

Take One... Nandi the Bull

ASHMOLEAN

These guidance notes are designed to help you use one object from our collection as a focus for cross-curricular teaching and learning. A visit to the Ashmolean Museum to see your chosen object offers your class the perfect 'learning outside the classroom' opportunity.



This large stone statue of Nandi the bull is on display in Gallery 32, India from AD 600. A zoomable image of Nandi is available on our website. Visit www.ashmolean.org/learn

Starting Questions

The following questions may be useful as a starting point for developing speaking and listening skills with your class.

- What animal do you think this is?
- What do you think the sculpture is made from?
- How do you think it was made?
- Why do you think the bull is decorated and wearing a bell?
- Do you think the bull looks scary or friendly?
- Where in the world might the object come from?
- Where do you think the statue might have been displayed originally? Describe and draw the setting.

During a Take One visit to the Ashmolean children will explore a wide range of objects from our collections that will help them to build knowledge and understanding of Indian art, culture and religion. They will take part in object handling and craft activities during their visit.

After your visit the aim is for your project to be cross-curricular and skills based.

TAKE ONE...

Inspired by the National Gallery's
Take One Picture programme

Background Information

NANDI

Each of the major Hindu deities is associated with a vahana; a bird or animal on which he or she rides. This sculpture is of Nandi the bull, vahana of the powerful god Shiva. Worshippers arriving at a temple dedicated to Shiva will often encounter a large sculpture, like this one, of the reclining bull gazing devotedly towards the inner shrine, where the image of his master Shiva resides.

Sculpted in hard basalt stone, this figure shows Nandi as a young Indian humped bull, ceremonially decorated with chains, bells and ornaments. The sculpture dates from between 1501 and 1700 and was probably carved in the Deccan region of southern India. The bull reclines with one foreleg tucked aside and the other half-raised, and he licks his nostril with his tongue. This sculpture has the typically sweet and beguiling expression of Indian bovines, which has made them a favourite animal subject for Indian sculptors and painters over the centuries.

Shiva's association with a bull dates from very early times. The significance of the bull as a symbol of fertility and strength was widespread in India as early as the Indus Valley Civilization (about 2000 BC), as well as in ancient Egypt, Greece and the Near East.

HINDU GODS

There are many gods and goddesses in Hinduism. People can turn to different gods to help with different questions or problems.

Two important gods are shown on the right. If you come for a Take One Nandi visit you will see these objects on display. You will also discover some wonderful stories about some Hindu gods and goddesses.

Shiva is the destroyer. He destroys things that are old or no longer needed so that new things can happen. He usually has at least four arms which hold life and death and good and evil.

Vishnu is the protector. Hindus believe that when the earth is in peril, he comes to protect it. He has nine different forms or avatars. Two of these appearances are more important than others. One is where he came to earth as Rama, a prince whose wife was captured by an evil demon. His adventures are told in the poem called the Ramayana. The other most famous appearance is as Krishna who is the hero of the Bhagavad Gita, part of a poem called the Mahabharata.



Shiva, Lord of the dance, tramples the demon of ignorance underfoot. On display in Gallery 32, India from AD 600.



This small bronze statue is Kurma, the tortoise avatar of Vishnu.



In this picture, Devi, the Great Goddess, whose powers incorporate those of the other gods, sits on a lotus playing the vina. She is attended by Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, the three principal Hindu gods, who pay their respects. <http://jameelcentre.ashmolean.org/collection/8/object/19118>

Ideas for creative planning across the KS1 and KS2 curriculum

You can use this object as the starting point for developing pupils' critical and creative thinking as well as their learning across the curriculum. You may want to consider possible 'lines of enquiry' as a first step in your cross-curricular planning. Choosing a line of enquiry area may help you to build strong links between curriculum areas. After using strategies to help children engage with the object and using questions to facilitate dialogue about the object, you can work with the children to develop lines of enquiry that will interest them.

Here are a few suggestions of possible 'lines of enquiry' using this object:

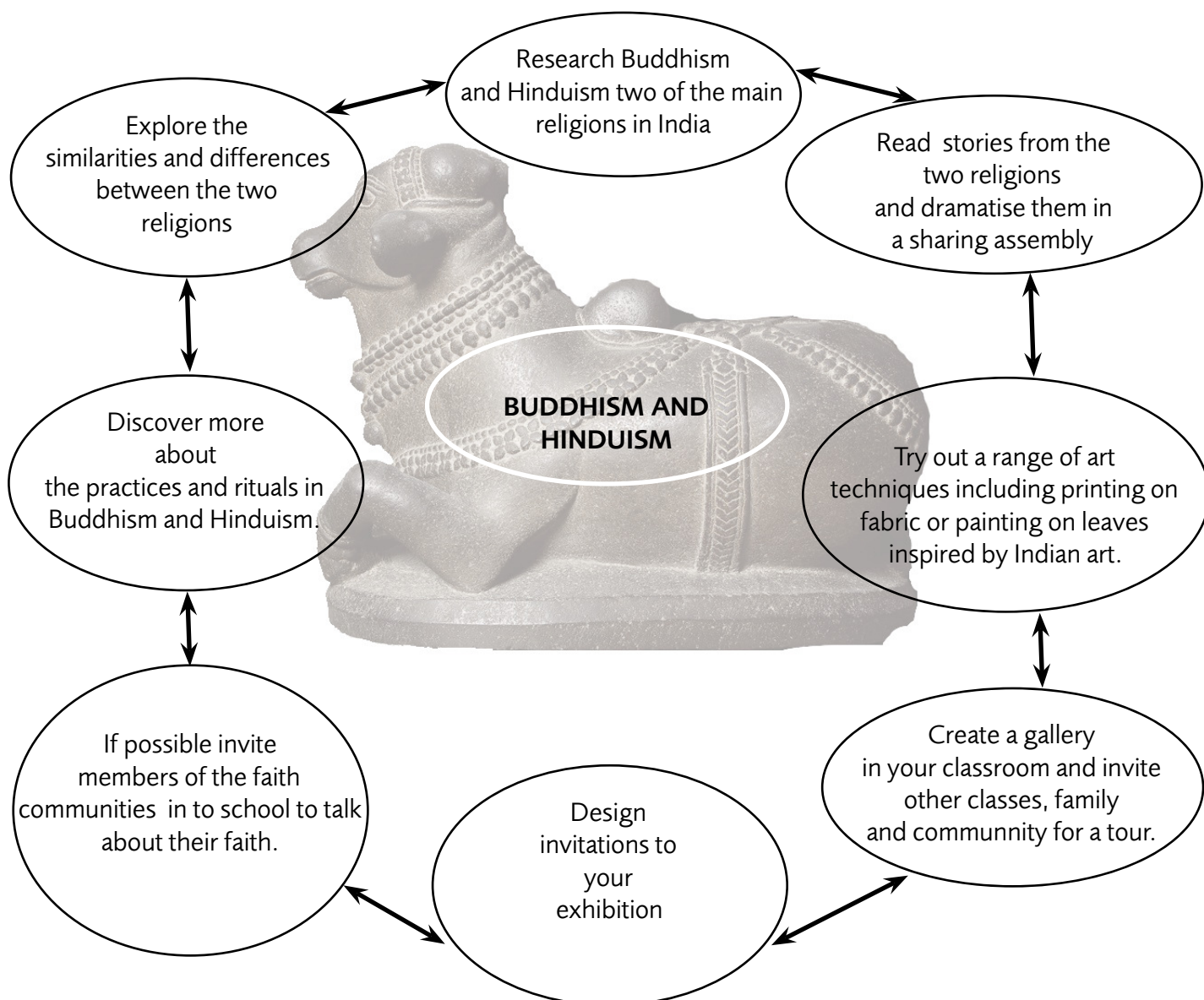
- India
- Buddhism and Hinduism
- Animals in Indian Art

Using one or more line of enquiry as your starting point, consider how you can work in a number of curriculum areas to build strong and effective cross-curricular links.

Using Buddhism and Hinduism as a line of enquiry

Here are a few ideas of how you can develop a range of learning opportunities to engage pupils with this line of enquiry. Each activity can link with the others to build on pupils' learning across the chosen theme.

Using Nandi as your starting point





This small carved roundel shows Buddha as a child. He has rescued a swan shot by his cousin. On display in Gallery 32, floor 1.

Tips for introducing objects to a class

- Display an image of the object in the classroom for a number of days with a tape recorder or 'graffiti wall' for children to add comments or questions about the object. Once the pupils' comments and questions have been gathered a class discussion can follow on.
- Cover an object and allow the children to feel it. Can they work out what it is without seeing it?
- Show the object to the class for a minute or two. Remove the object and see what they can remember.
- Introduce the object to the whole class in a question and answer session designed to develop the pupils' speaking and listening skills as outlined on page one.
- Work in pairs sitting back to back. One child describes the object and the other draws.
- Collect as many pictures or examples of similar objects from different time periods and explore the similarities and differences. Then try to sort the objects according to age.

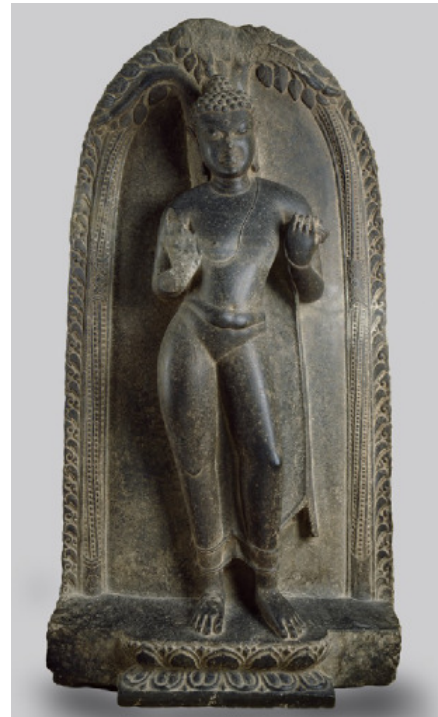


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Take One...Inspires

Take One... encourages teachers to use an object, painting or other resource, imaginatively in the classroom, both as a stimulus for artwork, and for work in more unexpected curriculum areas. Work in many curriculum areas can be inspired by using a single object as a starting point.

The challenge is for teachers to use objects to develop culturally enriching, relevant and practical learning opportunities across the curriculum.



Buddha under the Bodhi tree seeks enlightenment. The statue dates from the 9th or 10th century. Carved stone. On display in India from 600AD, floor 1.

"Thank you for a wonderful and stimulating day at the Ashmolean. I came away buzzing, full of ideas."
Feedback after a recent Take One...INSET

Please contact us or visit our website for more information about our programmes including training opportunities

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