Aileen Level

US-China Institute Seminar

Lesson Plan Draft

Grade: 7th World History

Topic: Medieval Japanese Culture with Links to Modern Culture

History-Social Science Standards:

**7.5 Students analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures of the civilizations of Medieval Japan.**

1. Describe the significance of Japan’s proximity to China and Korea and the intellectual, linguistic, religious, and philosophical influence of those countries on Japan.

5. Study the ninth and tenth centuries’ golden age of literature, art, and drama and its lasting effects on culture today, including Murasaki Shikibu’s *Tale of Genji.*

Materials:

* Textbook: Holt: *World History: Medieval to Early Modern Times*
* Selections from *Myths and Legends of Japan*, edited by F. Hadland Davis: the stories of Amaterasu, Momotaro, and the Kappa
* Alternative: selections from the *Tale of Genji*
* Samples of modern-day *manga*, such as *Cardcaptor Sakura* or *Ranma ½*
* Images (from websites below) of various aspects of medieval culture (shown on Smartboard)
* White paper
* Colored pencils/markers

Objective: Students will examine components of medieval Japanese culture, including arts and literature, using primary source material. Students will read several Japanese myths and use the modern manga style to illustrate them. Alternatively, the myths may be replaced by selections from the *Tale of Genji*.

Prior knowledge: connect to stories from other cultures, such as the Epic of Gilgamesh and the story of Set and Osiris; connect to current unit – Japanese geography, medieval society and government, etc.

Day 1: Overview of medieval Japanese culture:

Discuss key components of the arts in medieval Japan: nature and religious themes, strict formats and hierarchies, brush painting, calligraphy, kimono, pottery, tea ceremony, literature including poetry and the Tale of Genji. Use Smartboard to present images of the various cultural traditions. Trace links to Chinese and other Asian cultures. Begin to read selections from *Myths and Legends of Japan* or *Tale of Genji*. For the primary source documents, read small sections, then guide the students through a discussion to determine what the story is saying (i.e. translate into modern, comprehensible English).

Day 2: Continue Japanese literature:

Continue reading selections from *Myths and Legends of Japan* or *Tale of Genji*. Discuss each section to ensure students understand the stories. After finishing the selections, conduct a brief overview of the *manga* style – most students will already be familiar with it. Conventions, such as reading from the “back” of the book to the “front.” Students will be assigned to groups. Each group will select one section of the stories to illustrate in *manga* style. Begin group work.

Day 3: Continue group activity:

Continue group work on *manga*-style images of selections from *Myths and Legends of Japan* or *Tale of Genji*. When they are finished, each group will present the images to the class. All group members must participate. Post a gallery of the class manga on the 7th grade board.

Assessment:

Students will be graded on participation in the all-class discussion of culture as well as in the group activity. Each group will be graded on their *manga* as well: does it show concerted effort on the part of the group? Does it accurately depict the story? Does it follow conventions from manga or from medieval art?

Web resources:

* Kimono images and information from the Metropolitan Museum of Art: <http://www.metmuseum.org/collections/search-the-collections?ft=kimono&amp;noqs=true>
* Kimono images and information from the Victoria and Albert Museum: <http://www.vam.ac.uk/page/k/kimono/>
* Ukiyo-e images and information from the Victoria and Albert Museum: <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/u/ukiyo-e-pictures-of-the-floating-world/>
* UNESCO Global Heritage Pavilion: The Tale of Genji: <http://webworld.unesco.org/genji/en/index.shtml>
* Japan National Tourism Organization information about the tea ceremony: <http://www.jnto.go.jp/eng/indepth/cultural/experience/f.html>
* Information about one of the major branches of the tea ceremony, from the Omotesenke domonkai, which has events here in Southern California: <http://www.omotesenke.jp/english/tobira.html>
* Information on medieval Japanese culture and society from Columbia University: <http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/tps/1000ce_jp.htm> and <http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/tps/1450_jp.htm#kano> These pages include links to informative videos.
* Cardcaptor Sakura anime page at NHK (Japanese tv station), note: site is in Japanese: <http://www3.nhk.or.jp/anime/sakura/>