AN INTRODUCTION TO ASIAN ART

RESOURCE & ACTIVITY GUIDE
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ASIAN ART AT THE RINGLING

From its inception in the 1920s, The Ringling’s Asian art collection has expanded greatly over the decades. While John Ringling’s passion for collecting art was centered on the European Baroque period, he also purchased a number of large stone objects from India, forming the basis of his Asian art collection and providing the impetus for the Museum to continue collecting art objects from Asia to this day.

Subsequent significant gifts and purchases have greatly augmented the collection, and today it encompasses diverse objects from a broad range of Asian cultures. These include stone Buddhist sculpture from Gandhara, a crossroads of the ancient world’s Silk Road; Chinese ceramics from all periods of China’s history; Japanese woodblock prints, both traditional ukiyo-e as well as twentieth-century specimens; Vietnamese, Thai and Korean ceramics; and decorative objects representing Turkomen tribes and other cultural groups.

ABOUT THE RINGLING’S CENTER FOR ASIAN ART

In 2016, The Ringling debuted a new center for the study and appreciation of the arts and culture of Asia. The Center for Asian Art in the Dr. Helga Wall-Apelt Gallery of Asian Art will foster the exploration of historical and contemporary Asian cultures through research, exhibitions, and programs. The Center makes The Ringling a scholarly destination for the study of Asian arts and culture and provides opportunities for individual research, conferences, and professional and student exchange.
Commissioned from the internationally renowned architecture firm Machado Silvetti, the Center consists of a new pavilion and a renovation of almost 15,000 square feet within the existing Museum of Art, which together provide over 20,000 square feet of space. The new pavilion’s design incorporates influences from Asian art and architecture, such as the jade green terra cotta tiles covering the exterior, creating a new jewel on The Ringling’s campus.

The Center features 6,800 square feet of gallery space for the display of Asian art, a 125-person lecture hall, a seminar room, and open collections storage all linked by a new bridge connecting the Center to The Ringling’s existing Johnson-Blalock Education Center. Extending out from the Museum, and facing Sarasota Bay, the Center includes an open terrace on the ground floor with shaded space surrounded by Asian-inspired gardens and landscaping.

**MAP OF THE CENTER FOR ASIAN ART, MAIN LEVEL**

**HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE**

Asia is a huge, diverse, and vibrant place that provides a multitude of entry points for students of all ages and interests. Accordingly, there are many ways that teachers of all subject areas might connect their curriculum to art objects and artifacts from Asia; this guide provides only a few examples. Drawing on some of the stronger and more visible parts of The Ringling’s Asian art collection – Indian sculpture, Chinese and Japanese ceramics, and porcelain meant for foreign consumption – the activity suggestions in this guide are listed by grade level and include questions and contextual information to engage students in careful observation and critical thinking. Teachers of language arts, social studies, and visual art will find that the activities encourage students to consider museum objects as primary sources, artistic exemplars, and the inspiration for lively discussion and written response. Please feel free to adapt the activities to suit the needs and interests of your students!
ACTIVITIES: Indian Sculpture

The roots of The Ringling’s Asian art collection lie in John Ringling’s purchases of Indian sculptural objects. These early acquisitions represent the rich artistic heritage of Gandhara, an ancient region located in present-day Pakistan, where Greco-Roman, Persian, and South Asian cultures intermingled through conquest and trade. An important center of Buddhist pilgrimage, Gandhara produced narrative and free-standing sculptural images of the Buddha that reflected the naturalistic influence of Greco-Roman art and helped worshippers connect with the tenets of their faith.

Additional examples of Indian sculpture in The Ringling’s collection speak to other faiths practiced in India and the spread of religious ideas throughout Asia. Bronze figures of Hindu deities underscore the diversity of Indian culture, and comparisons among Gandharan, East Indian, and Chinese Buddhist images demonstrate the cultural exchange that characterizes many eras in Asian history.

GRADES 3-5: Images of the Buddha in Indian Art

**OBJECTIVE:**
Students will identify and describe visual cues used to depict the Buddha in works of art.

**DURATION:**
20-30 minutes

**MATERIALS:**
Pencils, notebooks or journals, enough copies of the mudras (shown below) to give one to each group of 3-4 students

**STANDARDS:**
LAFS.K12.W.4.10
LAFS.K12.SL.1.1
VA.3.H.1.3
VA.4.H.1.3

**ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION**
Gather students in the Center for Asian Art and read this description of the Buddha:

*The Buddha is the most important figure in Buddhism, a religion that is practiced all over the world. Images of the Buddha show him with recognizable features. He is usually shown wearing a simple robe that may leave one of his shoulders bare. He often has long, stretched earlobes. He has a bump or knot of hair on top of his head.*

Have students walk through the Asian art galleries to see if they can identify the Buddha in works of art, standing next to an example when they find one. Visit each of the works students find and ask: How did you identify the Buddha in this image?

Next, divide students into teams and hand out written descriptions (photocopied from the information below) of the different gestures (*mudras*) that the Buddha can be shown making. Each team should see if they can find an example of their assigned *mudra* in the galleries. When they find one, they can sketch the work that they see in notebooks or journals, writing next to their drawing the name of the *mudra* shown in the image.

![Meditation mudra](image1)
![Teaching mudra](image2)
![Do Not Fear mudra](image3)
![Earth Touching mudra](image4)

**EXTENSION**
Have students select an image of the Buddha that they find in the Center for Asian Art galleries. They should write a visual description of their chosen Buddha image, including the pose, clothing, medium used, and any other attributes they see.
OBJECTIVE:
Students will analyze the Buddhist narrative shown in a work of art and create original narrative images.

DURATION:
30-40 minutes

MATERIALS:
Pencils, notebooks or journals, copies of the Presentation of the Four Bowls story (shown at right) for all students

STANDARDS:
LAFS.K12.R.3.9
LAFS.K12.W.1.3
VA.3-5.C.1.2
VA.3-5.O.3.1

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION
Take students to view the stone panel Presentation of the Four Bowls in the Galleria of the Center for Asian Art. Discuss: What might be going on here? Pass out copies of the story below and have students read it in groups:

As the Buddha sat beneath a tree thinking, two merchants passed by and offered him some food to eat. The Buddha had no bowl to receive their offering. All of a sudden, four heavenly kings appeared. Each offered a golden bowl to the Buddha. He rejected the fine dishes until the kings turned them from gold to humble stone. Then the Buddha accepted the bowls. But, before he began to eat, he turned the four separate bowls into a single bowl. That way, he wouldn’t show favoritism to any of the kings.

Discuss as a class: How do the written and visual versions of this story compare? What clues did the artist put in this image to tell us what’s going on? Discuss how the columns in this panel divide it into different scenes from the Buddha’s life. Ask: Can you think of other stories that are told in a series of rectangular pictures like this? (Comic books are one example.)

EXTENSION
Have students use notebooks or journals to sketch the scene that might have come right before this moment in the story (when the merchants approach the Buddha and offer him some food as he sits under the tree). Back in the classroom, students can write their own original narratives and illustrate them in the same manner used in this work of art, with individual scenes shown in rectangular, side-by-side panels.

GRADES 6-8: Hinduism and Buddhism in Indian Art

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION
In the Chao Gallery of the Center for Asian Art, have students find the bronze figure of Shiva Nataraja and the East Indian Buddha sculpture. Without reading any information from the labels, students should begin with a visual comparison of the two sculptures. Pass out blank copies of a Venn diagram and have students fill in each side, comparing “Work A” and “Work B” in terms of each figure’s pose, size, facial expression, clothing, and other attributes. Then, read students the following descriptions of the Buddha and of Shiva, and ask them to identify which description goes with which sculpture:

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Buddha: This historical figure was born into a powerful family, but gave up the comforts of wealth to seek truth. He is said to have reached a state of enlightenment – the sudden understanding of the true nature of life and the universe – while meditating under a tree. The teachings he left behind, which formed the basis of a major world religion, emphasize acceptance of the passing nature of the world around us and the importance of mindfulness.

Shiva: This Hindu god is seen by his worshippers as the creator, preserver, and destroyer of the universe. He is associated with the flames of destruction, but also with the drum that beats the rhythm of life and provides the source of all movement in the universe. He can be understood as a positive force or a fearsome one. His divine dance represents ruin and renewal.

EXTENSION
In class, watch videos of Buddhist (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pOJwkVG8YqM) and Hindu (http://www.asia.si.edu/explore/indianart/videoProcession.asp) worship practices. Have students discuss in pairs or groups: In what ways do these practices appear similar to one another? In what ways do they seem different? Based on what you saw in the video, how might the sculptures of the Buddha and of Shiva that were displayed in the Center for Asian Art have been used by worshippers?

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION
Once students have analyzed the East Indian Buddha described above, have them look at the Gandharan Seated Buddha nearby. Have students compare these two images of the same figure, discussing what is similar and different about each depiction.

Next, pass out copies of the map below, which shows the locations and time periods associated with the two Buddha images. Have students work in groups to identify the location and time frame of Gandhara, as well as the location and time frame of the Pala Empire, which produced the East Indian Buddha sculpture.

Discuss as a class: What do you notice about the physical and historical distance between Gandhara and the Pala Empire? Why might it be helpful for artists to depict the Buddha in similar ways across great distances and spans of time? Explain that the consistent portrayal of the Buddha in art helped spread the beliefs of Buddhism across languages and cultures.

EXTENSION
In class, pairs of students can use museum websites to look for other images of Buddha from other times and places. Each pair should print out one image they find,
record the date and location of its creation, and then add the image to a class map of the world. Once all pairs add their contributions, you’ll have a large illustration of the spread of Buddhism and Buddhist imagery.

GRADES 9-12: Cross-Cultural Exchange in Religious Art of Asia

**ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION**

Begin by asking students to brainstorm examples of an idea, tradition, or object from one culture being spread to another. (Some examples might include Santa Claus evolving from the Greek Saint Nicholas or “fusion” restaurants offering an American take on cuisines from around the world.) Discuss: When this type of cultural borrowing happens, why might the idea or object end up looking different from its original form?

Take students to view the Cypriot sculpture heads in the Galleria of the Center for Asian Art. Next to them they can also view the Gandharan Head of a Bodhisattva. Explain that artists in Gandhara, a region in modern-day Pakistan, came into regular contact with Roman art due to routes passing through the region on their way to cities in the Mediterranean world. Discuss: What similarities in style do we see between the Mediterranean sculptures and the head of the bodhisattva? What characteristics does the bodhisattva figure have that distinguish it from the sculpture heads? How did the artist who carved the bodhisattva create a sense of calm, power, and compassion?

Explain that bodhisattvas are seen in some varieties of Buddhism as enlightened individuals who forgo entrance into nirvana in order to help others free themselves from suffering. When Buddhism spread from India to China, certain bodhisattvas became especially popular among Chinese practitioners. Take students into the Chao Gallery to view the Chinese Head of a Bodhisattva. Discuss: What is different about this bodhisattva image from the Gandharan figure?

**EXTENSION**

Have students think about what a contemporary, American image of a bodhisattva might look like. How could the image convey a sense of power, calm, and compassion? What traditional elements might carry over from Asian bodhisattva imagery, and what elements of American style would be incorporated into the image? Have students sketch ideas in notebooks or journals. In class, they can create final paintings or sculptures based on their sketches.
ACTIVITIES: Ceramics for Rites and Rituals

The Ringling’s collection of Asian ceramics spans centuries and cultures, from ancient Thai earthenware to Chinese porcelain of the 20th century. Many of the ceramic pieces on view were created to be used in rituals or in a ritualized setting, such as a tomb. Figures like the camel, horse, and groom from 8th-century Tang dynasty China would have been buried alongside wealthy individuals to serve them in the afterlife. It was believed that the deceased’s needs after death were similar to their needs on earth, so the ceramics excavated from burial sites can tell us about daily life in different parts of Asia throughout history. Since economic exchange along the Silk Road was an important part of life during China’s Tang dynasty, the camel, horse, and groom on display in the Center for Asian Art are also significant for their connection to the Silk Road.

The rites and customs of daily life are also reflected in ceramic vessels that were used for specific ceremonies. The Japanese tea ceremony, called chanoyu, emerged in the 16th century as a ritualized, secular practice rooted in the appreciation of natural beauty and the harmonious interactions of host and guests. Ceremonial tea bowls with an unstudied, simple appearance reflect the ideals of the tea ceremony as it existed in 18th-century Japan.

GRADES K-5: Traveling on the Silk Road

OBJECTIVE: Students will interpret works of art as primary sources documenting aspects of life in Asia during the time of the Silk Road.

DURATION: 45-90 minutes

MATERIALS: Pencils, notebooks or journals, large version of the Central Asian landscape photo (below)

STANDARDS: LAFS.K12.SL.1.1 LAFS.K12.SL.2.6 SS.K.A.1.2 SS.1-3.A.1.1 SS.5.A.1.1

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

Discuss with students: Have you ever taken a trip? How did you get to where you were going? What kinds of things did you need to take with you?

Explain that, for many centuries, merchants and traders took long trips along well-traveled routes across Asia known as the Silk Road. Ask: Since cars had not yet been invented, what might people have used to make their journeys on the Silk Road?

Take students to view the Central Asiatic Groom figure. Have students stand in the same pose as the man and ask: What might he be in the middle of doing? Discuss: How can you tell this figure is from another time and place? (Some possible answers might include his clothing, the peeling paint on the surface, and the worn look of the sculpture.)

Explain that this figure represents a type of person who might have traveled the Silk Road to care for camels and horses, which were used for transportation. Point out the ceramic Standing Camel nearby, which represents the type of animal the man might care for.

Pass around copies of the photo of the Central Asian landscape (below). In pairs, have students discuss: What would it feel like to walk through this landscape? What sounds would you hear? What might you smell or taste? What would you see? What would you need to take with you on a journey in this land?
Working with their partners, students should write an imaginary, first-person description of what the camel or the groom might experience during their Silk Road travel. Pairs can share their monologues with the class.

EXTENSION
In class, students can use web resources and books to research the Silk Road and the types of people that traveled or lived along them. Then, they should select one Silk Road character and write a first-person journal entry describing a day in the life of that person.

GRADES 6-8: The Development of Silk Road Trade

**OBJECTIVE:**
Students will interpret primary sources of life in Asia during the time of the Silk Road.

**DURATION:**
15-20 minutes

**MATERIALS:**
Pencils, notebooks or journals

**STANDARDS:**
SS.6.W.4.10
SS.6.W.1.3

**ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION**
Take students to view the Saddled Horse and the Standing Camel figures, which both come from around the time of China’s Tang dynasty (618-907 CE). They were made as funerary objects to be buried in the tombs of the wealthy, and they represent two types of animals that played a role in Silk Road trade, which flourished during the Tang dynasty.

In pairs or small groups, students should decide:
Which one of these animals appears better suited to long-distance desert travel, and which one looks better suited to military or ceremonial purposes? Take a class vote on which animal aligns with which purpose, and then discuss the evidence within each figure that led students to those conclusions.

**EXTENSION**
In notebooks or journals, have students sketch the kind of landscape setting they would expect to see each of these animals in.

**ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION**
Gather around Saddled Horse and divide students into small groups. Each group should divide a sheet of paper into three columns, titling the columns “line,” “shape,” and “color.” Groups should take notes on their observations of those three elements in Saddled Horse. As a class, discuss: What is your overall impression of this work of art? Do you think the culture that produced it appreciated horses? What makes you say that?
Explain that, from the 2nd century BCE, Chinese emperors sought large, finely bred horses (like the one shown here) from Central Asia to serve as mounts for the military forces that defended their lands from northern nomadic tribes. Chinese expeditions to the west in search of these horses helped spur development of the Silk Road linking China and other parts of Eurasia. Point out the respective locations of Central Asia and China on the large wall map in the Galleria of the Center for Asian Art. Explain that it could have taken many months and great expense to transport horses between the two locations. Discuss: Knowing all this, why do you think a Chinese nobleman would choose to have a figure of a horse buried with him in his tomb?

EXTENSION
Have students brainstorm contemporary examples of something that is both practical and a kind of status symbol (like this Tang horse figure). Then, each student should select one of these objects to research. They can use internet sources to determine where the contemporary object is made and where its raw materials might come from; they can also interview their peers or others to determine why it is so valued. To complete the project, students create clay figures of their chosen objects and produce written reports on what they learned from their research.

GRADES 9-12: The Japanese Tea Ceremony

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION
Take students to view these three ceramic bowls from 19th-century Japan, on view in the Chao Gallery of the Center for Asian Art. Discuss: What might the purpose of these objects have been? Have students work in pairs to rank the three bowls from "best" to "worst." Once all pairs have determined their rankings, discuss: how did you come up with criteria for rating the bowls? Were everyone's rankings the same? Why might someone want to own something like this?

Explain the use of tea bowls and other dishes that played a role in the Japanese tea ceremony, which is known in Japan as chanoyu. Point out that both the tea ceremony and the visual arts in Japan have been influenced by Buddhist ideas about finding harmony with nature, appreciating simplicity, and finding beauty even in imperfect or humble things. Unpretentious clay vessels like the ones shown here were created during 19th-century Japan with those ideals in mind.

Have students explore The Ringling with cameras or cell phones, taking photos that they think capture the same spirit – beauty in humble, simple, and/or imperfect things.
EXTENSION
In class, have students study the poetic form *haiku*, which is another traditional Japanese artform. As with the tea ceremony and visual art, Japanese poetry has been informed by Buddhist ideas about simplicity and the appreciation of the natural world. Have students read some samples of famous Japanese haiku by visiting www.haiku-poetry.org. In response, students can write their own original haikus based on the photos they took at the Museum.

**OBJECTIVE:**
Students will compare ceramic objects from China and Japan and create their own clay bowls in response.

**DURATION:**
60-90 minutes

**MATERIALS:**
Clay, clay tools, kiln (optional)

**STANDARDS:**
VA.912.C.1.3
VA.912.S.3.1

**ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION**
After examining the 19th-century Japanese bowls, have students compare their appearance and materials with the nearby *kinrande* bowl from China’s Ming dynasty (1368-1644 CE). Explain that formal tea drinking is also an important part of Chinese culture, and that ornately decorated porcelain bowls like this one were popular in the imperial court during the Ming dynasty. Have students vote on which style they prefer (the Japanese bowls from the Edo period or this Ming bowl), and then have them participate in short debate on the merits of each.

**EXTENSION**
In the classroom, have students use clay to create their own tea bowls inspired by the Japanese and Chinese examples they saw in the Center for Asian Art galleries. If you have access to a potter’s wheel and/or a kiln, students can experiment with different forms, techniques, and glazes.
ACTIVITIES: Export Porcelain

Understanding the ways that different countries and cultures interact is a key component in studying world history, and a subset of The Ringling's collection of Asian ceramics provides insight into that topic. Asian export ceramics are objects that were crafted for foreign markets. Their forms and decoration, then, reflect both the artistic traditions of their country of origin as well as the tastes of foreign consumers. Examples from The Ringling’s collection of Asian export ceramics include porcelain objects from China and Japan that mix European subject matter with Asian forms and techniques.

Also included is a Chinese porcelain flask that was created not for sale, but as a gift for foreign dignitaries. A Chinese emissary from the Ming imperial court might have offered such an object as a diplomatic gift; significantly, the form of the flask itself was likely inspired by metal vessels given to the Chinese emperor by rulers in the Middle East or Central Asia. Like the ceramics designed for sale abroad, gift items like this reflected cultural exchange both within Asia and beyond its borders.

GRADES 2-5: East Meets West in China

OBJECTIVE:
Students will analyze the depiction of Europeans in an Asian art object and consider differences and similarities across cultures.

DURATION:
30-45 minutes

MATERIALS:
Large versions of the paintings of Dutch and Chinese families (shown below), pencils, notebooks or loose paper

STANDARDS:
LAFS.K12.SL.1.1
SS.2-3.A.1.1
SS.2-3.A.1.2
VA.2-5.H.2.1

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION
Take students to the Galleria of the Center for Asian Art to view the Dutch Family figurine from 18th-century China. Explain that this object was made in China by Chinese artists, but was meant to depict a Dutch family from Europe. Because of this, it shows some details that look more Chinese, and some details that look more European.

Show students print-outs of the images below, which show a Dutch family painted by a Dutch artist and a Chinese family painted by a Chinese artist. After giving students a few minutes to look at the images, have students analyze individual characteristics shown in the Dutch Family sculpture. For each one, they should hold their fingers in a “c” shape if they think it’s influenced more by Chinese life, and a “d” shape if they think it’s influenced more by Dutch life.
Elements to examine include:

- The man's hat
- The pet dog
- The jackets worn by the man and boy
- The boots worn by the boy
- The woman's hairstyle
- The woman's robe
- The flowers in a pot
- The shape of the chair

Discuss as a class: Why do you think the Chinese artist mixed some details of Chinese life into this image of a Dutch family? Explain that, when this sculpture was made, some Dutch people were spending time in China as merchants. Discuss in pairs or groups: If you could live or work in another country, which country would you choose? What might life be like there? How might it be different from life in America?

EXTENSION
Have students research the country they chose, looking at what daily life is like there. Students can draw a portrait of their own family that combines elements of their life in America with details that might suggest their life in their chosen country.

GRADES 6-8: Artistic Exchange in the Ming Dynasty

**OBJECTIVE:**
Students will compare art objects as primary sources of cultural exchange in Asia.

**DURATION:**
20-30 minutes

**MATERIALS:**
Cotton ball, pencils, notebooks or journals, large image of the metal pilgrim flask (shown below)

**STANDARDS:**
SS.6.W.1.3
SS.6.W.4.10

**ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION**
Lead students to the Chao Gallery of the Center for Asian Art to view the *Blue-and-White Pilgrim Flask* made during China’s Ming dynasty (1368-1644). Before students have a chance to read the label information, have them take turns tossing a cotton ball among themselves to generate observations – whoever has the cotton ball has to say one thing they notice about the object, as well as what that detail might tell us about the object, such as how it was used, where it came from, or what it’s made from, etc.

Next, show students the photo below of the metal pilgrim flask, which was made in the Middle East in the mid-13th century. Ask students to compare the two similar objects in terms of material, functionality, and decoration.

Explain that each of these objects was based on the canteens that medieval pilgrims carried with them on journeys to the Holy Land. Silver and brass versions made in the Middle East might have been offered as gifts to Chinese emperors by Islamic rulers, and Chinese artists adopted the flask shape to create porcelain gifts for local aristocrats and foreign dignitaries.
Ask: Which would have been easier to transport over land along the Silk Road – the porcelain or metal version? Why? If land travel was an impractical option, how else could the Chinese get porcelain objects to other countries? Look at the large wall map in the Galleria and have students find the sea routes that connected Asia, Africa, and Europe.

EXTENSION
Have students look for other examples of porcelain in the galleries, noting down the date and location where each one was made. What does the widespread presence of this particular material – which was made using sophisticated firing methods that were first developed in China – tell you about interactions between different places and cultures within Asia?

GRADES 9-12: Globalization in Asian Art

OBJECTIVE:
Students will consider ceramic goods from China and Japan as indicators of globalization.

DURATION:
60-90 minutes

MATERIALS:
Assorted art-making supplies

STANDARDS:
SS.912.W.2.22
SS.912.W.6.1
SS.912.H.1.2
VA.912.H.2.3
VA.912.H.3.3

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION
Show students the Chinese and Japanese sculptures of the Montgolfier balloon in the Galleria of the Center for Asian Art. Have them compare the two objects, deciding which was likely made first. Then, discuss: What is the subject matter? What might the painted decorations on the Japanese example show?

Discuss: What does the story behind these objects tell you about connections between Asia and Europe in the late 1700s and 1800s? What examples of globalization can you think of today?

EXTENSION
Have students research 20th- or 21st-century events in Asia that have made headlines in the US. Then, they can create three-dimensional works of art commemorating those events. Instruct them to include elements that are reminiscent of both American visual culture and the visual art of the country in which the event took place. Discuss: Why is it important for us as Americans to be aware of current events that happen in Asia, and vice versa?
Bodhisattva: In some varieties of Buddhism, an enlightened individual who could reach nirvana but who chooses to remain on earth to free others from suffering.

Buddha: The historical Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama, was a sage and ascetic who lived sometime between the 6th and 4th centuries BCE and whose teachings formed the basis of Buddhism.

Buddhism: A major world religion that originated in India. Its basic tenets include the transitory and unsatisfying nature of the physical universe, the cycle of repeated deaths and rebirths, and the ultimate goal of becoming liberated from that cycle.

Central Asia: The central region of Asia; it encompasses the modern-day nations of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Kyrgyzstan and northern parts of Afghanistan.

Ceramic: Made of clay that has been fired at a high temperature.

Chanoyu: Literally “hot water for tea;” a ritualized tea ceremony practiced in Japan since the 16th century CE.

Earthenware: Material made from clay that has been fired below 1200º C and is therefore opaque, somewhat porous, and soft enough to be scratched with a knife.

Enlightenment: In Buddhism, the sudden understanding and insight into essential truths about the universe.

Export: A good that is sold abroad.

Gandhara: An extinct kingdom located in present-day Afghanistan and Pakistan; it served as a crossroads of cultural exchange between the Mediterranean world and regions of Asia.

Globalization: Integration, interaction, and mutual awareness among the different nations of the world.

Hinduism: A major world religion that originated in India. It encompasses a wide range of beliefs and practices but can be recognized by a shared cosmology and an emphasis on the proper aims of human life.

Kinrande: A style of Chinese porcelain that became popular during the Ming dynasty; it is characterized by lavish gilt decoration.

Ming dynasty: The ruling dynasty in China between 1368 and 1644 CE.

Mudras: Symbolic hand gestures seen in Hindu and Buddhist religious images.

Nirvana: The spiritual goal of Buddhism, it is a perfect state of liberation from suffering and from the cycle of death and rebirth.

Nomadic: Moving from place to place rather than settling in a single location.

Pilgrim: One who travels to a holy place for the purpose of worship, devotion, or supplication.

Porcelain: A ceramic material that has been fired above 1200ºC, resulting in a very hard texture and translucent, white appearance. Its production originated in China.

Shiva Nataraja: A depiction of the Hindu god Shiva in which he performs the cosmic dance that regenerates the universe.

Silk Road: The network of trade routes that connected Asia and Europe for centuries, from the 2nd century BCE until the 15th century CE.

Tang dynasty: The ruling dynasty in China between 618 and 907 CE.
ABOUT THE RINGLING

The Ringling is the remarkable legacy of circus owner, art collector, and financier John Ringling (1866-1936) and his wife, Mable (1875-1929). In 1911, John and Mable bought property in Sarasota, Florida, where they eventually built Ca’ d’Zan, a palatial winter residence that reflects the opulence of America’s Jazz Age elites. An art museum housing the Ringlings’ impressive collection of European, American, and Asian art was soon added. These treasures were left to the state of Florida upon John’s death in 1936, and today they have been joined by a circus museum, a historic theater, and an art library. Visitors to The Ringling can enjoy 66 acres of manicured grounds, featuring native and exotic trees and a 27,000-square-foot rose garden. The Ringling is now recognized as the State Art Museum of Florida and is committed to inspiring and educating the public while honoring the legacy of John and Mable Ringling.

WHERE to LEARN MORE

Education About Asia
Find current issues at www.asian-studies.org
Published by the Association for Asian Studies, this journal provides scholarly articles on Asia and on the teaching of Asian history and culture.

Asian Art Museum of San Francisco
www.asianart.org
This museum houses one of the most comprehensive collections of Asian art in the world, and its website offers lesson plans, background information, and multimedia resources to use when teaching Asian art in the classroom.

Asia for Educators
afe.easia.columbia.edu
An initiative of Columbia University’s East Asian Institute, this site offers timelines, lesson plans, and primary sources related to the teaching of Asian history and culture.

UPCOMING SATURDAYS for EDUCATORS

Nov 5, 2016 Photographs from the Former Soviet Union
Jan 14, 2017 Music in Art and Circus
Feb 18, 2017 A Feast for the Senses: Medieval Art
May 6, 2017 Looking into Local History: Florida Life in the 1920s

IMAGE CREDITS