Teacher’s Guide
Washi: Japanese Papermaking Workshop
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Historical aspects of Japanese papermaking

Since its introduction to Japan, papermaking has been at the center of Japanese life, both the religious and the secular. Paper plays an important role in many rituals, ceremonies and festivals during special occasions, as well as, in countless ordinary everyday activities. Handmade Japanese paper, washi, is a perfect example of the four principles of Japanese aesthetics: purity, tranquility, harmony, and respect, and is a perfect manifestation of that culture.

Papermaking, which was introduced to Japan in 610 CE, and its use, expanded steadily in the following centuries. From the 6th through the 12th centuries, the center of political power was the imperial court, which was permanently established in Kyoto in 785. Early in the classical era, emperors sponsored the copying and printing of thousands of Buddhist sermons (sutra), and paper was collected as taxes for this purpose. Later in the classical era, political power shifted from emperors themselves to powerful imperial courtiers who served as regents and ruled in the name of the emperor. These were often close relatives of the emperor or empress. Because emperors claimed descent through their fathers, ambitious courtiers struggled to marry their daughters into the imperial line, thereby becoming the grandfather of a future emperor. The best example of this strategy was Fujiwara no Michinaga (966-1028), who was the uncle of two emperors, the grandfather of three emperors, and the father of four empresses. His formal claim to power was as regent for his nephew, the emperor Go-ichijo, but his real power lay in his vast network of family ties.

During this period, the details of etiquette and protocol were extremely important. Since political power was rooted in marriage politics, fine manners at court were central to political advancement. The political elite, limited to a few thousand people, was extremely conscious both of birth rank and of the fine points of etiquette and aesthetics. Elegant poetry and letter writing, for example, were essential to social and political success. Paper was an important part of this courtier culture. Courtiers sought not only to match their poetry to the season and the emotional mood, but to find an appropriate style and color of calligraphy paper or paper fan on which to write their verse. Courtiers
sought exotic papers with flowers and fabrics mixed with the pulp, as well as, scented papers. Courtiers prided themselves on their ability to discern fine distinctions in the style of paper, subtle differences in hue, and an appropriate harmony with the verse itself. Paper was also important to the ritual and protocols of the imperial court: *washi* was used in the hats of imperial courtiers and specific papers were needed for different court ceremonies.

In the 1100’s a struggle between rival factions at the imperial court became explosively bitter and violent. Both sides requested the assistance of low-ranking courtiers who could summon armies of samurai, or rural warriors. By the time the fighting was over in 1185, the warriors had established an independent capital in Kamakura. The new warrior rulers, known as shoguns, were respectful of the court and did not seek to destroy court authority. Many elite warriors relied on courtiers to teach them poetry and the arts. But warriors also developed their own cultural traditions. Key among these was Zen Buddhism, a school of Buddhism that values simplicity, tranquility, and clarity. Samurai found that the calm focus Zen meditation helped them deal with the frenzy and terror of battle. Zen aesthetics led to a demand for new types of paper, such as simple white paper for use in garments. The rise of the warrior class also shifted power away from the capital to the countryside, and this helped spread the use of paper. Warriors also sought to promote the production of paper in their own territories. By the 1400s, the shoguns found it increasingly difficult to control rival warrior families and in 1467 the country collapsed into total civil war between hundreds of different samurai armies.

After a century of war, a series of three warlords, known as the three unifiers, began to recentralize the country, assembling larger and larger warlord alliances. In 1600, the warlord, Tokugawa Ieyasu, led his allies to a decisive victory at the Battle of Sekigahara and he became shogun soon after. By the 1630s the Tokugawa house had suppressed all possible challengers. They ruled Japan in relative peace until the 1860s.

The peace of the Tokugawa era brought unprecedented prosperity to Japan. The population soared from about 15 million in 1600 to almost 30 million in the mid-1700s. The city of Edo, the shogun’s capital, grew from a fishing village to a city of over one million. Amidst this prosperity the use of paper production soared and paper products
spread to the general population. Fans, parasols, wrapping paper, and paper door screens, once limited to the court and warrior, became known and used by wealthier commoners. The most prosperous commoner families sought to learn crafts such as ceremonial gift-wrapping, mizuhiki, and paper folding, origami.

The use of paper was encouraged by widespread literacy. After the 1600’s, most samurai lived in cities and relied on commoners to keep track of taxes and farm yields. The warrior elite were, thus, dependent on basic commoner literacy, and the spread of literacy helped build a vast publishing industry. By the 1700’s, Japan was publishing thousands of books annually ranging from farm manuals, through philosophy and history, to fanciful tales of romance and adventure. The growing publishing industry not only required enormous amounts of paper, but it spread knowledge of paper arts. The proper etiquette of paper folding and gift wrapping, once a part of courtier culture, were now made available to ordinary Japanese through published manuals. Commoners even developed their own forms of poetry, the most famous being the haiku.

Tokugawa rulers were fearful of unfamiliar ideas, especially Christianity, which they thought could undermine their rule. From the 1630’s they barred people who left Japan from ever returning, and strictly controlled contact with the few Europeans who came to Japan. In the 1840s, however, Europe and the US put increasing pressure on Japan to establish trade with the rest of the world, and in 1853 the US forced the shogunate to sign its first treaty with a Western power. The Tokugawa never recovered from this humiliation – the proud warrior government had been publicly intimidated by Western military technology. In the Meiji Restoration of 1868, the Tokugawa were overthrown by an alliance of warriors loyal to the emperor. Although the imperial court had been powerless for centuries, the leaders of the Meiji Restoration used the aura of the court to build a strong centralized government, while simultaneously opening Japan to new ideas and technologies.

In papermaking, the modern era saw the introduction of the Western-style wood pulp based papermaking. This cheaper paper soon replaced washi for use in newspapers, magazines, and books. Washi, however, remained important for traditional crafts and the government made efforts to promote and protect washi making. In 1878, for example, washi was prominently featured in the Japanese pavilion of the Paris World Exposition,
and this increased the visibility of washi internationally. Nonetheless, the demand for washi as a fine craft was much less than the demand for paper as a whole and the number of Japanese papermakers declined sharply, from as many as 60,000 in 1900 to under 400 in the 1980s.
Cultural aspects of Japanese paper

Paper has been at the center of Japanese cultural life for centuries. Paper technology accompanied the introduction of writing from China. While writing and the tools associated with it (brushes, ink, and, of course, paper) were originally imported from China, the Japanese rapidly domesticated these, and by the 7th century had invented their own writing system—the basis of a syllabary (comparable to the Western alphabet) that is still used today.

Writing

Only aristocrats (about 5% of the population) learned to write in the early part of Japanese history, the classical period (719-1185). Interestingly, writing was an important part of success in life for aristocratic women, as well as, men. Obviously, it was necessary to know how to write to get a job in the government offices, much as it is today. But writing was also important for finding a husband or wife—people got to know each other by exchanging poems by letter, rather than meeting face to face. For this reason people were very much interested in finding beautiful paper in order to create a good impression, and even cause someone to fall in love with them. Many people kept diaries, especially women, who collected their poems and their thoughts about life and shared them with their friends and handed them down to their daughters.

By the early modern period (1600-1868), many commoners were also learning how to read and write. Literacy was important for children in both urban and rural areas—especially merchants, who needed to keep good accounts and write letters to suppliers and customers. It was also important for farmers, who had to maintain records of crops and various kinds of correspondence. Both men and women worked in the family business, so reading was essential for both boys and girls. People also read for pleasure—lending libraries began to develop at this time, and improvements in the development of both papermaking and print technology made it possible for people to buy books cheaply. They also collected pictures of famous actors and beautiful women (much like we read magazines about celebrities today) so that they could keep up with fashion—and these pictures were printed on paper. Furthermore, people began to travel more during this
time, so letter writing to friends, business associates, and loved ones far away became important. People still kept diaries, and wrote poems to their lovers. Writing itself was an art—with upwards of 6000 Chinese characters in common use, writing beautifully took constant practice. Good handwriting was thought of as a sign of intelligence and good character. Paper, of course, was central to this practice.

Religion

Two religions developed in Japan: Shinto and Buddhism. Shinto (the word means "the way of the gods") is indigenous to Japan; Buddhism came from India through China and Korea starting from around the 5th century. For the most part, Shinto and Buddhism have had a long history of peaceful coexistence; most Japanese have believed in both of them at the same time.

Paper is central to ritual in both Shinto. One of the most common sights at a Shinto shrine is heihaku, pieces of white paper folded into zigzag-shaped strips that are displayed as offerings to the gods. Purity is of primary importance in Shinto, and the whiteness of the paper is a symbol of this purity. Sometimes priests will use wands hung with heihaku in exorcism rituals. Another common use of paper in a Shinto shrine is omikuji, or fortune-telling strips: worshippers choose these at random, read the fortune that's written there, and then tie them to a fence at the shrine as a prayer for good luck.

Paper is also very important in Buddhism. Unlike Shinto, which has no scripture, Buddhism reveres written texts that are believed to be the teachings of Buddha and other important spiritual figures. Veneration of these texts is an important part of Buddhist worship, and over the centuries believers created countless examples of illustrated and decorated versions of the sutras. Many were made with beautiful colored paper (deep purple and indigo were popular colors, inscribed with ink made of gold or silver), and illustrated with incredibly elaborate images. Hanging scrolls, that is, images painted on paper and mounted in a flexible cloth frame, were hung in temples and in private homes as objects of worship. These might have a picture of a single Buddha, hundreds of Buddhas (mandala), or written quotations from holy texts.
Clothing

Clothing was very expensive, and many people could not always afford clothing made from the commonly used fibers, hemp or cotton, let alone silk. Luckily, paper provided an alternative. Paper garments, called shifu or kamiko, were made partly or entirely of strong paper. These were very durable, and often very colorful.
Traditional Technique of Japanese papermaking

Japanese paper is made with local plants such as kozo, gampi, and mitsumata. Entire villages and multiple generations have participated in papermaking since its inception. Each village in Japan has a unique style, or type of paper, for which they are known. Until the 1960’s the secrets of the village papermaking styles was so closely guarded that the villagers would not marry people from other villages lest their secrets be found out. Paper is made in the winter when the villagers are not farming, the temperature is cooler, and the plant material used will not rot. Today, most paper is made by machine in Japan; however, there are still hundreds of families that make paper by hand using traditional methods that have changed little through the centuries.

The first step in papermaking is the harvesting of the plants. Kozo and mitsumata are farmed plants and gampi is a wild plant. The plants are cut from the bottom of their stalk into one meter lengths and bundled together. They are steamed in a barrel over a fire in order to easily separate the bark. The bark is then stripped and dried. Often this dried bark is sold to papermakers throughout the country. This bark is the black bark or kuro-kawa. In order to make paper it must be turned into white bark, shiro-kawa. The bundles of fibers are placed in cold streams for one to three days. The black layers of the bark, called chirogami, are scraped off with a blunt knife leaving white bark. It is then macerated in the running water again in order to remove any glutinous substances. The fibers are now boiled in an iron cauldron with lye. This allows the fibers to become soft to the touch. The fibers are rinsed in a stream to remove any of the lye. Next the fibers are beaten by hand using large heavy wooden hammers to separate the fibers. More modern
hand paper mills use a stamper or a Hollander beater to separate the fibers. The fibers are mixed with water and toroai or neri (a glutinous mixture which suspends the fibers in the water and prevents them from sinking to the bottom) and then placed into a wooden vat. The tool used to make the paper is a sugeta, made from bamboo and horse hair woven together. The papermaker dips the mold and pulls it up shaking the excess water and pulp off the back. This process is usually rapidly repeated three times. The wet sheets of paper are stacked on top of each other and pressed. The pressed sheets are then taken outside and brushed onto long flat boards to finish drying. The process of making paper by hand is so time consuming that in Japanese culture it is considered a virtue to not waste a single sheet of paper.
Instructions on how to make Japanese paper in the classroom

1. Cook Kozo, Mitsumata or Gampi fibers until done or purchase cooked and bleached fibers from vendors.
2. Create formation aid. You can mix this ahead of time or soak cooked, cut okra in water.
3. Hand beat fibers with wooden mallets (meat tenderizers). Use a drop and pull motion to separate the fibers faster. This method keeps you from getting too tired.
4. Stir fibers into a vat. Add formation aid until the water makes gloop noises instead of splash noises.
5. Hold the sugeta about midway down the outside edges. Make sure the chain (sewn) lines point towards you.
6. Dip ¼ of the mould into the vat. Rock the mould forwards and back watching the wave you create. Make sure the wave bounces from one side of the frame to the other and back. Before the water is gone, flick the remaining water out of the sugeta.
7. Repeat until desired thickness of paper is achieved.
8. Let drain.
9. Open the frame and remove the su (the bamboo holding the fibers).
10. Lay the su onto a piece of dampened pelon (fabric interfacing).
   Having a wool blanket or towel to cushion underneath the pelon is helpful in getting the paper off the su.
11. Gently press back of su and then pull the su up from one side. Roll the su back and the paper should release onto the pelon. If not help it along with your finger.
12. Place another piece of dampened pelon down and repeat. Add more pulp to the vat as needed.
13. After achieving the desired amount of paper, place the stack of paper and pelon between boards and press. You can use a hydraulic jack with minimal pressure or use a trash can and drip water into it over the next few hours.
14. Remove after pressing and place sheets onto wood coated with polyurethane or sheets of Plexiglas. Let air-dry if possible. Remove by gently pulling up one side of the sheet and snapping the paper off the boards. Do not pull the paper back or roll it off. That will curl the paper.
What holidays are celebrated in Japan?

People all over the world celebrate holidays and festivals. As modern as life in Japan has become, many of the traditional ways are remembered and honored during holidays and celebrations. In fact, Japan is a country of many festivals. Every month sees some sort of celebration which frequently commemorates an incident from history, a religious holiday, or a legend.

Thanksgiving: After World War II, Japanese people began to celebrate Thanksgiving, or a time to give blessings, on November 23rd. Some festivals are national, while others are held in cities, towns, or villages. Part of these celebrations may include dancing, parades, and singing. The wearing of traditional costumes, bright colors, and historic decorations may also be involved in the celebrations. Although Christmas and Easter are not widely celebrated holidays in Japan, they are observed by those Japanese who are Christians.

Birthdays: Just as children in America celebrate the day of their birth, so do children in Japan with birthday parties. Many birthday parties are held at home. After partaking of birthday cake or perhaps opening gifts, children gather for a special event called “kakushi-gei”. This means, secret performance, and may consist of a sing along, a magic show, or even humorous type of dancing.

New Year’s: The biggest celebration of the year in Japan is New Year’s which occurs between January 1st and January 3rd. This is a solemn, but joyous occasion. Homage may be paid at a shrine or temple where petitions are raised for good fortune for the coming year. In some areas, houses are thoroughly cleaned and front entrances are decorated with bamboo and pine. A shimenwa, or taboo rope made of paper and straw is strung across the top of the entry way. This practice is based on a legend that tells of the Sun Goddess, Amaterasu, who hid in a cave and when the world turned dark, was enticed back into the world by sounds of laughter and dancing. People string a rope across the front of the cave to keep her from hiding there again. A kadomatsu arrangement of bamboo, pine boughs and straw may be set up on two sides of the front entrance of a house as a symbol of longevity. Before the end of the old year, many Japanese people mail cards or postcards to family and friends. Post Office employees deliver these
greetings on the first of January. Many parents and relatives give children pocket money, called otoshidama, as part of the New Year’s celebration. At midnight on New Year’s Eve, bells ring from the temple. Bells are rung 108 times with the belief that each person has committed 108 sins during the year. The bells chase away the evil spirits so everyone can begin the year with a clean slate.

Valentine’s Day: Another holiday that American children and many Japanese children commonly celebrate is on February 14\textsuperscript{th}. Although this holiday has not been observed by children in Japan until recently, it has become an occasion where it is appropriate for a young girl to send chocolate candy to a boy she likes.

Girls’ festival: Hina-matsuri, also known as the Doll’s Festival. It is held on the third day of the third month, it is usually observed at home. In celebration of a girl’s health and progress, a set of beautiful dolls (usually 15) dressed in traditional costumes are displayed on a tiered doll stand that is covered with red carpet. Dolls of royalty are displayed on the top shelf, followed by court ladies, musicians, guards, and servants. The bottom tier holds miniature furniture and musical instruments. Children should be reminded that these dolls are not the usual dolls that children play with daily, but are special dolls that may have been handed down for generations and carefully stored.

Children’s Festival (Kodomo-No-Hi), May 5\textsuperscript{th}, is the traditional time to celebrate children. It is often referred to as Boy’s Day because samurai dolls are put on display, samurai armor suits are exhibited, and judo experts demonstrate the martial arts. Because the koi, or carp, symbolizes how children beautifully negotiate the stream of life, many carp kites or wind socks, known as koi nobori, fly all over Japan when they are hung on wooden poles in the front yard, in gardens, or on roof tops. Each boy in the family has his own fish, with the oldest having the largest fish, and the youngest having the smallest. In fact, each region of Japan sports a unique design. Koi were traditionally displayed when a child was born. Currently, large black (representing father), middle- sized pink (representing mother), and small blue (representing a child) carp are displayed. This is also an appropriate time to tell the classic tales such as Little One Inch or Little Peach Boy, which should be available in your library.
You may want to invite children to make their own koi nobori. Talk to the children about the symbolism related to the carp (the koi, or carp, symbolizes how children beautifully negotiate the stream of life). Point out that the fish has scales, fins, gills, and a tail. See page 26, “Making Koi Nobori” if you are interested in guiding children in this activity.

Tanabata (Star Festival) occurs in the summer on the 7th day of the 7th month. Ask children to figure out what day this celebration takes place (July 7). This festival is based on a classic Japanese tale:

The Heavenly Emperor’s daughter had made the fabric of heaven that included a weaving of the stars. He was very proud of his daughter and of his many cattle who were guarded faithfully by a cow herder. One day, the daughter and cow herder fell in love and married only after they promised not to let their love interfere with their work. However, the princess allowed holes to form in the star weaving, and the cow herder allowed several cattle to wander away. The Emperor became enraged and ordered the couple to live on opposite sides of the entire universe. There was no way for the two lovers to meet until a flock of magpies came and made a wide bridge. Only once a year did the magpies return and allow them to cross over the Milky Way. We can see the two stars (Weaver Star and Cowherd Star, Vega and Altair respectively) meeting in the night sky early in July.

In celebration of this tale of love, children decorate the branches of bamboo with hearts shapes, star shapes, curly shapes, and wish (tanzaku) on paper and then have a parade. Ask the students to imagine a parade of laughing children carrying bright green bamboo, swishing the leaves and paper, as they parade on a hot day in July.

You may want to hold an honorary Tanabata celebration in your classroom. Each child may gather a branch to bring to school (if bamboo is difficult to obtain, you may also supply willow branches, or other branches from trees with thin leaves.) Each child will need at least 12” of branch to decorate. As you talk about the story, ask children to be deciding what they would like to hang on their branch. Tell children that the tanzaku, or wish- papers are frequently recorded on square shaped paper and then hung with the other shapes (stars, circle, etc.). When they are finished, they may enjoy marching around the room in their own version of the parade.
Discuss the similarities and differences in celebrations in Japan and the United States.

Make a list of students’ suggestions. Your organized list might look something like this:

Similarities:
Both involve family celebrations
Both involve customs or traditions
Both occur at special times of the year

Differences
Different customs are observed
Japanese may wear more traditional costumes
Japanese Writing System

Kanji is the Japanese word for the written characters that are said to have been created in China several thousand years ago, though nobody knows exactly where or when. The way Kanji got started was from pictures people drew. Over a long period of time the shape of the pictures changed, and so most of them no longer look like the original objects. But they still stand for whole words or parts of words.

Kanji were brought to Japan about 1,900 years ago. There are many thousands of them; one big dictionary has about 50,000. But people don’t actually use that many. There are about 2,000 of them on the list the government has drawn up for regular use. Elementary school children learn 1,006 by the end of sixth grade. Middle school students learn to write sentences with these 1,006 and learn to read another 939.

In addition to Kanji, which have meaning and stand for words or parts of words, the Japanese has two sets of characters for writing sounds. Hiragana has rounded strokes, while katakana uses mostly straight lines. They were developed during the Heian period (794-1185) from the kanji that came to be used for certain sounds in the Japanese language. There are 46 characters in each of these two sets, which are called syllabaries, because they stand for syllables (usually including both a consonant and a vowel, like “ka”). Combined with some extra dots used to mark changes of the original sounds, these 46 characters are enough to express all the sounds of modern Japanese. Hiragana are used together with kanji to write ordinary Japanese words. Katakana are used mainly to write words borrowed from other languages and names of foreign people and places, as well as, to denote sounds and cries of animals.
What types of literature are written and shared in Japan?

When learning about Japan it is essential to examine the types of writing produced and enjoyed for various purposes. The works of poets, stories of authors, and proverbs of ancient writers, provide insights into the soul of the country.

These cues to the values of a nation are best enjoyed when read aloud in the classroom, discussed and responded to through various activities. To make the experience an insightful one for children, guide them to imagine the people who actually wrote or said the words of the examples of writing you will examine. Invite them to think about the feelings, images, or thoughts the words evoke. What author’s beliefs, hopes, or even cautions do they think are intended?

According to a 1993 survey reported in Japan 1996: An International Comparison published by the Keizai Koho Center, Japan has 576 daily newspapers in circulation per 1,000 people, as compared to 249 in America. Japan also published 48,053 new books as compared to 49,287 in the United States. It is easy to see that Japanese people like to be well-informed and enjoy various forms of literature. Explain to the students that some of the current forms of writing in Japan also include less serious forms of writing: advertising slogans and comic books.

Advertising and campaign slogans serve the same purpose in Japan as they do in the United States. They are intended to persuade a reader or passerby to agree with or think about a particular point of view. Write the following slogan on the board:

*Japan’s so small, why are you driving so fast?*

Ask students to speculate on who might have written the slogan and for what purpose. What slogans from the United States can they recall? Responses might include:

*Just say no.  Only you can prevent forest fires.  Life’s a sport, drink it up.*

Students might want to try their hand at creating a short slogan intended to capture attention quickly, and provide an important message to their peers.

Comic books: Japanese comics are called manga. These periodicals are published monthly along with a small collection of games, fun ideas, and other materials for young readers. These are very popular among Japanese school-aged children and are labeled as
to the level of school appropriate for their use. Familiar items are advertised in these widely read materials.

Explain that many forms of writing enjoyed in Japan have a long literary tradition. These include proverbs, haiku, and folk tales.

Write the following Japanese proverb on the board:

“The nail that sticks up gets hammered down.”

Ask students to speculate on the meaning of the proverb. Explain that a proverb is designed to be short and give a quick lesson or caution about life. This saying is a familiar Japanese metaphor for what happens to people who stand out as different from others in the group. Ask children to think about how this proverb might relate to peer pressure in the United States. What proverb that uses a metaphor might they write to offer a caution about life in the United States?

Haiku is a type of Japanese written art form that many children in the United States may enjoy trying. This type of non-rhyming poetry focuses on nature and the beauty of the environment. Haiku is intended to be simply written, yet richly insightful. Many of these poems capture the changing of seasons, or the exquisite fall of a rain drop with just a few, well-chosen words. The words in the first line of a haiku are usually constructed of five syllables; the words of the second line consist of seven syllables, and the third and last line repeats the five syllable (not word) pattern. Masters of this form of writing may slightly alter the number of syllables in order to achieve a certain aesthetic effect.

Children will benefit from hearing haiku, analyzing the structure, and perhaps seeing accompanying Japanese-style illustrations. You might want to share a haiku selected from a book by George Shannon (1996), *Spring: A Haiku Story*, published in New York by Greenwillow Books. Shannon’s fourteen haiku poems illustrate the freshness of the earth during spring time. Charming Japanese folk-art style paintings help create a sense of new beginnings and a contemplative celebration of creation. The author reminds readers that several of the selections have been enjoyed by Japanese readers and listeners for over 300 years. Sharing these short, elegantly written poems should evoke moments of awe and a new way to enjoy nature among the students. The following excerpts are as refreshing as a sudden spring shower.
The snow thaws,
And suddenly the whole village
is full of children.

The drake and his wife,
Paddling among green tufts of grass
are playing house.

After sharing and discussing several examples of haiku, you may want to invite children to create a haiku of their own. When guiding this experience, it is best to set the stage in ways that help prepare students for how to “see” the world and nature through the eyes of a poet. Tell students that they will be going outside to gather inspiration for writing haiku. Remind them that after they have sat quietly for a few minutes and enjoyed a corner of the playground, or a spot by some planted shrubbery, to focus on one aspect of nature. They may also take paper and pencil to record a few words that will remind them of the experience, and perhaps capture the essence of nature. Back in the classroom, remind students of the pattern for a haiku and allow them time to formulate their poems and revise them for the correct number of syllables and wording.

Students may select their best haiku to prepare for display. After the poem is copied with magic marker or black ink onto a piece of construction or parchment paper, the student may add a related illustrated watercolor or magic marker picture and paste the top and bottom edges to thin wooden dowels, wooden skewers, or even long drinking straws. These haiku scrolls may be exhibited on a bulletin board.

Folktales: This segment of the lesson provides an opportunity for children to compare and contrast a traditional folktale from Japan, The Inch Boy, with a traditional folktale from England and that is told and enjoyed in the United States, Tom Thumb. A 1984 edition of The Inch Boy, illustrated by Junko Morimoto is available through Puffin Books. A 1989 version of Tom Thumb retold and illustrated by Richard Jesse Watson is available through Harcourt Brace, Jovanovich, and Publishers.
To facilitate discussion and comparisons between stories, distribute diagram on Comparing Folktales in Japan and the United States. After sharing one of the books, fill out the language chart categories by answering these questions.

- Who was the main character?
- Where did the story mostly take place?
- What was the main character’s problem?
- How was the problem solved?
- How does the story reflect unique cultural aspects of the United States and Japan?

Students will discover similarities such as:

- both heroes were an inch tall, or the size of a thumb;
- both heroes had poor parents and were born as a result of a sincere petition;
- both heroes faced a giant;
- both heroes were almost destroyed inside the stomach of a creature;
- both heroes saved the day;
- both heroes were rewarded.

Students will also discover differences such as:

- Issunboshi’s parents prayed to Buddha for a child whereas Tom’s parents were kind to a famous medieval magician, Merlin who found out they wanted a child;
- each character’s clothes reflected the unique aspects of their cultures;
- Issunboshi was rewarded for his heroism by gaining size and status; but Tom was rewarded with money to share with his poor family.

Students might have fun writing their own version of this tale by considering what might happen in a modern day setting in the United States or in Japan. What perils would the hero face? What cultural influences should appear in the story? What sort of modern day villain should the little hero face? What would be an appropriate reward?
What is Shodo (Calligraphy)?

These days, most Japanese use pencils, ballpoints, or felt-tip pens to write letters and other documents. But the art of Shodo (calligraphy), where an ink-dipped brush is used artistically to create Chinese kanji and Japanese kana characters, remains a traditional part of Japan’s culture. Works of calligraphy are admired for accurate composition of their characters, of course, but also for the way the brush is handled in their creation, the shading of the ink, and the balanced placement of the characters on the paper.

Beginning in elementary school, students learn the basics of calligraphy in penmanship classes. At the beginning of each calendar year the children gather to take part in an activity known as kakizome, where they create calligraphic works symbolizing their wishes for the New Year. Students practice their penmanship to improve their calligraphy, sometimes copying out works by famous calligraphers from the past. Some elementary and middle school students even go to special schools to learn the art, attending classes in the evenings and on the weekends to become able to write beautiful characters.

The art of Shodo originated in China and came to Japan in the sixth or seventh century, along with methods for making brushes, ink, and paper. In those days, Calligraphy was an essential part of the education of members of the ruling noble families, but as time went by, the art spread among the common people as well. Nowadays, calligraphy is not just an art form to be admired; people use it to write New Year’s cards, and in other situations in their daily lives.
Arts and Crafts in Japan

People who live in Japan participate in a variety of arts, crafts and artistic hobbies. As in America, some Japanese people enjoy participating in artistic activities, such as drawing informal sketches. Other Japanese crafts are paper folding, or origami and making lacquer ware boxes.

Origami is the art of paper folding. Ori means to fold and Kami means paper. When the two words are joined together the k is changed to g. One of the unique aspects of this art is that wonderful objects can be made without any cutting or pasting. Colored paper is folded in various ways with precise creases until over time it is transformed into a hat, an animal or even a person. Children first learn how to fold paper at preschools, or their mothers may teach them a few basics folds at home. Refer to pages 28 - 30 that provide instruction for creating a folded sailboat, helmet or whale.

Lacquer ware box creation is a Japanese art with a long history, In this traditional art form, lacquer was applied to wood, paper, or a variety of materials. Simple objects from Japanese culture or nature (flowers, cranes, ducks, vines, butterflies, tortoises, feathers, dragonflies) were incorporated into the decorative designs on the boxes. If students would like to try making their own versions of a lacquer ware box, refer to page.
Making Koi Nobori

Materials: 15” piece of wax paper
Scissors
White glue
Tissue paper in various colors and shapes
(Fish scale shapes, triangles for fins, circles for eyes, etc.)
Ribbon

• Directions: Fold the piece of wax paper lengthwise and cut into a fish design, being sure to leave the two sides attached on at least one portion of one side of the fish.
• Unfold the paper so that the fish is displayed with both sides showing simultaneously.
• Paint the wax paper with glue.
• Lay on layers of precut tissue paper shapes for scales, fins, eyes, gills. (Light layers of tissue paper will produce a translucent quality to the kite).
• Fold the fish together with the tissue paper on either the inside of the outside. Staple or flue the unattached edge.
• Punch holes on either side of the fishes’ mouth and tie with a ribbon.
• Kites may be flown when they are completely dried.
Map of Japan
SAILBOAT

1. Fold in half and open

2. Fold to center crease

3. Fold up from bottom

4. Fold up again
HELMET

1. Fold in half

2. Fold corners to center

3. Fold bottom flaps upward

4. Fold flaps outward from center

5. Fold top flap up from bottom

6. Fold flap up again

7. Fold flap up again
WHALE

1. Fold and open

2. Fold to center crease

3. Fold backwards

4. Fold tail back

5. Fold back fin and fold in nose

6. Cut open tail and draw on eye and mouth
Japanese Hiragana

Origin

Hiragana syllables developed from Chinese characters, as shown below. Hiragana were originally called *onnade* or 'women's hand' as were used mainly by women - men wrote in kanji and katakana. By the 10th century, hiragana were used by everybody. The word hiragana means "ordinary syllabic script".

In early versions of hiragana there were often many different characters to represent the same syllable, however the system was eventually simplified so that there was a one-to-one relationship between spoken and written syllables. The present orthography of hiragana was codified by the Japanese government in 1946.

The hiragana syllabary

In each column the rōmaji appears on the left, the hiragana symbols in the middle and the kanji from which they developed on the right. There is some dispute about which kanji the hiragana developed from.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>平仮名（ひらがな）</th>
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</table>
The symbols for 'wi' and 'we' were made obsolete by the Japanese Ministry of Education in 1946 as part of its language reforms. The symbols 'ha', 'he' and 'wo' are pronounced 'wa', 'e' and 'o' respectively when used as grammatical particles.

Additional sounds are represented using diacritics or combinations of syllables:

```
ka  gi  ggu  ge  go  kya  kyu  kyo  kiyo
za  ji  zu  ze  zo  gya  gyu  gyu  gyio
da  ji  zu  de  do  sha  shu  shu  shyo
ba  bi  bu  be  bo  ja  ju  jyu  jyo
pa  pi  pu  pe  po  cha  chu  chu  chyo
nya  nyu  nyu  nyu  nyoy
hya  hyu  hyu  hyu  hyyo
bya  byu  byu  byu  byyo
pya  pyu  pyu  pyu  pyyo
mya  myu  myu  myu  myyo
rya  riu  riu  riu  ryyo
```

**Characteristics and usage of hiragana**

The hiragana syllabary consists of 48 syllables and is mainly used to write word endings, known as *okurigana* in Japanese. Hiragana are also widely used in materials for children, textbooks, animation and comic books, to write Japanese words which are not normally written with kanji, such as adverbs and some nouns and adjectives, or for words whose kanji are obscure or obsolete.

Hiragana are also sometimes written above or along side kanji to indicate pronunciation, especially if the pronunciation is obscure or non-standard. Hiragana used in this way are known as *furigana* or ruby. In horizontal texts, the furigana appear above the kanji and in vertical texts, the furigana appear on the right of the kanji. In newspapers it is a legal requirement for furigana to be attached to kanji which are not included in the official list of the 1,945 most frequently-used kanji. Newspapers in fact rarely use kanji not included in this list.
Making Lacquer ware Boxes

Material

- One small box per child (e.g. cardboard gift box, concentrated laundry detergent box with a hinged lid).
- Gesso (inexpensive base paint available at craft stores)
- Black tempera paint
- Paint brushes
- A variety of colors of tempera paints (optional-gold acrylic paint)
- Black construction paper
- Spray paint sealer

Directions:

1. Each student will paint the outside of a box with the gesso undercoat.
2. After the undercoat is dry, each student will paint their box with a coat of black tempera paint.
3. When this layer of paint has thoroughly dried, remind students about simplicity and elegance of Japanese Lacquer ware box designs. Subjects they might want to select might include: flowers, vines, branches, cranes, butterflies, dragonflies, etc. Students may use tempera paint to practice a design on black construction paper.
4. Each student will paint their selected design on their box.
5. When these designs have dried, take the boxes outside in a well-ventilated area and spray with sealer.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Who was the main character?</th>
<th>Where did the story mostly take place?</th>
<th>What was the main character's problem?</th>
<th>How was the problem solved?</th>
<th>How does the story reflect unique cultural aspects?</th>
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<tr>
<td>The Inch Boy</td>
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<td>Tom Thumb</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
HAIKU

5 syllables

7 syllables

5 syllables

Tree in the courtyard

silver branches floating high

a sofa for birds.
Helpful websites for additional research:

A good introduction to the Japanese writing system is available here:

http://www.kanjisite.com/

Seventeenth century haiku on poem paper: http://web-japan.org/museum/others/uta/haiku/haiku_01_01.html

Contemporary example pf poem paper: http://www.japanese-doll.biz/detail/japanese-paper_33_288.html


Bookbinding:
http://www.centerforbookarts.org/newsite/classes/classdetail.asp?classeventID=158

Illustrated Sutra of Cause and Effect:
http://cla.calpoly.edu/~jwetzel/Japan/slides/SutraOfCauseAndEffect.html

Clothing: http://www.jge.co.jp/waza/b4_washi/washi02.htm

Images of heihaku and omikuji paper: http://www.japan-guide.com/e/e2059

Festival decorations: http://www.city.sendai.jp/kikaku/kokusai/english/maturi.html

Fans :( Folding and Round)

K-12 workshops on Fans:
http://www.indiana.edu/~japan/LP/LS17.html

Tea ceremony:
http://www.matchaandmore.com/utensils/kaishi.htm

Lanterns:
http://www.interchg.ubc.ca/nikolai/photos/lanterns.html

Hiragana:
http://www.omniglot.com/writing/japanese_hiragana.htm

Japanese Paper Museum
www.papermuseum.jp/

Awagami: Paper Factory
www.awagami.com