural paintings depicting Buddhist folklore and myths as well as family activities. At the same time, common people made their own images and sculptures of Buddha and worshipped them in their homes. Under these circumstances, Buddhism flourished during the period of Sui and Tang dynasties<sup>18</sup> (Ho, 1991; Hsieh, 1978). In the end it emerged as the national religion of China (Berry, 1967).

Lion images on the thousands of Buddhist art works accompanied the spread of Buddhism from the Yellow River (north) to Yang Tze River (south) (Liu, 1981; Ho



1991). The most impressive examples include sculptures and mural paintings in many of the large temples as well as in the now famous caves and grottoes. Examples are found in the Tun Huang<sup>19</sup>, Yun Kang<sup>20</sup>, I Hsien<sup>21</sup>, Kung Hsien<sup>22</sup>, and Lung Men<sup>23</sup> grottos (Seckel, 1963). Today, some of these sculptures have been removed from the actual grottos and are displayed in art museums worldwide (Chuang, 1997). Now available to view in museums, Buddhist art is studied by historians, scholars, anthropologists, archeologists, visual artists, dancers, and students. Significantly, lion images are recognized as motifs of the Budhisattvas' and Saykamuni's sculptures and painting.

#### Lion imagery in Buddhist arts.

I discovered the association of lion images with the Buddha and Budhisattva Manjusri from the greatest Buddhist sacred Sutra, the Ta Tsang Ching (reprinted in 1992). This Sutra consists of writings which cover 49 years of Buddha Saykamuni's teaching<sup>24</sup>; including all Buddhist scriptures, laws, discipline, discussion, theories, pictures, and portraits (Rahula, 1986; Ta Tsang Ching, reprint in 1992). In short, Ta Tsang Ching consists of 85 encyclopedic book collections of the essential Buddhist wisdom and activities throughout Chinese history.

From this seminal collection, I selected three Buddha lion portraits from Ta Tsang Ching to illustrate the role of lion imagery in Buddhist art. The first shows three standing lion figures, facing respectively to the right, left, and front, appearing under the lotus seat of Buddha Shengfodin (see Figures 4 – 2, Ta Tsang Ching, 1992, p. 13). The second example is five lion carrying the lotus seat for the Six-Word Budhisattva Manjusri (see Figure 4 – 3, Ta Tsang Ching, reprinted in 1992, p. 14). The third portrait is entitled the

“Budhisattva Manjusri of the Wu Tai Mountain” which depicts a huge lion carrying Manjusri Budhisattva on its back. There is a rope around its neck and a groom holds the other end of the rope. Both female and male worshipers, hands pressed together, are greeting the Buddhisattva Manjusri. An old man holding a stick looks as though he is talking to the female worshiper (see Figure 4 – 4) (picture section six, p. 14 -15). As I mentioned earlier, Budhisattva Manjusri is one of the four popular Budhisattva in ancient China. Because Manjusri means extraordinarily auspicious (Liu, 1981), the Budhisattva Manjusri personifies intelligence, wisdom, and knowledge. The appearance of the lion represents Buddhists’ majesty, authority, awe, fierceness, and bravery (Liu, 1981; Tzu, 1988).



Figures 4 – 2.  
The Six-Word Buddha Shengdin



Figure 4 – 3.  
Budhisattva Manjusri



Figure 4 – 4.  
Bodhisattva Manjysri

Buddhism, eventually merged with the Chinese Popular Religion, Taoism, and Confucianism (Donath, 1974; Seckel, 1963) to become a popular Chinese style of Buddhism. And thus, most Taoist temples worship the Buddha and the four popular Buddhisttva. How do the major religions practices, Chinese Popular Religion, Taoism, and Confucianism, influence Chinese life? What is their relation to Lion Dancing as performed in religious temple festivals and ritual ceremonies?

### Popular Religion

Popular Religion is one of the popular root religions practiced in China, Taiwan, and Chinese communities worldwide. Its gods and goddess include those representative of natural phenomena and objects, legend characters, and historical heroes. This folk religion is “communal, festive, and participatory, rather than doctrinal or theological. Identification with the family lineage is achieved by participating in life-cycle rituals and ancestor offerings, . . . annual festivals, renewal rites, and the birthdays of important gods” (Bowker, 1997, p. 94). Most activities focus on the harmony of essential gender coded forces of *Yin* and *Yang* — with the individual, society, and nature. *Yin* represents the moon, female, softness, gentleness, following, passivity, water, heaviness, night, and spiritual qualities. On the other hand, *Yang* represents the sun, male, firmness, directing, activity, fire, lightness, day, and physical quality.

There are many gods and ghosts in the *Yin* world which consists of the nine layers of heaven and 18 levels of hell. The Yu Huang Da Di, the Big Jade Emperor is in charge of all gods in the heavens and of all human beings in the *Yang* world. In the hierarchy of Taoist gods, only his mother, Wang Mu Nian Nian (the Mother of the Big Jade Emperor), is supreme over his jurisdiction. How is it that the Yu Huang Da Di retains the capability to rule and watch over such a large number of gods and people? Popular Religion incorporates supernatural power, historical heroes, and ancestors deities, all of which are believed to be fellow watchmen for the Yu Hunag Da Di. They watch over their various territories and people and report to the deeds of people Yu Hunag Da Di.



Of the many deities, one type that can be found in homes are the kitchen god and his wife that watch over every family. They are the gods worshipped within individual family settings. Their simple pictorial representation is placed above the chimney by the traditional Chinese stove or glued onto the kitchen wall. Facing the image of the kitchen gods are a small incense container, a small cup with “respectful” tea (water), and a plate of “respectful” fruit. Normally, it is the woman’s duty to burn incense, and offerings are usually presented twice a month, on the first and the sixteenth. Since the kitchen gods are believed to report to the supreme ruler on the eve of the Chinese New Year, people offer them sweet rice cakes and candy to sweeten their tongues – all in hope that the gods will report their good deeds to Yu Huang Da Di. When Lion Dancers are invited into the homes in celebration of the New Year, they perform the dance and bow three times (*sankou tou*) in front of the Buddhas’ altar, and also before the pictures of the kitchen gods.

Another important god overseeing the earth is Tu Di Kung, the old man of the land. Tu Di Kung is a small god who knows all the Yang people (those alive) and Yin spirits (those deceased) that live in the area of his duty. Businessmen worship Tu Di Kung at least twice a month, if not every day. In Southern China, Hong Kong, and Southeast Asia, most owners of Chinese restaurants set up shrines of Tu Di Kung next to the entrance to their establishments. In Taiwan, however, the shrine is set up on the wall, facing the doorway in hope of drawing more customers.

Apart from the ancient gods, Chinese people venerate three famous historical heroes, Kuan Yu, Chang Fei, and Liu Pei. When they met during a war before the Han dynasty and took an oath of brotherhood, they protected each other for many years during

various wars. When Liu Pei became the first Emperor of the Han dynasty, he appointed his “adopted” brothers Kuan Yu and Chang Fei major generals. Chinese people came to regard these three heroes as three sages of martial arts and to think of them as the representations of the gods *Chong*, *Hsiao*, *Jai*, and *Yi* (loyalty, filial piety, ethical and moral behavior). They are worshipped at every traditional Chinese martial arts school and many trading centers, restaurants, as well as grocery stores as the major god-protectors of their professions. Today, the lions in Lion Dancing bear the names of the three heroes. Lion Dancing is performed as part of these rituals to scare away evil spirits and bring wealth to business owners. During grand openings and Chinese New Year, lion dancers are always on hand to perform at local businesses, such as supermarkets, restaurants, and trade centers in either outdoor and/or indoor performances. During outdoor performances, lions always perform on high tables or stacked benches to attract audiences/customers, which insures good business. Indoor performances, on the other hand, are where the lions gather in front of the shrine of Tu Di Kung to perform a series of bowing movements to show respect towards the god of the land.

In concern for the evolution of religious beliefs, Chinese also merged popular religious belief to the philosophy of Tao; it, in turn, became Taoism.

### Taoism in Ancient China

Lao-Tzu is essentially the father of Taoism (Cheng, 1981). He believed that the universe holds within itself a perfect harmony, and that all-fundamental energies are sources of the cosmic currents of *yin* and *yang* (Feng & English, 1972). “Central to Taoism are the beliefs that the Tao is the unchanging principle behind the universe, and



that the secret of life is to live in accordance with the Tao which never acts, yet nothing is left undone” (Bowker, 1997, p. 98). Nothing out of the physical realm should be forced beyond its capability. The principal concepts of Taoism include living with nature, appreciating ones possessions, worshipping regularly, performing rites in honor of ones’ ancestors, and leading a life true to one’s principle (Ho, 1991).

A prophet of the time, Lao-Tzu (1972; 2000) wrote *Tao Te Ching*, a book containing passages of internal, hidden meanings. His philosophy was meant primarily to assist the emperor, and his writings stressed the necessity to act with nature, in order to survive and flourish. “Tao integrates a mystical path of naturalness and unconstrained spontaneous action with a political philosophy of creative inaction or wu-wei, in which the ruler does not seek to impose and dominate affairs of national and state concern” (Bowker, 1997, p. 98). *Chi* is a primary Taoist theory, as it was the basic unit of the vital energy and blood system. “The flow of chi in the body is regarded as closely parallel to the flow of chi over the landscape, and chi in the body is as subject to change as the forces in the weather” (Bowker, 1997, p. 99). Thus, in Taoist thought there is a close connection between body, mind, spirit, and the environment. Popularly, Chinese people believe that Lion dancing can bring essential positive chi, and summon *yang chi* [the positive energy] to the environment wherever Lion Dancing appear.

Taoism advocates meditation and the practice of philosophy in order to find “Tao ‘the way’ as the supreme reality” (Smullyan, 1977, p. 38). Immortality is sought by finding and practicing the balance of harmony between internal forces of yin and yang; the goal is to achieve spiritual freedom by “cultivating an imperishable subtle body”

(Bowker, 1997, p. 96). Taoist sects differ in many ways, but the desire to control spirits remains the prominent feature of all of them. As Lao Tze once said, “The Tao is Formless and Vague! It is Hidden, Mysterious and Dark! It is the source of all things” (Smullyan, 1977, p.11).

#### Lion imagery in Taoist arts.

When Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism merged, lion imagery was incorporated in Taoist arts as symbols of authority, power, and protection. In their architecture, Taoist temples are unique in several ways. The rooftop, eaves, windows, walls, entrances, and ceilings are usually decorated with figurines of historical heroes, folk stories, animals, flowers, and birds in spirited attitudes. These decorations consist of wood and stone carvings, Cochin China (ceramics), and cut-and-paste porcelain. Of special interest are following Taoist lion figures (see Figures 4 – 5 to 7) found in contemporary Taoist temples in Taiwan. All are from the 1993 *Appointment Diary* by Chungihsin Huang.

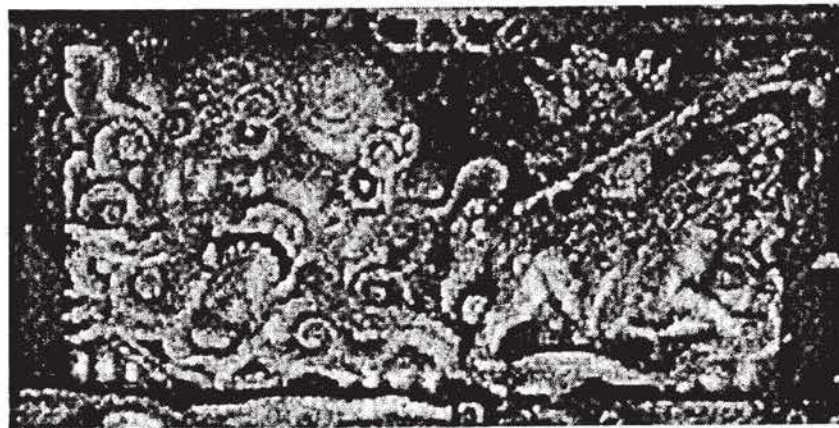


Figure 4 – 5. Tsou Yu, the lion figures as guardian angels, are part of gorgeously decorated crossbeams combining unique Chinese wooden carvings and colorful paint works.



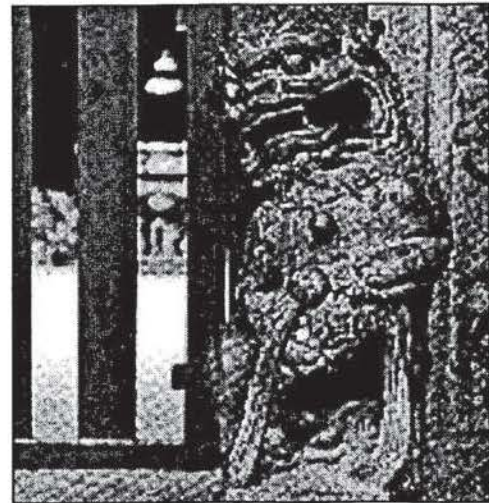


Figure 4 – 6 a & b. These stone lions at the entrance of the temple have two symbolic functions. One welcomes every visitor to the temple. The other – to guard the temple and bring good fortune.



Figure 4 – 7. The pattern of a man riding on a lion's back is a popular design in roof spine decoration.

Lion images and figures are also prevalent in Chinese funerary sculpture which encompasses funeral ceremonies, the design of graves, and objects that are put into the coffin with the dead person to express *Hsiou Shun* (filial piety) to the dead parents. This traditional concept is stressed by Confucius' ethical teachings.

### Confucianism and the Chinese Way

Derived from the Taoism, Confucianism constituted the Chinese Great Tradition. As John Bodley states (2000), "The Confucian great Tradition represented the power of the state in the form of great palaces, temples, rituals, literature, and artworks, which collectively must have inspired feelings of awe and subordination in the commoners" (p. 229). An important part of the practices of Confucianism focuses on moral principles and emphasizes duty, a strict devotion to family, filial piety, loyalty, and respect for common man. Many western scholars mistakenly think of Confucianism as one of the Chinese religions rather than the educational philosophy it is. The confusion arises from Confucian temples being found in Chinese communities. In fact these are not places of worship but memorials to the greatest educator in Chinese history and places of contemplation. Only once a year, on Confucius's birthday<sup>25</sup>, do temples become sites of a formal ceremony with ancient music and dance rituals – the so called Ba Yi Wu<sup>26</sup>.

Confucius is a latinization of K'ung Fu Tzu or K'ung Tzu which means Master K'ung. His name was Ch'iu and commonly called Chung Ni. He was born in 551 B.C.E. in Tsu, in a small dukedom of Lu located in the modern province of Shantung, about 200 miles eastward to the Yellow sea (Creel, 1972; Liu, 1991; Pound, 1951; Smith, 1973).

K'ung Tzu's father, K'ung Ho, was a mighty warrior who died during the war when K'ung Tzu was only three years old. K'ung Tzu grew up in poverty, he and his mother relied on each other. Although very poor, K'ung Tzu "loved to read and learn about the ceremonies and rites of the time [The spring and autumn]" (Chiang & Liao, 1989, p. 38).

At the age of 20, K'ung Tzu was already fairly well known. He was already a minor official taking care of barns and domestic livestock. At 30, the ruler of the state of Lu, Duke Chao sent him to the capital city of Loyang to research the ceremonies and music of Chou. When, armed with new knowledge and high aspirations, he returned from Loyang, his reputation spread quickly throughout the country (Chiang & Liao, 1989).

Originally, K'ung Tzu's hoped to involve himself in the political life of Lu to help build its prosperity and power. Unfortunately, the ruling ministers did not award K'ung Tzu an influential position. Disgruntled, K'ung Tzu "took his students and traveled from state to state" (Chiang & Liao, 1989, p. 38). Although K'ung Tzu visited many states and met with the rulers of each one, the often narrow-minded and shortsighted rulers did not understand or appreciate K'ung Tzu's idealism. In the end, when K'ung Tzu was 68 years old, a high official in the state of Lu formally requested to K'ung Tzu to return to his native country; there he died five years later. Although his political aspirations were never realized during his lifetime, the conversations between K'ung Tzu and his students were recorded and collected in what became one of the great Chinese books, *The Analects*. Like Socrates, his thoughts and ideals were carried on by his students, and they have continued to influence Chinese culture for more than 2,500 years. K'ung Tzu was

referred to as “a sage and as the most prominent philosopher and educator in Chinese history” (Chiang & Liao, 1989, p. 40).

#### The concept of *Hsiao*.

In his teaching, K’ung Tzu always emphasized *Hsiao* – filial piety, which refers to the proper ways of acting and expressing of respect of a child to his/her parents. Not simply subservient, the behavior includes respect and obedience with “glad heart”. Tzu Yu once asked K’ung Tzu “What is *Hsiao*?” to which K’ung Tzu answered: “Today, people think that *Hsiao* consists in the duty to feed the parents. But, we feed our animals, such as horses, and cows, too. Without respect, there is no difference between feeding our animals and parents” (Lin, 1963, p. 66). *Hsiao* is a highly valued attitude in Chinese society. If a child does not practice it properly, the neighbors admonish him/her. If the poor behavior persists, the society looks down on the child. It is also shameful for the family if a its member does not practice *Hsiao*.

People must not only practice *Hsiao* when parents are alive, but shall continue the action of *Hsiao* when they pass away. Once a student asked Confucius,

“What constitutes the duty of a good son?” He replied, “when his parents are living, a good son should do his duties to them according to the usage prescribed by propriety; when they are dead, he should bury them and honor their memory according to the rites prescribed by propriety” (Ku, 1982, p. 6).

#### Lion imagery in the tomb arts.

According to archeologists, *Pei Tsang* was a popular custom early in the Yin Shan dynasty<sup>27</sup> (Hsieh, 1978; Liu, 1978). *Pei* means to accompany; *Tsang* is to bury. Together the two words refer to people and animals that are buried along with valuable jewelry,



silk fabric, daily objects, and Ming Chi. In ancient China, it was a rule that the courtesans, body guards, and servants were buried with their dead lord – the Emperor, or a rich landlord. Being buried with a dead person voluntarily or by force is called *Shin Tsang*, an act of complete faith, respect, and love for the dead person. This cruel custom was gradually abandoned to accommodate Confucius' ideas about the practice of Hsiao. In his view, Shin Tsang was not an expression of Hsiao or filial piety –but superstition. His views on the subject in question are best illustrated by his conversation with his students (Ku translated in 1898):

A disciple enquired how one should behave toward the spirits of dead men. Confucius answered, "We cannot as yet do out duties to living men; why should we enquire about our duties as dead men"? The disciple went on to enquire about death. Confucius answered, "We do not as yet know about life; why should we enquire about death"? ( Ku, 1982, p. 69)

Confucius scaled down ostentatious funeral rites. He felt deeply that "in rituals for the dead, it is better that there should be heartfelt grief than minute attention to observances" (Ku, 1982, p. 11). As a result, the custom of burying people and animals alive gradually changed to burying symbolic representations of the living in the form of ceramic and wooden figurines. This led to the proliferation of *Ming Chi* - the name for artifacts offered to the dead that accompany them in hereafter. The popular Ming Chi included human and animal figurines, miniature houses and furniture, models of musical instruments, and daily life objects. Outside the tombs, large stone figures of the attendants, and animals were used as the guards protecting the spirit of the dead (Liu, 1978). Among these standing, sitting, and kneeling tomb guardians, were respected exotic animals: stone tigers, elephants, lions, leopards, camels, and giant birds. Some of

these tomb guardians are fantastical, while others are fierce and wild animals with human faces and horns or antlers on top of their heads. Of all these stony images, large lions became especially popular as tomb guards to protect the spirit of the deceased at ancient tombs of the royalty (Liu, 1978; Liu, 1981; Hsieh, 1978).

Archeologists have recovered lion figures funerary objects. In 1900, geologist Sven Hedin<sup>28</sup> discovered an abandoned, ancient town located in today's Hsin Chiang province, known during the Han dynasty<sup>29</sup> as Lou Lan. Of all small countries in Hsi Yu, Lou Lan country, also known as Cen Shan, was closest to ancient China. According to the historical document Han Shu, Lou Lan a country of 14,100 people representing 1,570 extended families was situated about 6,100 kilometers west from the Han's capital Chang An (Hsieh, 1978, p.10). In 1906, some wooden engravings and silk fabric were discovered with images of lions, dragons, and *chilin* part of the silk fabric's design (Hsieh, 1978): *Chilin* was "a fabulous animal resembling the deer said to appear in time of peace and prosperity" (Lian, 1992, p. 598). Three sitting animal figures originally from Kao Chang country<sup>30</sup> were also found. Of the fierce animal figures found by the British archeologist Mark Aurel Stein, two were lions. One of the figures is a wild and fierce animal head that looks like a combination of a lion with an open mouth, a wolf, and a dog, and another depicts a dark faced figure — half human and half lion (see Figure. 4 – 8) (Hsieh, 1978, p. 113).



Figure 4 – 8. Half human and half lion figures.

To recapitulate, the lion became one of the most significant symbols for Chinese people - despite the fact that it did not originally live in China — and is understood only in the wide context of Chinese culture. The qualities of the lion, including its power, its authority, and its status as the king of all animals, made the lion well suited as a symbol of power, authority, and protection in a culture which developed around Buddhism, Taoism, Popular Religions, and Confucianism. The art associated with these religions reflects the importance of lion symbolism. In addition, these belief systems created fertile ground for the proliferation of art objects representing the lion figure in both ancient China and in modern Chinese communities worldwide.

#### Lion Figures in Contemporary Chinese Culture

Traditionally, lion sculptures are always paired; a male is accompanied by a female, a clear reference to Yin and Yang. In most classical palaces, traditional buildings, and museums, Buddhist and Taoist temples in Taiwan and China, are found with the stone,



wood, or metal lion sculptures at the entrance or in their courtyards (see Figure 4 – 9 & 12.)



Figure 4 – 9. A stone lion sculpture with a giant Buddha 21.8 m tall in Taiwan



Figure 4 – 10. A stone lion sculpture with Kung Yin in Taiwan

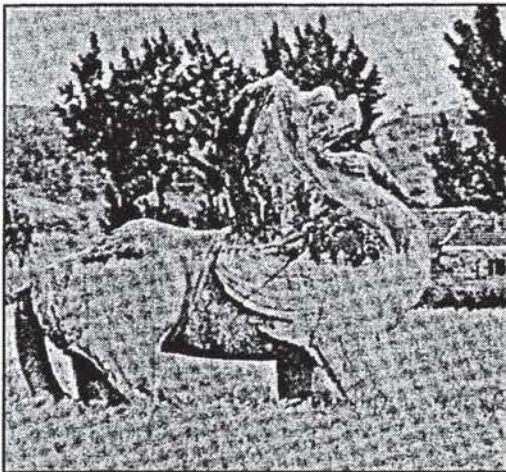


Figure 4 – 11. Stone lion sculpture.



Figure 4 – 12. Metal lion sculpture.

Today, they are found in Chinese communities all over the world, both in public places and in private homes. It is a common symbol, signifying a kind of guardian angel. Many Chinese houses regardless of their style have two small lion figures on either side of the main entrance of a major building, or four mini wooden lions on the four corners under the roof. In most parks, stone lion sculptures can be found somewhere within the

park, if they are not at the entrance. They are often placed at both ends of the bridge as both decoration and as guardians. A notable example is the famous, well photographed Lu Gou Chiao<sup>31</sup> in Pei King; with imore than 332 males, females, and baby lion figures at both sides (see Figure 4 – 13. *Lu Gou Chiao*.) (*Gin Bu Yu Faun Jung*, 1985; M. Ho, personal communication, April 27, 1994; Hseih, 1978; Lai, 1976; Lee, 1952, Wang, 1991).

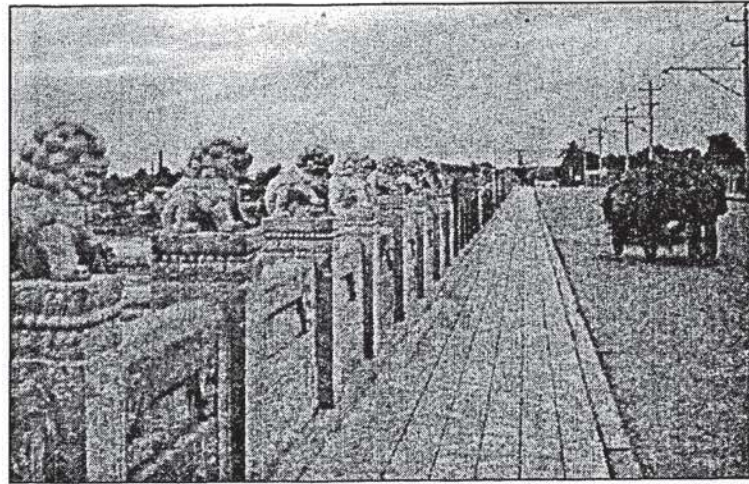


Figure 4 – 13. Lions sculptures at the Lu Gou Chiao

Another famous lion figure is *Fong shih yea*<sup>32</sup> (see Figure 4 – 14.) who is a huge standing stone lion that protects an entire village. Today, you can find the huge Fong shih yea at the most famous windy city, Shinzu, in Taiwan and the Gingmen Island. Take Shinzu for instance, many twelve feet tall Fong shih yea are located at major intersections as the protectors for the city and people. The huge stone lions at the gates of the village would often serve as wind breaks for the town in the Gingmen Island. So this belief has its genesis in fact since the statues lessened the effects from the cold breezes and contributed to the sense of well being. In some cases, reducing the wind chill factor may



have also decreased the amount of illness. Consequently, these huge stone lions actually did serve to protect those villages that they guarded. The beliefs in stone lions as city guards spread to the neighboring countries including Japan, Korea, and Okinawa. They also adapted the symbolism of the huge stone lion as protector. These lions are called the “shih gong dong”<sup>33</sup>, and lions are thought to protect their villages.

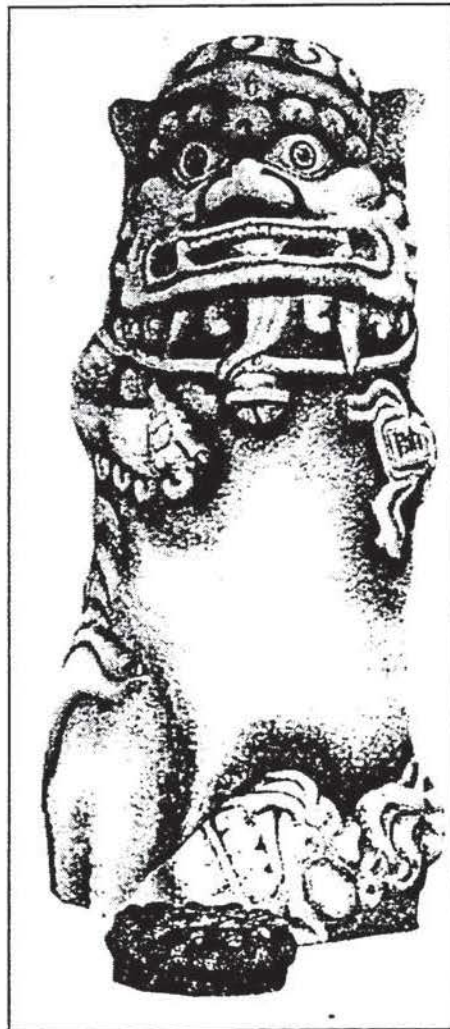


Figure 4 – 14. A *Fong shih yea* sculpture.



The lion figure is not only important in public life, but is also an integral part of personal life. A little lion figure can become an important design element of a seal or a personal chop. It can be found in a variety of objects of daily life. Collecting lion sculptures and images is a favorite hobby. Traditional Chinese Buddhism and Taoism graves continue to erect small lion figures as grave guards.

#### Possible Origins and Documentation of Lion Dancing

How did the lion figures, an integral part of Chinese culture, lead to Lion Dancing? According to the Sung Shu, the historical document of Sung dynasty<sup>34</sup> Lion Dancing was originally used to drive away elephants, rather than evil. During the Sung period<sup>35</sup> of Southern Northern Dynasties<sup>36</sup>. Emperor Sung Win Di sent General Tzung Ch'ueh with an army to attack the country of Lin-Yi located near Laos and Burma. The king of Lin-Yi used an elephant formation to stop the army's advance. But General Tzung Ch'ueh having heard that "all beasts submit to the lion" ordered his soldiers to construct fake lions and put them on the front line. When the elephants saw the faux lions, they scattered with Lin-yi surrendered to Emperor Sung Win Di (Liu, 1981; Lu, 1986).

Lion Dancing is passed down from the *Sifu*, teacher, to students, generation by generation. Fortunately, many historical documents describe what is accepted as its original form and related folklore. In his thesis, Liu (1981) states that the Lion Dance originated from performances, which first used real animals then people disguised as animals. Later, the Lion Dance was performed at court with actors-dancers using elaborate costumes and choreography intended to express certain philosophical ideas.

Finally, it was included in the repertory of folk dances performed in festivals for entertainment and as a form of the martial arts (Liu, 1981, p. 31).

Early in the Tang dynasty, Lion Dancing was transformed into the royalty as a court dance named *Tai Pin Yuea*<sup>37</sup>, also called *Wu Fan Shizi Wu* [Five Regional Lion Dancing]. One of the earliest records, *Shi Win Shan Tong Kou* notes that in the third year of Hong Chi, Emperor Min Shiao Chung invited the ambassadors of each friendly region to the palace to watch Lion Dancing (Shih, 1993). Another historical document from before the Sang dynasty<sup>38</sup>, *Shang Shu*, notes that: “the animals of various kinds are dancing to the music” (Liu, 1981).

That the popularity of Lion Dancing soon spread to the common people explains perhaps why the tradition has persisted to this day. Agriculture is the basis of traditional Chinese society. People performing Lion Dancing at many agricultural festivals and ritual ceremonies celebrated and represented the relationship between a successful harvest, changing lunar seasons, gods, deities, and decants (Shiau, 1989). During the twentieth century, Lion Dancing has become an important entertainment, a form of physical exercise, and team training.

Nothing in Chinese entertainment exceeds the excitement of the Lion Dance. During the New Year the northerners<sup>39</sup> like to dance from the break of dawn until late into the night. Noisy processions, the offering of sacrifices, and rain chants are all indispensable to the festivities. When southerners<sup>40</sup> have a big celebration, lions are always part of the finale (Liu, 1981).

When part of religious rituals, Chinese perform the Lion Dance in temples, in people's homes, or on the streets door by door. People believe the Lion Dance brings good luck and prosperity, as well as scares away evil spirits and *yin chi* — bad energy. Most often it is performed during the Lunar New Year season, during festivals, temple activities, when opening new businesses, at birthday celebrations of wealthy individuals, and at funeral ceremonies (Shiau, 1989). Every year, to ensure the four seasons of peace and fair weather, many Taoist deities from both heaven and hell are believed to make a tour of the community. The celebration looks very much like a carnival parade except for its religious significance. Lion Dancers always head the parade clearing the streets and dispelling evil spirits. Not incidentally, the dancers accompanied by noisy drumbeats and gong sounds are sure to attract and excite the audience.

#### Selected formal features.

What was once handed down through families and clans is now available as part of civic education . Today, perhaps the best place to learn Lion Dancing is a martial arts school (K. Hong, personal communication, April 19, 1994; Slovenz, 1987; Water & Slovenz-Low, 1990; R. Yung, personal communication, April 19, 1994). The Lion Dance instructor choreographs and directs the performances as well as being the master, or *Sifu*, of a martial art. The main character is always a lion (or lions) that dances to rhythmic sounds of a percussion orchestra made up of drums, gongs, and cymbals or to special traditional music, entitled the Lion Dance. Two ancient documents, *Jou Tan Su Yin Yuea Chih* and *Shin Tan Su Li Yueh Jeh* specify that the ancient form of Lion Dancing included as many as 12 performers per lion (Shiau, 1989). The modern Lion

Dance, with only two performers for each lion, evolved during the Chien Lung period of the Ch'ing Dynasty<sup>41</sup> (Shiau, 1989). This form continues to this day.

A lion is performed by one or two dancers. In Chiang Su province the lion is performed by only one person (Liu, 1981). Usually a big lion is represented by two performers, one under the lion's head and the other bent horizontally to dance the tail. During the performance, the person at the front under the lion's head, frequently twists and turns the head so that the lion looks around. The other person controls the lion's tail (body) and accompanies the lion's "head" by performing energetic tail movements. If there are nine big lions, a minimum of 18 people is needed. In addition, there are drum, gong, and cymbal performers. Lion Dancers work as one big family with a dedicated, harmonious team spirit to perform well for the audience. Self-esteem and honor for the lion team and for the martial arts school results from a performance well done.

Lion Dancing reflects the diverse ethnicity of Chinese culture. Even though in both secular and ritualistic manifestations the Lion Dance is clearly recognizable, every ethnic group and indeed every person performing the dance puts a personal signature on the dance.

The most popular Lion Dancing are the Northern Lion, the Southern or Awakened Lion, and the Taiwanese Lion. For example, the Northern style of Lion Dancing, *Pei ging shih*<sup>42</sup>, is known for its acrobatic technique as well as its costuming which always incorporates some form of furry leg garments. The Southern or Cantonese style lion is very colorful and its name means "historical hero". The third style is the Taiwanese style lion, which is identified by its green and somewhat, flattened face.

For this study, I limited my research to these three popular categories. The Southern or Awakened Lion is actually the *Kuang-tungese* Lion. The most popular design is that of the painted face of three historical Han Dynasty heroes, the Taoist gods for martial arts school, *Liu Pei* (white-faced), *Kuan Yu* (red-faced), or *Chang Fe* (black-faced).

The painted face of Liu Pei lion is also named “the Lucky Lion”. Most of its face is yellow with white beard and eyebrows. Yellow color represents the concept of wealth. Toward the back of its head, there is a “triple golden-coin” pattern. The tail is decorated with white rabbit fur representing its nobility. Liu Pei lion is gentle and kind (Shiau, 1989).

The red-faced lion is called “the Awakened Lion of Kuan Yu”. It is with black eyebrows and black hair, and a “double golden-coin” pattern decorates the back of its head. Its tail is tri-colored (red, black, and green) symbolizing courage. The Kuan Yu lion is brave and loyal (Shiau, 1989).

The black-faced Chang Fei lion has red black eyebrows and hair on its black face. It is known as the “Fierce Lion of Chang Fei” with a “single golden-coin” design on the back of its head. The dark red eyes, erect ears, and jutting teeth and its black and white tail reflect its fierce, violent, and easily angered character. During festivals or ritual ceremonies, the Chang Fei lion is often seen rushing in and out of the formations. As a troublemaker, he instigate fights when other lions do not give him his way. Chang Fei lion’s temper deserves two nicknames “Noisy Lion” and “Brawling Lion” (Shiau, 1989).

There are also a number of variations in the forms of Lion Dancing especially adapted to particular groups and techniques of people, for example, the wheelchair users’



Lion Dancing, the high stick version Lion Dancing, and the acrobatic Lion Dancing in which the lion plays with two huge balls on the stage (see Figure 4 – 15).

The lion head mask.

One of the most essential parts of the lion is its mask. The mask of the lion is deeply related to the dance and ritual because Chinese believe the ferocious mask is capable of scaring away evil. The lion mask called *Tsou Yu*<sup>43</sup>, first appeared in classical music literature, *Yuea Fu Shih Gi*, as a subtitle in five movement compositions entitled *Wu Chu*. It was written for a stringed instrument, the *Ku Chin*, which was invented 3,000 years ago and which was played only by the royalty, scholars, and people of the noble court. The *Tsou Yu* movement of *Wu Chu* originally accompanied royalty practicing archery in the courts and on the fields (Fu, 1987; Lin, personal communication, 1999).



Figure 4 – 15. The acrobatic Lion Dancing.

The mask of a small/baby lion is designed also in accordance with regional culture and performance traditions (Liu, 1981). It can be a very simple symbol in which a



colorfully decorated paper plate is used as the lion's mask. Normally, this simple form of Lion Dancing is performed by children for educational purposes and/or for entertainment. Another kind of popular lion mask for children is made of hard plastic. The big lion head is extremely elaborate constructed of bamboo sticks, paper-mache, and decorated with light balls, bells, colorful silk fabric and paint, sequins, and paste (Slovenz, 1987; Sung, 1983; R. Young, personal communication, April, 19, 1994). The lion can open and close its mouth. Some lions have movable ears and eyelids.

Among these three popular styles of Lion Dancing are different types of masks and performing techniques. However, the body of lion always covers the dancers with three to six feet of cloth consisting of different colors and decorations which represents the lion's body. The traditional Lion Dance is always accompanied by percussion from a big drum, a gong, and several pairs of cymbals.

This chapter began with my tracing the historical background of lion figures from ancient China to our present day. I then introduced the connection of lion figures with religious arts, Chinese beliefs, daily activities, and living environments. I then continued by explaining how a mythical figure became a popular celebration activity. I also explained the symbolic meanings of lion figures and the multi-dimensional, complex significance of Lion Dancing within Chinese communities. Next, I pointed out its relationships within Chinese beliefs and culture and in conclusion, I depicted the three popular categories of Lion Dancing with detailed explanations of the Southern style of lion. Lion Dancing combines artistic, religious, and entertainment elements in a unique way. In general, Lion Dancing has been an integral part of the Chinese culture for

countless generations and continues to be performed all over the world in Chinese communities in a form that has remained consistent (Wang, 1990).

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#### Chapter Four Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> approximately 424 – 449 C.E.,
- <sup>2</sup> approximately 140 – 87 B.C.E.,
- <sup>3</sup> approximately 87 – 89 C.E.
- <sup>4</sup> approximately 132 – 135 C.E.
- <sup>5</sup> approximately 684 – 710 C.E.
- <sup>6</sup> approximately 618 – 904 C.E.
- <sup>7</sup> modern Nepal.
- <sup>8</sup> approximately 404 – 222 B.C.E.
- <sup>9</sup> approximately 334 B.C.E.,
- <sup>10</sup> in today's India
- <sup>11</sup> approximately 200 B.C.E.
- <sup>12</sup> approximately between 25 – 219 C.E.,
- <sup>13</sup> approximately 220 - 265 C.E.
- <sup>14</sup> approximately 265 – 419 C.E.
- <sup>15</sup> approximately 587 C.E.
- <sup>16</sup> approximately 386 – 557 C.E.

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- <sup>17</sup> approximately 598 – 904 C.E.
- <sup>18</sup> approximately 598 – 904 C.E.
- <sup>19</sup> approximately 360 – 1300 B.C.E.
- <sup>20</sup> approximately 460 – 540 B.C.E.
- <sup>21</sup> approximately 90 – 530 B.C.E.
- <sup>22</sup> approximately 505 – 540 B.C.E.
- <sup>23</sup> approximately 495 540 B.C.E. and 580 - 750 B.C.E.
- <sup>24</sup> approximately 79 – 624 B.C.E.
- <sup>25</sup> a National holiday, the National Teacher's Day, that reflects the importance of teachers in Chinese culture and their lineage to Confucius.
- <sup>26</sup> a special ritual dance performed by 64 young boys with a slow traditional and ceremonial ritual music on September 28, Confucius's birthday.
- <sup>27</sup> approximately 157 – 1112 B.C.E.
- <sup>28</sup> approximately 865 – 1952 C.E.
- <sup>29</sup> approximately 02 BCE – 220 C.E.
- <sup>30</sup> Kao Chang was a country with ties of friendship to ancient China during the North South dynasty (420 – 587 C. E.), Sui dynasty (589 – 614 C. E.), and the Tang dynasty (618 – 904 C. E.).
- <sup>31</sup> the Japanese tried unsuccessfully to destroy that bridge during the World War II
- <sup>32</sup> winged lion grandpa
- <sup>33</sup> a stone carved with three Chinese calligraphy shih gong dong.
- <sup>34</sup> approximately 24 – 449 C.E.
- <sup>35</sup> approximately 24 – 449 C.E.

- 
- <sup>36</sup> approximately 20 – 907 C.E
- <sup>37</sup> the music/dance for peace
- <sup>38</sup> 16<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E
- <sup>39</sup> people who live in north area of the Yangtze river.
- <sup>40</sup> people who live in south area of Yangtze river.
- <sup>41</sup> approximately 450 – 1911 C.E.
- <sup>42</sup> *pei ging shih* means the lion of the city of Pei ging a.k.a. Beijing and formerly known as Peking.
- <sup>43</sup> the mask is called *Tsou Yu* in classical Chinese literature. Tsou translates to “official in charge of driving carriages” and Yu means “to expect, to anticipate”.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### COLLECTING THE JEWELS: MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

Throughout the history of the United States, “waves of immigrants” (Staley, 1994, p. 1) from the world over have contributed to the complexity of American society . Between 1981 and 1990, more than 8 million legal immigrants settled in the United States. A large but undetermined number of illegal immigrants also enter the United States every year (Banks, 1997). Today more than 275 million people inhabit the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Bruce Mitchell and Robert Salsbury (2000) state, “Without a doubt, the United States of America is one of the most complicated nations on the globe” (p. 1). Among its citizens are European-Americans, African-Americans, Native Americans, Eskimo, Aleut, Latin-Americans, Chicanos, Asian-Americans, Pacific Islander-American, and many other ethnic groups. The United States has become a nation of people of multi-ethnic origins and, thus, of many subcultures (Duarte & Smith, 2000; Johansen, Collins, & Johnson, 1982; Mitchell & Salsbury, 2000). Educators are increasingly conscious of the need to develop multicultural awareness (Staley, 1994). Living in this culturally diverse society, people need to have an understanding and/or appreciation of other cultures (Banks, 1997; Duarte and Smith, 2000; Edwards & Usher, 2000; Diaz, Massialas & Xanthopoulos, 1999; Mitchell & Salsbury, 2000; Prevots, 1991; Staley, 1994).

It is anticipated that by the year of 2020, approximately 46% of American elementary school students will represent non-Anglo ethnic minorities (Anrig, Baratz-Swoned, & Goertz, 1987; Pallas, Natriello, & McDill, 1989; Nieto, 1999). These students will bring a variety of experiences, beliefs, languages, and cultures to their classrooms. I believe that this will bring an unprecedented opportunity for students to share their backgrounds and learn from one another. This, in turn, will help to form and increase everyone's understanding of the opportunities that all can reap from sharing different ways of being human. As Nathan Glazer (1981) commented, the United States remains the gathering place of the nations, but that the nation itself is a cumulative product of many different groups, each maintaining language and culture. Thus, the American public educational system (grades K-12) must participate in transmitting and developing an understanding of cultural diversity. Teaching students about diverse cultural concepts, practices, and values helps remove the fear and misunderstanding that so often is seen when two or more different groups confront each other. The first step to understanding is knowledge, and transmitting the knowledge, mores and traditions of other groups through cooperative learning. Direct contact increases non-hierarchical interaction to alleviate prejudices that students may unconsciously harbor. Multicultural literacy must be focused upon direct yet informal interaction and is a necessary if our students are to become "knowledgeable, reflective, and caring citizens in the twenty-first century" (Banks, 1997, p. 13).



American history is replete with instances of intercultural contact. Indeed, the union of the colonies into a new nation was an experiment in intercultural relations. As Alexander Hamilton remarked in the first of the *Federalist Papers*, it was reserved to the people of this country to “decide the important question, whether societies of men are really capable or not of establishing good government from reflection and choice, or whether they are forever destined to depend for their political constitutions on accident and force” (Hamilton, 1961, *Federalist* #1, p. 1). Implicit in this quote is the thought that America is and ought to be a nation where societies can reflect upon and choose good government. To choose, however, we must first understand the societies that comprise this country and constantly remember that this country is a nation of groups of chaotically differing ethnic, religious, racial, and cultural backgrounds (Cortes, 1993).

Our society is based on diversity. From this diversity can come either strength or division. To remain strong as a nation, we must foster an appreciation of our diversity through a systematic, consistent program that includes the different cultures that comprise the nation. Since the 1920's two central themes have permeated American education: equal opportunity and mass education (Johansen et al., 1982, p. 280). Fulfilling these themes in our pluralistic society requires multicultural education (Johansen et al., 1982, p. 282) to be at the core not the periphery of the general curriculum.

### Multicultural Education

Multicultural education is, in its broadest sense, an “education for freedom” (Banks, 1994, p. 81). James A. Banks (1999) maintains that multicultural education should

provide students the opportunity to develop “the skills, attitudes, and knowledge needed to function within their ethnic culture, the mainstream culture, and within and across other ethnic cultures” (p. 2). Joan Thrower Timm (1996) maintains that multicultural education encompasses a “broad spectrum of concepts, all of which are important in order for students to develop an awareness of the way in which people’s identity is inevitably derived from their culture and their history” (p. 2). Finally, since diversity is one of the major issues of our times (Kalanatzis & Cope, 1999), multicultural education is equally as important for members of the dominant culture as it is for members of minority groups.

In his book, *The Aim of Education*, Alfred North Whitehead (1957) declares, “Education should be useful” (p. 2). The purpose of multicultural education is to provide sequenced learning for students of the cultures that surround them so that the students can acquire the skills, attitudes, and knowledge that they will need to participate and function effectively in society (Banks, 1994; Bank and Banks, 1995b; Banks, 1997, Banks, 1999). In addition, we must recognize that members of differing cultures also share a great deal in common. People are all members of cultures, which, broadly defined, are ways of seeing, perceiving, and believing (Noel, 2000; Cooper, 1991; LaPointe-Crump, 1991). And, although we often focus on the differences among groups of citizens, we must realize that all cultures have a great deal in common (Grant, 1997). We must teach this to educators so that they, in turn, can teach our children. Multicultural education in teacher education programs is of paramount importance in reaching this goal. In this chapter I will explore the reasons for multicultural education and the need for multicultural

education programs as part of teacher education. I will discuss some of the different groups or cultures that comprise the American nation and will propose a model curriculum for achieving this goal.

### Progressive Education and the Multicultural Movement

For education to have meaning, it must include more than scraps of information (Whitehead, 1957, p. 1). Education presupposes that the facts the students acquire can be used in a meaningful way or, in Whitehead's words (p. 5), the knowledge will become inert and lifeless. Multicultural education curriculum must, also, be more than a meaningless collection of facts, token holiday events or a month devoted to awareness of a particular segment of the population.

John Dewey's work epitomizes the philosophy behind the multicultural education movement. Under the theory of progressive education, teachers and students have learned to emphasize education as a social process and have re-interpreted knowledge as the reconstruction of experience (Cooper, 1988, p. 3). The progressive movement is characterized by viewing the learner as an experiencing person who has freedom of choice. Group learning is emphasized, and content is not compartmentalized (Johnsen et al. 1982, p. 244). Dewey's philosophy fostered a child-centered education, an educational movement that "made teachers more aware of the growing human being and personal relations" (Spring, 1996, p. 235). This emphasis on personal needs, self worth, and self esteem are all hallmarks of multicultural education in which educators view and respect the background that forms the physical and spiritual core of each individual. To

fully appreciate the individual, we must know and understand the person's unique background.

Dewey believed that all knowledge has a social origin and that the principles of morality and the organization of society constantly change to adapt to new situations and beliefs (Spring, 1996, p. 236). Multicultural learning illustrates this principle since different cultures respond differently to the same set of stimuli. Thus, by learning how different groups of people respond to the same needs and concerns, students can learn that there are different ways in which they, too, can respond to changes in their own lives. This can be particularly important during the adolescent years which is an especially difficult developmental phase (Grossman, 1995, p. 148). Contemporary interest in brain research and developmental education does not negate the role of family and culture to shaping the mind.

There is no absolutism in the Dewey system. Rather, Dewey and his disciples view the world as a constantly changing organism and education as a way to respond to these constant changes. Cooperative learning deepens students' connection to the shared world. Learning first about other cultures, students can next move on to cooperating with others. The role of curriculum is to shape and sequence experiences that meet the needs of the changing adolescent.

### Curriculum Development

In the development of any curriculum, we should first focus on the central issues. Why, in other words, do we teach at all? Why have a structured setting, and for what purpose(s) do schools exist? This question is central to recognizing that multicultural

education is necessary. Of course, as I originally maintained, multicultural education presupposes teachers who are competent and capable of preserving those things that are “true, good, and of greatest value” (Venable, 1967, p. 43). Once these things are identified, we can preserve and extend our knowledge of them to meet the demands of a changing society via the learning process. Problem solving is the zenith of learning. The well educated person then is that person who can solve problems and adapt to new situations. Dewey believed that the value of learning lay in its usefulness so that society could and would be able to solve problems which all people face (Venable, 1967, p. 83; Whitehead, 1957, p. 2). Critical thinking is fostered when students analyze and make their own judgments (Nieto, Young, Tran, & Pang, 1994). To develop this ability, students must look at their own values, assumptions, and biases as well as identify the values, assumptions, and biases of other cultures, beyond those of the majority, dominant or mainstream culture.

Schools must confront their relationship to society as a whole. How do and why should schools mold the students who attend? In every society we find methods by which young people are taught the mores, traditions, and values of their own culture (Steiner, Arnone, & McClellan, 1980, p. 50). These canonical lessons indicate how a youth should respond when faced with specific problems. The younger generation is taught the roles which they will assume in their adult lives and the values and roles of other community members (Venable, 1967, p. 93). In modern American society our youth now face and will continue to confront a host of changing circumstances and a variety of people. Ubiquitous to the global community is the ability to respond to

changing demands and to relate to people from many differing background beliefs and linguistic systems. Multicultural education helps prepare youth for an ever – changing world.

Change is the single greatest characteristic of modern times (Venable, 1967, p. 93; Johansen et al., 1982, p. 238). Over the course of the last century American society has radically changed from a predominantly ingrown agrarian society with close-knit groups of kinfolk to an industrial complex with nuclear family support and now to a metropolitan association of people from different backgrounds who superficially interact in a dot. com, single parent, multi-national environment (J. LaPointe-Crump, personal communication, January 16, 2001). Schools in this new society assume a much greater importance as a source of unification as well as a source of mediation of cultural differences (Steiner, et al., 1980, p. 25).

As a pluralistic society (Johansen, et al., 1982, p. 168), Americans commonly talk of American pop culture but, in reality, this is an amalgam of the different cultures making up the American population (Stanek and Hartmann, 1973, p. 3). As educators we must know the cultures, their distinct attributes, and how they interface and ultimately combine to evolve a renewing cultural energy.

No culture is superior to any other (Garcia, 1991, p. 13). Some cultures are more comfortable for certain people, but that comfort emanates from familiarity. Fulfilling the need to teach America's young people about how to deal and react in a fluid pluralistic society (Mann, 1979, p. 50), multicultural education seeks "to incorporate the cultural expressions of groups that reflect their experiences in a society with enduring racial and



economic divisions” (Bigler, 1999, p. 11). World-wide computer access and convenient travel have brought the world and its cultures to the homes of our children (J. LaPointe-Crump, personal communication, January 16, 2001). Consequently, traditional education emphasizing the beliefs held by the dominant group is not complete nor adequate “but still essential” (J. Cooper, personal communication, March 15, 2001). Traditional American education has, as stated by Carlos Diaz, Byron Massialas, and John Xanthopoulos (1999), placed the nation at the “hub of all knowledge” (p. 5) while ignoring or de-emphasizing the role and impact of non-dominant groups. This standard is not acceptable in the new millenium.

To conceive of methodology for teaching multicultural education in a pluralistic society, educators must first agree on a definition for the terms used (see Chapter One). Culture has myriad meanings (Banks, 1994, p. 50), because each person may be a microculture (Garcia, 1991, p. 67) with his or her own experiences combining to form a very unique sub-grouping. Yet, to view each person as an independent culture is confusing and makes useful generalizations meaningless. Therefore, we need to understand that every one has the freedom to value, choose, and practice his/her favorite culture, but must allow other people to have their freedom to evaluate, select, and practice their favorite culture as well.

Multicultural education presupposes the interrelationship of many cultures and suggests a paradigm for how these cultures can and should be included in a classroom setting. The term multicultural education has meant different ideas in different time periods. The first to confront the conundrum of multicultural approaches were those

educators who subscribed to the idea of the school system as a pressure cooker for teaching majority social norms (Rasool & Curtis, 2000).

During 1980's, multicultural education mirrored the theory of American society as a melting pot of the different cultures it comprised (J. Cooper, personal communication, March 15, 2001). Many students attending school did not speak English at home, therefore American schools sought to assimilate children from a plethora of immigrant backgrounds and to mold them into small reproductions of twentieth century Anglo-Americans (Baruth & Manning, 1992, p. 22). Cultural diversity was decried, and children were punished for infractions such as speaking in their native tongue (H. Levine, personal communication, December 27, 1995). In later years, while the punishment decreased, the emotional turmoil remained; children whose original language was other than English found themselves at a social as well as linguistic disadvantage. Jana Nieto (2000) related her frustration when recalling the effects of the discrimination she experienced when she attended New York City schools.

As a young child growing up in Brooklyn, New York, during the 1940s, I experienced firsthand the effects of relative poverty and discrimination. In the schools I attended, a common perception was that my culture and language were inferior. I spoke only Spanish when I entered first grade and I was immediately confronted with the arduous task of learning a second language while my developed native language was all but ignored. Almost fifty years later, I still remember the frustration of groping for English words I did not know to express thoughts I could say very capably in Spanish. Equally vivid are memories of some teachers' expectations that my classmates and I would not do well in school because of our language and cultural differences. This explains my fourth-grade teacher's response when mine was the only hand to go up when she asked whether anybody in the class wanted to go to college. "Well, that's okay," she said, "because we always need people to clean toilets". (p. 1)

Children have little or no protection from the assaults on their persons or cultures since their parents may be linguistically challenged by a language they neither speak nor understand (Timm, 1996, p. 81). Let me tell you about Mrs. Levine, an 88-year-old Phoenix woman. So traumatized was she by the punishments she received in a Brooklyn public school for not understanding English that she was haunted years later. She relates that when, as an adult, she worked in a pharmacy and one of her grammar school teachers entered, she felt compelled to leave the store rather than serve the teacher (H. Levine, personal communication, December 27, 1995).

As with many other students from different cultural backgrounds, both Mrs. Levine and Sonia Nieto felt that the problem was not with the school but with themselves (Nieto, 2000). Happily this situation has not prevailed, and multicultural and bi-lingual education helps immigrant children once the dominant society learned to appreciate cultural diversity (Baruth & Manning, 1992, p. 22). Teachers have learned to appreciate these languages and dialects and refrain from passing a value judgment on the students' home language. They avoid generalizations and notice when they are making a judgment about a child or parent (Ross, 1995). Merely because a student is from a disadvantaged group does not mean that the student is "stupid." While teachers must teach standard English if they wish their students to be able to compete, the teacher must be sensitized to the idea that other forms of communication are not "wrong."

### Goals and implementation of multicultural education.

Among the goals for multicultural education I stress building tolerance for others, eliminating racism, teaching students to view the world from different perspectives, and learning the specifics about how others live through direct experiences with different cultural practices and traditions (Spring, 1996, p. 164). Multicultural education also helps students acculturate or adapt to mainstream society while preserving their own heritages and dignity (Cortes, 1993). Other goals include increasing the academic achievement of students from different ethnic, gender, and cultural groups and helping members of victimized groups develop a more positive attitude toward their own group (Banks, 1994, p. 9). Mainstream Americans reap benefits from multicultural education since students from the majority culture rarely have the opportunity to observe and question the beliefs with which they were raised (Banks, 1994, p. 7). The opportunity for children to see themselves as part of a larger society and to inculcate a sense of social responsibility extends a child's world beyond the immediate family or social group (Ramsey, 1987, p. 4) permitting the child to make choices about her or his future.

### Multicultural Education and Civil Rights

Multicultural education received its largest impetus from the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s which, itself, was an outgrowth of the historic 1954 United States Supreme Court decision of *Brown v. Board of Education, Topeka Kansas*. Prior to this landmark decision, schools were severely and openly segregated in both the north and the south. Under an earlier 1896 decision, *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the Supreme Court had maintained that segregated facilities were lawful as long as the facilities were equal.

Under *Plessy*, segregated schools created no badge of inferiority. It was not until *Brown* that the Supreme Court recognized that the separation was the evil to avoid. No matter how equivalent the texts and facilities, segregated students could not and did not receive equal education.

Despite the ruling in the *Brown* case, this situation existed in many jurisdictions until Congress passed the 1964 Civil Rights Act which provided a means for the federal government to force school desegregation (Spring, 1996, p. 112). The result of this legislation was the rapid desegregation of schools (Spring, 1996, p. 112), followed by the equally rapid introduction of students with diverse backgrounds into what had formerly been a more unified school setting. While the decision was focused upon African American minorities, the rights of other minorities were affected. This then resulted in an increased need to confront the differences all minority students face and to confront them as a celebration of differences. "Accordingly, schools should focus on the cultural enrichment of all students through programs aimed at the preservation and extension of cultural pluralism" (Weil, 1998, p. 16). Multicultural education is now an accepted part of the academic world (Banks, 1994, p. 8).

James Banks suggests three different approaches to multicultural education: curriculum reform, achievement, and inter-group education (Banks, 1994, p. 9). In reforming curriculum, educators incorporate material about diverse cultural groups into the curriculum so that students will be able to see things from a new perspective. One program is content-based with students accumulating facts about other cultures. Novels about other cultures may be used in this approach (Johnson and Smith, 1993, p. 48) as

long as care is used in the selection process. A second program emphasizes achievement and is geared toward increasing the academic performance of students from formerly stigmatized ethnic and racial backgrounds, female students, students from lower class background, and students with disabilities. This approach incorporates a series of remedial programs to aid students who have been disadvantaged. The programs include bilingual and bicultural education as well as special tutorials in reading, math, and language arts (Banks, 1994, p. 9). The third and last program calls for inter-group education; it most closely approximates the generally held view of multicultural education. This approach aims at helping students develop positive attitudes toward other racial, ethnic, and cultural groups by desegregating classes and by helping members of minority groups develop more positive attitudes toward their own cultural group (Banks, 1994, p. 9). These approaches presuppose that there is one correct methodology for teaching cultural diversity. This may not necessarily be true.

Cortes (1993) also posits several approaches to multicultural education. In his paradigm he suggests that schools need to enhance students' abilities to function within mainstream culture by increasing their academic prowess. In addition, many students from non-mainstream backgrounds may need to learn situational cultural appropriateness so that they understand when, where, and why they may need to adapt to different norms. In turn, schools must draw on the diversity of their students and reaffirm the value of this diversity via group resource acculturation which brings the diversity of the world into the adolescent classroom and allows students to see the value of their own cultural experiences (Cortes, 1993). Finally, a civic commitment to acculturation should



encourage all citizens to focus on their roles in the community at large. This goal emphasizes using one's individual gifts for all of society rather than for a small section or microcosm.

### Implementation.

One problem is implementation. Education remains structured to support methods and skills that are successful with middle class American students whose parents are familiar with American society and schools, and who have the time and commitment to participate with the schools in educating their children. This is not the reality that many of our culturally diverse students know, nor the reality that many of our public schools face. Some culturally diverse students come from backgrounds that are characterized by poverty, an inability to deal in the English language, immigrant status, neglect, or a history of victimization (Timm, 1996, p.65; Garcia, 1991, p. 29-35). Programs designed to merely familiarize students with the stories or facts of other cultures will not truly meet their needs nor help them to live in a culturally diverse world. The program should be a comprehensive curriculum shaped to fit the particular group of students.

Remediation is not the complete answer. There is most definitely not a "one size fits all" method; teaching styles should be adapted to fit the needs of these students since they may not profit from traditional educational approaches (Grossman, 1995, p. 119).

### My volunteer students' background .

All my volunteer students came from middle class families with well-educated parents who immigrated to the United States from Taiwan after having completed their studies. They chose to work here and become citizens. Among my 14 volunteers, 13

students are American born Chinese, 10 of them had attended the English as Second Language program when they were at kindergarten. Today, they are all A students, take private piano or violin lessons, and attend weekend Chinese schools. It is no surprise that their parents want them to learn Chinese culture because Chinese make up a large minority population in the United States, and children learn very little about Chinese culture at their American daily school (U.S. Census, 2000).

I wish to point out that not all models of multicultural education really respect indigenous differences. For example, Banks (1994) does not always grapple directly with primary problems, but, instead, postulates a variety of paradigms that promote assimilation rather than the diversity he advocates. His achievement hypothesis is geared toward remediation. Via this method, disadvantaged students are brought to the ostensible level of their more fortunate peers. He disregards the benefits that the students may derive from their own culture but seeks, instead, to promote those aspects of "success" that characterize the majority culture. This focus is based on a cultural deprivation paradigm that first was popularized in the 1960's and is once again gaining in popularity (p. 8).

The cultural deprivation paradigm assumes that low-income students do not experience school success because they come from low-income homes or single parent families. Adherents to this position believe that the students' culture is at fault and generalize this culture as impoverished (Banks, 1994, p. 48) and substandard. This theory is astounding in its failure to account for the many success stories dealing with

low-income immigrant and single parent families. Nor does it account for immigrant children in the middle class. These successes are usually related to the family's emphasis on education and not simply on the economic or sociological status of the family as the many recent achievements of Japanese, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Russian immigrant families demonstrate (M. Harris, personal communication, December 31, 1995). Banks suggests further that disadvantaged students frequently perform poorly in school because their cultures are different from the dominant culture of the school (Banks, 1994, p. 49). Students will improve quickly when the schools reflect these minority cultures and incorporate cross-cultural teaching strategies.

Grossman (1995), on the other hand, suggests contextually appropriate education and advocates teachers first learning about the cultures of the children they teach so that they can understand the responses and the behavior the children make. Teacher reticence and awkwardness is melted by their own intimate contact with the other. As an example, Grossman relates the difference between American and Japanese education. In referencing Japanese education she writes that there is a great deal of memorization, therefore Japanese students expect a teacher to lecture rather than to ask questions. When confronted with a Socratic teaching style, students may find the class difficult to understand and downright embarrassing (Grossman, 1995, p. 120-121). In dealing with African American students, DeWitt (1994) challenges teachers to reflect upon their teaching strategies so that the teacher can create a culturally inclusive curriculum. To begin this process, DeWitt suggests that the teachers devise strategies to help understand their own sensitivity to the cultural realities of their students. Teachers should first learn

who they are and where they came from since this self-knowledge is a prerequisite to understanding and respecting other cultures. A critical examination of their own identity, biases, and prejudices gives insight to teachers as to how their personal perspectives shape their own worldview. Teachers must also confront personal fears, because fear maintains prejudice. Tolerance never exists in a biased atmosphere, and no child should have his or her education influenced by bias (Carlson, 1994).

Cultural diversity requires that we jettison the idea that there is a “best way” to approach and solve learning problems. Frank Gilbreth, an industrial engineer at the beginning of the twentieth century, was known for his “one best way” theory in order to increase efficiency in the industrialized workplace. Too often, educators may unconsciously subscribe to this philosophy in an attempt to create a guaranteed program that will provide success for all youngsters. Standardized testing does nothing to decrease the search for a “best way” paradigm. And, too often, educators fail to achieve this goal because there may simply not be one guaranteed program to enhance all students in all areas comprising our pluralistic society. Instead, perhaps educators should focus on the ultimate goal: teaching children, all children. DeWitt (1994) addresses this goal when she asks teachers to confront their own beliefs so that they can better monitor their own responses to their culturally diverse students. I have found that teachers, even within the same culture as the students, must face openly the shifts in culture and gender that separates teacher from students. Similarly, Canella (1998) reflects on the role of the teachers themselves and notes through her own research that often multicultural engagement is hampered by Christian prejudice and forms of white privilege.

In the case of small minorities where students from a nation like Taiwan may be scattered throughout the school, it is easy to let these students fall through the cracks. But, instructional materials must relate to the cultural backgrounds of their students in that motivation to learn cannot be separated from culture (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995). Too often teachers experience failure because the teacher cannot identify what can and will motivate particular students. They act and react as if the educational process were simply the force feeding of specified facts into a predetermined number of unwilling brains. This model is one of manipulation and behavioral control that relies on external motivation and reinforcement. Students are manipulated into learning by a set of rewards and punishments (Strong, Silver, & Robinson, 1995). This methodology is largely unsuccessful with students who do not share the background of mainstream America. Undoubtedly the “carrot and stick” approach to learning has its advocates and its short term successes.

A better approach may be to first determine what factors motivate students. When I originally addressed the concept of culture, I wrote of the basic similarities between all cultures: All cultures incorporate ways for their adherents and proponents to react to particular problems or stimuli in the environment.

When teachers confront the basic ways in which students from a variety of cultural backgrounds respond to problems, in all cases the problem is learning. Students learn when they are motivated to learn. This is no astounding truth. It is simply the result of careful observation. Very young children constantly learn. It is one consistent response that the very young make, and very young children, regardless of their cultural

background, all learn the same basic skills because developmental growth represents the development of the mind. One has only to watch a baby learning to walk to identify this truth. The child will consistently practice until the child masters walking. No child practices walking because there will be an "A" or a gold star once the child has succeeded. The child practices to walk because the child is self-motivated by an innate desire to walk. Similarly children learn to talk, to respond to the adults in their communities, and to relate and function within their own cultural world. Barring a physical or mental disability that precludes the movement, children from all cultures learn to walk, talk, draw, and sing without rewards or external motivations from their parents or teachers. Children learn because they are internally programmed to learn. I call this the *learning spirit*. As educators we must capture this learning spirit and allow it to motivate not only young children but also our school age and adolescent youth.

The learning spirit may not be enough. Children do not live in a vacuum, and only in the most perfect world would the internal motivations provided by the learning spirit be all that is required. Teachers work with those students in whom the learning spirit appears to be absent or on vacation.

Four objectives can help invigorate the learning process. These goals are curiosity, success, originality, and satisfying relationships (Strong et al., 1995). Students must be shown the criteria for success, the incremental skills they need to be successful, and that success is valuable. A student's curiosity must be aroused by presenting information that relates to the students' own lives (Strong et al., 1995). Playfulness and games, mystery and intrigue are all motivational. An accepting atmosphere is requisite; "Authentic



multiculturalism requires that teachers understand and respect the children that they teach” (Boutte, 1999, p. 114).

Students shall be treated fairly so that our teaching relates to their own experiences. For instance, some new immigrant children are smart and fluent in her/his mother language but not in English. In order for them to understand what the teacher says in English, schools need to provide bilingual teachers or volunteer parents to act as translators before they understand English. Some students may feel uncomfortable with a new classroom environment or around with new classmates. Thus a teacher should be aware of the situation and use methods, such as friendly conversations, games, or little mini babies to help them reduce and release uncomfortable feelings.

Most desires are learned from family and cultural associations. Children learn to recognize and desire those items that others within their cultural milieu find desirable. These culturally determined items, thoughts, and feelings all contribute to the child's learning spirit because they help the child to visualize, imagine, and verbalize those items which the child will find intriguing.

By now, I hope you are as convinced as I am that multicultural education programs should not merely be content driven. Too many discrete bits of information for students or teachers to keep pace with compartmentalizes and privileges the knowledge rather than interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary relationships (Costa & Liebmann, 1997). Traditional curricula, originally based on a patriarchal western and male oriented methodology, is no longer appropriate in the modern world (Costa & Liebmann, 1997). Today curriculum and pedagogy must be considered as an interactive process to aid

students in dealing with the problems they not only currently face but finding solutions for problems that will not arise until some later time. I recommend a transdisciplinary approach to curriculum design. A transdisciplinary methodology emanates from a holistic approach that is a culturally responsive way to provide a learning environment.

#### A Transdisciplinary Methodology as a Holistic Approach

How do we prepare teachers for a transdisciplinary curriculum? An effective teacher education program must consider the elements already discussed. Each teacher is a student of life, one who brings to his or her pedagogy a personalized cultural background. The effective pre-service program for contemporary teacher education takes these variables into account and clearly specifies its goals; namely to develop and encourage culturally diverse teachers so that they can effectively respond to and guide a variety of students from varied backgrounds. Teachers must experience the dynamic cooperative approach to multicultural learning themselves. No one could effectively teach what has not been personally experienced in terms of a process. While one may easily teach a collection of facts that the teacher did not know at first hand, it is far better for the teacher to experience the process of holistic multicultural education first hand.

The holistic approach allows the teachers to focus first on cross cultural commonalities. As human institutions, all cultures share commonalities which may help to establish cultural bridges that enable us to better understand and value each culture. For example, all children require food and shelter and some type of nurturing (Ralph, 1995). By exploring and comparing how different peoples meet basic needs, students can feel the uniformity of patterns that harmonize our cultures while learning to appreciate

the intrinsic differences among unique cultural practices. Students can compare and contrast the means of meeting basic needs while sharing their own basic cultural and family-centered similarities. Human natural disasters, such as earth quakes, AIDS or polio outbreaks, and avalanches, forefronts our sense of world community (even from avowed enemies) to solve the crises of famine, pestilence, disease, shelter, safe food, and water supply. People come together by setting aside deep divisions to meet basic needs of survival. Can we not do this on a daily basis?

Educators must learn to appreciate and enjoy learning from their students, regardless of their origins. These educators must also confront how to deal with the emotional component that can and may become associated with controversial subject matter. Often students from differing backgrounds may unleash first hand experiences of past bigotry or cultural conflict. Are teachers ready to resolve conflicted traumas (Ralph, 1995)? Only if they have already confronted and thought about their own responses to these difficult, sensitive areas. Analysis and critical thinking in these sensitive areas is a vital albeit only one aspect of mandatory pre-service preparation.

Educators, new to the idea of multicultural education, must also have the opportunity to generate knowledge about the many cultures with which they are already familiar. Self- or group-directed studies are invaluable in this area. For instance, one might assign pre-service students to investigate the prices and kinds of goods in differing neighborhoods. Beverly Tatum, a professor at Mount Holyoke College who teaches the psychology of racism, suggested that students shop at grocery stores in neighborhoods of differing racial composition and compare the quality and variety of goods and services as

well as the interactions between shoppers and store personnel (Amster, 1994). Students may also look at videos dealing with the culture, listen to music, read fiction, go to dance clubs, art exhibits, ethnic festivals, religious services, and visit with members of the culture as a means of immersing themselves within the culture.

From these casual experiences uniting different cultures, personal biases must be admitted and emotional responses integrated since they can give off subtle signs of prejudice via the choice of words, body language, aesthetic and political reactions, and teaching materials. Teachers must reconsider the “facts” that they were once taught, especially if they experienced policies that stressed acculturation, assimilation, and “melting pot” paradigms.

A transdisciplinary educational program pays heed to all cultures without approving or disapproving any one culture. Too often, multicultural literature attends to the major cultures such as Hispanic, Afro-American, Asian American, and “WASP.” This attitude can be devastating because it treats a variety of cultures under broad generalized, stereotypical categories. There is more than one “white” culture, similarly, African-Americans represent a variety of cultural and geographical backgrounds. Japanese traditions are not copies of Chinese beliefs, yet both are grouped together as “Asian.” Bland generalizations about cultures must be dismantled.

The role of media to perpetuate, correct or invent stereotypes is an important part of the preparation and study. Are blacks depicted in roles of perpetrators and victims; Chinese as laundry owners and chefs; or Hispanics as dope runners, servants and farm laborers? Ideally, training should include a portion of time living in another culture.

Field research, participation in Peace Corps type projects, “adopting” a family in one's home town, writing to a pen pal, or attending neighborhood cultural festivities are all ways of exposing our future teachers to a variety of cultures. MyLuong Tran, Russell Young, and Joseph DiLella (1994) refer to this as a cultural plunge and report that the plunge has been effective in reducing racism, while promoting self awareness and cultural empathy.

Simply bringing students together with peoples from other cultures may be counterproductive. Mere interaction with adults from other cultures does not decrease misunderstanding (Weaver, 1995). Like an ethnologist who studies cultural practices, students must be immersed in the other culture for a long enough time period so that they go beyond reaffirming their own cultural identity to being curious about the deeper meaning of things. The strangeness of another culture may initially reinforce a desire to remain safe and secure with the beliefs with which we were raised. The program must be long enough to allow students to overcome any fears and misbelieve they may harbor.

One way to expose students to multicultural education is by encouraging student teachers to join together with other student teachers from other cultures or by developing a mentoring program whereby student teachers are paired with children from a different culture, emulating the Big Brother-Big Sister program. The program must be safe. Students must feel safe so that they will be open with sharing personal experiences and interconnecting freely. Tutoring or working with people from different cultures exposes student teachers to biases (Bollin and Finkel, 1995) that they might not otherwise have recognized and admitted. From recognition of biases, what happens next? This is too

limited an exploration and justification for getting people of differing cultures together. What else can occur? An internship in a multicultural environment is a definite asset.

A networking system whereby students from one area of the United States would spend a summer or semester in another locale is recommended. One way to approach language diversity in preparing for the internship is to incorporate literature, dance, and art making into the scholastic program. The expressive arts provide a window into and a threshold to the lives of others (Johnson and Smith, 1993, p. 5). They invite teachers and students to familiarize themselves with other cultures while remaining safely within their own. Teacher training programs must expose teachers to available literary music, dance, visual arts, and play sources so that teachers can choose appropriate selections.

Teachers should not restrict their activities to literary sources. Instead, they should locate instructional materials that portray people of varied cultures and seek to locate people who can speak to or interact with the class (Phuntsog, 1995). For educators to actively incorporate a multicultural approach in their classrooms, teachers must be convinced of the value of this form of teaching. Instructors must appreciate the differences between their own backgrounds and those of their students in order for the teacher to successfully deal with students from other, more diverse, cultures.

One way for an instructor to achieve this goal is via the family home visit, or by inviting their students or the volunteer parents to the class and to share their unique culture through dancing, singing, drawing, story telling, playing games, watching culturally related films, and allowing students to ask questions. Through first hand experiences, students can learn and understand what ways other ethnic groups live, their



food, clothing, and how they celebrate their holidays, then to describe the significant meanings behind these aspects of the host culture. Through the activities of dancing, art making, and playing, a teacher can share meaningfully certain cultural values of other ethnic groups in ways that are natural to the learning and life process.

Multicultural education transforms the focus in the schools. Many students in the middle and upper grades experience curricula that emphasize the accumulation of academic facts and are examined according to rigid performance standards. The results are that minority students who quickly understand the mainstream language, English, find their studies easier and remain in school. My volunteer students and my children benefited from one multicultural education program, English as a Second Language (ESL).

Emphasis on a holistic and multicultural approach may not equally serve the academic needs of all students. Multicultural education focuses on the process of learning and incorporates knowledge about the great diversity of the cultures within our nation and the world. This knowledge does not have to be at odds with a more traditional academic curriculum. Multicultural education encourages a transdisciplinary model that can be integrated with other curriculum approaches (Davidman & Davidman, 1994, p. 183). Thus a multicultural education approach is not a series of separate units but is integrated throughout the curriculum and should emphasize a positive attitude in all students by recognizing and respecting their status as citizens of their family, community, nation, and world. When students learn that people from other cultures face many of the same problems and pleasures that they do and study the means that different cultures

use to meet these concerns, a greater appreciation and sense of self as part of a global community results. It is an issue of familiarity, cooperation, and respect. The multicultural approach to curriculum and pedagogy illustrates what cultures share as well as what makes each culture distinct. Finally, students learn to appreciate multiple groups and discourse tools for interacting with the dominant culture in ways that celebrate the uniqueness that gives each person his or her own individual self worth.

### Transdisciplinary Curriculum

Through this study, I have come to understand a need to expand the traditional definition of multicultural education to focus upon the role of the arts as a non-heirarchical, creative educational process. A Transdisciplinary curriculum (J. Lapointe-Crump, personal communication, February 18, 2001) goes beyond a multi-disciplinary approach in that it combines many disciplines to create an experiential curriculum. Transdisciplinary education involves total immersion experiences that allow students to learn by and through their experiences and reflection. Since most experiences combine various senses, a transdisciplinary curriculum encourages a holistic learning process through a variety of senses. The ultimate aim of teaching is not solely based in students acquiring a pre-determined body of knowledge. Through this multi-dimensional approach the students were deeply involved in not only language, dancing, visual arts, and music, but were able to combine these separate disciplines into a total experience, one they created. In addition, students encountered each of these art disciplines in more than one way. For example, where the music was involved, students not only played instruments and learned about the meanings behind the rhythms, but also had improvised

new rhythms with four people on the big drum, instead of just one as in the traditional setting. Similarly, where the visual arts were incorporated, the students again drew their versions of Lion Dancing and created masks from their imagination. Some of these art works were put on the wall or set on the table as part of the presentation. The music and dance components were combined with their literary projects, film viewing, costuming, food eating, family involvement, and multiple performances for the indigenous community. Together, these varied events created the total experience of Lion Dancing within the students' understanding, interests, and decision making. The students attained a level of personal ownership of their culture through art making.

## CHAPTER SIX

### THE LEARNING PROCESS

The following chapter demonstrates the application of learning and teaching educational concepts and theories of *Multiple Intelligences* (Gardner, 1993); it also illustrates my application of them within my curriculum and pedagogy. I also describe, in detail, the learning process of my students. Lastly, my thoughts and responses to the students and their learning process are touched upon.

Howard Gardner's (1993) theories guided the construction of the lesson plans. Emphasized were the students' individual potentials of musical, spatial, and bodily-kinesthetic intelligences in their learning process. Expecting the students to discover their intelligences through positive hands-on experiences, the group creative project provided them with an opportunity to experience and explore their intelligences. Within this introductory my workshop students were encouraged to focus on their natural abilities; for the students with linguistic and logical-mathematical strengths, they took charge of the section illustrating mythology, history, stories, and music. Before proceeding further, let us consider the teaching – learning process.

#### Learning and Learners

Education is a continuing and continuous process. It begins the day we are born and continues until the day we die. Perhaps this is one reason that one of the newer trends in education has been coined “learning is a lifetime experience” (Balfe & Heine,

1988, p. 3). In teaching, you never really know what your students will absorb. Gullette (1984) stated, "Teaching is like dropping ideas into the letter box of the human subconscious. You know when they are posted but you never know when they will be received or in what form" (p. vii). It is of little importance whether the teacher is instructing in the fields of art, music, dance, or science: The most important criteria in any educational program are the pedagogical approach. The purpose of this chapter is to illuminate the artistic process and pedagogy in order to present the pedagogical context of educating overseas Chinese students about their root culture through Lion Dancing.

As teachers, we all endeavor to see that as many students as possible will receive the information we try to impart, based on the belief that the information is valuable to the student. However, when we think of education in the more traditional institutional setting of a school, we can recognize easily that students present themselves for different and differing reasons. For some, education is a process to be endured. For others, education is a way to meet their continuing needs. For all, education may be a destination with the road chosen determined by the inner motivation of the student.

Although we tend to believe that all students should be equal, the reality is that they are not. While they are entitled to be treated equally and fairly, students do not present themselves equally. Some are motivated to learn a particular bit of knowledge because it is immediately relevant. Others are merely present, having no immediate use or interest in the subject, and seem to be filling time and space. For yet others, there is no immediate need for the information, but there may be a future practical application. Depending on the individual's particular need, then, the student may approach learning

with different perspectives. The more immediate the need for the information, the faster the student will assimilate the content. And as the students' perspectives are different, as Claudine Sherrill (1986) states, "educators [must] *adapt* curriculum content, instructional pedagogy, assessment and evaluation methodology, and physical environment in order to help students to adapt. Physical education is continuously being *adapted*; it is an active, ongoing process" (p. 12), just as dance is as well.

Learning processes are different. For young children, there is little, if any, choice in their curriculum. The supervisory adults<sup>1</sup> predetermine the type of learning that will occupy their time and the children are the more passive recipients of the knowledge, which the more powerful adults present. This was the situation I faced. Although my students did not really want to come to my workshop, their parents were determined for them to learn more about Chinese culture. I intruded by designing a set curriculum for participation in the Lion Dancing activities. They could choose to participate more or less willingly, but they really did not have the option to simply refuse to participate.

### Learning and Memory

In addition to these general comments about issues affecting learning, we should also recognize that students will retain and apply information for shorter or longer periods depending on their inner motivation. "Memory depends heavily on the learners activity — thinking about and elaborating on new knowledge" (McKeachie, 1999, p. 69). From my personal experience, the more relevant I find the information to future usage, the more I'll pay attention. And when a subject is more fun to learn, I am more likely to remember the information taught. Lion dancing falls into the latter category. Once the



information is remembered by a student over a duration of time, I argue that the information then becomes a part of her or his long term memory.

Let us consider the differences between long term memory and long-term learning. The first refers to the length of time the student retains the material, while the second refers to how much time the instructor takes to present the material. Long-term learning (LL) can result in both long-term memory (LM) and short-term memory (SM) depending on how “useful” the information seems to the particular student. Similarly, short-term learning (SL) can equally result in both long term memory and short-term memory. The following diagram can illustrate this:

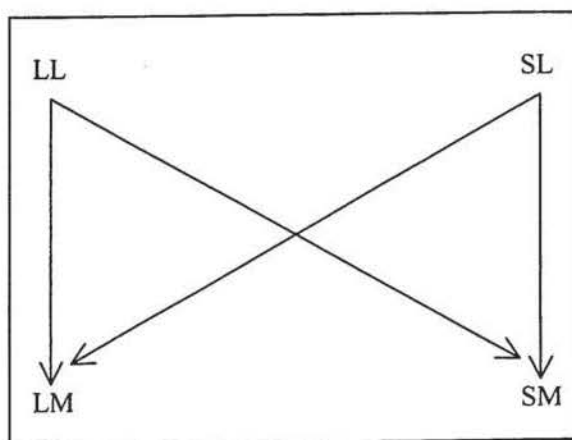


Figure 6 –1. Learning and Memory

The more pleasant the learning experience, the more the learning will become a part of one’s long term memory. My study is an example of short-term learning that would, hopefully, become part of the students’ long term memory. If this occurred, students would gain a lasting appreciation of their culture.

### Experiential Interactive Learning

The hands-on approach (Dewey, 1934) has been successfully used in education for much of the previous century, and is particularly suited to teaching of the arts. Indeed, “people learn by doing and thinking about what they do” (Lowery, 1994). Thus, much of the learning process can be accelerated by using a variety of methods that trigger responses of varying kinds. Since students learn in a variety of ways (Prorak, Gottschalk, & Pollastro, 1994), and may be primarily visual, auditory, or kinesthetic learners (Gardner, 1993; Milgram, Dunn, & Price, 1993), the most effective pedagogical approach utilizes a variety of activities that stimulates these different learning styles. For example, kinesthetic learners do best when working with sensory motor skills which emphasize receiving information through the five senses (Lockhart, 1966). What does this mean in the classroom and life? Some learners absorb best when they hear the material (as exemplified by the traditional lecture approach most commonly seen in schools), while others need visual education and can only learn something when they first see it. Others, holistic learners, absorb more deeply through several approaches. In order to focus my students’ attention and increase their interest in Chinese culture, I designed a curriculum that integrated all three learning methods.

My first challenge was to motivate these students who had little or no intrinsic desire to learn more about Chinese culture. Most were simply filling time during one week of the Christmas holiday. Their parents had registered them for the class. They would have preferred probably to spend their afternoons settled before a Nintendo game, television, video or DVD player, or computer games. Although all of the students in the

workshop were from Chinese American or Chinese backgrounds, they still evidenced little initial interest in learning more about either Lion Dancing or Chinese culture. The students all shared similar backgrounds and had at least a minimal introduction to Chinese culture, however, they were very much individual learners. I needed to accommodate to their differences by developing a curriculum that would meet their varying learning styles.

Judith Balfe's and Joni Heine's (1988) words that "programs must be devised to attract the attention of these diverse potential audiences — and to educate as well as entertain them" (p. 4) were applied. What I embraced was a pedagogy derived from my personal learning and teaching experiences in both Taiwan and the United States. In attempting to stimulate and challenge the students as well as to entertain them, I sought means to attract their attention and activate their learning motivation throughout the course of the workshop. I remained mindful of the changes in my pedagogy that occurred because of the different motivational background of my students and as an outgrowth of observing and sensing student interests.

#### Traditional Learning in Taiwan

Within the traditional Chinese learning discipline, children owe their teachers both respect and obedience. Children do not challenge their teachers openly. I remember that my teacher taught my classmates and me how to perform the Lion Dance imitatively. He performed the movements and we copied what he did. I learned the steps first because his form of instruction was geared toward replication of the physical movements. We students then attempted to reproduce the movement with little in the way of explanation.

Technique was supreme, and the instructions were limited to correcting our movements. First, we just learned the steps and movements without any props at all – no lion mask or head. The teacher was authoritative, the expert; his ways went unchallenged. The students never questioned either his authority or his way of performing anything; for his way was accepted as the best way, as well as the only way to perform. Each student was respectful and felt honored to practice the movements repeatedly until he was satisfied. It was natural for each of us to learn under the theory of “no mouth but ears”<sup>2</sup> (i.e. children should be seen but not heard). Thirty five to 40 years ago, a good child or student was just required to listen and do what his/her parents and/or teachers wanted him/her to do. Children were never encouraged to express their own opinions and were never to interrupt adult conversation. The good child/student adhered to the rule of “no mouth but ears” all the time. No student would have dreamed of requesting a break to get a drink of water or to rest. Indeed, if my teacher praised me, it was done indirectly. For example he might state, “Mei Hsiu, you did ‘not too bad’” in front of the class. I translated it to mean “Mei Hsiu, you did a very good job.” I felt very happy and proud despite my exhaustion, for I was expected to work as hard and as long as my teacher demanded. He was in charge of my work and I complied with his standards, no matter how rigorous.

#### Striving for a Personal Pedagogy

As a teacher, it is my mission to pass on the discipline of Lion Dancing to my students. However, unlike my own experience, I always encourage my students’ efforts, even if their work is mediocre. What a departure it is from the traditional Chinese way of

teaching. I came to recognize that American students expect a great deal of positive reinforcement and would react poorly to a traditional Chinese educational experience. Consequently, I have integrated both Chinese and American pedagogy.

In drawing from a combination of techniques to find my way, I recognized that American students expect their teachers to be friendlier than is and was common in China. The students are more demanding in that they do not accept the teacher's authority because of the teacher's position. American students are more difficult since many do not balk at the idea of correcting their teachers – a concept that is, indeed, very foreign to a Chinese school. I was determined to reach the students in my class by utilizing a varied curriculum that recognizes the different styles of learning as well as the cultural imperatives that teaching a class of American students presents.

#### The Lion Dance Workshop Curriculum

In developing the Lion Dance curriculum, I chose to use three methods of teaching so that I could reach all the learners in the class and empower them to become aware of and appreciate the beauty of cultural expressions that they might not have previously understood. The goal was for the students to gain an appreciation of Chinese culture through the Lion Dance as well as to be able to express their own connection to the dance. Because each dancer presents the personality or “person-ness” of the dance (Lippincott, 1960, p. 15). In participating in the Lion Dance, rather than simply viewing it or learning about its history, they internalized the meaning of Lion Dancing and enhanced their own connection with Chinese culture.

Lion Dancing exemplifies a form of “cultural dance” since it is a dance form that is peculiar to China, illustrates its beliefs and forms an integral part of that culture’s total experience. From an outsider’s “etic” perspective, the Lion Dance may be viewed as an artistic, mythic, and/or entertainment dance form. From an insider’s “emic” perception, it may or may not be artistic, mythic, or entertaining. Instead the dance is a complex of movement, song and gesture that is part of natural daily activities. Consequently, we can view Lion Dancing as a cultural dance, whose constituent movement qualities have symbolic historical, educational, and spiritual values and functions for their people.

Lion dancing is like a folk dance, a reflection of the culture’s beliefs and mores.

The cultural values of the folk dance when it is properly taught are many and touch a number of facets of human experience. The study of the folk dances of a given country will reveal characteristic types of step patterns and the qualities of movement. Studies of folk dances of many countries will facilitate a comparison of movement patterns and will provide clues to differences in temperament, and to points of view on the part of the peoples of these countries; subtle differences among groups in the performances of the same step patterns and transitional dance forms may be observed. Paralleling the learning of folk dances of various countries should be a study of the history of folk dance with respect to origins, symbolism and the development which is, in turn, inextricably related with the history and philosophy of all dance including that at its highest cultural level — dance is an art form. (Milgram, Dunn, & Price, 1993, p.26)

In preparing this study, my ultimate aim was to use dance as a vehicle for transmitting culture. Whereas folk dance furthers a knowledge of dance, cultural dance studies furthers a knowledge of culture. Unlike a more traditional dance curriculum where technique is of supreme importance and where it is the process and preparation for performance (Hanstein, 1992), the Lion Dance curriculum was constructed to transmit cultural constructs. In many ways this is antithetical to the traditional dance curriculum



where technique centers on the physical positioning of one's body and the movement qualities are of major significance. Instead, in this study, in which the Lion Dance experience was the vehicle for transmitting Chinese culture, exact body positions were secondary to an awakening to the cultural significance of the dance.

#### The pedagogical models and time range.

To accomplish this goal, the non – hierarchical program emphasized learning competencies that incorporated the historical background of the Lion Dance with its culturally related and creative artistic elements. The workshop was divided into three major sections: lecture demonstration; hands-on experience; and personal/group creativity. Through literature reviews and careful preparation, I connected the related Lion Dance material with Wissler's nine culture universals. For instance, the areas of language, government, religion, art, war, mythology, family and social organization, and material traits were all covered in my lectures-presentations. The hands on experiences of drawing, making a lion head, playing music instruments and learning dance movements were related to the subjects of art, material traits, and social organization (see Figure 6 – 2). No games or contests were played because I emphasized group spirit in developing the Lion Dancing project, yet I purposely wanted the students to work as a team.

The workshop was divided approximately into the following hours. The lecture section that included mythology, historical stories, geography, religion, cultural beliefs, language, and calligraphy cultural connections to Lion Dancing lasted around 12 hours. We spent four hours on rhythmic practice for playing the big drum, gongs, and cymbals.

Four hours were spent on the visual arts section; it contained drawing and making lion heads. Watching and talking about movies and videos occupied about four more hours. Twelve hours were used on dance movements, learning and practicing, and five hours were spent on the group project, with one hour on the pre and post-questionnaires (see Figure 6 –3). Students performing the Lion Dance were the culmination of the learning experience.

#### Pre-workshop questionnaire.

I began the program with a non-graded questionnaire, which was followed by an interactive session incorporating questions and answers to account for and to acknowledge students' level of knowledge. The students were assured that their answers would not be graded so that stress caused by taking a test was lessened. I also told the students that they were free to respond in English, Chinese, a combination of the two languages, or by drawing pictures to illustrate their answers. All of them responded in English and with some drawings. This initial questionnaire not only provided a method for evaluating the substantive material learned at the end of the course, but also functioned as an assessment tool for myself and for them at the end of the workshop. Since I planned to, and did, use both Chinese and English during the instructional sessions, the initial set of responses allowed me to assess the degree of language proficiency and the knowledge of Lion Dancing that my students had already attained. And, as mentioned, the questionnaire gave me the ability to compare the responses of the students at the end of the workshop. I believed that the questionnaire time was not fun at all because students were thinking, wondering, and writing the answers. Once the

students completed the questionnaire, I used those questions as a way to interest my students in the subject. Breaking the ice, so to speak, the questionnaire made the class feel comfortable.

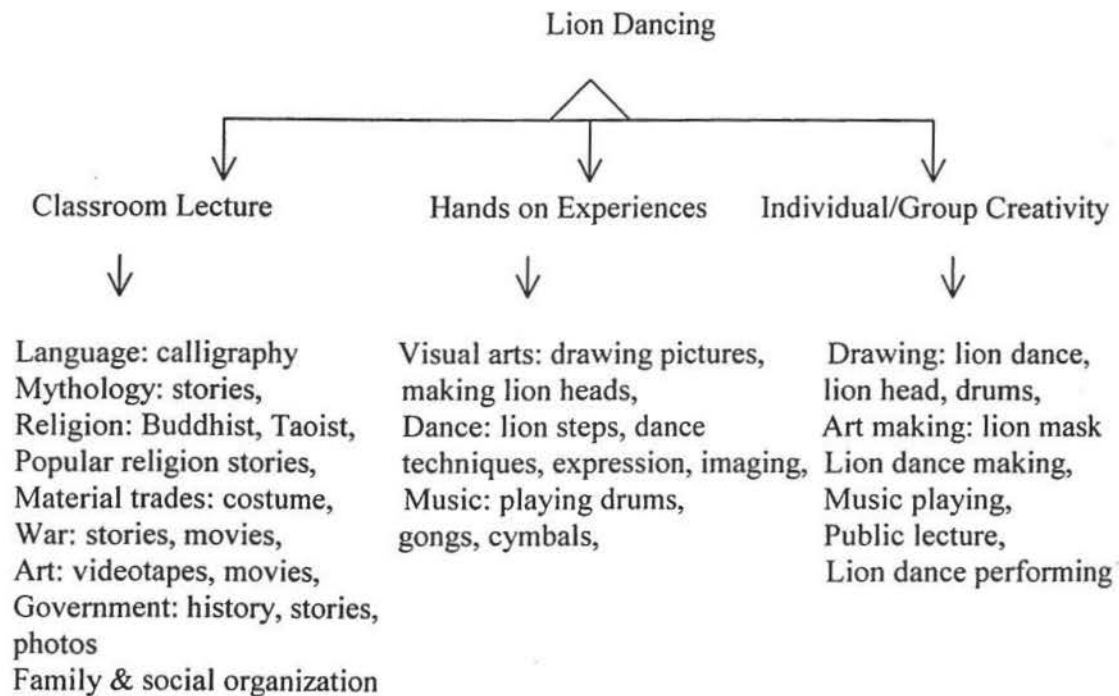


Figure 6-2. Pedagogical Content Model

### Dance Curriculum Organization

The Lion Dance curriculum was organized over a six-day period, with each session lasting about four hours. Since the students were with me for an entire week, I organized each class with a variety of activities. Each meeting included some lecture material as well as some hands on activities (see Figure 6 – 2). Consequently I constantly adjusted my lesson plan in correspondence to the students' attention span, their body language and behavior. When they seemed to be getting bored with a particular activity, I cut short that activity and changed the classroom task. In some cases this meant leaving a lecture

component sooner than I had planned for in the lesson plan. When this occurred, I adapted the lesson being cognizant of what material had been omitted so that it could be included at a later point in the day's activity. The workshop concluded with the students' final presentation.

The lessons proceed.

At the first lesson, I asked why we had Lion Dance as opposed to a monkey dance or a dog dance and solicited student responses to this question. This question was of particular interest because the lion is not a native animal. Lions originate in Africa, not in China, so the significance of a Lion Dance is an intriguing beginning which I used to pique student interest (see Chapter Four). I capitalized on students' interest in animals by relating the history of how the lion was first introduced to China in a story telling manner, then how the introduction resulted in the first documented zoo<sup>3</sup>. At this time, we also discussed the calligraphy of the word lion and how the Chinese character for lion incorporates the character for teacher as an integral part<sup>4</sup>. All the children wrote in Chinese, thus incorporating a kinesthetic approach to one that had been mostly auditory and visual. In fact, the spoken word in mandarin for both is "shih" and these two words are homonyms.

Since these students all attended Chinese school in addition to their regular American schools, the students were able to respond to the different meanings and methodology that is implied simply by the use of the word "teacher." In the traditional Chinese school, the teacher is the complete authority. The students recognized the lion as an authority figure and found ironical the view of the teacher as lion and vice versa.

The children next learned the calligraphy for lion, which is a combination of the words “teacher” and “animal”(see Figure 6 – 3 & 4). In their analysis, the calligraphy was accurate and they stated that the Chinese teacher is like the lion, authoritative and powerful but not “fun” like the American counterpart.



Figure 6 – 3. Teacher



Figure 6 – 4. Lion

Following the calligraphy lesson, we discussed the popular styles of Lion Dancing. I described three different types of Lion Dancing, illustrated different artistic views of the lion, and we explored varying artistic portrayals of the lion. These included photographs of stone lions in varying places including cemeteries where the lions protect the graves, temples, and the village protector *Fong shih yea* (see Figure. 4 - 14). We also looked at various stone lions, located in Japan, Korea, Okinawa, Vietnam and the. In addition, I showed videos of the different styles of Lion Dancing and compared and contrasted the different movements used in each style.

I then explained color symbolism by looking at lion photos and listening to a lecture. Because these lions are such colorful creatures, here was an opportunity to discuss the meaning of color in Chinese culture in contrast to western symbolism. Many of the students were unfamiliar with the meanings given to particular colors. Unlike the

Western world where white is a symbol of goodness and purity, white in Chinese culture represents mourning. Similarly, red in Chinese culture is a symbol for good luck and fortune whereas red is used to denote sanguine, almost uncontrollable dangerous passions in western society where the “red light” district symbolizes a place of ill repute. To reinforce these color concepts, I gave the students colored markers and asked them to draw lion heads. Three lion masks illustrated different lion heads, and the students were free to either draw a lion head on their own and of their own creation, or copy from the examples in the room. Each child could create his or her own lion or lion head. I sought to engage all of the learners in the class in a way that would relate to the individual learning style of each student. Once again I was able to employ visual, auditory, and kinesthetic activities in my classroom presentation. Here, too, I hoped that the use of the multiple styles of learning would enhance the students’ abilities to retain the information that was presented and allow this information to be internalized and become part of their long term memory.

#### Media images of Lion Dancing.

From my personal collection I showed videotaped performances by the National Acrobats from Taiwan in 1974<sup>5</sup>. These videos are not commercially available. Since I traveled and performed with this group, I was able to acquire videotapes of some of our performances. The first video shown illustrates the Northern style of Lion Dancing which uses one male and one female lion. Each lion requires the conjoined movements of two dancers. The entire performance requires a cast of six; two dancers for each of the lions and two additional youngsters who acted as prods to tease the lions. These Lion Dancers



are extraordinary, performing some of their movements atop large balls. The dancers must move these balls along a seesaw, which symbolically represents a mountain that the lions must climb or a bridge that the lions must cross. I explained the symbolic meaning to my class, including the significance of the three bows, and the climbing up to the mountain followed by the lion's descent. However, it was choreographed as an art for the purpose of an entertainment on an indoor stage with lighting design, but it did not include the *Chai chin*<sup>6</sup> or any ritual meanings. During the dance the lions imitate human behavior by the dancers making the lion to blink, yawn, and otherwise display human emotions. The children found this to be quite funny, as did the audience during the actual performance.

Following this was a video of the southern style of Lion Dancing, made at a competition held in Tao Yuan, Taiwan in 1990. We were able to compare the Southern style of Lion Dancing with the Northern one. Here I wanted the students to recognize that in the Southern style the movements were uniformly low level in contrast to the more acrobatic and aerial style of movement associated with the Northern style. In this tape the students saw a variety of Lion Dance styles since there were many groups competing and they were performed outdoors on a stage that was built only for this Lion Dancing competition. Students saw groups of children performing as well as adults performing these three popular styles of Lion Dancing. The unifying factor throughout this tape was that all of the dancers were utilizing the Southern style. Then, students viewed a documentary tape I made in 1996 about nine lions performing for an oriental supermarket

grand opening. The lion team belongs to *Shifu* Phillip Ng's Shaolin Hung Gar Tiger Crane Kung Fu Association in Richardson, TX.

From this video I was able to explain the importance of the setting for the Lion Dance as well as the significance of the music and the ambiance of the location. Lion Dancing, more than just movement, is a cultural symbol, so I wanted my students to appreciate that the entire setting contributed to the meaning of the Lion Dance. In this particular video, the dancers were dancing at both indoors and out doors ceremonies.

The setting demonstrated the significance of a grand opening Lion Dancing since it contained two strings of firecrackers about 50 feet long and two large banners with the Chinese words for wealth, prosperity, and good fortune. Since the dance was performed at the opening of the new Hong Kong Super Market in Arlington, TX, one of the immediate meanings was to illustrate wishes for good fortune for the new enterprise. While I thought that the symbolism was apparent, particularly at the end, when one lion climbed to the top of a thirty foot tower made of chairs and ladders, opened its mouth, and let fall a long red banner emblazoned with the Chinese characters for good fortune, happiness, wealth, and prosperity, I discovered that the children had difficulty in following these concepts and needed direct explanations for the meaning.

The video also included other actions which the children could not identify on their own. At one point, the lions all knelt inside the store. The students did not immediately notice that the lions were kneeling before a small altar which contained the earth god and goddess and that this was an important moment in the religious ritual. At first, the students merely thought that the lions were sleeping. Their reaction gave me the

opportunity to stress the importance of noting small details in the dance. In addition, I was able to explain the importance of timing as a context in Lion Dancing. Everything has its opportune time. In order for the good wishes to reap the maximum result, the main part of the dance must occur at a specific time. Kneeling before the altar allowed the Lion Dancers to adjust the timing of their performance so that it would occur at the most propitious moment. This, too, is another cultural belief that Lion Dancing illustrates and is one that would not be apparent by just viewing the video by oneself. Here are two examples of high context beliefs embedded in the practice of the dance.

For the third style of Lion Dancing, the Taiwanese style, the student again saw children dancing. This model showed my students that it is possible and acceptable for children to perform this dance. Their imaginations were opened to the creative potential of the dance versus mere repetition of the forms. The dance shown was applicable to all people so that my students would believe that they, too, would be able to participate. I explained that small children can perform Lion Dancing using a paper plate mask. In a similar fashion, I showed my students pictures of physically challenged dancers performing this dance. When I first suggested that wheelchair users could participate in the Lion Dance, my students were extremely skeptical. However, when I showed them the illustration of the wheelchair dancer with a lion head mask and a tail on the back of the wheelchair, the students began to believe that they, too, would be successful.

In structuring this class I decided to use a variety of activity so the students would have the opportunity to transition from contemplative to strenuous activities. By changing the activity level in the class I intended to provide additional stimuli and

provide balance with which to interest my students. Here the spectrum of my students' intelligences (Gardner, 1993; Gardner as cited in Gerke and Landalf, 1999) were engaged by orchestrating a synchrony of activities. More particularly, I worked developmentally through the use of kinesthetic skills, artistic enterprises in the Lion Dance choreography and costume, thinking skills by having them create their own lion mask and Lion Dance, and personal and social development by having them work in groups to resolve their own difficulties. Fearlessly and openly they conveyed their positive and negative responses. The cultural beliefs emphasized were those skills which predominate and intertwine in Chinese culture; obedience and filial piety are represented by cooperative endeavors, team spirit, and honor in the completion and achievement of the assignments.

I expected my students to internalize these aspects of Chinese culture and demonstrate them by the ways in which they interacted with their fellow classmates. I knew that this facet of Chinese life was represented if my students treated each other as if they were members of the same family and showed both respect and honor for their classmates. At the beginning process of group preparation for their final presentation, four students insisted and said, "I want to be a lion head". As the workshop went along, my students were able to not only work as a group, but to forego some of their individual immediate desires in favor of a group decision. They were individually able to postpone immediately gratifying some of their own desires in favor of decisions that would benefit or ease the way of the group as a whole. This type of behavior is typical of Chinese groups but is not really as characteristic of American school children that tend toward more independence and individuality.

### Watching Lion Dancing – Martial Arts Movie

On the very last day, I brought a commercial three-hour Chinese Lion Dancing videotape — *Once upon a time in China 3* (Tai-Sheng, 1992) to the class. It described the relationship between a *shifu* and his students; the general at the court and his people; and the traditional, conservative love between a young man and his shifu's daughter. It also showed how martial arts schools used the Lion Dance to represent their martial arts techniques in the late Chin dynasty. At the beginning of the film, there were hundreds of northern lions dancing at the same time, that exploring the powerful *chi* from the lions and depicting how Lion Dancing was used as a fighting tool. My students saw Lion Dancing as an actual fighting tool as well as a performance medium. The lion mask, itself, reflected its martial arts use as it included sharp weapons which could be used to inflict injuries or destroy the lion masks from competing schools. In addition, the performers were all martial artists, and wore special shoes equipped with weapons on them for their 'fighting performance.'

Some parts of this movie were very dangerous and violent. I strongly pointed out that the dangerous and violent parts were not real, just for the movie effects, the products of trick effects and editing. I purposely showed this on the last day because I did not want the students to imitate this behavior and use the two beautiful and expensive lions that I borrowed for the workshop with which to fight. To minimize any sense of fear or of awe, a lunch break occurred in the middle of the movie. We enjoyed Chinese foods and white rice; everyone ate with chopsticks.

### Rhythm and music.

Following the videos, it was the time for my students to learn the musical instruments that are used in Lion Dancing. I brought in a large drum<sup>7</sup>, two sets of gongs, 14 pairs of cymbals, and 28 wooden drumsticks so that the students would see and hear all of the musical instruments used. First, they practiced the basic rhythm and five variation beating patterns on the tabletops at the same time. They also practiced three patterns of playing cymbals. After the students mastered the rhythms, they were each, in turn, allowed to practice on the large drum. This was a very successful albeit noisy activity, but was one which the students found completely enjoyable.

Most of the time, during their group creative process, students enjoyed their activities. Sometimes, they argued and disagreed. These conflicts were caused by their different personalities. While they were having fun, I was busy observing them and having fun with them too. When they argued, both at their request and because of my role as teacher, I acted as a mediator to diminish this conflict.

### My Role as a Teacher in the Study

Throughout this study two distinct roles were maintained: that of a directive, Chinese-style teacher and that of a supportive, America-style teacher. During the first three days of the workshop, I was a strong, directive Chinese teacher, and taught the students material that I believed they must learn. During the last two days, my interaction was more supportive and less directive; allowance was given for them to take charge of their projects. During those first three days, I wanted the students to learn most of the essential materials, and to use this information as the foundation to create their final



group presentations. Instead of instructing the children in how to do something, suggestions were made, questions asked, and reminders of ideas covered. I tried to be less dominant so that the students could engage in their own creative process. In pursuing the creative process, much encouragement was verbalized to empower their efforts.

The primary intention was for the students to try and create, reflect, discuss, and solve the problems presented to them. Ergo, the activities were more important than the final product. What interested me the most was their attempt and the creative process rather than the result. After all, the students risked trying to do something new. It was a challenging task for them, one which would result in increased learning. I knew that if a traditional critical stance was taken while they were trying to put together or create something, their original thoughts would be destroyed, and they would lose their confidence. This is similar to a little plant growing fresh, tender leaves. A plant can never grow into a tree if the leaves are picked off before they have developed. Supportive teaching requires a great deal of patience since students need time to explore, make mistakes, and to create. However, sometimes allowing students ample time frustrated me the circumstance of limited time, especially when a great deal of material needed to be covered.

Engagement through the application of Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences was central to my pedagogy; the lectures about historical and literary sources, as well as mythological stories were related to a broad spectrum of learning styles. The musical exercises and artistic dance techniques were associated with musical, bodily kinesthetic, logical-mathematical, special, and intrapersonal intelligences. Although the students kept

busy doing and/or thinking about ideas previously selected for them, in my role as a teacher I sporadically changed from one learning style to another to hold the students' attention during the six days.

### Steps to Lion Dancing

In the dance portion of this curriculum I began by requesting that the students line up and announced,

Please try your best, because you only have a very short time (six days) to learn Lion Dancing which usually requires a long term (six months to two years) learning process at a traditional martial arts school . . . . If you 'want to perform nicely' instead of 'looking stupid' in front of your parents, sibling, and friends at the end of my workshop you must pay attention when I explain and demonstrate the movement and try your best while practicing.

I set up a goal for them to pursue. In addition, I added, "If you try your best, I will try my best to teach you as much as possible about the important steps and movements for Lion Dancing; otherwise, you may only learn a very simple Lion Dancing." Let me share the essential techniques of the dance.

#### 1. Fundamental walking steps – *tzou bu* – advancing and retreating.

The easiest section is the footwork. I lined the students up and asked them to stand where they could see my feet. I demonstrated the steps at the front, in the middle, and on both sides of the room to make sure every student could easily see my steps. No matter where they stood, I treated them as equally as possible. The students began by standing with their legs in outward rotation and with feet apart<sup>8</sup>; naturally turned out. This foot position roughly corresponds to second position in ballet. They put their hands behind their backs with one hand grabbing the wrist on the other hand, resting on the lumbar

spine. The students next practiced walking forward and backward – advancing and retreating – with ‘strong quality of powerful, firm, and steady foot movement’ in two sets of eight counts. It was eight steps (counts) forward, eight (counts) backward. I then clapped and counted the beats and watched them practice the steps row by row. I stopped and gave the student some encouragement, such as “Good try!” “Not too bad!” and followed this by corrections and reminders about the required form or rhythm as needed. Overall, positive reinforcement was emphasized. After approximately five minutes of practicing the forward and backward walking steps they learned to squat down. This squat was not like a demi pli   in ballet since a vertical trunk is not important. When they bent down, their bottoms did not need to be tucked in but should protrude. Next, the students practiced walking forward and backward in a squatting position. They were serious in learning how to walk as a lion should, and they did well.

## 2. Fundamental running steps – *Pao bu*.

Once the students mastered the walking steps, advancing and retreating, next learned was the running step. For this step, their feet are only slightly turned out and about a half to one foot length apart<sup>9</sup> (measured by the student’s own foot). I lined the students up and the entire class practiced the running step, which consisted of eight quick steps forward and then eight quick steps in reverse with ‘light and sustained’ qualities. For these quick running steps, the students bent their knees, but only a little. After the class mastered going forward and backward to several sets of eight counts, I had the individual rows practice. Gaining expertise, the pace was quickened. As the tempo increased, the children placed their arms in front and imagined that they were each

holding a basketball in front of them at about abdomen level. Once they had learned to do this, they imagined the basketball was a little higher and that they were to look forward while running. The next instruction was that their backs should move as they ran forward and backward. As they ran forward, the angle of their back increased so that their bodies inclined forward about 30 degrees. As they ran backward, their bodies were parallel to the floor forming a 90-degree angle. Throughout the running step, they looked forward so that their eyes always faced the audience rather than looking downward to their feet or at the floor. The students next learned to alternate running and walking steps on command and to create phrases combining the two basic step units.

Throughout this practice, they were laughing at each other because it was not easy to stop smoothly when running forward, and it also looked funny when they ran backward. They laughed loudly, whenever someone bumped into the wall as they were running backward. In order not to bump into the wall, they developed a spatial sensation by sensing and measuring the distance in their minds.

### 3. Fundamental walking steps with the imagery of holding a lion head – *jia chuang*

#### *Na shih.*

Once the students had mastered both the walking and running steps, I introduced another movement. For this, the students assumed the same position as for the walking step but the position of their arms changed. Instead of keeping their arms behind them, they kept their arms in front and imagined they were holding a large beach ball but with their hands held in a gentle fist. The beach ball image encouraged the students to visualize the proper distance for their hand positions.

4. Sharply turn the lion head to right and left – *Zou gu you pan.*

Here they imagined holding a lion head. The students took a step forward with the right foot and held their imaginary lion head out and in the direction that they were stepping. Both arms were extended in the sagittal plane while the right hand was held at waist level with the left hand at shoulder level. They then reversed this position when they stepped to the left. Each step takes two counts. These forward walking steps require coordinated arms and feet in order to keep their balance.

Again, once the students mastered the basic arm movement, I introduced the need for 'strong and sudden qualities; their movement must be 'urgent and sharp.' The students were coached to sharpen their arm movements and use 'sudden and strong' energy so that their upper bodies would reflect a lion's strength while continuing to perform the same footwork. To practice, the students again walked forward and backward for eight steps<sup>10</sup>, repeated in sets of four. Part of our initial practice was geared toward developing the leg muscles. These students lacked the discipline that I would have expected from dance students, for they would simply stand up and relax whenever they began to get tired.

5. Sharply turn the lion head to four corners – *Kan shi fong.*

The third step had an additional variation. In the variation, the students looked to the four corners instead of looking to the right and left. They looked down and to the right, down and to the left, up and to the right, and up and to the left corners. In this variation, the students looked either towards the floor or toward the upper right and left corners. Turning the lion head to the four corners also required precise 'strong, quick,

direct, and bound' movement qualities to demonstrate the *Yang chi*, the lion's essential strong energy.

6. Stretching the lion's torso with running forward – *Chien pao shen yeo*.

The running step also had a variant. In this variant, the students used the same footwork but changed the level of their body movement from very low to very high. As they ran forward, their body levels increased so that the lion head was held up high. Here, both arms should be completely flexed with the shoulder girdle fully elevated, and with the upper arms close to the ears. As they ran backward, they lowered their body position, both arms flexed and the lion head carried approximately at knee level. This movement also is the preparation movement of the three bows. In contract, of the dance jump, plié – bending the knees is the preparation for the sauté – jump. Without strength in the lion's body, there would be no space for the lion to do the bowing movement.

7. Three bows – *San kou tou* – blessing or greeting.

Another movement is reminiscent of a bow which means "Blessing from the lion to the people" or "Greeting from the lion to the gods." In this movement the students ran diagonally forward the same as in the previous movement of stretching the lion's torso with running forward and extended their right foot on a diagonal from their bodies. They flexed their right foot with left knee bent, and bowed sharply so that with 'the direct action and sudden, bound, and strong movement quality' the lion head was stopped at the approximately level of their right knee. This movement was then repeated to the left diagonal<sup>11</sup>. After they did both right and left diagonal bows, they practiced the center bow<sup>12</sup>. They ran directly forward and did the third bow with both legs bending<sup>13</sup> or with



either leg stretched out with that foot flexed, and the other leg bent (similar to the ballet reverence).

#### 8. Walking/running steps with right/left circle path – *Pao/Zou chuan chuan*

The next step was a directional floor pattern. In this step the walking step was combined with either a right turn or left circular path. I began this exercise with different sizes of spiral circles that ranged from one as small as a five-foot diameter area and increased until the students were moving in an area as large as a circle with a 15-foot diameter. I directed them with verbal cueing signals such “a small right turn circle with eight counts, a big left turn arch path with 16 counts, a medium left circle with 12 counts, a right turn running circle for 8 counts, an eight counts half circle running to left, etc.”

The walking and running in circular paths are preparatory to an actual performance. This practice allowed the students to get a sense of movement and of how to move on an actual stage. Once the students mastered how to move to the left and right, they had learned the basics needed in order to change and adapt these movements. Combined, the movements could form a figure eight. The ability to move easily in these directions allowed the students to design their choreography and expand their movement range on the stage. After approximately 10 minutes of busy running practice, I taught them how a lion tail performer’s movement would contrast with a lion head dancer. Prior to this, all of the movements and emphasis had been focused on moving with the lion head.

#### 9. The Lion tail’s movement – *Shih wei de don zhou*

The key preparation movement required for a tail performer is for the dancer to stand in a large turned out second position and keep the body as close to the horizontal

plane as possible. Every student now practiced the tail performer's steps. I pointed out that they must keep their eyes forward instead of looking downward toward on the floor, because looking forward will cause them to stay the right distance from the lion head performer. Mainly the tail performer follows the lion head performer's path. The tail performer's arms are flexed to a 45° position and does the adduction and abduction movements at hip level, with soft fists. The fists represented holding the costume fabric and the abduction and adduction movements with 'free flow' quality represents the lion's breathing.

Safety comes first – *Onn chuan di yi*.

I then asked the students to find a partner. Each student had opportunities to experience the movements of both a lion head and tail performer. However, I emphasized, "the most important thing during the Lion Dance movements, exercise and performance is 'Safety comes first,' because some of the technical Lion Dancing movements may be risky." I pointed out that they knew their body limitations better than anyone else did. "It is your job to protect yourself from any injury!" I added, since I did not want any student to get injured in my workshop. Some technical movements such as "jumping up and down from a chair," "rolling on the floor," "walking on the bricks," or "jumping up and standing on lion tail's lap" may be easy for some students and difficult for others. In order to diminish the possibility of any injury, such as twisted ankles, hit elbows, and hurt knees, I broke down some technical movement into sequential slow motions and taught them step by step.

#### 10. Rolling side ways on the floor/ground – *Di shon da goun*

The sequence of the lion rolling movements is complicated and requires concentration, so the actions were divided into eight sequential parts:

(a). From the standing position to the lower preparation for the rolling position.

Their arms were raised at face level to indicate that each student was holding a lion mask. First, they lowered to the complete squatting position and shifted their weight to their left leg/foot, and placed their right knee down to the floor.

(b). With the same arm positions, they shifted their weight to the right knee and lowered the right arm until the right elbow touched the floor. Each student's right elbow was approximately 1-2 inches in front of his/her right knee.

(c). Next they completely shifted their weight to right knee and leg, with the left knee touching the floor. Kneeling, both elbows touched the floor. Their torsos were close to thighs. Both forearms were approximately 45 degree angle from the floor. Their fists were above their heads.

(d). They rolled their bodies toward the right side until both the right shoulder and hip touched the floor. At this point, their left elbows and knees were off the floor.

(e). They continued rolling to their backs. Their heads were off the floor with their chins touching their chests. Their legs were bent and their knees were together. In this position, their backs were rounded.

(f). They continued rolling with rounded backs, until the left side of their bodies (left shoulder, upper arm, hip, and leg) touched the floor.

(g). They then pushed their left elbows against the floor in order to raise the body upward, balancing on their left knee on the right leg extended sideward.

(h). Finally, their torso went back to a vertical position. With their left knee on the floor to support their weight, their right leg abducted to the right side, they both arms are flexed as if they were holding the lion head.

#### 11. Jumping forward and backward – *Chien hòu tiàu*.

The preparation for this jumping was similar to that used in the standing position where the students were holding lion heads above their faces. Students were instructed to bend their knees about 2-3 inches and to inhale while they jumped forward with ‘lightness quality’. They needed to land through the feet, ankles, knees, and hips to absorb their weight safely and beautifully. Then, backward jumps were practiced using the same breathing method and movement quality. Through years of martial arts training I learned that inhaling while you jump and exhaling while you land increases energy and stamina.

#### 12. Jumping upward and downward – *Tiao shong tiao sha*

The students learned how to jump from the floor to a wooden chair<sup>14</sup> by jumping on to a pretend chair<sup>15</sup> which I named ‘empty jump.’ I told them to bend their knees before and after each jump and then I encouraged and challenged them by shouting “Good job!” “How about a higher jump!” “Great landing!” “Jump two inches higher!” Sometimes they jumped together; other times they did not. They practiced until their empty jump levels were higher than the wooden chair. We move on to practicing individual jumps with protection. I asked a student to be my assistant, telling him to spot the other side of

the jumping student, as I spotted one side. Standing at opposite sides of the chair, each of us held one hand of the student who was jumping on to the chair. Some students jumped without any problem, but some of the girls were afraid, stating that the chair was too tall. We lifted them up and let them land on the chair. Many students started jumping by themselves after only one or two assists.

### 13. Walking on the bricks – *zou tzi chung tao shan*

Six concrete blocks were lined up, about two feet apart, to represent a bridge. The students walked with 'light and slow' qualities, one by one, with two assistants holding their hands first, then practiced without help. As they were practicing, I kept reminding them "it is not dangerous at all as long as you step straight downward and across the bridge slowly." Approximately 15 minutes was devoted for them to master walking across the bridge.

### 14. Imagine the lion as a human – *Gia shon ni shih yi zi shih tzu*

I showed the students how to hold the lion head properly and explained to them that the strings inside the lion head have different functions. One was to make its eyes blink and the other was for moving its ears. They also learned how to handle the lion's mouth and to open and close it. Every student was excited to experience and play with the big lion head. Again, they were teasing and laughing at each other. Some students were excited to see their classmates through the big lion's mouth. Because both lion heads were adult size, it was very heavy and too big for some of the smaller students.

In making and performing dance, "the creative imagination" (Fraleigh, 1987, p. 92) is essential. I then asked them to practice imagining they were lions. They took turns

using the prop and create the lion's expression with their own imaginations and mastering how to control the secret strings inside the lion head. With actual practice, they became more familiar with how to make the lion blink one eye and/or both eyes, move its ears, and move its mouth so that the lion appeared to be grooming itself. While some students were busy mastering how to using the prop, others were talking to the lions, laughing at them, touching its mouth, and were trying to direct the lion to blink its eyes or make the ears move.

#### 15. Jumping up to the tail's lap – *Taio dao twei shon*

Among all of the steps that they learned, this jumping exercise is the most difficult movement. I did not let every student try this movement because of the danger it posed both to the student jumping and to the student who provided the lap. Four of the smaller students were selected to perform this exercise. They began by choosing their tail partners. The tail partners stood with feet apart and knees slightly flexed. The head partners practiced jumping on to the "lap" for approximately 10-15 minutes. Some found it scary to jump on someone's lap and did not want to participate in this activity. This was one activity where the individual student could decide whether to participate. I also needed to be particularly vigilant and stop the students once they began to show signs of fatigue so that the risk of injury was reduced.

#### 16. Picking up the green – *Chai chin*

The last movement that I taught them is *Chai Chin* which means picking up the green. This was a most significant movement since it is used for collecting the red envelope with money inside of it. It is a tradition among Chinese people to give a red



envelope to the lion, to bring good fortune. I taught them how to use the top of their head to carry the lion head on their shoulders and only use one hand (right or left) for support and balance. Each student practiced using one hand to get the red envelope through the lion's mouth and then putting the red envelope away.

After they learned the movements, two students worked at a time with the big lion head. They paired as a lion (head and tail) and practiced. I said to them "I am so proud of you all; you have learned all the movements necessary to perform the dance. The next step is working together as a Lion Dance team and using these movements, or creating new steps, to make a Lion Dance for your final presentation. I will help you whenever you need me."

Every day, before the end of each session, 10 to 15 minutes were provided to review, study, discuss, and prepare for their final demonstration. However, they usually spent most of the time talking or playing with the lion and the big drum. No one ever reviewed material from the lecture, and I never pressed them. They had already seen more than 10 versions of Lion Dancing, learned about costumes, cultural and color symbolism, Chinese calligraphy and drawing, practiced playing the instruments, and how to create the lion head. I expected that they would be able to create something for their final public presentation.

#### Preparations for the Performance

During the first three days, the students were not actively working on their final performance. Mostly they were chatting and teasing each other. Some decided to put their lion pictures on the wall and displayed their group artwork – lion head – on a table.

Others disagreed, because they felt the work was really ugly. While they had a hard time deciding whether to display all of their lion masks, I suggested they may think about only displaying some lion heads rather than all. Their final decision was that everyone's drawing of lion masks should be put up on the wall, but to display only two lion heads on a table.

On the fourth day, I did not see any change, because they were not serious. They were making fun of each other. Therefore, I reminded the students that "There are only two days left before your group presentation." Some students stopped playing around, and one brought a piece of paper and a pencil and said, "Hey, you guys, stop joking! Let's talk about our performance." It took a few minutes for them to quiet down. They then all sat down and started to discuss what they were going to do.

During the discussion, some students were more active than others. However they all started to take the task seriously and planned their upcoming performance. Amaley, Hobbes, Asian Sensation, Jade, and Pippo wanted to be the lion heads; one of the twins, Chip and Nermal volunteered to be the lion tails; Calvin loved the character of the happy god; and five of them wanted to play the big drum; two students volunteered to play the cymbals; and no one wanted to be the narrator for the show. Everybody agreed that Calvin should perform the position of the 'Happy god' because 'he loves to be the Happy god.' Then, they decided that every body must take a part to speak something about the Lion Dancing, but nobody wanted to be the first one. So, I volunteered myself. I said, "How about this, I would be the first person to start the program." They cheered. I could

see from their facial expressions that they were happy because none of them would be the first one to speak.

Traditionally only one drummer is needed, one person to be happy god, one or two person(s) play the gong(s), and there can be many cymbal players. They continued to discuss, argue, laugh, and tease. Then, the seven students who wanted to be part of the lion started to discuss how they were going to do so. Woodstock suggested her house has a traditional Chinese wine bottle, and if any one wanted to be a drunken lion, she would bring the bottle as a prop. Hobbes and Nermal decided that their lion would walk on the building blocks and Hobbes would jump on Nermal's legs.

On the fifth day, the students divided the 'speaking job.' Each took a part and practiced a little. All of the drummers decided to practice together, and then, on the last day, the person who played the drum the best was designated the drum player for the presentation. However, at the late afternoon on the day before their show, they could not select the best drum player, since "no one was the best." They concluded that "more than one drum player was needed" for the show. They hurried and worked with the lions to review the sequences the lions would perform. The solution to the problem was interesting because it made everyone happy. During the rehearsal, on the last day, some students forgot what they were supposed to do so others offered to write up notes for them. At their pre-performance rehearsal, many jitters prevailed and students were both very nervous as well as excited.

### The Public Presentation

The performance was designed to include a lecture as well as a demonstration. Everyone took part in the lecture that blended history, mythology, and the symbolic meaning of Lion Dance. This was the easiest part of the demonstration since the children did not particularly care which role they had in the lecture. The situation changed with the demonstration though, since the children had strong feelings about the part they played. There were two problems with the Lion Dance demonstration: (a) traditionally there is only one big drum player but four students really wanted to play the drum; and (b) five students strongly desired to perform as the lion head although only two performers were needed. They agreed to a compromise. Since we had a second showing of the Lion Dance the students were able to negotiate with their classmates for each performance. For the first show, two students played the cymbals instead of being lion heads. Although this was not their first choice, they accepted the decision of the group. In the traditional Lion Dance setting, only one drum player is allowed; instead, four drum players performed at the same time. The students decided their presentation would have three drummers in order to accommodate their classmates' desires.

Before the show, Woodstock and Chip, the twins, realized that they forgot their prop, a traditional Chinese wine bottle. The happy god boy, Calvin, forgot his pillow which was to be 'his big stomach', and Tyne left the red envelopes on her dining room table at home. One of the twins solved the dilemma by asking her father to drive home to get the Chinese wine bottle, and also volunteered her father to bring a pillow from home.

She even asked him to stop by a Chinese supermarket to buy some red envelopes for the group.

When the time arrived and the folding chairs were filled with parents and family, I gave a brief welcoming introduction to the audience by thanking the parents for their support. Next, Dr. Charles Ku, a Chinese community leader, gave a short speech. Then, the microphone was passed to the students and I sat down. They began by lining up and introducing themselves, one by one with their real names, ages, and also announcing the name of their Chinese school to the audience. Next, one student asked the audience “Does anybody know why there was no dog dancing and/or monkey dancing during the Chinese New Year?” No one answered this question. The next question was “Do you know when the first lion was brought to China?” Again, it was quiet for a moment. The students answered the questions themselves and continued to introduce the history and stories behind Lion Dancing. Later, a student asked the audience “Does anyone know how many stone lions were built on the both sides of the *Lu gou* bridge?” One parent answered, “I don’t know the exact number of the stone lion figures, but it must be an even number.” One by one, the students alternated and presented approximately the material that they designed from the material I had shared with them. Some had memorized their speeches, while others read their notes. They followed the lecture portion with a performance of Lion Dancing that they had choreographed in which four of the students performed the dance while the remaining ten students played the drums, the cymbals, and two played the gongs.

Later that afternoon the children performed again at Dr. Ku's book signing party. All the parents helped in moving the two large lion heads, the big drum, as well as the heavy gong, cymbals, and building blocks to the Omni Hotel in Richardson, TX. During the second performance, a different set of students danced the part of the lion. In general, they did much better than they had at any of their rehearsals. While the children were performing the parents watched happily and some even videotaped their children.

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#### Chapter Six Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> parents and teachers.
- <sup>2</sup> i.e. children should be seen but not heard
- <sup>3</sup> according to Chinese history.
- <sup>4</sup> both words "shih" are homonyms.
- <sup>5</sup> I was a professional dancer and a martial arts soloist performing with the company.
- <sup>6</sup> picking up the green – a red envelope with money inside.
- <sup>7</sup> three feet in diameter.
- <sup>8</sup> approximately shoulder width
- <sup>9</sup> measured by the student's own foot.
- <sup>10</sup> 16 counts.
- <sup>11</sup> essentially a mirror image of the movement.
- <sup>12</sup> the third bow.
- <sup>13</sup> close to squat position.



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<sup>14</sup> approximately two and a half feet tall.

<sup>15</sup> called an “empty jump.”

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### DIGGING JEWELS FROM A TREASURE MINE

This study has explored how facets of Chinese culture could be transmitted to a group of Chinese–American children. The following chapter explores how the project was actually carried through to its conclusion. In many ways, the children represent the jewels of my culture. As the future heirs to my rich and vast tradition, children must be cherished for the jewels that they will become. However, since these children did not, as yet, possess the education to further carry on Chinese culture, they were still uncut jewels – needing to be formed and polished. Carrying this analogy even further, I also felt that the ideas that each child had and could create were further jewels. These ideas needed to be extracted from the minds of the children. Thus, I believe that I found jewels within treasure mines each time I had a teaching encounter with these children and each time we came together to learn more about Chinese culture through Lion Dancing.

#### First Day's Impression About the Children

On the first day, when I walked into the classroom I saw a typical classroom – one of almost chaotic freedom. There were eight three by six feet folding tables set up in a rectangle, and 18 chairs around them. Inside the rectangle was a large empty space; three boys were playing, screaming, and pushing each other around. Two girls in the northeast corner were watching them play, while two other girls had their heads down, resting on the north side tables half asleep. They seemed not to hear the noise from the three boys.

A few other children were sitting on the east side of the table, chewing gum and roaming about the room. Four girls were sitting at the south side table kicking their legs, talking and laughing. A big boy, at the southeast corner, was reading. The classroom was filled with energy, and a lot of noise.

When they saw me, some of them began to whisper and giggle. I began to think that even with their different backgrounds, they were not at all behaving like Chinese children — to sit quietly and wait for a teacher. I began by asking them what they knew about the workshop. All seemed to have a vague idea, because they all nodded their heads and looked at each other. The big boy, who was reading, said, “it has something to do with Lion Dance.” One girl added, “something about the Chinese culture.” Because their parents registered them all, it was difficult to gauge their interest in the enterprise. I asked them, “Didn’t you read the consent and register forms before you signed them? Did you?” Some students said, “No, I just signed my name when my mother told me to do so.” Others answered, “No” and shook their heads. One added in Chinese, “I signed them even though I didn’t read them, but I knew ‘the class is free and will do me good’ as my Mom said.”

I then briefly explained to them, “the workshop is for my scholarly research and I am looking for answers to my scholarly research.” Some students asked, “What is scholarly research?” I replied, “According to one of my professors, Dr. Penelope Hanstein (1989; 1999), ‘Scholarly research is a process of creating new knowledge, . . . it seeks to expand the realm of human knowing and understanding (p. 23). . . . Scholarly research is a visionary process and is guided by the researcher’s ability to see and think

about ideas in new ways” (p. 280). “Hanstein also says, ‘Research as a process means to search and re-search” (p. 25). One boy said lightly, “You all are stupid kids.” Another boy, answered, “We are not stupid, we ask because we want to know, and you didn’t, so you are a real stupid boy.” I stopped their argument by saying, “Quiet! Please remember, during my class. Everyone must be polite to each other. It is a Chinese culture.”

Next, I asked each of the 14 children to select an alias so that their true identity would remain confidential. One boy said, “It’s all right, I don’t mind if you use my name;” five other students followed saying, “You can use my name too.” Another girl said, “There is nothing to worry about. I give you the right to use my name.” Slowly, as they became more comfortable with the setting, I watched as some of the more silent ones joined into the group until the room was filled with noise. I used my teacher as a soft weapon to stop the endless discussion with them, because a teacher is respected in Chinese culture. This ploy settled the issue. Afterward, a few of them continued to make noise, but only because they could not decide which alias they wished to use.

A few minutes later, they were satisfied with their aliases. The children selected American and Spanish sounding personal names: Chip, Calvin, Nermal, Tay, Tyne, and Pochacco; names of cartoon characters: Garfield, and a bird, Woodstock; and characters from a television program: Pippo, Hobbes, and Amalee. One student choose the last name of a historical figure: Calhoun. Only two students chose aliases connected with Chinese culture: Asian Sensation and Jade. The non-Chinese aliases selected by the

students, in what was to me a Chinese setting, seemed to point out the strong acculturation of the class members into their host environment.

Let me describe the students. None of the students were born in Texas, although all except one were born in the United States. Tay, a 13-year-old girl, was born in Taiwan, but she came to the United States at the age of two. Her 11 year old sister, Pippo was born in Arizona. Woodstock and Chip, identical twins born in New Jersey, were 13 years old. Nermal was a 14-year-old boy. His younger brother Garfield was 12. Both 11-year-old Jade and 13-year-old Amaley loved to play the piano. They found out they had the same piano teacher during this workshop. Twelve year old Tyne and 14 year old Asian Sensation were sister and brother. Hobbes and Calvin were 10 and 11 years old; they seemed to be good friends. Pochacco, 11 years old, and Calhoun, 14 years old, were slim, tall girls; both played softball and basketball.

#### The first task.

After they had selected their aliases and before I distributed the pre-workshop questionnaire, I told them that they did not need to worry about correct or incorrect answers because the questionnaire was only to give me ideas. I emphasized the fact that there was no pressure or competition among them, and that if they did not understand the questions they should feel free to ask me. The pre-workshop questionnaire contained a total of 12 open-ended questions probing the participants' knowledge of the Lion Dance as it relates to Chinese history and culture. As noted before, these questions were formulated in their final form following informal conversations with the parents during registration. Based on those conversations, I knew that all the children had been, to a

lesser or greater degree, exposed to at least some elements of Chinese culture — though these elements had not been identified by me at the time. Apart from its function as a research tool of data collection, the pre-workshop questionnaire provided me with the information I used to adjust the content of the workshop. I gave pens, pencils, coloring pens, and crayons to the students to use at their discretion and indicated that the length of their answers was not limited to the pages of the questionnaire<sup>1</sup>. Despite my reassuring remarks, I noticed that some of the students were taken aback by the prospect of filling out the questionnaire. Others seemed indifferent, as though filling out questionnaires were a daily activity for them.

When the questionnaire was distributed and I began to explain it, the students quieted and focused their attention on me. I pointed out that they could answer the question by drawing and/or by writing the answer in Chinese or English words, and that not answering the question was all right too. As they filled out the questionnaire, I continued to observe their behavior, trying to keep an open mind, so as not to disregard something of potential significance.

Asian Sensation and Calvin spent a considerable amount of time flipping the questionnaire from one side to the other, as if “sizing up” the questions. They also looked around at the students beside them as if they wanted to make sure that their classmates were actually working on the questions. In the end, they reluctantly started filling out the questionnaire. Tay, Calhoun, and Jade focused on answering the questions as soon as they got the questionnaire. Most of them took little breaks to play with their pencils, look around, and stretch their legs as if it was hard for them to sit still for any



length of time. Others seemed distracted by the questions asked. Woodstock and Chip, the twins, would scratch their heads, answer a question, scratch their heads some more and then answer a few questions. Unlike the twins, most students were not silent. For the sake of the validity of my pre-workshop questionnaire, I finally asked them not to discuss their answers.

#### Students' reactions and questionnaire results.

When I analyzed my field notes from this initial phase, I began to pay attention to two aspects of my data: the informal behavior of the students, on the one hand, and their different personalities, on the other. The former, I associated with the American classroom tradition and with the group's acculturation to American culture. The latter provided me with information which helped me to recognize the students not only as part of the group but also as individuals. Some were more active and even rambunctious, while others were more quiet. Some were slow starters, while others easily fell into the flow of things. Some did not pay attention to detail while others seemed more analytical. I began to see a distinction between the *emic* and the *etic* of their behavioral traits.

As soon as I picked up the questionnaires, the students began discussing their answers. They were all very interested in how many questions they answered compared to others. Garfield and Normal, brothers, are typical of the conversations. Garfield seemed very disappointed in himself, whereas Normal reassured him that there was no need to worry because "the teacher had already made it clear that the answers will not be graded." The preoccupation with achievement surprised me after I had reacted to the students' behaviors when I introduced the workshop.

When asked whether they had seen Lion Dancing before most of the students responded in the affirmative. Jade, Calvin, Garfield, Tay, and Tyne had watched it at a supermarket grand opening. Hobbes, Nermal, and Woodstock saw it at martial arts academies, on television, at an auditorium, and at restaurants. Pochacco, Asian Sensation, Calhoun, and Amaley, saw it at the local mall during the Christmas season celebration as well as at the Dallas Chinese Activity Center. Chip did not answer this question, instead, she wrote a question mark. Describing the dance, Hobbes, Garfield, and Woodstock wrote that the dance is a process involving two people "one in front as the head and one in the back as the tail." Calhoun depicted Lion Dancing as a dance accompanied by the use of drums. Pippo, Tyne, Amaley, Asian Sensation, and Nermal drew pictures of the lion performing various movements of the dance: jumping on top of the props, cleaning its feet, eating the red envelope, and performing acrobatic movements in which the head dancer stands on top of the shoulders or knees of the back dancer. Pochacco, Asian Sensation, and Pippo drew some stools and benches, the props used for Lion Dancing. Tyne and Asian Sensation drew pictures of the exaggerated lion head, while Nermal drew Lion Dancing as an event performed for an audience within an auditorium.

All participants remembered clearly, in elaborate details, the Lion Dancer's movements. Those details depicted in their rendition of the lion suggested to me that the children, at some point in their lives, had watched Lion Dancing with rapt attention. Most of them saw the dance in an American setting. With regard to the music, half of the

students remembered that it involves three instruments: the drum, the cymbals, and the gong.

A few other questions were designed to probe the students' understanding of and knowledge associated with Lion Dancing. The children all had some vague knowledge. When asked if they could write the Chinese characters for "Lion Dancing" only Tay could do it (see Figure 7 - 1). The other 13 participants could not write the characters of "Lion Dancing." Over half of the students could, however, phonetically pronounce the words "Lion Dancing" in Mandarin.

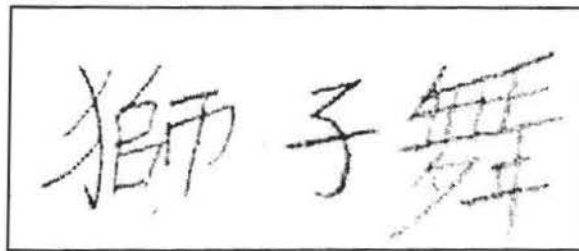


Figure 7 - 1. Tay's correct writing of Lion Dancing

Their answers about the possible origin and the meaning of the dance proved that all the students had been exposed to some information about the functions of the dance. It is true that most students were not sure whether the lion is or is not a native animal to the country of China, and five of them thought it is. On the other hand, the majority of the students remembered that Lion Dancing was used "to scare away bad, evil spirits and that it was also used to bring in good fortune." Four respondents, Pippo, Pochacco, Chip, and Tyne, however, mistakenly associated Lion Dancing with the myth of *nien*<sup>2</sup>.

Further, asked about historical facts and myths associated with Lion Dancing, Pochacco, Calvin, Garfield, Amaley, and Chip were unable to answer. Calvin, Tyne, Amaley, and Woodstock knew that red meant good luck and good fortune. Asian

Sensation and Pochacco thought that the red color could chase away evil spirits. Upon subsequent analysis, Jade answered, "I could try doing the drums, but I'd rather dance." Hobbes wrote, "I know how to play all the instruments shown above [drums, cymbals, and a gong], but mostly I play the cymbals because it's easy."

The last question was designed to assess the students' understanding of inherent values. The question "What is (are) the important thing(s) in performing Lion Dancing?" was answered with a degree of insight. Jade, Pochacco, Chip, and Tay put a question mark as the answer or left it blank.

From an analysis of these data, I was able to identify and refine some of the key concepts for my research. Those pertained mostly to the felt or emic elements of the culture of the group. At this point I also decided on the framework for the pedagogical process through the course of which I would be able to observe, record, and analyze change and development in the group. In the process, I clarified for myself the emic elements of the Lion Dance and the etic elements of culture I was going to share with my students. Videotaping the workshop provided a wonderful way of gathering field data, particularly since a volunteer videographer maintained focus on key events and conversation.

The workshop consisted of four types of units: lectures, hands on experience, discussions, and creative activity periods. The lecture, discussions, and creative periods provided the cultural context in which the learning of the dance took place. The general design was prompted by an anthropological and ethnological perspective to my experience and my research on dance and culture (already discussed in detail in Chapter

Six). Class observation and videotaped classes together with an in depth analysis allowed me to design and gradually adjust the course of the workshop. I was then able to adapt the pedagogy to the needs of the group: at the same time, together with the conversation during the class, they provided me with the material which shaped the course of my research.

My Observations: They were different

Lecture presentations.

Starting with the first lecture, I observed the students as they sat listening. The behavior of the students was very informal by Chinese standards. They sat as they pleased: with their legs crossed, on top of the chair, swinging their legs, chewing gum, or staring into space. Some students looked around and twirled their pencils; one student waved at the camera while a volunteer parent videotaped the class. This is far from the expected norm for traditional Chinese students. The students were uninhibited in their comments, and some of them giggled a lot. It was evident that I had a group of easy-going children, used to a relaxed learning environment. Only a few gave me their undivided attention.

I later realized that regardless of their behavior, they were in fact listening to the lecture since they laughed at all the jokes I interspersed into my presentation. I reminded myself not to be offended but to keep an open mind and not to let my traditional cultural bias lead me to hasty assumptions that would interfere with the observations.

First, I distributed notebooks and asked the students to sign them with their newly adopted aliases. I did not give them any instructions as to how to use the notebooks but I

expected (here my cultural bias again) that they would take notes. To my surprise, none of the students took any notes – not even when I wrote key words on the board. I was unfamiliar with each individual's study habits, but was unsure if they would be able to retain the information I was passing on to them if they didn't copy down the material. Emphasizing the Chinese way of instruction, I urged them to keep notes. In a word, in the course of that first lecture I was confronted with to what appeared to be the groups' culturally significant habits on one hand and my pedagogical approach on the other. It seemed from my students' reactions that they were showing some interest in the workshop. In fact, some of them began showing signs of enjoyment. Both the material and the method of presentation seemed to appeal to the group. The analysis of subsequent lectures revealed a growing interest and involvement by the students.

Hands on experiences: Constructing, playing, and dancing.

The central part of the workshop consisted, of hands-on activities. Those were designed to teach the Lion Dance and its music. From the point of view of the research, I was looking for data the analysis of which would help me formulate a working hypothesis. Let me point out again that I based the broad framework of the research on the study of literature pertaining to dance as an expression of culture and to multiculturalism in general. I was greatly aided by my substantial experience as a dance teacher in Taiwan and the United States, as well as in European and South American countries.

In the workshop, music and dance were taught in separate units. Since Lion Dancing, as well as the music ensemble, requires a great degree of synchronization, I



emphasized developing a noncompetitive spirit: emphasis was placed on the importance of teamwork as well as the significance of each individual as part of that team. To illustrate my point, I used Chinese tableware chopsticks for my example; it is very difficult to eat with only one chopstick.

Playing musical instruments: Delight in sound.

In the music unit, I introduced the students to Chinese musical instruments used to accompany Lion Dancing: the large drum, the cymbals, and the gong. The students learned the basics of how to play these instruments, learned different rhythmic patterns assigned to each instrument and its role in the ensemble. From their initial behavior, I was surprised to find that all students were patient in acquiring competent performing skills. It was clear from their body language and responses that they were thoroughly enjoying the process, though it was easier for me gauge the pleasure of the more extroverted students. This involvement and the progress of the students convinced me that my initial observation of the group had led me to select an appropriate level and gradation of difficulty. I emphasized a non-threatening, relaxed, and enjoyable learning atmosphere.

The large drum was especially popular, perhaps because of its sound and size. The students never seemed to tire of playing it. Learning to play the gong, though its rhythmic patterns are not difficult in the Lion Dance music, required restraint and discipline which not all the students showed at first. One time, during practice, one of them struck the gong so hard that it almost fell over. The cymbals are most numerous in the ensemble and require a high degree of cooperation. At first, the students hit the

cymbals in a completely uncontrolled manner, and the result was an almost unbearably crashing noise. However, the students soon realized that if they played the cymbals in unison, the effect was much more pleasing. As the teacher, I only gave basic instruction for playing the instruments as well as the basics of rhythm. The students created the music themselves, to illustrate the actions and the feelings of the lion.

Creating a lion head: It is not easy.

As indicated, within the framework of the dance, the students had a high degree of freedom to express their creative ideas and to develop the necessary team work. Likewise, the section devoted to the construction of the lion head allowed them to give reign to their creative urges. The lion heads were constructed in groups of two, three, four, or more students. Woodstock and Chip brought a lot of cotton balls, string, sequins, markers, and other materials for their group. This all-girl group devoted themselves to the details of their lion. Another group, Pippo and Hobbes, brought wire and string because they wanted to make a frame for the lion head. This was too difficult so the head was greatly reduced in size as compared to their design. One of the twins, Chip, criticized the results, saying, “our head is ugly;” whereas Calvin, in another group, reassured Chip that it was all right since they were not professionals.

Dancing with the lion: Exciting and fun.

A similar approach was taken in the case of teaching the dance. I provided the students with basic steps and techniques, and the basic elements required in the Southern style of the Lion Dance. The rest was left up to them.

On the first day of the dance class, before I began teaching the students the dance steps, I stood back for a while and observed their reactions to the lion head masks, Hobbes, Tay, and Garfield played with one of the two lions I had placed in the room. They were curious about the animal and examined it by touching and playing with its head, its mouth and its eyes. They finally picked it up. Since they did not know how to handle the big, heavy lion's head, it fell down to the floor and, much to the students' chagrin, received some damage. I reassured them that it was all right and that it was not hard for me to repair the damaged beast. That incident surprised me because I never expected the students to pick up the lion without asking for my permission. I reminded myself again of the cultural bias I was trying so hard to avoid. I felt lucky because the students only did a little damage to the lip of one lion.

In the course of the dance unit, the room was often filled with laughter as the students reacted to the steps they were learning. When the rows practiced, the front sometimes ran into the back row or vice-versa. This produced general merriment. It seemed to me that they were having too much fun, and that they were not seriously focused on *real* practice of the dance. But by the rehearsal for the final presentation, the day before it was given, everyone assumed a serious attitude and gave the practice their full attention. They critiqued each other – even quite harshly at times – and everyone was in a no-nonsense mood. They also helped one another. When one student offered to write down his classmate's lines on a note card, in case she got too nervous on the stage, I realized that the students had developed a cohesive community.

Team work: Two heads are better than one.

One of the challenging steps consisted of jumping on top of bricks. Some of the less daring students preferred, at first, to step on and step off rather than to jump. With some practice, and the encouragement of their fellow students, however, they managed to overcome their fears quite quickly.

When they were preparing for the performance with two lions the students agreed among themselves on the roles they would play in the Lion Dance. Because there were only two lions, no more than four people could play the lion part at any one time. Some students insisted on having an important role and if they did not get it at first they were very upset. They were happy to learn from me that during the remaining performances they would take turns; they became more cooperative. Others, those more withdrawn, wanted only minor roles. It was important to me that students felt comfortable with their roles so they would achieve and do their best within self proclaimed limits.

During the practice everybody gradually learned to cooperate. This was a must in the dance as the cooperation was vital. The students worked together in a relaxed and happy atmosphere. Their body language and facial expressions also indicated little competitive spirit in favor of a cooperative attitude.

One of the technical movements in the dance calls for the lion head to jump onto the lap of the lion tail. While practicing this step, everyone was trying to avoid injuring the other students. Some tried to support the head while others supported the tail. That was a strong indication of the students' developing a sense of community based on cooperation.

Every child volunteered for a part for the final performance. One child wanted to be the Happy God, others wanted to play the drum, or gongs, while still others wanted to be part of the lion. One of the twins, Woodstock, wanted to be a lion tail, whereas the other wanted to play the cymbals. They decided that they wanted their lion to be a drunken lion and, to play out the act, they needed a bottle; so they offered to bring a Chinese wine flask from home.

Public performance: Group effort and a family affair.

During their performance, the students showed a sense of discipline and the ability to work as a self-directed team, qualities they had gradually acquired in the course of the workshop. It was also obvious that they were truly enjoying themselves. The program included also a brief oral presentation by each student in which certain parts of the dance were described. They presented with poise and I sensed their evident pride in and respect for the individual contributions made to the performance.

The performance was a family affair. Everybody came: grandparents, uncles and aunts, siblings, and cousins. There was a sense of importance to the occasion. Some parents brought red envelopes stuffed with cash to “feed” the lions. When the twins forgot to bring a bottle for their drunken lion, which made them terribly upset, their father dashed home to bring it in time (see Figure 7 - 2).

The parents also played an important part in the performance effort. Right after the presentation, we hurried to the “real” performance for Dr. Ku’s book signing at the Omni Hotel in Richardson. The parents had everything packed in 15 minutes and then, upon



arriving, they unpacked in a matter of minutes. In a word, the parents also exhibited the ability to work as a team!



Figure 7 – 2: My volunteer Overseas Chinese students' performance.

#### Data Analysis

From the data collected during the final presentation my refined hypothesis emerged. The analysis indicated a change toward co-operation and team spirit, and in the formation of a sense of community and involvement. The change, I posited, occurred as a result of the involvement in the culturally charged Lion Dance. It can be argued that dance and ensemble music teach cooperation and team work irrespective of the culture. These qualities represent the foremost values in traditional Chinese culture; whereas in Western culture they belong mostly to a subculture or are restricted to certain situations.



In this sense one can say that, through learning the Lion Dance, my American Chinese students responded about the curriculum positively and acquired an essential *emic* aspect of Chinese culture that affected the analysis and the theory. Role of the pedagogy to provide an inviting threshold for the students to feel the fun, challenge, achievement and significance of the traditions and ritual associated with Lion Dancing.

Pre –questionnaires vs. Post questionnaires.

The impact of the workshop on the students' deeper understanding and knowledge of Lion Dancing in its cultural context was determined by the post-workshop questionnaire which consisted of the same questions included in the pre-workshop questionnaire. It was administered in the same format. Substantial change was noted in the areas of the meaning and the origin of the dance: Now 11 students correctly identified the color symbolism. Ten mentioned that red means good luck; three pointed out that the silver color represents ghosts and spirits, and ten mentioned white as the color of death, funerals, illness, and sadness. Four students knew that gold and red symbolizes good fortune, prosperity, and celebration. Two identified black as a serious color, and one knew that green represented money.

There was also a broader range of answers to the question about the history and myths associated with the lion. All of the students were aware that the lion was not native to China. Five wrote said that Lion Dancing was used during warfare to scare away elephants. The soldiers put on ferocious lion masks to scare the enemy's elephants. Two students noted that the lion was brought into China from outside of the country as gifts to the Emperor, which lead to establishing the first zoo.

There was a significantly wider range of answers to the question “Why do the Chinese perform the Lion Dance?” All 14 students noted that Lion Dancing was performed “to scare off and to keep evil or bad spirits away.” Ten of them also replied that “it was to bring good luck or fortune.” Chip and Asian Sensation indicated that it could be performed as part of a funeral dance, and Chip also said that Lion Dancing “could be for war.” Asian Sensation answered that Lion Dance could be performed at parties, grand openings of stores, Chinese New Year’s, at other festive occasions, and at funerals. Amaley wrote “to bring happiness.”

In the area of practical skills, all the students learned to draw “Lion” in Chinese, and most of them were able to write “Lion Dancing.” They indicated that they knew how to create the lion head, and to play the lion music instruments which they correctly identified. All 14 students said that the gong, cymbals, and big drum were the instruments used for Lion Dancing. Eight students even elaborated by drawing each of the three instruments. One student wrote both the Chinese characters and the English words for the instruments. Ten students said that they could play all three major instruments, while one student said that he could only play the drum, which he described by drawing it. Another child stated that he could only play the gong.

The majority of the students clearly remembered that the frame of the lion head was made of bamboo, papered and then covered with cloth and decorated at will. Nine of them stated that after the frame of the lion head was made, it was covered once or twice with paper maché. One child said that the head must be covered with glass paper.

That the students strongly identified with the dance was also revealed by their answer to the question, "Where did you see the Lion Dance?" to which 50% responded that they saw it at the Dallas Chinese Community Center. Many described their own experienced version of the dance. One drew both a male and a female lion. There were two children teasing the lion in the picture. Three students said something about the different instruments used during performance of the Lion Dance. They mentioned the three parts of the performance, the lion crossing a bridge, a drunkard lion, and *Tsai chin*. Twelve students indicated they had learned about three different styles of Lion Dancing, which they were able to list. Some students were even able to write the names of the styles in Chinese characters. The majority were able to identify the Northern style lion as one with yellow or long, golden yellow hair/fur and characterized its performance as "acrobatic." Describing the Southern style lion, they referred to it as "vivid, colorful and often accompanied by a Happy Buddha who plays with the lion. The lion's eyelids can blink and its mouth can be opened and closed." The Taiwan lion," said the students, "had a green mask and its mouth was closed."

The results of the post-workshop questionnaire demonstrated the effectiveness of teaching elements of culture through and in connection with dance, music, and style. Relying almost solely on interactive, cooperative learning tools, students determined their active knowledge of the material by creating a final project. In designing the project, students had used their own method to present a short, informational presentation to their family and friends.

To acquire the third element in the triangulation of the data, I formed my observations by interviewing both parents and a selected group of students following the workshop and studying the video tapes.

Parents' voices: They really learned a lot.

When questioned about their children's reactions, comments, non verbal behavior as well as newly acquired knowledge and skills at home after returning from workshop classes, the parents gave a wide range of responses. It became evident that some parents interacted closely with their children, while others did not have much meaningful contact with their teenagers. Some parents questioned their children about the workshop daily while others limited themselves to sporadic questions, if any. Nermal and Garfield's mother seemed to think of the workshop as free babysitting since as she said that "at least they could not learn anything bad from it." She indicated that her children didn't talk to her about the workshop throughout its duration. She told me that she and her husband were always busy after work, so they never asked the children any questions; the children themselves preferred to spend the evenings playing video games. Calhoun's mother said, "my child remained silent when she returned home, and that neither her husband nor she ever asked any questions. They felt teenagers "were a little odd" and if "disturbed" too much with questions, her daughter might feel that her privacy had been invaded.

Conversely, Tyne's and Asian Sensation's mother admitted that, as a former teacher, she probed her children. Every day after the class, the minute her children got in the car, she asked her children what they had learned. Sometimes her son and daughter

were enthusiastic about the class and talked incessantly about it, both at the same time; at other times, they ignored her questions.

Many of the parents noticed their children's growing enthusiasm and interest in the Lion Dance and some observed their interest in the cultural context of the dance. Amaley said that the stories told by her the teacher were "really cool;" that she had never heard any of them in Chinese schools and she had never come across them in the storybooks at the library. Jade, whose only enjoyment seemed to have been playing the piano, told her mother after the first day of the workshop that the class was a lot of fun. She was impressed with the historical background about the lion that was presented and said that perhaps she could use it in one of her projects in world history class. Nermal's mother said, "My big son was interested in Chinese history, and so, in the workshop, he was especially drawn to the presentations of historical background of the Lion Dance." Pippo, according to her mother, repeatedly "tested " her father's knowledge of the material.

In most cases, the parents were able to point to the steady growth of enjoyment of the workshop on the part of their children. The mother of twins, Woodstock and Chip, admitted that she had brought them to the workshop without telling them of its duration. The twins thought they were coming just once. When, after the first session, they realized the workshop was going to last six days, they came home crying. Woodstock and Chip felt their afternoons would be wasted as they wouldn't be able to watch TV and relax. Their parents, however, were firm in their resolve and did not let them drop the workshop; they were convinced that it presented a rare opportunity to their children. A

few hours later, the twins stopped complaining and resigned themselves to the will of the parents.

The twins' mother continued, "The second day, however, after dinner, my daughters mentioned that they had fun that day, because they had touched and played with a lion." The following night they became busy around the house searching for materials needed to construct and decorate the lion. After dinner on the third evening, Woodstock said, ". . . the most boring part today was making the lion head because there were not many materials and the lion head was ugly and fake looking." They were very unhappy but did not want to volunteer more details. The only exception came the day before the performance when they asked to bring a traditional Chinese wine bottle for their performance the following day. When the mother inquired about its purpose, the twins answered that it would be perfect for the *Tsai chin* section of the Lion Dance.

The twins' mother saw merits in teaching her children self-discipline and to work despite their initial resentment. These children who cried on the first day of the workshop subsequently became deeply involved. Depending on their personalities and on the family situation, some children expressed their excitement more clearly than others. Tyne's father described an afternoon when his daughter came home very happy and excited. Tyne quickly demonstrated the different drum beats she had learned with an explanation of what they meant. Tyne told her father that the drum beat indicated what the lion was doing and was a signal of what it was going to do next. She called this the "secret language."



One of the most important questions asked of the parents was that pertaining to their perception of the changes that they had observed in their children's appreciation of the Chinese culture. Did they feel the changes were linked to participation in the workshop? The parents persisted in describing their children activities which indicated their growing interest in the Lion Dance. Amaley's mother said that she was very happy because she had always wanted to perform Lion Dancing and now she could, at last, do it. She thanked her mother and told her that she loved her and that she would love her forever for making her dream come true. Hobbes went home and continued to practice writing of word for "*shi tsi*". In the past, according to the mother, he had not been a very good student, and she was very grateful to see him so enthusiastic about learning.

Most of the parents emphasized the educational benefits. When asked "What is/are the most important thing(s) you feel your child has learned from the Lion Dancing program?" some stressed the newly acquired skills. Eight parents said that after watching the presentation, they realized that they knew less than 15% of what their children had learned in the workshop. They were also greatly surprised that their children could actually present and perform the Lion Dance in only one week. These parents thought that their children had learned a lot about Chinese culture and that the workshop provided them with a unique educational experience.

Some parents observed changes in their children's behavior. Jade's mother said that, in the past, her child had been very introverted and shy. Through participation in the Lion Dance, she gained more confidence and poise. Her mother was happy to see this transformation when she watched the final presentation. The mother of Nermal and

Garfield pointed to changes in her sons' interaction with each other. Her older son often took advantage of his younger brother who adored him: Many conflicts existed between the two. The two boys apparently responded to the teaching about teamwork and, toward the end of the workshop, the mother observed much less friction between them.

Pochacco's father thought that the workshop was a turning point in his child's appreciation of Chinese culture. Watching the children so enthusiastically present information about the lions and Chinese culture filled him with immense pride. He was convinced that other parents experienced similar emotions.

Asked what aspects of the workshop the students responded to best, Amaley's and Chip's mothers said that their children loved being the lion so much that they continued to work on their lion heads at home. They also devoted a considerable amount of time to practicing crossing of the bridge section. They both mentioned, "My daughter was very excited about the workshop." Calvin's mother said, "My son enjoyed being the Happy God and would carry a fan around the house practicing how to play the role of the Happy God." Nermal's mother said that her child told her he liked the stories very much and enjoyed learning the Lion Dance movements. Asian Sensation loved the social interaction at the workshop, according to his parent.

The only disappointment expressed by the parents was with the lack of opportunities to perform Lion Dance in the future. Some worried that their children might forget how to do the dance ritual. I assured them that if there was an invitation to perform in the future, at a Chinese school or at a New Year's Party, we could perform.

Trying to assess the participants' ties to the homeland, I asked them whether they were planning to return home. None of the families had such plans, but Pippo mentioned, "When I grow up, I want to go to Taiwan, to learn more about Taiwanese and Chinese culture". She kept her words. In the summer following the Lion Dance workshop, she returned to Taiwan, her parents' birth place. And, as I write this chapter (March, 2001), Pippo has already attended the provincial junior high school of Normal University in Taipei, Taiwan for one year and eight months.

The analysis of the above material allowed me to verify my hypothesis then to formulate the grounded theory pertaining to the process of teaching culture through and in connection with teaching Lion Dancing to Chinese American students.

#### Students' voices: Lion Dancing is fun.

The students' perceptions of their involvement, interest in Lion Dancing and in the cultural context was an important source of data. Interviews with selected students constituted another strand of information to reveal the level of enjoyment experienced and the significance the students gave to their work. The data collected helped in the verification and the final refinement of my grounded theory.

Three of the 14 students interviewed indicated their preference for musical activities. Another student said that all the instruments "were fun to play" but he enjoyed the drum the most because it led the ensemble. The other two instruments simply enhance the sound of the drum. He also liked performing as the lion very much. His only complaint was the short duration of the workshop. Five students said that they liked the hands-on experience with the lions the best. Even though they learned a lot, three felt

that listening and sitting through the lectures was the most boring. Four said that the videos of the Northern style Lion Dancing and the acrobatics were “very cool” to watch. The female and male lions flirting “were funny”, and the popular film — *Once upon a time in China 3* — with the fighting lions and with the performance of hundreds of lions was “really neat.”

Yet another student, Chip, enjoyed being the lion tail. Because she thought she was big, too tall and heavy to be the lion head, she chose to play the part of the tail which involved holding her partner upright when he jumped onto her leg. She felt that the “most boring part” of the workshop was constructing the lion head. She was frustrated because her group had not brought enough interesting materials with which to make the head and consequently the results of their creative efforts were not pleasing.

A few students expressed preferences for the lecture format. Six students said that their favorite part was listening to the historical narratives about Lion Dancing, and that it was the stories that spurred their interest in the workshop. One student said that in general she did not like lectures and thought they were “very boring.” However, during my lecture presentations, she did not experience the usual boredom. “The way the teacher presented the information continuously held my attention and so my idea that all lectures are boring has changed.”

Through an open-ended process, teachers begin to experience the unique attributes of their students. I am no different. All the students represented different personalities, and I saw those differences reflected in their likes and dislikes. Some were captivated by hands-on demonstrations, others by performing as the lion head or its tail, while others

preferred playing a certain instrument, watching videos, and learning about the history of Lion Dancing. Some found it especially delightful to watch the flirtation between the male and female lion. A few actually enjoyed lecture presentations. Regardless of their personal preferences, in the course of the workshop the students seemed to develop or strengthen the spirit of cooperation and team work and to put the benefit of the group before their own likes and dislikes. One student enjoyed playing the drums, but set aside her favorite role to play the part of a lion. These simple gestures and actions reflected a shift from self preoccupation to thinking in terms of community. In this effortless way the students seem to have internalized the concept of cooperation which is essential not only to Lion Dancing but to Chinese culture in general. This is one of the deeper cultural lessons learned by Lion Dancing.

Generally speaking, the students considered the workshop too short. Amaley said, "I love you Mommy for bringing me to this." I believe this illustrates the positive influence the workshop had on these students and gives validity to the effort.

#### Videotaping.

I was privileged to have one of the mothers assist me in videotaping these classes. However, this proved to be both a blessing and a detriment. I really appreciated the assistance as well as the use of the video equipment which saved a great expense. Nonetheless, I found that having another person who was not as knowledgeable about research strategy ultimately resulted in a research deficit. As a researcher I was and am cognizant of the need to record everything (as much as possible) that occurred in the classroom. Since my study focused on student perceptions and learning, I needed to have

an accurate documentary of all of the classroom activities. Although I reminded my volunteer mother at the first day of the workshop that I needed to record everything, unfortunately, she did not understand the need to record the entire class. Instead, I found that segments of activities were recorded. This was most noticeable where an activity involved a great deal of repetition. Instead of continuing to record the students' observable behavior, my volunteer mother contented herself with recording a segment of the activity and then shutting the camera off until a new activity began thus editing the recordable information. Consequently, I was not able to analyze every moment of the class.

However, the activities that my volunteer mother recorded were very clear. It allowed me to repeatedly review the classroom activities and to search and research my answers. Since I was looking for both the etic and the emic of the class, I found that this lack of complete documentation was detrimental. I then needed to use my recollection as well as my field-notes to fill in the lack of a totally comprehensive video.

#### Triangulated Relationships: Searching for the Answers

The triangulated relationships between the different groups involved in this study. The steps of triangulation helped me re-examined the analytical outcome among the parents, students, and me, as well as validated my final result. Each was dynamic, influenced by the actions of every other group or sphere. In this ways I can not only see but depict how Lion Dancing has affected me, my students, their parents, and, by extension, the community at large. I learned from the students that they enjoyed learning with fun and challenging. The students love to perform in front of their friends, parents,



and audience, they were empowered through their positive hands-on learning experience, successful final presentation and communities performances. Parents were proud of their children and were completely support the children's performances by transporting all of the music instruments, costumes, and lions with honor. In addition the recognition from the Chinese community greatly valued the effort of each one of us. I saw this as the jewels that I collected from the study; it was beyond my expectation.

Finally, in many ways I felt that the students were like my own daughters. Each has the potential for richness, but the jewel – like wealth must be coaxed forth. I used my teachings as tools to help me to extract the wealth of ideas and abilities that lay dormant within each student. As my students developed deeper connections to their Chinese heritage and culture, the jewels that were within each child become more visible. Similarly, I was a mine, full of wealth that could enrich their knowledge of their world. Each time I provided the students with a nugget of information, it was as if I had strewn the area with pearls. The students had only to collect these jewels in order to create wealth of their own.

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#### Chapter Seven Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> they had an unlimited supply of paper at their disposal

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### TRANSMITTING CULTURE – THE WEALTH OF A COMMUNITY:

#### SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND CONCLUSION

This study was a very serious task, as I spent nearly four years in its preparation. During that time, I read historical documents and religious literature, while attending various Lion Dancing performances. In addition, I visited several martial arts schools as well as interviewed *Shifus* of Lion Dancing, and their students to sum up more historical, mythological, ceremonial, and practical material for the workshop. And I delved deeply into my store of memories learning, performing, and teaching Lion Dancing in Taiwan, in the United States and in other countries.

My research was structured around the traditional questions of where, when, why, who, and how. From this I could trace the pathways that lion dancing has taken as its influence traveled around the world. I noticed the progression that occurred from the lion's first introduction to ancient China from India and its eventual transmission as a cultural icon to the rest of the world. I can now directly trace the path of Lion Dancing to Taiwan, Okinawa, and rest of the Orient, and ultimately, to the remainder of the world. Similarly, I can trace the influence the lion had, not only as an animal, but as a symbol that has been incorporated into artworks and personal collections. Indeed, I recognize how the lion image has become sculpture that is found at museums, parks, temples,

graveyards, and as guardians for streets and entire villages. I have also seen the lion image guarding individual houses where it is found in front yards, on roofs, inside the home, outside the door, and posted on windows and gates. I was also able to trace the historical paths and timelines for the development of Lion Dancing as well as recreate the Lion Dance for a group of school children.

My research led me to develop methods of teaching that can be thought of as a transdisciplinary approach that incorporated elements of art, music, history, language, and dance along with more traditional lectures. I was able to first learn and then to teach my students of the overall importance of Lion Dancing to Chinese culture as well as to show them three popular forms of Lion Dancing. Furthermore, not only did I transmit knowledge of the subject itself, I was also able to incorporate venerable traits of Chinese culture such as sharing and working together as a group. Finally, I learned to appreciate how one cultural element, such as Lion Dancing, can be used to foster cultural identity.

Ultimately culture and people are intertwined. Culture is an outgrowth and development of people and can only continue if it is passed from one generation to the next. Without this human element, culture would not exist. For me, one effect of this study was to continue to pass my culture along to a new generation of students – a group of overseas Chinese students. Finding these students and teaching them more about our shared culture was akin to finding the jewels in the mine and polishing these gems. This effect was a lasting one. I learned from this study that I did not just affect the students in my class. Instead, my work had a larger and more far reaching effect as the Lion Dancing

tradition was passed to my students and then on to their family and friends, and ultimately to the larger community.

My personal pedagogical framework involved combining a specific approach with the curriculum content to position students as active participants in the learning process. My approach was a transdisciplinary one involving different senses. I believe that each student desires the teacher's attention, encouragement and guidance, and a sense of empowerment which can be achieved through positive feedback. A teacher must recognize that each student is a unique individual and that each student is equally important. Consequently, a teacher must ensure that each student has the opportunity to express him or herself, perform, and develop his or her own self esteem. Teachers must be sensitive to the needs of the students and be flexible enough to adapt each lesson to the students' need. This may require that the teacher deviate from a predetermined lesson by planning and allowing the lesson to change in response to the students' needs.

To allow such adaptation, the teacher must be well steeped in the content of the material to be presented. In terms of the Lion Dance content, the teacher must recognize the geographical spread of the lion image from India to China and of Lion dance from China to the rest of orient and then to the remainder of the world. The teacher must recognize why the Lion Dance has such importance in Chinese culture and be able to demonstrate not only how to perform the Lion Dance but the reason for performing it. Thus, the teacher must be able to show not only the history of the Lion Dance but also its relevance and value in present day society. I found that the endeavor became a communal enterprise between myself, the students, the parents, and the community.

To help students appreciate the influence Lion Dance has had on Chinese culture, we traced its root beginnings as well as the forms the Lion Dance now takes. Together, we studied the props and types of costuming used in Lion Dancing as well as the interaction between the performing arts of music and dance and how these interrelate with the history of Lion Dance, its relationship to religious influences and its geographic spread. We learned to appreciate Lion Dance's significance in terms of the luck the Lion brings and the influence the Lion has in producing good fortune. We also learned movement techniques so that the students could effectively perform the Lion dance as well as the musical rhythms, instruments, and musical patterns. From a literary perspective, we incorporated not only the mythological beginnings but the historical antecedents as well. Finally, we relied upon family and community support for the entire project. Parents, friends of the students, and volunteers were involved in loaning the props, music instruments, and they became involved in advertising. Beyond this, the local community provided the locus for the performances as well as media attention for the event. Communal energy is a vital part of Chinese culture.

#### A Different Understanding

Teaching a group of 14 students to understand and appreciate Chinese culture during a one-week workshop of Lion Dancing was no simple task. Even with a well-designed curriculum and with flexible teaching skills, I felt challenged simply because all of the students had different personalities, characteristics, motivations, art making experiences, and movement abilities. For example, when I taught them the basic

movements, I had to incorporate and work with the fact that most of students have no, or very limited, dance experience, and one student evidenced coordination problems.

In the beginning, the lecture section was a bit frustrating because the students did not actively copy down the material I taught. But as each day passed the frustration subsided and enjoyment replaced. As a dance scholar, I valued much from the literature I studied, and excitedly offered this information to my students. However, to my surprise and dismay, the students did not bother taking notes. Although each had a notebook, they began to take notes limited to the material I wrote on the board only after I strongly emphasized that they should. I learned later from my daughters that to children of their similar age, learning meant “sitting in class while watching and listening”. Through this experience, I learned the culture of students and their “absorb naturally” learning style.

When comparing the pre and post-questionnaire, I noticed dramatic differences in their answers. They had learned the key concepts. In the pre-questionnaires, out of 14 people, only one student could write “lion dancing” in Chinese correctly. After the workshop, all the students wrote the words in Chinese, demonstrating a level of basic understanding of Chinese vocabulary. To another question, one, which asked whether the lion was or was not native to China, the six students first claimed “yes.” By the end of the workshop, all students said “no.” To the question of “what do you know of the history or myth about lion dancing,” seven students were unable to respond with an answer, four gave unclear answers (mixing up lion dancing with the monster of the Chinese New Year), and two gave incorrect answers. At the end of the workshop all the students gave the same, correct answer in personalized, elaborately detailed descriptions.



They described the origins of the lion dancing, and the entire process of its derivation – from its use on the battlefield to it being used for celebration purposes. When first asked about Lion Dancing styles, only 11 made comments, but later all the students named the popular styles of Lion Dancing. Even more, they all learned Chinese color symbolism as well as the Chinese tradition of sending red envelopes for New Years and white envelopes, for funerals. They were proud of what they learned and excited, at the end, to perform and demonstrate their new knowledge. The support by family and the community validated the efforts they had made.

From a scholar's perspective, I hoped the students would value the organized and collected sources the way I did. However, they did not understand that a great majority of Lion Dance devotees would feel lucky to have such a vast array of organized and collected material covering the subject so thoroughly. Because they did not understand its importance, they were unable to appreciate its true value during the lectures. In order to spark their interest and desire to learn I shifted to an Americanized approach; I simply reduced the material to their comprehension level and included stories, rhythmical music, art making (drawing and making the lion head), movies and videotapes. I had to accept them first, to teach them at their level of interest. Thus, my students increased their knowledge through the experiences based upon visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning styles. According to two students, the lectures were surprisingly interesting and very enjoyable. All students commented that throughout the workshop, they were happy, "much like the happy god" as a boy portrayed at the end. He also said, "You are the BEST teacher, thank you," commenting that the workshop was extremely enjoyable and

educational. This study provided me the opportunity to practice my multicultural and dance education concepts on the students, and helped me derive my theory of transdisciplinary pedagogy.

#### Changes in the Student's Understanding and Appreciation of Chinese Cultural Elements

The students picked up the concept of aesthetic appreciation through the procedure of creating their masks, exchanging opinions and suggestions about how best to construct them, and then later learning to appreciate their own artwork. Another concept was color symbolism; students contrasted between western and Chinese contexts.

In the American school system, individualism is highly stressed. In contrast, I continually emphasized teamwork and a group learning spirit in the Lion Dance activities. The “self” was enlarged to “the group.” Indirectly, this taught the children that “harmony increases the power,” a cultural factor highly stressed by the Chinese family. They worked with the spirit of unity and cooperative effort. Ergo, even under circumstances of conflict, where more than one student wanted to play the drums or such, they resolved the problem to suit the greater interest of the collective group. A group learning spirit is something innate to Chinese culture but was lost to these American Chinese children. This application of harmonious principle opened the children to this inherent quality. The application was demonstrated by their volunteering to help each other making the masks. Impressively, at the conclusion of the workshop, students incorporated into their presentation more than 90% of the original material and information I taught them. Their presentation of so much material, and so thoroughly, was noteworthy. Naturally I was thrilled. Although this is what I hoped for, I had no idea what they would decide to

include in their script. Of course, this does not mean that they learned the material they covered since many of them had note cards while presenting, but at least I understood that they did appreciate a part of their culture and expressed their ideas enthusiastically.

For the beginning of their presentation, they commented on how they were going to use Lion Dancing to introduce the Chinese culture. Later, during the performance, they mingled with the audience to collect the red envelopes. I had originally planned to give out ten envelopes for them to collect, but at the end the total was nearly seventy! The students enjoyed receiving the envelopes from their relatives; it delighted them to be able to “eat” the envelopes out of the hands of those they knew. The collected money was used to purchase lunch for the whole group. This kind of sharing is also very Chinese. The maxim reads along the lines that when it is time to work, everyone helps and when the reaping is done, everyone shares.

#### Parents' Comments

Many of the parents were ecstatic at the progress and results of the workshop. Pochacco's, Calvin's, Amaley's, Jade's, Nermal's, and Garfield's parents were so happy with the results that they inquired if another workshop would occur the following year on a different popular traditional activity, such as Dragon Dancing. They even commented that they would be more than willing to pay for the next workshop. Other parents readily agreed to the suggestion and indicated that the workshop be longer since the children obviously enjoyed it so much.

In most cases, I encountered parents, community officials, and students who are awestruck that so much study, research, and theorization must be done to get a doctorate

in dance. They often view dance as being a subject where people move and dance around; a deeper respect for it is usually not given. These parents shared the same view. They did not think that dance would be so academically linked or that it truly needed a basis in theory. However, after watching their children perform Lion Dancing, they began to see how elements such as geography, dance, religion, history, and culture were evident in dance, and that a scholarly inquiry surfaces these features. At the end they were all very proud that their children had attended the workshop and that they had learned so much about Chinese history and culture through studying Lion Dancing in relation to their culture.

### Community Participation

Cultural events transfer from the individual to family, from family to community, from community to society, from society to nation, and ultimately from nation to the world. Communities usually represent culturally different groups, and when joined together in society, society must deal with the diversity of so many different cultures. By using a form of dance and its related arts to teach children Chinese culture, community participation is fostered. The community is an involved partner.

In order to obtain the volunteer students the community was drawn in. I began the preparation for the study by writing an article for the Chinese newspaper a month before the date and asked five Chinese school principals to announced the news. During the course of the workshop, by-passers into the community center often noted the lion dancing with curiosity. Some asked if there were a fee to learn while others wished to inquire if there were more classes. I commented that it was a scholarly research and that

all participating spots were taken, and that they were invited to come to the concluding presentation. At the end of the study, the parents brought family, relatives, and friends to the presentation. In addition, a week before the culminating performance, I again published an article about the ceremony and invited the public to join our presentation. People from some other organizations attended.

The sum of all the factors resulted in the community actively participating and partaking in the cultural event. This entire process also illustrates another Chinese maxim stating that *one begins and one completes*. It also is a Chinese cultural and educational concept that we must use what we have learned to contribute to the community.

The workshop expanded to include the entire Chinese community. We performed at six different events. Dr. Charles Ku, a respected leader in the Chinese community and a noted author, was involved in two of these events. He not only attended my first preparation meeting, where students and parents meet my major advisor Dr. Janice LaPointe-Crump and me, but also introduced the final presentation. He then invited the children to perform during his book signing at the Omni Hotel in Richardson, TX.

The children were elated that so many people applauded and asked me if there would be any future performance opportunities. But even happier than the children were the parents, because pride consumed them. Three parents volunteered that if transportation was necessary they were more than willing to help out and that they would work the performances into their schedule.

Performing at Chinese New Year's parties.

Within a month, the students and I were very busy because we were invited to perform at five Chinese New Year's celebration parties.

At the Tzu-Chi Foundation, the audience was filled with philanthropists, and the purpose of our performance was to thank the volunteers for their good works and contributions. This is also part of Chinese culture: to thank those who involve themselves. This mission was explained to the students. At the other two performances, we were invited by the principals of two schools. Six students were from Da Hwa Chinese School in Plano so were able to perform in front of their peers, parents, and grandparents to demonstrate their new prowess. There they collected 102 red envelopes!

The performance at the other school was simply entertainment to a crowd of students and parents of Hai Hwa Chinese school in Richardson, who were celebrating our New Year. After the performance, many parents wanted to take photos of their children with the lions masks and little performers. My students felt very important.

Another performance was the traditional annual Chinese New Year Celebration Party at the Dallas Chinese Community Activities Center. This was an event that included the entire Chinese community. Here, both the students and their parents felt extremely proud of their ability to demonstrate Lion Dancing or that their children had a grasp on Lion Dancing so well.

Lastly, at the Overseas Chinese Arts Festival at Garland Performing Center for the Arts, our dance was the opening act. It is traditional for the lion to welcome in the New Year. The elderly ladies and gentlemen applauded and praised the children for their



mastery. After every performance, the students critiqued their mistakes, but I countered that the performance is over, and as long as the audience and they enjoyed it, art was in progress and that was all that counted.

Appreciation of the children's own culture and other cultures is demonstrated by relating qualities of their created works to their own lives and concerns. A work which they create and take credit for directly reflects their appreciation of it, for one does not take credit for that which maintains no relevance to oneself. Some children proudly displayed their drawings and the art work (the little lion heads that they constructed). Although each lion head was a collaborative effort, each student was able to appreciate his or her own part and the quality of the work in the context of their own culture. The students' comments, body languages, attitudes, final presentation, and community performances demonstrated their empowerment. Their appreciation of Chinese culture rested in their respect for the final dance and by their lecture demonstration, a tangible and verbal representation of all that they had learned.

As to the use of Chinese Lion Dancing being an effective tool to promote culture and values, my response is affirmative. Within a safe, stored community of learners, they also learned to trade ideas and feelings and to elicit reciprocity in the process.

After this study, I derived a conclusive pedagogical framework in which dance can be a medium to teach children, within an adopted cultural environment, their root culture. Two major points must be emphasized: what material to include and the ability to instruct. The content is extremely important because the children are often not familiar with the achievements and the history of their heritage. Consequently material that is

provided plays a large role in shaping an understanding, appreciation, and respect for their culture. The material acts as a bridge between their previous knowledge and their later understanding. Through language, history, geography, and art (which includes music, fine arts, and dance), a basis for their root culture can be constructed. To add a deeper understanding with symbolism, ordinary activities, and behavioral nuances helps to expand their grasp. Cultural concepts, religious beliefs, and social enactment, through family and social organizational values are all components to the entire whole of culture.

The format we must follow, in order to gain the children's attention and curiosity, begins with a positive environment so they happily wish to learn more. A sense of safety is the basis of true communication. All subjects should be taught with diverse methods. Because students are individuals, the theories and practice of multiple intelligence (Gardner, 1993) helped me fulfill their needs. Thus, when using dance as the means to introduce culture, one must decide upon the form of dance and then proceed by adding the necessary areas for concentration to the main form. This selective process can be done by researching the literature to discover what measures, traditional or current, should be taken. Searching through all the material, the teacher must then carefully select the information that is most valuable to use in relation to the subject. Interviewing the older people and visiting the diasporic community to obtain primary information is also a good form of collecting cultural material, and to feel more at one with individuals within the community. Generally speaking, each student's unique abilities, whether musical, bodily-kinesthetic, logical-mathematical, linguistic, spatial, interpersonal, and

intrapersonal, must be engaged to achieve self empowerment. My students' body language expressed a sense of confidence and personal pride.

I believed the door of a new world of Chinese culture is opened through their eyes, ears, and bodies. For those who learn by musical inclination, such as rhythm and auditory sensation, music conduces a deep understanding. For those who are spatial, engaging in artwork, and hands on activities provides the link to visual understanding. For kinesthetic learners, the dance movements connect them to an understanding of the material. Linguistic learners find written and visual literature compelling. Interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence is applied through group work. Throughout the entire learning process, though, enjoyment and desire to learn must remain foremost. Students must apply and acknowledge what they have learned.

#### Transdisciplinary Pedagogy in Teaching Culture

Most programs for teaching children about culture through the arts are limited to the standard curriculum and pedagogy related to a single fine arts field, such as visual arts, music, dance, drama, or literature. The theory of transdisciplinary pedagogy in cultural education uses related categories and applied teaching methods. The culturally related subjects may include history, geography, language, literature, mythology, aesthetic and symbolic values and meanings, knowledge of religious beliefs and ritual ceremonies, and ordinary life activities.

The effective teaching method must engage multi-sensory media, such as auditory, visual, and kinesthetic ways of learning, to focus on the students' own potential by capturing their learning styles. In this study, I was able to provide a vivid learning

experience. Furthermore, it is very important to allow the students equal opportunity to express their thoughts, feelings, and ideas. Through positive hands-on learning, students experience culture in individual and/or group artistic creative projects. Applying transdisciplinary pedagogy, the teacher needs to be patient with each student and provide encouragement, inspiration, enlightenment, motivation, and positive correction. Transdisciplinary pedagogy goes beyond what the individual cultural related subject usually teaches. It promotes a sense of individual safety, develops self respect and confidence, encourages community learning, and extends the educational activities to the parents and community. In this study each student was able to maximize his/her potential during the learning, creating, decision making, and performing processes.

While I have not as yet utilized this methodology with children who have had no direct experience with the particular culture that is being studied, a transdisciplinary approach to multicultural education may help these children learn about diversity in a non-confrontational manner. They might be able to appreciate the beauty and mystery of various cultures, and ultimately this may reduce the xenophobia and hegemony that unfamiliarity and fear so often engenders.

If I were to conduct this study again, I would change the following: I would include a personal character questionnaire – which would help define what category of multiple intelligence each child belonged to and then I could have focused my teaching methods at the outset. Field trips to see images of lions at various local restaurants and museums within the community, would have expanded my use of photos. The children could have interviewed the restaurant and house owners to ask about the symbolic representation of

these lions. This would involve interaction with first hand sources and made the study of symbols more vivid. Also, if provided the opportunity again, I would conduct this workshop for physically challenged students and use the Lion Dance workshop to promote personal pride and respect for themselves and their culture.

### Suggestions for Further Study

As a suggestion for further studies, I recommend using Labanotation and Effort-Shape to record Lion Dancing movements into scores, so those who read notation may reconstruct the Lion Dance. It is important that Asian dances be a part of the folk and ethnic dance literature. Use of these integrated systems would then allow the widespread sharing of Lion Dancing. For other ethnic dance educators, I would recommend applying the pedagogical framework to their own culture. Adaptation of its methods would be necessary so that only those methods suited to their students should be included. Educators must be more eager to prepare teaching methods for students that may be physically challenged. All children have a right to multicultural education.

By providing our upcoming generation with an appreciation and understanding of their root culture we allow them to interact with a variety of other cultures with an open mindset. This is important because the United States is and will continue to be a nation that is increasingly multi-culturally based. In order to advance a more harmonic union among the races, familiarity, cooperation and respect must dominate, and this union begins with the sowed seeds of understanding that results from respecting all cultures as jewels to be cherished.

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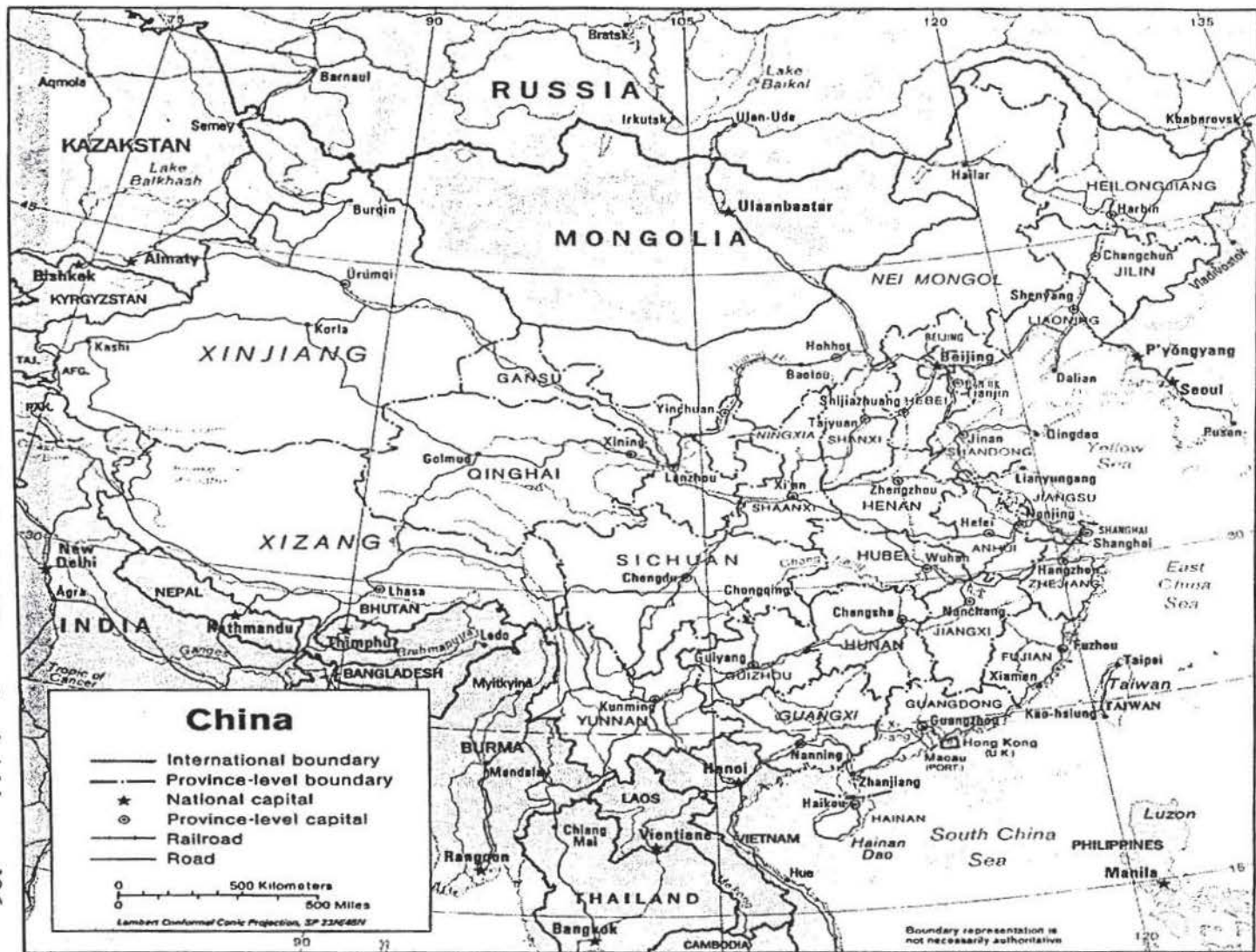
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## APPENDIX A

### The Map of China and Taiwan

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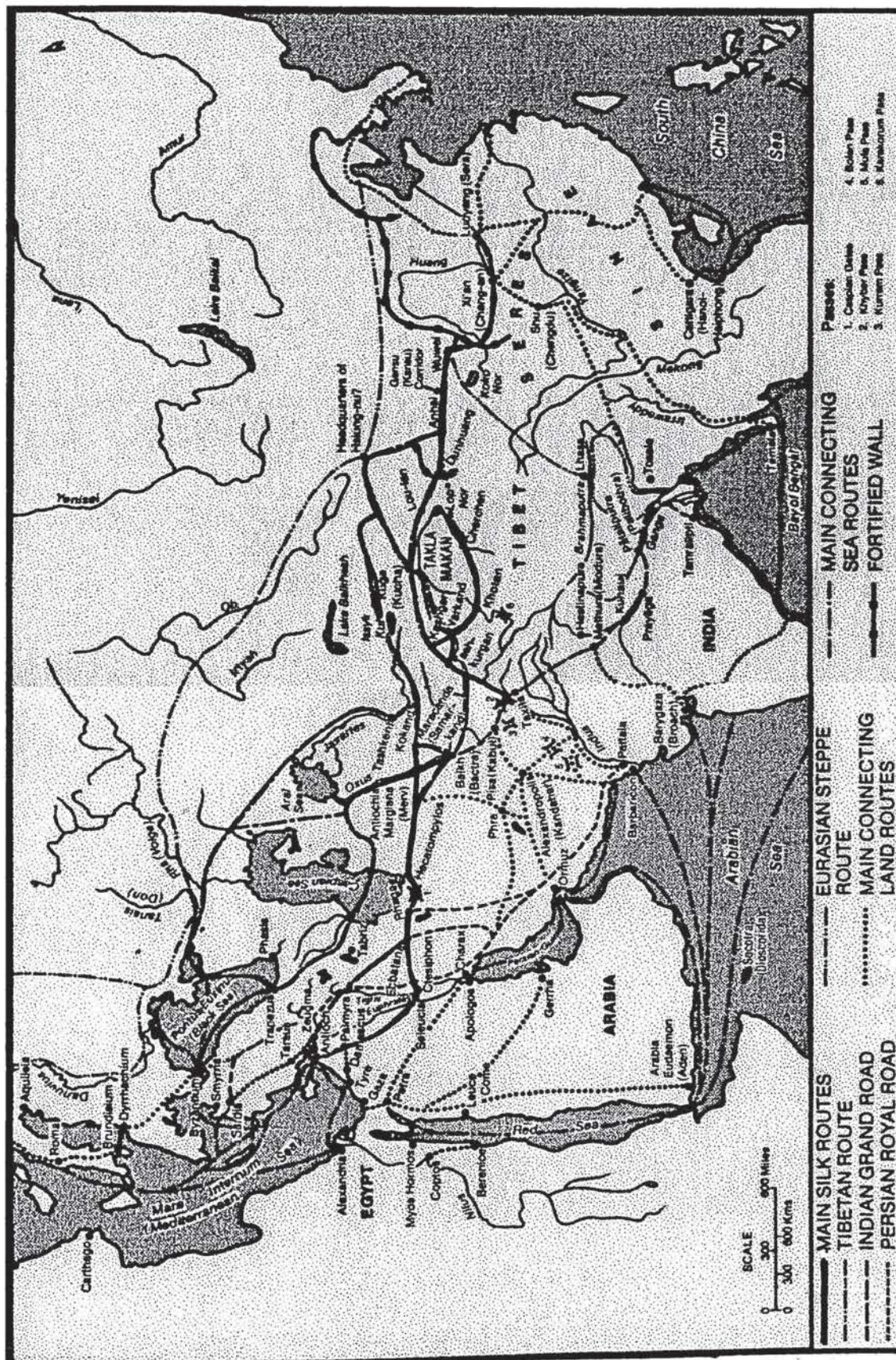
## APPENDIX B

### The Map of Main Silk Routes

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## APPENDIX C

The letter from Human Subject Review Committee

**TEXAS WOMAN'S  
UNIVERSITY**  
DENTON/DALLAS/HOUSTON

HUMAN SUBJECTS  
REVIEW COMMITTEE  
P.O. Box 425619  
Denton, TX 76204-5619  
Phone: 940/898-3377  
Fax: 940/898-3416

December 4, 1997

Ms. Mei Hsiu Chan  
1804 Scripture Street, Apt. 21  
Denton, TX 76201

Dear Ms. Chan:

Your study entitled "Reinstating Chinese Culture: Learning the Culture through Lion Dancing" has been reviewed by a committee of the Human Subjects Review Committee and appears to meet our requirements in regard to protection of individuals' rights.

Be reminded that both the University and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) regulations typically require that agency approval letters and signatures indicating informed consent be obtained from all human subjects in your study. **These consent forms and an annual/final report (attached) are to be filed with the Human Subjects Review Committee at the completion of the study.**

This approval is valid one year from the date of this letter. Furthermore, according to HHS regulations, another review by the Committee is required if your project changes. If you have any questions, please feel free to call the Human Subjects Review Committee at the phone number listed above.

Sincerely,



Chair  
Human Subjects Review Committee

cc. Graduate School  
Dr. Janice LaPointe-Crump, Department of Performing Arts - Dance  
Dr. Richard Rodean, Department of Performing Arts - Dance

## APPENDIX D

The letter from Dallas Chinese Community Activity Center

8/10/2020 10:10:10 AM

**達福華僑文教活動中心**  
**Dallas Chinese Community Activity Center**

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400 N. Greenville Avenue • Suite 12 • Richardson, Texas 75081 • Tel: (214) 480-0311 • Fax: (214) 480-0403

Jeannie Hu, Director  
Dallas Chinese Community Activity Center  
400 Greenville, Suite, # 14, Richardson, TX.  
Phone: 972/ 480-0311 & 972/ 380-0324

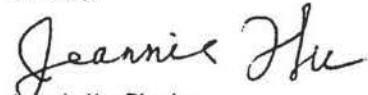
Human Subjects  
Review Committee  
Texas Woman's University  
P.O. Box 425619  
Denton, TX 76204-5619

November 4th, 1997

To Human Subjects Review Committee,

I have read the research proposal from Ms. Mei Hsiu Chan, a doctoral candidate in Dance at Texas Woman's University, about her dissertation study that is *Reinstating Chinese Culture: Learning the Culture through Lion Dancing* at Dallas Chinese Community Center. I am happy Ms. Mei Hsiu Chan will use the Dallas Chinese Community Activity Center, from December 28, 1997 to January 10, 1998, to teach Chinese culture through Lion Dancing (it does not incorporate a religious tone) to a group of Chinese students. As Ms. Chan and I discussed on the phone this afternoon, I have already agreed and reserved the classroom and the activity hall for Ms. Chan's Lion Dancing study. If there is anything I can help please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



Jeannie Hu, Director  
Dallas Chinese Community Activity Center

cc. Ms. Mei Hsiu Chan

## APPENDIX E

The parents permission consent form

TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY  
SUBJECT CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Project Title

Transdisciplinary Multicultural Dance Education: Teaching Overseas Chinese Students  
Chinese Culture Through Lion Dancing

Mei Hsiu Chan (940) 898-2085 (TWU Programs in Dance)  
Dr. Janice LaPointe-Crump, Research Advisor (940) 898-2090  
(TWU Programs in Dance)

I hereby authorize my child, \_\_\_\_\_, birth date \_\_\_\_\_, to participate in a two week workshop of Lion Dancing which will be taught by Mei Hsiu Chan for three hours a day, from December 29, 1997 to January 4th, 1998 at the Dallas Chinese Community Activity Center, 400 Greenville, Suite, # 14, Richardson, TX. The purpose of this study is to investigate the change in understanding and appreciation of Chinese culture by Chinese students through their participation in a learning program focusing on Lion Dancing and its related arts. I realize that participation in this project is completely voluntary and that I may revoke my consent at any time during the study. I understand that my child's name will be changed on all written documents to assure confidentiality. I understand that this form of Lion Dancing is not a religious ritual, nor does it have religious meanings. I further certify that my child is at least 11 years old, but is not more than 14 years old.

I understand that materials such as field notes of interviews, copies of my child's journals and drawings will be stored until the conclusion of Ms. Chan's dissertation process, and will be burned after the research is completed (December, 2000).

I understand the following risks:

- \* Lion Dancing will involve dance movement with a prop (a big lion head). It may be too heavy for small students. I understand that Ms. Chan will tell students.- "please feel free to let me know if the lion head is too heavy for you. You can do the tail part or play the instruments rather than actually dance with the lion head".
- \* There is always a risk of injury when participating in any physical activity. However, my child will not be requested to perform movement beyond her/his ability. Bruises, strains, scrapes, and sore muscles will be dealt with immediately with first aid procedures. If it is a serious injury, Ms. Chan will follow the Dallas Chinese Community



Activity Center's emergency procedures, someone from the Dallas Chinese Community Activity Center may call 911 for an ambulance, and Ms. Chan will notify me immediately.

\* Participating in any group activity, such as doing a movement, answering a question, or performing in front of the audience can be at times embarrassing. My child will be encouraged, but not required, to do whatever he/she feels is comfortable. If my child does not enjoy the Lion Dancing class, or feels uncomfortable participating in a certain activity, I understand that he/she will not be requested to perform. It is "Okay" for my child to do only whatever he/she enjoys and likes.

\* Students' names on their written journals or drawings may be seen by the public. Therefore, every student will be requested to pick a favorite pseudonym for himself/herself and to use his/her pseudonym on any written journal and drawing assignment throughout the study.

As described in the cover letter, I understand the potential benefits to my child:

\* These classes will provide my child with the opportunity to learn Chinese culture through learning and performing Lion Dancing and its related arts.

\* This program is not offered in my child's regular school curriculum, nor offered in the regular program by The Chinese Community Activity Center.

\* At the end of the study, my child will be invited to perform the Lion Dance in public with the group, and my child will receive a copy of the videotape of her/his performance as a reward.

The researcher will try to prevent any problem that could happen because of this research. I should let the researcher know at once if there is a problem and she will help me. I understand, however, that TWU does not provide medical services or financial assistance for injuries that might happen because I am taking part in this research.

I understand that my child can withdraw from participation in the project at any time. There will be no penalties associated with withdrawing from this study.

Please let me know if there is a problem and I will try my best to help you. If you have any questions concerning the research or regarding your child's rights as a subject, I hope you will ask me. You can call Texas Woman's University Programs in Dance at (940) 898-2085, and I will return your call as soon as possible. If you have questions afterward or if you have any problems, please call me or my advisor Dr. LaPointe-Crump at (940) 898-2090, or the Office of Research & Grants Administration at (940) 898-3377. You

will receive a photo copy of this dated and signed consent form on the first day of Lion Dancing class.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of parent/guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

-----

I do hereby consent to the audio and video recording of my child's voice and/or images by Mei Hsiu Chan, from December 29, 1997 to January 10, 1998 under the authority of the Texas Woman's University. I understand that the material recorded today will be seen and heard by only Mei Hsiu Chan and three professors serving on Ms. Chan's doctoral research committee during the study. I understand that the audio material will be stored until the conclusion of Ms. Chan's dissertation process (December, 1998), and then destroyed by erasing the material within two years of the study's end. I understand the videotapes will be kept for ten years following the completion of the study and may be made available for educational and/or research purposes and may be presented in an educational setting, then destroyed. I do hereby consent to such use.

I hereby release the Texas Woman's University and the undersigned party acting under the authority of Texas Woman's University, from any and all claims arising out of such taking, recording, reproducing, publishing, transmitting, or exhibiting as is authorized by the Texas Woman's University.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of parent/guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

The above consent form was read, discussed, and signed in my presence. In my opinion, the person signing said consent form did so freely and with full knowledge and understanding of its contents.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Representative of Texas Woman's University

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## APPENDIX F

### The research project questionnaire

Transdisciplinary Multicultural Dance Education: Teaching Overseas Chinese Students  
Chinese Culture Through Lion Dancing

Research Project Questionnaire

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(The name you pick to use in Lion Dancing study)

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ (Today)

**\* Please raising your hand if you need more paper for your description or drawing.**

1. Have you seen Lion Dancing? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If your answer is "Yes", please answer WHERE it was and describe or draw  
WHAT did you see.

2. Do you know how to write "Lion Dancing" in Chinese?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If your answer is "Yes", please write Lion Dancing in Chinese.

3. Is the lion a native animal in China? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

4. Do you know WHY Chinese perform Lion Dancing? Please describe.

5. What do you know of the history or myth about Lion Dancing? Please describe.

6. How many popular styles of Lion Dancing do you know? Please describe or  
draw.

7. What is(are) the DIFFERENCE(S) between (among) these styles of Lion  
Dancing? You can describe by writing or drawing.

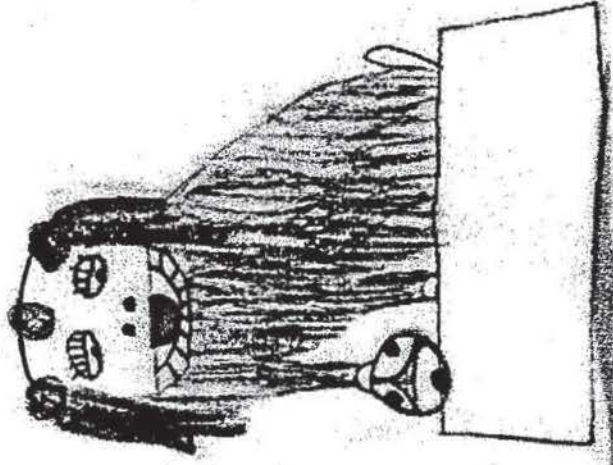
8. Do you know how to make a lion head for Lion Dancing? Please describe.
9. What do you know about the MEANING of COLOR in Chinese culture?
10. What kinds of Chinese instruments are used in Lion Dancing? You can describe them by writing or drawing.
11. Do You know how to play a Chinese instrument for Lion Dancing? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ If your answer is yes, what is the instrument? You can describe it by writing or drawing.
12. What is(are) the important thing(s) to perform Lion Dancing?

## APPENDIX G

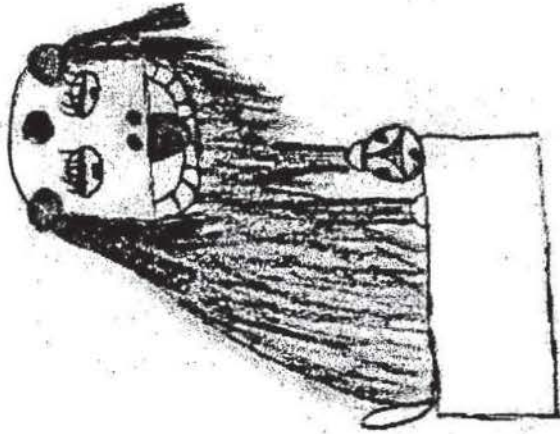
### The students' drawings



52-00

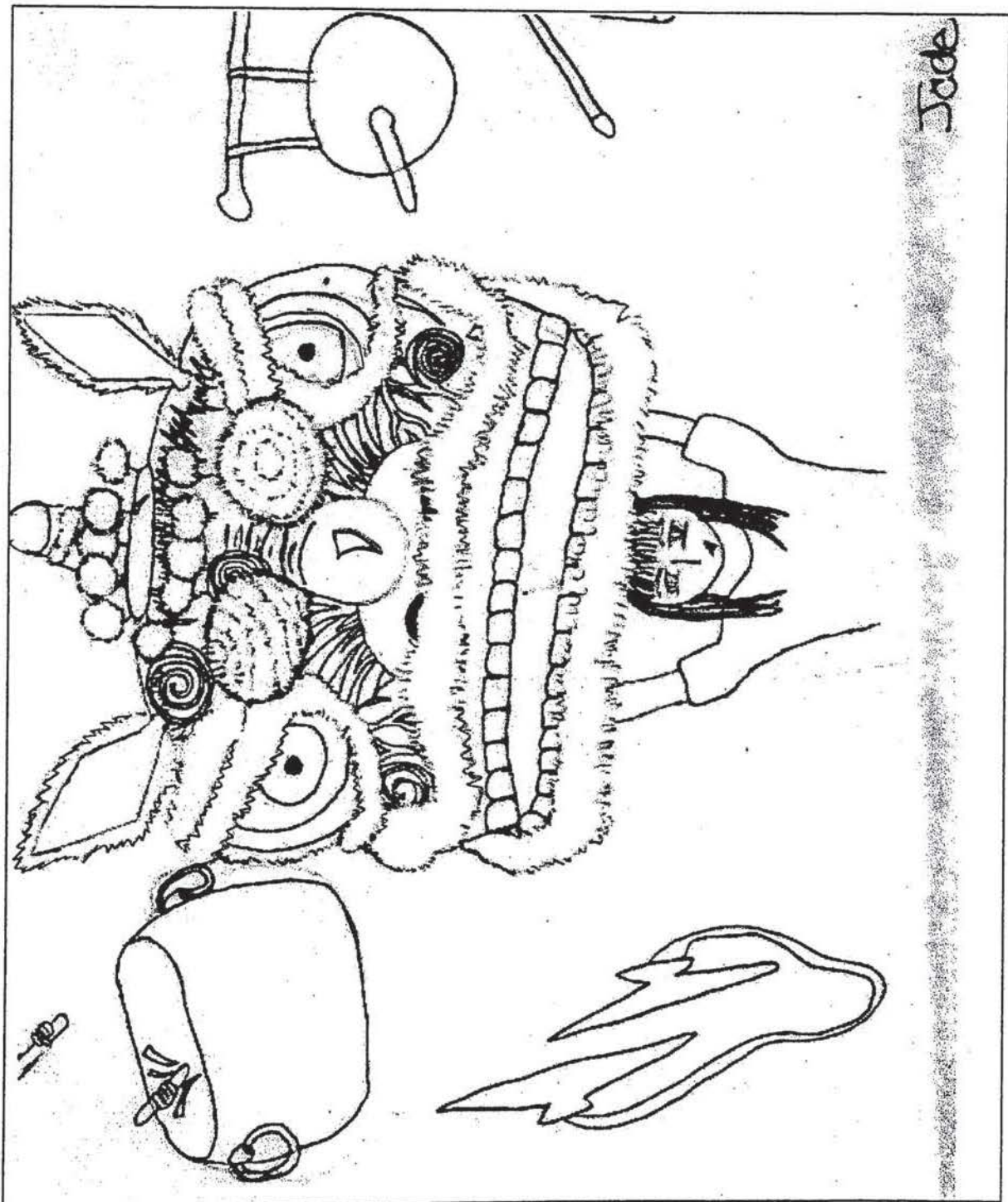


北

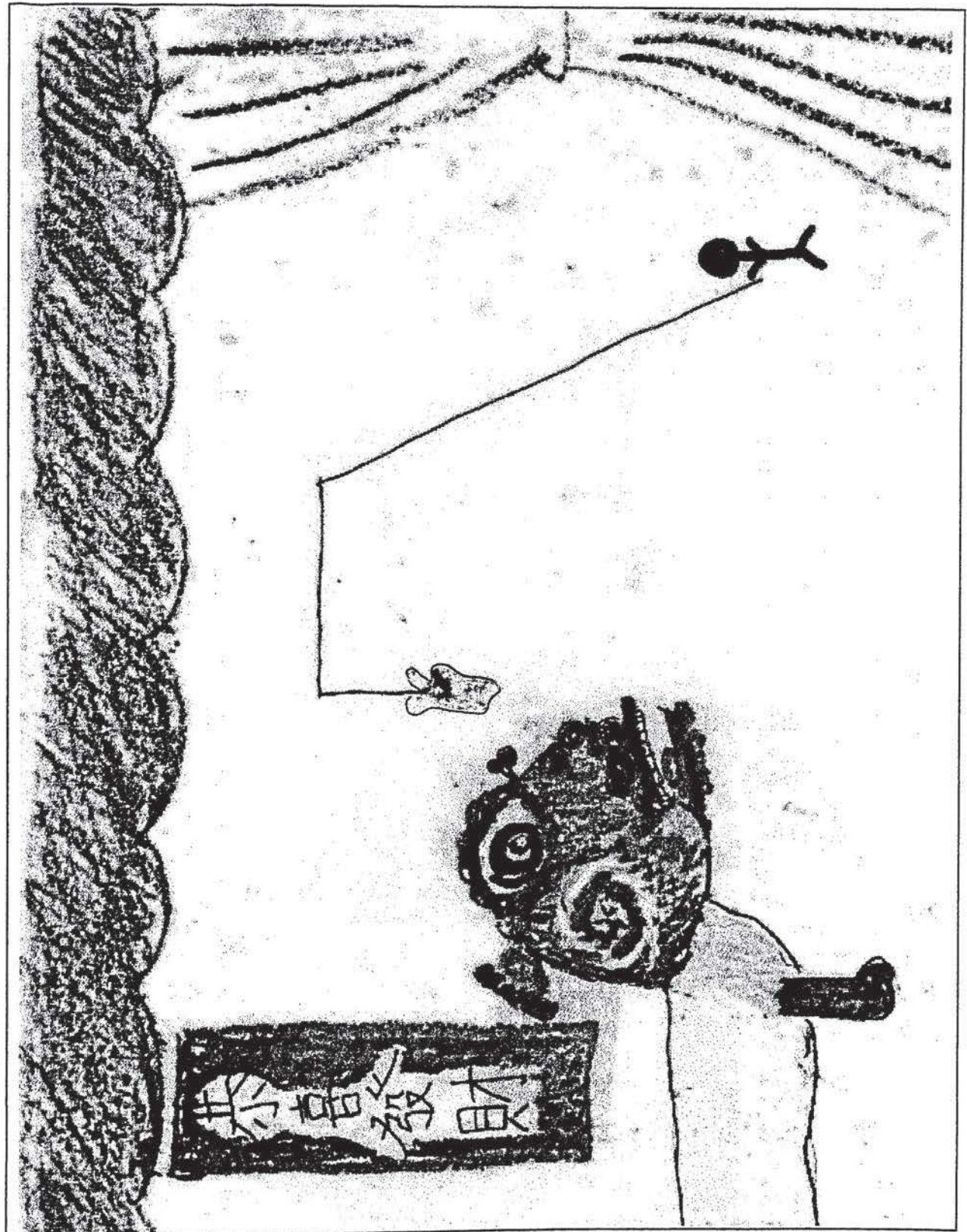


PIPPLO OUL

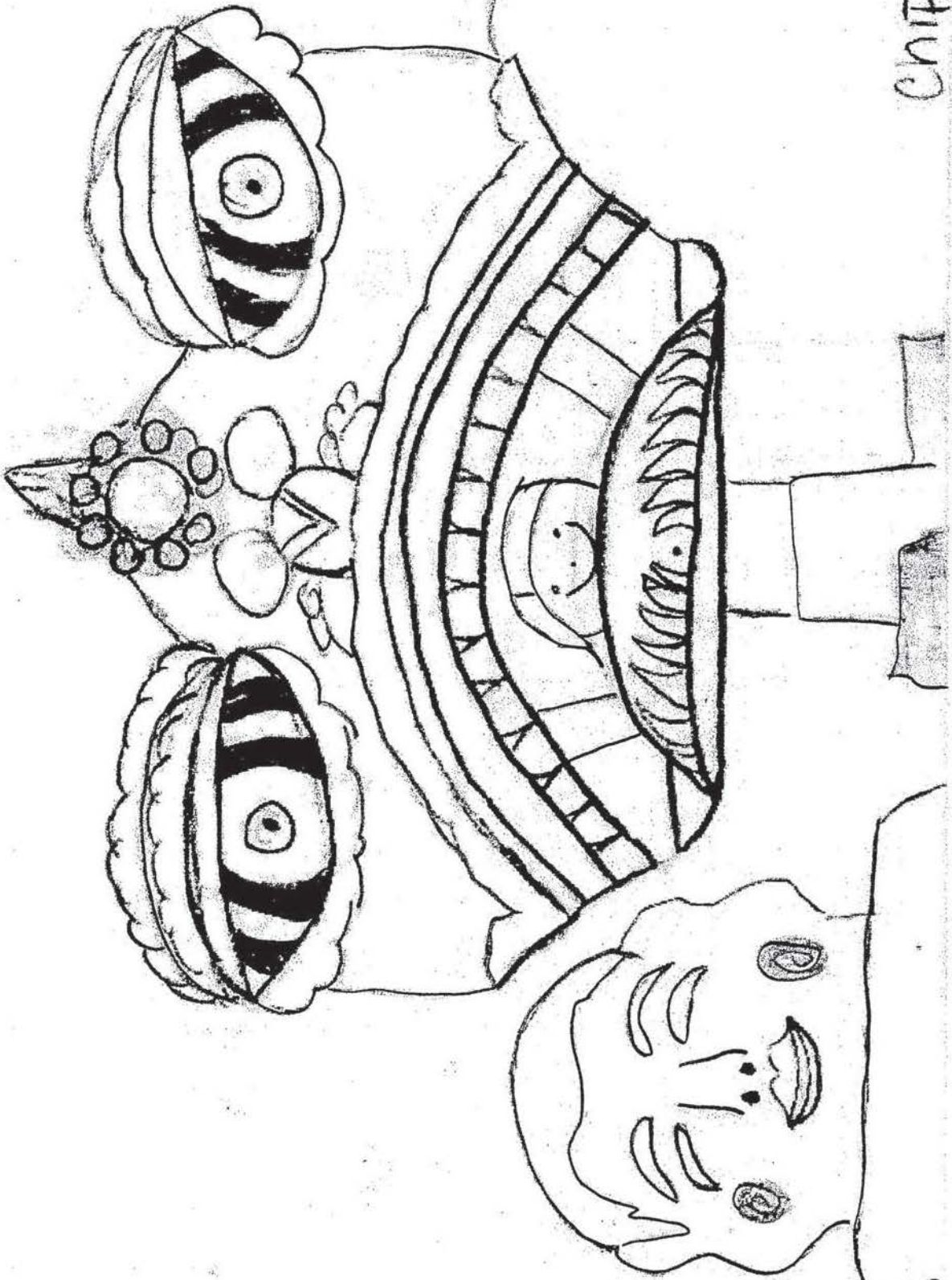
Jade





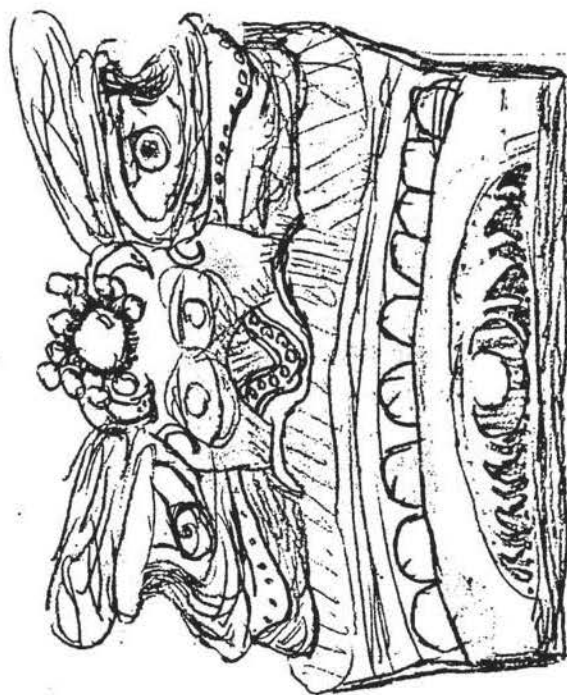


chip

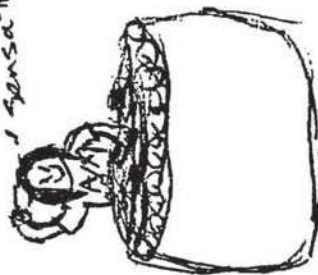




Buddah -  
We're Happy

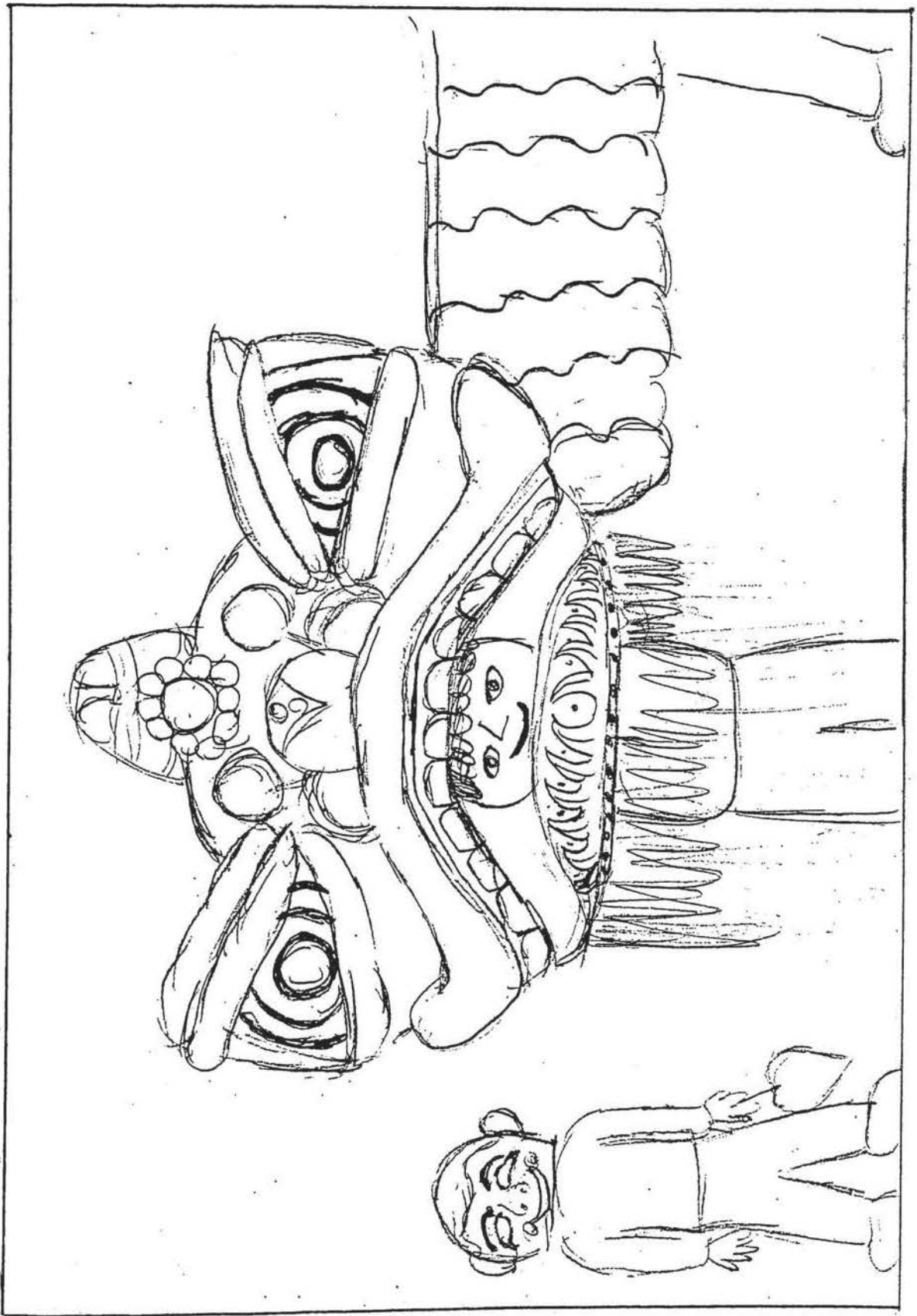


Asian  
sensation

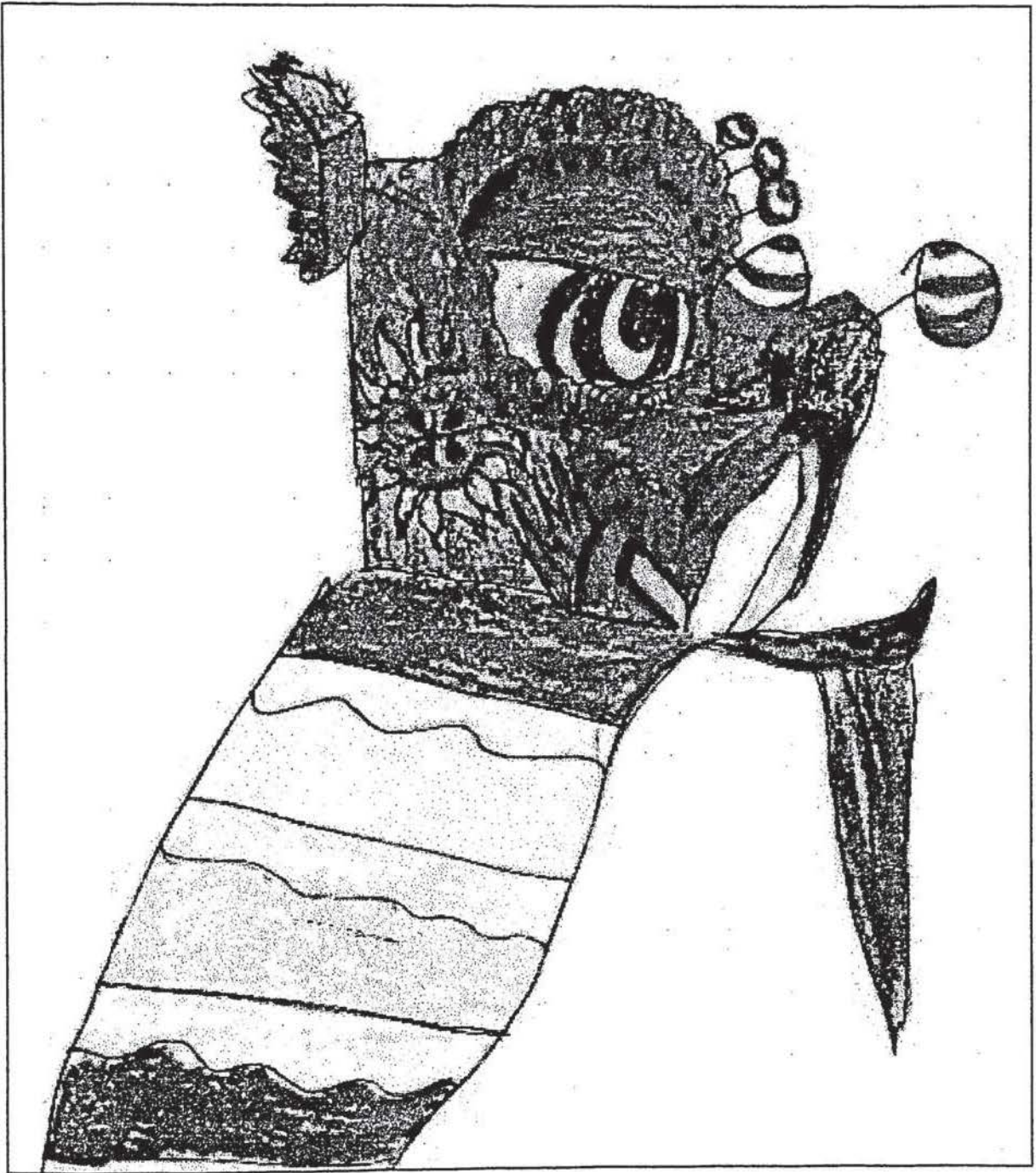


Love Guy









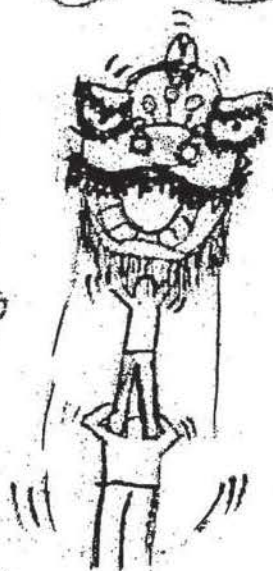
獅

子

舞

LION DANCING

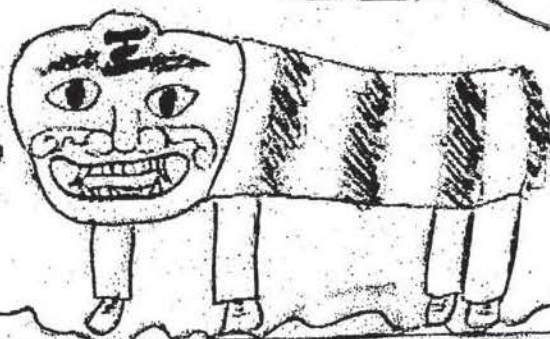
廣東獅



北京獅



台灣獅







大頭佛



鼓

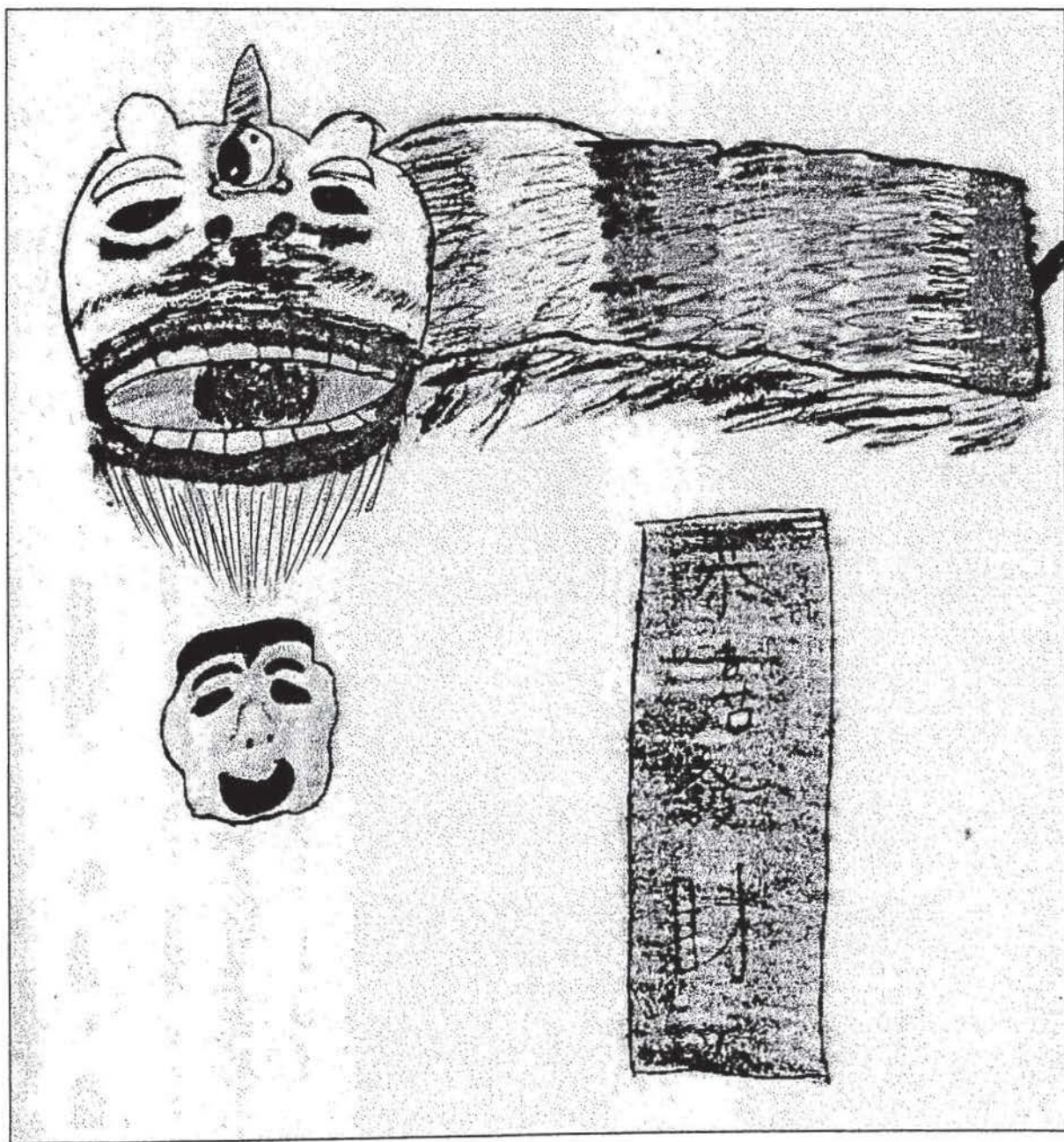


鈸

金羅

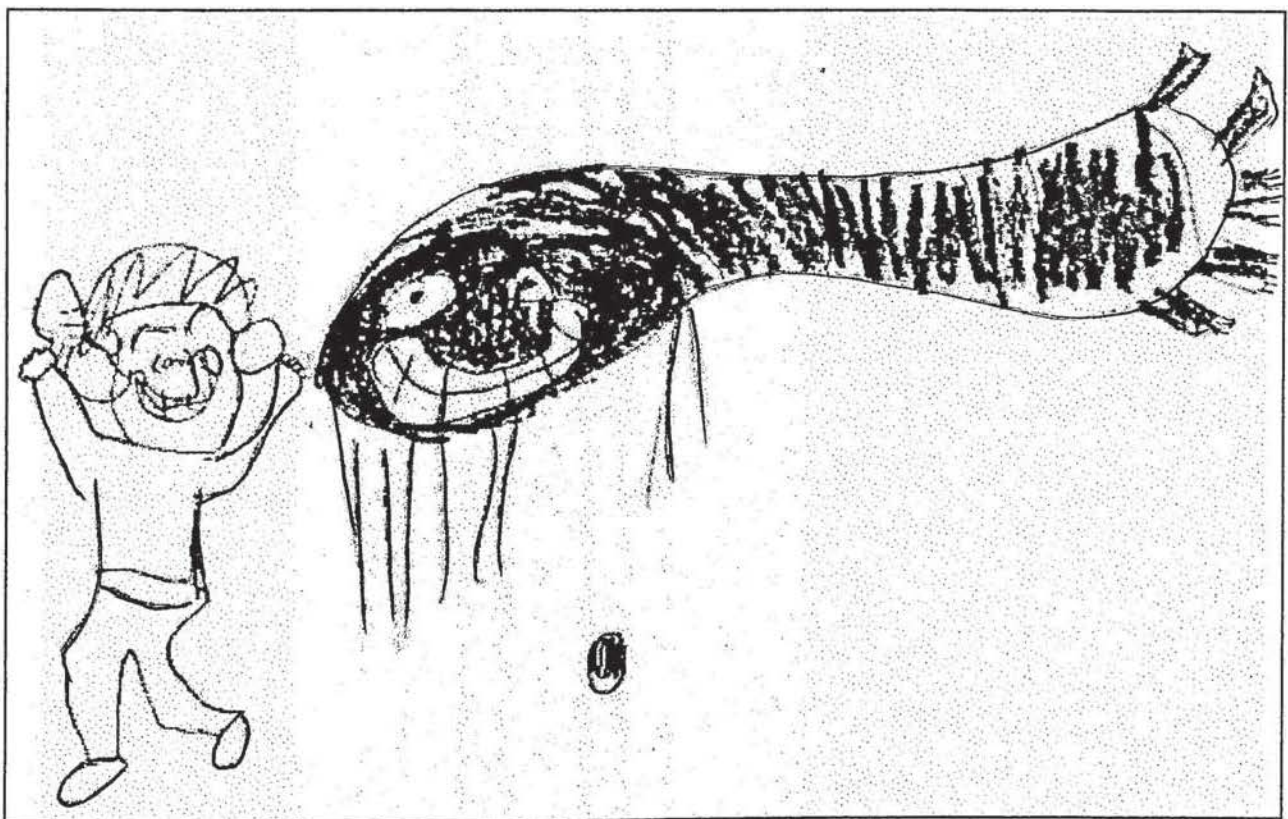








Side view of Lion  
Drawn by Tyne









## APPENDIX H

### Biographical Sketch

## Mei Hsiu Chan Biographical Statement

I was born and raised in Taiwan, ROC, where I did my initial dance training. I graduated from the College of Chinese Culture in Taipei, Taiwan where I received both a Diploma in Dance & Music and a B.F.A. in Cinema & Drama. I then taught at the Chinese Culture University for five years as well as at the Shuang Mei Performing Arts School where I was the Artistic Director, Administrator as well as an instructor and producer. I am knowledgeable in several styles of martial arts and have extensive experience with various dance forms including ballet, tap, jazz, modern, post-modern, as well as ethnic dance. I alternated my educational experiences with an active performing career and traveled with the Chinese Martial Arts Goodwill Mission to various European countries, the Middle East, and Hong Kong. I also performed with the Chinese Acrobats and Musicians and toured Central and South America, Canada, Japan, and through most of the United States. In addition, I danced with the Classical Ballet of the Republic of China and the Chinese Goodwill Mission. These performing experiences allowed me to realize the importance of dance-arts as a means of educating both children and adults into dance as well as culture. I have actively choreographed during my entire career and have also developed classical Chinese dance companies in Taiwan, Arizona, and Texas.

I have extensive educational experience on both national and international levels. I have taught at the Summer Camps of Chinese Culture in Belgium, Austria, France, Brazil, the Netherlands, Paraguay, and the Dominican Republic. I was an Artist in Residence in primary and secondary schools in Tucson, Phoenix, and on the Navajo Reservation (Tuba City), where I introduced Chinese culture as well as classical Chinese

dance to a variety of classes and ages. I have also performed as a guest artist/choreographer and/or had an artist residency at several universities including Texas Women's University, West Michigan University, Arizona State University, Colorado Spring College, and Murray State University.

On an academic level, I have an M.F.A. from Arizona State University and a Ph.D. from Texas Women's University. I have authored several articles in both Chinese and English dealing with dance, including an invited paper on "Teaching Children a Second Culture Through Dance" which was included as part of the Proceedings of the 1991 Conference of Dance and the Child International at Utah State University, July 29-August 3, 1991. I also participated in the Congress on Research in Dance: Dance Theater in a Multicultural Context in Atlanta, Georgia, August 2-5, 1992. Most recently I completed research on using Chinese Lion Dance as a vehicle for transmitting culture to a group of Chinese American elementary and middle school students in the Dallas area.