



# Japanese Art

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## Lesson Plans for Educators

October 8, 2008

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## Image List

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1. Kikukawa Eizan (1787-1867), Japanese  
***Untitled [Beautiful Woman]***  
Woodcut and paper  
Gift of Mr. & Mrs. James L. Franken  
Museum # 1938.13
2. Japanese, Sengoku Period (mid – 16th -17th Century)  
***Samurai Armor***  
Steel, iron, silk, leather, wood, hemp, & lacquer  
Gift of Bill Traeger  
Museum # 2002.8.1 A-F
3. Japanese, Muromachi Period ( 1392-1573)  
***Fighting Warriors***  
Paper, gouache, gold leaf, fabric, lacquer and wood  
Gift in memory of Sallie Eccles  
Museum # 2002.12.4
4. Japanese, Edo Period (1605-1868)  
***Guardian Lion***  
Wood with traces of polychromy  
Gift of Owen D. Mort Jr.  
Museum # 1993.027.019
5. Takeuchi Miyuki, Japanese (1947- )  
***Grace***  
Ink on Paper  
Gift of the artist  
Museum # 2006.10.1
6. Japanese  
***Ceremonial Kimono***  
Silk, gold, silver, embroidery  
Gift of Natalie Cotterell  
Museum # 1993.13.1



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# Japanese Art

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Japanese art covers a wide range of art styles and media, including ancient pottery, sculpture in wood and bronze, ink painting on silk and paper, and a myriad of other types of works of art. It also has a long history, ranging from the beginnings of human habitation in Japan, sometime in the 10th millennium BC, to the present.

Painting is the preferred artistic expression in Japan, practiced by amateurs and professionals alike. Until modern times, the Japanese wrote with a brush rather than a pen, and their familiarity with brush techniques has made them particularly sensitive to the values and aesthetics of painting. With the rise of popular culture in the Edo period, a style of woodblock prints called *ukiyo-e* became a major artform and its techniques were fine tuned to produce colorful prints of everything from daily news to schoolbooks. The Japanese, in this period, found sculpture a much less sympathetic medium for artistic expression; most Japanese sculpture is associated with religion, and the medium's use declined with the lessening importance of traditional Buddhism.

Japan's aesthetic traditions were derived from diverse cultural traditions. Japanese aesthetics provide a key to understanding artistic works perceivably different from those coming from Western traditions. Chinese art was a major influence on early Japanese aesthetics. Nevertheless, several Japanese arts developed their own style, which can be differentiated from various Chinese arts. The monumental, symmetrically balanced, rational approach of Chinese art forms became miniaturized, irregular, and subtly suggestive in Japanese art. Miniature rock gardens, diminutive plants (bonsai), and ikebana (flower arrangements), in which the selected few represented a garden, were the favorite pursuits of refined aristocrats for a millennium, and they have remained a part of contemporary cultural life.

The diagonal, reflecting a natural flow, rather than the fixed triangle, became the favored structural device, whether in painting, architectural or garden design, dance steps, or musical notations. Odd numbers replace even numbers in the regularity of a Chinese master pattern, and a pull to one side allows a motif to turn the corner of a three-dimensional object, thus giving continuity and motion that is lacking in a static frontal design. Japanese painters used the devices of the cutoff, close-up, and fade-out by the twelfth century in *yamato-e*, or Japanese-style, scroll painting, perhaps one reason why modern filmmaking has been such a natural and successful art form in Japan.

Taken from:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japanese\\_art](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japanese_art)

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/japanese-aesthetics/>

## Untitled (Beautiful Woman)

**Kikukawa Eizan**



Eizan's skill and reputation led him to be known as a master of *bijin-ga* (pictures of beautiful women). Kikukawa depicted the most beautiful courtesans and women of the last shogunate. He trained many of the next generation of artists including Keizai Eisan, who established his own school. One Japanese print scholar described Eizan's women as neat and elegant, with doll-like innocent faces. Most of his work comes from 1804-1817 when he was at the height of popularity.

This untitled print shows a woman leaning against a pillar near a small light. Kikukawa emphasized the poise of the woman and the features of her face to show her beauty. She is clutching in her hands what is most likely a love letter. The curling of her right foot and toes around the left and the piece of the letter in her mouth suggests she is rather passionate about this lover.

Kikukawa Eizan (1787-1867), Japanese  
**Untitled [Beautiful Woman]**  
Woodcut and paper  
Gift of Mr. & Mrs. James L. Franken  
Museum # 1938.13

# Untitled (Beautiful Woman)

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**written by Kathy Korkishko**

## **State Core Links:**

- 1) Students will find meaning by analyzing, criticizing and evaluating works of art using art elements, principles, impact of content, expressive qualities and aesthetic significance (Visual Arts Core, Standard 2, Perceiving).
- 2) Students will examine how works of art were created by manipulating media and by organizing images with art elements and principles by making a woodblock print (Visual Arts Core, Standard 1, Making).
- 3) Students will discover meaning in art (Visual Arts Core, Standard 3, Expressing).
- 4) Students will analyze the impact of time, place and culture on works of art (Visual Arts Core, Standard 4, Contextualizing, Objective 1b).
- 5) Students will evaluate their relationship with artworks from various periods in history (Visual Arts Core, Standard 4, Contextualizing, Objective 1c).
- 6) Students will evaluate the impact of art on life outside of school and how art history can add quality to life (Visual Arts, Standard 4, Contextualizing, Objective 3b)
- 7) Students will understand the process of seeking and giving information in conversations, group discussions, written reports, and oral presentations. (Language Arts Core, Standard 3 (Inquiry/Research/Oral Presentation)).

**Grade Level:** Secondary

**Materials:** Internet access, access to magazine advertisements

## **Activity:**

### **Activity 1:** Group Project - Love Letters

Each of the art pieces below is entitled: Love Letter.

1) Choose three (3) of them and compare and contrast each of the three chosen by your group with the original art piece according to the elements of art: line, shape, color, texture, form, value, space.

<http://faculty.indy.cc.ks.us/jnull/introelements2.htm>

2) Discuss the content of three (3) of the pictures below:

- a) What elements of each might be considered erotic?
- b) If two figures are present, what might they be discussing?
- c) If one figure is present, what might the young woman be thinking? What effect is made if she looks directly at the viewer vs. looking elsewhere? Give examples.
- d) How does color contribute to the effect of the art piece? Give specific examples.

3) Evaluating and analyzing all art pieces below:

- a) Why might animals be included? A dog is a specific symbol in art. Research what a dog might represent in European art. Tell in the art pieces that have a dog, how that symbol impacts the painting.
- b) Compare the paintings with two women. Which one in each piece received the love letter? What is the role of the other woman? How might the discussions between the two women in each of the two pictures be different?



- c) Compare the last two art pieces. What do you suppose the content of the love letter might be, judging from the pose and facial expression of the woman (recipient)?



<http://www.nga.gov/collection/gallery/gg54/gg54-45744.0.html>

*The Love Letter*, François Boucher

The scene is a pastoral idyll. The young "shepherdesses" wear fine silks, and a contemporary audience would understand an erotic promise in the display of pink toes. Idealized visions of country life were common on the stage and in real-life masquerades. Viewers appreciate the brilliance of Boucher's painting, which captures the luminous colors of shells, butterflies, and polished stones—objects the artist collected so he could copy their fragile iridescence.



<http://www.wga.hu/frames-e.html?/html/f/fragonar/2/09letter.html>

*Love Letter*, Jean-Honoré Fragonard 1770s

This picture exemplifies Fragonard's feeling for color, his sensitive handling of effects of light, and his extraordinary technical facility. The elegant blue dress, lace cap, and coiffure of the woman seated at her writing table must have been the height of fashion at the time this painting was made. The inscription on the letter she holds has given rise to different interpretations. It may simply refer to her cavalier, but if it is read Cuvillere, then the sitter would be the daughter of François Boucher, Fragonard's teacher. Marie Émilie Boucher, born in 1740, was widowed in 1769 and married, in 1773, her father's friend, the architect Charles Étienne Gabriel Cuvillier.



<http://www.allposters.com/gallery.asp?aid=85097&apnum=382500&DestType=7&Referrer%20=http://www.artcyclopedia.com/scripts/tsearch.pl?t=Love+Letter&type=2>

*Love Letter*, H. Lejeune



<http://cgfa.sunsite.dk/goya/p-goya12.htm>

*Love Letter*, Francisco de Goya



[http://www.artnet.com/Galleries/Artists\\_detail.asp?G=&gid=424158133&which=&aid=689624&ViewArtistBy=online&rta=http://www.artnet.com/ag/fulltextsearch.asp?searchstring=The+Love+Letter](http://www.artnet.com/Galleries/Artists_detail.asp?G=&gid=424158133&which=&aid=689624&ViewArtistBy=online&rta=http://www.artnet.com/ag/fulltextsearch.asp?searchstring=The+Love+Letter)

*The Ambiguous Love Letter*, Lucio Ranucci

## Activity 2: Making a woodcut

**Materials:** Small wood block, black ink, small pieces of plastic for build-up

**Background:** Woodcut is a relief printing technique in printmaking in which an image is carved into the surface of a block of wood, with the printing parts remaining level with the surface while the non-printing parts are removed, typically with gouges much like an ink stamp. The areas to show 'white' are cut away with a knife or chisel, leaving the characters or image to show in 'black' at the original surface level. The block is cut along the grain of the wood (unlike wood engraving where the block is cut in the end-grain). In Japan, a special type of cherry wood is used. The surface is covered with ink by rolling over the surface with an ink-covered roller (brayer), leaving ink upon the flat surface, but not in the non-printing areas. Multiple colors can be printed by keying the paper to a frame around the woodblocks (where a different block is used for each color).

There are several methods of printing to consider:

### Stamping

Used for many fabrics, and most early European woodcuts (1400-1440) These were printed by putting the paper or fabric on a table or other flat surface with the block on top, and pressing or hammering the back of the block.

## Rubbing

The block goes face up on a table, with the paper or fabric on top. The back is rubbed with a hard pad, a flat piece of wood, a burnisher. This is the most common method used in Japan and China and adopted for European woodcuts and blockbooks later in the fifteenth century. It was used widely for cloth.

In both Europe and Japan, traditionally, the artist only designed the woodcut, and the block-carving was left to specialist craftsmen, some of whom became well-known in their own right. They, in turn, handed the block on to specialist printers. There were further specialists who made the blank blocks.

There were various methods of transferring the artist's drawn design onto the block for the cutter to follow. Either the drawing would be made directly onto the block (often whitened first), or a drawing on paper was glued to the block. Either way, the artist's drawing was destroyed during the cutting process. Tracing was another method used.

- 1) Find a small block of wood and make a simple drawing that could be used for a woodcut the size of the block of wood. Think about using black and white only as you are creating your art piece. Trace the drawing onto the wood block. Build up the areas that will be black by gluing on pieces of plastic that have been pre-cut as desired. Follow the procedure above for printing using the stamping OR rubbing method.
- 2) Evaluate the result of the woodblock print. What were some difficulties? How could the method be improved? How would additional colors be added without smearing into the black?
- 3) Think about why this method was so widely used in Japan and China. What would be some applications to printing books and on cloth? How can the artist maintain his/her control over the finished product? Would the cutter deserve as much credit as the original artist or less credit?

## **Variation of Activity 2:** Group Woodcut Project

**Materials:** Same as Activity 2, adding additional paint colors and various colors/textures of cloth.

- 1) Form groups of 2-3 people.
- 2) Have each group focus on the following:
  - A) Adding two (2) additional colors
  - B) Stamping at least five (5) prints and evaluating the results
  - C) Rubbing at least five (5) prints and evaluating the results.
  - D) Stamping on cloth of various colors and textures. Determine the best way to make stamping permanent (not wash out). Evaluate results.

## **Activity 3:** Comparing two (2) woodblock prints

- 1) Compare the woodblock print below with the *Untitled (Beautiful Woman)* artwork. Describe the colors and textures in each. Geishas and elite women of this time period wore elaborate layered kimonos that showed the various contrasting layers of each kimono at the neck and above the wrist. Some women wore from 3-7 kimonos on top of each other. Some even more, especially in winter. Beauty in Japanese women was personified with pale skin, round eyes and a round or slightly elongated face. Hairstyles were complex with many ornaments to complement the kimonos. Geishas often slept on an uncomfortable neck rest to preserve their hairstyle. Comment on the various kimono layers and the complicated hairstyles noted in each art piece.  
[http://www.morbidoutlook.com/fashion/historical/2004\\_07\\_edo.html](http://www.morbidoutlook.com/fashion/historical/2004_07_edo.html)



- 2) Describe at least three similarities and three differences? Be sure to look at the backgrounds of each piece.
- 3) Which would be more difficult to produce and reproduce as a woodblock print? Give two reasons to support your view.
- 4) Present your views in a class discussion.



Keisai Eisen, Edo Period, Japanese woodblock print

[http://www.mfa.org/collections/search\\_art.asp?review=true&id=216827&coll\\_keywords=Keisai+Eisen&coll\\_accession=&coll\\_name=&coll\\_artist=&coll\\_place=&coll\\_medium=&coll\\_culture=&coll\\_classification=&coll\\_credit=&coll\\_provenance=&coll\\_location=&coll\\_has\\_images=1&coll\\_on\\_view=&coll\\_sort=0&coll\\_sort\\_order=0&coll\\_view=0&coll\\_package=0&coll\\_start=11](http://www.mfa.org/collections/search_art.asp?review=true&id=216827&coll_keywords=Keisai+Eisen&coll_accession=&coll_name=&coll_artist=&coll_place=&coll_medium=&coll_culture=&coll_classification=&coll_credit=&coll_provenance=&coll_location=&coll_has_images=1&coll_on_view=&coll_sort=0&coll_sort_order=0&coll_view=0&coll_package=0&coll_start=11)

#### Assessment:

- 1) All groups must complete Activity 3 – Making a woodprint.
- 2) Groups may select Activity 1, 2 or 4 to complete satisfactorily and present to the class.

Note: Activity 1 is the most interactive as students must define beauty today and hopefully access its importance despite our media push for “beauty = success” in life and in relationships. Activity 2 feeds off the findings of Activity 1. Activity 4 focuses on Japanese art and could be combined with additional research on clothing during the Edo period.

#### Sources:

<http://science.jrank.org/pages/8445/Beauty-Ugliness-Function-Beauty.html>  
Philosophers' views on beauty and art

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Woodcut>

[http://www.artnet.com/Galleries/Artists\\_detail.asp?G=&gid=424158133&which=&aid=689624&ViewArtistBy=online&rta=http://www.artnet.com/ag/fulltextsearch.asp?searchstring=The+Love+Letter](http://www.artnet.com/Galleries/Artists_detail.asp?G=&gid=424158133&which=&aid=689624&ViewArtistBy=online&rta=http://www.artnet.com/ag/fulltextsearch.asp?searchstring=The+Love+Letter)  
*The Ambiguous Love Letter*, Lucio Ranucci

[http://www.nga.gov/feature/nouveau/teach/fig\\_6fs.htm](http://www.nga.gov/feature/nouveau/teach/fig_6fs.htm)  
<http://www.nga.gov/collection/gallery/gg54/gg54-45744.0.html>  
*The Love Letter*, François Boucher

<http://www.allposters.com/gallery.asp?aid=85097&apnum=382500&DestType=7&Referrer%20=http://www.art-cyclopedia.com/scripts/tsearch.pl?t=Love+Letter&type=2>  
*Love Letter*, H. Lejeune

<http://www.wga.hu/frames-e.html?/html/f/fragonar/2/09letter.html>  
*Love Letter*, Jean-Honore Fragonard 1770s

<http://cgfa.sunsite.dk/goya/p-goya12.htm>  
*Love Letter*, Francisco de Goya

[http://www.morbidoutlook.com/fashion/historical/2004\\_07\\_edo.html](http://www.morbidoutlook.com/fashion/historical/2004_07_edo.html)  
Article on Japanese clothing from the Edo period.

## Samurai Armor

## Sengoku Period



### What was the Sengoku Period?

*Sengoku* is the shortened form of *Sengoku jidai* that literally means the “Era of the country at war.” From the late 15th to early 17th century, Japan was in the grips of civil war. Samurai warlords or *Daimyo* constantly fought each other for more land and power. *Daimyo* was a powerful samurai clan that controlled one or more provinces in Japan. Weaker or “retainer” clans would join themselves to a *daimyo* for a share of rewards reaped from war.

In the mid 1500's Oda Nobunaga (1534-1582), the first of the three great unifiers of Japan, rose to power. He fought a series of campaigns that brought much of Japan under his control. On his death, his general Toyotomi Hideoyoshi (1536-1598) continued the campaign to unify Japan. Toyotomi began his military career as a common foot soldier but rose to the rank of general, a rare feat. It was not Toyotomi but one of his generals Tokugawa Iyeyasu (1543-1616) who finally unified Japan. Tokugawa established himself as shogun, the supreme ruler. His family then held the shogunate for another 250 years, a time known as the Edo period.

### Who were the Samurai?

The word samurai translates as “One who serves.” A samurai shared many similarities with the medieval European knight. One had to be born into a samurai or knightly family, only infrequently like Toyotomi Hideoyoshi was one made a samurai. A samurai was part of the ruling elite and had many privileges afforded to him. These warriors held land or fiefs given to them by their lords in exchange for service. Tax revenue and the produce from the land enabled the samurai to devote their time to martial training. Some samurai, especially during the unification period, did not have lords. These samurai were known as ronin “wave men.” Frequently these men turned to banditry to make money, a not so honorable profession.

Japanese, Sengoku Period (mid – 16th -17th Century)  
**Samurai Armor**  
Steel, iron, silk, leather, wood, hemp, & lacquer  
Gift of Bill Traeger  
Museum # 2002.8.1 A-F

Knights and samurai each had a strict code of conduct on how to conduct their lives. Chivalry was the code for knights while Bushido was the code of the samurai. Honor and upholding of it was very important for the samurai. If one lost honor through defeat in battle, the code expected the samurai to kill himself. However, Bushido and Chivalry were the ideals but not the norm. Sometimes these warriors would do things not allowed by their code but would not be punished.

During the Edo period, when the Tokugawa shoguns ruled Japan, samurai no longer needed to train for war. Instead they concentrated on the running of the government and other pursuits such as art, calligraphy, and music. In 1868, the Tokugawa shogun rule and the samurai came to an end. The emperor of Japan, who was only a figurehead during the shogunate, reassumed his power. One of his acts was officially dissolving the samurai as a class in Japan. Although the samurai are gone, their code and way of life are still admired to this day.



This symbol on the helmet was the family crest used by samurai clans much like coats of arms for medieval European knights. A retainer clan would not have their own but instead take the crest of their daiymo. Three clans used this symbol during the 1500's: The Otomo clan which was the daiymo family of Bongo Province on Kyushu, The Usui which was a retainer clan of the Otomo, and the Nabeshima. These clans were all native to Kyushu, the westernmost island of the islands that make up Japan.

## A Glossary of Samurai Armor Terms

Dô: Breast/Back Plates	Kabuto: Helmet
Haidate: Protective apron	Kote: Arm sleeves
Hanbô: Half cheek guard	Sode: Shoulder Plates
Suneate: Shin guards	

## For more information on Samurai and Japanese culture in the 16th century:

### Books:

Harry Cook. *Samurai: The Story of a Warrior Tradition*. Sterling Publishing Company, Inc. 1998  
ISBN# 0806906707. A in-depth book on the history and customs of the samurai.

Jenny Roberts. *Samurai Warriors*. Glouster Press. 1990. A book aimed towards younger readers on history of the samurai.

### Movies:

*Ran* (1985). This movie by Akira Kurosawa provides an excellent visual depiction of 16th century Japan and samurai warfare.

*Seven Samurai* (1954). Story of seven Ronin samurai who come together to protect a village from bandits. It was remade in the United States as *The Magnificent Seven* (1960).

### Web Site:

<http://www.samurai-archives.com> Great source for information on the samurai in the 16th century.



# Samurai Armor

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**written by Jennifer Jensen**

## **Objective:**

Students will be able to summarize information learned about samurais and will be able to retell the information through pictures and words by creating a kamishibai.

## **State Core Links**

Grades 3-6: Language Arts

Standard 8: Writing – Objective 6: Write in different forms and genres.

Grades 3-6: Visual Arts

Standard 4: The student will interpret and apply visual arts in relation to cultures, history, and all learning.

## **Grade Level:** 3-6

## **Materials:**

Image of *Samurai Armor*

5 sheets of paper for each student

Art supplies (crayons, colored pencils, markers)

Access to articles or books about Samurais

A copy of the Samurai kamishibai (included in packet) or one you created yourself

## **Background:**

To be a samurai was a special honor, but the job was not an easy one. Samurai means “those who serve.” They were private soldiers who were hired to protect the property of powerful landowners. Samurai lived an unwritten code of honor called the bushido, which means “way of the warrior.” Strongly influenced by the ideas of Confucius, samurai were self-disciplined, courageous, compassionate, and fiercely loyal to their masters. Obedience and honor were more important to a samurai than his own life. Today there are no more Samurai, but the code of bushido is still a big influence on the Japanese military men.

Samurai employed a range of weapons such as bows and arrows, spears, and guns; but their most famous weapon and their symbol was the sword. The true samurai was not only a trained warrior, but also an artist and philosopher. Samurai cultivated the spirit and the mind through writing, painting, and calligraphy.

*Kamishibai*, (kah-mee-she-bye) or “paper-theater,” is said to have started in Japan in the late 1920s, but it is part of a long tradition of picture storytelling, beginning as early as the 9th or 10th centuries when priests used illustrated scrolls combined with narration to convey Buddhist doctrine to lay audiences. Later, etoki (picture-tellers) adopted these methods to tell more secular stories. Throughout the Edo period (1603-1867) and on into the Meiji period (1868-1912), a variety of street performance styles evolved, using pictures and narration.

The stages used for these early precursors of kamishibai were not as easily transportable as the form that developed in the late 1920s and came to be what we know as kamishibai today. The kamishibai performer



made a living by selling candy, and he could strap the small wooden stage onto his bicycle with the illustrated cards and his wares and carry them easily from town to town. Typically, the stories were told in serial fashion and were so suspenseful that audiences came repeatedly to buy candy and to hear the next episode of the story.

By the 1950s and the advent of television, kamishibai had become so popular that television was initially referred to as denki kamishibai, or “electric kamishibai.” But as Japan became increasingly affluent, kamishibai became associated with poverty and backwardness. Eventually kamishibai as a street-performance art all but disappeared. The artists who had made their living with kamishibai turned to more lucrative pursuits, notably the creation of manga (comic books) and later anime, but they never entirely forgot their roots in kamishibai.

But kamishibai has never entirely died out. Kamishibai stories for educational purposes are still being published and can be found in schools and libraries throughout Japan.

### **Activity:**

1. Begin your lesson by asking students what they know about samurai warriors. Have them think and discuss in pairs and then have them share with the whole class.
2. Tell students your objective for the lesson: Students will be able to summarize information learned about samurais and will be able to retell the information through pictures and words by creating a kamishibai.
3. Explain to the students what a kamishibai is. It may help to explain them if you create one yourself prior to the lesson. This could be a great way to present your background information on samurai warriors. If you don't want to create your own kamishibai, there is an example included in the packet.
4. Divide your class into 5 groups and take them into a computer lab to research one of these areas: History of Samurais, Samurai Culture, Samurai Philosophy, Samurai Weapons, and Samurai Education (you can add or remove any of these categories). A few links are provided below and you could also find library books about Samurais.
5. Have each group think of the 5 most important facts about these topics.
6. Once they get their 5 facts chosen, have students create 5 pictures and 5 captions to create their kamishibai. They should draw the 5 pictures on a separate piece of paper and then glue the caption for the first picture on the back of the last picture, then the caption for the second picture on the back of the first picture so that they can easily present the story to the rest of the class.
7. Once the class has finished their story have them present them to each other.

**Assessment:** Give each student a note card and have them write down one fact they learned about each topic being presented. Also have each member of the group write down what each student in their group did to contribute in their group. This will ensure accountability for group work.

### **Sources:**

<http://www.timewarptrio.com/teachers-parents/lessons/pdf/twt-lesson-samurai.pdf>

<http://samuraikids.com.au/samuraifacts.html#>

<http://www.kamishibai.com/history.html>

Cut out the strips below and glue them onto the back of the kamishibai pictures. Glue the first strip on the back of the last picture, the second strip on the back of the first picture, the third strip on the back of the second picture, the fourth strip on the back of the third picture, and the 5 strip on the back of the fourth picture. This will help for easy storytelling.

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**To be a samurai was a very special honor, but the job was not an easy one. The word Samurai means “those who serve.”**

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**Samurai lived an unwritten code of honor called the bushido, which means “way of the warrior.” Strongly influenced by the ideas of Confucius, samurai were self-disciplined, courageous, compassionate, and fiercely loyal to their masters. Obedience and honor were more important to a samurai than his own life. Today there are no more Samurai, but the code of bushido is still a big influence on the Japanese military men.**

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**Samurai wore a special armor to protect them. This armor was composed of many pieces including a Kabuto (helmet), a Hanbô (Half cheek guard), a Dô (Breast/Back Plates), a Haidate (Protective apron), a Kote (Arm sleeves), and a Suneate (Shin guards).**

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**Samurai employed a range of weapons such as bows and arrows, spears, and guns; but their most famous weapon and their symbol was the sword.**

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**The true samurai was not only a trained warrior, but also an artist and philosopher. Samurai cultivated the spirit and the mind through writing, painting, and calligraphy.**

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Kabuto



Hanbo



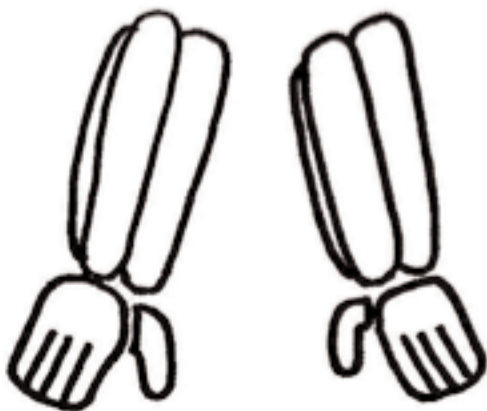
Dô



Haidate



Kote



Suneate



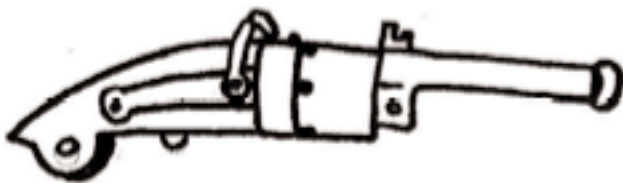




Bow and Arrow



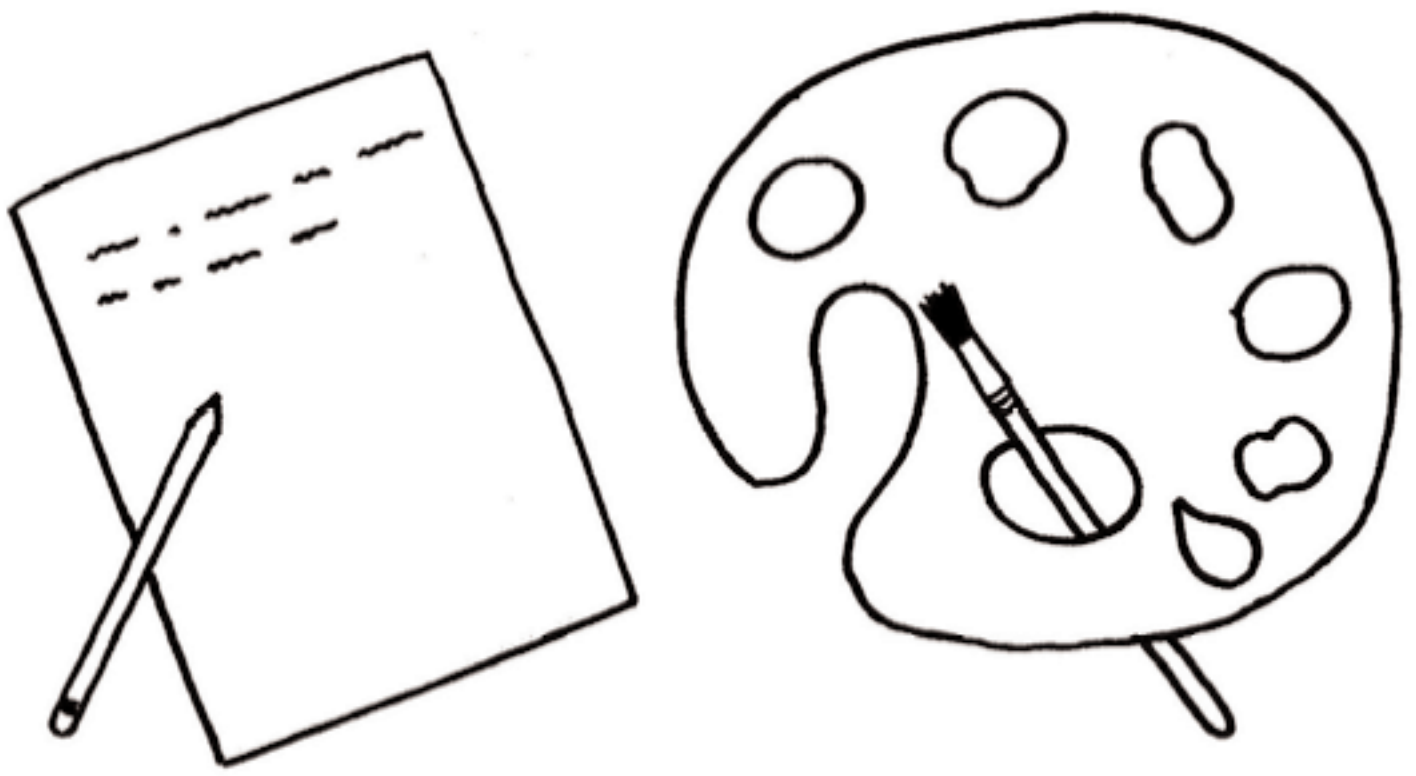
Spear



Japanese Gun



Samurai Sword



夢文

### ***Fighting Warriors***

### ***Muromachi Period***



Japanese, Muromachi Period (1392-1573)

***Fighting Warriors***

Paper, gouache, gold leaf, fabric, lacquer and wood  
Gift in memory of Sallie Eccles  
Museum # 2002.12.4

A battle between two samurai clans is the subject of the screen. The emphasis is on the center screen where a samurai on horseback is charging at his rivals in the boats to his left. His armor and helmet suggests he is the leader of the clan on the right. One would believe the leader was rather foolhardy, rushing into this battle. However, he is showing the true characteristics of the samurai.

This poem by the 16th century samurai explains this scene better than any other words can:

Fate is in Heaven, the armor is on the breast, success is with the legs. Go to the battlefield firmly confident of victory, and you will come home with no wounds whatever. Engage in combat fully determined to die and you will be alive; wish to survive in the battle and you will surely meet death. When you leave the house determined not to see it again you will come home safely; when you have any thought of returning you will not return. You may not be in the wrong to think that the world is always subject to change, but the warrior must not entertain this way of thinking, for his fate is always determined.

Uesugi Kenshin (1530-1578)

# Warriors in Japan and Europe

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written by Kathy Korkishko

## **Objective:**

Objectives: (Standard 3, Objective 2 – World Civilization)

- 1) Students will investigate the diffusion and interaction of cultures by assessing the influence of ethics and advancing technologies (military warfare and weaponry) on the development of societies.
- 2) Students will understand the influence of revolution and social change in the transition from early modern to contemporary societies regarding social organization.
- 3) Students will demonstrate increased understanding of the way art interfaces with literature and history to educate.

## **State Core Links**

Standard 3, Objective 2 – World Civilization

**Grade Level:** Secondary

## **Activity:**

Activity 1: Art Analysis through Literature

## **Background:**

*Bushido* (武士道 meaning "Way of the Warrior", is a Japanese code of conduct and moral principles linked to the samurai way of life, loosely analogous to the concept of chivalry, stressing frugality, loyalty, martial arts mastery and honor unto death. Under the Bushido ideal, if a samurai failed to uphold his honor he could regain it by performing *harakiri* (ritual suicide).

In an excerpt from his book *Samurai: The World of the Warrior*, historian Stephen Turnbull describes the role of harakiri in feudal Japan:

In the world of the warrior, seppuku was a deed of bravery that was admirable in a samurai who knew he was defeated, disgraced, or mortally wounded. It meant that he could end his days with his transgressions wiped away and with his reputation not merely intact, but actually enhanced. The cutting of the abdomen released the samurai's spirit in the most dramatic fashion, but it was an extremely painful and unpleasant way to die, and sometimes the samurai who was performing the act asked a loyal comrade help him complete the ritual if he was unable to do so.

In the Bushido code, the violent existence of the samurai was tempered by the serenity and wisdom of Buddhism and the respect for elders (filial piety) of Confucianism. Bushido developed between the 9th to 12th centuries having wide influence across the whole of Japan from the 12th to 16th centuries. Bushido, then, is the unuttered and unwritten code of moral principles which the samurai were required or instructed to observe.

Bushido was widely practiced and it is surprising how uniform the samurai code remained over time, crossing over all geographic and socio-economic backgrounds of the samurai. The samurai represented a wide populace numbering from 7% to 10% of the Japanese population, and the first Meiji era census at the end of the

19th century counted 1,282,000 members of the "high samurais," allowed to ride a horse, and 492,000 members of the "low samurai," allowed to wear two swords, but not to ride a horse, in a country of about 25 million.

Other parts of the Bushido philosophy cover methods of raising children, appearance and grooming, and most of all, constant preparation for death. One might say that death is at the very center of Bushido as the overall purpose- to die a good death and with one's honor intact. Harakiri or ritual suicide, developed as an integral part of the code of Bushido and the discipline of the samurai warrior class. It is an act of loyalty and dignity and also a means of redeeming failure through an honorable death. The samurai understood harakiri, whether ordered as punishment or chosen in preference to a dishonorable death at the hands of an enemy, as an unquestionable demonstration of their honor, courage, loyalty, and moral character. Seppuku is not the act of suicide, but the state of mind reached by the samurai to accomplish harakiri.

The Bushido code is typified by seven virtues:

- Integrity (義 gi?)
- Courage (勇 yuu?)
- Benevolence (仁 jin?) (Kindness)
- Respect (礼 rei?)
- Honesty (誠 makoto or 信 shin?)
- Honor (誉 yo?)
- Loyalty (忠 chuu?)
- Filial piety (孝 kō?) (Love and respect for one's ancestors)
- Wisdom (智 chi?)
- Care for the aged (悌 tei?)

A Japanese sword, or nihontō (日本刀 or にほんとう lit. Japanese sword), is one of the traditional bladed weapons of Japan used by samurai warriors. It is a deep, graceful, curved long sword held with two hands and designed for cutting, rather than stabbing. Early models had uneven curves with the deepest part of the curve at the hilt. With changes to military fighting techniques, the center of the curve moved up the blade. As cavalry became the predominant fighting unit, the curved sword was a far more efficient weapon when wielded by a warrior on horseback where the curve of the blade adds considerably to the downward force of a cutting action.

The sacred art of forging a Japanese blade took hours, days, or even weeks. As with many complex endeavors, rather than a single craftsman, several artists were involved. There was a smith to forge the rough shape, often a second smith (apprentice) to fold the metal, a specialist polisher (called a togi), as well as, the various artisans that made the koshirae --the various fittings used to decorate the finished blade and saya (sheath) including the tsuka (hilt), fuchi (collar), kashira (pommel), and tsuba (hand guard). According to myth, each blade had a unique spirit embodied within it.





Blacksmith Munetaka (end of the 10th century), helped by a fox spirit, forging the blade kogitsune-maru ("Little fox"). The spirit is represented by a woman surrounded by foxes. Engraving by Ogata Gekkō (1859–1920), 1873.



The nihontō would be carried in a saya (sheath) and tucked into the samurai's belt. Originally, samurai would carry the sword with the blade turned down. This was a more comfortable way for the armored samurai to carry his very long sword. The bulk of the samurai armor made it difficult to draw the sword from any other place on his body. When unarmored, samurai would carry their sword with the blade facing up. This made it possible to draw the sword and strike in one quick motion. In order to draw the sword, the samurai would turn the saya (sheath) downward ninety degrees and pull it out of his obi (sash) just a bit with his left hand, then gripping the tsuka (hilt) with his right hand he would slide it out while sliding the saya (sheath) back to its original position.



The short story below depicts a young Japanese soldier who is disillusioned by failure of the Young Officer's revolt of February 26, 1936 in Tokyo of which he was a part. He upholds the Bushido code of the samurai.

(Teachers, please read this short story on harakiri, the Japanese suicide ritual, before assigning to your students.)

1) Read the short story, *Patriotism* by Yukio Mishima (pre- WWII) found at the following website:

<http://www.mutantfrog.com/patriotism-by-yukio-mishima>

2) Answer the following questions:

- a) Which of the seven Bushido virtues are noted in the main characters?
- b) What things are ritualized in the story? Why?
- c) What is the role of women in Japanese society according to the story?
- d) Note how Mishima tells in the opening paragraph exactly what the story is about and what's going to happen in the end. By doing this the writer is telling the reader that what's interesting isn't so much what happens, but how it happens. Discuss various reactions the reader might have knowing the ending first off, or not knowing until the end of the story. Did this make the story more or less affective?
- e) Many scholars feel that the samurai code transferred to the kamikaze, suicide bomber ideology in WWII. Prove or disprove this theory.
- f) What are the psychological views regarding suicide today in Japan vs. the USA? (Note that some religions such as the Roman Catholic Church refuse burial in the Catholic cemetery to a person who has committed suicide.)
- g) Is suicide in war more accepted? This rite is a tradition in many military societies, not just with the Japanese. Consider the Spartan dictum that the soldier return with his shield or on it, or the Roman practice of falling on the sword.
- h) Yukio Mishima, the author of *Patriotism*, starred in the Japanese movie of the same name. What do you supposed his beliefs were?



Final scene of the movie

Activity 2: Comparing Weapons of Choice from Two (2) Elite Warrior Groups  
(Some additional research on the Internet may be necessary to complete this assignment.)

Background:

Roman Legionnaires 509-107 BC

The heavy infantry was composed of citizen legionnaires that could afford the equipment: an iron helmet, shield, armor and pilum, a heavy javelin whose range was about 30 meters. After 387 BC, the preferred

weapon was the gladius, a short sword. The heavy infantry was subdivided, according to the legionaries' experience, into three separate lines:

- a) *hastati* (sing. *hastatus*) were the youngest, less reliable troops.
- b) *principes* (sing. *princeps*), men in their prime ages (late twenties to early thirties).
- c) *triarii* (sing. *triarius*), the veteran soldiers. Only in extreme situations would they be used in battle and rested one knee down when unengaged. Since these elite warriors fought in a phalanx, they were equipped with spears rather than the pilum and gladius. The sight of an advanced shield wall composed of these soldiers, discouraged exultant enemies pursuing *hastati* and *principes*. "To fall upon the *triarii*" was a Roman idiom meaning to use one's last resort.

After the 2nd century BC, every legion had a baggage train of 640 mules or about 1 mule for every 8 legionaries. To keep these baggage trains from becoming too large and slow, each infantryman carried as much of his own equipment as he could, including his own armor, weapons and 15 days rations, for about 25-30 kg (50–60 pounds). This arrangement allowed for the supply train to become detached from the main body of the legion, thus greatly increasing the army's speed while on the march.

*Gladius* is a Latin word for sword. Early ancient Roman swords were similar to those used by the Greeks. From the 3rd century BC, the Romans adopted swords similar to those used by the Celts. These blades were long and narrow, being good for both cut and thrust.



Answer the following questions to complete Activity 2:

- 1) What is the difference in time period for these two elite groups of samurai and legionnaires?
- 2) How were their "codes of honor" similar?
- 3) How do samurai and legionnaires compare in military techniques?
- 4) Compare the gladius and samurai sword. How are they similar in use and appearance? How are they different?
- 5) Compare samurai with knights of the feudal period considering military techniques, weapons and social organization. How did these warriors fit into their societies to help maintain the status quo? How are their honor codes similar?

Assessment:

- 1) Students will complete d, e, f, g and two other questions in Activity 1 and discuss their findings in class.
- 2) Students will complete #1, #2, #5 and either #3 or #4 in Activity 2 and discuss their findings in class.
- 3) Students will demonstrate increased understanding of the way art interfaces with literature and history.

Sources:

Harry Cook. *Samurai: The Story of a Warrior Tradition*. Sterling Publishing Company, Inc. 1998 ISBN# 0806906707.

An in-depth book on the history and customs of the samurai.

Movie: *Seven Samurai* (1954). Story of seven Ronin samurai who come together to protect a village from bandits. It was remade in the United States as *The Magnificent Seven* (1960).

<http://www.samurai-archives.com>

Great source for information on the samurai in the 16th century.

<http://www.mutantfrog.com/patriotism-by-yukio-mishima/>  
(Short Story) *Patriotism* by Yuko Mishima

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman\\_legionnaire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_legionnaire)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japanese\\_sword](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japanese_sword)

## Guardian Lion

## Edo Period



Guardian lions were an import from China during the Tang dynasty (8th century) which in turned had adopted the image of lions from Central Asia. The Japanese lion is a combination of the Imperial lion of India with the sky-dog from Chinese mythology. They would usually be stationed outside Shinto shrines or Buddhist temples. Most often they were in pairs; a female and male. The female lion would guard the people while the male would guard the structure. During the Edo period in Japan, these lion figures began to be installed at entrances to many secular buildings.

Japanese, Edo Period (1605-1868)

**Guardian Lion**

Wood with traces of polychromy

Gift of Owen D. Mort Jr.

Museum # 1993.027.019



# Guardian Lion

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written by Kathy Korkishko

## **State Core Links**

- 1) Students will explore the movement potential found in an idea, visual image, object, text, sound or activity and abstract it to create a motif. Students will explore the formal properties of choreography using a simple sequence or motif. (“Creating” Dance Core– 5th Grade)
- 2) Students will compare parts of an object to the whole to improve their skill in displaying proportion in works of art. Students will balance works of art by evenly distributing elements on either side of the center. Students will identify and discuss realism and abstraction. (“Appreciating and Decoding Meaning in Art” Visual Arts Core – 5th Grade)
- 3) Students will introduce theme and variation in instrumental music and create simple accompaniment in a theatrical presentation. Students will identify the elements that create texture/harmony within a theatrical presentation. (“Creating” and “Listening” Music Core and Theatre Core – 5th Grade)
- 4) Students will utilize four of the eight standards: oral language, phonics, spelling, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension and writing in creating a myth or story with supernatural attributes and symbolism. (Language Arts Core, K-6th Grades). Students will attempt to explain elements of symbolism in art through writing. (Secondary Language Arts Core)
- 5) Students will investigate the diffusion and interaction of cultures from the Classical Period through the Age of Discovery (World Civilization Secondary, 6th Grade Core). What impact might Asian art and symbolism have had on the West?

**Grade Level:** 5th-8th Grades

## **Activity:**



### **Background:**

Frightening animals are used in many cultures to protect temples or sacred places of worship. In European cathedrals, griffins (mythological birds) and gargoyles (little monsters) were carved on the roof of the church to protect worshippers and scare away witches and evil spirits.

In Japan, fierce stone lions, sometimes called temple dogs, guarded the Buddhist temple or Shinto shrine entrance. Most often they were in pairs; a female on the left and a male on the right, stationed as wards to protect from various evils. The female lion would guard the people while the male would guard the structure. When found in pairs, the female traditionally has a closed mouth, while the male has an open mouth. Legend has it that the open mouth is to ward off evil spirits and the closed mouth will keep good spirits in. Other Japanese adaptations state that the male is inhaling, representing life, while the female is exhaling, representing death. Sometimes the female is depicted with cubs.

The Japanese lion is a combination of the Imperial lion of India with the sky-dog from Chinese mythology. Lions also bring good luck in Chinese mythology. People dress as huge lions in parades to celebrate happy occasions such as weddings, opening a new business or on the Chinese New Year.



Open-mouthed Shisa on a traditional tile roof in Okinawa Prefecture.

### Activity 1: Animals as Guardians

Materials: Paper, markers or crayons for #7; clay or paper mache for #8.

1) What characteristics of the lion make him an excellent guardian of a temple?

2) Do you think all temple lions look this fierce? Why or why not?

3) Go to the following link:

<http://www.theschoolbell.com/Links/Chinatown/Lions.html>

Describe the lion costumes you see. Are they frightening? What is their purpose in the parade?

4) Some of the qualities of temple guardians were transferred to the emperor or king. Which qualities that you have discussed could be associated symbolically with the king? What famous people are associated with lions as their symbol?

5) Why would the Emperor want his people to associate him with a warning?

6) Often the Emperor is associated with a five-toed dragon? Do you think a dragon or a lion is a more powerful animal? Which would you pick to symbolize you, if you were the Emperor?

7) Create a flag with your powerful symbol on it if you were the Emperor. Why did you choose the particular colors that you used?

8) Create an animal as a guardian to your bedroom in clay or paper mache. Why did you choose this particular animal as a ward against evil for yourself? What attributes does this animal have that you wanted people to note?

### Activity 2: Examining Shape, Line, Color and Texture

Materials: Drawing paper & pencil or camera. Student will need transportation to building site.

1) Go to the Cathedral of the Madeleine, 331 East South Temple in downtown Salt Lake City. Take a camera or a drawing sketch pad and pencil. Stand outside the main doors and see if you can see any guardians on the roof of this church. What animal do you observe? Why might this animal be associated with supernatural powers? Take a picture or draw one of the animals seen on the rooftop of this church and compare it to another guardian lion (one above or another one you have downloaded from the Internet). How are the lines, shape, color and textures similar or different? (Write two sentences for each, comparing and contrasting: lines, shape, color and texture in each animal.) What body parts of these animals are emphasized? Why did the artist do that? What do these animals symbolize that might be different than what the guardian lions do? What effect would color have on the art pieces? What colors would you use if you were the artist? Why?

2) Go to the Masonic Temple, 650 East South Temple in downtown Salt Lake City. Take a camera or a drawing sketch pad and pencil. Take a picture or draw the animals on the front porch of this building. Compare them with the guardian lion above or one you have downloaded from the Internet. How are the lines, shape, color and textures similar or different? (Write two sentences for each, comparing and contrasting: lines, shape, color and texture in each animal.) What body parts of these animals are emphasized? Why did the artist do that? Of what media (clay, stone, porcelain, or plastic) are these animals made? What effect would color have on the art pieces? What colors would you use if you were the artist? Why?

3) Find a building in your area that has animals or guardians on it such as a library or a church and complete the same investigation as above.

Group Activity 3: Creating myths/stories through literature, music and dance. Each student will create a myth/story below (#2, #3, or #4). The group will determine which student's story they will use in the theatrical presentation to the class.

Materials: Drawing paper/sketch pad, pencil, colored pencils or chalk; musical instruments and props made for theatrical presentation in #5; instruments in #6.

Folklore: The Shisa Legend (adapted from Legends of Okinawa by Chizue Sesoko)

When a certain emissary to China returned from one of his voyages to the court at Shuri Castle, he brought with him as a gift for the king a necklace decorated with a small figurine of a shis (guardian lion). The king found it charming and wore it underneath his clothes. Now it happened that at Naha Port bay, the village of Madanbashi was often terrorized by a sea dragon that ate the villagers and destroyed their property. One day, the king of the region was visiting the village, and one of these attacks happened; all the people ran and hid. The local noro or shaman had been told in a dream to instruct the king when he visited, to stand on the beach and lift up his figurine towards the dragon. He faced the monster with the figurine held high, and immediately a giant roar sounded all through the village, a roar so deep and powerful that it even shook the dragon. A massive boulder then fell from heaven and crushed the dragon's tail. He couldn't move, and eventually died. This boulder and the dragon's body became covered with plants and surrounded by trees, and can still be seen today. It is the "Gana-mui Woods" near Naha Ohashi bridge. The townspeople built a large stone shisa to protect it from the dragon's spirit and other threats.

- 1) Read the legend above. What was the purpose of this legend? Can you come up with a logical interpretation of what really happened in the story (without any supernatural aspects)? Write it down and share with your teacher. Why do all cultures have myths and legends? (Discuss the local myth of Timpanogos and why the princess guards the mountain still.)
- 2) Examine some of the guardians we have in our culture. Write a story about guardian angels or guardian spirits or even ghosts that you have heard of protecting someone. Can you also write a logical explanation for the supernatural happenings in your story? Why or why not? Discuss with your group to determine which story your group will use to complete #5 below.
- 3) Write a myth or story about how an animal of your choice received supernatural power. Tell how this animal might help humankind in the future. Draw your animal. Discuss with your group to determine which story your group will use to complete #5 below.
- 4) Write a myth or story about how you turned into an animal that is important in another culture and how the people of that culture feel about you. Be creative. How about a crocodile or snake for Africa or a camel for Egypt? What attributes will your animal have? Will your animal be the perfect hero/heroine or not exactly perfect? What colors will you use on your animal? Draw your animal. Discuss with your group to determine which story your group will use to complete #5 below.
- 5) Create a dance with or without words to tell your story in #3, or #4. Explore the types of movement your animal would utilize. Develop a sequence of choreography to present your story with or without props. Choose an instrument to represent each of the characters in your story. Develop a theme or series of notes to depict each character with the individual instrument you have chosen as each appears in your choreography.

Assessment:

- 1) Students must complete #1-6 and either #7 or #8 of Activity 1.
- 2) Students must complete either #1 or #2 of Activity 2.
- 3) Group Project Activity 3: All groups must complete #1, #5 and any other of the group's choice to create the story or myth to present to the class.

Bibliography:

<http://www.bookrags.com/wiki/Shisa>, 2006. Accessed June 21, 2008

<http://www.theschoolbell.com/Links/Chinatown/Lions.html>, 2003.  
Accessed June 18, 2008.

### Grace

### Takeuchi Miyuki



Calligraphy is an art that has been studied for over three thousand years. This knowledge of calligraphy is an important step in the understanding of Japanese culture. Calligraphy is not merely an exercise in good handwriting, but rather one of the foremost art forms of Japan.

In Japanese, calligraphy is called shodo, or “the way of writing.” It is widely practiced by people of all ages in Japan. Indeed, all Japanese children have to learn the basics of calligraphy as part of their elementary school education. There are three different types of Japanese calligraphy: Kaisho (or “correct writing”), Gyousho (semi-cursive), and Sousho (cursive).

Kaisho calligraphy is the form that students study first because it is the closest to the printed characters that you might see in a newspaper. It is helpful because the students are already familiar with the characters, but at the same time teaches them to use the brush correctly. Gyousho means “traveling writing” and is thought of as semi-cursive. Similar to English cursive, what is written as separate strokes in kaisho style flow together more in gyousho. Most educated Japanese are able to read this style. On the other hand, Sousho is usually only read by those who are trained to write in it. With this style, form supersedes readability.

This piece is done in a bold, broad sousho style and is the form for the word Inori or “pray.” The artist was contemplating the human condition, trying to determine why they would commit massacres. This is a call for world peace.

The piece was done on Hanshi rice paper on a dark tan mount. The edges are darkened with a black ink to give the illusion that there is a border. A rod without knobs is attached at the bottom.

Takeuchi Miyuki, Japanese (1947- )

**Grace**

Ink on Paper

Gift of the artist

Museum # 2006.10.1

# Japanese Calligraphy

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**written by Jennifer Jensen**

## **Objective:**

Students will be able to create a calligraphy piece of their name in Japanese after learning about the art of calligraphy.

## **State Core Links**

Social Studies – Grade 4

Standard 4: Students participate in activities that promote cultural understanding and good citizenship.

Objective 1: Show appreciation for the uniqueness of other cultures

Visual Arts – Grades 3-6

Standard 4: The student will interpret and apply visual arts in relation to cultures, history, and all learning.

Objective 2: Connect various kinds of art with particular cultures, times, or places.

## **Grade Level:** 3-6

## **Materials:**

Image of *Grace Calligraphy* by Takeuchi

Manila or rice paper

Black ink or paint

Paint brushes

## **Activity:**

1. Begin by explaining some of the background to Japanese calligraphy. Explain that learning about calligraphy will help them in understanding more about Japanese culture.
2. Show students some examples of Japanese calligraphy in the kaisho, gyousho, and susho styles. This can easily be found by visiting some of the sources below or by searching on the internet.
3. Show the postcard of *Grace Calligraphy* by Takeuchi to the class and explain to them that this piece is done in the susho style and is the form for the word Inori or "pray." The artist was contemplating the human condition and why they would commit massacres. This piece is a call for world peace.
4. Take students into a computer lab or print these off prior to your lesson. Have students look up their name in Japanese calligraphy by visiting this site: <http://www.japanesetranslator.co.uk/your-name-in-japanese/> . Once they have found their name, have them print it out and go back to the classroom.
5. Provide students with lightweight paper, paintbrushes, and black paint. Traditionally, Japanese calligraphy is done on rice paper with ink, but to keep supply costs low and to avoid big messes, any lightweight paper and black paint should work just fine.
6. Allow students plenty of time to perfect their calligraphy and encourage them to do their best work.
7. Once the pieces have dried, you can choose to either mount them on another color of paper or glue a straw on the top back and pull a string through so that it can hang on a nail or push pin.

## **Assessment:**

Give the students a rubric before starting that explains the quality of work you expect for the highest grade.



Also, informally assess them by observing how closely they try to make their own calligraphy piece look like the name printed off the computer.

**Extension:**

A whole unit could be done on the art of Japanese calligraphy. Students could pick out a specific word that they want to write and then write a short response on why they chose that word, similar to the artist's reason for choosing "pray" in the postcard.

**Sources:**

For examples of Japanese symbols: <http://www.webvinder.com/kanji/index.html>

Your name in Japanese: <http://www.japanesetranslator.co.uk/your-name-in-japanese/>

Counting books: <http://teacher.scholastic.com/ilp/view.asp?SubjectID=2&SubheadID=6&TopicID=6&GradeID=&PageURL=%2Flessonrepro%2Flessonplans%2Fprofbooks%2Fcalligraphy%2Epdf>

Background: [http://www.japanese-name-translation.com/site/about\\_japanese\\_calligraphy.html](http://www.japanese-name-translation.com/site/about_japanese_calligraphy.html)

## Ceremonial Kimono

## Japanese



The color and choice of symbols on this kimono may make it a wedding reception kimono and is called *uchikake*. Red in Japanese culture is a popular choice for wedding kimonos because it symbolizes luck. Peacocks are symbols of beauty and dignity. Chrysanthemums are symbols of happiness and a life of ease. It is also the symbol of autumn. Both symbols are transplants from China, which had heavy influence of Japan's art and culture during the medieval period.

The origin of *uchikake* goes back to the Edo period and were worn by women of warrior and noble families. Near the end of the period, it became part of the bridal dress, which was composed of three kimonos worn on successive days.

On the first day, the bride would wear a white on white kimono to represent purity. On the second day, she would wear the red kimono because of the symbols and color; it would be a shield against ill fortune but also luck in the wedding. The last day would be the formal black kimono.

Japanese  
**Ceremonial Kimono**  
Silk, gold, silver, embroidered  
Gift of Natalie Cotterell  
Museum # 1993.13.1

# Ceremonial Kimono

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written by **Brittanni McLeod**

## **Objective:**

- To introduce students to traditional Japanese culture through learning symbols, and art styles that are used in Kimono design.
- To compare and analyze one's own culture by learning about another.

## **State Core Links**

Grades 3-6

Standard 2

- The student will analyze, reflect on, and apply the structures of art.

Objective 1

- Analyze and reflect on works of art by their elements and principles.
- Determine how artists create dominance in their work; e.g., size, repetition, and contrast.

Objective 2

- Create works of art using the elements and principles.
- Identify dominant elements in significant works of art.
- Group some significant works of art by a common element or visual characteristic.
- Create a work of art that uses all of the space on the paper.

Standard 3

- The student will choose and evaluate artistic subject matter, themes, symbols, ideas, meanings, and purposes.

Objective 1

- Explore possible content and purposes in significant works of art.
- Explain possible meanings or interpretations of some significant works of art.
- Invent possible stories that may explain what is going on in these same works of art
- Discuss how an artist's work might be different if it is displayed publicly as opposed to being displayed at home.

Objective 2

- Discuss, evaluate, and choose symbols, ideas, subject matter, meanings, and purposes for their own artworks.
- Group significant works of art according to theme or subject matter.
- Judge which works of art most clearly communicate through the use of symbols.
- Create symbols in art that express individual or group interests.
- Create a work of art that uses a similar subject matter, symbol, idea, and/or meaning found in a significant work of art.
- Select some art for public display around the school.

Standard 4

- The student will interpret and apply visual arts in relation to cultures, history, and all learning.

Objective 1

- Compare the arts of different cultures to explore their similarities and diversities.

Objective 2

- Connect various kinds of art with particular cultures, times, or places.

- Predict how a work of art or a craft can be connected to an ancient culture.
- Describe why a local craft or art form looks like it was made in your area.

### Objective 3

- Recognize the connection of visual arts to all learning.
- Use a visual arts form as a help in expressing an idea in a non-art subject; e.g., a science project, the writing of a poem, a social studies project.

### **Grade Level:** 3-12

### **Activity:**

#### Introduction for Students:

Learning about traditional clothing from around the world can aid in the understanding of various cultures. A person's daily wear can tell us many things about their culture, such as what they do for daily work, if there is social stratification within the community (different clothes for different economic levels), special clothes for dignitaries or community leaders, the culture's artistic style, and what possessions or ideas a culture deems important (motifs, images, accessories) just to name a few. Let's learn about the Japanese culture by examining a piece of traditional clothing called the Kimono. Take out both the History of the Kimono and Different Types of kimonos fact sheets. Then follow the directions below.

#### Preparation:

- Read over the fact sheets to familiarize yourself with the history of the kimono.
- (optional for older students) Print off copies of the fact sheets for students to have on file.

#### Lesson/Activity:

1. Explain the history of the Kimono by reading and discussing with your students the kimono timescale.
2. Next discuss the various types of kimonos worn by both men and women today by using the Different Types of Kimonos fact sheet.
3. After this is complete have a classroom discussion using the following questions as a guide. Feel free to add more questions, or to adjust it to the level of teaching you will be conducting.

#### Discussion Questions:

##### Different types of Kimonos

1. What do you think is the function of having shorter sleeves on the kimono once the woman is married? What are some clothing styles that you use for function (workout clothes, dance clothes, swimsuits, etc)?
2. What is the symbolism for having shorter sleeves on your Kimono once the woman is married? What types of items show symbolism in your clothing (Skull caps, Christian crosses, wedding rings, etc)?
3. In regards to the Yukata, why are some fabrics chosen over others for various occasions (hint cotton vs. silk)?

##### Kimono Timescale

1. How has technology in American culture helped with the diversification of clothing (images, materials etc)? What are some examples of the link between technology and changes in clothing?
2. In the timescale it tells how the obi was first tied to the side, then the front, and later to the back. What changes have appeared in how you wear clothing, in comparison to your parents or your grandparents when they were your age? Do you think change happens faster or slower in American clothing?

3. When the Samurais started having control over the country the functionality of the clothing changed. It became less formal, and more able to assist in the movements necessary for the samurai. This affected not only the samurai's clothing, but the fashion of the whole culture. Looking at American history, can you identify certain eras when history has changed fashion? You can compare such eras as the Flappers from the roaring 20s to Rosie the riveters of the 1940s.

Note: Remind students that although kimonos were worn everyday in the past, today they are usually worn only on special occasions such as weddings and festivals.

### **Activity two (Japanese symbols/ Meanings)**

#### **Materials:**

- Kimono Paper Dolls sheet
- Japanese Symbols sheet
- Origami paper
- Markers/crayons

#### **Introduction:**

Nature is an important part of Japanese culture. You can find interpretation of nature in Japanese artwork, religious beliefs, performing arts, and motifs on the kimonos. In this lesson we will examine which objects from nature were used at certain times of the year, and incorporated into the kimono's art work.

#### **Preparation:**

- Take out the Japanese Symbols sheet to see some of the natural objects Japanese artists and kimono makers take inspiration from during various months.
- Research these items to get better acquainted with Japan's climate, and natural environment.

#### **Lesson Plan/ Activity:**

1. First discuss the natural objects that have influenced Japanese culture by asking the following questions below.

#### **Japanese Symbolism**

- Can you guess what type of climate Japan has by looking at the pictures?
- Which natural items are similar to ones where you live? Which ones are different?
- What are some of the common images/motifs/designs on your clothing? On your classmates clothing? (I.e. sports cars, celebrities, and places we have visited). What does that say about your culture? What does it say about traditional Japanese culture?

2. Next pull out the Kimono paper dolls worksheet.

3. Lead your students through the instructions on how to make the paper doll.

4. After your students have finished assembling the paper dolls have them decorate the dolls with either their own designs, or have them copy the ones from the symbols page.

### **Activity three (Wear a Kimono)**

#### **Introduction:**

We use many fasteners in clothing that help keep it together. Some of those items are buttons, zip-pers, velcro, etc. This is also true when wearing the kimono. Some of the items that help keep the kimono together are belts such as the Yukata Koshi, Himo String and the Obi belt. There are also many accessories that go along with it such as tabi socks, hair decorations, and shoes. While explaining this to your students see if they can think of fasteners that they use that may be similar or different from the ones used in wearing the kimono. Once the discussion is finished, begin the activity.

#### **Lesson/Activity**

1. Take out the Kimono, and the three belts (Two pink sashes, and black Obi belt).
2. Next take out the instruction sheets titled How to tie a Kimono and Tying an Obi belt.
3. After this is done pick a volunteer to be the model for the kimono.
4. Explain all the kimono pieces.
5. Next follow the steps for assembling the kimono
6. Follow the steps for fastening the various belts

#### **Assessment for lesson plan activities:**

Make sure that the students understand these following key concepts:

- Kimonos are traditional wear of the Japanese. They are not usually worn now except for special occasions and festivals
- Traditional Japanese culture puts a high emphasis on nature
- There are various types of kimonos for certain occasions, genders, economic levels, status and time in life
- Kimonos have changed during history to meet the needs of or aesthetic choices of the people
- Basic similarities and differences between traditional Japanese culture and American culture

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## Different Types Of Kimonos

### Furisode

- This Gown is worn by single women
- Usually worn to special events like weddings, or at coming out parties that happen when the person is 20 years old
- It is characterized by its long sleeves that can measure up to 42 inches
- It is made of fine silk, and brightly colored



### Kurotmesode

- This kimono is worn by married women
- The sleeves are shorter to symbolize that you are married
- It is mostly worn at special occasions like weddings



### Yukata

- Yukata is a casual kimono that is worn during the summer months
- It is also worn during Japanese spas as sort of a robe
- Yukata's are made out of Cotton, not silk



### Hakama

- Hakamas are kimonos worn by men
- They are worn on formal occasions , and in the martial arts like Aikido, Kendo (fencing), and archery
- Each pleat on the pants have a special meaning which are stated below

### Symbolism of Yukata pleats

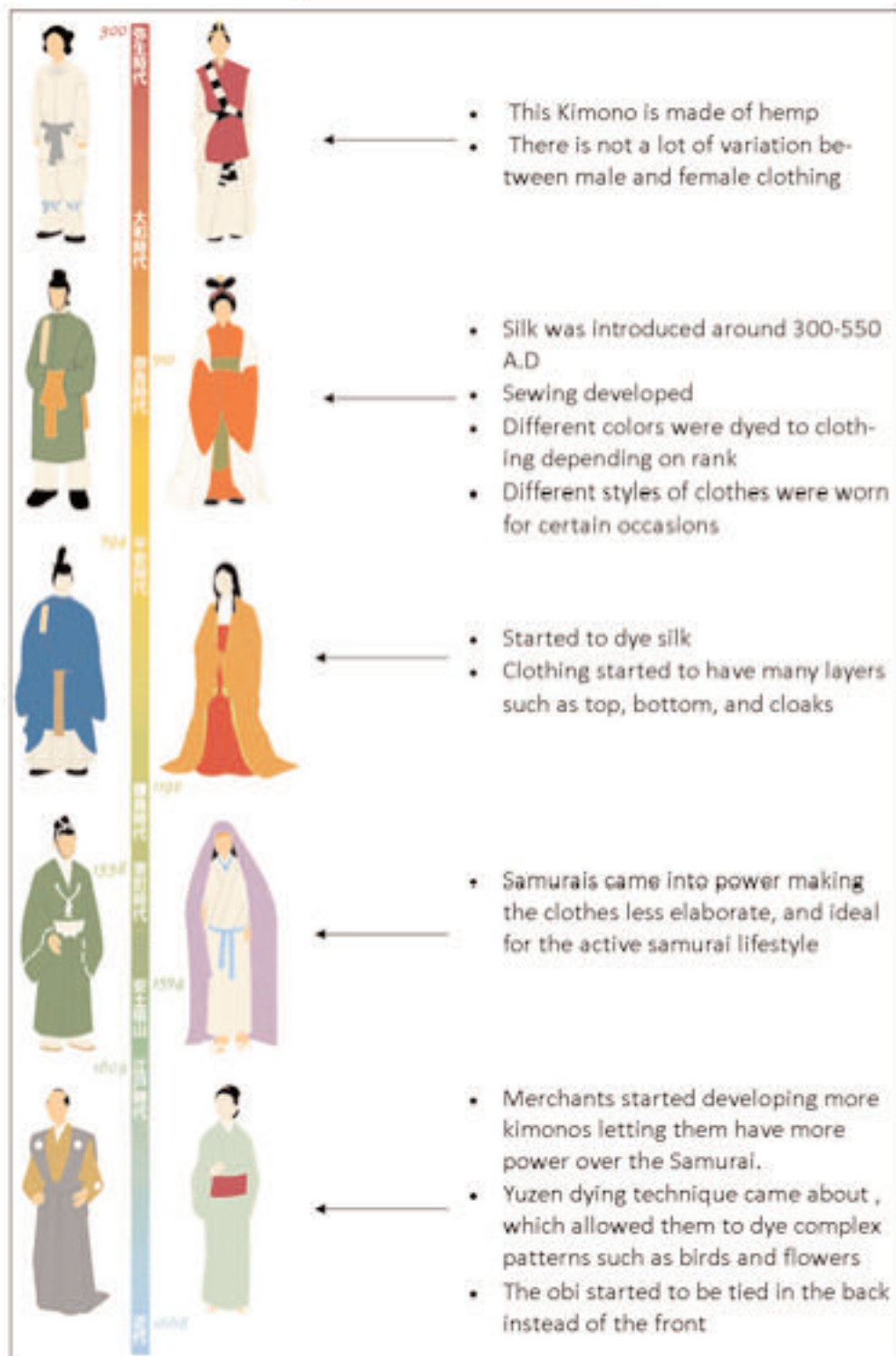
1. Gi --the right decision
2. Yu -- bravery
3. Jin -- universal love, benevolence toward mankind; compassion
4. Rei -- right action, courtesy
5. Makoto -- sincerity, truthfulness
6. Meiyo -- honor
7. Chugi -- devotion, loyalty

### Haori

- A Hori is jacket that is worn over the Hakama kimono
- It is held together by a braided knot like the one to the left
- It is usually worn for special occasions such as a wedding



## Kimono Timeline

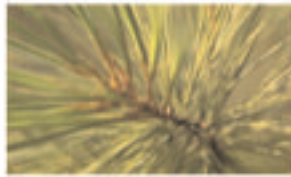


Picture Source: <http://www.japaneselifestyle.com.au/>

## Japanese Symbolism



January - February



Pine



Plum Blossoms



Bamboo



March - April



Cherry Blossoms



Butterflies



Wisteria



May - June



Iris



Willow



Birds



July-August



Plovers



Shells



Waves



September-October



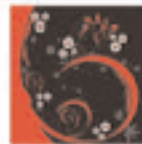
Plumed Grass



Maple leaves



Chrysanthemum



November-December



Bamboo in Snow



Pine Needles



Ginkgo



## Kimono Paper dolls

- Make this kimono paper doll with origami paper
- Then study the motifs kimono makers draw inspiration from for their designs which mostly come from nature
- After you view them pick a season to draw and design images for your own kimono on



1) Fold each side of the square to the middle of the paper



2) Fold the Top part down



3) Fold the bottom part up, and crease at the middle joint



4) Fold over each flap to the middle



5) For the emperor fold the top point down



6) Then fold it up again over itself



7) For the empress fold the top triangle back



8) Fold the bottom half of the doll back so that it can stand up on its own



9) DECORATE!



## How To Tie A Kimono



1) Start by pulling the obi over your shoulders, and holding it outwards with your hands.



2) Pull the kimono up so that it reaches just above your ankles.



3) Holding the kimono taut, bring the left side into the kimono so that it touches the right hipbone.



4) Hold the left side in place while repeating the step on the other side. Remember to hold it taut.



5) Continue to hold the kimono tightly. Holding the kimono with your right hand take the first waist sash with the left hand.



6) Remove creases with the left hand, and then tie the sash around the waist.



7) Insert hands into the two openings towards the back. This allows you to smooth out any creases.



8) Holding the back of the kimono pull out the front so that you can fit a size of a clenched fist into it.



9) Fold this over taught and hold.



10) Tie this over lap with the second sash tie it right under the breast bone.



11) Check that the top and bottom parts are aligned.



## How To Tie An Obi

1) Holding the black obi, pull it through your hands to make one end smaller than the other.

8) Wrap the obi around your waist, and then tie it diagonally.

9) Tie it again this time making a bow. Making sure the long piece falls down, take it and pull it up over the middle of the bow. Tuck it into the back, and then flatten the bow.

10) Turn the belt so that the bow is now in the back. Flatten the obi, and make sure that it covers the pink sashes.