Asian Art Outlook

Teacher Resources Based on the
Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd
Collection of Asian Art

Asia Society

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Asian Art Outlook:
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Art is of intrinsic importance to the educational process. The arts help teach young people how to learn by giving them the desire to learn. The arts are systems of signification that encode the values and ideologies of their time and place. When teachers are helped and encouraged to embark on culturally diverse studies of the visual arts by including Asian arts in their curriculums, students will gain a broader and deeper understanding of the world in which they live. Often, this leads to students studying the arts of their own cultural heritage, thereby gaining self-esteem.

Given that the study of Asia is required in the social studies standards in 34 of the 50 states, it is clear that our schools and teachers need support and resources to meet the demands and expectations already upon them. This resource for educators uses the Asia Society's permanent collection, the Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection of Asian Art, as an accessible and tangible starting point for discussion about the history, geography, and cultures of Asia.

About the Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection

The Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection of Asian Art is one of the most notable collections of Asian art in the United States. Although small in size with just under 300 objects, it is broad in scope and of the highest aesthetic quality. The formation of the collection was integral to the history of the Asia Society. John D. Rockefeller 3rd, who founded the Asia Society in 1956, saw art as being an indispensable and integral tool for promoting better understanding between the countries of Asia and the United States. Rockefeller and his wife, Blanchette, began the collection in the early 1960s with the help of the eminent art historian Sherman Lee. They wanted the collection to both represent the finest accomplishments of the arts of Asia and to be representative of the breadth of those cultures. Always concerned with the future public use of such a collection, they saw its possibilities for public education as part of their aim to improve and increase American understanding of Asia, past and present.

How to use this resource

This resource is divided into three main sections. Section One is intended to help teachers and students develop the skills for working with art objects. The objects, drawn from the Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection, are divided into three thematic sections—Japan, China, and India. In Section Two, there are model lesson plans to help teachers and students apply these skills to multiple classroom literacies. Each lesson is based on one or more of the illustrations in the resource. The learning standards addressed in these lessons are the standards for upper elementary grades. The English Language Standards are from the New York City Language Arts Standards. Social Studies and Cultural Arts Standards are those of New York State. These lessons are suggested strategies and meant as a springboard for teachers in the development of future lessons. They may be adjusted for other grade levels. Section Three is an appendix that contains additional background material and a bibliography.

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The images are provided on the enclosed CD.

Section One: Looking at Art

Introductory Activities

When confronted with a work of art, most people do not know what it is that they are supposed to be seeing. This resource suggests a strategy for teachers to help students look at works of art.

How to use this section

Teachers are urged to begin with one or more of the introductory activities. They should then use the Basic Lesson Plan (page 5) to explore the objects. Teachers are urged to read the relevant background information for each object they elect to explore in order that they may lead the class discussions. The background information is intended to give the teacher the tools to extend the looking experience. At this juncture, it is suggested that they should not read the information to the class, but rather let the student look at the objects with a fresh eye.

Following are a number of exercises that will help students develop some of the basic observation, deductive, and language skills that will underlay the study of works of art.

Learning to Look

Materials

- Common household or classroom objects
- Paper
- Pencils

Procedure

Students are given a set period of time to look at an object. The object is removed. Students are told to draw the object from memory. The exercise is repeated several times to demonstrate how time and concentration can reveal information not seen at first glance.

Learning to Describe

Materials

- Cloth or plastic drawstring bag
- Common household or classroom objects

Procedure

Students feel objects inside the bag and are asked to describe them. This activity may be done in small groups or with the entire class. Listening students can be asked to guess the identity of the object on the basis of the description given.

Learning to Ask Questions

Materials

- Common household or classroom objects

Procedure

Students work in pairs sitting back to back. One student is given an object. The other has ten or twenty questions to find out what that object is. Student one can only give information in response to the questions and may not name the object. The teacher should conduct a follow-up discussion about what types of questions provide the most useful answers.

Basic Lesson Plan

Standards

NYC English Language Arts Performance Standards

E2a—*Produce a report of information.*
E1c—*Read and comprehend informational materials.*

Learning Standards for the Arts

Standard 3—Responding to and analyzing works of art

Visual Arts

Performance Indicator 2—*Students explain the visual and other sensory qualities (surfaces, colors, textures, shapes, sizes, volumes) found in a wide variety of art works.*

Learning Standards for Social Studies

Standard 2

World History

Performance Indicator 4—*Students view historical events through the eyes of those who were there, as shown in their art, writing, music, and artifacts.*

Theme

What can we learn from looking at an art object?

Performance Objective

Students examine an image, analyze its components, and begin to learn about its meaning.

Grade Level

All Grades

Essential Question—Aim

What can we learn by examining a work of art?

Materials

- Visual representation of an object
- Looking exercise

Assessment

Students' verbal responses, drawings, and written commentaries

Procedure

Teachers should use the looking exercise (page 7) to lead the students in a visual exploration of each object.

1. Make a list on the blackboard of features that students see in the image.
2. After the questioning is completed, each student draws the object. Teachers may want to have each student record the drawings in a special notebook of Asia Art.
3. Each student writes a short description of the object next to the drawing.

Extension

A class visit to a museum or gallery that exhibits the kind of objects being discussed.

Looking Exercise

Step 1 **General questions that motivate observation and personal (or group) interpretation**

- What can you see?
- Have you ever seen anything like it?
- What is going on here?
- What else do you see?

To encourage students to ground their comments in observation ask:

- What do you see that makes you say that?
- How is this the same/different from other things you have seen?

Step 2 **Questions that extend the process of observing and interpreting**

- Can you tell what it is made from?
- What makes you say that?
- How do you think it might be used?

For **figural** works you may want to ask:

- Who do we see here?
- What can you guess about their life and/or personality?
- What do they seem to be doing?
- When is this happening? (What time of day or season of the year?)
- What are they wearing?

For **landscapes** you may want to ask:

- Where is this?
- When is this? (What time of day or season of the year?)

For **both** you may want to ask:

- What about … (point to a detail not yet discussed)? This asks students to pinpoint clothing, activities, gestures, expressions, etc., that might not have been noticed.

Step 3 **Questions that lead to reflecting on observations**

- What makes you think/say that?
- Is there anything else that makes you think that?
- What can we learn from thinking about this?

Object Lists by Region

Indian Subcontinent

1. ***Buddha***
India, probably Bihar; late 6th century
1979.008

2. ***Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara***
Nepal, Transitional period; late 10th–early 11th century
1979.047

3. ***Shiva as Lord of the Dance (Shiva Nataraja)***
India, Tamil Nadu, Chola period; about 970
1979.020

4. ***Parvati***
India, Tamil Nadu; Chola period, early 11th century
1979.019

5. ***Ganesha***
India, Uttar Pradesh; 8th century
1979.013

6. ***Krishna Dancing on Kalya***
India, Tamil Nadu; Chola period, late 10–early 11th century
1979.022

7. *Folio from a* ***Ragamala*** *Series:*
Madhu Hadhavi Ragini
India, Madhya Pradesh, Malwa region; about 1660–1680
1979.057

China

1. ***Storage Jar***
China, Gansu or Qinghai Province; Neolithic period,
Gansu Yangshao culture, Banshan type, about 3rd–2nd millenium B.C.E.
1979.125

2. ***Wine Vessel: You***
North China; Western Zhou period, about late 11th century B.C.E.
1979.100

3. ***Censer in the Shape of Mount Bo (Boshanlu)***
North China; Eastern Han period, 1st–2nd century
1979.109

4. ***Horse***
North China; Tang period, early 8th century
1992.001

5. ***Civil Official***
North China; Tang period, 8th century
1079.114

6. ***Platter***
China, Jiangxi Province; Yuan period, mid-14th century
1979.151

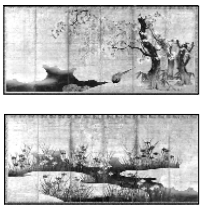
7. *Kuncan (161–about 1686)*
Temple on a Mountain Ledge
China, Qing period, dated 1661
1979.124

Japan

1. ***Figure of a Man***
Japan, Ibarake Prefecture; Tumulus period, 6th–7th century
1979.199

2. *Zen'en (active first half 13th century)*
Bodhisattva Kshitigarbha (Jizo Bosatsu)
Japan; Kamakura period, 1223–1226
1979. 202

3. *Kano school, possibly by Kano Shoei (1519–1592)*
Birds, Ducks, and Willow Tree
Japan; Muromachi period, mid-16th century
1979. 213



4. *Attributed to Kano Ryokei (died 1645)*
Pheasants under Cherry and Willow Trees and Irises and Mist
Japan, Kyoto Prefecture, Nishihonganji; Edo period, first half 17th century
1979.217

5. *Toshusai Sharaku (active 1794–1795)*
Nakamura Konozo as the Boatman Kanagawaya No Gon and Nakajima Wadaemon as "Dried Codfish" Chozaemon
Japan; Edo period, 1794–1795
1979.220

6. ***Water Jar for Tea Ceremony***
Japan, Mie Prefecture; Momoyama to Edo period,
late 16th–early 17th century
1979.224

7. ***Octagonal Jar***
Japan, Saga Prefecture; Edo period, 18th century
1979.231

Looking at Art:

Indian Subcontinent

Buddha
India, probably Bihar; late 6th century
Bronze (copper alloy)
H: 27 in.
1979.008

Background

Buddhism is one of the world's oldest and most widespread religions. According to tradition, the Buddha was born in the region that is now Nepal in the year 563 B.C.E. He was born a prince named Siddhartha Gautama. Siddhartha left his palace, renouncing his princely life, and set out to find the cause of human suffering. He became a wandering monk. After years of searching, he found his answer—or awakening—and proceeded to teach others. When he died, he attained nirvana—the final release from earthly suffering. The name "Buddha" means "the Awakened One" or "the Enlightened One."

Followers of the Buddha, monks and nuns who lived in monasteries located around the modern Indian state of Bihar, codified his teachings and spread them through northern India. The earliest known Buddhist monuments were produced during the Maurya period (322-185 B.C.E.). When the emperor Asoka (reigned about 273-232 B.C.E.) was converted to Buddhism, he propagated the faith throughout the Indian sub-continent.

In the early phases of Buddhism, the Buddha was represented in art by symbols; by the beginning of the Common Era actual images of the Buddha began to appear. These images became a focal point of worship and ritual.

This statue was produced in northern India during the 6th century and shows the influence of the Gupta art style. The Gupta period (319-500) in north and north-central India was a period of enormous prosperity and artistic fluorescence. The Gupta style spread throughout India and also influenced the arts in other areas of Asia.

How to look at this work

Since no one knows what the Buddha looked like, his image was created to express ideas about his life and teachings through visible signs. An examination of this Buddha image reveals the following identifying characteristics:

- **Robe**
  The Buddha wears the garment of a Buddhist monk. This consists of two unsewn pieces of cloth. One piece is wrapped around the waist; the other is draped around the shoulders.

- **Ushnisha**
  The cranial bump (*ushnisha*) symbolizes the "expanded wisdom" the Buddha attained at the time of his enlightenment.

- **Urna**
  The mark in the center of the Buddha's forehead (*urna*) refers to his supernatural wisdom.

- **Hair**
  The Buddha's hair is usually depicted in the form of "snail-shell" curls. Monks have shaven heads, but according to leg end, when the Buddha cut his hair, the uncut portions snapped into these curls and he never had to cut his hair again.

- **Face**
  The face is quiet and serene. The eyelids are lowered as if in meditation. The ears are large and the earlobes elongated, extended by the large and heavy earrings the Buddha once wore when he was a prince. They remind us that to secure enlightenment, we must surrender attachment to worldly goods.

- **Hand Gestures**
  The Buddha's hand gestures are called *mudras* and have symbolic meanings. In this image, the right hand is raised to chest level with the palm facing the viewer. This is the gesture of reassurance. It tells us to have no fear.

In these various ways this sculpture reflects ideas about the Buddha.

Function

We cannot be absolutely certain about the function of this particular image, but we know that in Buddhist worship today, as is earlier times, images like this are the focal point of personal worship and religious ritual. The worshipper may offer gifts like candles, incense, food, and water to the Buddha and in this way honor the deity and acquire either personal or family merit.

How this object was made

This image is made from bronze, an alloy of copper and tin. It was cast in the "lost-wax" method. In this technique, the sculpture is first formed in wax, which is then covered in clay and fired. As the clay bakes, the wax melts and runs out through funnels, leaving an empty mold, which is then filled with melted bronze. After the metal cools the clay mold is broken open, producing a unique object.

Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara
Nepal, Transitional period, late 10th–early 11th century
Gilt copper with inlays of semiprecious stones
H: 26 3/4 in.
1979.047

Background

After the death of the Buddha, his teachings were written down by his followers who spread his message. An organized religion began to take form. With the passage of time, a new branch of Buddhism emerged, called Mahayana. An important element in Mahayana belief was the worship of bodhisattvas. While the Buddha transcends mortal concerns after attaining enlightenment and withdraws from the world, a bodhisattva, though spiritually advanced, chooses to remain on earth to help all beings become enlightened.

Buddhism spread from India into surrounding regions. Nepal was a critical link between north and east India and other nations. We assume that Buddhist teachings were introduced into the region during or just after the reign of Ashoka (reigned about 269-32 B.C.E.). Although Buddhism gradually died out in India, many schools and sects of Buddhism were (and still are) active in Nepal.

How to look at this work

Images of bodhisattvas are visual representations of their natures:

1. Because a bodhisattva lives in this world, he wears the appropriate worldly trappings:
    - Here he wears a skirtlike garment (*dhoti*) with floral design that wraps around his waist and between his legs. A sash is wrapped over the *dhoti*, around the hips, and is tied at his left.
    - He wears elaborate, bejeweled ornaments: a necklace with a large pendant, armlets, bracelets, and a belt. He wears long earrings and an elaborate crown. His hair hangs down on his shoulders.
    - A sacred thread hangs down from his left shoulder. It symbolized his high social and religious status.
2. The mark on his forehead (*urna*) refers to his supernatural wisdom.
3. Both hands are held in the gesture of teaching, in which the thumbs touch the index or middle finger.
4. We can identify this bodhisattva as Avalokiteshvara because of the small-seated sculpture of the Amitabha Buddha in his head dress. Other bodhisattvas have different identifying marks.

This figure stands in a relaxed posture with one knee flexed. He has a smooth, bare torso with broad shoulders and a small waist.

Function

We cannot be certain about the exact function of this particular image, but we know that in Nepal today, as in earlier times, images like this were the focal point of personal worship and religious ritual. Devotees dress and adorn such images with flowers. Worship also involves attendance by Buddhist priests, who might dress them, bathe them, and burn incense before them. They might reside in a temple or on a home altar or they may be carried in processions to celebrate important religious events.

How this object was made

This image was produced using the lost-wax method (page 12). The sculpture was then gilded (covered in gold) and inlaid with semiprecious stones.

Shiva as Lord of the Dance (Shiva Nataraja)
India, Tamil Nadu; Chola period, 970
Bronze (copper alloy)
H: 29 1/2 in.
1979.020

Background

Hinduism, one of the world's great religions, is the belief system of 80 percent of the people of India. It is an ancient and complex system in which there are many levels of understanding.

In the Hindu cosmos, time is conceived of as cyclical, rather than linear. The world is created and, after millennia, destroyed, only to be created once again.

Most Hindus believe in divinity that is formless and all-powerful but may manifest itself in many different gods and goddesses in order to help people who need a deity to worship. For purposes of worship, a god can place his or her power in a visible form (for example, a statue). When that power is made manifest in humanized form, such images represent divine reality, rather than likenesses of earthly beings.

The major Hindu deities are Shiva, Vishnu, and Devi (a goddess). The character of the deity Shiva is complex. He is known by many different names and has numerous manifestations. Shiva is worshiped in symbolic form (known as *linga*) for his progenitive powers. Although he is regarded as the cosmic destroyer, he is also a creator. Among his manifestations are Cosmic Dancer, creator and destroyer of the universe, wandering mendicant, and family man. He is full of paradoxes. He may be auspicious or inauspicious, male or female. He is all of these things, all opposites reconciled.

This sculpture represents Shiva in his role as Lord of Dance performing his "dance of bliss." It is believed that Shiva first performed this dance in order to redeem a group of sages who were practicing an unorthodox form of Hinduism. In an attempt to resist Shiva, they challenged him with three creatures: a tiger, a snake, and a dwarf-demon. Shiva subdued all three. As a result, he often wears a snake belt and an animal-skin loincloth, and he generally stands on the back of a dwarf. The three creatures symbolize the untamed minds, egoism, and ignorance that Shiva had to destroy in order to guide the sages to a more developed spiritual state. After he had subdued the creatures, Shiva began his dance. The power inherent in his furious dance symbolizes his role as the creator-destroyer of the universe. The dance is the catalyst for the destruction of the universe and the creation of a new cosmos.

This image was created in south India during the Chola period (880-1279 B.C.E.), an era of great Hindu piety in that region. The Chola rulers were devoted to Shiva, in particular in his role as the Lord of Dance and they built great temples in his honor. They patronized the arts and were renowned for the sculptures made in their bronze casting workshops.

How to look at this work

Hindu images are both visual theologies and visual scriptures. They are visual narrations of myths and traditions. We may identify individual deities by the objects that they hold, by what they wear, by their hairstyles and by the other beings that accompany them.

Shiva as Lord of the Dance is represented in the following way:

1. **Flaming halo**
   Shiva dances within a flaming arch that springs from a lotus base. The halo represents the cosmos. The triple flames on this halo are symbolic of the three worlds: heaven, earth, and the netherworld.

2. **Pose**
   Shiva's feet are in a dancing pose. His left leg is raised and his right foot is planted on the demon-dwarf, signifying that Shiva overcomes ignorance in the world.

3. **Hands**
   Multiple hands symbolize Shiva's multiple powers.
   - The back right hand holds the drum, the symbol of creation. Sound was the first of the five elements that became manifest in the cosmos.
   - The back left hand holds a flame within a bowl. The flame symbolizes destruction leading to creation.
   - The front right hand is held in the gesture that tells the devotee to have no fear. This is the gesture of reassurance.
   - The front left hand points to the raised leg in a gesture that is called "like an elephant trunk" and signifies that Shiva's activities will bring salvation.

4. **Face**
   - Shiva's expression is aloof; he is absorbed in meditation.
   - He has an all-seeing, all-knowing third eye.
   - Shiva wears the matted locks of a yogi, or holy person. The hair is piled up into a crown at the top of his head. The strands flow towards the flaming halo and are adorned with flowers.

5. **Clothing and adornments**
   - Shiva wears a short garment, known as a *dhoti* (pronounced "doe-tee"), over which he wears a tiger skin.
   - He wears much jewelry: necklace, armlets, bracelets, anklets, and finger and toe rings.
   - A snake is wound around his arms.

Function

Large-scale bronzes images like this sculpture were (and still are) generally intended for temples. Devotees would visit a temple to be in a space sacred to the deity. The god is understood to inhabit the sculpture and therefore worshipers treat the sculpture as they would a god. In the act of worship, devotees can see the god and the god can see the devotees. Worshipers bathe and perfume the god, dress the image in robes, and ornament it with jewelry and flowers. During festivals, the deity might be taken out and carried in processions.

How this object was made

This bronze image was created using the "lost-wax" technique (page 12).

Parvati
India, Tamil Nadu; Chola period, 10th–11th Century
Copper alloy
H: 35 in. (88.9 cm)
1979.019

Background

Hinduism, one of the world's great religions, is practiced by 80 percent of the people of India. It is an ancient and complex system in which there are many levels of understanding.

In the Hindu cosmos, time is conceived of as cyclical, rather than linear. The world is created and, after millennia, destroyed, only to be created once again.

Most Hindus believe in divinity that is formless and all-powerful but may manifest itself in many different gods and goddesses in order to help people who need a deity to worship. For purposes of worship, a god can place his or her power in a visible form (for example, a statue). When that power manifests in humanized form such images represent divine reality, rather than likenesses of earthly beings.

The major Hindu deities are Shiva, Vishnu, and Devi (the Goddess). Ganesha is a popular Hindu god who is the son of Shiva and his wife Parvati.

Parvati is the wife of Shiva and the daughter of the Himalayan Mountains. She represents one manifestation of Devi, the Mother Goddess. Like her husband Shiva, Parvati has both kind and fierce forms.

Hindu mythology recounts how Parvati was sent to Shiva as a prospective wife. However, she was unable to win his attention because he was absorbed in meditation. After many unsuccessful attempts to attract him, Parvati decided to practice Shiva's asceticism, and while she meditated on a mountain peak, Shiva finally realized that he loved her. When Parvati came down from the mountain they married. Eventually Shiva and Parvati became the parents of two children, the warrior god Karttikeya (Skanda) and the elephant-headed Ganesha.

Parvati is often portrayed as a caring and kind-hearted mother and is often depicted alongside her husband, though she is sometimes worshipped as an independent deity.

This image was created in South India (in what is now the modern state Tamil Nadu) during the Chola period (880–1279), an era of great Hindu piety in that region. The Chola rulers were particularly devoted to Shiva, especially in his role as "Lord of the Dance" (Shiva Nataraja), and they built great temples in his honor. Parvati is commonly shown alongside Shiva in this role because she witnessed him performing his heavenly dance, and so she is often depicted as one of his attendants in imagery related to this story.

How to look at this work

Hindu images are both visual theologies and visual scriptures. They are visual narrations of traditional myths. We may identify individual deities by the objects that they hold, by what they wear, by their hairstyles, and by the other beings that accompany them.

Parvati is represented here as follows:

1. **Headdress**
   - Parvati wears an elaborate cone-shaped crown with tiers that alludes to her derivation from the mountains.
   - On her headdress is a trident, which is a common attribute of her husband, and shows her relationship to Shiva.

2. **Pose**
   - Parvati stands in a triple-bend (*tribhanga*) pose, with bends at her hip, knee, and ankle. Parvati is commonly depicted in this pose when she accompanies her husband and this posture is one indication that this sculpture once stood alongside a representation of Shiva.
   - In this pose, Parvati's left arm and hand rest along her side and her right hand is positioned in a way that signifies holding a flower because the flower is a common attribute of the goddess.

3. **Clothing and ornamentation**
   - Parvati wears a long garment that clings to her body. Her garment is simple, falling in a series of even pleats.
   - She wears much jewelry, including a multi-layered neck lace, armbands, bracelets, and anklets. On her upper arms are two tridents, again recalling her relationship to Shiva.

Function

Large-scale bronze images like this sculpture were (and still are) generally intended for temples. Devotees would visit a temple to be in a space sacred to the deity. The god is understood to inhabit the sculpture and therefore worshipers treat the sculpture as they would a god. In the act of worship, devotees can see the god and the god can see the devotees. Worshipers bathe and perfume the god, dress the image in robes, and ornament it with jewelry and flowers. During festivals, the deity might be taken out and carried in processions.

Images of Parvati in this form were often placed to the left side of Shiva in his form as "Lord of the Dance." Though Parvati is often worshipped as an individual deity, temples dedicated solely to the goddess are rare, and so most images of Parvati come from temples devoted to her husband.

How this object was made

This image was created using the "lost-wax" technique (page 12).

Ganesha
India, Uttar Pradesh; 8th Century
Sandstone
H: 49 1/2 in. (125.7 cm)
1979.013

Background

Hinduism, one of the world's great religions, is practiced by 80 percent of the people of India. It is an ancient and complex system in which there are many levels of understanding.

In the Hindu cosmos, time is conceived of as cyclical, rather than linear. The world is created and, after millennia, destroyed, only to be created once again.

Most Hindus believe in divinity that is formless and all-powerful but may manifest itself in many different gods and goddesses in order to help people who need a deity to worship. For purposes of worship, a god can place his or her power in a visible form (for example, a statue). When that power manifests in humanized form such images represent divine reality, rather than likenesses of earthly beings.

The major Hindu deities are Shiva, Vishnu, and Devi (the Goddess). Ganesha is a popular Hindu god who is the son of Shiva and his wife Parvati (a form of Devi).

Ganesha, is called the "Lord of Obstacles" because he is invoked at the beginning of any major activity or ceremony (whether religious or secular) to promote good luck. He is also known as the god of wisdom and salvation.

This sculpture was produced during the eighth century in Uttar Pradesh, a north Indian state with great historical importance for Hindus—the sacred Ganges River flows through the state and four of the seven holy cities of Hinduism lie within it.

How to look at this work

Hindu images are both visual theologies and visual scriptures. They are visual narrations of traditional myths. We may identify individual deities by the objects that they hold, by what they wear, by their hairstyles, and by the other beings that accompany them.

Ganesha is represented here as follows:

1. **Elephant head**
    - Ganesha is best known for his elephant head. According to tradition, a son was created by the goddess Parvati while her husband, Shiva, was away from home. Upon his return Shiva demanded entry into Parvati's bath. Ganesha,

who had been charged with guarding the door, prevented Shiva's entry. This angered Shiva who, not knowing about the existence of the boy, severed his head. Seeing his wife's sorrow afterwards, Shiva agreed to replace Ganesha's head with that of the next being he saw. The first that passed was an elephant. In Indian mythology, the elephant symbolizes devotion, patience, and truth, and Ganesha has taken on these characteristics.
    - One of his tusks is broken.

2. **Pose**
    - Ganesha is in a relaxed dancing pose.
    - His left leg is firmly planted and his right leg is off-balance and shows movement.
    - Ganesha stands upon a lotus.

3. **Hands**
    - Multiple hands symbolize Ganesha's multiple powers.
    - This statue of Ganesha has ten hands, although some have broken off. Seven of them complement his dancing posture.
    - One hand holds a rosary, which signifies devotion.
    - One hand holds a snake symbolizing control over earthly waters.
    - One hand holds a broken tusk. This is a reference to a myth in which an ashamed Ganesha throws his tusk at the moon after the moon watches his large potbelly burst from overeating causing the tusk to break.
    - One hand holds a ball of sweets since Ganesha is a young boy and young boys love sweets.

4. **Clothing and ornamentation**
    - Ganesha wears a crown that is elaborated with a floral motif. When looked at closely, one can see that a snake is embedded in his headdress.
    - Ganesha wears a lion skin around his waist.
    - He wears much jewelry, with bracelets and armlets adorning each arm and anklets around his legs.
    - He wears two belts that are intricately decorated with a floral motif that is similar to the one depicted in his headdress.

Function

Ganesha's large size shows that the sculpture was used in temple (rather than private) worship. His frontal posture further indicates that he was likely placed in a well-seen position on the exterior of a temple wall. Ganesha sculptures are often seen in temples devoted to Shiva; there are very few temples devoted exclusively to Ganesha, and so it can be assumed that this sculpture comes from a temple to Shiva (his father).

How this object was made

This object was carved from sandstone.

Krishna Dancing on Kaliya
India, Tamil Nadu;
Chola period, Late 10th–early 11th Century
Copper alloy
H: 34 1/2 in. (87.6 cm.)
1979.022

Background

Hinduism, one of the world's great religions, is practiced by 80 percent of the people of India. It is an ancient and complex system in which there are many levels of understanding.

In the Hindu cosmos, time is conceived of as cyclical, rather than linear. The world is created and, after millennia, destroyed, only to be created once again.

Most Hindus believe in divinity that is formless and all-powerful but may manifest itself in many different gods and goddesses in order to help people who need a deity to worship. For purposes of worship, a god can place his or her power in a visible form (for example, a statue). When that power manifests in humanized form such images represent divine reality, rather than likenesses of earthly beings.

The major Hindu deities are Shiva, Vishnu, and Devi (the Goddess). Vishnu is regarded as the "preserver' of the world who has come down to earth ten times to defeat the forces of evil. Each time he has come in a different form—a tortoise, a dwarf, a lion-man, prince Rama, Krishna, the Buddha, and, in his last and future incarnation, as the horse Kalkin, who cleanses the world.

It is as Krishna that Vishnu is especially beloved. Krishna, who embodies the divine love between god and human beings, is known as a mischievous baby, a young boy, a cowherd adored by many, a slayer of demons, and a great lover.

How to look at this work

Hindu images are both visual theologies and visual scriptures. They are visual narrations of traditional myths. We may identify individual deities by the objects that they hold, by what they wear, by their hairstyles, and by the other beings that accompany them.

This statue depicts the story of Krishna's encounter with the multi-headed serpent-demon Kaliya. According to myth, Krishna was raised in the countryside by *gopis* (females who tended the cows). When he was a youth, Kaliya lived in a whirlpool in the sacred river Yamuna, terrifying the population and spreading his poison throughout the land.

When Krishna chased after a ball that had fallen into the whirlpool, Kaliya captured him. Krishna grabbed the central head of the serpent, forcing the demon to bow. Then he danced on Kaliya's head and sent him back to his natural environment, the ocean.

1. **Kaliya**
   Kaliya has three cobra heads that surround one human head, personifying the snake and indicating that he is a hybrid creature: a serpent-demon. The multiple heads suggest that he has varied powers.

2. **Krishna**

   A. **Treatment of face and body**
   - Krishna is depicted in realistic human form.
   - Krishna's gaze is serene and reassuring.
   - His facial features are youthful.
   - He has broad shoulders.

   B. **Pose**
   - Krishna stands atop the hood of a serpent and holds the tail in his left hand.
   - Krishna's feet are in a dancing pose. The knees are bent with the left foot planted on Kaliya's head. The right foot is poised on its toes.

   C. **Hands**
   - Krishna grasps Kaliya's tail with his left hand.
   - His right hand is held in the gesture of reassurance that tells the devotee to have no fear.

   D. **Clothing and ornamentation**
   - Krishna wears a garment called a *dhoti* (pronounced "doe-tee") that is still commonly worn by men in South India.
   - A jeweled belt lies over his *dhoti*.
   - Other adornments include hanging earrings, a thick necklace, armbands, bracelets, and anklets.
   - Krishna wears the high crowned hat that identifies him as an incarnation of Vishnu.

Size is a major indicator of prominence in Hindu iconography. Here, Kaliya is significantly smaller than Krishna, showing Krishna's greater importance. As Krishna has already defeated the demon here, Kaliya looks up to Krishna with a reverent gaze, his hands placed together in submission.

Function

Large-scale bronze images like this sculpture were (and still are) generally intended for use in temples. Devotees would visit a temple to be in a space sacred to the deity. The god is understood to inhabit the sculpture and therefore worshipers treat the sculpture as they would a god. In the act of worship, devotees can see the god and the god can see the devotees. Worshipers bathe and perfume the god, dress the image in robes, and ornament it with jewelry and flowers. During festivals, the statue of the deity might be taken out and carried in processions.

This image may have been placed in a temple dedicated to the deity Vishnu (since Krishna is a manifestation of that deity) or it may have placed in a temple dedicated to Krishna himself.

How this object was made

This bronze image was made using the "lost-wax" technique (page 12).

*Folio from a **Ragamala** series:*
Madhu Madhavi Ragini
India, Madhya Pradesh, Malwa region; about 1660–1680
Opaque watercolor and ink on paper
9 x 6 5/8 in.
1979.047

Background

This manuscript was produced in Malwa, a region in north-central India that remained under Hindu rule even after the Mughal conquests. The native Hindu rulers in Malwa were from the Rajput (literally "sons of kings") clan. The Rajputs traced their ancestry to the sun, moon, or fire gods, and were known for their chivalric code.

This folio, *Madhu Madhavi Ragini*, relates to a musical mode of the same name and comes from a *Ragamala* series. A *Ragamala* is literally a "garland of melody," and the word refers to a specific type of painting that illustrates poems dealing with musical themes. The *Ragamala* joins three major art forms—music, painting, and poetry—in a unique way. *Ragamala* paintings often deal with themes of love and depict lovers or a hero and heroine.

How to look at this work

Subject
This painting depicts a woman running through the rain to meet her lover. The woman is braving the harsh rain and lightning in an effort to reach the man, who is peacefully reclining inside awaiting her arrival. The woman's figure shows motion, and it is easy to imagine her moving in sync with the corresponding musical mode. This is a court painting and, by the architecture in the background and clothing of the figures, we can see that the man and woman belong to royalty.

Theme
The theme of this painting is love and this is manifested in the anticipation the viewer feels as the woman runs to reach her lover. As the woman is trying to escape the harsh elements to meet the man, she is associated with a type of character that recurs in Indian love literature—one who conquers all obstacles in order to be with her lover.

Mood
The dramatic mood of the painting is created by the weather, time of day, and expressions of the woman. The rain and lightning create a threatening mood and a need for the woman to rush indoors so quickly. Even the birds, in the upper right hand corner, seem determined to flee the storm. This scene takes place during the annual monsoon season, and it is early evening—the time when the daily rains typically arrive. We can sense the woman's anticipation of getting indoors and reaching her lover, which adds to the excitement of the scene.

Setting
The architecture and interior in this work show that this scene takes place in a royal Rajput court. The man's bedroom is in a palace, as can be seen from the elegant building surrounding him. Though the palace is not realistically rendered, it is reflective of the typical architecture of northern India in the 16th and 17th century. Even though this painting was produced for a Hindu court, the main influence on the architecture is Islamic. Typical Islamic elements include the use of marble, linear columns on either side of the room, careful symmetry, and Iranian double domes atop the roof.

As he awaits his lover, the man leisurely reclines on a bed in a way that men are often portrayed in painting of this time; the source of his pose is from Mughal painting. Both his furniture and the building itself are adorned with stylized decorations that have Central Asian origins.

Visual style and perspective
The painting shows a traditional visual style that was characteristic of art from Malwa, with its uniform color and geometric lines. The space of the painting is generally flat and two-dimensional, which imparts a dreamlike, rather than realistic, sense. The man and woman, however, are more carefully modeled because they are the focal points of the painting, showing emotion and movement.

Function

Though Rajput court painting comes from the tradition of illustrated manuscripts, most Rajput paintings were not bound, but were collected and stored like books, until they were brought out to be examined as one would a book.

As mentioned earlier, *Ragamalas* were meant to conjoin painting, poetry, and music. This painting accompanied a specific musical mode also called *Madhu Madhavi Ragini*, and was probably created for the royal court at Malwa.

How this object was made

The painting technique used was simple—opaque watercolor on paper. The artist began by laying out the composition with think black ink applied with either a brush or pen. This is called an "underdrawing." The artist could then begin to paint, working from larger diffuse areas to smaller detailed areas. During the process of painting, a work was often burnished, a process that consists of placing the paper face down on a smooth slab of stone and rubbing the back of the paper with a smooth stone. Burnishing gave the painting its smooth surface. One of the last steps was to outline the design elements in black. Artists sat on the floor, working on boards or low tables.

Looking at Art:

China

Storage Jar
China, Gansu or Qinghai Province; Neolithic period,
about 3rd–2nd millennium B.C.E.
Earthenware painted with red and black slips
H: 15 5/8 in.
D: 13 3/4in.
1979.125

Background

Ceramics have been produced in China for more than eight thousand years. The range of objects has been enormous: architectural, burial, utilitarian, luxury, trade, and ceremonial. The Chinese ceramic objects preserved today amount to only a small portion of the huge numbers produced. However, shards (fragments of ceramics) survive in large numbers and contribute to our knowledge of the past.

The earliest Chinese ceramics may date from around 10,000 B.C.E., but scholars can trace a continuous development only from the date of the earliest known pottery kilns, the 6th or 5th millennia B.C.E.

Distinct Neolithic cultures, characterized by permanent settlements and a lifestyle based on agriculture, developed along the two main rivers of China, the Yellow River, in the north, and the Yangzi, in the south, by about 5000 B.C.E. Millet was farmed in the north, while rice was cultivated in the south. Although mostly tools of chipped or shaped stones, or of carved bones or tusks, were made, several of these cultures also created ritual and decorative carvings of jade. The difficulty in carving and polishing this hard mineral attests to an advanced technological level, while the complicated imagery shows a developed interest in artistic representation. Human figures, animals, stylized plants, and abstract geometric designs are found in both pottery and jade.

Until the beginning of China's historic age (the 16th century B.C.E.), a series of distinguishable cultures followed, or coexisted with, each other. Distinctive ceramics are associated with most of these civilizations.

How to look at this work

This jar has a narrow base, a flared out middle, and a rather long and narrow neck. There are two lugs at the neck and two at the middle. The upper portion is painted while the lower remains bare. A band of lozenge shapes is around the middle of the jar. Above this is a large-scale,

meandering scroll design of red and black fringed bands centered on four roundels. The neck is painted with triangles at its base and a net-like design of intersecting lines at the top. It is possible that these motifs possessed meaning, but we do not know what it was.

Function

While Neolithic ceramics were utilitarian objects, it is assumed that painted ceramics, like this jar, may also have been used as ritual objects or to show the high status of their owner. The two small lugs at the top of the neck may have secured a cover while the two larger lugs on either side may have served to carry or tip the jar. Perhaps the lower half was left unpainted, because the jar was meant to be partially buried in the ground.

How this object was made

This jar was made from earthenware, a coarse and grainy clay, using the coil method. The body was smoothed by hand or by beating with a paddle on the outside against a pad on the inside of the pot. The design was painted on the surface using black and red pigment made from iron oxide. Firing was done in simple kilns dug into the ground at a temperature between 800º Celsius and 1050º Celsius. The final step was to burnish the surface.

Wine Vessel (You)
North China; Western Zhou period, about late 11th century B.C.E.
Bronze
H: 14 7/8 in.
1979.100

Background

The Bronze Age in China extended from 2000 to 500 B.C.E. The development of bronze technology provided better tools for increased productivity and more effective weapons. In China, bronze objects also served a ritual purpose.

Excavations at Anyang, the capital city of China during the late Shang period (1300–1050 B.C.E.), have revealed large palace buildings, workshops, and burial sites with many bronze vessels. These vessels were mainly cast for the king and the nobility. The Zhou people defeated the Shang and established a new capital at Xi'an. Under the Zhou (1050 B.C.E. to 221 B.C.E.), bronze vessels, which had been used only for rituals, became items of luxury and power.

How to look at this object

This object is bucket-shaped and has a lid and a swing handle. The handle's attachments are in the shape of the head of a horned buffalo. On the lower part of the vessel is a masklike representation of a buffalo with bulbous eyes, a long snout, horns and, cloven hooves. Above this buffalo face is the masklike shape of another type of animal. A buffalo motif can also be seen on the top of the lid. These animal-like faces are called *taotie* (pronounced "ta-o-tyay"). These fantastic creatures may have served as intermediaries between the world of men and the realms of the spirits. The masks are set against a spiral-like background.

Function

The shape of this vessel indicates that it was a container for storing liquid, probably wine.

Bronze vessels cast during the Shang Dynasty (1700–1050 B.C.E.) were used in state rituals and in other rituals concerned with communication with ancestors or gods. The belief that deceased spirits had powers to influence events on earth was important in early Chinese culture. Since spirits were all-powerful, they had to be propitiated. The most important way to appease them was with periodic sacrifices, during which offerings of food and drink were made and the spirits were invited to partake in a ritual meal. In addition to being used for such ceremonies, bronze vessels were often buried in tombs. Under the Zhou, bronze vessels were still cast for rituals to honor ancestors, but other motivations became more common.

How this object was made

This vessel was cast in the piece-mold method. A model was made "… probably of clay. When the model had hardened more clay was packed around it to make the molds: To remove these molds from the model, the clay wrapper had to be carefully cut into sections. The mold sections were fired and then reassembled around a core, so that when the hot metal was poured into them, a hollow vessel would result."*

*Jessica Rawson, ed., The British Museum Book of Chinese Art. (Thames and Hudson Inc., 1992), p. 49.

Censer in the shape of Mount Bo (Boshanlu)
North China; Eastern Han Period, 1st–2nd Century
H: 5 1/2 in.
D: 4 5/8 in.
1979.109

Background

The Han dynasty (206 B.C.E.–220 C.E.) completed and consolidated the reunification of China begun by the Qin dynasty (221–207 B.C.E.). It was during this time that Chinese cultural patterns that have persisted into the modern age were established. Through both war and trade, the Han Empire was in contact with India, Southeast Asia, Central Asia, and the Mediterranean world.

Censers

Metal and ceramic censers are known in China from the Eastern Zhou period (770–221 B.C.E.). These included openwork bucket shaped bronzes in which burning aromatic branches or twigs were placed. The use of incense in China may have been stimulated by contact and exchange with non-Chinese people on the southern borders of Siberia, who were known to have inhaled narcotics from basins in which hot stones were placed.

Boshanlu censers, which were very common during the Western Han dynasty (221 B.C.E.–24C.E.), do not seem to have existed prior to that period. Within a short period, this type of covered censer was the repository of a fully integrated system of associations and meanings.

Sacred mountains

We do not know when and how the worship of mountains started in China. However, by the end of the Zhou dynasty (1027–256 B.C.E.), a system incorporating inherited animistic, shamanistic, and ancestor worshiping beliefs and sacrificial rituals had been organized according to a cosmology of heaven, earth, and man. Mountain worship occupied an important position in this system. Five Sacred Mountains were designated to receive royal sacrifices. These five represented all existing mountains and their earthly powers and, together with the Four Sacred Rivers, symbolically represented the power of the earth as a whole.

Among the powers ascribed to mountains, the ability to provide water was perhaps the most important for an agrarian society like China. More importantly, they were seen as the sources of the clouds that brought the rain. Cloud-breath, whose visible manifestation was depicted in art as trailing wisps of smoky clouds, was regarded as an auspicious omen.

The Five Sacred Mountains were also supposed to act as intermediaries between earth and heaven, where the supreme heavenly Sovereign resided. When a new dynasty was founded, the emperor was supposed to visit the mountains, or at least one of them, to report to heaven through them and to receive the heavenly mandate for ruling the whole world.

Mountains were portrayed as places where all sorts of peculiar mammals, birds, and fish live. The deities who presided over the mountain ranges were described as composites of two or three creatures such as, human, dragon, bird, snake, or horse.

There were many myths and legends associated with mountains in general and with certain mountains in particular. Mt. Kunlun was described as the place where the Queen Mother of the West dwells. By the Han dynasty, it was written that a mortal could reach the upper Heaven and become a god if he succeeded in climbing Kunlun.

From the late Zhou period, the cult of immortals became increasingly important. Belief in a mythical land called *Penglai*, an imaginary mountain paradise inhabited by immortals and said to be located in either the western mountains or the eastern seas, began as early as the 4th century B.C.E. It was believed that humans could find this paradise and there obtain the elixir of immortality. This cult eventually became incorporated into religious Daoism.

Daoism

Daoism, one of the main streams of Chinese philosophy, first appears in a work called the "Book of the Way and its Power" (*Dao de jing*), attributed to Lao Zi (Old Master), who supposedly lived during the 6th century B.C.E. In answer to the question "What is the nature of the natural world?" Lao Zi replied that it is the visible manifestation of the Dao, the Way that contains within itself the matter and form of every physical phenomenon. The central teaching of Daoism is that one must live in intuitive harmony with the Dao. It was not until the Han dynasty that the teachings of Lao Zi were incorporated into a religious movement in which elaborate rituals and sacred writings were developed.

How to look at this work

A shallow dish with extended sides contains a coiled dragon on whose back is a flower. Arising from the flower is a bowl from which arises a mountain. We can see the peaks mounting higher and culminating at the top.

The top of the censer was made in two parts, a lower bowl and an upper section, which represents the mountain. It opens at the joint between the sections to allow for the placement and lighting of incense. The smoke escapes through small holes hidden in the top part of the mountain. This smoke was believed to represent cloud breath.

Function

Since the activities of the animals and humans depicted vary from one censer to another, it is probable that mountain censers were made to suit particular situations, variations in religious beliefs, and purposes. Censers were probably used in state rituals, funerals, the cult of immortals, and the enhancement of daily life. They were also used for more mundane tasks like masking unpleasant odors.

How this object was made

Bronze is an alloy of copper and tin. This piece was probably made in the lost-wax method (page 12).

Horse
North China; Tang period, early 8th century
Earthenware with multicolored lead glaze
23 x 24 1/4 x 8 in.
1992.001

Background

Archeological discoveries reveal that in early Chinese history, sacrificial victims were buried with the bodies of royalty and the nobility. By the 4th century B.C.E., these practices began to change and tomb figurines were substituted. These tomb furnishings, which included models of attendants, entertainers, and pets as well as reproductions of the daily world of home and farm, attest to the belief in an afterlife in which the activities of this world continued.

During the Tang dynasty (618–906), China was powerful and prosperous. Trade was extensive and tomb sculpture reflected the influences from other regions that were pervasive during that time.

Many tomb sculptures from this period are coated with the lead glazes known as three-color (*sancai*). These wares were produced at a limited number of kilns, some of which are known to have produced goods for imperial use. The earliest known examples of these *sancai* glazed ceramics were excavated from a tomb dated to 675. After the mid-8th century production of these ceramics slowed. The majority of *sancai* wares were made during the late 7th and early 8th centuries.

The native Chinese horse is relatively small in stature. Chinese emissaries first came across the monumental horses bred in Ferghana in the second century B.C.E. It was under Tang rule that the horse came to symbolize power and strength in China.

How to look at this work

This lifelike animal stands on all four legs with its head down, mouth open, and nostrils slightly flaring. The modeling of the figure is convincing and the pose is realistic. Splashes of glaze give the effect of a spotted coat. Originally, this horse would have had a mane and tail of real hair.

Function

This figure was made to be placed in a tomb. It would have been one of a much larger group of figures, including soldiers, servants, musicians, guardians, camels, and spirit figures as well as a variety of articles of daily life, placed with the deceased person to provide for his or her daily needs after death. Tomb furnishings were perhaps placed as an act of homage to the ancestors. They also attest to the wealth, status, and interests of the deceased.

Horses were an important part of the funerary regalia of high-ranking officials and members of the imperial family. Many had saddles, bridles, and other ornaments.

How this object was made

Tomb figures were generally made of earthenware and shaped in one or more molds. This horse was coated with a three-color lead glaze known as *sancai* (pronounced "san-tsigh"), and then fired in a kiln. Additional pigments and gilding would sometimes be applied after firing.

Civil Official
North China; Tang period, 8th century
Earthenware with multicolored lead glazes and traces of pigment (*sancai* ware)
H: 40 3/4 in. (103.5 cm)
1979.114

Background

Ceramics

Ceramics have been produced in China for more than eight thousand years. The range of objects has been enormous: architectural, burial, utilitarian, luxury, trade, and ceremonial. The amount of Chinese ceramic objects preserved today is only a small portion of the huge numbers produced.

Tombs

Archeological discoveries reveal that in early Chinese history, sacrificial victims were buried with the bodies of royalty and the nobility. By the 5th century B.C.E., these practices began to change and tomb figurines were substituted. These tomb furnishings, which included models of attendants, entertainers, and pets as well as reproductions of the daily world of home and farm, attest to the belief in an afterlife in which the activities of the world continued.

The Chinese bureaucracy

It was during the Eastern Zhou period (770–256 B.C.E.), a time of political fragmentation, that rulers, trying to expand their control over the people and land, tried new techniques of governing. Rather than give authority to hereditary lesser lords, they sent out their own officials (men who would advance themselves through their own talents) and thus created the beginnings of centralized bureaucratic control.

This trend was consolidated during the Qin dynasty (211–206 B.C.E.), which created a unified China and continued during the succeeding Han dynasty (202 B.C.E.–220 C.E.). In order to curb the power of the aristocracy, Han emperors governed through officials appointed by the court for their merit, not their birth, who were subject to dismissal or discipline.

After a period of disunity, North and South China were reunited under the Sui Dynasty (581–617), but it was during the succeeding Tang dynasty (618–907) that China became an expansive, cosmopolitan empire. The capital city, Chang'an, became the world's largest city, attracting traders and pilgrims from all over Asia. Foreign influences enriched Chinese art and culture. As a means of strengthening imperial power, Tang rulers appointed officials who were imbued with the Confucian values of loyalty to the ruler and duty to the people. Written examinations had been introduced during the Sui dynasty to identify true Confucians and test literary abilities and knowledge of the Confucian Classics. The Tang expanded this examination system, set up state schools, and issued authorized versions of the Classics.

Confucius
Confucius (Kongzi, "Master Kong" ca. 551–479 B.C.E.) lived in China during the latter half of the Zhou dynasty (11th century–256 B.C.E) As a philosopher and teacher, Confucius influences far more people today through classic writings, such as the *Analects*, than he did during his lifetime. He created a philosophy that later became a major influence in the organization of Imperial China and was adopted and modified in other countries such as Korea, Japan, and Vietnam.

Confucius emphasized principles for self-guidance. The key to producing a harmonious life, he wrote, is in how we treat others—our ancestors, leaders, parents, spouses, neighbors, and friends. The foundation for harmonious relationships is found in the principles of benevolence (*ren*); ritual/ceremony, often rendered as propriety/politeness (*li*); reciprocity, "Do unto others…" (*shu*); and filial piety, showing respect for one's elders (*xiao*).

Two other concepts that were predominant in Confucius's worldview were Heaven (*Tian*) and Way (*Dao*). His heaven represented a celestial power connected with the will of mighty ancestors such as the widely known Yao, Shun, and Yu. The Way, on the other hand, constituted a natural path for humanity. Whereas Heaven emphasized the choice, the Way required a yielding heart-mind (*xin*); both were crucial for achieving harmony in the earthly realm.

How to look at this work

This standing figure wears a high hat. His face is composed, his lips closed. From the neck up, he is grayish in color. He wears a two-piece costume. The top is predominantly orange with a green and cream patterned rectangular patch across the front. The stand-up collar is also cream and green, as are the very long sleeves into which his hands are tucked. The bottom skirt-like garment flares out at the bottom. It is cream with green trim. Green shoes with curled-up toes peek out from his skirt. The man stands on a pedestal that is shaped to conform to the shape of his skirt.

The shape of his hat and his rectangular badge identify him as a civil official.

Function

This figure was made to be placed in a tomb. He would have been one of a much larger group of figures, as well as a variety of articles of daily life, interred with the deceased person to provide for his or her daily needs after death. The large size of this statue, as well as the use of a shaped pedestal, suggest that it may have been in the tomb of a member of the court or perhaps even of the imperial family. Given the rigid regulation of tomb sizes and burial goods during the Tang dynasty, it is unlikely that a figure of a civil official would have been placed in any tomb but that of a member of the court. The folded hands indicate that his position was subservient to that of the deceased: Only someone of status would have had any authority over a civil official. Tomb furnishings were perhaps placed as an act of homage to the ancestry. They also attest to the wealth, status, and interests of the deceased.

How this object was made

Tomb figures were generally made of earthenware (a type of clay) and shaped in molds. Often the body was only roughly molded, and body and head were made in separate molds. Arms, hands, and held objects were often worked by hand after the main structure had been taken from the mold. This figure was coated with a three-color lead glaze known as *sancai* (pronounced "san-tsigh"), and then fired in a kiln. Earthenware is fired at temperatures between 800º Celsius and 1100º Celsius. Additional color may be painted on after firing.

Platter
China: Jiangxi Province; Yuan period, mid-14th century
Porcelain painted with underglaze cobalt blue (Jingdezhen ware)
D: 18 3/8 in.
1979.151

Background

Ceramics

Blue-and-white porcelain has been one of the most popular and influential types of ceramics both in and outside China. The first blue-and-white wares were probably produced in China as early as the 9th century, during the Tang dynasty. However, the full development of the technology and its widespread exportation dates to the mid-14th century, when China was ruled by the Yuan dynasty (1279–1368). The Yuan dynasty was established by nomadic peoples from the north called the Mongols. They conquered the Song dynasty and brought new influences into China from the lands under their dominion. Chinese potters produced blue-and white wares to satisfy the Mongol taste. The Mongol trade networks were widespread. During this time, many Islamic merchants settled in China and great quantities of Chinese ceramics were exported to the Islamic world.

Qilin

Fantastic animals ranging from the completely mythical to composite creatures have appeared in Chinese art since the Warring States period (5th–3rd centuries B.C.E.). Both powerful and protective, these animals were thought to inhabit equally the world of the living and the spirit realms of the dead. They could appear to humans as either auspicious of inauspicious omens.

The unicorn (*qilin*, pronounced "chee-lin") was a composite animal with the body of a deer, a bushy ox tail, cloven hooves, scales, and a single horn. It was perceived as the noblest of creatures and as a symbol of perfect goodness. The appearance of a *qilin* was thought to portend the advent of good government or the birth of a virtuous ruler.

How to look at this work

In the center of this large platter is a *qilin*, which seems to be leaping into space among melons and morning glories, which are symbols of good luck. Although there is no defined ground, there seems to be a landscape scene made up of rocks, bamboo, and large plantain leaves. The inner rim contains a scrolling lotus vine, while the outermost rim has a repeated geometric pattern.

Function

This platter would have served a large group of people, which is not in keeping with the Chinese custom in which food is offered in numerous smaller dishes to individuals sharing a meal. Large dishes like this one were thus produced for export to the Islamic world.

On the underside of this platter is an inscription with the name of the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan (reigned 1627–58) famous for building the Taj Mahal—and the date 1063 (in the Arabic calendar that corresponds to 1646). The date indicates when the platter was owned by the emperor, not the date of manufacture.

How the object was made

Porcelain is the product of a combination of two special clays—kaolin and petuntse—which, when fired at temperatures above 1300º Celsius, becomes nonporous, vitrified (glasslike), and usually translucent. Unlike earthenware and stoneware, which may be found in a range of body colors, porcelain is generally white. The decoration of this piece was produced by painting on the unbaked object using cobalt oxide, then covering the dish with a colorless glaze and firing the piece.

Temple on a Mountain Ledge
by Kuncan (1612–ca.1686)
China; Qing period, dated 1661
Hanging scroll; ink and color on paper
1979.124

Background

Landscape painting is one of the most significant Chinese art forms. By the 4th century, painters and connoisseurs had begun to claim that landscape painting had a spiritual and aesthetic value above other painting. During the Northern Song dynasty (960–1126), landscape painting became important as an expressive medium.

From the Song period, Chinese theorists began to distinguish between the professional and the amateur ideals in painting. In the 11th century a group of scholar-officials turned to painting as a means of self-expression. The mastery of the brush was a requirement for a high official. As in the case of calligraphy, painting was now also regarded as the mark of the cultivated individual. Rather than create a mere representation of a particular landscape, painters sought instead to capture the essence of a scene and the metaphors it might offer for life.

Kuncan (pronounced "koon-tsan"), 1612–1686, is considered one of the four great monk-painters of 17th century China. He spent his youth studying the Confucian classics before becoming a Chan Buddhist monk. He traveled, lived in the wilderness enduring many hardships, and finally became the abbot of a temple at the Bao'en monastery, where he remained the rest of his life. It is this monastery that is the subject of the painting.

How to look at this work

Starting at the bottom, we look down onto a group of rocks and evergreen trees near a river flowing into the distance. A group of houses can be seen on the river-bank. A fisherman sits in his boat, floating on the river. Moving upward, we look across at trees and a small waterfall. Above the waterfall is a wooden-fence that runs along the contour of the cliff, behind which is a monastery with an open gate. To the right, another boat floats on the river in the distance. Moving upward again, we look up at the steeply rising rocky mountain peaks. Mist encircles the scene.

The painter has used a shifting point of view rather than the one-point perspective we are used to in Western art. The eye wanders through the landscape looking down, then across, then up at the scene.

In the upper right-hand corner of the painting is a poem written by the artist that describes his view of the landscape. He tells of his earlier wanderings and equates them with the Buddhist quest for enlightenment to which he dedicated his life. The painting is signed and dated.

Function

This painting is a personal statement by the artist. With his brush, he has sought to convey his personal experience of a place and his state of mind. His artistic choices indicate that he is a member of the educated elite, or literati. We do not know exactly where this painting was hung, but we do know that paintings like this would have hung on the walls of a scholar-gentleman's study for his enjoyment and contemplation.

How the object was made

The painter has used ink and light colors (browns, oranges, and blues). Notice how the artist has used his brush to make the small strokes that build the composition.

Looking at Art:

Japan

Figure of a Man
Japan, Ibaraki Prefecture; Tumulus period, 6th–7th century
Earthenware with traces of pigment
H: 56 in.
1979.199

Background

Clay sculptures like this one were produced during the Tumulus or Kofun era (258–646) in Japan. Kofun means "tumulus" or "old tomb", and this era is named after the enormous mounded tombs that were constructed for the ruling elite in the Kansai region during that time. The diffusion of these tombs from this area to other parts of Japan suggests the extension of political power. We know that during the Tumulus period, Japan, which had been divided into a series of loosely related domains, was gradually organized into a unified state with a center of government located in the present-day Osaka-Nara area.

These tombs were often keyhole shaped. They were built over pit-shaft graves, in which the burial chamber was usually located near the top of the mound. Grave goods, including iron weapons, bronze mirrors, and ornaments of jade and jasper, have been found in the burial chambers.

Clay sculptures like this piece, called *haniwa*, were distributed over the surface of the tomb mound. By the 5th century, tombs had increased in size and complexity. The most impressive appear to have been built for the imperial family. The largest tomb, which is near Osaka, is 90 feet high, almost 1600 feet long, and is surrounded by three moats. It is estimated that 20,000 *haniwa* were distributed over the surface of the mound.

Hani means "clay" and *wa* means "circle" and the earliest *haniwa* were thought to have been simple slabs or coils of clay. Eventually they ranged in shape from simple cylinders to detailed reproductions of architecture, military equipment, and human figures.

How to look at this work

This is a human figure with open eyes and mouth, standing on a jar. He wears a pointed hat that hangs over his ears and onto his shoulders. He wears a tunic and trousers that are tied under the knees. His hands are small in comparison to the rest of his body. He appears to be wearing a necklace. There is a comma-shaped object on the front of his tunic. It is

unclear what it might be—perhaps the hilt of a sword or a ritual or religious object. Who might this man be? Perhaps he is a warrior or a religious figure.

Function

The question of the function of such objects is still debated. It has been suggested that they were intended to keep the earth of the artificial mounds in place. Scholars today think that most likely they served two functions: To separate the world of the dead from that of the living, and to protect the deceased and provide their spirits with a familiar resting place.

In addition to serving as attendants to the deceased, these figures may have been symbols of their high status and importance.

How the object was made

Haniwa were made of earthenware. It is thought that they were made by the same craftsmen who made everyday ceramic ware, since the materials and techniques were the same for both.

Bodhisattva Kshitigarbha (Jizo Bosatsu)
Japan; Kamakura period, 1223–1226
Cypress wood with cut gold leaf and traces of pigment; staff with metal attachments
H: 22 3/4 in.
1979.202

Background

Buddhism was introduced into Japan by a mission from the Korean kingdom of Paekche in the 6th century, nearly 1,000 years after its beginnings in India. By this time, many schools of Buddhism had emerged. It was primarily the Mahayana type, with its many Buddhas and bodhisattvas, that took root in Japan. The establishment of Buddhism affected the whole fabric of Japanese culture. A writing system using Chinese characters was introduced, since rituals required the reading and reciting of Buddhist texts. Temples and images were needed. The Japanese learned the technologies and iconographies for creating such images from Chinese and Korean models.

The Bodhisattva Kshitigarbha, known in Japan as Jizo Bosatsu, is the bodhisattva of the Earth Womb. In the Buddhist worldview, time is seen as cyclical. Death is succeeded by rebirth until a being attains release from this cycle through the Buddha's teachings. Successive lives may take place in any one of six worlds, depending upon one's acts in previous life or lives. One of the worlds to which a being might be sent is one of the hells. Jizo is a savior bodhisattva, who guides the faithful and helps those in hell. In Japan, he is also worshiped as the protector of women, children, and travelers. Stone statues of the bodhisattva are often placed at crossroads.

How to look at this work

- Jizo is depicted as a Buddhist monk with a shaven head.
- The monk's staff, held in his right hand, is used to open the doors of hell. The little rings hanging from the top make a clinking sound when the staff is tapped on the ground to warn even the smallest insects so they may escape and not be crushed under foot.
- In his left hand, he holds a jewel of wisdom that grants all wishes. Jizo carries this jewel to infernal realms to illuminate the darkness and ease the suffering of those who dwell there.
- Jizo is dressed in the robes of a Japanese Buddhist monk. He wears a vest over a long shirtlike garment with a shawl wrapped around the upper part of his body.
- The mark on his forehead, *urna*, refers to his supernatural wisdom.
- He stands on a lotus, a Buddhist symbol of all that is pure on earth.

This sculpture was probably made to be placed in the Kofukuji temple in Nara,

Function

Japan, for the veneration of the Bodhisattva Kshitigarbha. When it was repaired in the 1960s, an inscription was discovered in the hollow interior of the body that provided the names of the sculptor, Zen'en, who made the piece.

How the object was made

This statue was carved of Japanese cypress wood using the joined woodblock technique of construction that was developed in the 11th century. The image is composed of different parts, such as the head, feet, hands, and the torso—which were carved from separate pieces of wood. The head and torso were hollowed out and then the pieces were assembled. The surface was lacquered, painted, and decorated with pieces of cut gold leaf.

Bird, Ducks, and Willow Trees
Kano school, possibly by Kano Shoei (1519–1592)
Japan; Muromachi period, mid-16th century
Folding screen panels mounted as a hanging scroll, Ink on paper
H: 54 in., W: 45 in.
1979.213

Background

Ink monochrome painting using wash was first practiced in China during the Song period (960–1279). Trade between Japan and China was reopened during the 12th century. This resumption meant that Chinese paintings could be imported into Japan. The first ink paintings were religious, used in meditation and ritual practices by Zen Buddhist monks. The techniques and themes of ink painting spread from the Zen monasteries to the studios of professional painters.

The painter of this work was probably a member of the Kano school, the hereditary family of painters employed by the Tokugawa shoguns and other military rulers from the 16th to the 19th centuries. Kano painters combined the Chinese style ink painting with Japanese sensibility. They developed a style of large-scale painting suited to the need for the large scale interior decoration demanded by their wealthy patrons. The sharply defined details are typical of the art of the Kano school and they distinguish it from the softer, more atmospheric Chinese models.

How to look at this work

A willow tree sits on the bank of a body of water. Its trunk is thick, gnarled, and bent with age. The branches, with fully developed leaves, hang over the water. We can tell that this is water because a group of ducks were swimming under the branches. Birds perch on the tree, while still others fly overhead. Nature has been carefully and intimately observed. Each type of bird is represented differently. On the shore we can see tall grass growing on gently rolling hills or rocks. All of this indicates that it is a summer landscape.

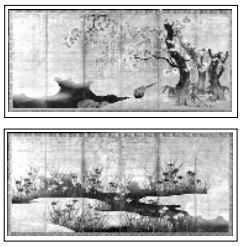
Function

In Japan, ink monochrome landscapes were often used for interior decoration in the form of screens or sliding doors in monasteries as well as residences. They were, in fact, part of the architectural tradition in Japan, a utilitarian feature of Japanese buildings used to separate and define space.

Originally the painting consisted of two panels from a sliding door. The two panels are now joined and mounted as a hanging scroll.

How the object was made

The scene is painted with ink and washes of ink and gold. The artist has varied the shape, size, and tone of his brushstrokes to create his effects. Notice how he has used strong outlines and ink wash.



Pheasants under Cherry and Willow Trees and Irises and Mist
Attributed to Kano Ryokei (died 1645)
Japan, Kyoto Prefecture
Nishionganji; Edo Period, first half 17th century
Ink and color on gold leaf on paper
63x 143.25 in.
1979.217

Background

Trade between Japan and China was reopened during the 12th century. This resumption meant that Chinese monochrome ink paintings could be imported into Japan. The first ink paintings produced in Japan following these Chinese models were religious, and were used in meditation and ritual practices by Zen Buddhist monks. Eventually, the techniques and themes of ink painting spread from the Zen monasteries to the studios of professional painters.

The painter of this work was probably a member of the Kano school, the hereditary family of painters employed by the Tokugawa shoguns and other military rulers from the 16th to the 19th centuries. Kano painters combined Chinese-inspired themes and the brushwork style of ink painting with Japanese subjects and themes that reflected Japanese sensibility. This new style of painting was well suited to the sliding doors and folding screens that became the dominant type of official painting.

Screens
Originating in China, folding screens first entered Japan as gifts from the Korean Silla kingdom in 686. However, it was in Japan that screens achieved their full aesthetic potential as important aspects of interior decoration.

During the late 16th century the use of a gold foil background for painted screens became extremely popular, allowing the owner to display his wealth and status, and serving a practical purpose as well. In late medieval Japan the construction of stone fortifications made the bright effect of the metallic panels an asset in dark castles.

Theme of the four seasons
Japan is a country of marked by seasonal changes and the four seasons have been a favorite theme both in the literary and the visual arts. Specific images evoked a specific season and often, the human activities that were a part of the passing year. These seasonal images are often used a metaphors for human emotions. Sensitivity to the subtle changes in the landscape and the feelings these changes elicit, have often been understood as the mark of a cultured person in Japan.

How to look at this work

In *Pheasants under Cherry and Willow Trees* we see two birds, a male and a female pheasant, under the shelter of three old trees with exposed roots. Growing near the trunks of these trees are leafy green plants. Moving upwards, there is moss growing along the trunks of the blooming trees, which display light pinkish-white cherry blossoms and light green dripping willow branches. On the left-hand side of the screen are impressions of clouds above a dark sky.

The accompanying screen, *Irises and Mist*, shows irises growing in a misty bank. Like the previous work, we can see the impressions of the clouds against the gold background. Irises, a common springtime flower in the United States, bloom during the summertime in Japan due to climatic differences.

In these works we see spring, shown through the predominant themes in the first screen (cherry blossoms and pheasants), followed by summer, in the form of the blooming irises, in the second screen.

Function

Traditional Japanese residence—whether house, temple, or palace—had few permanent interior walls. As much as possible, interior space dividers were kept movable. Folding screens were used as temporary space dividers since they are relatively lightweight, easily folded to portable size and easy to move or store away. In addition, they were used to create private areas in- or out-doors, as gifts, as backgrounds for concerts or dancing, and as backdrops for important ceremonies, including Buddhist and other rites. When decorated with a painting, a screen also became an object for visual pleasure and a symbol of the owner's wealth and power. Screens were usually made to suit the needs and tastes of a particular individual.

How the object was made

Each panel of a screen consists of a light wooden frame enclosing a lattice of wooden strips. Several layers of paper are pasted over this foundation to build up a backing to support the surface—usually paper, but occasionally silk—on which a painting is executed. The panels are hinged together with paper, which is interlocked and overlapped from the front of one panel to the back of the next. This allows the panels to be closely joined and to fold in an accordion fashion. A frame of narrow, lacquered wooden strips is attached to the outer edge of the entire screen. Screens were often, although not always, produced in pairs.

Nakamura Konozo as the Boatman Kanagawaya no Gon and Nakajima Wadaemon as "Dried Codfish" Bodara no Chozaemon
Toshusai Sharaku (active 1794–1795)
Japan; Edo period
Woodblock print: ink, color, and mica on paper
H: 14 3/4 in.
1979.220

Background

In 1603, the Tokugawa family gained control of the shogunate (military government) and established a centralized government. This era, which lasted until 1868, is called the Edo period after the name of the city that became the new center of government. (Edo was renamed Tokyo in 1868). The resulting years of peace and economic expansion, coupled with growth of cities and trade, strengthened the merchants and tradesmen, classes at the bottom of a governmentally imposed social order. The vitality of these classes and their new affluence produced a climate in which the arts flourished. This new bourgeoisie had money, knowledge, and leisure. It was in this new urban culture that woodblock prints became an important art form.

History of woodblock prints

Printed illustrations have been known in Japan since the Heian period (794–1185), but it was during the Edo period that the newly prosperous bourgeois, who sought to educate themselves, created an enormous demand for printed books and illustrations.

Woodblock carvers began to produce prints that illustrated and expressed the lives of the newly affluent and their leisure activities. Woodblock prints were mass produced—thousands of copies could be distributed quickly and cheaply.

Kabuki theater

The Kabuki theater was (and still is) one of the most popular art forms in Japan. Founded in the early Edo period, it was intended for urban dwellers. All roles are played by men. During the Edo period, actors were considered as very low in social status and theaters were confined to separate, "pleasure" quarters of the city called the "floating world" (*ukiyo*), which also consisted of brothels and tea houses. *Ukiyo* was originally a Buddhist term meaning the impermanence of the human world. But, during the Edo period it took on a new meaning of "floating world" filled with ever-changing pleasures.

Censors' seals

The Tokugawa shogunate was intent on imposing order and central authority in Japan. Legislation established rules and regulations governing most aspects of life, including woodblock prints. A system for overseeing the content of prints was instituted, in which censors had to affix a seal to a print to show that it was approved.

How to look at this work

Two men are reacting to each other, possibly talking. Their accented features (eyebrows, eyes, and mouths) and the shapes of their faces emphasize their different physiognomies. The tops of their heads are shaven and their hair is elaborately pulled back into ponytails. Each has a round insignia on the traditional Japanese kimono he wears. These marks identify the actors, and their costumes and makeup help identify their roles.

Notice the strong color contrasts against the soft background.

The writing on the print tells us the following:

- The signature of the artist—in the upper left-hand corner.
- Who published the print—the mark of a leaf below a mountain identifies the publisher.
- The approximate date of the print—the circular mark is the seal of the censor. This type of print was made during the period 1790–1800.
- A Western collector once owned the print—a mark in the lower right corner.

This information provides a wealth of information about the context of this print. For example, the censor's mark indicates that the government was concerned with its content.

Function

Kabuki actors were the matinee idols of their day. Prints were made to be sold outside the theaters as souvenirs of each performance and functioned like movie star posters do today.

How the object was made

Woodblock prints are made by transferring an image carved into the surface of a wooden block to a sheet of paper. The artist makes a design on paper. This is transferred to the woodblock. The surface of the block is cut away leaving a design of raised lines. Ink is applied to this surface and a piece of paper is placed over it and rubbed down. If color is used, a separate block must be carved for each color and each block must be aligned with the others. Usually, it was the publisher who commissioned and distributed the print. The prints were created by a team of highly skilled workers—the artist, the engraver and the printer.

Water Jar for Tea Ceremony
Japan, Mie Prefecture; Momoyama to Edo period,
late 16th–early 17th century
Stoneware with impressed design under glaze
9 1/2 x 7 1/4 x 7 1/4 in.
1979.224 a, b (245)
1979.224

Background

Ceramics

The indigenous ceramic tradition in Japan goes back some 12,000 years. By the 16th century certain types of stoneware were produced by potters especially for the tea ceremony. At this time, taste rejected the perfection of Chinese ware in favor of simple, rougher looking, Korean-influenced ware, producing an aesthetic that valued the imperfect. Irregular glaze, shape, and decoration were all aspects of this new aesthetic.

Tea

The drinking of powdered green tea came to Japan from China at the end of the 12th century. The tea was scooped into a bowl, hot water was added, and the two were mixed together with a bamboo whisk.

Tea ceremony

The Way of Tea (*chanoyu*) consists of the simple acts of serving tea and receiving it with gratitude. Its goal is to realize tranquility of mind in communion with one's fellow man. *Chanoyu* is not the same as merely drinking tea. Rather, *chanoyu* involves certain rules and etiquette born out of a specific philosophical approach to life.

Zen Buddhism, in which enlightenment was achieved by seated meditation, was introduced into Japan from China in the early Kamakura period. It was in Zen monasteries that a code of etiquette for tea first developed during the 14th century. The appreciation of tea spread from the monasteries to the Kyoto aristocracy and the warrior class. By the 16th century increasingly ostentatious gatherings brought a reaction and under Sen no Rikyu, tea master to the great warlord Toyotomi Hideyoshi, the tea ceremony found a new simplicity and spirituality and became associated with the value known as austerity (*wabi*).

Attending a tea ceremony

If you were invited to a tea ceremony, you would enter the outer gate, pass through a rustic garden to the middle gate, and then to the inner garden of the teahouse, thereby separating yourself from the outside world. The inner garden's path might be made up of stepping stones set in a manner that enables the guests to enjoy different views of the plantings as they proceed. In the center of the garden would be a carved stone basin with running water and a wooden dipper for rinsing hands and mouth. As a token of humility, you would enter the teahouse by crouching through a low entryway. The entrance was originally designed in this way so that no weapons could be brought into the teahouse. The last guest would close the door. The tearoom might be a special enclosure within a home or a

separate structure. In either case, the space is small and the walls no more than six feet high.

Before the start of the ceremony, the host would have made certain that the teahouse and garden were clean, that a fire was laid in the hearth, and that water be put on the fire to boil. If a meal were to be served, the host would have prepared it in an adjacent section of the teahouse. In the alcove (*tokonoma*) there would be a work of art, perhaps a scroll or a basket with flowers. All utensils, implements, and art would reflect the season or mood.

When the guests are assembled, the host would prepare the tea using water jars, a kettle, a lid rest, a bamboo scoop, a bamboo whish, a tea caddy, and bowls. The first round of whisked tea would be thick and served in one bowl passed among the guests. The second round would be thin and served in individual bowls. Only the guests would partake of the tea. Both host and guests would have experienced a social communion among equals—the enjoyment of tea, of beautiful objects, and of the ephemeral nature of the moment.

The aesthetic of tea

The *wabi* aesthetic elevated the earthy and often distorted tea bowls, water jars, and flower vases made at domestic kilns over the previously favored perfectly flawless ceramics. Even as the dominant tastes of the tea ceremony changed over time and more flamboyant pots came to be favored, the majority of Japanese stoneware from the Momoyama and early Edo periods continued to be characterized by unusual shapes, rich glaze colors and textures, and often highly individualistic and playful decorations.

How to look at this work

The jar has a square bottom and a round top with a cover. The sides are marked with lines and seem rough and uneven. The surface glaze is uneven; the cover is dark and mottled, while along the top of the square body glaze drips down each side. On each face a stamped design is partially obscured by the rivulets of glaze.

For the tea practitioners of the Momoyama period, this object would have been appealing precisely because of its imperfections.

Function

The jar would have been part of the basic equipment for the tea ceremony. The container held fresh water, which was boiled over a hot brazier and then poured into individual tea bowls and briskly whisked with bright green powdered tea leaves.

How the object was made

This jar was first made on a pottery wheel. Then the potter used his hands to change the rounded form into a square one. It is made from stoneware, a type of clay. The potter then applied the glaze to produce the uneven drips and imperfections and the jar was fired at temperatures between 1200º Celsius and 1300º Celsius. The clay fused to produce a body that is harder than earthenware and is impermeable. The lid was made separately.

Octagonal Jar
Japan, Saga Prefecture; Edo period, 18th century
Porcelain painted with underglaze cobalt blue and overglaze enamels, with traces of gold
H: 17 5/8 in.
W: 12 3/8 in.
1979.231

Background

Porcelain in Japan

The first Japanese porcelains were produced during the 17th century. Several factors contributed to this development. One was the contribution of the technically advanced potters brought to Japan from Korea during the late-16th century Japanese invasion of Korea. Another factor was the discovery in Japan of the type of clay needed to produce porcelains, a discovery traditionally attributed to a Korean potter named Ri Sampei. A third factor was civil disarray in China, which led its foreign ceramics customers, particularly Europeans, to turn to Japan in search of the highly prized wares. During the 17th century, the city of Arita, located on the southern island of Kyushu, became the largest and most important center for the production of porcelain in the world.

Decoration

By the 5th to 6th century, Japan had turned to China and Korea for such powerful cultural ideas as a writing system, the Buddhist religion, and artistic motifs and symbols. The interpretation of these borrowings was, and has remained, original and has consistently produced a recognizably Japanese body of work.

How to look at this work

Two women, one following the other, are walking amongst a group of buildings. We can see another building above and to the rear of the second woman. Large flowers surround the two. The buildings have sloping wooden roofs. The first woman, who has an elaborate hairstyle, wears a kimono with large flowers and a black sash (*obi*). The second woman, who appears smaller, has a simpler hairstyle and a darker kimono.

The neck, shoulder, and base of the vase are decorated with a combination of fantastic creatures, flowers, clouds, and cartouches filled with the symbols of Buddhism—including parasol, wheel, fish, and endless knot.

The predominant colors are red, pink, and blue. The background is white. The vase's shape is octagonal.

This vase is painted with Chinese-inspired motifs (like the clouds on the neck), Buddhist symbols (like the lions), and Chinese-style architecture. On the other hand, the beautifully attired woman followed by an attendant wears a Japanese hairstyle and kimono, which

indicate that she is a high-ranking courtesan. These details reflect fashions and customs prevalent in Japan during the late 17th century.

Function

Japanese potters produced Chinese-style pieces for both the Japanese and the export markets. However, the large size of this vase suggests that it was made for export to Europe where it would have functioned as decoration.

How the object was made

Porcelain is the product of a combination of two special clays—kaolin and petuntse—which when fired at temperatures above 1300º Celsius becomes nonporous, vitrified (glasslike), and usually translucent. Unlike earthenware and stoneware, which may be found in a range of body colors, porcelain is generally white. The jar was produced on a pottery wheel then the eight flat sides were produced by hand faceting.

The blue decoration was produced by painting on the unbaked object using cobalt oxide, covering the dish with a colorless glaze, and then firing the piece. The rest of the scene was painted in overglaze enamels then the jar was refired at a lower temperature.

Section Two: Lesson Plans

Art objects are learning tools. They can reveal a great deal about the people who created them. If we understand why an object was made, how it was intended to be used, who made it, for whom it was made, or what materials were used, we can begin to learn about the social, political, and economic life of the society of which it was a part. Careful examination of an object using the questioning technique is the first step in the looking experience. From these observations, students will begin to use deductive reasoning to draw inferences about the society from which the object comes.

How to use this section

This section contains specific lesson plans. These lessons are based upon themes that are relevant to the art objects in the teaching packet. Each lesson is based upon one or more art objects. Unless otherwise noted, all the lessons are intended for the third through sixth grades, although they may be adapted for older students.

Teachers are urged to read the material relevant to the objects (see Section One) before embarking on the lesson.

Lesson Plan: Geography

Standards

NYC English Language Arts Performance Standards

E2a—*Produce a report of information*
E3b—*Speaking, listening and viewing*
The student participates in group meetings.
E1c—*Read and comprehend informational materials.*

Learning Standards for the Arts

Standard 3—Responding to and analyzing works or art.

Visual Arts
Performance Indicator—*Students explain how ideas, themes, or concepts in the visual arts are expressed in other disciplines (e.g., mathematics, science, literature, social studies, etc.)*

Learning Standards for Social Studies

Standard 3

Geography
Performance Indicator—*Students ask geographic questions about where places are located; why they are located where they are; what is important about their locations; and how their loca tions are related to the location of other people and places.*

Motivation

1. Discussion of the different kinds of maps with which the students are familiar.
2. Teacher may ask the students to bring in maps.
3. Divide the class into groups and have students chart the similarities and differences of their maps.
4. Each group reports to the class.

Theme

Learning about and from maps.

Performance Objective

By creating their own maps, as well as analyzing maps of Asia, students will identify key elements of a map (scale, kinds of features, symbols, orientation) and how those functions influence how it serves as a resource.

Essential Question—Aim

What can maps tell us about the continent of Asia and the individual countries India, China, and Japan?

Materials

Photocopies of the map

Assesment

Students' verbal responses, student maps

Procedure

1. Begin by discussing the different types of maps students have seen. Make a list or chart. Next discuss why maps can be useful. Teacher may need to bridge the discussion between maps used in daily life and those of countries and continents.
2. Discuss the ways that maps convey information. Teachers will discuss distance scale, use of different colors, and lines to show boundaries.
3. Using the map of Asia, teacher will lead a discussion: What kinds of information we can learn from this map? Discussion will focus on: neighboring countries and boundaries, surrounding bodies of water, internal topography—mountains and rivers, relation to the equator.
4. Divide the class into small groups. Each group will concentrate on one country to determine as much information as possible. Each group presents an oral report to the class.

Extensions

Project: students are asked to map the geography of New York City. The map should include all the features that have been discussed.

Lesson Plan: Document-Based Learning

Standards

NYC English Language Arts Performance Standards

E2a—*Produce a narrative account*
E3b—*Participate in group meetings*

Learning Standards for the Arts

Standard 3—Responding to and analyzing works of art

Visual Arts

Performance Indicator—*Students explain their reflections about the meaning, purpose and sources of works of art; describe their responses to the works and the reasons for those responses.*

Performance *Indicator—Students explain the visual and other sensory qualities (surfaces, textures, shapes, sizes, volumes) found in a wide variety of art works.*

Learning Standards for Social Studies

Standard 2

World History

Performance indicator—*Students gather and present information about important developments from world history.*

Motivation

1. Break the class into groups of twos or threes. Give each group a copper penny.
2. Tell the students to pretend that they were space travelers who landed on an unknown planet and found this object
3. Task: What can you tell about the inhabitants of this planet just from examining this object?
4. Give the class ten minutes and then discuss the results—make a list of the observations.
5. Summary discussion: How accurate were the observations in light of what you know about America.

Theme

An art object is primary source material; it is an historical document.

Performance Objective

Students examine an image, analyze its components, begin to learn about its meaning, and recognize that it is an historical document—a window into the Chinese past.

Essential Question—Aim

Through visual examination, what can students learn about the people/person who made and used this object?

How can students extend this information?

Materials

- Visual representation of an object
- Looking Exercise
- Copper pennies—enough to give one to each group of 2–3 students

Assesment Piece

Students' verbal responses and written commentaries

Procedure

1. Teacher will lead the class in the questioning strategy using the Chinese Yu vessel. After asking the students to spend time looking at the Yu, teacher will ask the class what they can tell about the people who made and used this object.
2. As the discussion progresses, chart what students deduce about China from looking. Teachers may want to make a chart divided by category—such as, access to materials and technology, belief systems, economic systems.
3. After the questioning is completed, each student draws the object. Teachers may want to have each student record his/her drawing in a special notebook of Asian art.
4. Each student writes a short description of the object next to the drawing.

Extensions

An alternate additional or alternate strategy to introduce students to form and function is as follows:

Materials

- Small containers of different shapes—these should be familiar household or classroom objects like cups, saucers, or pencil holders. Alternately, pictures may be used.
- Pencils
- Paper or notebook

Procedure

1. Divide the class into small groups. Give each group a picture or an object.
2. The group must decide how the object can be used and why. Each students should make note and drawing of each object.
3. Exchange objects (or pictures) among the groups until each group has seen all.
4. Make a class chart of shapes, uses, and reasons.

Lesson Plan: Understanding Symbols

Standards

NYC English Language Arts Performance Standards

E2c—*Produce a narrative account*
E1c—*Read and comprehend informational materials*
E3b—*Participate in group meetings*

Learning Standards for the Arts

Standard 3—Responding to and analyzing works of art

Visual Arts

Performance Indicator—*Students explain their reflections about the meaning, purpose and sources of works of art; describe their responses to the works and the reasons for those responses.*

Learning Standards for Social Studies

Standard 2

World History

Performance Indicator—*Students study different world cultures and civilizations focusing on their accomplishments, contributions, values, beliefs, and traditions.*

Theme

How art objects make ideas and beliefs tangible through symbols. Students can understand ideas and belief by learning to decode these symbols.

Performance Objective

Students examine two objects, analyze their components, compare and contrast them, and begin to learn about their meanings.

Procedure

Using visual examination, comparing and contrasting, what can students learn about the ideas and belief systems of the people/person who made and used these objects?

Materials

- Slide of Buddha
- Slide of Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara
- Looking Exercise
- Pencils
- Handout: Venn diagram
- Handout questions

Assesment Piece

Students' Venn diagrams and answers to questions

Procedure

1. Teacher will show the two slides to the class.
2. Using the looking exercise and the background information, the teacher will discuss each with the class.
3. Teacher will hand out the outline of the Venn diagram. Students are instructed to enter the differences and similarities. Teachers may want to give the students categories for comparison, for example: the head and face, the clothing, the gestures.
4. Students and teachers will discuss the student's conclusions.
5. Students are asked to answer the question handout.
6. Teacher will tell the student the story of the Buddha—see information sheet—and discuss the concept of the Bodhisattva.
7. Students will reassess their handouts in light of the discussion.

Handout

Students are asked to answer the following questions:

- What does the expression on each of their faces tell you about each?
- Why do you think the Buddha might have an enlarged head—the bump that you see?
- What do you think each is trying to tell us with his hands?
- Why do you think that one of the images wears jewelry and the other does not?

Lesson Plan: Art and Creative Writing

Standards

NYC English Language Arts Performance Standards

E2c—*Produce a narrative account (fictional or autobiographical).*
E3d—*Make informal judgments about television, radio, and film productions.*

Learning Standards for the Arts

Standard 3—Responding to and analyzing works of art

Visual Arts
Performance Indicator—*Students explain their reflections about the meaning, purpose and sources of works of art; describe their responses to the works and the reasons for those responses.*

Learning Standards for Social Studies

Standard 2

World History
Performance Indicator—*Students explore the lifestyles, beliefs, traditions, rules and laws, and social/cultural needs and wants of people during different periods in history and in different parts of the world.*

Theme

Visual Arts and Writing

Performance Objective

Students will analyze slides of artifacts as cultural and social representations. Students will utilize the writing process to create a word map and creative writing sample using standard written language conventions.

Essential Question—Aim

What is your response to a work of art?
How can I best express that response in words?

Materials

- Butcher Paper (6" x 9" piece for each student), crayons or markers
- Slide packet
- Pencils
- Unlined paper

Assesment Piece

Students will generate a word map and creative writing sample from the images in the Rockefeller Collection slide packet.

Procedure

1. Focus on one of the paintings (or the screen). Have students generate their own drawing, based on the chosen picture, on a piece butcher paper. Brainstorm ideas for that someone might find helpful in understanding this picture. Have students include a title or brief statement that indicates what is being illustrated. Post the pictures and discuss them with the entire class.

2. Using a figural object, have the students consider the following ques tions before generating their own fictional writing piece featuring the character in the slide. Who is the person? Where is he/she from? (Show students a map of Asia.) What is he doing? Why is he dressed like this? Generate a list of words to describe the image.

Art Objects from India

Slide — ***Shiva as Lord of the Dance***

Prompts
- What adjective would describe the expression on his face?
- If you had six arms, like he does, what would you have in each (use one or two words for each)?

Slide — ***Ganesha***

Prompts
- What name would you give to this being?
- What name would you give to the dance he is doing?

Teachers should make up their own prompts based on the background material in the packet.

Extensions

Procedure A

1. Hand out unlined paper and a pencil to each student. Explain to them that you will be showing a series of slides. For each slide, you will ask them to jot down responses to a phrase or question. The responses should not be made in a list—spread them around the paper as a collage of words that can act as a story starter later. Slides could be shown from a few seconds to a minute, it is important for students to write the first ideas that come to mind. Impress on students that there are no "wrong" responses. The word map will act as a writing tool for a story or poem later.

2. Show slides one by one. For each slide, teacher will develop a set of short prompts, one for each slide and read each allowing at least five seconds for each response. Have students generate word maps as you read the prompts. Do NOT simply read the descriptions of the artifacts to the students.

3. Ask students to use their word maps to generate a poem or short story based on one or more of the word prompts and the slides that were shown.

4. When students have completed writing, have them share the products with the class.

Procedure B

The students have given the objects an individual story or "history" in their writing accounts. Have the students investigate the "real history" by writing on one of the artifacts or about the time and place in which the object originated. Report findings to the class.

Art Objects from China

Slide ***Platter***

Prompts What was put on this plate?

Slide ***Temple on a Mountain Ledge***

Prompts
- You are at this place. Describe where you would choose to be in less than five words.
- What could you see if you were standing at the top of the highest mountain looking away from this scene?

Art Objects from Japan

Slide ***Pheasants Under Cherry and Willow Trees***

Prompts
- What two adjectives would describe this scene?
- If you were in this place, how would you feel?

Slide ***Nakamura Komozo as the Boatman Kanagawaya No Gros and Nakajima Wadamon as "Dried Codfish" Chozaemon***

Prompts
- What did the one man say to the other?
- What word describes the man in gray's facial expression?

Lesson Plan: Creating a Narrative

Standards

NYC English Language Arts Performance Standards

E2a—*Produce a report of information*
E2d—*Produce a narrative procedure*
E1c—*Read and comprehend informational materials*
E2c—*Produce a narrative fictional or autobiographical account*

Learning Standards for the Arts

Standard 3—Responding to and analyzing works of art

Visual Arts

Performance Indicator—*Students explain their reflections about the meaning, purpose and sources of works of art; describe their responses to the works and the reasons for those responses.*

Learning Standards for Social Studies

Standard 2

World History

Performance Indicator—*Students explore the lifestyles, beliefs, traditions, rule, and laws, and social/cultural needs and wants of people during different periods in history and in different parts of the world.*

Theme

Students will study Chinese painting as a narrative journey and create their own narratives.

Performance Objective

Students will examine and analyze a Chinese landscape painting as a narrative journey. Then students will create their own narrative journey.

Essential Questions—Aims

- Understanding a Chinese painting.
- How should we look at it?
- How can the student create his/her own narrative journey?

Materials

- Slide: ***Temple on a Mountain Ledge***
- Looking exercise
- Pencils
- Paper or notebook

Assesment Piece

- Student's verbal responses
- Student's written responses
- Student's own narrative document

Procedure

1. Teacher will show the slide to the class.
2. Using the Looking Exercise and the background information, the teacher will discuss the image with the class. If at the end of the discussion, students have not notice the shifting viewpoints, teacher should point this out.
3. Writing exercise: Teacher asks each student to look at the scene and silently choose a place where he/she would like to be. Instruct the students to describe that place on a piece of paper, or in a note book. Ask for volunteers to read their description to the class. The students will then try to figure out what place in the picture is being described.
4. Chinese paintings are often described as journeys. Teacher should explain this to the class and discuss how a traveler could travel through this picture. For example, by climbing a hill or crossing a field.
5. Writing exercise: Students are asked to describe a journey they have taken. Teacher may ask students to illustrate the journey.
6. Students share their journeys with the rest of the class.

Lesson Plan: Creating a Japanese Screen

This lesson is based on a lesson plan written by Antonia Toria, PS 73 Queens.

Standards

The NYC English Language Arts Performance Standards

E2a—*Produce a report of information*
E1c—*Read and comprehend informational materials*

Learning Standards for the Arts

Standard 3

Visual Arts

Performance Indicator—*Students explain the visual and other sensory qualities (surfaces, colors, textures, shapes, sizes, volumes) found in a wide variety of art works.*

Learning Standards for Social Studies

Standard 2

World History

Performance Indicator—*Students study about different world cultures and civilizations focusing on their accomplishments, contributions, values, beliefs, and traditions.*

Motivation

The screens we will be looking at were created to decorate and beautify the residences of Japanese people. The images on these screens reflect the life and culture of the time when they were created. This exercise will introduce the idea that art is made to enhance our surroundings and also that the choices made about them reflect something about the person choosing.

1. Begin with the classroom. Ask the students to describe what it looked like on the first day of school. What does it look like now? What was added? Why were these things chosen? Make a list.
2. Ask that each student to write down something that they have chosen to decorate their room at home.
3. Have each student pick two of the objects chosen and write a sentence about why this was chosen and why it is important to him/her.

Theme

Learning about Japanese screens and applying this to our lives.

Performance Objective

By creating their own screens, as well as analyzing Japanese screens, students will identify key elements of a screen (why it was made, how it was used, subject matter, symbols) and how they may help us learn about our lives and those of other peoples.

Essential Questions—Aims

- What are Japanese screens?
- How were and are they used?
- What do they tell us about Japan and the Japanese?

Materials

- Slide projector and slide
- Oak tag
- Markers, pencils, and paint or magazine pictures
- Paper for composition

Assesment Piece

The screens produced by each student, students' verbal responses and talks.

Procedure

1. Begin by showing the slide of the Japanese screen and discussing the object. using the Looking Exercise. Using the background material, teachers and students should be able to discuss the uses for and subject matter of Japanese screens and their place in Japanese arts and culture.
2. Teachers may want to show other examples of Japanese screens, either from books or by visiting a museum.
3. Teachers and students discuss the themes from the screens—nature, the world around them, etc.
4. Teachers and students discuss parallel themes from their own culture.
5. To create ideas for their own screen, each student creates a theme map—their country of origin, their family, their home, and their interests.
6. Students are each given a piece of oak tag and are instructed to fold it into five sections (make six folds) to create a self-standing screen.
7. Students will decorate the screen either with cut-out magazine pictures or drawings.
8. After artwork is done, each student will describe his/her heritage screen in writing.
9. Students take turns showing screens and reading their writing to the class.

Extension

Teachers may want to try the following plan to discuss the subject of the screens: ***The Four Seasons***.

Materials

- Pencil
- Paper or notebook
- Blackboard

Procedure

Teacher and student discussions based on the following questions. During the discussion, make a chart on the blackboard with a section for each season. You may want to construct a grid.

- What are some of the special activities that we do in the spring? In the summer? In the fall? In the winter?
- What types of clothing do we wear for different seasons?
- What are some of the plants and animals that we see outside for each season?
- Would this list be the same if we lived in another place? Would it be the same in Japan?

Section Three: Appendices

Geography

India

The Indian subcontinent is a 2000-mile-long triangle that is suspended off the landmass of Central Asia. Bounded on the north by the Himalayas, the land is accessible from that direction only through a number of northwest-facing passes. The Arabian Sea forms the western boundary and the Bay of Bengal the eastern one.

The subcontinent can be roughly divided into geographic units. The northern region extends from the northwest lands watered by the Indus River to the northeastern region watered by the Ganges River. Rajastan and the Punjab hills are in this region. The central area, south of the Vindhya mountain range, is called the Deccan and includes hill and forest zones as well as the high and arid Deccan plateau. The southern region is separated from the rest of the land by the Nilgiri Hills.

The climate is largely tropical with rainfall for much of the subcontinent dependent on the monsoon winds that blow across the Indian Ocean from June to October. However the plains of the northern regions, where great rivers are fed by melting mountain snows, are less dependent upon the winds than is peninsular India in the south.

China

China consists mostly of mountains, high plateaus, and deserts in the west, and flattens out into plains, deltas, and hills towards the east. Only 10 percent of the land is arable and the majority of the population lives on the eastern half of the country. The vast deserts and parts of the mountainous west are uninhabited.

Two great rivers, the Yellow River in the north and the Yangtze Kiang in the south, flow through eastern China into the Pacific. The eastern coast faces the Yellow Sea to the northeast, the East China Sea to the east, the South China Sea to the southeast, and the Gulf of Tonkin to the south. To the north, China shares a border with Russia, Mongolia, and North Korea. Along China's western border, its neighbors are Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, while along the south, the bordering countries are India, Bhutan, Burma, Nepal, Laos, Vietnam, and Macau. China is the world's third largest country after Russia and Canada; its total area is 9,596,960 square kilometers.

Japan

Japan is an island nation. It consists of four principal islands—Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu—more than 3,000 small adjacent islands and islets in the Nanpo chain and more than 200 other smaller islands in the Ryukyu archipelago. The four major islands are separated by narrow straits and extend along a northeast-southwest axis, forming a natural entity.

The Japanese archipelago lies off the eastern coast of Asia separated from the mainland by the Sea of Japan. The distance between Japan and the Asian continent is about 124 miles (200 kilometers), with the Korean peninsula as the nearest landmass. The Japanese islands cover approximately 147,116 square miles (381,000 square kilometers) and measure nearly 2,361 miles (3,800 kilometers) from north to south.

More than two-thirds of Japan is mountainous. A long chain of mountains runs down its middle, dividing it into halves. One half faces the Pacific Ocean, the other the Sea of Japan. The Japanese islands are, in fact, the summits of mountain ridges that were uplifted near the outer edge of the Asian continental shelf.

It is in the plains and mountain basins that most of the population is concentrated. This means that most cities, factories, farms, and people are squeezed into one-third of Japan's total land.

Japan is located in the Pacific Basin, a zone where the earth's crust is unstable. Many earthquakes occur each year. The mountains of Japan are volcanic and more than forty of the volcanoes are active.

Japan lies in approximately the same latitude as the eastern coast of the United States. Seasonal change is clearly marked. Two major ocean currents affect Japan's climate. The Black Current flows north on the Pacific side warming areas as far north as Tokyo while another current flows southward along the northern Pacific, cooling adjacent coastal areas. Monsoon winds contribute to the hot and humid summers, rainy seasons in early summer and early fall, and the cold northern winters.

Map | Indian Subcontinent

Map | China


Pacific Ocean
East China Sea
South China Sea
Sea of Japan
Yellow Sea
Gulf of Tonkin
Bay of Bengal
Tokyo
Pyongyang
Seoul
Beijing
Ulaanbaatar
Hanoi
Vientiane
Rangoon
Thimphu
Dhaka
Kathmandu
New Delhi
Alma Ata
Bishkek
Taipei
Hong Kong
MONGOLIA
RUSSIA
CHINA
KAZAKHSTAN
KYRGYZSTAN
NORTH KOREA
SOUTH KOREA
JAPAN
TAIWAN
VIETNAM
LAOS
THAILAND
MYANMAR
BHUTAN
BANGLADESH
NEPAL
INDIA
PAKISTAN
PHILIPPINES

Map | Japan


RUSSIA
Amur
Khabarovsk
Sakhalin Island
Yuzhno Sakhalinsk
CHINA
Qiqihar
Harbin
Jixi
Changchung
Jilin
Hokkaido
Vladivostok
Sapporo
Liaoyuan
Fushun
Benxi
NORTH KOREA
Feng Cheng
Dandong
Sea
of
Japan
Akita
Pyongyang
Sendai
Seoul
Niigata
Incheon
SOUTH
KOREA
JAPAN
Honshu
Taejeon
Tokyo
Yellow Sea
Taegu
Sakai-minato
Nagoya
Chiba
Kyoto
Pusan
Hiroshima
Osaka
Kita-kyushu
Fukuoka
Shikoku
Kyushu
East China Sea
Pacific
Ocean

Indian Painting

Early Painting Traditions

From the 9th century, important schools of manuscript illumination flourished in the Buddhist monasteries of eastern India and in the Jain temples of western India. The subjects were religious and scriptural. Paintings were inscribed on palm leaves until the introduction of paper in the 14th century.

The oldest known Hindu texts date from the second half of the 15th century and relate to the Jain manuscript tradition. Hindu myths and epics were the subjects of these early works, produced in northern India. By the early 16th century, a new style had arisen that illustrated secular as well as religious themes.

In the courts of the pre-Mughal Muslim Sultanates, both the styles and the themes of painting combined the Islamic tradition of Persian painting and an indigenous sensibility

Mughal Painting

When Humayun (reigned from 1530–40 and 1555–56) took refuge in Tabriz at the Safavid court of Shah Tahmasp II, he was exposed to the Persian painting and manuscript tradition. Humayun returned to India with two noted painters.

It was his son, Akbar, who consolidated imperial authority, established a new capital, and became a great patron of the arts. In Akbar's atelier, approximately one hundred artists recruited from the pre-Mughal centers of painting were trained under the Persian masters. Eventually a new painting style, called Mughal, emerged from this synthesis. Akbar was determined to document his reign in the manuscripts and paintings produced in the imperial atelier. The result was new painting conventions to record a new reality—Mughal rule. European prints and paintings that came to the court gave artists the opportunity to study Western artistic devices and incorporate what they deemed appropriate. The introduction of portraiture was, perhaps, the most significant contribution to Indian art made during Akbar's reign.

Akbar's son and grandson continued to patronize court painting, but his great grandson Aurangzeb was determined to enforce Muslim orthodoxy. Artists left the royal painting atelier to find new patronage in the Rajput courts of the Rajasthan and the Punjab Hills.

Rajput Painting

Although pre-Mughal artistic traditions continued, painting was affected in both style and content by artistic developments at the Mughal court. Rajput rulers fought in the Mughal military campaigns and spent time at the Mughal court, where they absorbed the ethos of the court, adopted its way of dressing, and became patrons of the arts. Each Rajput kingdom evolved its distinctive style. The decline of Mughal power in the 18th century and

the dispersal of the artists from Aurangzeb's imperial atelier ushered in a period of florescence for the court painting in Rajastan and the Punjab hills.

How Paintings Were Viewed

Many Mughal pictures were parts of manuscripts and albums that were bound. Most of the Rajput paintings were not bound, but were collected and stored like books, until they were brought out to be examined, as you would a book.

Techniques

The painting technique used was essentially simple—the application of opaque watercolor on paper. The artist began by laying out the composition with charcoal or thin black ink applied with either a brush or a pen. The paper may have been burnished beforehand. A thin ground—a layer of opaque watercolor—was brushed over the underdrawing. This layer—which might be white or tinted yellow or blue—covered the paper, but was translucent enough so that the underdrawing was still visible. Different colored grounds could be used to define major areas of the composition. Another underdrawing, generally red or black and done by brush in thin watercolor, was drawn on the ground.

At this point, the painting was usually burnished by being placed face down on a smooth slab of stone. The back of the paper was rubbed with a smooth stone, inset into a wooden holder. Burnishing was repeated frequently during the painting process. The practice of burnishing gave a smooth surface to the painting. Near the end of the process, the painted side might be rubbed using a smaller burnisher to produce local glossy areas.

Further layers of paint were added to the ground with artists working from larger to smaller areas of color and from more diffuse to more detail. The final areas were often the more important compositional elements, like human figures, or the lions and tigers of the hunting scenes. Towards the end of the process, final outlining, usually in black, of the design elements was done.

Materials

The paper used was of two types: One, a thin, smooth, whitish paper was prepared from fine off-white paper pulp; The other, a rougher, buff paper, was made from fibrous, brownish, nonuniform paper pulp. The practice of burnishing resulted in a smooth surface to the finished work. Cloth was used for larger-sized works.

Recent research into the types of pigments has uncovered the following information. Several types of whites were used, all metallic and including lead white (found in the majority of paintings), tin white, and zinc white. Lampblack was the only black identified. Brilliant yellow, called Indian yellow (a calcium or magnesium salt of euzanthic acid), was an organic extract from cow urine. Vegetable dyestuff indigo was the most common

blue. Natural ultramarine (the mineral lazarite) was also used. Vermilion (mercuric sulphide) and red lead were the most common reds. Many greens were used. The most common was verdigris, copper chloride produced by the reaction of copper metal with salt water. Metallic pigments were also used, including gold in painted powder form and a tin metal that was silver in color. Binders, the solution into which pigments are mixed so that they might be spread, were gums—gum arabic and gum tragacanth.

Work Method

Artists sat on the floor working on boards or low tables.

Preservation of the Works

Paintings were kept in the palace in a dry picture storeroom, piled on stone shelves. They were usually wrapped in cotton bandanas to protect them from insects, damp, and light. Bundles were arranged by topic and size.

Paintings were available to the ruler and his court and, as they recorded geography, history, animals, as well as many other subjects, served as an invaluable educational resource.

The Artist

Although we know the names of artists who worked at the Mughal courts, many of the artists who produced Rajput paintings remain anonymous. Inscriptions and more recently, studies, have identified some of these artists. Stylistic evidence tells us that painting techniques and materials, as well as artists traveled throughout the region. The political alliances and military campaigns of the region assured cross-fertilization between Mughal and Rajput art.

Apprenticeship to a master artist began at a young age. Court workshops housed the artists. Artists' wages were about equal to those of soldiers and they might receive a bonus for an outstanding work. Artists traveled with the rulers to war, hunts, and local festivals.

Resource List

For Teachers

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India for Kids (produced by a primary school in India)—
http://home.freeuk.com/elloughton13/india.htm

Information-packed site about China—
http://www.chinapage.com/china.html