

East Asia Seminar Lesson Plan  
Name: Chinese Pagoda sculptures

Topic: The introduction of Buddhism and Pagodas to China

Stage 1- Desired Results		
Established Goals	Transfer	
	<i>Students will be able to independently use their learning to...</i>	
	-make choices about materials and concepts to achieve a given goal	
	-make connections to other religions	
	-illustrate the self through symbolic imagery	
Grade 7	<i>What kind of long term, independent accomplishments are desired?</i>	
- ART.VA.I.7.2	Meaning	
- ART.VA.II.7.4	<b>Understandings</b> <i>Students will understand that...</i>	<b>Essential Questions</b>
- ART.VA.II.7.6	-China has multiple religions	-What is Buddhism ?
- ART.VA.III.7.3	-that Buddhism is a significant religion of the world	-Why do you think pagodas were so popular in China?
- ART.VA.IV.7.2	-pagodas originated in the east and are an eastern architectural form	-What would your perfect pagoda look like if you were given anything to make it out of?
- ART.VA.V.7.1	-That there are some architectural similarities in religious structures between the East and West	-What objects or words represent you?
	-Architecture is a form of art and design	
	Acquisitions	
	<b><i>Students will know...</i></b>	<b><i>Students will be skilled at ...</i></b>
	-the story of Buddha and understand the basic doctrine of Buddhism	-Be able to create balance, and unity in a sculpture through proportion, color, texture, space, and pattern in an architectural form
	-the function and purpose of pagodas in China	-Critically analyze what objects or words best represent
	-the definitions of balance, proportion and unity in artworks	

themselves as individuals.

*What discrete skills and processes should be able to use?*

### Stage 2- Evidence

#### Evaluative Criteria

- The ability to illustrate balance, and proportion through the construction of a pagoda
- The ability to create unity through texture, pattern, color, space and balance
- the ability to articulate who Buddha was, the basic doctrines of Buddhism and the definition and function of pagodas in China

#### Assessment Evidence

##### **Transfer Task(s)**

- Handouts of the story of Buddha and the four Noble Truths, Noble 8-Fold Path and the Five Precepts
- Handouts of a variety of Chinese pagodas with descriptions, year of construction and location
- Ppt. about Chinese pagodas and art concepts: balance, proportion, space, texture, pattern and unity

##### **Other Evidence**

Student constructed pagodas, classroom discussion about China and Buddhism, evaluation sheet for each student and student written list and description of objects they chose to place in their pagodas

### Stage 3-Learning Plan

#### **Summary of Key Learning Events and Instruction**

##### **Day 1**

Draw a picture of Buddha on the board and ask: "Who is this guy?" "Have you ever scene any statues of him?" "Where?"

Tell the story of the transformation of Siddhartha Gautama to Buddha, go through the basic philosophy and doctrine of Buddhism looking at the four Noble Truths and the 8 Fold Path. Use the handout as a visual reference and schematic. Invite comparison to Christianity but be mindful of proselytizing.

Next tell the story of Emperor Ming's (of the Eastern Han Dynasty) vision of a golden man and how Buddhism came to China introducing a new form of spirituality different from Taoism and the teachings of Confucianism.

This story allows a segue into pagodas, as possibly the first pagoda built in China was the White Horse Pagoda (57CE), Luoyang, Henan Province. It was constructed to house Buddhist sacred texts brought over to China during the reign of Emperor Ming.

Show Ppt. and images of different Chinese pagodas, architectural qualities, function, and artistic enhancements namely decorative attributes of color, texture and pattern. Discuss how pagodas are balanced structures that progressively become smaller proportionally as they move upward. Each level is a fraction of the size of the one below it. Also each level is a form that is equal lateral or has a diameter that is equal from any side (no rectangles or ovals).

### Exit questions

Q: "What three kinds of base structures could a Chinese pagoda have?"

Q: "Where did pagodas originate from and what religion introduced pagodas to China?"

Q: "What was the function of a pagoda in China?"

### **Days 2-5**

Design and build a pagoda

Hand out the assignment sheet as a reference for students while they build their projects.

The pagoda should be an example of the following

- Ornamentation
- Unity
- Negative space (though the space around the eaves and though the upward movement of the structure)
- Texture
- Balance (The sculpture should have its weight evenly divided on all corners and sides and progress upward proportionally.)

### **Steps**

1. Decide on base form (square, circular, multisided). Attach base of building to a board base using glue guns or Elmer's glue
2. Build basic structure using found objects like boxes, yogurt and other plastic food containers as the individual levels and then wooden or cardboard boards as roofs for each level
3. Build a spire on the pinnacle of the final roof.
4. Paint
5. Attach ornamentation and the eaves using other found objects like buttons, beads, popsicle sticks, shells, stones, tassels, craft foam, etc
6. Decide what objects (relic) or texts to include inside pagoda. These should be significant to the artist as these pagodas will reflect meaning and importance to their creators.

While building their pagodas students should be asking themselves, "Is my pagoda balanced in form as well as in the ornamentation?", "Does it show unity through texture, color and form?"

### Exit questions

"What was working today?" "What did work and how am I going to fix it?"

### **Day 6**

Share work with class and critique

- Describe
  - "What materials did you use?"
  - "What basic forms did you build your pagoda with?"
  - "What did you do for ornamentation?"
- Analyze
  - How does your pagoda incorporate negative space?

- How well does your pagoda show balance?
- Interpret
  - What did you put inside of your pagoda and why did you choose these items?
- Evaluate
  - Do you think your pagoda is unified? Does it show unity through form, scale, space, texture, and color?
  - What do you like best about your sculpture

Display sculptures in the hall with explanations of what is inside each pagoda and why the artists chose these items.

Also hang or display a summary of what a pagoda is, how this architectural style came to China and a short summarization of Buddhism as a religion and the goals/objectives of this assignment. Include a picture of an actual pagoda in China.

*Possible pre planning questions to ask at this stage (You do not need to provide answers to these questions):*

- Are all three types of goals (acquisition, meaning, and transfer) addressed in the learning plan?
- Does the learning plan reflect principles of learning and best practice?
- Is there tight alignment across all three stages?

Template Source: [grantwiggling.files.wordpress.com](http://grantwiggling.files.wordpress.com)



## East Asia Art Elective

### Assignment: Build your personal Chinese Pagoda

**What would your perfect pagoda look like if you could build it out of anything?**

Your pagoda must illustrate the following

- **Texture**: smooth, bumpy, pokey, rough, softy
- **Pattern**: repeating forms, shapes, colors, lines, etc.
- **Negative space**: the space your sculpture reaches out to or allows to pass through itself
- **Balance**: The forms (each floor and section) are even and centered and all the decorations and colors are evenly assembled
- **Proportion**: the forms of each level progress upward from big to small evenly to each other
- **Unity**: all aspects listed above work together to make your pagoda visually cohesive

### Directions and steps

1. Decide on a style. Will your pagoda have a circular base, a square base or a multisided base (hexagon, octagon, pentagon)?
2. Build from the bottom up using found objects.
  - a. Glue down base
  - b. Glue on roof
  - c. Add next level but this floor will be a fraction smaller than the one below it.
  - d. Glue on second floor roof
  - e. Continue until you have your pagoda as tall as you would like it
3. Construct the final roof at the top of your pagoda with a spire
4. Decide what to put into your pagoda
5. Decide on a unifying style and ornamentation (glitz, sparkles, doodads, color and bling)
6. Paint and glue on details for your pagoda
7. Glue sections together
8. Write down what you chose to put in your pagoda and why you chose them

### **What is Buddhism and who was Buddha?**

Buddhism is a religion that began in India about 2,500 years ago. The name comes from the word Budhi meaning "to awaken".



Once there was a man named Siddhartha Gautama. He was a prince in India and was very wealthy and privileged. He lived a life of pleasure and luxury, but he became dissatisfied with this life because he felt no spiritual value in it and was saddened by the poverty, sickness, death and unhappiness of his people. Only a small percent of people were wealthy and only the king and his family had great wealth and power. Siddhartha gave up his life as a prince leaving the protective walls of his father's palace and wandered through the world to learn from spiritual leaders. He first learned how to meditate but found it did not take away suffering then he gave up food and fasted until he almost died but found it did not end suffering. He accepted milk and rice from a peasant girl and slowly recovered while

realizing that a middle path between fasting and over indulging is the happiest route. Then one day he sat down under a fig tree called the Bodhi tree and meditated for many days until he found the path of enlightenment, unfettering his mind and freeing himself of suffering and the cycle of suffering and rebirth. Siddhartha Gautama became the Buddha, "the awakened one". He became a great teacher and had many followers who wrote down his teachings of how to reach enlightenment and end suffering, Nirvana. Buddha lived for 80 years and when he died there is a story that his body transformed into many jewels.

### **Buddhism Basics**

#### The Four Noble Truths

1. Life is suffering
2. Suffering is caused by craving and aversion
3. Suffering can be overcome by giving up cravings and desire
4. The 8-fold path leads to the end of suffering

#### The Noble 8-Fold Path

Noble 8-fold Path is being moral (through what we say, do and our livelihood), focusing the mind on being fully aware of our thoughts and actions, and developing wisdom by understanding the Four Noble Truths and by developing compassion for others.

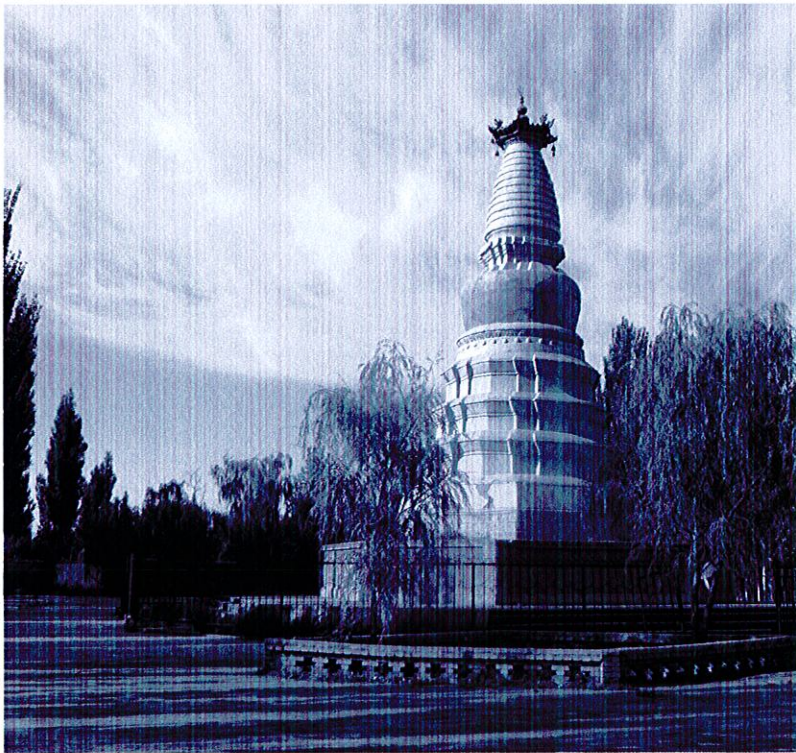
The Five Precepts (Moral code) Do not to take the life of anything living, do not to take anything not freely given, to abstain from sexual misconduct and sensual overindulgence, to refrain from untrue speech, and to avoid intoxication, that is, losing mindfulness.



### Some Pagodas of China

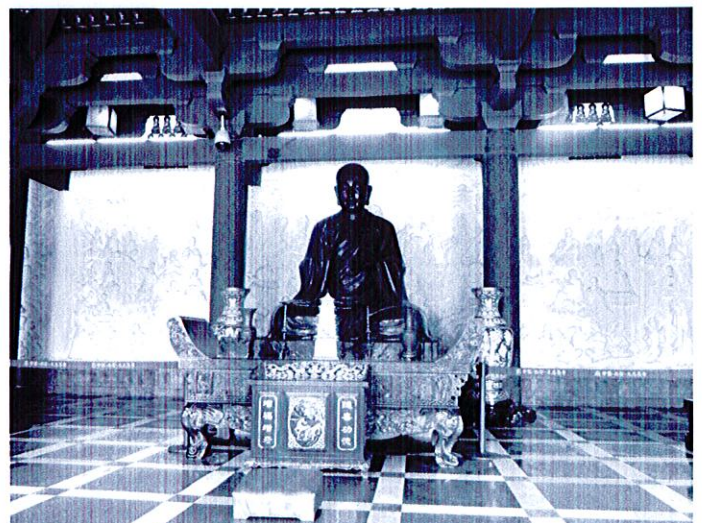
Pagodas served a variety of functions. They were memorials, places to hold sacred texts and statues, and they were watchtowers and landmarks.

White Horse Pagoda, Duguang province, 384CE



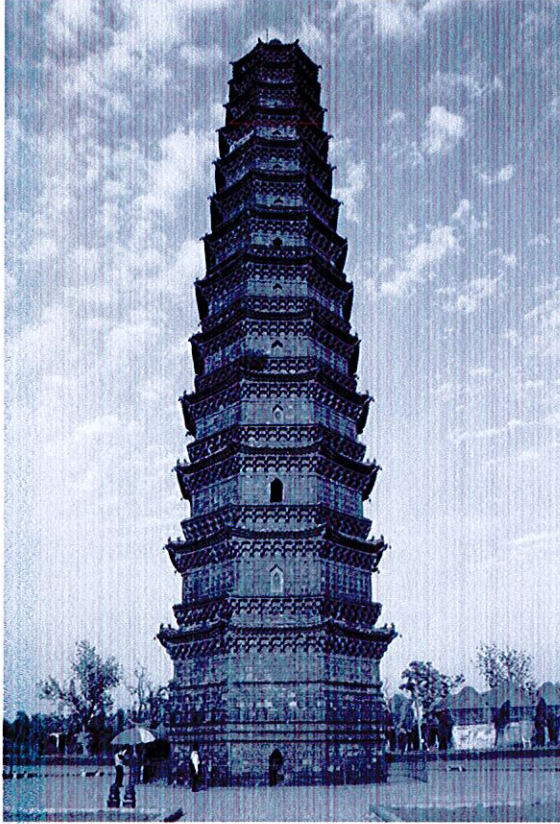
Built as a memorial to the brave white horse that brought the Buddhist monk and the sacred writings of Buddha over the mountains into China.

Wild Goose Pagoda, Xi'an, Shaanxi province, 652CE

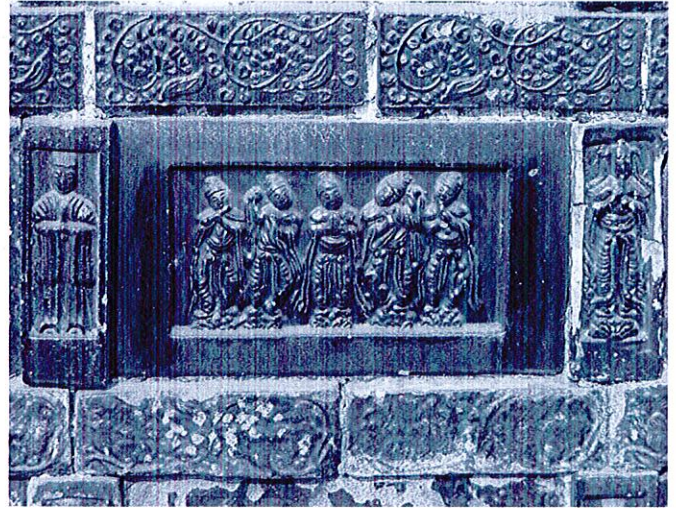




Iron Pagoda; Kaifeng City, Henan Province, 1049



Made of fifty different varieties of glazed brick on an octagonal base. The bricks have many carvings of monks, singers, dancers, lions, flowers, clouds and dragons. Under the eaves of each roof are 104 bells ringing when the wind moves them.



Xumi pagoda, Zhengding, 636CE



Built on a square base and made of stone and brick. The interior no longer has a staircase and the rafters of the first floor are destroyed as well as most of the monastery that used to surround it.



## Building plan of a traditional Chinese compound

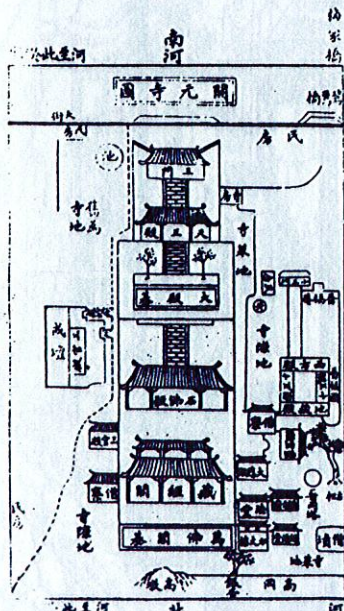
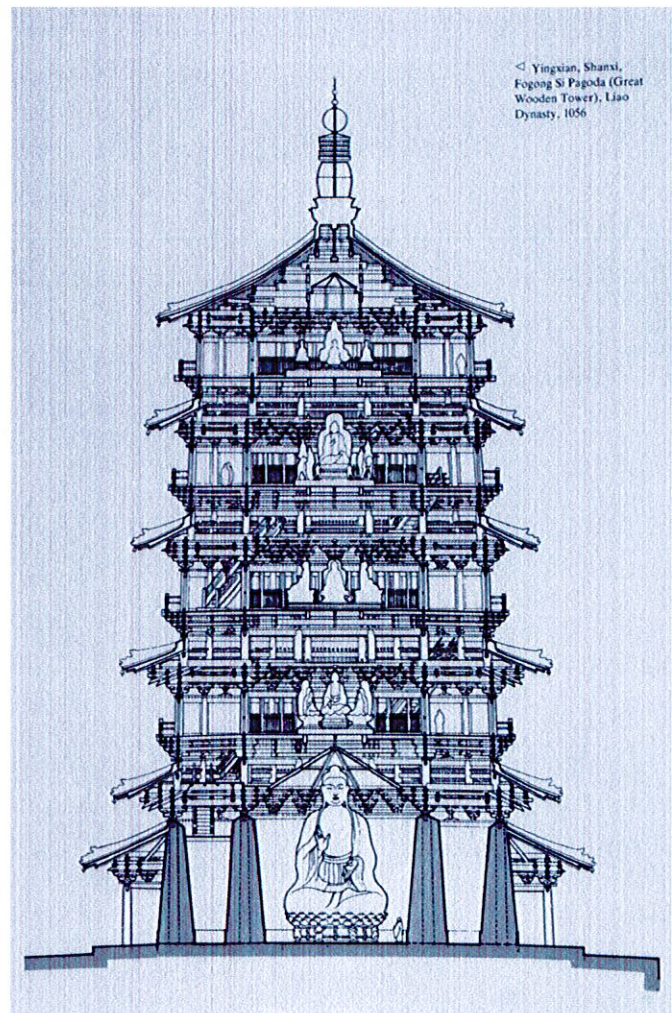
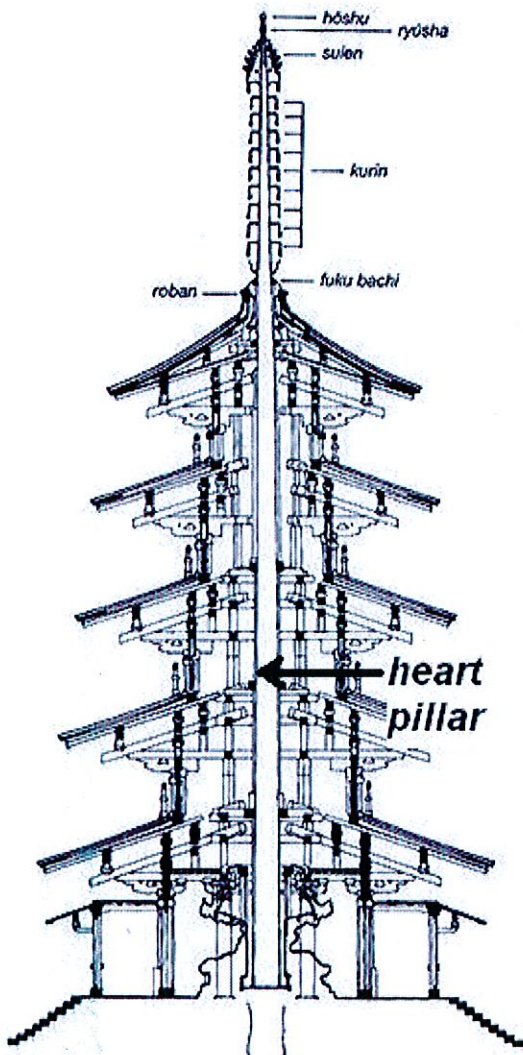


圖 37 蘇州開元寺，載於  
《開元寺志》。

## Interior of two pagodas, one Japanese and one Chinese



Name: (1pt) \_\_\_\_\_

## **East Asia Art Elective 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Grade**

### **Evaluation Pagoda Sculptures**

Project        \_\_\_/93

Effort         \_\_\_/20

Total         \_\_\_/113

**Directions:** Circle a number in the first column that you think best describes your work and performance in the art room for this project. I will score in the colored column and add both scores together to get a total for your grade. 1 is fail and 5 is superb. (80pts.)

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |           |           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. How well does the color on your pagoda work to unify your sculpture? Are the colors random or is there a color scheme?                                                                                               | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 2. How well do the patterns you incorporated in your pagoda work towards unity? Are the patterns worked evenly around your pagoda or are they sporadic or incomplete? Are the patterns also part of the whole building? | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 3. How well does the texture your created work with the color and patterns? Is it part of the pattern or is it camouflaging the pattern? Do the colors accentuate the texture or mask it?                               | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 4. How well did you incorporate negative space? Does your pagoda reach upward in a long vertical fashion? Did you create eaves that protrude outward toward the sides like arms?                                        | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 5. How well did you create balance in your pagoda? Are all the floors positioned on a central axis? Are they crooked? Did you decorate your pagoda symmetrically (evenly)?                                              | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 6. How well did you scale your pagoda from bottom to top making it move upward proportionally from big to small forms?                                                                                                  | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 7. How unified is your pagoda?<br>this includes all of the above working together?                                                                                                                                      | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 8. How well crafted is your pagoda sculpture?<br>This includes the skill and technical qualities.                                                                                                                       | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 5 |



9. How much effort and classroom participation did you put into the project based on the five school wide expectations?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

---

### Short Answers

Directions: answer the following questions with complete sentences. Please read them carefully and think deeply.

- 1. What did you put into your pagoda and why are these things significant to you? (6pts)**

2pts: answer

2pts: complete sentences

2pts: evidence to backup and explain your answer

- 2. What do you think it is about Buddhism that is so appealing to people in China, India, Japan, Korea and much of East Asia and now to so many people in the West? (6pts)**

2pts: answer

2pts: complete sentences

2pts: evidence to backup and explain your answer