

Jill Hurley
Lesson Plan- Korea
Art Survey 1- Grades 9-12

Korean Folk paintings- The Symbolic Tiger

Purpose:

Students will understand and appreciate the rich traditions of Korea through exploration of art and folklore based on symbolic animals, specifically the tiger. Students will increase their understanding of folk painting in relationship to folk painting from our own cultures.

Essential Questions:

1. What is symbolism and how is it used in folk painting traditions?
2. Why was the tiger an important symbol in Korean folklore?
3. What symbols are found in traditional folk paintings from your own culture?

Rationale:

To understand our own traditions as well as that of other cultures creating a richer more vibrant understanding of our world.

Materials:

The Tiger and the Dried Persimmon by Janie Jaehyun Park
ISBN# 0-88899-485-0
Douglas & McIntyre, Toronto, Vancouver, Berkely

Art Treasures of Seoul with Walking Tours by Edward B. Adams
Samhwa Printing Co., Ltd. Seoul, Korea

Korean Cultural Heritage Volume 1 Fine Arts by Korea Foundation
ISBN # 89-860-9006-1
Samsung Moonhwa Printing Co., Seoul, Korea\

<http://www.sit.wisc.edu/~tiger2000/magtiger.html>

Photographs of various tigers from both books and magazines.
Traditional Korean tiger painting
Paper, Paint, Brush, India Ink, Dowel rods

Activities:

Day1: Students read Korean folktale *The Tiger and the Dried Persimmon*. Discuss the story and its meaning with students. Look at the beautiful artwork of the tiger through out the book. Discussion: The story is an original Korean folktale passed down, about a tiger that is overly proud and boastful. His own vanity and foolishness causes him to become afraid of a persimmon and go on a wild chase which takes him back to his mountain never to return to the village again. This story could have many meanings to students, there are no wrong answers. Students should write down their thoughts and then

be prepared to share them aloud. Ask students to consider why the tiger is an important symbol and what it might stand for? Share answers. (strength, courage, bravery, etc.)

Day2: Show students a variety of folk paintings from Korea, of tigers as well as other animals. Discuss minhwa paintings (see attached) and explain that students will be creating their own folk painting based on the tiger/ and magpie. Show a Korean painting if available. Show photos of other styles of Korean painting and talk about influences from China.

Day3-4: Give students photographs of tigers to work from. (National Geographic, Nature, etc.), sumi brushes and ink. Students should begin by experimenting with the brushes and creating gestural lines. Tell students to focus on the patterns of the tiger and to begin making shapes and patterns to create a fantasy tiger. It does not need to look like the photograph, but may become abstracted or even cartoonish.

Day5: When tigers have been mastered, students should begin to create atmospheric backgrounds, similar to that in Korean landscape and folk art paintings. They may add color with paints or cray-pas.

Day6: Hang papers like banners from a dowel rod. Ask students if they know of any symbols used in folk paintings from their own cultures. List on board. Compare answers. Teacher could show folk paintings from a variety of cultures to look for similarities and differences.

Assessment:

Rubric

Near Perfection (A)

Work shows:

A very good understanding of subject.

Student is motivated to find creative and inventive ways to solve the problems.

Student participates fully and provides input and resources for the group to follow.

Very Good (B)

Work shows:

Good understanding of subject.

Student is motivated to find ways to solve the problems.

Student participates and provides some input and resources for the group to follow.

OK/Tried (C)

Work shows:

Some understanding of subject.

Student solves the problems, but could show a better understanding.

Student participates in the group, but could provide more input to the group.

Needs Improvement (D)

Work shows:

Little understanding of subject.
Student does little to solve the problems.
Student participates little or none with the group.

Lack of Interest (F)
Work shows:
Little or no interest in subject.
Student does little or nothing to solve the problems

Grade Adaptation:

Easily adaptable to any grade level, change materials if necessary.

Minhwa

Minhwa, or folk paintings are by far the most interesting of the traditional Korean paintings. The characteristics of *Minhwa* paintings are that they were all painted by unknown artists, and all were painted near the end of, or after the Chosun period. Though many of them appear rather childish, and unrefined, quite a number display great painting skill. Under the *Minhwa* category of paintings are many sub-categories. In brief they are:

Landscape Paintings - Some of the most common of the *Minhwa* genre, *Minhwa* landscape paintings can follow any of the traditional styles from the earlier periods.

Magpies and Tigers - One of the most popular themes next to landscapes, the tigers are usually depicted in a comical manner and are shown with a magpie squawking at them from a tree - the magpie is considered a carrier of good news.

Flowers and Birds - Paintings with flowers are usually quite colorful while those that depict animals generally show animals in pairs with the Sun, or Moon. These motifs can be seen on some modern celadon, lacquered boxes, and music boxes as well.

Peonies - The peony symbolizes wealth, honors and high social position and is used extensively in *Minhwa* paintings as well as in celadon.

Lotus Flowers - Though it originally represented the Sun and the mercy of Buddha, in *Minhwa* paintings it has come to represent high government officials.

The Ten Longevity Symbols - The symbols are the Sun, clouds, mountains, rocks, water, cranes, deer, turtles, pine trees, and mushrooms. These symbols can be found in many *Minhwa* paintings and also on modern lacquered boxes and celadon designs.

Dragons - The dragon can represent a variety of meanings including repelling evil spirits and bringing rain.

Paintings of Tiger Hide - As the cost of real tiger hides was prohibitive, paintings that resembled tiger skin were used to provoke the tigers' power as a guardian.

Fish and Crabs - Usually appear in pairs kissing or otherwise being amorous.

Manchurian Hunting Scenes - Used as a sign of bravery these paintings often decorated military quarters.

One Hundred Children - Representing the 100 children from heaven they reflect a wish for many, healthy descendants.

Paintings of the Life Cycle - Used primarily to depict the life of a scholar-official.

Bookcases and Scholars' Rooms - Similar to a Western still-life, these paintings showed the accoutrements of a scholar.

Shamanistic Deities - These paintings usually showed shamanistic rites or deities.

From http://www.korean-arts.com/about_korean_paintings.htm

http://www.korean-arts.com/paintings/tigers/tigers_and_folk_tigers.htm

Tiger paintings for sale

<http://www.sit.wisc.edu/~tiger2000/magtiger.html>

"Magpie and Tiger" (Artist unknown)



A long long time ago, when Tigers smoked pipes...

The tiger has always occupied a special place in Korean heart, as a messenger of the Mountain spirit in folk paintings, as a comic figure along with the Magpies, or as a talisman that warded off evil spirits.

The Korean Tiger is depicted as being frightening yet gentle; brave and almost sacred, but at the same time rather slow-witted. He sometimes repays debts and scolds the hypocrisy of human society. The essence of Korean humor lies in the latitude of the savage Tiger sticking a long smoking pipe in his mouth.

KOREAN PAINTING – Prehistory to the late 19th Century

Although Korean painting is not well known in the west, it has held an important place in Korea from a very early date. One of the difficulties in studying Korean art is that conflict which has been so much a feature of life on the Korean peninsula through the ages has destroyed so much of what certainly existed in prior periods. Additionally, invasion and conquest has resulted in much of the best of what remained after battle being removed to other countries where it is more difficult to study and relate it to other Korean developments.

Despite these complications in the study of Korean art, Korean art is fascinating because although it has been deeply influenced by Chinese art, the most productive periods in terms of art often do not coincide between the two countries. This can be particularly noted in Koguryo wall paintings, Buddhist paintings of the Koryo period, landscape painting in the first portion of the Choson dynasty and the landscapes painted of Korean scenes in the eighteenth century. Korean painting therefore was influenced by Chinese painting while still pursuing its own path. This resulted in different results and developments than that found on the mainland and give Korean art an interest all its own.

The earliest historical record of painting in Korea comes from the area of Lelang in Korea where a tradition of painting existed from sometime around the founding of this kingdom in 108 B.C. Painted baskets in the Pyongyang museum show numerous figures demonstrating filial piety. These works show that painting was a well developed art form even at this early date. When the Lelang area was conquered in AD 313, it is believed that some of its artisans and craftsmen were absorbed into Koguryo.

During the Three Kingdoms period in Korea, which was from 57 BC through 668 A.D, centers of civilization were found at Koguryo in the North which extended far into Manchuria, and at Paekche and Silla in the south. Although there is still some discussion as to which civilization was oldest, scholars generally believe that the Kingdom around Koguryo was in fact the oldest. Koguryo period painting of tombs offers the largest remaining examples of Korean painting from this period although tombs from Paekche and painted objects from Silla offer further demonstration as to the artistic measure of Korea's ancient civilizations.

The wall paintings of the Koguryo tombs are located in the North of Korea in the area around present-day Tong'gou and Pyongyang. The tombs are large stone-built structures with multiple chambers and with paintings on the walls and ceilings. The earliest tombs in Koguryo date from the third and fourth century A.D. and continue on through the sixth and seventh century A.D. These later tombs, particularly the Great Tomb of Kangso, the tomb at Naeri and others are decorated with clouds and representations of birds, snakes and tortoises and also Buddhist elements such as the lotus and floral scrolls. Similar decorative details are seen at the Takamatsu tomb in Nara in Japan and it is thought that this treatment probably reflected Korean influence in the arts during this period.

In addition to these Koguryo tomb paintings, one of the tombs from Paekche during the later period when their capital was at Puyo contains very fine examples of wall paintings with depictions of animals. In Puyo itself, many fine tiles have been discovered with landscape designs that also display the artistic sensitivities of the artisans of this period.



Although almost nothing remains in the way of actual painting of the Unified Silla period (AD 668-918) except an illuminated fragment of the Avatamsaka sutra on purple paper, the artistic decoration of this fragment which is believed to have been created around AD 750 A.D. fully demonstrates the high level of accomplishment in painting of the people of this period.

The Koryo Dynasty (AD 918 – 1392) was a period in which the royal household and aristocracy acted as patrons of Buddhism. One of the ways that this patronage was demonstrated was in support for the arts and painted depictions of Buddhist art are fairly plentiful from this period. Koryo Buddhist paintings were produced to be used as part of many of the rites of Buddhism and are chronicled in the “Koryo-sa”, the History of the Koryo dynasty. The richness and vivid colors used in these paintings marked a high point for Asian painting. Among the characteristics of these paintings is in the use of gold in patterns for garments and the use of transparent effects.

No examples of Korean secular painting of this period remain, but writings tell us that secular painting was vibrant and that Koreans often came to China to buy paintings. Famous painters of this period according to the records were Yi Nyong and Yi Je-hyon.

The adoption of Confucianism as the state philosophy during the Choson dynasty (1392 – 1910) had a very profound affect on Buddhist painting. Although Buddhism continued to be popular and still had significant royal support, it never again had the artistic pre-eminence that it once enjoyed.

Korean painting during this period was more influenced by Chinese artists of the Southern Song academy tradition than those of the scholar-painters of the Chinese Wu school. Korean landscape masters of this period therefore evolved their own interpretation of the classical landscape tradition. In general these keep elements of far distance in their compositions rather than confining attention to the foreground, as often was the case in most Ming dynasty paintings. Artists of the so called Zhe school (named after Zhejiang, a Chinese coastal province from which many of these artists came) also had a deep effect on Korean painting so much so that one observer of Korean art has coined the term “Korean Zhe School” to designate Korean artists of this movement. An example of this style is the Korean artist Yi Kyong-yun.

Because of the successive Japanese and Manchu invasions, the seventeenth century does not really demonstrate the same vibrancy in painting that was occurring in China. The seventeenth century revival of classical styles in China had little effect in Korea. Korean painters were free to pursue their own development and it was in the eighteenth century when painting in China was losing its force that Korean painting really came into its own. The development of art in this period was purely Korean and very different from Chinese artistic traditions. One example of these new national patterns is the appearance of “Chingyoung sansu” or “real landscape”. This new style was developed by Chong Son and the early development of this technique can be seen in his painting titled “Summer

Landscape”.

Another uniquely Korean development of this period is the painting from daily life best exemplified by the artists Sin Yun-bok and Kim Hong-do. The pictures of Kim Tu-ryang used the technique of direct observation to render some highly original works. Work of the artist is displayed in the National Museum in Seoul and in the Pyongyang Museum. These works show experimentation with western techniques such as chiaroscuro but still contain the fine brush lines that demonstrate the clear Oriental traditions.

This first experimentation with inventive forms of painting in the eighteenth century gave way to even further experimentation in the 19th Century. The work of Kim Chong-hui, also known in Korea as Ch’usa or Wandang, shows a clear understanding of Chinese traditional techniques but often takes these traditions beyond the Chinese forms in both intensity and originality of form. Kim Chong-hui is a towering figure in the art scene of this period and is without equal in his effect on the direction of Korean art during this period. Of his students, Cho Hui-ryong and Hong Se-sop although never an equal to their teacher are well regarded for their artistic accomplishments.

As can be seen by the preceding short introduction, Korean painting although on the face adhering to Chinese models developed a clear Korean tradition in painting that yielded numerous unique developments. As Korea preceded into the 20th Century, Korean artists could look back on a tradition of painting that yielded many Korean forms and renderings of older more traditional techniques and subjects.

From: http://www.asia-art.net/korean_paint.html

Folk Painting

In Korea, the status of folk paintings as part of traditional art was obscure up until the 20th century. Folk painting, which is not unique to Korea, is typically understood to fall under folk studies rather than art history. Yet, there is a great difference in opinion among Korean scholars concerning the position of folk art within traditional art in general, as well as the scope and definition of the term. In the 1960s, a pioneering Korean scholar by the name of Cho Cha-yong collected folk art works and conducted excavations. Beginning with the "Tiger Exhibition" in 1969, special exhibitions of folk art were held on a regular basis. Around this time, information on folk art began to appear in publications, creating popular interest in the subject.

Since folk paintings are generally ordinary paintings made for a practical purpose, typically no mention is made of the artist's name. At first glance, the paintings seem crude. Yet, they vividly portray the simple beauty of the common people, and express a

faith filled with secular aspirations and optimism. With their humor and variegated colors, they capture the honest and natural aesthetic of the Korean people.

Since folk paintings are created for a practical purpose, few old examples remain. Yet, folk paintings have a diverse range of subjects, are colorful, concise in expression and treat familiar themes. Notably, since the 1960s, folk painting has begun to influence modern art circles.

Folk paintings can be classified, according to content, into a few or as many as 20 or 30 different styles. Distinguishable from general landscape paintings, *minhwa* landscapes include the typical *Eighth scenic views of the Hwiao and Hwiang Rivers* (a theme from China) and Korean landscapes. One can also find folk paintings created to decorate the interiors of rooms. These often depict the flower and bird motif, peonies, tiger-hunting scenes, comical magpie and tiger scenes and genre pictures of farmers working. Other pictures depict scholarly implements or contain inspirational verses—a clear demonstration of the respect for scholarship found in Confucian countries such as Korea.

From [http://www.asianinfo.org/asianinfo/korea/painting.htm#Folk Painting](http://www.asianinfo.org/asianinfo/korea/painting.htm#Folk%20Painting)