



DRAGON DANCE

With Chinese New Year approaching, the prospect of many fun festivities, food, song and dance appear as well. Many kick off the celebration by going to local festivals and watching street performers in parades showing homage to their culture. This includes the Dragon Dance, a traditional form of ceremonial worship for the new year in the Chinese culture.

The Dragon Dance costume, which is used for the ceremony, is mainly made of materials like grass, bamboo, paper, and cloth. The dragon's body is usually woven into a round shape from thin bamboo strips in segments, covered with a large red cloth and decorated with dragon scales.

MIREYA CABALLERO

Staff Writer

HISTORY

The Dragon Dance manifested from the Han Dynasty in China during 180-230 AD. It was the result of a farming culture. The dragon was a creature that was able to soar through the sky and swim in the vast waters. It symbolizes goodness, supernatural powers, fertility, vigilance, and pureness.

Since the dragon was seen to have an authoritative persona, emperors of China considered themselves as the sacred dragon. People feared the appearance of the dragon but were well aware of its benevolence which are qualities seen in a compassionate and determined Chinese emperor.

People of China strongly believed that the dragon dance was a symbol of respect toward the dragon. This divine dance is greatly cherished in their tradition and became a part of their performing arts. By performing the dragon dance, good luck and prosperity will flourish in the new year that is to come. During the Chan Chu period, students who were taught Chinese Martial Arts were also taught the dragon dance. The purpose of weaving both arts into one lesson was to provide more encouragement.

AISHANI SELLATHURAI

Staff Writer

TRADITIONS OF THE DRAGON

Traditionally, the dragon dance is performed during the Lunar New Year to start off the new year with good luck. In these dances, many dancers would carry the dragon, which have varying lengths up to 100 meters long and have many sections. The dancers in the dragon dance would chase after the pearl of wisdom, which another dancer carries, and sometimes, multiple dragons would compete for the pearl. Additionally, many musicians would accompany these dancers, playing instruments like cymbals, drums and gongs.

The dragons used for the dance are made of varying materials. In the past, heavier materials such as bamboo, metal and wood were used, contrasting the lightweight materials including paper, plastic and aluminum of today. Also, different colors of the dragons have different meanings behind them. Green is for harvest and gold and silver for prosperity.

For the dance to be successful, the dancers need to be in sync with each other. They must know every move they will make and even the beats that the musicians are playing. Not dancing to the beat or moving together with the team would ruin the whole dance. On top of this, the dancers must be strong and dexterous, since each piece can be as heavy as 30 pounds and the dragon winds around quickly.

Overall, though the dragon dance may be a beautiful dance, a lot of thoughts and efforts are put into the dance so that the people could enjoy it.

YI-FENG HO

Staff Writer

SIGNIFICANCE

Chinese New Year is a time to honor family members as well as previous ancestors. It is an opportunity to bond with relatives and may be only time long distance family members can reunite. It symbolizes a new beginning and encourages many people to reflect on their past year.

A famous legend is centered around a monster, Nian, who appears on Chinese New Years to devour children and livestock. To defend against the beast, people would put offerings such as food in front of their homes. Another way they would protect themselves against the monster is lighting bamboo sticks and placing red on each doorway after they discovered Nian was afraid of loud noises and the color red. This legend is a foundation for many traditions that still continue to this day.

The dragon dance is a symbol for scaring away evil spirits and is believed to bring wisdom and prosperity. It is believed that the longer the dragon length, the more luck it will bring to people. Many use it to represent imperial royalty. Unlike Nian who terrorised many villagers, dragons overall are associated with storm clouds and life giving rain. Dragons have long been a central part of Chinese culture, whether it be a defeated monster or a symbol of power, benevolence and imperiority.

EMILY TRAN

Staff Writer

WORD SEARCH

Y Y R B B S R U Y B W G C A W	DIGNITY
Y F J A P B E O U Q P Y S D P	DRAGON
E U N I P S W Z B X J T I F G	FERTILITY
F Q R B V N O V G W R I O Q F	FESTIVE
I I U W E P P V L N R L T S U	POWER
T Q A S V D S O O Z P I B Y R	RITUAL
F O S C D D I I A L Q T L D Y	SPIRIT
M O D S I W T G L H J R T R T	TRADITION
U F E S T I V E N A K E E A I	WISDOM
Y L U G D Y I Q Q I U F F G O	
J Q C A K J Y K D J T T O O V	
I X R A P R E Q R W J Y I N A	
Z T X V B T L Z U M N V Y R Y	
P N K I Q K A T P X T G E E Z	
N T N A J N O B C B Y D K X I	

ALECS REYES

Staff Writer