

Eth-Noh-Tec:

Asia Fantasia

Educational Guide, Grades K-12



About the Performance

Master storyteller Robert Kikuchi-Yngojo of Eth-Noh-Tec delights students with folktales and myths from Asia: Korea, Japan, China, Tibet, Afghanistan, and other Asian cultures. His engaging performances take you on an adventure of the imagination, weaving a variety of traditional tales with music, movement, and wild facial gestures to bring the characters and places to life. A few examples from his repertoire include “Firedog” (Korea), “Rainbow Mudbabies” (Philippines), “Mr. Pepper Peel and the Parrot” (China), and “The Bird of Happiness” (Tibet).



About the Artist

Eth-Noh-Tec is a kinetic storytelling company based in San Francisco that is at once precision choreography, lyrical word-weaving, graceful, playful and poetic. By layering ancient Asian mythologies, folktales and Asian urban legends with Asian American sensibilities, Eth-Noh-Tec has created an exciting new blend of movement-based storytelling. Founding member Robert Kikuchi-Yngojo travels to Massachusetts to perform Eth-Noh-Tec stories for school assemblies. Robert has trained and performed in traditional and contemporary art forms for over two decades. He has since enjoyed tremendous success in this focused fusion, truly meeting the goals of the name Eth-Noh-Tec: The weaving [tec] together of distinctive cultural elements of the East and West [eth] to create new possibilities [noh].

Program Learning Goals

1. To explore Asian culture through folktales and myths.
2. To introduce students to a variety of bamboo instruments.
3. To demonstrate the contrasting values of courage/fear, honesty/dishonesty, compassion/greed, etc.

Essential Questions

1. What can learning about other cultures teach us?
2. How are Asian myths and folktales similar to the ones you learn in school?
3. Why is it important to have pride in who you are?

Eth-Noh-Tec:
Asia Fantasia
Educational Guide, Grades K-12



Vocabulary

- **Eth:** *Ethos*; universal elements of art, Latin
 - *Ethnos*; nation, Greek
- **Noh:** possibility, Japanese
- **Tec:** *Texere*; to weave, Greek

Key Facts and Cultural Context for Students



Where is Asia?

This performance features stories from all over the continent of **Asia**. Asia has multiple geographical regions: North Asia, East Asia, Central Asia, West Asia, South Asia, and Southeast Asia.

Myths and Folktales

Myths are stories that explain a culture's beliefs, practices, or understanding of natural phenomena. **Folktales** are popular stories in a culture that are primarily told orally, by word of mouth.

Asian Bamboo Wind Instruments

This performance features Asian instruments made from bamboo. Here are some examples:



Shakuhachi
(shah-koo-HA-chee)
Japanese end-blown flute



Dizi
(DEE-tzuh)
Chinese flute



Kubing
(koo-BING)
Filipino jaw harp

Eth-Noh-Tec:
Asia Fantasia
Educational Guide, Grades K-12



Pre-Performance Activity: Explore Asia

LEARNING GOAL:

To introduce students to the geography and cultures of Asia

MATERIALS:

- World map and/or various maps of Asia
- Picture books of Asian folktales

TIPS FOR THE TEACHER:

- Connect this activity to studies on family, community, biology, and science (e.g., the science of sound physics and bamboo instruments)
- Encourage non-judgmental observation of other cultural customs



DIRECTIONS:

1. Review the seven continents and identify where Asia is situated (technically defined as lands east of the Ural Mountains to the Pacific Ocean).
2. Name as many countries in Asia as students know (some names have changed).
Discuss Asian geography. Sample discussion questions:
 - Which countries are in the "Middle East?"
 - Where is the line between Europe and Asia?
 - Is Russia an Asian country? If so, where is Siberia?
3. Divide the class into 6 groups, one for each region (north, south, east, west, central, and southeast Asia). Have each group research its region and describe the land features and plant and animal life (use picture books, maps, Internet images, etc.).
4. Discuss the race, ethnicity, dress, language, religion, and shelter of each region's people. Notice how the terrain affects agriculture, livestock, and transportation.

EXTENSIONS:

- Listen to traditional Asian music and look at pictures of instruments and/or musicians playing them.
- Explore the visual arts of some Asian countries with special attention to symbols, designs, patterns, and images (or lack thereof in Islamic cultures).

Post-Performance Activity: Living Harmoniously

LEARNING GOALS:

- To identify the messages and values of the people and animals in the folktales
- To listen to other points of view through stories

TIP FOR THE TEACHER:

Connect this activity to other language arts activities (comprehension, verbal skills, emotional expression, etc.)



DIRECTIONS:

1. Choose one story from the performance and ask students which country it came from, who the characters were, and what happened in the plot.
2. Identify the message. How did the story convey that message? How did the characters convey the message? Identify how the problem was solved.
3. Divide the students into small groups to discuss when they have experienced similar situations to those in the story.
4. Choose a character in the same story. Discuss how that character's viewpoint or personality created or solved the problem. Encourage them to express the different feelings and thoughts the character had throughout the story.

EXTENSION:

Find stories that have similar messages from other cultures. Try to relate these messages to the daily problems that come up in the classroom (e.g. being honest, being kind to your peers, accepting other students' cultures or difference in general, etc.).

Further Resources: Picture Books Featuring Asian Stories

- [Aekyung's Dream](#), Stories and pictures by Min Pak (Korean)
- [China's Bravest Girl: The Legend of Hua Mu Lan](#), Told by Chali Chin, illustrated by Tomie Arai (Chinese-American)
- [Judge Rabbit and the Tree Spirit](#), Told by Lina Mao Wall, illustrated by Nancy Hom (Cambodia)
- [Nine-in-One, Grr! Grr!](#), Told by Blia Xiong. Pictures by Tran-Khan-Tuyet, illustrated by Hom (Vietnamese)

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Educational Guide, Grades K-12



Curricular Connections

Arts Standards: Theatre and Music

Responding

- Perceive and analyze artistic work. (T.R.07, M.R.07)
- Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work. (T.R.08, M.R.08)
- Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work. Demonstrate active observation as an audience member (e.g., noticing details, making connections) (T.R.09, M.R.09)

Connecting

- Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art. (T.Co.10, M.Co.10)
- Relate artistic ideas and works to societal, cultural and historical contexts to deepen understanding. Identify different sources of theatrical works (e.g., folk and fairy talks, everyday life). (T.Co.11, M.Co.11)

English Language Arts and Literacy Anchor Standards

Writing

- Write narratives to develop experiences or events using effective literary techniques, well-chosen details, and well-structured sequences. (W.PK-12.3)

Speaking and Listening

- Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally. (SL.PK-12.2)
- Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric. (SL.PK-12.3)

History and Social Science

K

- Topic 2: Geography: connections among places (HSS.K.T2)
- Topic 3: History: shared traditions (HSS.K.T3)

Grade 1

- Topic 2: Geography: places to explore (HSS.1.T2)

Grade 2

- Topic 2: Geography and its effects on people (HSS.2.T2)
- Topic 4: Civics in the context of geography: countries and governments (HSS.2.T4)

Grade 6

- Topic 1: Studying complex societies, past and present (HSS.6.T1)

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Eth-Noh-Tec:
Asia Fantasia
Educational Guide, Grades K-12



Curricular Connections, continued

History and Social Science, continued

Grade 7

- Topic 1a: Physical and political geography of Central and South Asia (HSS.7.T1a)
- Topic 2a: Physical and political geography of East Asia (HSS.7.T2a)
- Topic 2c: Ancient Japan and Korea, c. 300 BCE-1300 CE (HSS.7.T2c)
- Topic 3a: Physical and political geography of Southeast Asia and Oceania (HSS.7.T3a)

Grades 9-12

- World History I Topic 1: Dynamic interactions among regions of the world (HSS.WHI.T1)

