

The Art of Asia

**India, Southeast Asia,
China, Korea, and Japan**

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To the Teacher

About The Walch Multicultural Art Series

The Walch Multicultural Art Series is designed to introduce students to the glories and richness of civilizations in Africa, Asia, and the Near East, and in Mexico, Central America, and South America.

The series is made up of four videos, each with a comprehensive teacher's guide containing full video commentary and a wealth of reproducible pages—maps, background information, art projects. The programs currently available are:

The Art of Asia: India, Southeast Asia, China, Korea, and Japan

The Art of the Near East and Ancient Egypt

The Art of Africa

The Art of Mexico, Central America, and South America

A fifth video program, *Native Art of North America*, will be available soon.

About The Art of Asia: India, Southeast Asia, China, Korea, and Japan

This video program features a total of 103 works of art. It surveys representative works of art from five Asian regions.

The art of India is surveyed with 26 art works, hardly a glimpse at the treasures of this vast land, equal to all of Europe in size, with a rich art history that spans 5000 years and many art styles.

Southeast Asia includes countries with very individualistic art styles. Background information provides basic information about the art of Tibet, Vietnam, Cambodia, Nepal, Burma, Siam (now Thailand), and Indonesia. A glimpse of these countries' art is provided with 10 visuals.

Chinese art is important both on its own and as a powerful influencing force on the art of other cultures. With 35 examples of art, the video outlines the major dynasties and art styles over 2500 years of Chinese history.

The art of Korea clearly shows the influence of both the Chinese and Japanese cultures, yet its painting and sculpture also has original characteristics. And Korean pottery influenced that of China, its far more powerful neighbor. Five visuals offer a quick look at the art of this distinctive land.

Japan is much in the news today for its independent role in contemporary issues and economics. But its art, religion, and society had long been influenced by China and Korea—not surprising since the island of Japan was once part of the mainland. Using foreign influences, Japanese artists created an art style uniquely and specially Japanese. With 26 visuals, the unique quiet style, sense of space, and clarity of Japanese art are revealed.

The teacher's guide includes:

- 4 reproducible maps
- reproducible background information on the five major regions ("Facts About . . .")
- reproducible guides to understanding and interpreting the art of these regions ("Characteristics of . . .")
- lists of pictures of art featured in the five sections of the video
- a copy of the complete video commentary
- for art of India, 6 fully explained art projects based on major styles and themes of Indian art—4 for individuals, 2 for groups—and 3 research projects
- for the art of Southeast Asia, 5 complete art projects—3 for individual students, 2 for groups—and 2 research projects
- for the art of China and Korea, 7 complete art projects—5 for individuals, 2 for groups—and 3 research projects
- for the art of Japan, 8 fully developed art projects—5 for individuals, 3 for groups—and 2 research projects
- pronunciation guides to terms and names used in each of Indian art, Southeast Asian art, Chinese and Korean art, and Japanese art

How to Use This Material

The Walch Multicultural Art Series is an extensive audiovisual program supplemented by informative and easily accessible background and follow-up materials. An exceptionally flexible teaching package, it is effective with a wide range of students and teaching situations. It can be used as a quick visual introduction to one or all of the areas covered, or it can be used to develop a fuller understanding of the art traditions and styles of the areas.

The program is appropriate for students in grades 6–12 and above, and for classes ranging from comprehensive art classes (including studio) to art history to world cultures. The materials included in this package allow you to easily tailor the presentation to your instructional objectives and to the needs and abilities of your students.

The units are not sequential, so you can use as many of them as you wish and in the order of your choice. Check to see how the units are grouped on the video before planning your lessons.

For a brief presentation, use the provided background information to prepare your own informal introduction or remarks. (A pronunciation guide is provided at the end of each unit.) Then let the video take over.

For a more thorough presentation of each unit, reproduce and distribute the map(s), "Facts About _____ Art," and "Characteristics of _____ Art." Students can then read and talk about the purpose and traditions of art in a particular area before viewing the examples.

Whether you choose a brief or more thorough presentation of the material, be sure to read through the studio projects at the end of each unit. These hands-on projects range from easy to more advanced. Some are for individual students; others are cooperative group projects.

By getting actively involved with the materials, styles, and themes they have just learned about, your students will gain some true understanding of different kinds of art—and will have empathy for those artists who created in highly restrictive environments! These sound, original projects will give your students' own creativity a boost as well.

The requirements for the projects are simple; these are not projects for skilled craftspeople, and they do not require complicated materials. (Of course, if a student is gifted or experienced in a particular craft or art, he or she should be encouraged to do an original project.) It would be helpful to have the following materials on hand:

1. Library books about the art and culture of the civilization; picture books, history books, and travel accounts are all relevant, and should be made available to students throughout the project duration.
2. Travel brochures for cutting up (Out-of-date travel material is generally available at travel agencies.)
3. Tempera paint, large rolls of brown paper, poster board, black ink and pens, paper plates, clay, newspaper, papier-mâché materials (flour, water, Elmer's glue, and newspaper strips). Other materials are mentioned as needed.
4. Display space. Projects deserve to be displayed both on walls and on table surfaces. Perhaps a section of classroom can be set aside.

In addition to the creative arts and crafts projects, a few research projects are included. A student who prefers this type of project can present it to the class as a lecture or demonstration.

A word on originality: While studying the books and other material is necessary and should be encouraged, copying a particular work is unacceptable. These projects should be original and relevant, and should never include tracings, photocopies that have been colored, or other forms of duplication. (The only exception to this rule is for research papers, which may use photocopies for illustration.)

The aim of both research and art projects is to broaden your students' understanding of what they have been studying by familiarizing them with the media, the techniques, and the styles of the art. This is one more way—along with the historical background, the study of the artistic characteristics, and the enjoyment of the pictures—to bring the riches of other cultures to your students.

India



Facts About Indian Art

India covers a giant area, equal to Europe in size. Its art history also spans an enormous period of time, and includes a variety of different styles. The country is so large that some areas produced art that was quite different from the styles of other areas. From the earliest known civilization in the Indus River valley (about 3000 B.C.), various outside peoples have invaded and settled on the Indian continent. Aryans, Greeks, Persians, and Moslems all added to the native cultures already flourishing in India.

In addition to the influences of foreign civilizations, four great religions have been of major importance to India's art: Buddhist, Hindu, Jainist, and Moslem beliefs have all inspired Indian art at different times and in different regions. Out of this constantly changing society, a distinctly native art arose and spread throughout Asia.

INDUS RIVER VALLEY

The earliest civilization appeared in the Indus River valley in Western India and what is now Pakistan. Like the early Mesopotamian cultures, it was an agricultural society which had contacts with neighboring civilizations. Some early pottery and seals show us that the Indus valley civilization was a highly developed society which traded with foreigners and conducted business much as the Sumerians did. People of this society worshiped many gods. The center of this civilization was called *Mohenjo-Daro*, from which ancient art objects still exist. Seals from Mohenjo-Daro include a form of writing in a language not yet deciphered. The people of this civilization believed in a philosophy called *Vedic* thought. Handed down verbally from generation to generation, Vedic teachings eventually formed the basis for Hinduism.

ARYANS

In about 1500 B.C., Aryan peoples, originally nomadic cattle herders, invaded India, occupying nearly all of the country. The Aryan period lasted for more than 900 years. There is little art remaining to tell us much about the period from a visual standpoint, but during the Aryan period sacred books called *Vedas* appeared. Written in Sanskrit, these books provide the



fundamental beliefs of Indian thought. There are four holy books which describe rituals, gods, sacrifices, the journey of the soul, reincarnation, and the “divine order.” The “divine order” includes India’s caste system, in which people are born to a particular social status and cannot change.

The major themes of Indian art come from the *Vedas*, including the personification of nature—visual images of the god of fire, the god of sun, the god of rain, and so forth. As we look at examples of Indian art, we can see that their subjects are frequently drawn from these scriptures.

BUDDHISM AND JAINISM

Two new religions appeared in the sixth century B.C.: Buddhism and Jainism. Both religions were founded by real figures whose lives were later embellished with legends. Buddhism, founded by Prince Siddhartha, taught non-violence, compassion, and ethical behavior. The legends that grew up around Buddha’s birth and enlightenment form the basis for much early Indian art (and the art of many other Asian countries, including China).

Jainism was founded by Mahavira, a man whose principles were also non-violent. Jainists believed that God was in all of nature; they were forbidden to harm any living thing. Both religions preached the importance of personal virtue rather than the complicated theology and rituals of Vedic thought. Both were opposed to the strict social caste system of Hinduism. These religions were followed by many Indians. By the fourth century B.C. Buddhism, Jainism, and an early form of Hinduism based on Vedic thought coexisted. The merging of Aryan and native civilizations eventually spread from the Indus valley to the Ganges River and across northern India. Organized states appeared and began to push their influence toward the south.

PERSIAN AND GREEK INVADERS

But soon two massive invasions by non-Indian peoples occurred. First, the Persians under Darius I conquered the Indus valley in 517–509 B.C. They were defeated by Alexander the Great of Greece in 326 B.C. Both Persian and Greek influences appeared in Indian art and architecture, but the foreign influences were mixed with native traditions. The strongest influence was Greek; it appeared in a style of sculpture called *Ghandaran* in north-west India. The classical style of Greek sculpture strongly influenced native styles. Ghandaran sculpture is noted for its finely proportioned bodies and classically styled portrait heads.



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21	<i>Emperor Jahangir and Shah Abas</i>		
22	<i>Elephants and Water Sprites</i>		

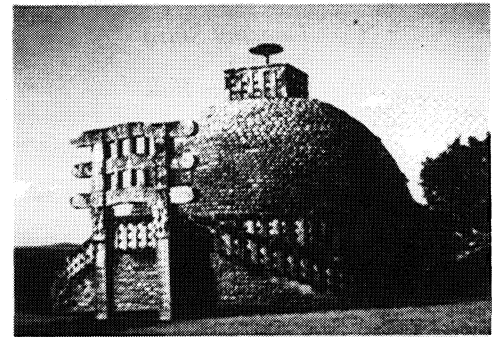
PICTURE 1 *Seal from Mohenjo-Daro*

This seal was found at Mohenjo-Daro, the site of the earliest civilization in India. It comes from between 2500 and 2300 B.C. The one-horned bull is thought to have been a kind of god. The bull was worshiped by the Hindus for centuries. Here it stands before some kind of sacred object, perhaps an incense burner. Scholars have not yet deciphered the writing on seals such as this one. The sophisticated drawing of the animal and the script suggest that there was some connection with the Mesopotamian culture, which also had seals with similar animals on them.



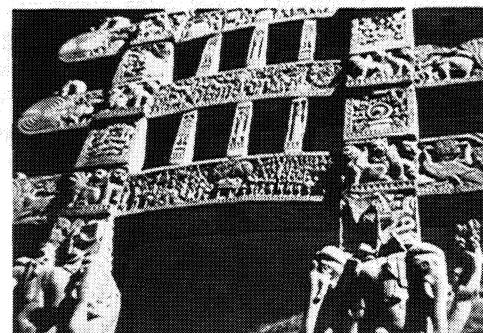
PICTURE 2 *Stupa at Sanchi*

This is the temple or memorial mound at Sanchi. This type of structure is called a *stupa*. First constructed during the reign of Asoka, the stupa was made of brick and then covered in sandstone. It was erected as a memorial to Buddha. It is filled with symbolic meanings. The base represents the earth. The dome represents the sky. The box on top symbolizes the palace of thirty-three ancient Vedic gods. And the umbrella shape at the very top stands for the royal rule of Buddha, who is supreme over heaven and earth and the Vedic gods. Note the combining of Hindu and Buddhist beliefs.



PICTURE 3 *Gate at Sanchi*

On the four sides of the stupa at Sanchi are large decorative gates. This one, like the others, is covered with ornamental carvings. They show stories of Buddha's life as well as symbols such as the wheel. There are also carvings of elephants, peacocks, and flowering trees. Buddha himself is never pictured in early Indian art. These early carvings and the many that followed in traditional style clearly show the joining of the spiritual (Buddhist beliefs) with physical beauty (molded bodies, flowering trees).



PICTURE 4 *Ghandaran Heads*

These two heads are from the fourth century B.C. They represent Buddha (or perhaps Majavira, the founder of the Jainist religion). They show how Indian style merged with classical Greek style after Alexander the Great invaded India. Ghandaran art, which was unlike other Indian art of the time, most clearly shows the influence of classical Greek style. The hybrid style of these two Ghandaran sculptures shows that by this time Buddha could be depicted as a man; in fact, he appears in the almost Western-looking proportions of classical Greece. The Greek style is seen in the realistically formed face with its long classical nose and well-designed mouth. The Indian traditions are found in the symbolic large ears (showing that Buddha hears all), the forehead dot (symbolizing a third eye that sees all) and the closed eyes (representing the serenity of Buddha's enlightenment).



PICTURE 5 *Ajanta Bodhisattva*

The remarkable wall paintings from the caves at Ajanta are among India's greatest art treasures. Made during the Gupta period, they show scenes and legends from Buddha's life, as well as details of life in the fifth century. They are the oldest surviving wall paintings in the world. Painted with striking realism, the human bodies in the Ajanta frescoes (wall paintings) have been compared to the work of Italian Renaissance artists for their grace and beauty. In this detail we see the Bodhisattva of Mercy and Compassion. A Bodhisattva is a saint-like person who has chosen to stay among his people to help them attain enlightenment. Here, he is in a dance-like position. In his hand is a lotus (a symbol of Buddha). He wears a pointed crown and a sacred cord made of pearls. The pearls indicate his high caste or social position. Despite the people crowding around him, he maintains a calm and serene poise.



Student Projects

Individual Projects

1. **Map of India**

Materials: large poster board; acrylic or tempera paint; magic markers; cut-out pictures (from travel brochures); glue; map; art books

Description: Students should make a giant map of India, using grids for accuracy. They should place major sites and geographic features on the map. Then, using travel material and hand drawings of famous spots, they should make a pictorial map of the continent. Important architectural, artistic, and geographic sites should be included and properly identified.

2. **Clay Sculpture**

Materials: self-hardening clay or plaster of paris; wire (optional)

Description: Using books on Indian art for reference, students should design a small sculpture of an Indian god, such as a many-armed Shiva dancing, or other typically Indian subjects. The finished sculpture should be about 8" high. Wire should be used for armature if necessary, particularly for a figure with many arms. Accurate positions for hands and feet can be taken from pictures.

3. **Collage**

Materials: large poster board; glue; miscellaneous pictures from magazines; travel brochures; hand-painted papers; fabric swatches of Indian patterns; bits of advertisements; other collage materials

Description: This collage (a composition made of pasted bits) will show Indian design elements, from tile patterns and wall decorations (such as those at the Taj Mahal) to the ornamented walls of Hindu sites (such as Halebid's temple) to the patterns of flowers, elephants, and tree shapes found in Indian painting and sculpture. Fragments should be glued to the poster board in a nice design, leaving a margin (including title space) but little other empty space. Fragments can overlap.

4. **Frieze with Indian Legend**

Materials: large piece of cardboard, box top, or other strong flat surface; plaster of paris, or self-hardening clay; acrylic or tempera paint; brushes; sculpture knife

Individual Projects (continued)

Description: After thickly covering a backing of cardboard or other surface with clay or plaster of paris that is about 2" thick, students will have a frieze background. It should be smoothed out before beginning the sculpture. Using a legend (researched in an art book) or other traditional Indian theme, students should mold figures and patterns that both cut into the surface and rise above it. After it has dried, it can be painted (using art books as guide to style and colors). Suggested themes: Krishna legend, Vishnu legend, dancers. Finished frieze should be placed against a wall.

Group Projects

5. Taj Mahal Model

Materials: cardboard boxes of different sizes, including gift boxes; papier mâché makings (flour, Elmer's glue, newspaper strips); tiny tiles (bathroom tile leftovers); acrylic paint; brushes; "found" objects; masking tape

Description: This project should be started with good pictures of the Taj Mahal, including some from angles other than the front view. Travel brochures will be helpful. The basic structure will be made from boxes taped together. This structure should be covered with papier mâché and allowed to dry. The outside can then be decorated with small tiles, painted designs, and "found" objects, as well as with cut-away areas to represent open arches. A more advanced project can include the reflecting pool and trees.

6. Hindu Gods and Legends

Materials: brown paper rolls; acrylic or tempera paint; brushes

Description: The finished project will look like a mural, covering a large part of the wall. It can be painted flat by many students working together. The subject should be researched in art books. The theme is the many different visual representations of Hindu gods and the legends that accompany them. Each student should take a different one (explanation should be pasted nearby) and paint—in traditional Indian style—the god or legend. If necessary, a god should be painted in its several different appearances.

Research Projects

7. Buddhist Art

Materials: photocopied pictures from art books; report materials; glue