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Chinese lions dance as Year of the Tiger pounces

BY JENNIFER BRADSHAW • EDUCATION WRITER • FEBRUARY 13, 2010

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In Chinese culture, they certainly can.

Weaving gracefully in rhythmic steps, two huge red and gold lions danced for a crowd at Brookdale Community College on Friday afternoon, held up by four students from the Jersey Shore Chinese School of Holmdel. Today is the first of the 15-day Chinese New Year holiday, and 2010 is the Year of the Tiger.

Ching-Yun Lee, language director of the 160-student school, said the tiger represents high energy, among other things.

"They have a power," she said.

In celebration of the holiday, both the Jersey Shore Chinese School and Fidelity Chinese School of Marlboro present lavish performances of Chinese arts and culture, including dance, music and Chinese yo-yo.

Both nonprofit schools hold classes on Saturdays for local students and teach Chinese language, arts and culture, allowing students to practice and nurture the skills featured in these showcases.

Some students perform dances and songs that have been part of their lives for years.

Melanie Hung, 13, of Holmdel performed the slow, graceful peacock dance and on the yang quin, a large string instrument played while sitting.

A student of the school for eight years and a dancer for five, she has participated in her fair share of shows.

"I still get nervous every time," she confessed.

While the Holmdel students entertained on Saturday, in a second, larger performance, Fidelity Chinese School in Marlboro was gearing up for its own performance, to be presented on Friday in three Marlboro schools, in addition to a full-school performance on Saturday for their families.

Janice Tsai, 17, of Marlboro, a student instructor for the 173-student school, guided other advanced dance students through fan and drum dances.

A dancer for 10 years, Janice said her goal is to nurture understanding of Chinese culture in her younger peers — to "expose them a little more to their culture and heritage," she said.

Some students in that delicate stage, adolescence, may be "a little bit afraid to be different," or appear "un-



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American," Janice said, and she hopes to change that.

Jennifer Bradshaw: 732-643-4223 or

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