



ASIA GALLERY CURRICULUM GUIDE

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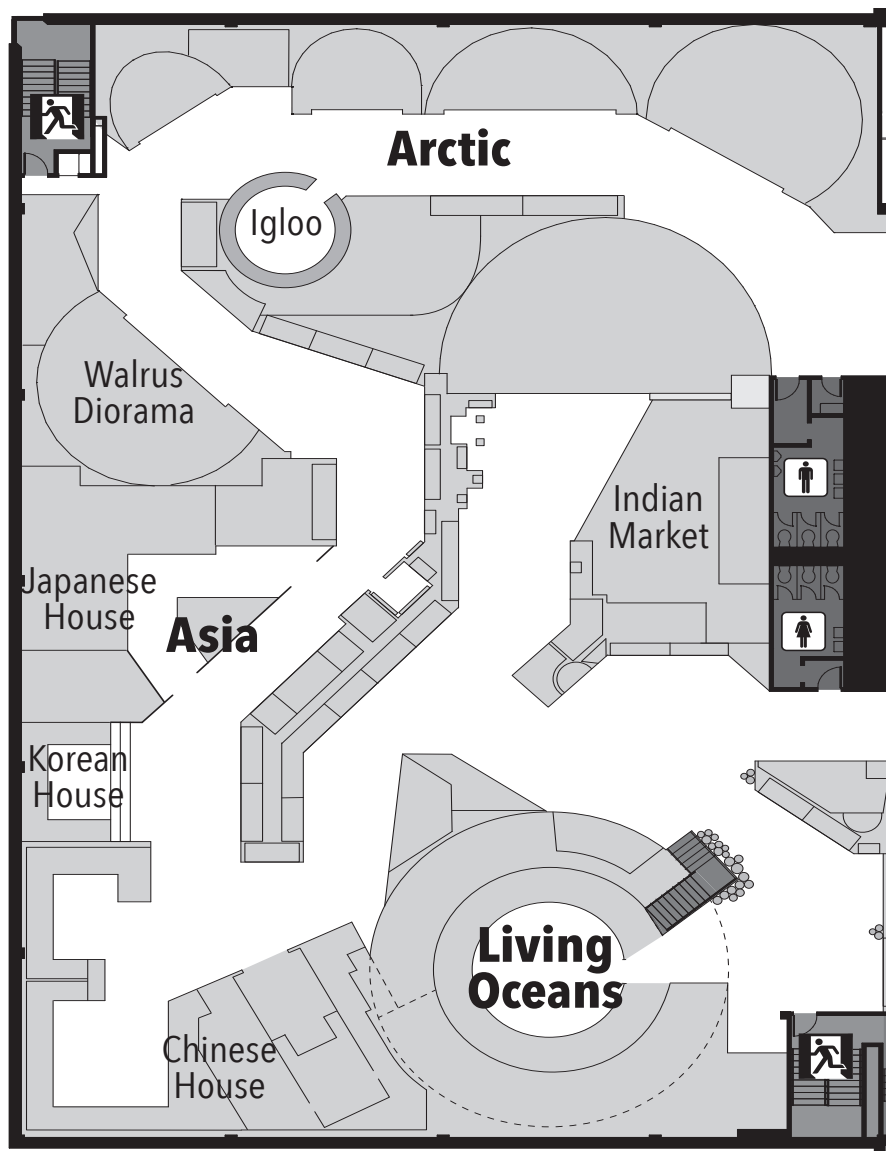
INTRODUCTION

The Asia Gallery

Asia is the world's largest continent and is inhabited by 60% of the Earth's population. It is joined to Europe on the western frontier to form Eurasia, and is the site of some of the world's earliest civilizations. The immensity of its landmass and the vast range of geographical features, cultures and ethnic groups, and languages can hardly be overstated.

Created by Museum artists and curators from 1972-1974, the gallery leads visitors on an immersive tour of the Pacific Rim of the Asian continent and the Indian sub-continent, focusing largely on architecture, spiritual artifacts, and decorative arts of several countries and subcultures. Individual exhibits represent Japan, China, Korea, Tibet, Nepal, and several Southeast Asian states including Thailand, Burma (now Myanmar), and Vietnam.

EXHIBIT MAP



MAP OF ASIA



EXHIBIT HIGHLIGHTS

Exhibit: *The Ainu*

The Ainu (“eye-noo”) are the indigenous people of Hokkaido, Sakhalin, and the Kuril Islands, the northernmost islands in the Japanese archipelago. They may be descendants of an indigenous population once widely spread over northern Asia, and many contemporary Ainu claim to have descended from Japan’s prehistoric Jōmon culture. The traditional Ainu language was almost completely supplanted by Japanese by the early 21st century, but was largely revitalized through a formal educational movement begun in the 1980s.

The Ainu are a hunting and fishing people, and the artifacts—edged weapons, bow and arrows, and rifle—depicted in these cases reflect the central role of these activities in their subsistence strategies. The rifle is a trade item, and is representative of their extensive trading history with Japan.

The bear skull mounted on the far left panel is emblematic of the Ainu bear cult, a representation of their animistic spirituality—attributing consciousness to inanimate objects and natural phenomena. The bear is sacred to Ainu, and is often referred to in their culture as “the god of the mountains.” One legend suggests that the bear is the ancestor of modern Ainu people. This skull was likely featured in the iyomante ceremony. In this tradition, observed between January and February when the snows are commonly heaviest, a bear cub is captured in hibernation, raised as a village member for two years, and then ceremonially sent back to the divine world.

The robes on exhibit are typical of traditional Ainu clothing in their geometric designs, patterns, and dyes, and the bark fabric is likewise reflective of the culture’s close and enduring connection with the nature and landscapes of northern Japan. The objects depicted in the exhibit are not the actual garments, but photographic reproductions as the original robes are too fragile to be exhibited.



Exhibit: *The Japanese House*

Contrary to the perception of many visitors, this is actually not a tea house, but a classic representation of traditional Japanese household architecture. It represents a middle-upper class dwelling typical of someone of status such as a merchant or landowner circa 1890-1930. The setting could be anywhere, rural or urban.

Before the westernization of Japan (1868-1912), stone and brick were largely reserved for temples, castles, and other monumental structures. These houses were commonly constructed of simple, natural materials such as wood, paper, rice straw, and clay. As a result, they were considered somewhat temporary, and it was commonly understood that they would be rebuilt every 20 years or so.

Traditional Japanese houses, known as *minka*, didn't use glass, and their designs directed natural lighting with the use of sliding panels, called *fusuma*, and *shoji*, which are privacy screens. These are commonly made of translucent paper held in a wooden frame and used for both interior and exterior walls, providing diffused light and shadows throughout the house to create ambience. The screens serve not only as structural elements, but also lend privacy and focus for tea and doll ceremonies, among others.

The scene includes a courtyard and traditional Japanese dry garden known as *karesansui*. A harmonious balance between humans and the natural world are the central goals of the traditional Japanese dry garden. Stones, plants, and water render the infinity of nature on a human scale. The scene evokes a Shinto aesthetic and Buddhist ideal of contemplation and unity with nature. Commonly, the raked gravel represents the ocean, and the rocks, islands.

Two women clad in traditional kimono are seen playing a game of cards called *Uta-garuta* which is based on the anthology, *Ogura Hyakunin Isshu* (*One Hundred Poets, One Poem Each*), a collection of 100 poems in the *tanka* form (five lines with a total of 31 syllables grouped in lines of five, seven, five, seven, and seven syllables). During the latter half of the Heian period (late 8th to late 12th century CE), the writing of short poems of love and nature became a trend in aristocratic circles. Emerging circa 1235, the anthology collected 100 poems from 100 poets dating from the mid-7th century onwards.



The word “kimono” literally means “something worn” and for centuries has served as Japan’s traditional garment, worn by men, women, and children alike.

Originally, the word described any type of clothing, but eventually came to refer specifically to the full-length garment that is still worn by the Japanese people today. Kimono are T-shaped robes that fall to the ankle, with collars and full-length sleeves which are wide and open at the wrist. Everyday kimono are commonly woven of linen, hemp, or cotton, while formal robes are made of brocaded silk.

Traditionally, on special occasions, unmarried women wear kimono with extremely long sleeves extending to the floor. The robe is wrapped around the body, always with the left side over the right, and secured by a wide sash tied in the back, called an *obi*. Traditionally, kimono are made from various handmade and hand-decorated fabrics such as linen, silk, and hemp.

FACTS:

- Commonly, the colors used in a kimono are symbolic. Dyes embody the spirit of the plants from which they are extracted, and any medicinal properties are thought to be transferred to the cloth. For example, blue derives from indigo which is used to treat bites and stings; so wearing a blue kimono is thought to repel the bite of snakes and insects.
- Paper screens and panels may seem like a strange choice for building material but can be surprisingly useful and durable. They were highly effective at creating air pockets and channeling drafts of warm air to heat rooms and small spaces. Japan’s largely temperate and subtropical climate is ideally suited for the use of a lighter, thinner material for these purposes.

NOTE: Due to the uneven flooring surface in front of the *Japanese House*, disabled access may be limited.



Exhibit: *The Korean House*

The Korean peninsula, bordered on the north by China and Russia, extends into the Sea of Japan on the east and Yellow Sea on the west. Western Japan is located across the Strait of Korea. Korea is an ancient land, inhabited for over 7,000 years. Its early culture was largely influenced by China, which, for many years, had military colonies there. This was largely replaced by the self-governing kingdoms of Silla (668-918 CE), Koryu (918-1392 CE), and Chosum (1392-1910 CE). Foreign intervention was periodic, but took hold in the early 20th century, culminating in a divided Korea in 1948 which remains so to this day.

The *Korean House* exhibits a widely cast group of materials that represent ancient societies and kingdoms, religious practice, and aspects of home life on the Korean peninsula. Though Korean decorative culture has been heavily influenced by Chinese art, Confucianism, and Buddhism, the exhibit reflects a unique artistic and decorative view of Korean culture. Korea and China were often close trade partners and entered into mutual diplomatic agreements at various times. The climate, animals, and geography of Korea are similar to parts of China, so their architecture, too, shares common values.

Though the furnishings are very Korean in style, Chinese influence is most distinct in the ceramics and painted artwork on exhibit, and the screen at the back of the exhibit (see below) is an excellent example. In pottery, many of the shapes and some colors (especially the blue and white pieces) are borrowed from China. Many of the flora and fauna shown on the pottery are similar to Chinese styles, if not the effect of outright influence.

The most notable piece of decorative art is the screen at the center. It belonged to architect Frank Lloyd Wright, and was donated to the Museum by his family. Wright bought the screen in 1912 on a visit to Korea during his Asia/Japan tour. This particular screen, one of ten purchased on the trip, was given to his son David in the mid-1930s, and was donated to the Museum in 1975.



The screen is believed to be from the late 18th century, probably from the Hanseong area (an old name for Seoul in the Joseon Era, 1392-1897 CE). Much as in traditional Japanese homes, these screens are used as room dividers, baffles against drafts, and as background for ceremonies. The screen measures six feet tall by 10 feet long, and features eight individual panels depicting agrarian scenes and textile production.

FACTS:

- The word "Korea" means "Land of High Mountains and Sparkling Streams," and comes from the word Koryo, the name of an ancient kingdom on the Korean peninsula.
- Due to its expansive mountainous terrain, only about 20% of the Korean peninsula is considered arable.

Exhibit: *China*

China is an enormous region of approximately 3.7 million square miles, 1.4 billion people, and a sweeping range of cultures, ethnic groups, and geographical features. Its history was dominated by a constant ebb and flow of people, and people conquering other people. The Han, an East Asian ethnic group native to China, came to prominence about 200 BCE, becoming the majority Chinese ethnicity, which it still is today. China has always been a vigorous trade entity, and expanded its markets through the Silk Road system approximately 2,500 to 3,000 years ago. The extent of its influence on the art, trade, architecture, and language of its neighboring countries is extensive.

Over the last 200 years, China enjoyed an astonishing reach in trade, due in part to a perceived exoticism which fascinated westerners. This interest was cultivated through a series of international expositions in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in such cities as Chicago, St. Louis, San Francisco, and Philadelphia. China and many other Asian cultures staged exhibitions at these events, advancing their influence through the west.



The chief goal for the renovated *China* exhibit was to reduce the density of objects and re-interpret them in light of geography, nature, society, and religion. Titled *Tian Chao*, or “heavenly dynasty,” it features a selection of Chinese decorative art objects—one of the Museum’s strongest collections. The selection of artifacts incorporates geography, nature, religion, general culture, and decorative arts. A timeline lends perspective and highlights points of Chinese and world history for a comparative understanding of history.

Most of the artifacts seen here date from the mid- to late Qing era (1750-1912). To the right of the interpretive kiosks, the objects reflect religious iconography and everyday goods. The puzzle balls represent tourist gifts. The room to the left focuses on art and metals, pottery, and pottery-making. The ceramics and bronze pieces on the left are the most traditional in Chinese form and theme, with later pieces (post-1800s) designed for Europeans and influenced by European styles and taste.

The Chinese mastered ceramic techniques long before the Europeans; Europe was producing fine porcelains in the 18th century, though the Chinese were doing it 1,000 years before. In this room, too, visitors see an intriguing array of dragon effigy pieces.



The concept of the dragon is central to Chinese culture. Widely featured in traditional Chinese literature, it is commonly held as an emblem of respect and reverence, a largely benevolent symbol of wisdom, spirituality, political power, and luck. Dragons are tied to the land, and various dragon manifestations are specific to a range of landscapes—mountain dragons, marsh dragons, valley dragons, etc.—and are strongly associated with water. They are connected to lakes, rivers, rain, and the ocean, protecting against evil spirits, and shielding the innocent from malevolent forces.

FACTS:

- Flanking the door of the Chinese merchant's house is a pair of granite Fu Lions made for the Museum in Milwaukee in the 1920s. Fu Lions have stood guard with mystic power protecting temples, tombs, palaces, government sites, and the homes of high-ranking members of society. They became more prevalent following the inclusion of lion iconography in Buddhist cave temples in northern China during the 5th and 6th centuries.
- Nearly always found in pairs, the male Lion is resting its front paw on a woven bamboo ball symbolizing the Earth and the unity of the Chinese empire. The female has a cub beneath her paw representing qualities of protection and nurturing of the residents within.



Exhibit: *The Indian Marketplace*



The Indian subcontinent features one of the world's most diverse ranges of geography, ethnicity, language, and religion. India itself is a 5,000-year-old civilization. Catholicism was brought by the Portuguese who established the trading colony of Goa in the early 16th century and used the subcontinent as a stepping stone to further commerce with eastern Asia. After the introduction of Catholicism, European states began to focus on India, exploiting it for trade and resources.

The British came to India in 1757, competing in trade with other European nations, and formal British rule of the Indian subcontinent, known as the "Raj," began in 1858. In 1876, India became a "Crown colony," whereby a governor-general oversaw all administration and was accountable to only the Queen, or Parliament on her behalf. In 1947, an act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom granted India independence.

This diorama depicts a 1950s-era Indian marketplace constructed from photographs, sketches, and memory by Museum staff. It reflects a period of the introduction of western culture and goods from WWII and later. It does not reflect current India, but is a mid-century representation of a typical market in old Delhi, highlighting the introduction and merging of trade and goods that developed after independence in 1947. Brass-wares and cloth are central features of the *Marketplace*, and western influences are reflected in movie posters and soft drink brand names. But this is decidedly an Indian market for Indian customers.



The cart seen in the center of the *Marketplace* is not actually a rickshaw, but a utility cart generally used for transporting cargo. This one, however, has been modified for carrying passengers.

To the left of the scene is a real Asian elephant — a female — and one of the Museum’s taxidermy mounts. For Indians, the elephant is both cultural and practical. In Hinduism, especially, elephants are a sacred animal, and a symbol of vigorous intellectual strength, representing education and success. Historically, they were deployed in warfare, and used extensively in logging practices. The elephant is considered the representation or living incarnation of Ganesha, the elephant-headed deity riding a mouse. It is the most important of all gods, commonly invoked before any others. Many major temples own elephants, while others are hired or are donated during the festival seasons.

FACTS:

- The Indian subcontinent continues to drift northward, pushing against the Asian landmass and forming the Himalayan range at the rate of about five centimeters per year. Earthquakes in the region are common. The largest earthquake ever recorded occurred near New Delhi in 1950 and had a magnitude of 8.5.
- With a population estimated at 1.37 billion, India is the world’s largest democracy.
- Snakes are not actually “charmed” by snake charmers. Without ears, they can’t actually hear the music of the snake charmer’s flute. So, the snake is actually following the swaying motion of the flute which it perceives as a threat, and so keeps intensely focused on it. And that’s no model, by the way; it’s a real cobra!
- The elephant’s name was Alice. She was a circus elephant and was prepared by a freelance taxidermist who sold it to MPM for the *India* exhibit.

SOUTHEAST ASIA

Southeast Asia consists of 11 countries that reach from eastern India to China, and is commonly divided into mainland and island zones. The mainland countries of Thailand, Laos, Burma, and Vietnam, among others, are represented by individual exhibit units within the Asia gallery. Many sea and jungle products are unique to the region, and were therefore much desired by international traders in early times. Southeast Asia provided petroleum products and rubber for Asia, and Hanoi, Singapore, and Bangkok are historically major sea-trading centers.

One of the most prominent features of Southeast Asia is its cultural diversity. Buddhism is the most prevalent religion, concentrated largely in the central and northern parts of the continent. As a single faith, however, Islam has the most followers, and is practiced by nearly a quarter of a billion people, especially in the southern archipelago (i.e. Maritime Southeast Asia), which includes the countries of Brunei, Singapore, East Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, and East Timor. Other religions include Christianity and Hinduism. Historically, Chinese influence has been pervasive, spreading throughout the region primarily through trade.

Southeast Asian cultures have been historically prominent and prolific producers of ceramics, as represented in the exhibit cases, but it took a long while before these materials made their way into western culture. Concerned that the West would carve them up for lumber and mining, Southeast Asian cultures kept their trading activities tightly restricted. Chinese expansion and control of Southeast Asia spread through the long river systems. This led to the colonization of Vietnam during the 1st century BCE, and brought Confucian philosophy, which had a lasting influence on Vietnamese culture. Catholicism was introduced to Vietnam with the arrival of French colonists in the mid-19th century and became highly influential. Buddhism and Taoism also reached Vietnam via China, and are today the most widely-practiced religions in Southeast Asia.

The *Thailand*, *Cambodia*, and *Vietnam* cases feature largely religious material, including Buddhist and Hindu-influenced iconography. They were installed in the early 1970s by a former MPM Curator who, as a practicing Buddhist, focused the collection to reflect that spirituality. There are approximately 100 iterations of the Buddha in the Southeast Asia region; the cases feature a broad array of his likenesses.

Exhibit: *Thailand*

As in many Asian societies, the elephant is a central cultural and spiritual trope, and a bronze elephant effigy may be seen in the second *Thailand* case. This three-headed piece represents Erawan, the vehicle of Indra, and appears on Siamese and Thai heraldry. Often seen riding an elephant, Indra is one of the main gods depicted in the Rigveda, the oldest of the sacred books of Hinduism, composed in an ancient form of Sanskrit about 1500 BCE.

In the last case before the entrance to the *Indian Marketplace* is a Khon theater dance costume. Khon is a traditional Thai dance drama which includes part masked dance and part play. Originally, it was only performed at the royal court and, as in Shakespeare's time, all roles were played by men. They wore masks and narrated the *Ramakian* story on which the Khon is based. The story is considered Thailand's national epic tale in which Hindu and Buddhist mythology are integrated with traditional Thai morality. This costume represents Tosakan, a mythological king of evil.



Exhibit: *Burma*



Known since 1989 as Myanmar, it is the second largest country in Southeast Asia. Like so many Southeast Asian lands, its geographical landscape features astonishing variety: This is a country of hills and valleys, mountains and beaches, temples and jungles.

Nicknamed "The Golden Land" after the nation's most precious metal, Myanmar is famous for its pagodas and Buddhist icons. The color gold is seen everywhere throughout this predominantly Buddhist land; gold-covered pagodas are pervasive across its landscape. Myanmar is home to 135 different ethnic groups, nine of which make up most of the population. The principle language is Burmese, though several other dialects are spoken throughout the country.

In this case, a reclining brass Buddha icon is seen being attended by two followers. The reclining Buddha is one of the standard *asana* or poses of the Buddha, and depicts him in his last moments of illness, his *Mahaparinirvana*. This is the ultimate state of Nirvana (highest peace and happiness) entered by an Awakened Being (Buddha) at the moment of physical death. Nirvana can also refer to that same state reached during such a being's physical lifetime as well.

FACTS:

- Myanmar borders six different Asian countries: Thailand, Laos, China, Tibet, India, and Bangladesh.
- Myanmar is one of only three countries worldwide that has not adopted the metric system (the other two are the United States and Liberia).

Exhibit: Vietnam

The *Vietnam* cases exhibit everyday goods, basketwork, and a variety of ceramics, a hallmark of the country's decorative arts. Ceramics production in Vietnam goes back nearly 2,000 years, and the country has long been considered a chief center of ceramic production on mainland Southeast Asia. Though they were heavily influenced by Chinese ceramics, Vietnamese ceramics display a unique style and form, and were traded widely throughout Asia. They appear in a broad variety of shapes, glazes, and decorative techniques, and were created for domestic and court use as wine ewers and teapots, and bowls for food and tea. Ceramic vessels were also used in temples to store offerings.



Vietnamese blue and white ceramics were not produced commonly until the 15th century. Those seen in the *Vietnam* cases are classic representations of the form. True examples comprise mainly bowls, pots, and bottles with well-done clay bodies painted finely with bright cobalt-blue against an ivory-white ground, as seen in the exhibit.

Typical are white bowls, ewers, small tureens, and spittoons that have one or two large, opaque blue lines around the mouth and two double sprays on either side of the body. Recent archaeological evidence confirms that cobalt imported from the Middle East was used in Vietnamese ceramics as early as the Tran dynasty, which ruled Vietnam from 1225 to 1400.

FACTS:

- In Vietnamese culture, as in many other East and Southeast Asian countries, the dragon plays a central role. In fact, the Vietnamese consider the shape of the country to represent a writhing dragon: the northern part is the tail, central Vietnam is the body with the Trường Sơn (Annamite) mountain range as its back and spine. The dragon's head lies in the southern part, its open mouth spraying water into the South China Sea.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Goal: To provide opportunities for structured exploration of the Museum’s *Asia* gallery and encourage a better understanding of Asian history and culture through close observation of exhibit content.

Grades 1-4: Go Fly a (Dragon) Kite!

OBJECTIVE: Students explore ancient Asian culture through imagination and artistic expression.

SUBJECT AREA: Geography, social studies, art

Overview: Both kites and dragons have a long history in Asia. Kites were flown in Malaysia and China around 2,000-3,000 years ago, and eventually spread from China to Korea, India, and Japan along Asian trade routes. Dragons emerged in East Asian culture at least 4,000 years ago. They figure extensively in religious iconography in many Asian faiths including Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism.

1. **Pre-visit activity:** Discuss the history of these two phenomena—kites and dragons—with the students. Ask them to consider why they developed in this part of the world, and why they are such an important part of so many Asian cultures.

Examine a topographical map of Asia to get a sense of the vast range of geographical features found on the continent. Discuss how Asian geography may have inspired dragons, and how their multiple iterations developed. (See *Vietnam FACTS*, p. 12.)
2. **On-visit activity:** Visit the *China* exhibit in the *Asia* gallery, and explore the case featuring decorative arts with dragon motifs (second case to the right of the center video kiosk). Ask the students to list the individual dragons they see, and describe their main distinguishing characteristics. (Consult the interactive video catalog at the center kiosk for detailed information on each piece.)
3. **Post-visit activity:** Back in the classroom, have students work in teams or individually to imagine their own dragon, one that reflects something important in their lives — a sport, hobby, pastime, favorite subject in school, or anything else of interest to them.

The students then write a story about how that dragon came to be connected with this particular phenomenon. Students draw an image of the dragon, and give it a name. For example, in ancient China, dragons are often connected with rough weather. Even today, tornadoes are known there as *long juanfeng*, the “dragon’s whirlwind.” They then draw their dragon on material they’ll use to make their own kite.

TEACHER RESOURCES

Website: American Kiteflyers Association

Link: <http://kite.org/education/history-of-kites/>

Website: “How to make a simple kite”

Link: <https://www.instructables.com/id/Easy-Paper-Kite-for-Kids/>

Website: “A history of dragons in Asia”

Link: <https://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/mythic-creatures/dragons/asian-dragons>

Grades 5-8: It's in the Cards

OBJECTIVE: Students experience traditional Japanese culture by engaging in an immersive activity.

SUBJECT AREA: Language arts, social studies, art

Overview: See Exhibit Highlights, *The Japanese House*, p. 2, above. Note: The game of *Hyakunin Isshu* is still enormously popular in Japan, and is played in highly competitive tournaments called *karuta*, requiring superior visual, listening, and concentration skills.

1. **Pre-visit activity:** Hold a classroom discussion about why people play games.

Discussion topics:

- People around the world have played games for thousands of years.
- Games entertain us, provide relaxation, and help to pass the time.
- More importantly, perhaps, games build community, and improve skills for hunting and battle.

2. **Onsite activity:** Visit the *Japanese House* and observe the card game, *Hyakunin Isshu* (*One Hundred Poets, One Poem Each*), being played by the two women in kimono. Be sure and read the label with the students. Discuss the game as a group, and explain how it's played, as follows:

- There are two sets of 100 cards. On one set (*yomifuda*), a complete five-line poem, a *waka*, is printed. (*Waka* are written in five lines of five, seven, five, seven, and seven syllables.) On the other set of cards (*shimo-no-ku*), only the last two lines of each poem appear. Usually there are two players or sides.
- Each player takes 25 of the *shimo-no-ku* cards and spreads them in front of him or her. A third person, acting as reader, reads from the cards with the whole poems on them.
- As the reader reads the first lines of a poem, each of the two players tries to find the card with the corresponding final two lines. The first player to find the right *shimo-no-ku* card removes it from the playing area.
- If the card is in the opponent's area, the player gives one of the cards from his or her own area to the opponent.
- The first player to get rid of all the cards in their own area is the winner.

Discussion topics:

- The game develops familiarity and appreciation for traditional Japanese literature and culture.
- The game tests and builds memory skills.
- The game develops agility and speed.

For background on the game, see Exhibit Highlights, *The Japanese House*, above.

3. **Post-visit activity:** Students write their own *waka* poems and inscribe them on a set of *Hyakunin Isshu* cards which the students design themselves using Japanese ink stamps, or copying or gluing on Japanese art and images. Students may also use *waka* poems from *Hyakunin Isshu* should they prefer not to write their own. The students then hold their own competition. Of course, it's not necessary to make sets of 100 cards, but perhaps 15-20 or so, one for each student's poem.

TEACHER RESOURCES

For a translation of the *Hyakunin Isshu* in English, the following website may be helpful:

<http://jti.lib.virginia.edu/japanese/hyakunin/noJIS/hyaku1.html>

Website: <https://www.tofugu.com/japan/karuta-japanese-cards/>

Website: <https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/13304/hyakunin-issu-100-poems-100-poets>

Website: <https://web-japan.org/kidsweb/cool/12-03-15/002.html>

Website: <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/life/2017/07/09/lifestyle/sheer-poetry-worlds-first-english-language-karuta-game>

Grades 9-12: Lost Languages?

OBJECTIVE: Students will better understand the vital role of language in preserving cultural identity through an exploration of the Ainu vernacular, and the core assets of their own language.

SUBJECT AREAS: Language arts, social studies

Overview: The steady loss of native languages is accelerating among indigenous people around the world. Both the Ainu and several Native American cultures, among many others globally, risk losing traditional language. What causes language loss? How can it be reversed? Why is it important to preserve indigenous languages?

1. **Pre-visit activity:** Prior to visiting the Museum's *Asia* gallery, students work in teams of two to assemble a "survival" vocabulary of 10-12 words from English that reflect the core values or significant elements of their own culture. These should be words they would put in a time capsule or museum exhibit to ensure that their identity as a people would not be lost.

Discussion topics:

- Why is it so important to reclaim languages that are becoming extinct?
 - How does diversity in language parallel diversity overall (diversity is healthy)?
 - When a language is lost, so is a culture, a perspective, and a way of life.
 - Language is a living experience; it is in constant evolution.
 - How would we feel if our language and way of life was being lost?
 - What does it mean to have a language? How does it help build identity?
 - How does it help communicate and tell a culture's story?
 - Is there a link between the threat to language diversity and the threat to biological and environmental diversity?
2. **Onsite activity:** Students spend time examining the *Ainu* exhibit cases. Based on the artifacts and cultural themes they see reflected there, they work with their partners to assemble a list of 10-12 words the Ainu would have to retain in order to preserve their cultural identity.
 3. **Post-visit activity:** Teams reassemble to finalize their ad hoc Ainu core vocabulary. They also review their "survival" vocabulary list from their pre-visit activity and make any adjustments based on their Ainu vocabulary. They then report on their vocabulary to the rest of the class who look for parallels in their own vocabularies. What vocabulary words—on both lists—are common among the teams? Each group reports on what words are essential for others to know in order to understand them. What words tell their story, their sense of who they are? Why did they choose them?

Discussion topics:

- Why is language so well-preserved by literature?
- Almost every human culture has produced either written or oral literature. Why?
- If culture could only be preserved through newspaper articles, for example, would it be successful? Can a culture be preserved without literature?

Final Question: What words or phrases are essential in all cultures, to all people, globally? Can you make a list?

TEACHER RESOURCES

Website: Ainu Museum, Hokkaido, Japan

<http://www.ainu-museum.or.jp/en/study/eng01.html>

Website: Living Tongues Institute for Endangered Languages

<https://livingtongues.org/>

VOCABULARY

Buddha— Founder of Buddhism; worshipped as a god (ca. 563-483 BCE).

Buddhism— Religion and philosophy that developed from the teachings of the Buddha (Sanskrit: “Awakened One”), a teacher who lived in northern India between the mid-6th and mid-5th centuries BCE.

Confucius— Renowned Chinese teacher, philosopher, and political theorist, whose ideas have influenced the civilization of East Asia.

Confucianism— A way of life propagated by Confucius in the 6th–5th century BCE and followed by the Chinese people for more than two millennia. Although transformed over time, it is still the substance of learning, the source of values, and the social code of the Chinese.

Decorative arts— Any of those arts that are concerned with the design and decoration of objects chiefly prized for their utility rather than aesthetic qualities. Ceramics, glassware, basketry, jewelry, metal-ware, furniture, textiles, clothing, and other such goods are the objects most commonly associated with this form.

Dynasty— A succession of rulers of the same line of descent.

Guru— A Hindu or Buddhist religious leader and spiritual teacher.

Haiku— A traditional form of Japanese poetry consisting of three lines. The first and last lines of a Haiku have five syllables, and the middle line has seven.

Hindi— The most widely-spoken language in India. Along with English, it is the country’s official language.

Hinduism— A major world religion originating on the Indian subcontinent and comprising several and varied systems of philosophy, belief, and ritual.

Indo-Aryan— A subgroup of the Indo-Iranian branch of the Indo-European language family.

Jackal— Wild, nocturnal canine mammal of Asia and Africa closely related to the dog.

Mandarin— A form of spoken Chinese used by the court and the official classes of the Empire.

Pagoda— A tower in eastern Asia usually with roofs curving upward at the division of each of several stories and erected as a temple or memorial.

Raj— British dominion over India (1757-1947).

Rickshaw— A small, covered, two-wheeled vehicle, usually for one passenger, that is pulled by one man and that was used originally in Japan, but is common in many Asian countries.

Rupee— The basic unit of money in India.

Sanskrit— An ancient Indo-Aryan language, it is the classical language of India and Hinduism.

Shinto— A Japanese religion dating from the early 8th century and incorporating the worship of ancestors and nature spirits and a belief in sacred power (kami) in both animate and inanimate things.

Silk Road— An ancient network of trade routes, formally established during the Han dynasty of China, which linked the regions of the ancient world in commerce between 130 BCE-1453 CE.

Samurai— A member of a powerful military caste in feudal Japan, especially a member of the class of military retainers.

Subcontinent— A large, distinguishable part of a continent, such as North America or southern Africa, that is part of a larger continent, made up of a number of countries forming a large mass of land. The term is often used to refer to the area that contains India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh.

Taoism— A Chinese mystical philosophy founded by Lao-tzu in the 6th century BCE.

Urdu— An official language of Pakistan, and widely spoken by Muslims in urban areas of India.

Common English vocabulary words deriving from Asian languages:

Asana (Sanskrit)— Any of various postures or positions in yoga.

Bamboo (Malay)— Woody tropical grass with hollow stems; there are over 1,000 species worldwide.

Bangle (Hindi)— A stiff, usually ornamental, bracelet or anklet slipped or clasped on.

Batik (Javanese)— A fabric printed by an Indonesian method of hand-printing textiles by coating with wax the parts not to be dyed.

Bungalow (Hindi and Urdu)— A small house with a single story.

Chintz (Hindi)— A brightly printed and glazed cotton fabric.

Chutney (Hindi and Urdu)— A spicy relish usually made with fruit, vinegar, and spices.

Cummerbund (Hindi)— A broad, pleated sash worn at the waist with a tuxedo.

Cushy (Hindi)— Comfortable and easy; not burdensome or demanding.

Dungaree (Hindi and Urdu)— A coarse durable twill-weave cotton fabric.

Gingham (Malay)— A clothing fabric in a plaid weave.

Gunnysack (Hindi)— A bag made of burlap.

Judo (Japanese, literally "gentle way," from *ju*, "gentleness," and *do*, "way, art")— A martial art emphasizing the use of quick movement and leverage to turn an opponent's force to one's own advantage.

Juggernaut (Hindi)— A massive, inexorable force.

Jungle (Hindi)— An area of land overgrown with dense forest and tangled vegetation, typically in the tropics.

Jute (Bengali)— A plant fiber used in making rope or sacks.

Karma (Sanskrit)— In Hinduism and Buddhism, the force generated by the effects of a person's actions that determine his destiny.

Loot (Hindi and Urdu, meaning "he plunders")— Goods or money obtained illegally.

Nirvana (Sanskrit)— The final beatitude that transcends suffering, karma, and samsara, and is sought especially in Buddhism through the extinction of desire and individual consciousness.

Oolong (Chinese, literally "black dragon")— Chinese tea leaves that have been partially fermented before being dried.

Pundit (Hindi)— A person who gives opinions in an authoritative manner, usually through mass media.

Raita (Hindi)— An Indian side dish of yogurt, chopped cucumbers, and spices.

Seersucker (Hindi and Urdu)— A light, puckered fabric that is usually striped.

Shampoo (Hindi and Urdu, "to press, massage")— Cleansing agent for washing the hair.

Typhoon (Chinese)— A tropical cyclone in the western Pacific or Indian oceans.

TEACHER RESOURCES

Books:

Asia (general):

A History of East Asia, origins to 21st Century. Charles Holcombe, 2011.

A History of Asia. Rhoads Murphey, 2013.

Southeast Asia:

Southeast Asia, an introductory history. 12th Ed. Milton Osborn, 2016.

Southeast Asia, an historical encyclopedia. Ed. Ooi Krat Gin, 2004.

Religion in SE Asia, an encyclopedia of faith and culture. d. Jesudas M. Athyal, 2015.

Korea:

A History of Korea. Kyung Moon Hwang, 2017.

Korean History in Maps. Ed. Michael D. Shin, 2014.

Japan:

The Ainu of Japan. Barbara Aoki Poisson, 2002.

The Japanese Experience, a short history of Japan. WG Beasley, 1999.

Japanese Culture. 4th Edition. Paul Varley, 2000.

The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Japan. Ed. Richard Bowring & Peter Kornicki, 1993.

Everyday Life in Traditional Japan. Charles J. Dunn, 1972.

The Boundaries of the Japanese, VOL 2. Korea, Taiwan and the Ainu, 1868-1945. Eiji Oguma, 2017.

China:

China, Empire and Civilization. Ed. Edward Shaugnessy, 2000.

Columbia Guide to Modern Chinese History. R. Keith Schoppa, 2000.

Cambridge Illustrated History: China. Patricia Buckley Ebrey, 1999.

Chinese Civiliaztion, a sourcebook. 2nd Ed. ed. Patricia Buckley Ebrey, 1993.

British Museum book of Chinese Art. Ed. Jessica Rawson, 1992.

Oxford Illustrated History of Modern China. Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom, 2016.

Websites:

Columbia University: Asia for Educators

Link: <http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/>

Introduction to Southeast Asia

Link: <https://asiasociety.org/education/introduction-southeast-asia>

Milwaukee Public Museum's Asia Gallery

Link: <https://www.mpm.edu/exhibitions/permanent-exhibits/third-floor-exhibits/asia>

National Consortium for Teaching about Asia (NCTAsia)

Link: <http://nctasia.org/>

National Geographic: Asia Physical Geography

Link: <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/asia/>