

Interdisciplinary Ideas

LANGUAGE ARTS

1. Read other Japanese folktales (Keyword: Japanese folktales) and choose one to retell to a partner. Include setting, plot, characters, conflict, and resolution in your retelling.
2. In pairs, investigate "kamishibai," the art of Japanese storytelling. (Keyword: kamishibai) Choose a story from Language Arts #1, create a twelve card kamishibai set for your story, practice, and present it to the class using this Japanese storytelling tradition.

SCIENCE

In small groups, investigate mandarin ducks. (Keyword: mandarin ducks habitat) Find out about physical characteristics (include coloring), habitat, behavior, diet, predators, reproduction, and conservation status. Create a poster or booklet about the species, and if possible, include photographs. (Keyword: photos, mandarin ducks)

SOCIAL STUDIES

1. In small groups, investigate the role of samurai in local districts in ancient Japan. (Keyword: samurai ancient Japan) Share information with the class.
2. In small groups, choose one of the following places to investigate and report to the class: Kyoto (the imperial capital of Japan before 1868), Mt. Fuji, Daisetsuzan National Park.

ART

1. Write the Heartwood attributes in Japanese (see *Teacher's Guide, Resources*).
 2. Look online for "ukiyo-e," a type of Japanese art used in the illustrations in the book. (Keyword: ukiyo-e images) With black marker and colored pencils draw pictures of people, flowers, trees, or kimonos in this style.
- * Visit www.heartwoodethics.org and choose Teaching Heartwood, Intermediate Activities, for Poem in Two Voices and Teacher Interview Page. Culture Keys offer cultural information.

The Tale of the Mandarin Ducks

Katherine Paterson
1990
New York: Lodestar Books

JUSTICE

Japan
Folktale
Reading Time: 10 minutes

CONCEPTS

Justice
Compassion
Loyalty

SUMMARY

A master's greed and cruelty, a chief steward's wise advice, a kitchen maid's kindness, and two mysterious imperial messengers combine to make this story one of intrigue, injustice, and finally justice. Leo and Diane Dillon's sumi ink and watercolor illustrations depict the Land of the Rising Sun with golden hues as rich as the plumage of the mountain drake himself.

OBJECTIVES

The student will be able to identify, define, and discuss justice, compassion, and loyalty as they apply to this story and will explore actions he or she can take to change unfair rules or policies.

After the Story

The Tale of the Mandarin Ducks

DISCUSSION

1. Why does the lord of the district want the drake? Why do you think he rejects Shozo's wise advice?
2. Describe Yasuko and Shozo. What Heartwood attributes do they possess? How is Shozo loyal to Yasuko?
3. How do Yasuko and Shozo show compassion and loyalty for the drake? What do you think you would have done in that situation?
4. Do animals have a right to stay in their natural habitats? Discuss.
5. Why is the lord of the district's punishment of Shozo and Yasuko unfair?
6. How is justice served for Yasuko and Shozo? In the story, is justice served for the lord of the district? Explain.
7. Discuss this quote about Shozo, "To his honest mind, desiring to unlatch the cage and actually lifting the latch were one and the same."
8. Which of Yasuko's and Shozo's qualities do you possess?

ACTIVITIES

1. Locate Japan on the world map. On a map of Japan find places such as Mt. Fuji, Daisetsuzan National Park, and Kyoto. (Keyword: map Japan)
2. Together list school rules or policies you believe are unfair. Choose one or two from the list and brainstorm strategies for changing the rule, such as writing letters to the principal. Follow through with one of the strategies. Repeat this process with a community or government policy you want to change.
3. In small groups, investigate animal rights. (Keyword: animal rights kids) Report to class what other kids are doing to help animals. Make "Be Kind to Animals" posters and display them around your school to help prevent cruelty to animals.

EXTENSION

1. Tell this story to your family and ask for opinions concerning the master's right to decide for everyone in the district.
2. Ask if family members ever refused to obey a rule or law or worked to change one because they believed it was unjust. With permission, share with the class.

WRAP-UP

1. In *My Heartwood Journal* write about the quote, "Trouble can always be borne when it is shared." Relate this quote to the story and to your own life.
2. On a Venn diagram (see *Teacher's Guide*) compare and contrast the lord of the district with Shozo. Use your notes on the Venn diagram to write an essay comparing the two characters. Be sure to include examples of Heartwood attributes.

VOCABULARY

drake
capital punishment
samurai

abolish
Buddha
plumage

brocade
ailing