

Tianyi enriches APA community with Chinese dance performances

Fusing together traditional movements with unique style, Tianyi, a Chinese dance group at the university has found a way to artistically enrich the community in Chinese culture.

Tianyi's name originated from the combination of the word tian, which means heaven, and yi, which means art. "Not only do we wish to bring traditional Chinese dance to the campus community, but also to bring dances inspired by the best performers in China," said artistic director Takako Nishimura.

The team was established in the spring of 2012 and currently consists of 20 members.

A capital focus of the team is to retain its Chinese roots. According to Nishimura, the team researches and spends time watching dozens of dance videos to ensure that their movements are traditional and authentic. "I am constantly balancing between what is genuine and what is relatable to produce the most enlightening experience for our audience," said Nishimura. "My hope is that our dances are fun, exciting, and culturally enriching."

Although the fundamental purpose of the group is to learn Chinese dance, for many of the performers Tianyi means a lot more. Grace Wang, president of general body and publicity, said, "Being in Tianyi isn't just about learning Chinese dance, it's also about being a team."

Catherine Wang, chief of public relations, described Tianyi as a second family whose care extends outside practices. She said, "We support each other when we are stressed about our personal and academic life."

For many members, dancing has been a passion since the early days of childhood. Dancer and auxiliary officer Carissa Kwan has been dancing since she was four and identifies dance as a form of relief and a place of solace. "[It's] a time where I can escape from the stresses of daily life and just absorb myself in my body and in the music," she said. "Chinese dance, especially, drew my attention not only

because of my culture, but also because it is a multifaceted genre that encompasses a variety of techniques and various props.”

Eva Morgun, fundraising and showcase director, joined the dance team as a way to learn more about Chinese dance. “Not being Chinese myself, I learned a lot about the culture and the community through this interaction,” said Morgun. “At first it was just curiosity... but then it turned into pride for the skills and culture [that I was] representing.”

The dance team has performed at various campus events such as BSA’s Maryland’s Got Talent, CSA’s and CSSA’s Lunar Banquets, TASA’s Night Market, as well as Kappa Phi Lambda’s Dedicated benefit show. According to Wang, the team will host its first showcase in the spring with a program that will consist of past and new dances choreographed over the years. More information regarding the showcase can be found on the [Tianyi’s Facebook page](#).