

teacher resource guide

# schooltime performance series

*year of  
the pig*

Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company

arts  
education  
**njpac**  
discover. create. grow.



## about the performance

In Chinese tradition, each year is represented by one of the twelve animals of the Chinese zodiac: the rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, rooster, dog and pig. Each Chinese New Year, people celebrate with dances, feasting, festivals and fireworks. It is believed that anyone born under the auspices of that year's animal sign will enjoy a year filled with good fortune.

2019 is the Year of the Earth Pig, and Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company will present a sensational performance of festival dances to celebrate the Chinese New Year. Celebrating the Chinese New Year is an annual tradition for the Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company. Nai-Ni Chen's unique approach to choreography merges traditional and contemporary styles and aims to "fuse the dynamic freedom of the American spirit with the grace and splendor of the Asian soul." *The New York Times* has called the Company's dancers "endlessly proliferating forces of cosmic energy."

The theatrical piece will feature beautiful traditional costumes, fan and ribbon dances, and group performances with dragon and lion costumes. Audience members will be entranced by the graceful and skillful movement of the dancers and their infectious joy in celebrating the Year of the Pig.

## meet the choreographer

Choreographer **Nai-Ni Chen** draws from a rich dance tradition that began in her homeland of Taiwan. Her dance career started at age 17 when she served on ambassadorial culture missions to nineteen countries as a renowned traditional dancer. She had studied with some of the most respected Peking Opera and traditional dance masters in Taiwan.

Her modern dance training began in 1976 when she performed as the youngest principal member of the Cloud Gate Dance Theater in Taiwan. After graduating from the Chinese Cultural University in 1982 (all the while maintaining her professional dance career), Nai-Ni Chen moved to America to explore her own voice in the dance world.

In New York, she continued her studies with renowned modern dancers and received her Master's degree from NYU. After performing in Broadway musicals like *The King and I* and Tony Award® winning play *M'Butterfly*, she began setting choreography for a small group of dancers, eventually founding the Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company in 1988.

With her wide-ranging repertoire, Nai-Ni Chen brings American audiences closer to Chinese art. Her choreography often reflects Chinese and Asian themes like the struggle of the Chinese people in the 20th century; the Buddhist and Taoist vision of fate, destiny and human relationships; and the beauty of Chinese traditional art and philosophy.

As a Principal Affiliate Artist of NJPAC, Nai-Ni Chen and her Company continue to connect Chinese and American communities through outreach, new works and education.

## about the earth pig

The Chinese lunar calendar is very ancient, going back to the Xia (21st century BCE-16th century BCE) and Shang Dynasty (16th century BCE-11th century BCE). Although China uses the solar-based Gregorian calendar to keep in step with most other nations, the traditional Chinese calendar is ruled by the cycles of the moon and is used even today to determine the dates of annual festivals. In the Chinese horoscope, each year is also influenced by one of the five elements— Fire, Earth, Metal, Water and Wood. The Year of the Earth Pig starts on February 5, 2019 and ends on January 24, 2020.

In the Chinese zodiac, the joyful roly poly pig represents abundance and wealth, a sign of plenty and good tidings. During the Earth Pig year, there will be good luck and fortune for many, not just those born under the Pig sign. Some Chinese astrologers are saying this will be a good time to also invest and make money.

People born in the Year of the Pig are considered to be generous, hardworking, kind and compassionate. They love to make new friends, hang out with the ones they have, and seek to enjoy life as much as possible. Generous to a fault, they also enjoy helping others, even if it may harm their wallets. They love to spend their money on name brand luxury items for themselves and their loved ones too. Being thrifty is a bit hard for those born under this sign.

The Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company is one of just a few professional Asian American dance companies in the United States. The Company's productions take the audience beyond cultural boundaries to where tradition meets innovation and freedom arises from discipline. It has produced more than 20 national tours reaching 41 states; nine international tours to Europe, Asia and the Americas; and regular New York and New Jersey seasons.

In addition to its extensive season of touring and performing, the Company has developed Arts in Education residency programs integrating dance, music, and poetry with multiple academic disciplines. Its community outreach programs include workshops with immigrant Chinese American children in Edison, New Jersey to help preserve Chinese cultural heritage.

## in the spotlight

An interview with producer Nai-Ni Chen

**What do you hope to accomplish with Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company? How is Nai-Ni Chen different from other dance companies?**

The mission of the Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company is to create new works that bring together the dynamic spirit of American modern dance with the elegant splendor of Asian art, encouraging mutual understanding among different communities through the power of dance, and preserving the excellent tradition of dance in the immigrant Chinese American community; to celebrate the richness of Asian Art and make an impact in the global dance scene in the US.

The Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company is one of the few professional dance companies led by an Asian American female. As a Choreographer and Artistic Director, I aim to incorporate my cultural heritage into my creative works. Through our education programs, our company brings performances to the general public and to school systems, encouraging mutual understanding among different communities through the power of dance.

**Do the dancers in your company need to have special dance skills or know techniques and styles that are different from western ballet and modern dance companies?**

Although some dancers join the company with mostly ballet and modern training, they all need to know Chinese dance technique and Tai-Chi.

As soon as they enter the company, they receive intensive training in both disciplines as well as my unique modern dance technique which incorporates the use of props and elements drawn out of traditional Chinese martial art. Through the learning process dancers discover unique ways to move their bodies while using the props, and a special way to utilize "Chi"—the internal energy which is central to my modern dance vocabulary.

**How do you view the connection between the traditions of Chinese dance and heritage and modern dance? How does it affect your choreography?**

I think all kinds of dance share things in common. For example, dance uses movement language as tool to express ideas, emotion, beauty and energy. And dance is created by people which relate closely to their culture, believe and social condition.

Traditional Chinese dance has a long and rich history, whereas modern dance is relatively young. However, the spirit behind both dance styles grew from the people who lived through those times and cultures. And the freedom of expression and desire to share something beautiful though dance are the same. I find the common ground between these two forms of dance while exploring the uniqueness in each. I spend hours in the studio experimenting with my dancers to create new ideas and movements based on these discoveries. We dig into the old tradition, re-invent new ways to move, and go beyond.

**What is your impression of China's influence on global culture today? How does 21st century China influence the creative expression of the dances you bring to your company?**

In the 21st century, we now have the internet. Although access to western culture is still somewhat restricted, Chinese people have enjoyed a much wider access to western culture in recent years, and vice versa.

My work is reflective of this trend. Since I began this company, I have been building a movement vocabulary that harmonizes and bridges the Chinese and American cultures. I think we are on the cutting edge, and you will be witnessing more new and exciting work from this company because we are truly a diverse group that is working together to create something new every time we walk into the studio together.







## in the spotlight

An interview with producer Nai-Ni Chen

**Why have you chosen to base your company in New Jersey? Is this location particularly important to your work or to the Chinese- American community?**

I lived and worked in New York City prior to moving to New Jersey. I have always enjoyed being with nature. I feel connected with its spirit and energy which inspires me to create new work. To be able to hear the birds and watch little animals running in the back yard is important to me. As a matter of fact, my observations of the changes in nature and the movements and behaviors of animals are reflected in my choreography quite closely. I moved from New York City to New Jersey to find that extra space and freedom. Ever since I started the company here, I became very involved with local Chinese community groups and have received several awards because of our performances and contributions to education in the area.

**Do you work solely with dancers of Asian descent? Is it important to you to merge and share the culture and traditions of other cultures? If so, why?**

Our dancers are from around the world. Each dancer contributes to the Company's new work. Their presence and participation in the creative process bring new perspectives and abilities, and allows us to foster mutual understanding between the artists and audience. We believe that by introducing different cultural ideas into the modern dance form, we can help audiences learn more about the commonalities and differences between cultures. These understandings are critical in resolving conflicts, developing collaboration and even breaking new ground.

**Why is it important to celebrate Chinese New Year? How has the celebration changed as Chinese people have moved to the United States and other lands?**

Chinese New Year is the most important celebration for Chinese people all over the world. It is a way to continue our traditions and honor our ancestors. The celebration is not as elaborate here in the US as it is in China, Taiwan and other Asian countries. In some Asian countries, the celebration can last for seven to fifteen days. However, in the US, many Chinese communities still make the festival a significant event, with a big, twelve course banquet, the *Lion Dance*, *Dragon Dance*, music, paper cut decorations, and lucky charms of golden nuggets to bring prosperity for the New Year. Many audience members from the New York/New Jersey area come to our performances at NJPAC each year as part of their family tradition to celebrate Chinese New Year.

**Do aspects of the performance change from year to year to reflect a different animal spirit?**

Yes, the program does change from year to year. We try to relate the program to the personality trait of each animal. There are legends and folklore about each animal in the twelve Zodiac cycles that we explore. We also find different approaches to connect to the special year. For example, according to ancient theory, there are five elements in the universe, in addition to the animal signs, that cycle in rotation year after year. They are Metal, Earth, Water, Fire and Wood.

**What do you hope audience members will take away from the Year of the Pig celebration?**

Most importantly, audience members should have fun and enjoy the time they spend in the theater. It is more than a celebration of the heritage of an ancient country in the East. It is a celebration of life in general. When the performers and audience come together in a gathering like this, it is about sharing the experience of warmth and happiness. I believe my audiences will be mesmerized by the grace and excitement they see on stage. The joy of the experience will not stop by exiting the theater. It should be just the beginning of a desire to explore more.





inspired ideas in the classroom

P

Prepare for the performance

**What is the Chinese New Year?**  
Introduce students to the Chinese New Year through videos, pictures, and slideshows. Help students understand the traditions of Lunar New Year and how they may be similar to traditions we already celebrate.  
Video: The Story of Chinese New Year:  
[youtu.be.com/v=\\_u-R-qlq3\\_E](https://youtu.be.com/v=_u-R-qlq3_E)  
Article: *About the Chinese Zodiac*: [travelchinaguide.com/intro/social\\_customs/zodiac](https://travelchinaguide.com/intro/social_customs/zodiac)

**Student Discussion**  
· Throughout the year, what traditions do you celebrate?  
· Are any of the traditions or celebrations you observe similar to those celebrated during the Chinese New Year?  
· From the video, does anyone remember how many animals are a part of the Chinese zodiac?  
· 2018 is the Year of the Dog. When was the last time it was the Year of the Dog?

NJ Student Learning Standards

**English Language Arts**  
NJSLSA.SL1.  
**Social Studies**  
6.1.4.D.13  
6.1.4.D.20  
**NJ Arts Standard**  
1.2 History of the Arts and Culture

E

Experience the performance

Before the performance, share with students that this upcoming year will be ‘The Year of the Pig’. Have students brainstorm traits that may be associated with the pig and other animals in the Chinese zodiac. Ask students to take mental note of anything specific the dancers do that may represent the different animals of the Chinese zodiac e.g. specific props, repetition of movement, costumes.

According to the Chinese calendar, the year 2019 will be ‘The Year of the Pig’! During the performance, analyze the movement of the dancers and the information shared by the the company members. See if you notice anything specific that may represent any of the twelve animals of the Chinese zodiac.

**Social Studies**  
6.1.4.D.20  
**NJ Arts Standard**  
1.4 Aesthetic Response & Critique

R

Reflect, respond and read

**Connecting With the Company**  
**Grade 3-5:** Have students reflect on the performance through an open discussion. Through written response, have students share their experience in a letter encouraging others to go see the performance.  
**Grade 6-8:** Have students read the Artistic Vision for Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company. Ask students to reflect on the performance and write a response connecting what they saw to what they read.

**Questions for Student Reflection**  
· What was unique about this dance performance?  
· What was your favorite part of the performance? Why?  
· What did the company members use to help celebrate the Chinese New Year?  
· How does the artistic vision relate to what you saw in the performance?

**NJ Arts Standard**  
1.4 Aesthetic Response and Critique  
**Social Studies**  
6.1.4.D.13  
6.1.4.D.18  
**English Language Arts**  
NJSLSA.W2.  
NJSLSA.W4.  
NJSLSA.SL2.

F

Focus

**Zodiac Dance Phrase**  
Have students think back to the twelve Chinese zodiac animals discussed in the ‘Prepare for the Performance’ stage. Have students create a short dance phrase that represents the characteristics of a specific Chinese zodiac. Next, have students change the size, level, or setting in which they perform their phrase. Then, have students swap zodiacs with another student and perform their phrase. Lastly, students can perform the opposite characteristic of their zodiac.  
**Note:** Although Chinese zodiacs change by the year, most students in class may have the same birth year. It may be helpful to have each animal represent a birth month instead of a year for this activity.

**Zodiac Swap**  
Think back to what we discussed about the Chinese New Year before the performance. Using the twelve animals of the Chinese zodiac:  
1. Create a dance phrase that represents a specific animal within the Chinese zodiac.  
2. Change the size, level or setting in which you perform your phrase.  
3. Swap zodiac phrases with a partner and perform their phrase.  
4. Perform the opposite characteristics of your partner’s zodiac.

**Social Studies**  
6.1.4.D.20  
**NJ Arts Standard**  
1.1 The Creative Process

O

Originate

**Creating Your Future**  
Have students create an artistic dance works that tells the story of their past and their dreams for the future. If necessary, students can work in small groups where each student contributes a past tradition and future goal. Encourage students to think not only about their personal past, but their cultural history. Allow students to brainstorm their ideas on paper before they begin creating.

**New Year, New Me**  
The 15 days of the Chinese New Year are a time to reflect on the passing year and celebrate the future. Create an artistic work that reflects on your past and celebrates the future. As you are creating your work, think about your personal story and traditions. How can your dance represent who you are and where you are going?

**NJ Arts Standard**  
1.1 The Creative Process

R

Rehearse

**Dance Rehearsal**  
Continue to monitor student work to ensure they are on track to share it with others. Ensure students have clearly communicated their story through words, dance, music, etc. Students further along in the rehearsal process can be encouraged to add additional visual elements (costumes, pictures, props) to their creation. Also, students can create names for their works based on what it represents.

**Final Rehearsal**  
As Nai-Ni Chen does in her works, remember to explore the resilience, will power and strength that you see in your community and communicate it to everyone.  
Through costumes, pictures or props, can you add any visual element to your dance that would enhance your creation?  
Also, based on what your creation represents, what would you name it?

**NJ Arts Standard**  
1.1 The Creative Process  
1.3 Performance

M

Make magic

**Performance**  
In a formal or informal setting, have students present their creations to one another. Encourage students to watch one another carefully in order to cite specific emotions or events they see. Students can also leave ‘Fortune Feedback’ or positive feedback notes for one another to encourage them to strive for the future goals.

**Show Time!**  
It is now time to share your work! Be creative, clear and have fun!  
**Fortune Feedback**  
When watching other groups perform, think about a positive fortune you can leave for another student. Write them a positive note to encourage them to keep their goals in sight the rest of the year.

**NJ Arts Standard**  
1.3 Performance  
1.4 Aesthetic Response & Critique

# curriculum standards

### NJ Arts Standards

#### 1.1 The Creative Process

All students will demonstrate an understanding of the elements and principles that govern the creation of works of art in dance, music, theatre, and visual art.

#### 1.2 History of Arts & Culture

All students will understand the role, development and influence of the arts throughout history and across cultures.

#### 1.3 Performance

All students will synthesize skills, media, methods and technologies that are appropriate to creating, performing and/or presenting works of art in dance, music, theatre and visual art.

#### 1.4 Aesthetic Response & Critique

All students will demonstrate and apply an understanding of arts philosophies, judgment and analysis to works of art in dance, music, theatre and visual art.

### National Arts Standards

- 1:** Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.
- 5:** Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.
- 6:** Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.
- 7:** Perceive and analyze artistic work.
- 8:** Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.
- 11:** Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.



# new jersey student learning standards

### Social Studies

**6.1.4.D.13.** Describe how culture is expressed through and influenced by the behavior of people

**6.1.4.D.18.** Explain how an individual's beliefs, values, and traditions may reflect more than one culture.

**6.1.4.D.20.** Describe why it is important to understand the perspectives of other cultures in an interconnected world.

### English Language Arts

**NJSLSA.W2.** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

**NJSLSA.W4.** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

**NJSLSA.SL1.** Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

**NJSLSA.SL2.** Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

### FIND THE STANDARDS

For more detailed information on the standards, visit these websites:

NJ ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS  
[state.nj.us/education/cccs/2016/ela](http://state.nj.us/education/cccs/2016/ela)

NJ SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS  
[state.nj.us/education/cccs/2014/ss](http://state.nj.us/education/cccs/2014/ss)

NJ WORLD LANGUAGE STANDARDS  
[state.nj.us/education/aps/cccs/wl](http://state.nj.us/education/aps/cccs/wl)

NJ ARTS STANDARDS  
[state.nj.us/education/cccs/2009/1.pdf](http://state.nj.us/education/cccs/2009/1.pdf)

NATIONAL ARTS STANDARDS  
[nationalartsstandards.org](http://nationalartsstandards.org)

# cultural connections

### Chinese food history and influence

For centuries since the first seafaring boats were built, Chinese people have left the motherland in droves to seek their fortune elsewhere as entrepreneurial merchants and adventurous sailors. This grand diaspora stretches across the globe—from Taiwan to Africa. And everywhere they went, they brought their unique cuisine. More than any other import, besides themselves, Chinese food has been a smashing success when it comes to being readily adopted and savored by non-Chinese. For many, it often serves as a gateway to the culture and the people.

China as a country is huge and diverse. Climate and landscapes vary from the humid subtropical climate of the Southern Coasts to the dry, arid Gobi Desert. The different cuisines are just as varied as the landscape.

In Southwest China, Sichuan cooking is famous for its use of fiery peppers—especially the Sichuan pepper, lots of garlic, and other pungent, heady flavors. Famous dishes from the region are lip-tingling dandan noodles and hot and sour soup. Some people call Sichuan a “heavenly country” because of the incredible food and the bounty of natural resources and the fertile agricultural land.

Hunan cuisine, of course, hails from the Hunan Province, an inland southeast region along the Yangtze watershed. The dishes here are known for their hot and spicy flavor profiles and utilize techniques such as smoking, braising, frying, and stewing. Popular dishes includes pearly meatballs, which are balls of ground meat covered in steamed glutinous rice, and pork spare ribs steamed in bamboo. Yum!

Cantonese cuisine is from the province of Guangdong, which is in South China and faces the South China Sea. Cantonese cooks utilize many different types of protein—from the usual pork to the exotic such as frog legs. Stir frying and steaming is two of the most popular cooking methods in Cantonese cuisine. Cooks use different sauces like black bean, hoisin, plum and oyster. Notable dishes from this region are chow mein, lo mein and roast suckling pig. Because of the large wave of Cantonese immigrants, many non-Chinese are familiar with Cantonese dishes even if they don't know that they originate from Canton.

Because of the Chinese diaspora, Chinese influence show up in dishes in other Asian countries, such as Vietnam, Indonesia, and the Philippines. Since the earliest days of human civilization, people from the southern parts of China have been sailing to the Philippines, which have a large Chinese Filipino population. The 7,000 archipelago boasts national dishes that have deep Chinese roots, such as pancit—a delicious stir fry noodle dish with vegetables and protein like chicken, lumpia—basically eggrolls, and siopao—steamed buns stuffed with vegetables or meat.



### American Chinese Cuisine

Chinese cuisine in America reflects the immigrant ingenuity of survival and adapting to local ingredients and palate. Many Chinese laborers sailed to America in the 19th century to build railroads and work in mines. Due to racism and prejudice, government officials did not allow them to own land, forcing them into ghettos—otherwise known as “Chinatowns.” Enterprising Chinese immigrants, many of them men, cooked for themselves to remember home and then started to open restaurants to cater to fellow Chinese and then Americans who were curious about the new cuisine. This milieu has given rise to uniquely American Chinese takeout staples like beef and broccoli, chop suey and fried crab rangoon, wonton skins filled with cream cheese and artificial crab.

Fortune cookies are definitely not from China. They were invented in California and are actually a version of a similar Japanese treat. General Tso's chicken, named after a Chinese military leader, and was also invented in America. Chinese cuisine in America has been adapted to be thicker, sweeter and blander for the typical American palate.

Some Chinese restaurants cater to both Americans and Chinese. Often times, there will be an American menu and a Chinese menu with “home-style dishes” like cold beef tendon and braised chicken feet.



# vocabulary

## Acrobatics

The performance of extreme gymnastic feats, such as walking on a tightrope or swinging on a trapeze. Acrobatics require excellent balance, agility, and coordination. In China, this ancient art form traces its roots to the Xia Dynasty 4,000 years ago.

## BCE

“Before Common Era,” meaning any date prior to the year 1 CE (Common Era). BC (Before Christ) means the same thing as BCE. AD (Anno Domini, which is Latin for “in the year of the Lord,”) means the same as CE.

## Buddhist

Someone who practices Buddhism, a religion or philosophy drawn from the teachings of Gautama Buddha or Siddhārtha Gautama, commonly known as the Buddha, “The Awakened One.” Buddhism originated in India between the mid-6th century and mid-4th century B.C.E. It spread from India to China, Korea, Japan, and other parts of Asia. Buddhism emphasizes mediation and developing one’s spirituality.

## Confucianism

A way of life formulated by the philosopher Confucius in 6th and 5th century B.C.E. It’s closely identified with Asian cultures, especially China. It is a philosophy or world view that places emphasis on filial connections, social harmony, social rituals, and compassion.

## Taoist

Someone who follows the philosophical Chinese tradition of Taoism, also known as Daoism. This philosophy emphasizes living in harmony with the Tao which means the “way,” “path” or “principle.” Tao can’t be exactly described but it sometimes describes a way of living or guidance or the natural order of the universe. Humans must learn what the tao entails in order to achieve wisdom and peace. The *Tao Te Ching* is a book that contains the basic teachings of Lao Tzu, whose writings are considered the keystone of this philosophy.

## Choreography

The art or practice of designing combinations and sequences of movements of physical bodies usually associated with dance. The person who creates the steps, combinations and patterns of a ballet or dance performance is called the choreographer.

## Erhu

A traditional Chinese two-stringed violin or fiddle, played with a bow. The erhu dates from the Tang dynasty (618-907 CE).

## Firecrackers

A small explosive device primarily made to create a loud noise and give off colorful sparks. Historians believe that firecrackers were first invented in 2nd century B.C.E. China. People accidentally invented firecrackers when they threw bamboo sticks into cooking fires, with the stalks blowing up due to hot air heating up in the bamboo hollows. Later in 600 to 900 C.E., a mysterious Chinese alchemist (or a cook, as some historians say) created gunpowder and stuffed it into bamboo stalks, creating the first ever, manmade firecracker. These devices have played important, prominent roles in Chinese culture, from festivals to funerals. People think the loud bang from firecrackers scare off evil spirits.

## Gregorian calendar

The official name for our 12-month, 365-day solar calendar. It is the most widely used civil calendar in the world, and is named for Pope Gregory XIII, who introduced it in October 1582.

## Immigrant

A person who migrates from one country to another, usually for permanent residence.

## Lion Dance

A traditional dance in Chinese culture in which performers mimic a lion’s movements in a lion costume. The *Lion Dance* is usually performed during the Chinese New Year and other Chinese traditional, cultural and religious festivals.

## Lunar

A term to mean relating to the moon or of the moon. From Luna, the Latin word for the Moon. Usually embodied in Ancient Rome as a woman wearing a crescent crown on her head and driving a chariot with horse or oxen.

## Pipa (pronounced “pee-paa”)

A four-stringed lute, somewhat like a guitar. With over 2000 years of history, the pipa is one of the oldest Chinese musical instruments.

## Peking Opera

A style of performance with roots deep in Chinese culture and history. A Peking Opera-style performance has singing, acting, martial arts, and music. It is known for its rich costumes and flamboyant makeup. It has been recognized by UNESCO on the “Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.”

## Zodiac

A coordinate system of twelve divisions based on twelve celestial constellations used in astronomy and astrology. The twelve divisions are traditionally called “signs.” The Chinese zodiac, (shēngxiào in Chinese, literally meaning “birth likeness”) is derived from the similar concept as in western astrology.

# resources

## Websites

Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company Official Website  
[nainichen.org](http://nainichen.org)

Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company Official Facebook Page  
[facebook.com/NaiNiChenDanceCompany](https://facebook.com/NaiNiChenDanceCompany)

Nai-Ni Chen biography  
[nainichen.org/Company/OLDbio.htm](http://nainichen.org/Company/OLDbio.htm)

Spotlight on Nai-Ni Chen: Not Alone: A Modern Dance Performance at Aljira  
[aljirablog.tumblr.com/100252879993](http://aljirablog.tumblr.com/100252879993)

Chinese New Year  
[history.com/topics/holidays/chinese-new-year](http://history.com/topics/holidays/chinese-new-year)

10 Interesting Facts about Chinese New Year  
[chinahighlights.com/travelguide/festivals/new-year-facts.htm](http://chinahighlights.com/travelguide/festivals/new-year-facts.htm)

Celebrating on Chinese New Year’s Day  
[thoughtco.com/chinese-new-years-day-687469](http://thoughtco.com/chinese-new-years-day-687469)

Chinese New Year Food  
[foodandwine.com/chinese-new-year](http://foodandwine.com/chinese-new-year)

Cleaning Up for Chinese New Year  
[well.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/01/26/cleaning-up-for-chinese-new-year](http://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/01/26/cleaning-up-for-chinese-new-year)

Chinese Immigrants in the United States  
[migrationpolicy.org/article/chinese-immigrants-united-states](http://migrationpolicy.org/article/chinese-immigrants-united-states)

10 Disappearing Chinese New Year Traditions  
[chinahighlights.com/festivals/chinese-new-year-disappearing-tradition.htm](http://chinahighlights.com/festivals/chinese-new-year-disappearing-tradition.htm)

About the Chinese Zodiac  
[travelchinaguide.com/intro/social\\_customs/zodiac](http://travelchinaguide.com/intro/social_customs/zodiac)

The Legend of the Zodiacs  
[chinesefortunecalendar.com/Zodiac/Legend.htm](http://chinesefortunecalendar.com/Zodiac/Legend.htm)

About the Elements in Chinese Astrology  
[karmaweather.com/the-5-chinese-astrology-zodiac-elements](http://karmaweather.com/the-5-chinese-astrology-zodiac-elements)

## Videos

Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company Demo  
[youtu.be.com/lxGaPU19FaA](http://youtu.be.com/lxGaPU19FaA)

Watch Auditions for Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company  
[youtu.be.com/skzcAgtSStU](http://youtu.be.com/skzcAgtSStU)

Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company Presents “Year of the Rooster”  
[youtu.be.com/YUztytF17QU](http://youtu.be.com/YUztytF17QU)

Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company: Song of the Phoenix  
[youtu.be/h0p81BHvn\\_A](http://youtu.be/h0p81BHvn_A)

New York Dance Up Close: Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company on Singular Movement  
[youtu.be.com/chQEtsuw6co](http://youtu.be.com/chQEtsuw6co)

Traditional Chinese Dance  
[youtu.be.com/Nom1BI1JJ3k](http://youtu.be.com/Nom1BI1JJ3k)

Beijing residents celebrate Chinese New Year with fireworks displays  
[theguardian.com/world/video/2015/feb/19/beijing-celebrates-chinese-new-year-fireworks-displays-video](http://theguardian.com/world/video/2015/feb/19/beijing-celebrates-chinese-new-year-fireworks-displays-video)

## Books

*The Year of the Dog* by Grace Lin (chapter book, Gr. 3-5)

*The Year of the Rat* by Grace Lin (chapter book, Gr. 3-5)

*The Year of the Tiger: Tales from the Chinese Zodiac* by Oliver Chin (picture book, Ages 4-8)

*Sam and the Lucky Money* by Karen Chinn (picture book, Ages 4-8)

*In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson* by Bette Bao Lord and Marc Simont (novel, Gr. 4-7)

*The Cambridge Illustrated History of China* by Patricia Buckley Ebrey (Cambridge University Press, 2010)

*China: A History* by John Keay (Basic Books, 2011)

*The Silk Roads: A New History of the World* by Peter Frankopan (Vintage, 2017)

*China A to Z: Everything You Need to Know to Understand Chinese Customs and Culture* by May-Lee Chai and Winberg Chai (Plume, 2014)

*The Chinese in America: A Narrative History* by Iris Chang (Penguin Books, 2004)

*Chinese Dance: In the Vast Land and Beyond* by Shih-Ming Li Chang and Lynn E. Frederiksen (Wesleyan, 2016)

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## the arts in your school

**In-School Residencies:** Drama + Social Studies. Dance + Math. It all adds up in NJPAC's In-School Residencies in which professional teaching artists partner with educators to bring the arts into the classroom. Each 7- to 10-week program culminates in a student performance or an interactive family workshop. All programs address state and national standards. NJPAC is the regional provider in New Jersey for international arts programs like the NJ Wolf Trap Program and Dancing Classrooms Global.

**Assemblies:** NJPAC presents engaging school assembly programs that are presented by professional artists that invite students into the enchanting world of live performance. NJPAC's assembly series promotes cultural awareness and invigorates learning by presenting works that are connected to your school's curriculum.

**Professional Development:** NJPAC Professional Development engages classroom teachers, arts specialists and teaching artists as integrated teams that combine arts pedagogy, content, classroom management and social behavioral strategies to ignite and inspire arts-rich classrooms. Working as a team empowers teachers to share practice and strategy. Our goal is to inspire artistic and intellectual capacities in students, building competence and confidence in both students and teachers.

## study the arts at njpac

**Saturday Programs:** NJPAC's Saturday programs are geared towards students at every level—from those who dream of starring on Broadway to those who are still learning their scales. Students work with professional artists to build technique and develop their own creative style in film, contemporary modern dance, hip hop, jazz, musical theater and symphonic band.

**Summer Programs:** Want to begin to explore the arts? Or immerse yourself in the study of one genre? Then join us at NJPAC next summer in one of seven programs that spark the creativity in every child through the study of music, dance and theater.

**For more information or to schedule an appointment, please call our education sales team at 973.353.7058 or email [artseducation@njpac.org](mailto:artseducation@njpac.org). Visit [njpac.org/education](http://njpac.org/education)**

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