

## **Asian Art Museum School Outreach Program Body Language Docent Script**

[Note: this is the script for the museum's school outreach program conducted during the year the Asian Art Museum is closed awaiting its new building in Civic Center to open early 2003. We found that this particular program works much better when students can view works in the round.]

### **Materials Checklist**

Please complete the Docent Checklist when contacting a teacher. Make sure that all of the following items are in the portfolio when you pick up the program materials.

#### Docent materials

- Poster of New Asian and Durga, Durga worksheet, large world map, tape.

#### Student materials

- India: poster of Shiva Tripurantaka and Ganesha, corresponding worksheets including map activity, and mudra handout.
- India: poster of Krishna Kaliya and Preaching Buddha, corresponding worksheets including map activity, and mudra handout.
- Southeast Asia: poster of Buddha, poster of head of Buddha and Shiva and Uma, corresponding worksheets including map activity, and mudra handout.
- Southeast Asia: poster of Naga Protected Buddha and Standing Buddha, corresponding worksheets including map activity, and mudra handout.
- Himalayas: poster of Vishnu as Narasimha and Dancing Ganesha, corresponding worksheets including map activity, and mudra handout.
- Himalayas: poster of Simhavaktra Dakini and White Tara, corresponding worksheets including map activity, and mudra handout.
- Color pencils

## Lesson Objectives

### Students will learn:

- that gestures, posture, and facial features are a means of communication
- that religious sculpture in this lesson reflects the

## Preparation

Arrive at the school 20 minutes before the start of class. Check in at the office. Once class begins, the entire introduction will be 15 minutes. Tape the posters around the room so that they are grouped by region (each wall will have posters from a different region). Write the following vocabulary words on the wall: Buddhism, Hinduism, deity, mudra, and enlightenment. Tape the large fold-up map on the wall at the front of the room.

## Introduction to the New Asian: Lead Docent (1 min.)

**Introduce the New Asian Art Museum. Ask students what countries they can name in Asia.**

Hello, I'm \_\_\_\_\_ and this is \_\_\_\_\_. We are docents from the Asian Art Museum. How many of you have been to our museum in Golden Gate Park? In early 2003, the museum will be moving to the old San Francisco Public Library in the Civic Center. This historically preserved building will house one of the finest collections of Asian Art in the United States. We will be located across from City Hall and right next to BART.

*[Show poster of New Asian]*

What do you think is special about the Asian Art Museum?

The Asian Art Museum creates a bridge between today and ancient times in foreign lands. Our museum focuses on arts and culture from all over Asia.

Can you name some countries of Asia?

Today you are going to be learning about art from three different regions of Asia: India, Southeast Asia, and the Himalayas.

### Assisting Docent (3 min.)

**Introduce the following concepts: body language, gesture, posture, and facial feature. Ask students to act out a response to a scenario using body language. Students should try to do this without making any sound.**

The title of this program is Body Language. Today you will learn how an artist communicates ideas and tell stories using the art of body language.

Can anyone tell me what body language is? Yes. It is how people use their hands, body, and facial expression to communicate an emotion or idea.

May I have everyone stand up? I am going to ask you to show me how you use body language. Body language means that there is no sound. Everything is communicated through gestures.

*[Give students a scenario in which they express excitement, sadness, strength, fear, and joy.]*

Good job. I could really tell what you were feeling by your body language!

### Lead Docent (5 min.)

**Ask students to “act out” story of Durga by taking the pose of the Indonesian sculpture. Interview students how they feel as they hold a specific pose. Tell the story of Durga.**

*[Hold up poster of Durga]*

This is a sculpture from Indonesia in Southeast Asia. What do you see? How many arms does she have? Yes. She has eight arms and each hand is holding a weapon. What kinds of weapons is she holding? (trident, javelin, discus) What is she doing? Yes. She is standing victoriously over a buffalo.

Now, can I have 6 volunteers to “act out” the sculpture?

*[Four girls stand in line and stretch out their arms. One boy lies on the ground imitating the slain buffalo while the other boy crouches to the side imitating the emerging demon.]*

I am a reporter and I am going to interview you.

*[Ask each student how he or she feels.]*

Great job. Please sit back down in your groups.

Let me tell you the story of Durga. She is the goddess of war. She has just slain a demon that had taken the form of a buffalo. She stands over and spears the animal, at which time the demon emerges from the dying animal. Can you see the demon? How can you tell Durga is powerful and victorious?

### Assisting Docent (5 min.)

**Explain to the students that they will be doing a map activity and then working in pairs to complete an art object worksheet.**

You will be working in groups to examine the Hindu and Buddhist art from Southeast Asia, India, and the Himalayas. All of the art objects that you see today, you will be able to see at the New Asian. Each group will focus on the arts of one of these regions.

1. All of you will be receiving a map activity worksheet. Raise your hand if you are a reader. It is your job to read out loud the map worksheet to your group as the rest of the group reads along silently. Next, as a group, complete the map activity. You might need to look at the world map.
2. Next, you will work with a partner to examine an art object. There may be 2–3 students working together and examining one art object. Find the poster that matches your worksheet and take it down from the wall.
3. You and your partner will be filling out an object worksheet together. The worksheet will have a drawing of the object with questions. Read and answer the questions carefully.

[Show poster of Durga Worksheet]

4. Once you and your partner have finished the worksheet, teach the other members of your group about your art object. You will have **twenty minutes** to complete worksheets. When the time is up, the reader or presenter in each group will present to the rest of the class what they learned.

### Lead Docent (5 min.)

**Explain to students that they will be examining Buddhist and Hindu art from India, Southeast Asia, and the Himalayas. Artists use body language such as mudras to communicate the supernatural powers of Buddhist and Hindu gods. It is also a means of retelling the stories of their lives. Carefully explain the lesson and how students are to work in their groups.**

Most art from ancient times in these regions expresses religious attitudes and beliefs. You will be learning about Buddhism and Hinduism. Hinduism is a religion based on local beliefs and spiritual and cultural practices of ancient India. There are many gods and goddesses worshiped in Hinduism, such as Shiva (the Creator and Destroyer), Vishnu (the Preserver), and the Goddess, the female deity who has many forms. Buddhism is the religion based on the teachings of an Indian prince who lived 2500 years ago. He gave up his royal life in search of a way to end suffering in the world. After years of searching he achieved perfect understanding and became the Buddha or the “Enlightened One.”

The arts were important in communicating the teachings of the gods and enlightened beings.

## Assisting Docent

*[Hand-out the materials and help students get started by encouraging the reader to read out loud the introduction activity. Write across the chalkboard in large letters: Southeast Asia, India, Himalayas. Write long vertical lines between these words allowing enough space for 4 posters to be placed side by side in each section. (see illustration)]*

Southeast Asia	India	Himalayas
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## Wrap-up I (Assisting Docent 15 min.)

**Have students finish their worksheets and clean up their tables. Ask students to choose one or more representatives from their group to present. Discuss presentation etiquette. Have students tape or hold up the poster of the object while they are presenting. After each presentation, have the student tape the poster in the appropriate section on the chalk board.**

*[Give students a 5 min. warning.]*

You have 5 minutes to wrap-up and finish the worksheets. Please write your names on your worksheets. Decide who will be presenting from your group. I will ask you to present to the class, in a few sentences, what you learned about one of the object.

*[After 5 min., go over presentation rules: Give your full attention to the presenters. The presenters face the class and tell them in a few sentences what they learned about the object. Have each group present at least one time. Have the presenters tape up the poster of their objects on the board in their appropriate region.]*

Have a presenter in each group present to the rest of the class what they learned about the object and to model the mudra and pose.

## Wrap -up II (Lead Docent 5 min.)

**Have students compare the art objects. Point out that that artists may show the same gods, goddesses, or enlightened beings (the Buddha) with a style distinctive to the artists culture and region. Through body language, artists were able to communicate religious beliefs throughout Asia. Thank the students and teacher, and invite them to the New Asian.**

Thank you. You all did a wonderful job. Now, stay seated and take a moment to look at all of the posters on the board. All of these objects show gods, goddesses, or enlightened beings from the Buddhist and Hindu religions. Art from different cultures and regions have their own distinct style. This is especially noticeable when you compare artworks from different regions and cultures that show same religious god or enlightened beings like the Buddha.

Describe some of the differences between the different regions and cultures.  
Look at the Ganesha from India and the one from Tibet. How are they different? Look at the Buddha from Laos and the one from India. How are they different? How are they similar?

Through body language, artists communicated Buddhist and Hindu beliefs throughout Asia. As you can see, these arts communicated not only their religious teachings, but also the many styles distinctive to the regions and cultures of Asia. You can see art from all of these cultures at the New Asian Art Museum.

Thank you for inviting us to come to your class. We hope to see you in the future at the New Asian Art Museum.