

## GYOTAKU



A lesson for EASTWOOD OPEN ROOM  
 Students ages 5 to 8, grades 1 & 2  
 Designed by Loren Fawcett, Education Assistant  
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### I. Theme/Subject:

**Gyotaku** (guh-yo-tah-koo) is the Japanese art of fish painting. It was developed more than a century ago as a fisherman's method of recording the size and species of his catch. Freshly caught fish were painted with a non-toxic ink, and covered with a piece of rice paper. The paper was then carefully smoothed down, and removed to make an exact size copy of the fish. Once the print was completed, the fish could be washed and prepared for a meal. By using this technique, Japanese fishermen were able to both record and eat their catch.

Since its functional beginning, Gyotaku has become an art form. Prints are no longer just plain black ink outlines, but colorful reproductions of the original species. Gyotaku art has been displayed at museums around the world.

**Haiku** is a form of poetry that developed in Japan from about 400 years ago. The style reached a peak in the first half of the Edo period (1603-1868), when a poet named Matsuo Basho wrote verses during his journeys around the country describing the seasons and the scenery of the places he visited.

In the Meiji period (1868-1912) *haiku* developed as a uniquely Japanese form of poetry under the influence of another poet, Masaoka Shiki. Shiki promoted a new form of *haiku* that emphasized realistic portrayals of nature and human life.

A *haiku* is a short verse of 17 syllables, divided into units of five, seven, and five syllables. *Haiku* use simple expressions to convey deeply felt emotions and a sense of discovery to the reader. As a rule, a *haiku* must have a word that is identified with a particular season.

### II. Objectives/Concepts:

1. Students will learn to look long and carefully as they create exact replicas of fish. Students will familiarize themselves with the printing process of Gyotaku.

2. Students will learn about the history and culture of the Japanese fisherman at the end of the Edo period.
3. Students will learn how to use printing materials properly.
4. Students will practice writing haiku and understand syllables and pattern in poetry.
5. Students will select one final print on which to write their haiku and display.

### **III. Standards:**

#### **A. National**

1. National Council for Social Studies
  - Culture People Places and Environment
  - Individual Development and Identity
2. National Arts Standards
  - NA-VA.K-4.1 Standard #1: Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes
  - NA-VA.K-4.3 Standard #3: Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas
  - NA-VA.K-4.4 Standard #4: Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures
3. National Science Education Standards
  - Characteristics of organisms
  - Organisms and environments

#### **B. Ohio State Standards**

1. Visual Arts
  - Benchmark 1A: Recognize and describe visual art forms and artworks from various times and places.
  - Benchmark 1C: Identify and describe the different purposes people have for creating works of art
  - Benchmark 2A: Demonstrate knowledge of visual art materials, tools, techniques and processes by using them expressively and skillfully.
  - Benchmark 3B: Apply comprehension strategies (e.g., personal experience, art knowledge, emotion, and perceptual and reasoning skills) to respond to a range of visual artworks.
  - Benchmark 4A: Apply basic reasoning skills to understand why works of art are made and valued.
  - Benchmark 5A: Demonstrate the relationship the visual arts share with other arts disciplines as meaningful forms of nonverbal communication. (Use visual art materials to express an idea from a song, poem, play, or story.)
  - Benchmark 5B: Use the visual arts as a means to understand concepts and topics studied in disciplines outside the arts.
2. Language Arts

- Distinguish between stories, poems, plays, fairy tales and fables.
  - Develop a main idea for writing.
  - Rewrite and illustrate writing samples for display and for sharing with others.
  - Produce informal writings (e.g., messages, journals, notes and poems) for various purposes.
  - Print legibly, and space letters, words and sentences appropriately.
  - Use active listening strategies, such as making eye contact and asking for clarification and explanation.
3. Social Studies
- Use historical artifacts, photographs, biographies, maps, diaries and folklore to answer questions about daily life in the past.
  - Identify and describe examples of how science and technology have changed the daily lives of people and compare (prints were used by fishermen before photography was invented)
  - Describe the cultural practices and products of people on different continents.
  - Describe ways in which language, stories, folktales, music and artistic creations serve as expressions of culture and influence the behavior of people living in a particular culture.
  - Demonstrate skills and explain the benefits of cooperation when working in group settings
  - Demonstrate self-direction in tasks within the school community
  - Obtain information from oral, visual and print sources.
4. Science
- Identify that there are many distinct environments that support different kinds of organisms.
  - Investigate the different structures of plants and animals that help them live in different environments (e.g. gills).
5. Math
- Extend simple number patterns (both repeating and growing patterns), and create similar patterns using different objects, such as using physical materials or shapes to represent numerical patterns. (haiku syllables/lines)
6. Music
- Benchmark B: Identify and respond to music of historical and cultural origins.
  - Benchmark A: Explain ways that music interrelates with other arts disciplines and with various disciplines outside the arts.

#### IV. Vocabulary:

- *Gyotaku*: The Japanese art of printing fish.

- *Haiku*: Haiku is a form of Japanese poetry; often centered around nature and natural things in the universe. The pattern for Haiku is the following: Line 1: 5 syllables; Line 2: 7 syllables; Line 3: 5 syllables

## V. Materials:

- Rubber Fish models \*
- Water-based Inks (black, red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple)
- Large, Medium, and Small paintbrushes (such as sizes 4, 8, and 12 round)
- Newsprint
- Rice paper or White construction paper
- Pencils
- 1950.776 (please see attached print at bottom of document)
- CD with Japanese music
- See references for book list

\*Rubber fish models were purchased from [www.DickBlick.com](http://www.DickBlick.com). Teachers may use real fish in place of rubber models, but fish must be cleaned well prior to inking,

## VI. Strategies and Procedures:

### A. Engage (motivation):

Students will visit the Allen Memorial Art Museum to view Asian works of art. Eastwood Elementary students came to see the exhibit: *Visions of Turmoil & tranquility: Japanese Woodblock Prints from the Collection* on view in Fall 2005 where students paid particular attention to the print: 1950.776. (Please see attached image at the end of this document)

### B. Explore:

Students will read the story *Kogi's Mysterious Journey* by Elizabeth Partridge, Illustrated by Aki Sogabe. They will learn about the history of Gyo-taku and its transition into an art form. Students will examine the body of the fish and note its different parts, particularly the gills, scales, fins, and eyes. Students will also be learning about haiku and create an original haiku to accompany their fish print.

### C. Create:

Students will create their own fish prints!

- 1) Select your fish!
- 2) Place fish (flat side down) on top of newsprint.

- 3) Using the colored water-based inks provided, paint your rubber fish with the appropriate size paint brush.
  - Make sure to cover the entire surface of the fish-include the eyes, fins, and all the scales!
  - Spread the ink evenly over the fish so that only a thin yet solid layer shows.
- 4) Visually line your white paper up over the fish so that the fish is positioned where you would like it to print. Place on top of fish.
- 5) Press firmly, covering the entire fish's surface.
  - Important: Do not let the paper move!
- 6) Carefully remove the paper and set aside to dry.
- 7) Repeat if desired!

#### VII. **Assessment:**

Have students complete a self-assessment or engage in a group discussion regarding the process of Gyotaku. Use elements of art and principles of design to describe their work.

#### VIII. **Closure:**

Have students present their haiku and fish prints to the class!  
Read Basho's haiku to class.

#### IX. **Across the Curriculum:**

- A. Language Arts:** Have students write haiku to be written neatly on fish print. Turn haiku into Tantra by adding the last two lines: each 7 syllables long.
- B. Science:** Study the anatomy of the fish in their prints! Have students label parts of the fish.
- C. Music:** Have students clap the beats of their haiku. Turn haiku into songs!
- D. Visual Arts:** Reread *Kogi's Mysterious Journey* by Elizabeth Partridge, Illustrated by Aki Sogabe and create new illustrations for the story.

#### X. **Resources:**

##### **A. Books:**

- 1) *Kogi's Mysterious Journey* by Elizabeth Partridge, Illustrated by Aki Sogabe
- 2) *Japanese Prints Coloring Book: 38 Designs Rendered for Coloring* by Ed Sibbett, Jr.
- 2) *Art of Japan: Wood-block Color Prints* by Carol Finley
- 3) *Utamaro: Portraits from the Floating World*, text by Tadashi Kobayashi
- 4) *Hokusai: Genius of the Japanese Ukiyo-e*, text by Seiji Nagata
- 5) *Hokusai: Prints and Drawings*, Matthi Forrer, Prestel (publisher)

**B. Websites:**

- 1) <http://www.ncoif.com/bogus/gyotaku/gyotaku.html>
- 2) <http://bluewaterfishrubblings.com/myo.php>



Allen Memorial Art Museum