



Japan: Arts & Crafts

食家
祭芸

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Asian Educational Media Service, Center for East Asian
and Pacific Studies, University of Illinois

Social Science Education Consortium

2000



JAPAN: ARTS AND CRAFTS

Teacher's Guide

by Mary Hammond Bernson

The Asia Video Reports series was created and compiled at the Asian Educational Media Service in the Center for East Asian and Pacific Studies at the Urbana-Champaign campus on behalf of the Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois.

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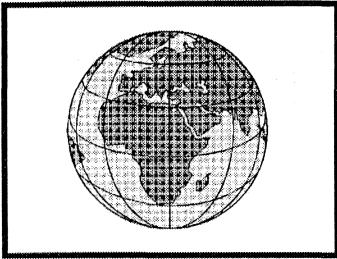
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JAPANESE PRONUNCIATION TIPS

by Mary Hammond Bernson and Evon Tanabe

Vowels: There are only five vowel sounds in Japanese. Here they are in Japanese order:

a sounds like the a in father. Example: *san*

i sounds like the i in machine or pizza. Example: *kimono*

u sounds like the u in flu or food, but is of shorter duration. Example: *mura*

e sounds like the e in pet but is shorter. Example: *sake*

o sounds like the o in comb or most. Example: *obi*

Japanese syllables are “open syllables” and almost always end in a vowel. There is very little stress on different syllables, so try to give equal stress and duration to each syllable. Some vowels, however, are long vowels in the sense of being held longer. The rhythm changes, but the pronunciation does not change as in English long vowels. When romanizing Japanese (writing it in the alphabet we use), long vowels are generally indicated by a double vowel or a line over a vowel, if noted at all. For example, *ojisan* means uncle and *ojiisan* (or *ojisan*) means grandfather.

The vowels u and i are sometimes not voiced at all when they appear at the end of a word or between such letters as f, h, k, p, s, t, ch, and sha. For example, *desu ka?* (is it?) is pronounced *deska*, and *sukiyaki* sounds like *skiyaki*.

Japanese also has some combined sounds.

ai sounds like the ai in kaiser. Example: *samurai*

ei sounds like the ei in rein. Example: *geisha*

Consonants: Most Japanese consonants sound very much like their English equivalents. The most notable differences are:

r sounds somewhat like a cross between r and l, as in the Spanish language

f sounds like a cross between f and h

g is always hard, as in go

n is more nasal than in the English language

ch sounds like the ch in cherry

ts sounds like the final ts in bits

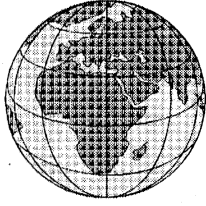
z is a hard sound, as in adds

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Double consonants are both pronounced, so for example, *ss* sounds like the two sounds in the words *chess set*.

Sometimes a consonant is followed by a *y*. This does not start a new syllable. *Kyushu*, for example, is a two-syllable word sounding like *sue-shoe*. The “*kyo*” in *Tokyo* and other words is one syllable.

Practice dividing the words in these lessons. *Fukuwarai* is *fu-ku-wa-ra-i*. *Haiku* is *ha-i-ku*. *Daruma* is *da-ru-ma*. Now try pronouncing two frequently mispronounced words: *i-ke-ba-na* (flower arranging) and *bon-sa-i* (miniature plants).



SECTION 1 ARTS AND CRAFTS

Introduction

The four segments in this Arts and Crafts videotape offer viewers of any age a chance to note: “That’s pretty,” “that’s different,” “that’s interesting,” or “that’s *amazing!*” The segments can be viewed and enjoyed in many ways. They also offer students a window into Japan, via glimpses of key concepts that Japanese and outside observers believe characterize Japanese culture today. Since these segments focus on arts traditions with long histories, they allow us to see how those traditions continue in a modern nation.

Noted scholar Stephen Addiss remarks in the introduction to his book *How to Look at Japanese Art*, “It has been said that there are no minor arts in Japan.” The Western distinction between major arts, such as painting, and other arts, which are viewed as lesser or minor, has not been a feature of the arts of Japan. Japan has also not made such a clear distinction between arts and crafts as is often made in Western cultures. As you will see in the videotape, the artists exhibit painstaking attention to their work, even when the medium is folded paper and the result is an object designed for use; they address their work with the same seriousness of purpose Westerners might expect to be lavished on paintings or sculpture. This videotape can prompt innumerable explorations, including the fundamental and unanswerable question: What is art? Understanding that different societies have different answers to that question can be an important step in opening students’ minds to the richness of personal expression that can be found in countries other than their own.

Module Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Identify several Japanese art forms.
- Describe the skills, training, tools, and techniques used in creating these objects.
- Discuss the underlying beliefs revealed in the creation of these objects.
- Discuss ways these beliefs might be exhibited in other aspects of Japanese life.
- Create hypotheses about Japanese definitions of creativity and artistic talent.

Module Themes

- Tradition and change.
- Arts as a reflection of cultural values.
- Transmission of culture from generation to generation.

Module Components

Section 1. Arts and Crafts. This introductory section ends with two background readings designed for teacher use in preparing to discuss the videotape with the class, although both readings could be used with older students. The first is a description of the four art forms shown in the videotape, including a brief history of each. Many books are available to anyone who wishes to learn more about these arts—some particularly useful ones are listed in the extension and enrichment section.

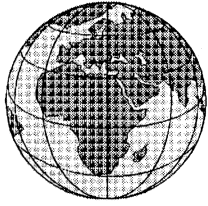
The second reading is an excerpt from *The Japanese Educational Challenge: A Commitment to Children*, by Merry White. Professor White has written many books and articles about Japanese youth and their education. She and other scholars make the point that the Japanese educational system has, as its most basic assumption, a belief that all students can succeed and reach very high levels of academic achievement. While some students may take longer to reach those levels, both parents and educators believe that the key to success is perseverance, not talent, or intelligence, or some other aspect of ability. This reading is included to provide background for one striking feature of the videotape: the artists arrive at their success through perseverance, and no mention is ever made of “artistic talent” or “creativity.”

Japan takes education very seriously indeed, and Japanese reformers are now calling for the nurturing of creativity in the school curriculum. Many of them, as well as many Americans, believe that our educational system does a better job of fostering creativity. Yet the excerpt by Professor White reveals that our two countries are bringing very different assumptions to the discussion of “creativity.” Perhaps after class discussion of this concept, fewer American students will dismiss the arts as something they are not good at; if more American students apply some perseverance to developing their own forms of artistic expression, the discussion will have been a productive one.

Section 2. Video Stories. The learning module contains four short segments, each of which explores an art form that continues to be practiced in Japan today. Initially, students may not even think of these as art. While painting on fabric may strike them as being an art form, folding paper into fans, lanterns, and cranes is not likely something they are accustomed to identifying as art. In the video section of this guide, teachers will find: an overview of the video segments and their content, a suggested approach to extending students’ understanding of Japan using this videotape, questions that can be used for class discussion, and a transcript of the video stories.

Section 3. Learning Activities. Two self-contained lessons are provided in this module. Both relate to topics in the videotape and are introduced at the beginning of Section 3. Extension and enrichment activities are also suggested.

Section 4. World Wide Web Resources. The final component of the module is a listing of relevant online resources.



Four Arts and Their History

The four arts shown in this videotape all have deep roots in Japanese history and culture. Knowing a bit about this background may help students develop a greater appreciation of these art forms and their meaning to people in Japan.

Yuzen

Yuzen (short for *yuzenzome*, meaning “dyeing in the style of Yuzen”) is a textile dyeing method that was perfected in Kyoto in the late 17th century by a fan painter named Miyazaki Yuzen. The process permits painting detailed pictures on the fabric. Students may be familiar with batik or other dyeing processes; one distinction of *yuzen* is that the background color is added by painting it on with a brush, not by putting the cloth in a dye bath as in a batik process.

Although the technique is named after Yuzen, it originated much earlier, probably in the feudal province of Kaga. The capital of this province, Kanazawa, is now the capital of modern-day Ishikawa Prefecture and the location of this video segment. The feudal lords who once ruled Kaga had the same name as the artist in the video. They were the Maeda family, known as patrons of the arts. Kanazawa continues to be famous for its support of traditional arts.

The first step in the *yuzen* process involves painting outlines of the design on the silk cloth with a tracing fluid made from a blue flower. After being used to guide the painting, these outlines are washed out later in the process. Next, the lines are covered with a paste made from glutinous rice. These lines will still be visible as thin white outlines after the dyeing is completed. The next step is to cover the entire cloth with soybean milk, which prevents the dyes from blurring, followed by the painting of the actual design. Then the entire design is covered with a resist, a gluey substance made from rice paste to prevent the painted areas from being affected by the dyes used as background colors. In this step, shown in the videotape, the background color is applied with a wide brush, in a smooth sweeping motion made difficult by the texture variations the paste has created on the surface. After fixing the color by steaming the fabric, the artist rinses the fabric in running water. In particularly elaborate pieces, embroidery in gold or other threads embellishes the design.

Once the *yuzen* fabric is completed, it is made into *kimono*, which are prized throughout Japan. The time and skill involved in *yuzen* dyeing make the *kimono* very expensive.

Origami

The term *origami* refers either to the art of folding paper or to the folded paper itself. The earliest *origami* was a rare part of various rituals and ceremonies at Shinto shrines. *Origami* was well-known by the Heian Period of Japanese history (794-1185). At that time, paper was still scarce and valuable, so only members of the imperial court could afford this form of entertainment. In this era, a noblewoman, Murasaki Shikibu, wrote *The Tale of Genji*, often described as the world's first novel.

By the Muromachi period (1333-1568), the idea of making *origami* by folding, not cutting, was already established. Other popular forms of paper arts in Japan include folding, cutting, and dyeing the paper, and assembling it in various collage processes. However, *origami* continues as a form of expression primarily employing folded shapes. Professor Naito's cranes in the video segment are unusual because some of them involve cutting as well as folding the paper.

Since the late 19th century, *origami* has been used as a teaching device in kindergartens and primary schools. Children learn *origami* so that, as adults, they can wrap and fold gifts and cards in the ways prescribed by proper etiquette. The coining of the term *origami*, based on the words *oru* (to fold) and *kami* (paper), is credited to a kindergarten teacher who taught in Tokyo in the 1880s. Although *origami* was deemphasized in the schools for awhile early in this century because it supposedly stifled creativity, it is now back in classrooms throughout Japan.

Adults who enjoy *origami* as a hobby can be found around the world, and there are official *origami* associations in 14 countries outside of Japan. Professor Naito, shown in the videotape, has developed an extraordinary level of skill, which he utilizes to create cranes of great beauty and amazing precision. Students may want to try to imagine the size of his 0.7 millimeter crane, about the size of the point of a sharpened pencil.

Chōchin

Chōchin are the portable, collapsible paper lanterns widely associated with people's images of traditional Japan. As the videotape claims, "electricity now lights the cities, but the *chōchin* still lights the Japanese soul." Despite being superseded by modern lighting, *chōchin* continue to be a part of modern life, illuminating festivals, restaurants, and the entry gates of temples such as the Asakusa Kannon Temple in Tokyo. Their shapes reappear in electric lighting fixtures, both in Japan and in other countries.

The paper lantern has been in use since the Heian Period, but the round *chōchin* seen in the videotape made their appearance at the end of the 16th century. Plain white *chōchin* were used as a part of funeral services, so until recently the *chōchin* used for all other purposes were made of other colors or embellished with designs, family crests, advertising, or other decoration.

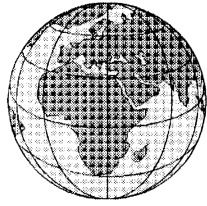
Folding Fans

Folding fans have roots particularly deep in Japanese history and are considered one of Japan's most ingenious inventions. The people seen in the videotape are creating objects with a history that can be traced to a folding fan in a Buddhist statue dating to 877 A.D., early in the Heian Period. *The Tale of Genji* includes many references to folding fans.

In general, folding fans used in dances are called *ogi* and small ones are called *sensu*. Used by both men and women, the fans have rich allusions to history and the arts, with their unfolding often seen as a metaphor for the opening out of a happy future. Thus, folding fans are often a motif on wedding kimono and are exchanged as a sign of a couple's engagement. The smaller fans are an important accessory when a person is dressed in *kimono* for a special event such as a tea ceremony.

The videotape gives students a good introduction to the complexity of the process of producing fans. The process combines the skills used to produce the beautiful designs as well as the techniques necessary for the precise folding, cutting, rib insertion, and addition of the end supports. The materials and tools used are familiar from other segments of the videotape: brushes for applying paint, paper of great strength, paints that will resist flaking during repeated folding, and bamboo for the ribs, brushes, and supports.

Up to the early 1600s, folding fans were a Japanese export to Europe. Japan was then closed to most trade for over two centuries. In the late 19th century, international expositions, or world's fairs, reacquainted Europeans and Americans with Japanese arts. As a result, fashionable women carried Japanese fans and posed with them for such famous painters as Monet and Whistler.



The Japanese Educational Challenge: A Commitment to Children

By Merry White

But Are They Creative?

If a Western educator observed either the ordinary schools or the *juku*, he would conclude that Japanese education could never allow the flowering of creativity. That conclusion is at least partly the result of ethnocentric assumptions about the source and meaning of creativity. And because Western beliefs about the nature and importance of creativity influence the ways in which we evaluate Japanese education, we should think for a moment about what we mean by creativity and why we regard it so highly.¹

Western folk and academic psychology both contend that creativity is a desirable individual trait. Popular psychology asserts that children possess the potential for considerable creativity, which may diminish as they grow older. Education that is too rigid and the imposition of adult standards too early are frequently cited as the culprits in a child's loss of a presumed spontaneous unacademic way of looking at the world. At the same time, psychologists frequently describe creativity as a statistically rare response or an extraordinary accomplishment, which by definition means that the average child or average adult is not creative.

Moreover, even as Western educators plan curricula for creativity, we believe that creative invention cannot be fostered institutionally. This idea comes from both nineteenth-century romanticism and twentieth-century expressionism. In the latter, the child is to be completely unrestrained and left to his or her own nature. He is to be driven by a naive force of self-expression, what some have called the "immaculate perception."

Some children are taught that spontaneity is more important than skill. I once observed an American gym class where children were given basketballs and told to "get to know" the ball, to understand its nature—a prospect which made some children intensely uncomfortable, since they really wanted to learn how to dribble and shoot. A recent cartoon in *The New Yorker* captures "free spirit" education. A small child, disgruntled, says to a teacher, "Do we have to do what we want to do again today?" Meanwhile, from the romantics we are given to understand that the best creative effort comes to the artist through the inspiration of the *divinus furor*, the "divine fury" that visits the worthy creator from heaven.

1. Thomas Rohlen, *Japan's High Schools* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), p. 296.

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Americans, in short, confuse self-expression with creativity, placing the greatest value on spontaneity rather than on taking pains. A contradiction may lurk here. We think, on the one hand, that hard work sometimes leads to creative success—hard work that goes on apart from formal schooling; on the other hand, we persist in the belief that schools can and should develop children's creativity.

Why do Americans especially believe creativity is so important? Part of the answer lies in American preoccupation with individual differences and the accompanying belief that absolutely unique accomplishments are better than those which somehow resemble the efforts of others. We also feel that society moves forward on breakthroughs, on the innovations and discoveries of people like Henry Ford and Albert Einstein.

Why, then, does Japanese creativity (or lack of it) interest Americans so much? Part of the interest may stem from old-fashioned American chauvinism and the need to find Japanese success fundamentally flawed. We cast about for some intangible yet crucial capacity that we have but that is absent in Japanese mentality, society, and education, which in turn will somehow permit us to retain, or regain, the upper hand.

So Americans insist that Japanese can only imitate because we feel that Japanese social structure and values do not provide fertile ground in which creativity can arise. Japanese culture puts much less emphasis on individual than on group accomplishments, and encourages perceptions of similarities rather than differences among individuals' social and cognitive achievements. Accordingly, the argument goes, classroom teachers do not expect a child to develop a novel approach or contribution and instead foster the development of memorization. Young people defer to their teachers well after their schooling has ended. Moreover, until recent American criticism made the Japanese somewhat self-conscious, there was little explicit rhetoric about the importance of creativity in education.

Traditional forms of learning—in crafts and arts—emphasize what we might call old-style creativity in Japan. Apprentices and novices may spend years sweeping the floors, washing vegetables, preparing the master's brushes, clapping out rhythms, before they shape clay, prepare a meal, draw, or try to dance themselves. Even as their performances become fully fluent, the goal remains precise imitation of the master. The fully mature Noh actor may begin to innovate, but this would be scarcely noticeable except to himself, the master, and the true aficionado—a slight turn of the head, a refinement of a movement of the hand. Such innovations, like a tiny modification of the glaze on a pot or the use of a new flower in a stylized arrangement, are in fact creative acts, which, among the right audience, produce the "Ah!" of shocked recognition that is experienced anywhere in the world in the presence of something truly creative.

The school, however, is a place where a new kind of creativity can be fostered. Japanese schools are, like most of ours, routinized. But because positive engagement and enthusiasm are emphasized, even what an American would call creativity is elicited in certain classes. The outcomes of *Japanese* routinization are, surprisingly, a high degree of analytic and creative problem-solving, as well as expressions of divergent points of view.

In arts education particularly, America cannot accuse Japanese schools of neglecting to foster creativity. In Japanese schools art is not a frill, it is basic. As Diane Ravitch says, for the Japanese the "development of an aesthetic sense" is as important as "learning about na-

ture.”² Hence all Japanese children learn to play two instruments and read music as part of the required elementary school curriculum. Moreover, every child participates in dramatic productions and receives instruction in drawing and painting. The belief is that before a child can be truly creative, or even express himself, he must be taught possibilities and limits of the medium; in short, one learns how to use the existing forms first. Americans who have observed Japanese children in arts classes also point to the group nature of instruction, and incorrectly assume that only as soloists, composers, and individual artists can they be truly creative—a perception highly colored by our own view of what creativity means.

Criticism leveled at Japanese education also comes down on what is seen as a suppression of genius. There is indeed little provision for tracking the superbright to their best advantage, but their best advantage may be defined very differently in Japan and America. A very bright child, appropriately socialized, will soon enough receive appropriate rewards in Japan, but he is not expected to burst through the limits established by others. He is unlike his American counterpart, who is expected to break records very early in life.

In sum, it will not get us very far to claim that the Japanese have successfully trained children to take exams at the expense of a broader education. And it is not at all appropriate to say that they cannot develop children’s individuality and encourage the geniuses who make scientific breakthroughs. The first is untrue, and as for the second, the Japanese, formidable organizers that they are, are now mobilizing themselves to produce scientists and technologists who will show themselves to be creative by anyone’s measure. In my judgment, the scales now appear to be tipped in favor of Japan. ...

Learning the Way

What other social and psychological skills does the mother encourage? For her, the “good” child is one who participates wholeheartedly in the pursuit of the adult’s goals, who in fact has taken them on as his own. That wholeheartedness is at least as important as the success that may result from the child’s internalizing adult objectives. In other words, the way in which a child does something is more the measure of the child’s character than the outcome of what he does. American children tend to be judged by the latter.

In Japan at any age, one’s attitude is integral to one’s performance. Thus, any task is composed of appropriate attitude, energy, patience, and attention to detail. The priority of process over product is fully shown in traditional apprenticeships and the acquisition of certain traditional crafts and skills: if you learn how to do something very carefully, and pay exquisite attention to every step needed to make it, the finished product will naturally be a good one.

As indicated in the popular book *Zen and the Art of Archery*,³ all skill and art lie in preparing to loose the arrow. If this is done well, the archer needn’t think about whether the arrow will fly true or not. Similarly, in the tea ceremony, in *origami*, in gardening, and in the construction of automobiles, understanding “the way” is more important than the “perfect” product itself. In short, the moral force of method is greater than quantifiable result. Thus,

2. Diane Ravitch, “Japan’s Smart Schools,” *New Republic* (January 13, 1986), pp. 13-15.

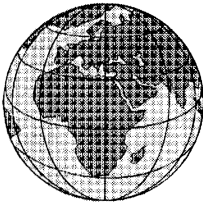
3. Eugen Herrigel, *Zen and the Art of Archery* (New York: Vintage Press, 1953).

even small children are taught that you fold the paper “exactly so,” you cut precisely along the line, you place your shoes exactly parallel and in just the right spot near the door.

What we see as compulsive, competitive “perfectionism” the Japanese see as a satisfying completion of a set of detailed tasks. When a Japanese child learns to do something, he is taught to do it in tiny steps, each one seen as very important and eminently doable. The mastery of one discrete step is greatly applauded, with the child experiencing a moment of clear accomplishment. Michael Kirst notes that “Japanese children are taught that each repetition of a process always contains something new. They learn to discriminate tiny variations in routines as they are repeated.” He goes on to conclude that this “probably helps the Japanese perfect and improve new technology that other countries develop.”⁴ But in my view the Japanese trait means much more for child rearing and cognitive development than it does for economic development.

A Western therapist might consider Japanese behavior as so obsessed with control that it masks suppressed aggression. In fact, our lack of attention to detail, and the delay of gratification until the completion of a large task, provide us with less mundane, moment-to-moment satisfaction. This in turn keeps us feeling frustrated and incomplete, as we value only the final, sometimes unobtainable end product. We have talked earlier about the differences in the meaning of creativity in the two societies, which also have to do with how the two differently regard task completion. Suffice it to emphasize here that what counts, in a Japanese home and a Japanese school, is a child’s commitment to work hard within a fully supportive ambience; what does not count are gifts or talents with which a youngster is endowed by God or nature. Thus, the mother’s and teacher’s most significant contribution to a child’s future is a capacity to instill the importance of engagement, the same engagement they themselves show—positive, wholehearted, energetic commitment—while at work on a task to produce a result.

4. Michael Kirst, “Japanese Education: Its Implications for Economic Cooperation in the 1980s,” *Phi Delta Kappan* (June 1981), p. 708.



SECTION 2 VIDEO STORIES

Video Viewing Guide and Discussion Questions

The *Arts and Crafts* video contains four story segments:

Segment 1. *The Making of a Yuzen Artist* (4 minutes 40 seconds). *Yuzen* is a specially dyed fabric used in prized *kimono*. The 300-year-old process and its modern adaptation are demonstrated as an aspiring *yuzen* artist learns his craft in historic Kanazawa in central Japan.

Segment 2. *Origami as Art* (1 minute 35 seconds). A retired engineering professor now concentrates on intricate and unusual *origami*, taking the folding of paper cranes to new levels of difficulty and original expression.

Segment 3. *Creating the Japanese Fan* (5 minutes 48 seconds). The Japanese fan has a long history in Japan's traditional arts. A master craftsman demonstrates fan-making techniques in his studio, where people may spend decades perfecting their step in the process of making fans.

Segment 4. *Chochin* (3 minutes 3 seconds). *Chōchin*, paper lanterns, are as popular as ever in Japan. Their creation is demonstrated at a family business in Tokyo and by a traditional craftsman in Shikoku.

To enable the students to discover this material for themselves, show them the videotape without any introduction other than an announcement that they will see a videotape about Japanese art. Because the segments are so fast-paced, students may miss key aspects of the video if they are busy looking for specific details or taking notes.

After they have seen the videotape for the first time, encourage students to express their personal responses to the content, either orally or in a brief paragraph. Ask them what they thought was most interesting and whether the videotape was different from what they expected. Remind them that reactions to art are personal, and no one's answer is more correct than another person's.

After students have shared initial reactions, move to specific questions about the arts they saw and their definition as art forms. Have students ever thought of such things as paper folding as an art form? Why or why not? Can they think of crafts or arts in the United States that are similar? If so, what are the similarities—the skill the artist must attain? the medium itself? the tools used? the purpose for which the objects are created?

Debrief any specific questions or observations about the tools and techniques. To develop students' appreciation of the skill involved, ask them to hold two pencils in one hand and try to write with one and then the other, in the same way that some of the artists used two brushes in one hand. If brushes such as those in the videotape are available, students could also try making very fine lines with a wide brush. Students may ask what the fan maker, Mr. Sugimoto, is doing with the black "stone." He is rubbing a solid stick of ink on an ink stone, adding water to get the right consistency.

Ask students if they noticed any subject matter that was common to all of the art forms. In traditional Japanese arts, and in this videotape, almost all of the subjects and designs are based on nature, including flowers, cranes, and pine branches. The exceptions in this video are *mon*, Japanese family crests, and they are usually abstracted designs based on nature as well.

As time allows, explain the history of these art forms, as outlined in the first reading provided in Section 1.

Tell the students that they will now look at the videotape again, this time looking for details they missed before and focusing on three key questions: How did the artists learn their skills? Are there any aspects of the training that seem to be common to all the art forms? In what other ways could those skills be applied?

After showing the videotape a second time, ask students to respond to the three questions above. They will probably note that when the videotape refers to training, the references are to working with a master or in a studio, not to training in an arts school. In every case where it is mentioned, the training commences with basic tasks, such as mixing paints for other artists. It involves many, many years of repetitive work and critiques by the master before a person is considered to be proficient. Some of the people who are profiled in the videotape have spent decades carrying out their specialized aspect of the process. As Mr. Maeda says of his young apprentice, Hiroshi Yamanaka, "Learning the art of *yuzen* takes time. He is a conscientious worker and an eager student. If he has patience and develops his skills, he is certain to become a fine *yuzen* artist."

Qualities that can be observed in the videotape include perseverance, most notably, as well as attention to detail, self-discipline, and willingness to subordinate personal preferences to the directions established by the master artist. These qualities could be applied to any artistic or industrial process, or to the mastery of new areas of knowledge.

Older students may wish to debate whether they, as Americans, would define these forms of expression as arts or as crafts. Encourage them to find multiple definitions, defend their points of view, and identify why they believe that it is important to make this distinction.

Ask students how someone becomes an artist in this country. The most common perception is that artists are born that way, or that they experience a lightning bolt of inspiration that results in the creation of a work of art. Ask students how artists develop the skills needed to express their artistic vision. Explain that artists in this country more often attend schools where they study art, rather than working as apprentices to a master, but that they must work hard to develop their skills just as the Japanese artists do. Point out that nowadays many Japanese develop art skills the same way, through formal study. Ask students to

consider the positive and negative aspects of the two different approaches to the training of artists.

Using the Merry White reading in Section 1 as a reference, explain the Japanese concepts of creativity in a way appropriate to the age level of the class. Ask students the following closing questions to bring their observations and reflections back to their own lives: How would our educational system be different if we believed that anyone could create works of art? How would you change your life if you believed that you could create art?

The Making of a *Yuzen* Artist (4 minutes 40 seconds): Video Transcript

WOMAN IN KIMONO

The cut of Japan's traditional garment, the *kimono*, has never changed though the fabric varies in color and design. The *kimono* prized by most Japanese women is a dyed fabric called *Yuzen*, a specialty of the Kanazawa region of central Japan.

KIMONO

Yuzen dyeing is some 300 years old. What makes this process unique is that the design is directly painted onto the silk fabric, so each *kimono* is an original work of art.

TWO PEOPLE IN RESTAURANT

Meet 22-year-old Hiroshi Yamanaka, dining with his friends. Hiroshi is an aspiring *yuzen* artist, and he works hard at learning his craft.

HAND PAINTING OUTLINE OF FLOWERS

Hiroshi is an apprentice at the workshop of Kenji Maeda and has been studying *yuzen* for four years. Even so, he is still considered a beginner, and his days are spent coloring in the designs created by Mr. Maeda.

Painting is but one stage of the *yuzen* process. Each dye must be properly mixed and have a special consistency so that when the dye is applied to the fabric, it is neither too thin nor too thick.

PAN FROM CEILING

After the design is painted onto the cloth, the entire bolt is then dyed a base color. Before this, however, the design is first coated with glue so as to prevent the base color from seeping into the design. Although the work is tedious, the result is worth the effort.

PAINTING PURPLE ONTO THE MATERIAL

A wide brush saves time, but it takes 10 years to learn to apply dye without a variation in color. The glue creates an uneven surface so that keeping each stroke even is difficult. Modern dyes provided a wide palette of hues.

MAEDA PAINTING

Hiroshi regularly presents his work for Mr. Maeda to review. His master is a severe critic and these sessions are trying. Even a snippet of praise is cause for rejoicing, but today Mr. Maeda's critique is discouraging.

RED SHIRT

When dejected, Hiroshi spends time by the river that flows through Kanazawa city. The soothing sound of the water helps to restore his confidence, reinspiring him to conquer his craft.

MR. MAEDA

Hiroshi need not be so discouraged, says Mr. Maeda. He's a conscientious worker and an eager student. Learning the art of *yuzen* takes time. If he has patience and develops his skills, he is certain to become a fine *yuzen* artist.

FACTORY INTERIOR

Hiroshi's duties go beyond painting. An apprentice must also mix the dyes of his senior colleagues.

Origami as Art (1 minute 35 seconds): Video Transcript

FLYING CRANES

To the Japanese, the crane symbolizes longevity, and its graceful beauty is often reproduced in the folk craft of *origami*, or paper-folding.

MAN IN CHAIR

Mr. Akira Naito, a retired engineering professor, enjoys making paper cranes, a pastime children like, too.

MAGNIFYING GLASS

Mr. Naito's skill, however, is exceptional. Using a magnifier and pincers, he creates cranes in miniature.

His tiniest crane is only 0.7 millimeters. Invisible to the naked eye, it sits on a grain of rice.

Using his engineering skills and a single sheet of paper, he has made original *origami* cranes. One that emerges from a pyramid, for instance—and other lovely cranes as well, each of an intricate design.

FACE

In Mr. Naito's deft hands, the craft of *origami* becomes an art.

Creating the Japanese Fan (5 minutes 48 seconds): Video Transcript

FANS

The Japanese fan has a long history dating at least from 877 A.D. when a Buddhist statue depicts a fan being held.

GLASS

Though often very beautiful, the fan originally had a utilitarian purpose—to keep cool. But over the centuries the fan has come to play a role in Japan's traditional arts.

WOMAN WAVING FAN

Fans are an important part of Noh dance-dramas and are used in other less formal dances as well. Let's now see how fans are created.

RUBBING INK

The first step starts with painting a scene on *washi*, traditional handmade paper. Akira Sugimoto is a master craftsman; he's been making fans for almost 60 years.

WOMAN MAKING FAN

His assistant, Chizuko Tsunemi, has studied under Mr. Sugimoto for 35 years. She now supervises the workshop.

BRUSHES

A special paint called *iwa* is used. For certain effects, the vivid colors must be subdued and require blurring with a brush dipped in water. Almost as important as the beauty of the painting is its durability, for the fan is opened and folded thousands of times. How much water to add is critical and depends on such variables as the weather and the humidity.

FAN

The lack of an apprentice to carry on the tradition of fan making was a concern, but a good one was found in 23-year-old Masato Endo, who now works under Ms. Tsunemi's tutelage.

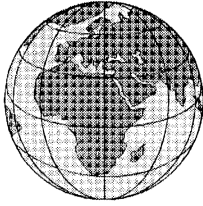
REACHING FOR BRUSH

Mr. Sugimoto is close to completing this painting.

BOWL OF GOLD PAINT	He adds gold flecks to pine motif.
MAN IN BLUE	Mr. Hiroshi Matsui is another valued craftsman. His job is to add function to art and he's been doing so for 25 years. The fan now has to be dampened because it has to be folded and the folding must be completed in a single sweep without a break in the rhythm of the process.
BIG KNIFE	Excess paper is then trimmed.
HANGING FANS	The fans are hung to dry for a day to eliminate excess water.
MAN	As the fan has a double layer of paper, space must be made between the layers to insert the fan's bamboo spine. Glue is spread over the bamboo spines, after which each spine is inserted into the respective space made for it. This can only be done by a master craftsman.
GLUING STICKS	The last step is adding two slightly curved bamboo supports for each side. These supports keep the fan firm.
SERIES OF FANS	Thus, a tool that was developed to keep cool has now become an object of stunning beauty.

***Chōchin* (3 minutes 3 seconds): Video Transcript**

CANDLE	Before the birth of the electric bulb, the Japanese devised their own method of candle illumination—the <i>chōchin</i> , or paper lantern. The Japanese fondness for <i>chōchin</i> is as popular as ever.
BIG LANTERN	The huge <i>chōchin</i> at Asakusa Kannon Temple in downtown Tokyo was made by the father of Hajime Igarashi, a fourth-generation <i>chōchin</i> maker who is kept busy.
APPLIES <i>CHŌCHIN</i> BASE	His methods of creating lanterns may be steeped in the past but not the way he does business. Some orders that came by phone are now received by fax.
LANTERN	Mr. Igarashi has been making <i>chōchin</i> for some 25 years.
WIFE	His wife often helps him.
IGARASHI	He ponders the design of his next lantern ordered by a shrine. Using a compass that he created, he inscribes circles onto the paper. Experience and instinct play a major part in what will become the final design. Oiling the paper makes the <i>chōchin</i> water-resistant. Mr. Igarashi admits <i>chōchin</i> aren't practical but he sells a lot.
NEW LANTERNS	Lanterns come in many forms.
FISH	Though Masanobu Miyoshi, a Shikoku <i>chōchin</i> -maker, produces traditional <i>chōchin</i> , he also makes other types. Here he creates a blowfish lantern.
CITY FESTIVAL	<i>Chōchin</i> are widely used for festive occasions.
YAKITORI RESTAURANT	Restaurants also use <i>chōchin</i> to advertise their food.
CITY LIGHTS	Electricity now lights the cities but the <i>chōchin</i> still lights the Japanese soul.



SECTION 3 LEARNING ACTIVITIES

This section contains two lessons that can be used to underscore and extend the concepts implicit in the videotape. Both relate to art forms that were highlighted, *origami* and fan-making. Although teachers may think that *origami* lessons are a bit of a cliché when teaching about Japan, *origami* can be used to introduce an astonishing array of concepts related to the curriculum in social studies, art, and math. The skills *origami* develops can also have an impact across the curriculum, offering students the opportunity to employ multiple learning styles, work collaboratively, and assume responsibility for others' mastery of the task, too. As one teacher has pointed out, thousands of paper cranes have been folded in her classes over the years, without her ever managing to figure out how to do it herself.

Lesson 1. Behind Origami: Exploring Cultural Values and Traditions in Folk Art. This lesson takes approximately one class period for students to complete; it delves into some of the Japanese values reflected in the practice of *origami*. If the teacher finds it difficult to do the specific *origami* activity, find a student who can do it and teach the class. In this way the teacher can model willingness to attempt something new as well as the positive results of perseverance.

Lesson 2. Japanese Fans. This elementary-level lesson introduces Japanese fans, both flat and folded styles. Older students can develop other approaches and uses of the fans, utilizing the same attention to precision necessitated in the *origami* lesson.

Suggestions for extension and enrichment activities conclude the section.



Lesson 1. Behind Origami: Exploring Cultural Values and Traditions in Folk Art

Introduction

Asked to relate what they know about Japanese arts, crafts, or pastimes, U.S. students of all ages often cite the art of *origami*, Japanese paper folding. Teachers often include *origami* as a hands-on experience in elementary and middle school units on Japan. Rather than focusing on *origami* as an end in itself, this activity uses this high-interest art form as a vehicle for identifying and analyzing traditional Japanese values and culture.

Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Explain the history of *origami*.
- Cite personal and social characteristics valued by the Japanese and reflected in *origami*.
- Recognize the value of *origami* as a skill-builder for children.
- Apply their analysis of *origami* to other aspects of Japanese society.

Teaching Time: 1 class period

Materials: *Origami* paper for all students (available at art supply stores); several *furoshiki*—Japanese wrapping cloths (optional). Teachers should use the provided directions to practice making the *origami* box before leading students in the activity.

Procedure:

1. Introduce the lesson by asking students if they know about or have ever tried to do *origami*. Have students who are familiar with the art describe what they know. Students will probably volunteer information on the animals and natural forms that can be made with *origami*, the bright paper used, and so on.
2. Build on student data by giving a brief history of the evolution of *origami* as follows.

From *Japan in the Classroom: Elementary and Secondary Activities*, by Lynn Parisi with Jacquelyn Johnson and Patricia Weiss (Boulder, CO: Social Science Education Consortium, 1993). Activity developed by Lynn Parisi based on a presentation of the Mid-Atlantic Region Japan-in-the-Schools (MAR-JiS) Project, September 1988.

Origami is believed to have been developed over 500 years ago. The roots of *origami* are believed to be in the traditional and ancient Shinto religion, in which white paper is folded and hung at the entrance to Shinto shrines. Paper has always been highly valued in Japan. In the Heian period, love letters were artfully folded before being delivered to a loved one. Although practiced widely by Japanese children, *origami* is a respected art form among adults.

3. Explain to the students that, as a class, you will try an *origami* exercise—creating a folded paper box. Emphasize to students that the **most important** thing about making this box will be to follow directions very carefully and thoughtfully and to be very precise. Emphasize that this is a serious undertaking with your own actions. To begin to establish this mood, ask all students to close their eyes, sit as still as possible, and relax their bodies for one minute. Explain that this is a technique for building concentration, which they will need in order to complete the *origami*.

4. Next, distribute a piece of colorful *origami* paper to each student. Ask them not to talk, but to carefully study their paper—holding it up to the light, admiring the color. Draw students' attention to the perfect squareness of the sheet, its evenness, and so on.

5. Students are now ready to begin the exercise. You should have already set a mood of quiet and concentration and established an expectation that the activity will proceed slowly. Throughout the folding activity, repeatedly stress quiet, concentration, and the importance of making each fold EXACTLY right. Tell students that at each step, they should listen carefully and repeat what you do, that they should match each fold up exactly, no corners overlapping, etc. Proceed through the folds, moving very slowly and carefully and modeling exactness in your *origami*. When students become loud, giggly, or frustrated with their folding, remind them that if they quietly concentrate, they will do better.

6. When students have completed their work, ask students who think they did a good job to display their work. Why do they think they were able to succeed? Ask students to brainstorm, based on their experience in making the box, what personal characteristics, personality traits, or skills might be developed through the making of *origami* objects. Encourage students to focus on the process of making the box rather than the finished product. Students should be able to cite concentration, attention to detail, orderliness, the importance of practice, the importance of following an exact method, precision, self-control, and patience.

7. (Optional) Explain to students that they will now switch gears slightly and consider another very common Japanese custom. Distribute to small groups of students a *furoshiki*—the Japanese cloth carrier—asking students to guess what this piece of cloth is used for. Write the word on the board and explain that the word is derived from *furo* (bath) and *shiki* (to spread out). The cloth carrier came into use in the 1600s as a wrapper for clothing and bath articles carried back and forth to the public bath houses. Tell students that the cloth is, in fact, a pervasive, all-purpose carrier in Japan. It is highly functional because it can be used to wrap up parcels of almost any size and shape.

8. Ask students to consider characteristics that the *furoshiki* and a piece of *origami* paper have in common. Students should note that both are exact squares; texture and color are im-

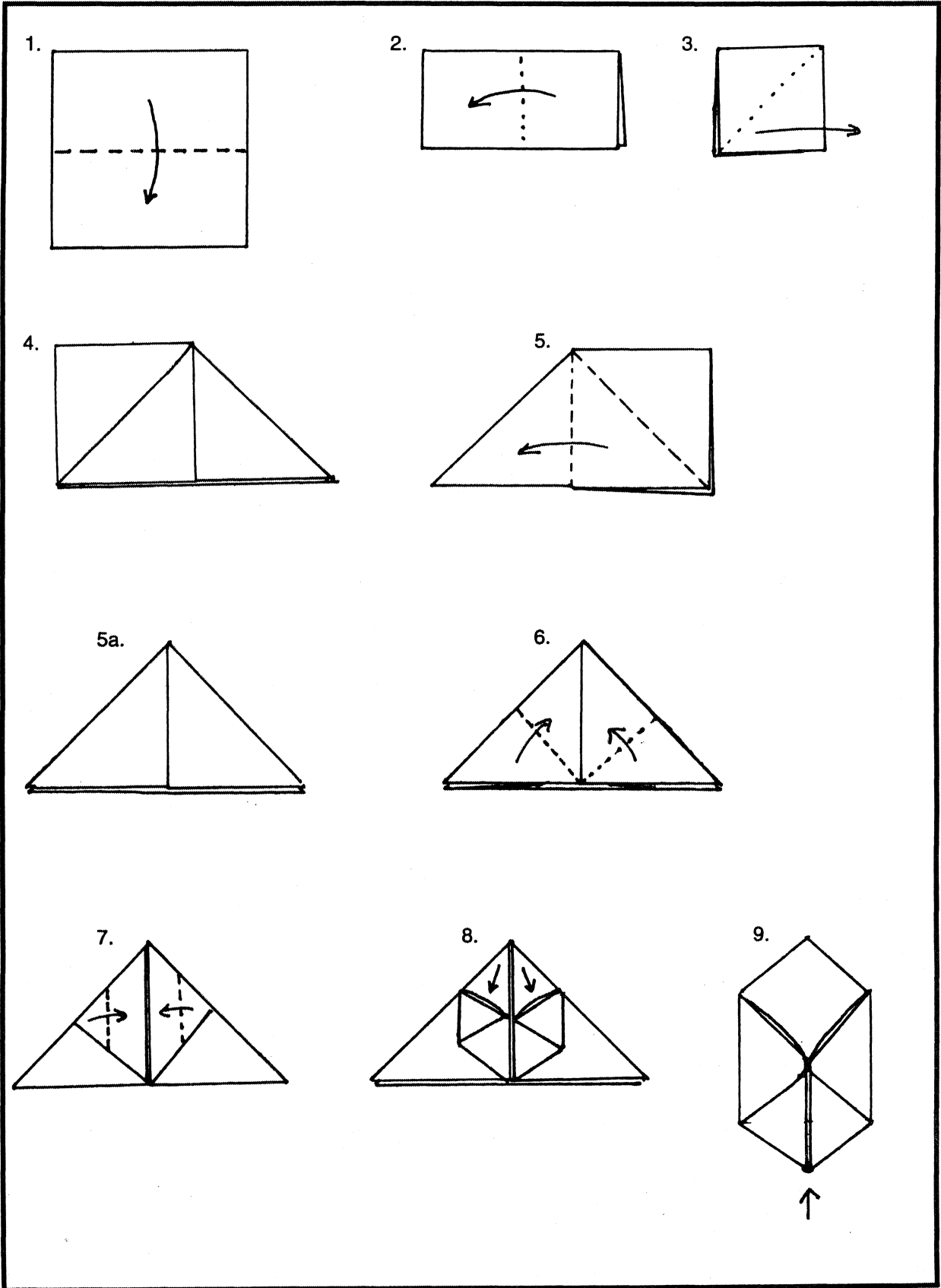
portant to both; folding is an element of both. Next, ask students to consider the characteristics of the *furoshiki* that make it such a useful carry-all. Students should cite characteristics such as adaptability and flexibility.

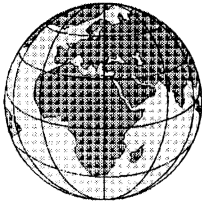
9. Ask students to consider *origami* and the *furoshiki* as two different but complementary clues to the same culture. What is behind the art of paper folding that helps to describe who the Japanese are? Why are these characteristics only one side of the picture? What additional information about the culture do you get from adding information about the *furoshiki*?

10. Given what students have gleaned about culture through *origami* and the *furoshiki*, what skills and attitudes do they think would be stressed in Japanese schools? How does understanding *origami* help to explain the Japanese educational emphasis on discipline, memorization, the endurance of passing the college entrance exam, and so on?

Directions for *Origami* Box

1. Hold square paper with colored side out, white side facing you. Fold vertically in half.
2. Fold paper horizontally in half, to form folded square. Open corners should be on left, lower side.
3. Make a fold diagonally as shown in illustration #3.
4. Open one side to make the shape shown in illustration #4.
5. Repeat steps 3 and 4 as shown in illustration #5. After completing this step, your paper will resemble two isosceles triangles, with open edges on the bottom, a closed point on top, as in illustration #5a.
6. Fold lower points of isosceles triangle closest to you up to create a diamond shape, resting against a triangle shape.
7. On the diamond shape you have created, fold right and left corners in to center as shown in illustration #7.
8. The folds in step #7 created two small pockets, facing up. Into these pockets, fold in the upper points of the triangle, as shown in illustration #8.
9. Repeat steps 6-8 for the reverse side of your object. You will end with an object shaped as shown in illustration #9.
10. Through the open hole at the bottom of your *origami*, gently blow enough air to inflate the box.





Lesson 2. Japanese Fans

by Jane Schisgall

Introduction

As illustrated in the video, creating fans is an art form in Japan. This lesson offers students the opportunity to create either folded or flat fans and to explore their uses.

Objectives: Students will be able to:

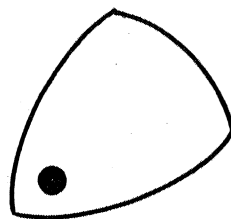
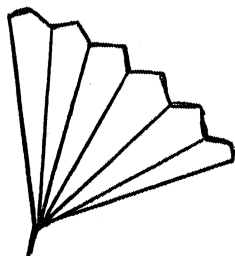
- Explain that fans are part of the cultural tradition of Japan.
- Create fans that incorporate design techniques and ornamentation similar to that used in Japan.
- Use the fan as an aid to expressive action.

Materials: Examples or photographs of Japanese fans; for folded fans: 9" x 24" pieces of construction paper, watercolor sets and brushes, stapler; for flat fans: 9" x 12" pieces of oak tag or colored poster board, scissors, fine line markers, scraps of construction paper, and tissue paper.

Teaching Time: 1-3 class periods

Procedure

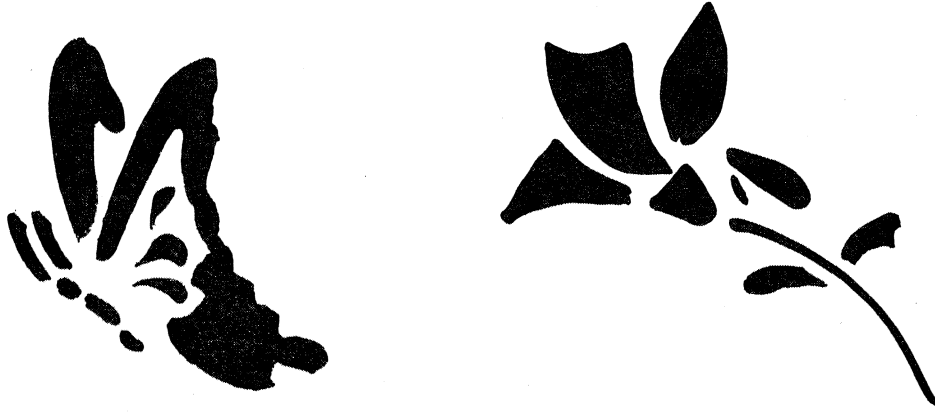
1. Have the students discuss fans, their uses, sizes, colors, etc. Display any examples of Japanese fans. Ask the students to decide to make either a flat or folded fan.



Reprinted from *Modern Japan: An Idea Book for K-12 Teachers*, edited by Mary Hammond Bernson (Seattle: East Asia Resource Center, University of Washington, 1984).

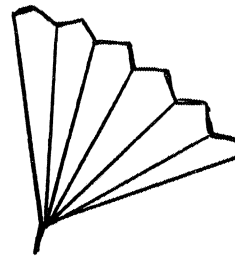
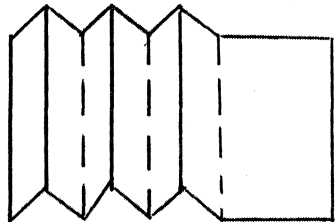
Folded Fans

1. Demonstrate how to make a brush painting of an item from nature using a minimum of lines and shapes to capture the essence of the object. Examples of simple brush strokes to create an object:



2. Have students select an idea from nature and paint it on construction paper using simple brush strokes and watercolors. Allow papers to dry.

3. Fold the paper back and forth to create a fan. The folds should be about one inch from each other. Fold the entire paper. Pinch one end of the paper together and secure with a staple.



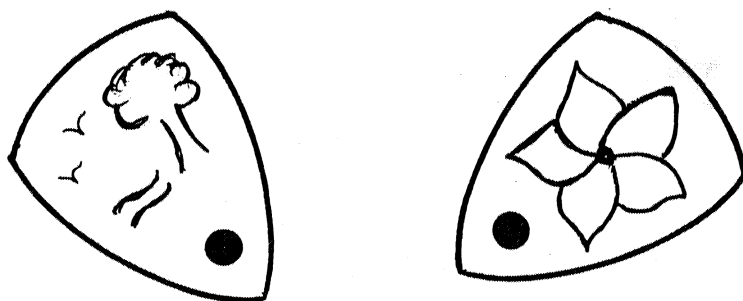
4. Display the finished fans and discuss the variety of themes from nature that were used. Discuss the use of color, line, and shapes that are seen on the fans.

Flat Fans

1. Flat fans lend themselves to creating an advertisement or can be used as a surface for a map. The shape of the fan may reflect the item being sold or the area being mapped. Have students decide whether they will make a map, an advertisement, or a design fan. Have them plan the design they will draw on the fan.

2. Have students plan an appropriate shape and cut it from oak tag or poster board. Cut a thumb hole.

3. Have students decorate the surface of the fan with the markers or scraps of paper. A combination of markers and torn paper shapes can be used for an advertisement or design.



4. Display and discuss the finished fans. Have the students consider:

- How they were made.
- What materials were used.
- What ideas were expressed.

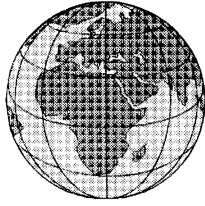
Uses of the Fans

1. Remind the students that fans are used in many ways in Japan. Have them pantomime the following uses: to cool oneself, to fan a fire, to hide behind, to get someone's attention, to place something on (as you would use a tray).

2. Have the students use their fans to suggest a wave in the ocean, a tree blowing in the breeze, or a bird flying. Ask them to think of other ways that they could use their fans.

Teacher Background Information

There are many uses for and ways of constructing fans. The folded fan was invented by the Japanese. It is thought that the wing of the bat was the source for this idea. Flat fans are made in a variety of shapes. The ornamentation on the fan may be a brush painting inspired by nature or bits of cut or torn paper that suggest objects to the artist. The uses of fans have been many—to cool oneself, fan a fire, as a dance prop, or even as a weapon. Some fans are also printed with maps or advertisements.



Extension and Enrichment

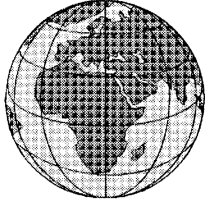
1. Many books explore specific Japanese arts and *mingei* (translated as folk crafts or folk arts). Some outstanding artists have received official commendations as “Living National Treasures,” and are profiled individually or as a group. Check local libraries, museums, or the web pages mentioned in Section 4 to find out more.

2. The segments in this module’s videotape can launch an exploration of the world of Japanese arts and the aesthetic values displayed in them. *How to Look at Japanese Art*, by Stephen Addiss with Audrey Yoshiko Seo (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1996) is a great introduction to the appreciation of Japanese art. Although written for adults, it can be read by older students and the concepts can be used by teachers when teaching the appreciation of any art form.

3. Among the many fine curriculum materials introducing Japanese art is the unit *Spring Blossoms, Autumn Moon: Japanese Art for the Classroom*, by Sarah Loudon (Seattle: Seattle Art Museum, 1989). Designed to make art accessible to students with many different learning styles, it focuses on concepts such as seasonality in Japanese art and includes a supporting component utilizing storytelling and music.

4. Doing additional *origami* is a logical extension activity, with wide appeal. Classes across the country are full of folded paper “fortune tellers” and frogs that can be induced to jump across aisles when their tails are pressed down to the desk. Innumerable books introduce *origami*. One that also offers background information is *Complete Origami*, by Eric Kenneway (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1987). One suggestion: when choosing *origami* projects, carefully consider whether you want the students to attempt a project that is simple enough to guarantee success, or whether you want them to appreciate the complexity of more challenging projects. Also, you risk frustration of your own if you attempt to work from the commonly available single-page diagrams that all too frequently omit an explanation of the meaning of dotted or solid lines and other symbols.

5. Virtual museums and art galleries abound on the Internet, as do numerous sites dedicated to individual arts and crafts forms. This module can be extended into an activity for practicing online search skills and information discrimination. A search for *origami*, for instance, will return hundreds of possibilities. How would you narrow that search? How many “hits” do searches for “Morikami Museum and Japanese Gardens” or “Seattle Asian Art Museum” produce? What new links do they provide?



SECTION 4 WORLD WIDE WEB RESOURCES

The World Wide Web provides an almost inexhaustible supply of background material, additional classroom activities, and research information to meet the needs of students and teachers. The following list is only a sample of what is available. As content and online addresses change frequently, the URLs (uniform resource locators) listed here in print may no longer be valid. If this is the case, use your favorite search engine to locate the sites listed.

Sites Related to Japanese Arts and Crafts

Irasshai (<http://www.peachstar.gatech.edu/irasshai/culwww/homepg.htm>)

From the launch pad at this web site from Georgia Public Broadcasting, you can link to sites on fan-making, flower arranging, sculpture, fish printing, and more arts-related topics.

Kid's Window: Arts and Crafts Class (<http://www.jwindow.net/OLD/KIDS/SCHOOL/ART/>)

This arts and crafts "class" provides directions for two *origami* projects.

Traditional Japanese Crafts (<http://www.jwindow.net/OLD/CUL/TJC/>)

At this site, students will find information about an array of art forms, including ceramics, woodwork, metalwork, weaving and dyeing, hand-made paper, and more.

Virtual Japanese Culture (<http://www.jinjapan.org/kidsweb/virtual.html>)

Learn about *ikebana*, *koto*, *ukiyo-e*, and other Japanese artforms at this site designed for students.

Sites with General Information about Japan

Asian Educational Media Service (<http://www.aems.uiuc.edu/>)

A national clearinghouse for information about audiovisual materials on Japan and Asia. Database is searchable by country, media type, audience, or subject.

Ask Asia (<http://www.askasia.org/>)

Features resources for the K-12 classroom including lesson plans, readings, bibliography and images for use in teaching and learning about the countries of Asia.

Irasshai (<http://www.peachstar.gatech.edu/irasshai/>)

This site produced by Georgia Public Broadcasting invites users to voyage to Japan through the World Wide Web. The "Launch Pad" includes a list of 23 major topics with dozens of subcategories linking to relevant sites or materials selected for their appeal to middle and high school students. The site's unique frame-design returns users to Irasshai after sojourns to linked sites, keeping students on task.

Japan Information Network (<http://www.jinjapan.org/>)

Maintained by the Japan Center for Intercultural Communications (JCIC), this site offers statistics, regional information, and links to other sites in Japan.

Japan Window (<http://www.jwindow.net/>)

A collaborative project between Stanford University and NTT Japan, this site offers information about Japanese science and technology, business, economics, education, and government. Also includes information about working, studying, living, and traveling in Japan and daily news headlines. This is the entry point to Kid's Window.

Kids Web Japan (<http://www.jinjapan.org/kidsweb/>)

Part of the Japan Information Network and managed by the Japan Center for Intercultural Communications, this colorful site for school kids has many graphics and photographs. The site provides basic information on many aspects of Japan. It includes facts about daily life, history, economy, and other topics, monthly news of interest to kids, links to other sites, games, and an interactive form to ask questions about Japan.

National Clearinghouse for U.S.-Japan Studies (<http://www.indiana.edu/~japan>)

This adjunct clearinghouse of ERIC based at Indiana University offers two searchable databases of information about print resources and lesson plans for teaching and learning about Japan, especially at the K-12 level. Also features virtual Japan kit of images and information and links to other sites about and in Japan.

NTT Japanese Information (<http://www.ntt.co.jp/japan/>)

Maintained by Nippon Telephone and Telegraph (NTT), this site offers information about the geography, culture, customs, government, sports, and tourist attractions of Japan.