



India Outside In

Lesson created by Chris Mullin
Santa Ynez Valley High School
for the Santa Barbara
Museum of Art



Enter the world of Indian religious and cultural art by approaching it as an outsider eager to look in. For two centuries, Great Britain controlled various Indian regions and left an indelible mark on Indian culture. At the same time, colonizers were unable to remain unaffected by the rich Indian culture that surrounded them. In this series of activities, students will follow different approaches and listen to different voices in order to explore and draw conclusions about Indian visual representations of religious faith.

Activity One: Fiction Goes to a Museum



RESOURCES

- Excerpt from Rudyard Kipling's 1800 novel of India **Kim**
- *Meditating Buddha without a Nimbus Seated under the Bodhi Tree* (pictured left)

Meditating Buddha without a Nimbus Seated under the Bodhi Tree. Flanked by divine worshippers Brahma and Indra. Ancient Gandhara, present-day Pakistan, Swat region, late 1st–early 2nd century. Green schist. 11 1/4 x 10 x 2 in. (28.6 x 25.4 x 5 cm). Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Anonymous Gift, 2013.48.2

Activity One: Fiction Goes to a Museum



Begin by having the students read aloud the excerpt from Rudyard Kipling's *Kim*. Rudyard Kipling was a British writer who lived in India in the 19th Century. Besides being the well-known author of *The Jungle Book* and the more controversial power *White Man's Burden*, he also penned the novel *Kim*, which opens with an unlikely pair teaming up to view the contents of India museum, contents not unlike those contained in this exhibition. The wonderment and uncertainty felt by the old Lama may offer a parallel to that of ourselves.

Meditating Buddha without a Nimbus Seated under the Bodhi Tree. Flanked by divine worshippers Brahma and Indra. Ancient Gandhara, present-day Pakistan, Swat region, late 1st–early 2nd century. Green schist. 11 1/4 x 10 x 2 in. (28.6 x 25.4 x 5 cm). Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Anonymous Gift, 2013.48.2

Activity One: Fiction Goes to a Museum

Discussion Questions

Once the students have taken turns reading the passage aloud, pose the following questions:

- Would the old Indian Lama (Buddhist monk) be considered an outsider? Explain?
- What does he discover in the museum that impresses him and how does he respond?
- What role does Kim play in this museum experience?
- How might the Lama's experience be like the one you are having today?



Meditating Buddha without a Nimbus Seated under the Bodhi Tree. Flanked by divine worshippers Brahma and Indra. Ancient Gandhara, present-day Pakistan, Swat region, late 1st–early 2nd century. Green schist. 11 1/4 x 10 x 2 in. (28.6 x 25.4 x 5 cm). Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Anonymous Gift, 2013.48.2

Students are reading this image to anchor their experience in that of a fictional character from a novel that emerged in the era of Imperialism.

Activity One: Fiction Goes to a Museum



Now provide each student with a color copy of *Meditating Buddha without a Nimbus Seated under the Bodhi Tree*

Have them take a minute to verbally describe everything they see. The descriptions can be literal images or conception perceptions. The teacher may wish to write them down if board or poster paper is available.

Meditating Buddha without a Nimbus Seated under the Bodhi Tree. Flanked by divine worshippers Brahma and Indra. Ancient Gandhara, present-day Pakistan, Swat region, late 1st–early 2nd century. Green schist. 11 1/4 x 10 x 2 in. (28.6 x 25.4 x 5 cm). Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Anonymous Gift, 2013.48.2

Activity One: Fiction Goes to a Museum



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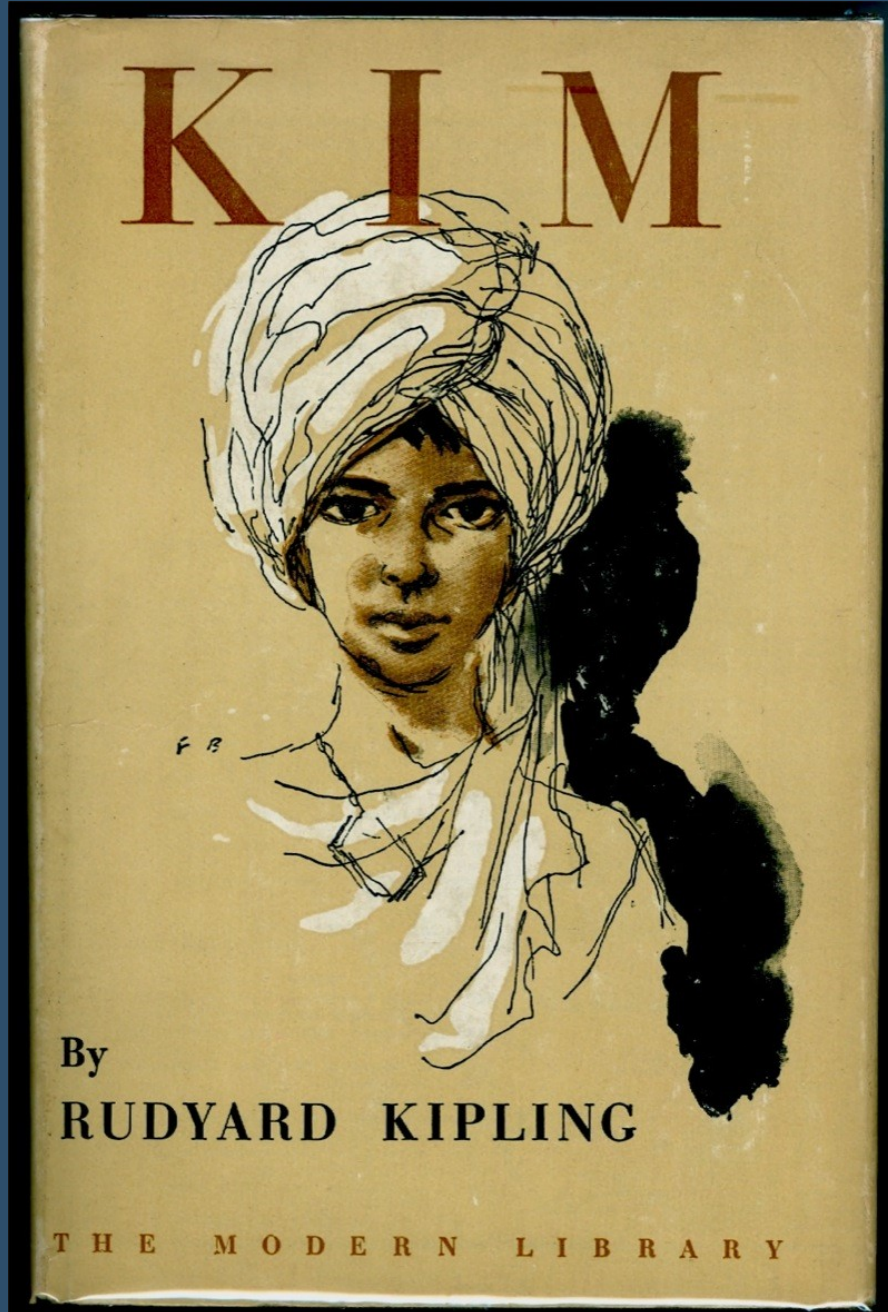
Rationale of the image use

The purpose of this visual inquiry into Buddhist image is to both mirror the excerpt of the story that the students read as well as to open the thematic doorway for the rest of the activities.

Now pose the following questions

- What do you know about Buddha?
- Why do you think the Lama was so excited when he saw the image?
- What stands out as noteworthy in the sculpture in its representation of the Buddha?

Activity One: Fiction Goes to a Museum



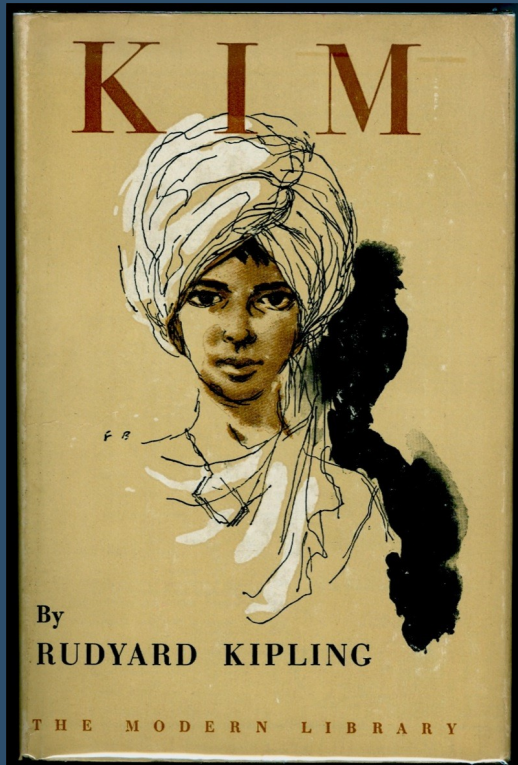
Excerpt from Rudyard Kipling's 1800's novel of India, *Kim*

- Kim is an orphaned Irish boy who has grown up in the slums of India raised by an Indian woman
 - The old man is a Lama, devout follower of Buddha, who has come down from a Tibetan monastery

In the following passage the old man and the young boy team up and enter a museum filled with a wide variety of sacred images of Indian origin

Activity One: Fiction Goes to a Museum

Excerpt:



The man turned helplessly and drifted towards the boys. He was old, and his woolen gabardine still reeked of the stinking Artemisia of the mountain passes.

"O Children, what is that big house?" He said in very fair Urdu.

"The Ajaib-Gher, the Wonder House!" Kim gave him no title—such as Lala or Mian. He could not divine the man's creed.

"Ah! The Wonder House! Can any enter?"

"It is written above the door—all can enter."

"Without payment?"

"I go in and out. I am no banker," laughed Kim.

"Alas! I am an old man. I did not know." Then, fingering his rosary, he half turned to the Museum.

"That is the Government's house and there is no idolatry in it, but only a Sahib with a white beard. Come with me and I will show..."

Activity One: Fiction Goes to a Museum

Excerpt continued...

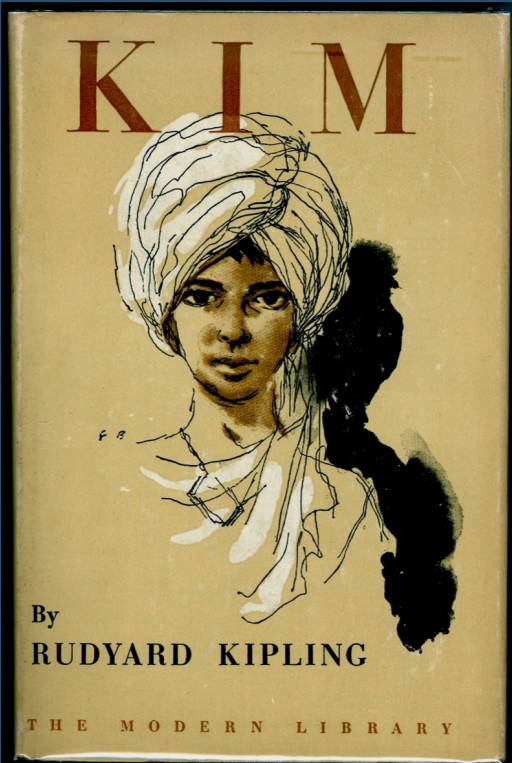
...Kim clicked round the self-registering turnstile; the old man followed and halted amazed. In the entrance-hall stood the larger figures of the Greco-Buddhist sculptures done, savants know how long since, by forgotten workmen whose hands were feeling, and not unskillfully, for the mysteriously transmitted Grecian touch.

There were hundreds of pieces, friezes of figures in relief, fragments of statues and slabs crowded with figures that had encrusted the brick walls of the Buddhist Stupas and Viharas of the North Country and now, dug up and labelled, made the pride of the Museum.

In open-mouthed wonder the Lama turned to this and that, and finally checked in rapt attention before a large alto-relief representing a coronation or apotheosis of the Lord Buddha.

The Master was represented seated on a lotus the petals of which were so deeply undercut as to show almost detached. Round Him was an adoring hierarchy of kings, elders, and old-time Buddhas.

Below were lotus-covered waters with fishes and water-birds. Two butterfly-winged Devas held a wreath over His head; above them another pair supported an umbrella surmounted by the jeweled headdress of the Bodhisat.

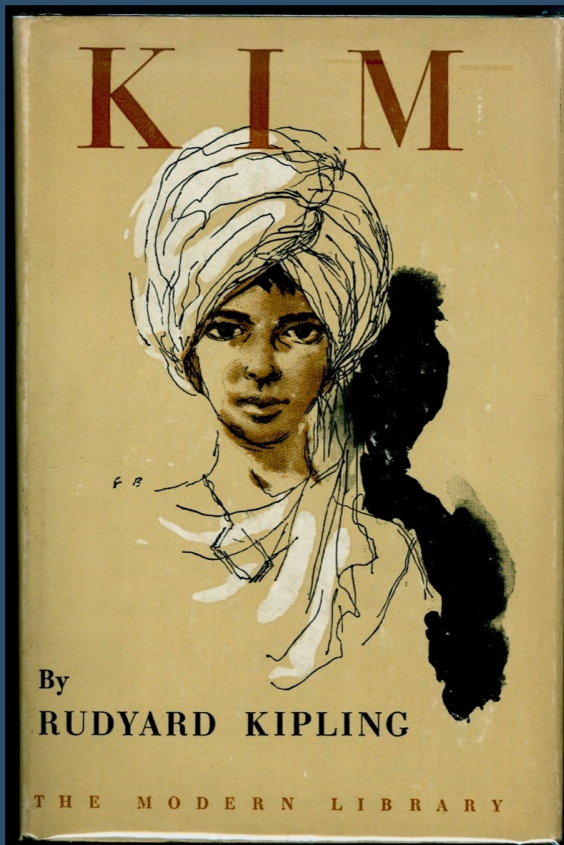


Activity I: Fiction Goes to a Museum

Excerpt continued...

"The Lord! The Lord! It is Sakya Muni himself!" The lama half sobbed and under his breath began the wonderful Buddhist invocation:

***"To Him the Way, the Law, apart
Whom Maya held beneath her heart
Ananda's Lord, the Bodhisat.
And He is here!
The Most Excellent Law is here also
My pilgrimage is well begun.
And what work! What work!"***



Activity II: I See, You Draw



Processional Image of Vishnu Riding Garuda,
India, Tamil Nadu, 18th century. Wood with traces of
gesso, pigments, and glass. Lent by Narendra and Rita
Parson



Goddess Durga Holding Club and Rope with
Lion, India, Tamil Nadu, 16th century. Bronze.
Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Gift of Pratapa-
tula and Chitra Pal

RESOURCES:

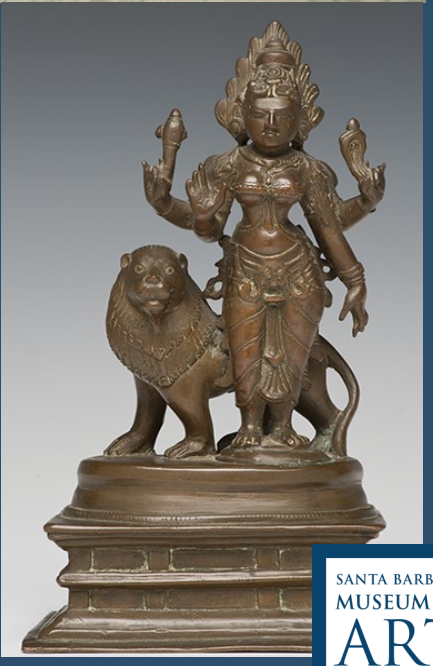
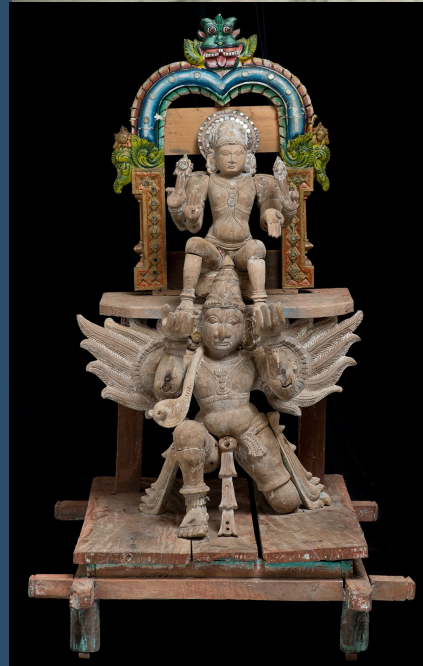
- Wood with traces of gesso
Processional Image of Vishnu Riding Garuda
(pictured far left)
- Bronze Statue:
Goddess Durga Holding Club with Rope and Lion
(pictured left)

Activity II: *I See, You Draw*

In this next activity...

students will work in pairs to engage in deep visual inquiry. The two sculptures in this activity represent one female and one male deity. Student will have to opportunity to sketch each one and then discuss the representation of gender in Indian art.

- ♦ Each student selects a partner and one is provided with a clean sheet of paper and a firm surface for drawing.
- ♦ Pairs should sit in such as way that the student with the paper will not be able to see the image when it is revealed by the teacher.
- ♦ The other partner must be able to see the revealed image, but will not be able to do the sketching.



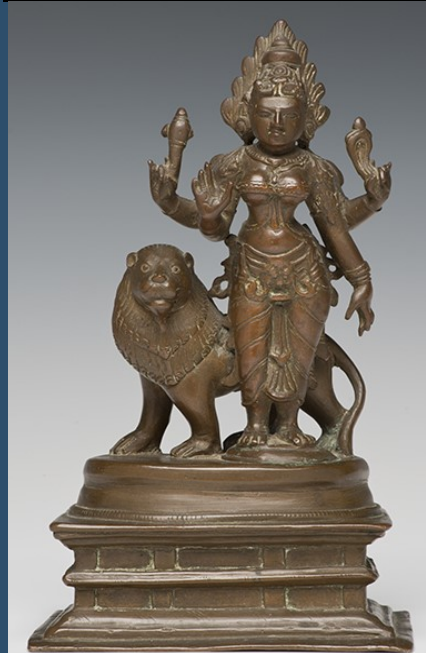
Activity II: *I See, You Draw*



When the students are ready, the teacher will reveal the first of the two images, Processional Image of Vishnu Riding Garuda. The student who is able to see the image, describes it in detail to her/his partner who attempts to sketch it out. After an appropriate amount of time, the teacher will allow the sketching students to see how close she/he has gotten.

Now, switch partners and repeat the process.

This time with Goddess Durga Holding Club with Rope and Lion As before wait a suitable amount of time before allowing the sketchers to view the original work.



The purpose of this exercise

To get at least one of the partners, the viewer, to really look deeply into all the details of the image provided.

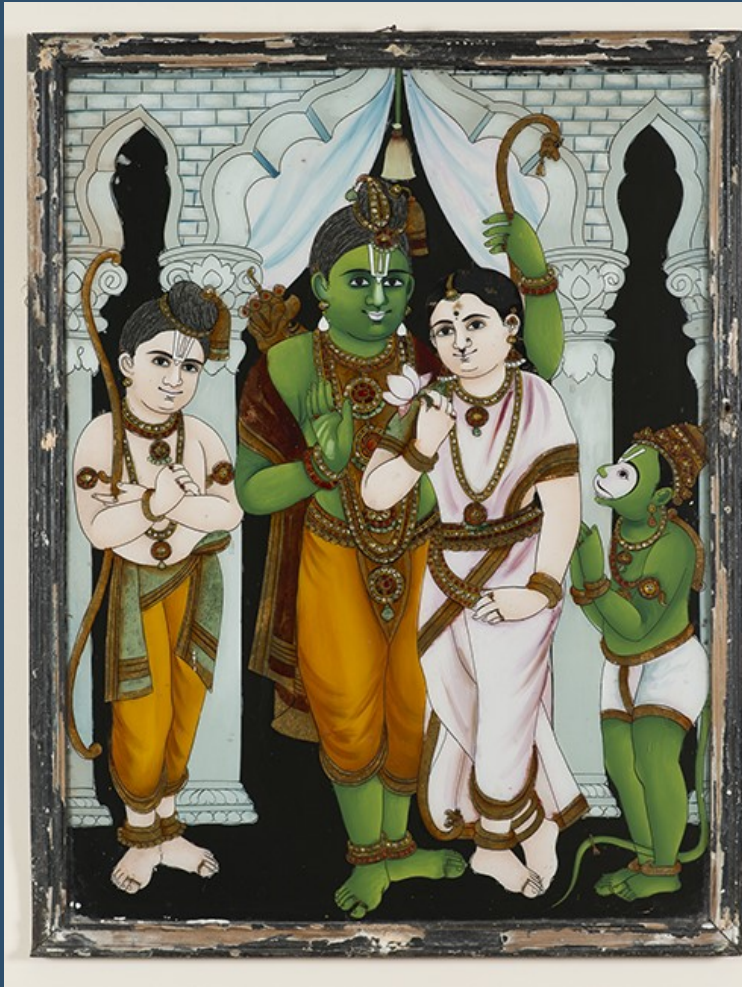
Activity II: *I See, You Draw*

Once the work has been completed lead the students in a discussion centered on several questions:

- ♦ Based on the representations of the deities, what sorts of divine power or oversight do you think they have?
- ♦ How are the different genders represented as divine? Are they different? Explain.
- ♦ What can you guess about Indian religious culture by looking at these images?



Activity III: Nineteenth Century Statesman as Tourist



Rama with his Souse Sita, Flaked by His Younger Sibling Lakshmana and His Simian Devotee Hanuman, India, Tamil Nadu, Late 19th-early 20th century. Ink and color reversed painted on glass. Lent by Narendeia and Rita Parson

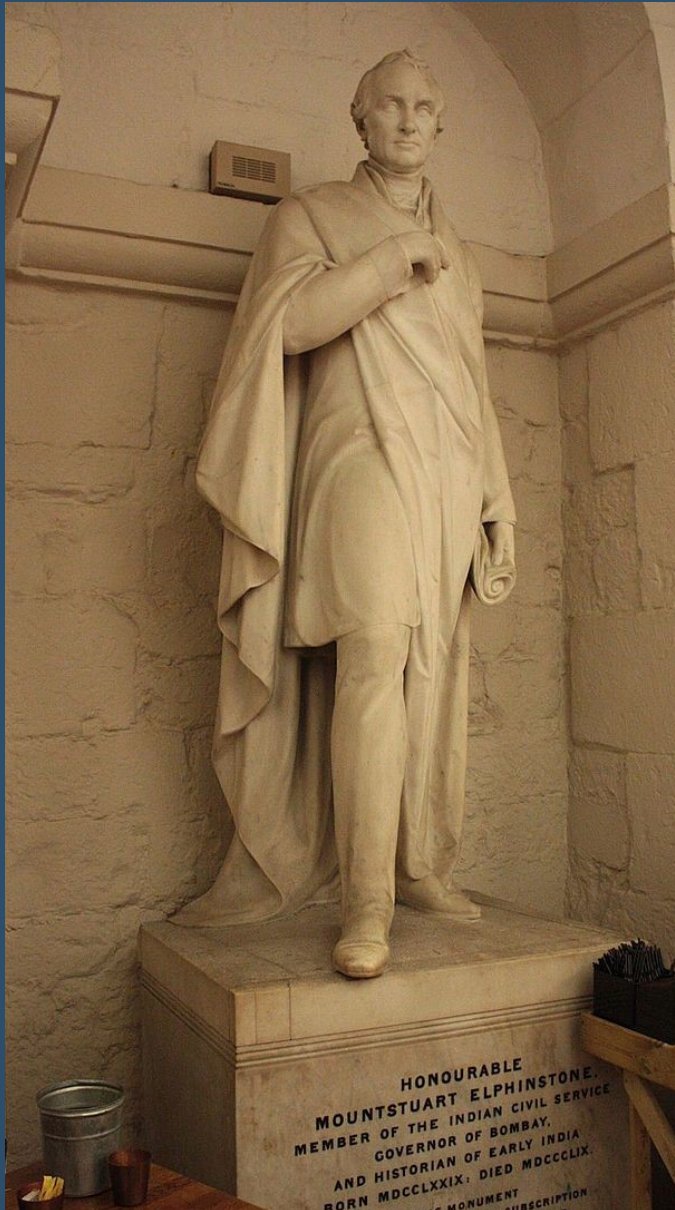


Monumental Head of Hanuman, Used in religious processions Kerala, India, Kerala, 18th century . Wood with pigments. Lent by Narendra and Rita Parson

RESOURCES:

- ♦ Painting on Glass:
Rama with this Spouse Sita, flanked by His Younger Sibling Lakshmana and His Simian Devotee Hanuman (pictured far left)
- ♦ Wood and Pigment
Monumental Head of Hanuman (pictured left)
- ♦ Excerpt: *Indian Customs and Manners*
Mountstuart Elphinstone 1840

Activity III: Nineteenth Century Statesman as Tourist



Mountstuart Elphinstone

Mountstuart Elphinstone

A longtime Scottish official in British India describes his experience at an Indian religious event: **Indian Customs and Manners** 1840. The event he describes is from a common myth about how Hanuman, after being insulted and having his tail deliberately singed, burned down the offending city of Lanka.

"Among the most striking of the religious exhibitions is that of the capture of Lanka, in honor of Rama, which is necessarily performed out of doors. Lanka is represented by a spacious castle with towers and battlements, which are assailed by an army dressed like Rama and his followers, with Hanuman and his monkey allies. The combat ends in the destruction of Lanka, amidst a blaze of fireworks which would excite admiration in any part of the world, and in a triumphal procession sometimes conducted in a style of grandeur which might become a more important occasion."

Activity III: Nineteenth Century Statesman as Tourist



Have one of the students read aloud the passage and then ask the following questions:

- ♦ The author is a man from Scotland, a country very different from that of India. What seems to be his view of this religious tradition?
- ♦ The main character described in this story are Rama and Hanuman. What do you think they are like physically?

Now have the student do some visual work by focusing on **Hanuman**. As in common for Indian gods and goddesses, Hanuman is provided with various and sometimes conflicting physical and personality traits.

Provide the students with both images, *Monumental Head of Hanuman* and *Rama with this Spouse Sita, Flanked by His Younger Sibling Lakshmana and His Simian Devotee Hanuman* and have them compare the two representations of Hanuman.

Activity III: Nineteenth Century Statesman as Tourist



To conclude this activity

- ♦ Ask the students to imagine that they are visiting an Indian village and the people there are carrying a large platform with the image or statue of Hanuman on it.
- ♦ Ask them to discuss what such a village event would be like?
Somber?
Loud?
Musical?
Silent?
- ♦ Ask them to justify their answers.

Activity IV: Half Devil and Half Child



Krishna Slaying Demons and Rescuing Cows as Balarama Watches, Illustration from a *Bhagavata Purana*, India, Himachal Pradesh, ca. 1850-60. Ink on color on paper. Lent by the Joseph B. and Ann S. Koepfli Trust



Shiva as Bhairava Dancing with Vishnu and Brahma as Musicians, India, Rajasthan, Mewar, 1750—75. Color and gold on paper. SBMA, Gift of Julia Emerson

RESOURCES:

- ♦ Shiva as Bhairava Dancing with Vishnu and Brahma as Musicians Color and Gold on Paper (top left)
- ♦ Krishna Slaying Demons and Rescuing Cows as Balarama Watches (top right)
- ♦ Kama Riding a Parrot and Kama's Spouse Rati on Gander (bottom left and bottom center)
- ♦ The Two Siblings, the Lighter Balarama and the Dark Krishna, Astride the Shoulders of Garuda (bottom far right)
- ♦ Rudyard Kipling: White Man's Burden 1899



Karma (God of Desire) Riding a Parrot and Karma's Spouse Rati on Gander, India, Tamil Nadu, Thanjavur (Tanjore), 19th century. Ink and color reverse painted on glass. Lent by Narendra and Rita Parson



Processional Image of Vishnu Riding Garuda, India, Tamil Nadu, 18th century. Wood with traces of gesso, pigments, and glass. Lent by Narendra and Rita Parson

Activity Four: Half Devil and Half Child



Rudyard Kipling: ***White Man's Burden*** 1899

Take up the White Man's burden, Send forth the best ye breed
Go bind your sons to exile, to serve your captives' need;
To wait in heavy harness, On fluttered folk and wild—
Your new-caught, sullen peoples, Half-devil and half-child.

Take up the White Man's burden, In patience to abide,
To veil the threat of terror And check the show of pride;
By open speech and simple, An hundred times made plain
To seek another's profit, And work another's gain.

Take up the White Man's burden, The savage wars of peace—
Fill full the mouth of Famine And bid the sickness cease;
And when your goal is nearest The end for others sought,
Watch sloth and heathen Folly Bring all your hopes to nought.

Take up the White Man's burden, No tawdry rule of kings,
But toil of serf and sweeper, The tale of common things.
The ports ye shall not enter, The roads ye shall not tread,
Go mark them with your living, And mark them with your dead.

Take up the White Man's burden And reap his old reward:
The blame of those ye better, The hate of those ye guard—
The cry of hosts ye humour (Ah, slowly!) toward the light:—
"Why brought he us from bondage, Our loved Egyptian night?"

Take up the White Man's burden, Ye dare not stoop to less—
Nor call too loud on Freedom To cloak your weariness;
By all ye cry or whisper, By all ye leave or do,
The silent, sullen peoples Shall weigh your gods and you.

Take up the White Man's burden, Have done with childish days—
The lightly proffered laurel, The easy, ungrudged praise.
Comes now, to search your manhood, through all the thankless
years
Cold, edged with dear-bought wisdom, The judgment of your
peers!

Activity Four: Half Devil and Half Child

In this activity, students will read aloud Rudyard Kipling's poem **The White Man's Burden**. As the title implies, Kipling felt that the non-industrialized peoples of color around the World were not the equals of White Europeans. As a lifelong resident of India, he must have formed some of his opinions interacting with Indian cultures. This poem is often recommended as a lens through which we might perceive English colonists' perceptions or preconceptions of colonized peoples.

Take up the White Man's burden—

Send forth the best ye breed—

Go send your sons to exile

To serve your captives' need

To wait in heavy harness

On fluttered folk and wild—

Your new-caught, sullen peoples,

Half devil and half child

Take up the White Man's burden

In patience to abide

To veil the threat of terror

And check the show of pride;

By open speech and simple

An hundred times made plain

To seek another's profit

And work another's gain

Take up the White Man's burden—

And reap his old reward:

The blame of those ye better

The hate of those ye guard—

The cry of hosts ye humour

(Ah slowly) to the light:

"Why brought ye us from bondage,

"Our loved Egyptian night?"

Take up the White Man's burden—

Have done with childish days—

The lightly proffered laurel,

The easy, ungrudged praise.

Comes now, to search your manhood

Through all the thankless years,

Cold-edged with dear-bought wisdom,

The judgment of your peers!

Activity Four: Half Devil and Half Child

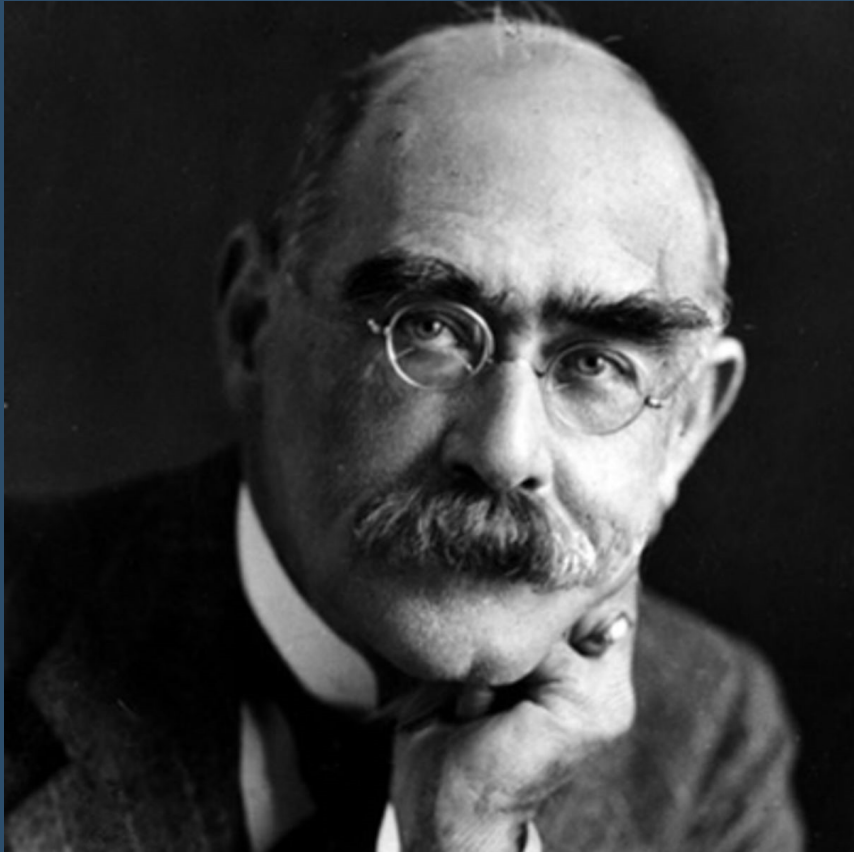
One catch phrase that emerges at the end of the first stanza is "**half-devil and half child**," a phrase which neither intentionally vilifies nor open-mindedly celebrates native culture. Instead, it frames Indian (and other) cultures as wild and under-developed, something to be treated with indulgent patience. Whereas this position is in no way consistent with a modern globalist perspective, it IS historically instructive.

The Goal of the Activity

To allow students time to come to grips with Kipling's 19th Century message while investigating the symbols or depictions in various Indian religious images. The ideal outcome of the teacher led investigation is that students perceive a cultural depth emerging in the images that transcends the child-like pre-development described by Kipling. In other words, students will hopefully explore the provided art and in so doing see a mature and sophisticated religious or cultural expression emerging.



Activity Four: Half Devil and Half Child



Rudyard Kipling

Instructions:

Begin by having the students take turns reading stanzas from The White Man's Burden. As they do so, ask them to look for two things.

- 1) According to Kipling, what IS the White Man's Burden?
- 2) Is Kipling being serious or ironic in his recommendations?
- 3) How might this poem be received today?

Have students explain their viewpoints.

Optional Activity:

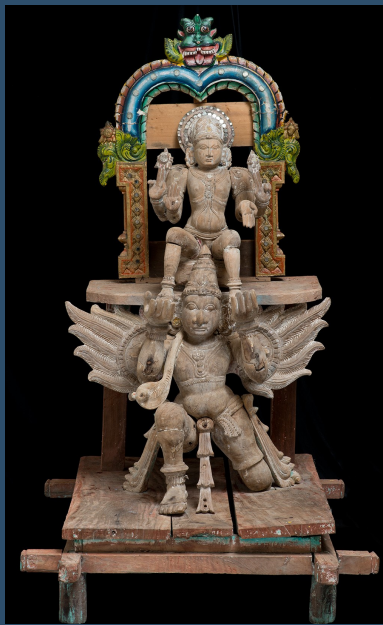
Have students create their own 1-2 stanza copy-change White Man's Burden. In this activity, students exchange the phrase: "White Man's" with a personalized phrase such as "Student's burden," "Jock' Burden" etc.

Activity Four: Half Devil and Half Child

Now identify all of the students as a 1, 2, 3, or 4. Give each student a copy of the image that relates to her/his number.



1



2



3

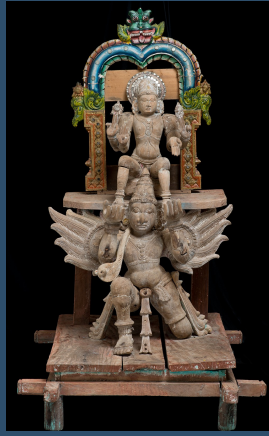


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Activity Four: Half Devil and Half Child



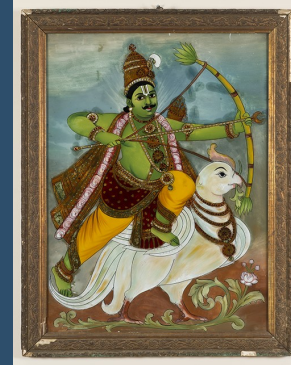
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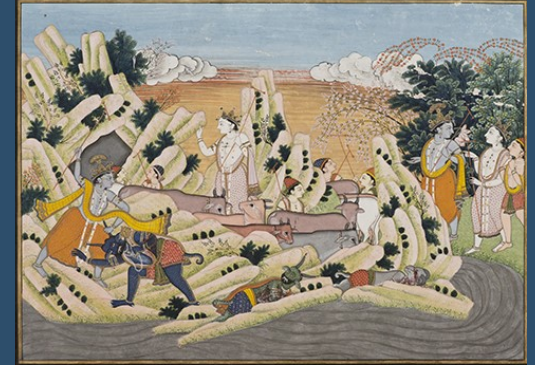
2



3



4



Each student should work independently or in a pair with another student of the same number to answer two questions about the image:

- 1) What about the image might be consistent with Kipling's outsider perception of Indians as "**half-devil and half-child**"
- 2) 2) What else emerges in the images that reveals a deeper spiritual message that Kipling's view.

Conclude

Have each individual or pair share out its findings. Using poster paper or dry erase board, the teacher should list or summarize students' findings.

Activity Five:

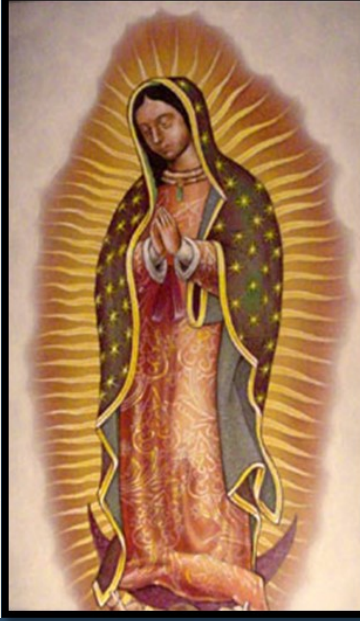
River, Destroyer, Saint: The Feminine East Meets the Feminine West



The Popular Form of Durga as the Destroyer of the Titan Mahisha (Mahishasuramardini) Worshipped by Bengali Hindus in the Festival of Durga Puja every autumn, India, West Bengal, Kolkata (Calcutta), 19th century. Color and Silver on Paper. Lent by Narendra and Rita Parson



River Goddess Ganga (Ganges) Riding a Makara, A Mythical Aquatic Creature Regarded as an Auspicious Symbol, India, West Bengal, Kolkata (Calcutta), 19th century. Color and Silver on Paper. Lent by Narendra and Rita Parson



Resources

- ♦ ***The Popular Form of Durga as the Destroyer and the Titan Mahisha***
Color and silver on paper
- ♦ ***River Goddess Ganga Riding a Makara***
Color and silver on paper
- ♦ Western image of the Virgin Mary with flames emerging from her body (Top right)
- ♦ Photograph of contemporary Puja procession, ideally with Durga represented (Bottom left)
- ♦ Photograph of a contemporary Catholic procession featuring the Virgin Mary (Bottom Right)



Activity Five:

River, Destroyer, Saint: The Feminine East Meets the Feminine West

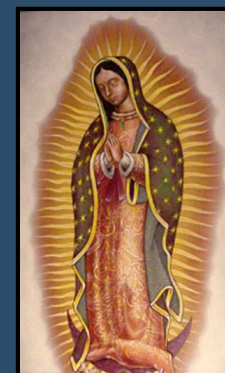
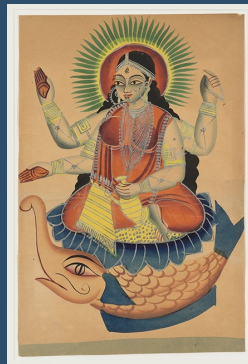
Comparison of the representation of the Hindu goddesses Durga and Ganga to that of the Virgin Mary

The goal of this activity

Get students to discover similarities in the common depictions of the Virgin Mary, a familiar icon in the West and those of female Indian goddesses. Likewise, students will explore the commonalities between Durga-centered Puja processions and Virgin Mary-centered Catholic processions. The overall goal is for the students to see universal links between Eastern and Western religious depictions and practices.

Divide the students

into groups of three and give each group an image of Durga, Ganga and the Virgin Mary. Have the students take a few minutes to discuss the symbols or traits that are present and then complete a short writing activity for each one.



Activity Five:

River, Destroyer, Saint: The Feminine East Meets the Feminine West

Writing activity: The Important Poem

Sometimes when getting students to observe historical material it helps to have them use creative writing strategies to unlock their perceptions. In this activity students are going to use a formulaic stanza where they will perform a copy-change.

Each student will use the following poem structure for one image. The groups of three will decide which student will write on Durga, which on Ganga and which on Mary. The only rule is that the first line is repeated in the last line.

The Important thing about Durga/Ganga/Mary is that she is...

She is...

She isn't...

She can...

She makes me think of....

But the important thing about Durga/Ganga/Mary is that she is...

Once students have completed their "Important" poems, have them share. On the board on paper the teacher can catalogue the main traits of each and identify commonalities.

Now that the students are familiar with the feminine deities, they will complete one last activity....

Activity Five:

River, Destroyer, Saint: The Feminine East Meets the Feminine West

Activity

Have the students observe a photograph of a modern Durga procession and a photograph of a modern Mary procession. In both images, the feminine deity should appear as a statue being carried in a public procession.



Divide the students into small groups, assigning half the groups the Durga photo and half the groups the Mary photo.

The job each group is to play the part of a documentary/travel reporter team describing in colorful terms the events unfolding around them. They can have on the spot interviews, background voiceovers giving cultural context as well as colorful descriptions. The teacher can set the length of the report but each one should be performed.

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Artwork and lesson created by Chris Mullin, Santa Ynez Valley High School, for the Santa Barbara Museum of Art

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