Lessons from Asian Art: *Time (and Place) will Tell*

HIGH SCHOOL LESSON
Eastern Asia: China, Korea, Japan

## Geography

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CHINA</th>
<th>KOREA</th>
<th>JAPAN</th>
<th>MICHIGAN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SQUARE MILES</td>
<td>3.705 million</td>
<td>38,691 (combined)</td>
<td>145,91</td>
<td>96,71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POPULATION</td>
<td>1.4 billion</td>
<td>North Korea: 25 million</td>
<td>127 million</td>
<td>10 million</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>South Korea: 51 million</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MILES OF COASTLINE</td>
<td>9,010</td>
<td>North Korea: 1,550</td>
<td>18,486</td>
<td>3,288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>South Korea: 1,499</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLIMATE</td>
<td>Extremely diverse; tropical in south to subarctic in north</td>
<td>Temperate, with rainfall heavier in summer than winter; cold winters, especially in the North</td>
<td>Varies from tropical in south to cool temperate in north</td>
<td>Distinctive summers and winters with a fairly even distribution of precipitation throughout the year</td>
</tr>
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Sources: CIA World Factbook, Michigan DNR, Michigan NRI. Numbers based on 2019 figures.
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<td><strong>TERRAIN</strong></td>
<td>Mostly mountains, high plateaus, deserts in west; plains, deltas, and hills in east</td>
<td>North: mostly hills and mountains with deep, narrow valleys; wide coastal plains in west; South: mostly hills and mountains; wide coastal plains in west and south</td>
<td>Mostly rugged and mountainous</td>
<td>Hilly and rugged in the western parts of the upper peninsula, flatter in the east; hilly in the northern lower peninsula and flatter in the south</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NATURAL RESOURCES</strong></td>
<td>Iron ore, tin, aluminum, lead, world’s largest hydropower potential, arable land</td>
<td>North: iron ore, limestone, graphite, copper, lead, precious metals, hydropower South: graphite, lead, hydropower potential</td>
<td>Fish, timber, and very few mineral resources</td>
<td>Metallic and nonmetallic minerals, fish, forests,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LAND USE</strong></td>
<td>Agricultural land: 55% Forest: 22% Other: 23%</td>
<td>North Korea/South Korea Agricultural: 22%/18% Forest: 46%/64% Other: 32%/18%</td>
<td>Agricultural land: 13% Forest: 69% Other: 19%</td>
<td>Agricultural land: 23% Forest: 47% Other: 30%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Sources: CIA World Factbook, Michigan DNR, Michigan NRI. Numbers based on 2019 figures.
Describe the form and possible function of this piece.

Why do you think the museum placed this piece at the entrance of a gallery that explores the themes of stillness and movement?

Samurai Helmet
no. 2017.1
Samurai Helmet, 17th century

Samurai Helmet
no. 2017.1
How would you describe tradition, rites, and filial piety based on your primary source reading?

- Confucian Analects
- A Discussion of Rites
- Classic of Filial Piety
- The Twenty-Four Exemplars of Filial Piety
### How does the form of each object relate to its purpose? What does the size of an object say about its function?

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<tr>
<td>Overall approximately: 6 × 6 × 6 in. (16 × 15 × 15 cm)</td>
<td>Wood Boxes Height: 16.5 in./41.9cm Diameter: 13.5 in./34.29cm</td>
<td>Overall approximately: 8 × 3 × 4 inches (21 × 8 × 10 cm)</td>
<td>Overall: 8.75 × 8 inches (22.2 × 20.3 cm)</td>
<td>Overall approximately: 12.5 × 11.75 × 11.5 in. (32 × 30 × 29 cm)</td>
<td>Overall: 4.75 × 9.5 × 3 in. (12.1 × 24.1 × 7.6 cm)</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Identify the ways in which Chinese, Korean, and Japanese art provides a record of ongoing exchanges between generations of artists and viewers.

What materials were used to make these pieces? Where do you think these pieces originated? How would an artist create these objects? What was the intended function of each piece?
What is the difference between burials and cremations? What is the purpose of burial goods such as these objects?

What religious beliefs and practices influence these customs? How have burial customs changed over time?
Family connections have been strengthened and reinforced through burial traditions.

How would you describe the concept of filial piety?

What is the purpose of joss paper objects?

Cultural traditions are also shared through objects that are passed down from generation to generation rather than being buried with the deceased.
Describe the geographic features of the regions where each of these pieces originated.

How do the materials used to create these pieces differ?

How might climate affect the quality?

How does an object’s patina reflect chemical changes in some pieces?

What is the role of today’s museum conservator in preserving and protecting these pieces?
<table>
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<th>TEAM A</th>
<th>TEAM B</th>
<th>TEAM C</th>
<th>TEAM D</th>
<th>TEAM E</th>
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<td>What challenges may have faced those who tried to hand down heirlooms from generation to generation?</td>
<td>What possible historical events threatened the ability for goods to “serve” the deceased in the afterlife?</td>
<td>Is it right for such funerary objects to become part of a museum collection—why or why not?</td>
<td>Is it better to bury objects with the deceased for them to have in the afterlife or for the family to keep and hand them down as objects of remembrance from generation to generation? Why?</td>
<td>How might technology have impacted the production of these traditional goods over time? Is that change for better or for worse?</td>
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| RESPONSES | RESPONSES | RESPONSES | RESPONSES | RESPONSES | RESPONSES |
SHADOWS OF TIME

Title of Piece
Time Period
Media
Approximate Size
Formal Qualities (Descriptors)
*
* 
* 
Function (Known Or Possible)
How are these objects a reflection of Korean culture, both past and present?
In comparing the old with the new, how does Tomoko Konno’s work reflect Japanese culture today?
SHADOWS OF TIME
What objects from the Shadows of Time graphic organizer did you find in the museum collection?

Working in teams, use the Tick Tock graphic organizer to chronologically arrange the items you and your teammates found in the museum collection.

Answer four of the following questions after completing that chronology.

1. What do these objects tell us about the time and place in which they were used?
2. How do these works reflect the people who used them?
3. How were these objects used?
4. Which objects show continuity? In what ways are they different?
5. How do those objects relate to each other?
6. How did the functions of these objects develop and change over time and place?
7. What are the most important objects which reflect change over time in East Asia?
TICK-TOCK

Graphic Organizer

DIRECTIONS: Working collaboratively, select twelve objects from your museum visit to place in chronological order using the clock below. Write the date of the object in the box next to the circle where you will identify, sketch or describe each object. Finally, select the one object that you feel best represents the importance of time in East Asia by drawing the final hand on the clock pointing toward the object you chose.
Select one object from the collection that you feel best represents the importance of time in an East Asian culture.

- Imagine yourself as part of that piece
- Write a one-page essay chronicling your journey through time
  - Creatively describe the following:
    - when and where you were created
    - how you were made
    - what your function has been
    - what you have seen throughout your existence
  - Consider the following:
    - the time period in which you were “born”
    - the materials with which you were made
    - where and how you were stored
    - your intended function
    - where you would have lived
    - how these factors may have affected your survival

Be prepared to share your object stories in small groups in class.


4. Chinese. **Incense Burner in the Shape of the Mountain of Immortals**, 206 BCE–220 CE. Earthenware with iridescent glaze, 8 3/4 × 8 inches. Detroit Institute of Arts, City of Detroit Purchase. 41.79


SLIDE 11

SLIDE 12
2. Chinese. Deep Footed Bowl, 1388–1122 BCE. Copper alloy, 8 1/2 × 6 1/2 inches. Detroit Institute of Arts, Gift of Allan Gerdau. 51.300

SLIDE 13

SLIDE 14
3. Chinese. Deep Footed Bowl, 1388–1122 BCE. Copper alloy, 8 1/2 × 6 1/2 inches. Detroit Institute of Arts, Gift of Allan Gerdau. 51.300


7. Chinese. *Incense Burner in the Shape of the Mountain of Immortals*, 206 BCE–220 CE. Earthenware with iridescent glaze, 8 3/4 × 8 inches. Detroit Institute of Arts, City of Detroit Purchase. 41.79


SLIDE 17

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SLIDE 19
6. Chinese. *Incense Burner in the Shape of the Mountain of Immortals*, 206 BCE–220 CE. Earthenware with iridescent glaze, 8 3/4 × 8 inches. Detroit Institute of Arts, City of Detroit Purchase. 41.79
7. Japanese. *Shigaraki Ware Water Jar*, 16th century. Jar: stoneware; lid: wood, lacquer, 6 1/4 × 6 × 6 1/16 inches. Detroit Institute of Arts, Museum Purchase, Ancient Art Deaccession Fund, gifts from Harold J. Quilhot, Mr. and Mrs. Herbert V. Book, Mrs. O. B. Nordstrom in memory of her parents Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Wyhan, Gibbs-Williams Fund, Mrs. Byron C. Foy in memory of her father Walter P. Chrysler, by exchange. 2014.36


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Thank you

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