

Hofstra University Museum JPMorgan Chase Art Travelers through Time: Literacy and History through Art

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Marishi-ten
15th Century
Japan
Wood, paint, glass
18 ½ x 15 ½ x 12 in.
HU70.19

WHAT: Marishi-ten

WHERE: Japan

WHEN: 15th Century

WHY: In Japanese Buddhist mythology Marishi-ten is known as a God (or Goddess) of the Sun and the Moon. Marishi-ten has been depicted in numerous ways including as a ferocious demon standing or sitting on the back of a boar with weapons in each of his or her six arms, driving a chariot drawn by seven pigs, or as a beautiful woman sitting on an open lotus. In her female form she is the harbinger of the Goddess of dawn and therefore identified with the blinding rays of the rising sun, giving her the power of invisibility. In the 8th century CE, Marishi-ten was adopted by the Samurai as a protector and patron. Warriors, hoping that enemies would not find them, would invoke Marishi-ten at sunrise in order to achieve victory on the battlefield.

According to a myth, Marishi-ten, who is positioned in front of the sun, helps bring the sun every morning from the nighttime spirit world. His six arms, each holding a different weapon, aid him in his daily task. He is riding a boar, which may be an incarnation of the Hindu god, Vishnu (the Preserver and Protector).

Japanese deities and their mythology are a blend of Hinduism, Buddhism and the native Japanese religion, Shintoism. When Buddhism was introduced in Japan, it absorbed some of the other Japanese gods creating an enormous group of deities whose origins come from all over Asia. Many of the gods and goddesses overlap. Amaterasu, for instance, is the Shinto goddess of light, while Marishi-ten is a Buddhist figure (see story book listed below).





Vocabulary

Warrior

Dawn

Dusk

Boar

Mythology



CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

ELA Activity: 1. Students read and discuss several myths from around the world that explain sunrise. Using a graphic organizer, students can compare and contrast story elements from the different myths. Students can also compare the different genres of folktales, myths and fables.

2. Students work independently or in small groups to write and illustrate their own story about how and why Marishiten acquired his six arms and weapons.

3. Performing Arts Extension: Students can turn their stories about Marishi –ten into theater scripts and perform them.

Visual Arts: Using visual elements such as color and line, students can create landscapes that show the environment at dawn and dusk.

Earth Science: Students can research the scientific evidence that explains day and night.



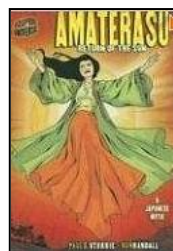
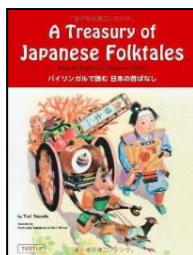
Resources

Children's Book

A Treasury of Japanese Folk Tales

by Yuri Yasuda

This book contains 12 of the best Japanese and fairy tales, told to generation after of Japanese children.



Amaterasu: Return of the Sun, a Japanese Myth

by Paul D. Storrie

This graphic novel tells the story of Amaterasu, the Japanese Shinto goddess of the sun.

Web Link



Japanese Myths and Gods

<http://www.st.rim.or.jp/~cycle/myrefE.HTML>