

TEA

by Velina Hasu Houston



Teacher's Study Guide



Alive & Aloud • Radio Plays for Learning in the Classroom

Dear Participating Teacher,

Winter 1999

We are pleased to provide you this Study Guide as part of our educational program **ALIVE & ALOUD: Radio Plays for Learning in the Classroom**. It is our hope that the enclosures will support your classroom lesson plans for all your students—wherever they are on the learning continuum. Using the educational materials to prepare the students to listen to the radio play will deepen the educational value of the theatre experience.

Velina Hasu Houston's **TEA** uses history and poetic writing to weave a drama about Japanese "war brides" living in Kansas. Houston dedicates the play to the women she knew. Telling their stories, she allows us into the world of Japanese culture and cross-cultural relationships. Listening to this drama brings students an appreciation of the challenges facing immigrants and an example of the rich cultural diversity that is part of our society's landscape.

You may want to experiment with various approaches to integrating **ALIVE & ALOUD** into your lesson plans. Students can listen to the audio plays individually with their own headset, in a group setting or on their own time outside of class. You may find that certain Study Guide exercises and activities require group listening in teams of students or with the class as a whole. Dividing the play into sections to focus on one part at a time can enhance group listening to the plays.

The Study Guide emphasizes the curriculum core subjects of secondary schools. It is organized to pose important questions and to develop significant study units inspired by the content of the play. These curriculum ideas are our way of promoting academic achievement and enriching the learning process of young people in the classroom.

Sincerely,



Susan Albert Loewenberg



TEA by Velina Hasu Houston
Director, Robert Robinson
Executive Producer, Susan Albert Loewenberg
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L.A. Theatre Works is a 25 year-old nonprofit theatre and radio production organization. We welcome your comments and inquiries regarding the **ALIVE & ALOUD** recording and study guide. To reach us or to request a free catalogue of L.A. Theatre Works plays, novels and short stories available on audio cassette, contact:

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Tea

by *Velina Hasu Houston*

·TEACHER'S STUDY GUIDE·

Table of Contents

Introduction from the playwright	1
Essay: Living in Two Cultures by Kathy Masaoka	3
First-Person Tea Memory by Keren Goldberg	5
Timeline: World History, 1946-1960	7
Timeline: Asian American Milestones	9
Notes to the Play	11
Cast of Characters	12
Suggested Vocabulary	13
Core Curriculum Support:	
Writing & Reading Exercises	14
Focusing Exercises: Listening	16
Activities:	
Unit I: Creating Haiku Poems	17
Unit II: Artistic Expression	18
Unit III: Creating Silent Tableaux	18
Teacher Guidelines for Further Study:	
Unit I: Japanese Tea Ceremony	19
Unit II: Side by Side: Immigrant Communities Living Together	21
Bibliography	22
Resources on the Internet	23



hito wa dono yo ni
i oo to mamayo

*I don't care
what anybody says,
I will never stop
Loving you.*

—Ancient Japanese Poem
as quoted in **TEA** by Velina Hasu Houston

Introduction from the Playwright

The characters encountered in my play *TEA* are based on women you are not apt to read about in American or Japanese history books. It is not likely you have met them. It is not likely you have heard their dreams or their nightmares. They are Japanese natives married to American soldiers who were stationed in Japan during the U.S. Occupation after World War II. Taking place in Japan roughly between 1946 and 1960, the marriages challenged the U.S. Army's enemy anti-fraternization policies and survived the rigorous psychological examinations to which the Army subjected the Japanese women before the marriages were allowed to take place. Moreover, the marriages challenged the social systems of both Japan and America because of their interracial-intercultural nature. Such systems required the women to survive the oppression and ridicule to which such marriages are often subjected.

These women—along with European women who married American soldiers—were labeled as “war brides” because war was the circumstance that brought them together with their husbands. The term, though romanticized and acceptable to some, is considered derogatory by Japanese women, who prefer the term “international brides,” if indeed they must be categorized and labeled.

My passion for these Japanese international brides of World War II is both personal and political. An Amerasian born of America's first war with Asia, I am the daughter of one such Japanese “war bride” and an American soldier who was half Native American Indian and half black. Having always been extremely close to my mother, it was a natural inclination to explore her story. Most writers tend to turn toward their family history as a resource for their first creative explorations. I was no different, but my family history certainly was. In fact, it was of a fabric yet to be documented: the history of Americans who married Japanese native women at the end of World War II and the forgotten Amerasians to which these marriages gave birth. Thus, my explorations became not only poetry and plays, but also documentation of history that otherwise might have been lost to the mainstream, history that Japan has sidestepped and about which America either never knew or never cared.



My father passed away in 1969. I was 11 and had been writing poetry for about three years. His death and the fact I had so many questions left to ask him made me realize the importance of time and the value of our pasts. In the early 1970s, I began asking my mother intense questions. Although I knew my Japanese grandfather had died tragically I never knew he committed suicide. This truth escaped reluctantly from my mother in our initial conversations. As she grew less inhibited about recounting the pain of the past, I learned about how American land resettlement policies had robbed my grandfather of most of the Shikoku land that had been in our family for centuries. I learned about the discrimination and pure hatred my mother faced because of her love for my father. I learned about the nature of my grandfather's untimely suicide and my grandmother's death 30 days later from breast cancer. These stories stirred deep, cultural bonds in me that led me to begin writing my first play, *ASA GA KIMASHITA (MORNING HAS BROKEN)*. Further

explorations led me to write a second play, **AMERICAN DREAMS** [also available on audio cassette from L.A. Theatre Works], a story about my father bringing home his Japanese bride to New York in the late 1950s. As is the historical truth, my father had to contend not only with the prejudice and discomfort of the society-at-large, but also with similar sentiment from his family. Once I began developing **TEA**, the media described the three plays as a trilogy. In a thematic sense, this is true. In terms of story content, the Japanese and black couple based on my parents that began their trek in my first play continues in **TEA**.



The story of **TEA** began as an idea for a book. I have since narrowed the scope of the book to include only my mother's history, however the original impulse led me to interview 50 Japanese women living in Kansas. The group consisted of family friends, unknown referrals and women who sought me out after hearing about my project. Many of these women were initially reluctant to talk. They consented only because I was one of them, a member of their private community. Their long-concealed stories quivered from their hearts, and we laughed and wept together. The interviews lasted from two to ten hours. I am certain that, for many, it was the first time they had revealed so fully and deeply the heartaches, fears and joys of their decisions to marry Americans and the lives in which those decisions resulted.

A couple of the women I interviewed have since passed away. Many live on. Remarkably, they are not bitter or remorseful. They do not hate America, but neither do most of them embrace it as their own. Nationality as a declaration of residence and what side of a war you end up on is one thing; how you feel in your gut is another. As a binational, multicultural/multiracial American, I understand this all too painfully well. These women remain forever trapped between countries and cultures. Without being tough, they are strong. Without being weak, they are gentle. Without being aggressive, they are survivors. Some have assimilated almost totally; most assimilate not at all or just enough to get by. Though they call America home, they are still, in their souls, Japanese. As my mother says, "I was born Japanese, I die Japanese - wherever I go." In a real sense, these women have no country. They no longer feel at home in Japan and they don't truly feel at home in America. They are, like the women in my play, in cultural limbo.



TEA, in its artistic soul, is truly my poem to my mother and to the Japanese women of Kansas who drifted through our home over the years to take tea and reflect. Such is the "tea ceremony" of everyday life, especially for Japanese women of the prewar generation who have had to survive the barren, foreign cultural frontier of Kansas for the last 30 to 40 years. These women's taking of tea is a time to psychologically extract themselves from the hurly-burly of their everyday lives; meditate, in a sense; and gather some sort of mental or spiritual fortitude with which to return to their lives with the vigor necessary to sustain and survive. I hope that, in listening to **TEA**, you enter this world and are able to see the many parallels these women's lives have in common with your ancestors and with the immigrant spirit that is the spine of America.

—Velina Hasu Houston

Living in Two Cultures

BY KATHY MASAOKA

TEA, by Velina Hasu Houston made me reflect on the life of Mrs. H., a “war bride” I met in the early ‘70s. At the time she was raising six children on her own in Los Angeles. Although she was still married to her Mexican American husband, he was on the road as a traveling salesman and made infrequent visits to the family. I got to know her and her children over the next ten years as I along with many other Sansei (third generation Japanese American) began to develop self-help programs in the Japanese American community and challenge the stereotype that Japanese Americans had no problems. Mrs. H. joined the first Japanese Welfare Rights Organization and helped to organize a group for “war brides” or as we later called the group, international marriages. Mrs. H. was a gutsy, tough woman who was determined that her children understand their Japanese heritage and that they never felt ashamed about being “hapa” or half-Japanese. She kept a tight rein on her family and they were her shield and refuge against a hostile world.



The Japan that Mrs. H. had left was recovering from the defeat of World War II. It was also a very proud country whose emperor had to admit to his people that he was not a “god” but an ordinary person. Even my own father, who had been born here but raised and educated in Japan, believed that the emperor was a god. It is important to remember that the Japanese military used the power of this belief to unify the people into a fighting machine that could take over Asia. In the name of the emperor, the Japanese military not only invaded other Asian countries, raping and torturing men, women and children, but also stripped the people of their own culture, forcing them to speak Japanese and adopt Japanese names. Yet this was the same country that was now under the American Occupation Forces, whose job was to set up a democratic system of government and education.



It was during this period that many American soldiers stationed in Japan met and married Japanese women. These women, marrying for love and a chance at a better life, challenged their families, Japanese society and faced the future without their support. Marriage in Japanese society was not an individual matter, but usually arranged and approved of by the families after checking on each person’s background. Any history of illness, mental problems or the wrong class background could be a reason to reject a person. A non-Japanese person was not even considered. Although there are third and fourth generation Koreans in Japan as well as Ainu (native peoples) and Burakumin (outcaste class), many Koreans grew up not knowing they were not Japanese until they were required to be fingerprinted at the age of 16. Japanese society does not tolerate differences very well

and many still will say that Japan is a homogeneous country! Children had an obligation to their parents and their behavior reflected on the family. When Japanese women married non-Japanese, it was both an act of individualism and cause for shame. Many of these women were disowned by their families.



When these Japanese women came to the United States with their husbands they faced a country whose culture and language was alien and whose people saw them as the enemy. Many times they found themselves in places where there were no other Japanese. Those who lived in cities where there were communities of Japanese Americans could at least find Japanese food and communicate in Japanese. Japanese Americans who had been incarcerated in concentration camps during World War II because of their race (they had the “face of the enemy”) were busy rebuilding their lives and proving they were good Americans. These women were a reminder of Japan’s defeat and of things too Japanese. And their husbands were viewed with distrust as men who saw Asian women not as people but as exotic dolls who could be discarded after the novelty wore off. The only support these women had was their husbands or other “war brides.” However, many lost even that support when their husbands abandoned them or abused them physically and mentally. But they did have their children.



Their “hapa” children, the offspring of the first big group of Asian and American unions, faced even greater confusion and difficulty. If they were Japanese and white, the larger American society rejected their Japaneseness while the Japanese American community tolerated them. If they were Japanese and non-white, they faced the racism from both the larger society and the Japanese American community. Mrs. H.’s children were Japanese and Mexican. Identity, “Who am I?,” is a question that all of us as minorities in the United States confront at some point in our lives. While she raised them in the only culture she knew, they also understood they were Mexican. Though they participated in Japanese American youth groups and a greater openness towards them was emerging, each had to resolve their relationship to both cultures. At times they chose to reject their Japanese side which their mother felt as rejection and hatred. Although all the children eventually married Latinos, I would run into one or two of them at the Japanese festivals, “obons,” with their children dressed in “kimonos” or the traditional Japanese dress. I hadn’t thought very much about the lives of “war brides” until Mrs. H.’s funeral a couple of years ago, so I’m glad TEA was written about a group of women who faced tremendous isolation so painful that not all could survive. Perhaps it will help us better understand the similar situation of many Asian immigrant women from Korea and Southeast Asia who have found themselves alone in this country with their children and the plight of thousands of the Amerasian offspring fathered by American servicemen who are often left behind in Asia.

First-Person Tea Memory

BY KEREN GOLDBERG

There are places all over the world where people are caught,
never able to express the culture of their birth,
never able to embrace the culture they have come to live in.

In 1969, I traveled by car to the central region of the Dominican Republic, a country that shares an island with its neighbor, Haiti, in the Caribbean. I spoke Spanish and my husband spoke Japanese. We were on our way to the most northern coast and heard that, in the farmland region, there was a Japanese colony where immigrants from Japan were living a style of life that still reflected their origins on that other island nation so far away and so different. Apparently, even before World War II, the long-time former dictator Trujillo had paid the Japanese government for workers who would bring the knowledge, discipline and artistry of farming common in the agricultural fields of Japan. We were intrigued enough to plan a stay overnight. This was possible only because Trujillo had also decided that this region would be good for tourism and had built quite a lavish hotel, which was still standing even if it was in decadent disrepair.



We passed through wondrous jungle foliage and radiant colors from flowers and fauna as well as typical Dominican towns. As the road suddenly curved, a spacious valley came into view with the most startling sight; there below us, laid out in precise and orderly patterns, were acres of farmlands planted in the ancient style and design of Japan. It was a breathtaking sight from above, a serene and intricate system of planting usually unknown to this part of the world. We arrived at the valley floor, parked the car and began walking through the neat rows of fields. The aroma of vegetables and grains filled the air. Here in the middle of the Dominican Republic were Japanese women of all ages dressed in the traditional Japanese clothing used for this occupation. They were kneeling and bending and gathering shaded by the large, pointed straw hat familiar in so many rural pictures from Japan. We began to talk with several of the workers about their history and their life in this remote area. They seemed surprised and delighted to have visitors, if a bit confused to hear a Westerner speaking Japanese. One elderly woman invited us to her home for tea.



Home for her and for all of the workers was what we would call a shack. For a while, we stood at the door while our hostess tried to straighten her two tiny rooms and arrange her table and the cups for the tea. I could feel how she was trying to recall something long-gone with time, even her Japanese was now a hybrid language. There was no evidence in the rooms of the Dominican culture and, except for an old, lone, faded calendar from

Japan showing flower arrangements and beautifully costumed young Japanese women, no evidence of Japanese culture either. The home was sparse and empty, perhaps reflecting some tradition from Japan but in this extreme case, perhaps a metaphor for what had happened to this woman's life.



With each new effort to arrange our tea, our hostess seemed to brighten, standing straighter and exuding more energy. At last it was time to sit and drink. We sat at a small, worn wood table set against an open window with no screen. As we took the first sips, I looked out at the dirt road, the wild growing trees, the broken, small houses in the rows beyond her window. She told us how she came to the island, how poor the colony was, how she never had been back to visit Japan. We talked quietly, sipping the tea; it was a "tea for remembering," and it was the closest I have ever been to a tea ceremony.



MAP OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC AND NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES

Timeline: 1946 - 1960

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN THE WORLD
DURING THE TIME OF THE PLAY.

1946-1949:

- First session of the United Nations General Assembly opens in London.
- The International Military Tribunal for the Far East opens war crimes trial in Tokyo, Japan.
- U.S. Supreme Court rules that the segregation of African Americans on interstate buses is unconstitutional.
- Bertrand Russell writes *The History of Western Philosophy* (England).
- In Japan, General MacArthur introduces a new constitution giving Japanese women the right to vote, limiting the powers of the Japanese Emperor and requiring that the country renounce war.
- Columbia Record Company releases the first long-playing record.
- Alan Paton writes *Cry, The Beloved Country* about apartheid South Africa.

1950-1953:

- Occupation of Japan ends, General MacArthur leaves behind a constitutional, democratic government and takes his new post as Supreme Commander for the Korean War. He is eventually relieved of his duties in Korea for not following President Truman's wishes to settle the war.
- President Truman instructs the Atomic Energy Commission to develop the hydrogen bomb.
- Chinese troops enter the Korean War and force UN troops to retreat.
- Pablo Neruda of Chile writes *General Song*.
- Peace Treaty with Japan signed in San Francisco, California.
- Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in Westminster Abbey, England.
- *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger published.

1954- 1957:

- The French surrender Vietnam.
- USA, Britain, France and USSR agree to end occupation of Germany.
- The National Cancer Institute in the USA first suggests a link between smoking and lung cancer.
- Dylan Thomas publishes his dramatic poem, *Under Milk Wood*.
- Rock 'n' Roll dominates dance floors.
- First computer programming language invented by Jack Backus at IBM.
- U.S. Expedition is flown to the South Pole.
- *West Side Story* is first performed at the Winter Garden Theatre, New York City.

1958 - 1960:

- Fidel Castro's guerilla war campaign defeats the presidential dictator Batista; Castro becomes Cuba's revolutionary president.
- Alaska and Hawaii become the 49th and 50th states in the union.
- UN General Assembly condemns apartheid in South Africa.
- Mary Leakey discovers a human skull thought to be 1.75 million years old in Tanganyika, Africa.
- Sony Corporation of Japan produces a transistor television receiver.
- France grants independence to former African colonies.
- John F. Kennedy, 43 years old, becomes the first Catholic to be elected President of the United States. More than 34 million people vote. He wins over Richard Nixon by a little over 100,000 votes.

Timeline: Asian American Milestones

<i>1848:</i> First Chinese immigrants	arrive in San Francisco. They provide essential labor for the Gold Rush and later are instrumental in building the trans-continental railroad, completed in 1869.
<i>1870:</i> Naturalization Act	excludes Chinese from citizenship and prohibits wives of Chinese laborers from entering the U.S.
<i>1871:</i> In Los Angeles' Chinatown,	the first of many anti-Chinese riots breaks out. A mob hangs 15 Chinese and shoots four more to death.
<i>1910:</i> Naturalization Act of 1870	is expanded to exclude all Asians from citizenship.
<i>1913:</i> The California Alien Land Act,	aimed at Japanese farmers, bars anyone ineligible for U.S. citizenship from purchasing land. The California Supreme Court rules the act unconstitutional in 1952.
<i>1922:</i> Under the U.S. Cable Act,	any woman marrying an immigrant ineligible for naturalization will lose her citizenship.
<i>1942:</i> After Japan's attack	on Pearl Harbor, a presidential order forces internment of more than 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry.
<i>1943:</i> Public response to China	as a World War II ally prompts Congress to repeal ban on Chinese immigration and naturalization.
<i>1946:</i> Filipinos and Asian Indians	become eligible for naturalization. Japanese immigrants follow in 1952.
<i>1948:</i> The U.S. government	passes an act allowing former Japanese American internees to file claims against the government for financial losses.
<i>1956:</i> Dalip Singh Saund,	of Asian Indian descent, is elected to Congress from a district in the Imperial Valley (CA) and serves three terms.

<i>1957:</i> "The New Adventures	of Charlie Chan," the first show featuring an Asian American character in a title role, comes to U.S. television for 39 episodes. The role of Chan, based on real-life police detective Chang Apana, is played by Irish American actor J. Carrol Naish.
<i>1959:</i> Hiram Fong of Hawaii	becomes the first Asian American elected to the U.S. Senate, followed by fellow Hawaiian Daniel Inouye in 1962.
<i>1965:</i> Immigration and Naturalization	Act of 1965 abolishes national origin quotas and substitutes hemispheric quotas, allowing many more Asians to immigrate to the U.S.
<i>1968:</i> Asian American students	join African Americans and Latinos in protesting the lack of ethnic studies at San Francisco State. Other protests follow at UC Berkeley and elsewhere. Acting San Francisco State President S.I. Hayakowa is later elected to U.S. Senate.
<i>1975:</i> A wave of Southeast Asian	immigration is touched off at the end of the Vietnam War.
<i>1980:</i> U.S. census shows	the Asian/Pacific American population at 3.5 million, or 1.5% of the total U.S. population.
<i>1982:</i> Amid controversy,	the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, designed by architect and sculptor Maya Lin, is dedicated in Washington, D.C.
<i>1988:</i> Congress passes bill	publicly apologizing for the internment of Japanese Americans and authorizing payment of \$20,000 to each eligible former internee.
<i>1993:</i> Connie Chung of CBS	becomes the first Asian American to co-anchor a television network news show.
<i>1996:</i> Gary Locke is elected	governor of Washington, the first Asian American to head a mainland U.S. state.
<i>1997:</i> A dozen Asian Americans	become enmeshed in widening scandal arising from fund-raising during the 1996 presidential election campaign.

Notes to the Play

BY VELINA HASU HOUSTON

This play is based on the virtually undocumented history of communities of Japanese “war brides” who have lived in Kansas over the last 20 to 40 years. Over 100,000 native Japanese women married American servicemen during the American Occupation of Japan. These families returned to the U.S. between the years of 1946 and 1960. Depending on the time of their return, many American servicemen married to “Oriental” women were required under the Army’s resettlement policies to be stationed at remote forts, such as Fort Riley, Kansas. Hence, in an area of Kansas known mostly for German and Irish American Protestants and agriculture, there came to exist communities of Japanese women and their multi-racial, multi-cultural children. This background and my family history catalyzed this play, in addition to extensive interviews with 50 Japanese women residing in Kansas who were international brides.

Order of Scenes:

—	PRELUDE	Invitation to Tea
—	SCENE ONE	The Art of Tea
—	SCENE TWO	Selecting Tea
—	SCENE THREE	Serving Tea
—	SCENE FOUR	Cold Tea
—	SCENE FIVE	Perfect Drinking Temperature

Time and Place



1968. The home of Himiko Hamilton in Junction City, Kansas, and an obscure netherworld where time moves at will.

Setting



The stark set includes both a representation of the netherworld (in which time is elastic and the spirit can journey) and a representation of the home of Himiko. The home is a combination of 1960’s Americana and things Japanese, including a raised area that abstractly comprises a Japanese tatami room bordered by linoleum. In the room are a pile of zabuton (flat Japanese sitting cushions), an antique, round-hooded trunk overflowing with Japanese cloth materials, kimono, etc. and an oval red lacquer tea table. The reality is distressed.

Cast of Characters

CHARACTERS

ACTORS IN THE L.A. THEATRE WORKS
RADIO THEATRE PRODUCTION

SetsukoTAKAYO FISCHER

Widowed; had been married to a gentle, urban African American.



AtsukoSHUKO AKUNE

Married to a mellow Nisei (first generation Japanese American);
wants to keep the tradition of drinking tea.



Chizuye (Chiz)DIANA TANAKA

Married to a Mexican American, became a tough minded,
Americanized business woman; really wants coffee.



TerukoLILY MARIYE

Married to a robust, swaggering, white Texan; tries to keep the
mood at their tea cheerful.



HimikoJUNE ANGELA

Married a scrappy white boy from Oklahoma; kills her husband
after years of abuse, loses her daughter in a rape/murder and
commits suicide. She is the spirit at the tea.



Suggested Vocabulary

Rr

antithetical
antiquity
aspire
assimilation
audible
aura
cleanse
compassion
conflicted
degradation
despair
devastation
distortion
envy
mortal
muted
netherworld
nirvana
pacific
pathos
perplexed
persevere (“gan’batte” in Japanese)
persistent
prejudice
psychosis
revulsion
ritual
spiritual
stench
stereotype
universal
valiant
vanity
wandering

S

y

Aa

Core Curriculum Support

ACTIVITIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF
CRITICAL THINKING, WRITING, LISTENING AND READING



WRITING AND READING EXERCISES

Objectives:

To stimulate interest in writing.

To increase vocabulary development.

To increase ability to organize and express ideas in writing.

1. Tea is an important ritual in Japanese homes. Describe a ritual or ceremony in your home. What is its purpose and meaning? What is your feeling about the ritual/ceremony? Do you plan to continue this tradition when you have your own home? Why, why not?
2. Write an imaginary dialogue between you and a character in TEA who reminds you of someone you know. Tell the character about this person and how their life relates to what is happening in the story.
3. A personal journal is an opportunity to write about what is on your mind. It is a way you can learn more about what is troubling you and even become aware of solutions to your problems.
 - a. Keep a journal for five days from the perspective of one of the characters in the play.
 - b. Keep a journal for five days about your friendships. Are any of your relationships similar to the ones in TEA? How, how not?
4. The children of the characters in TEA have identities from more than one culture, and except for one couple, more than one race. How many identities do you have? Interview members of your family and learn about the identities of your ancestors—their nation, culture, race and religion. Make an oral report to the class.
5. Describe what you have learned about the Japanese culture and being Japanese from listening to TEA. How can a work of fiction about a particular group of people give you a greater appreciation and understanding of another culture?
6. What were the different ways the Japanese women became “war brides?”
7. As a spirit, Himiko questions the women about their sense of community—a community she never felt a part of. How would you define community? What is your community and what does it mean to you?
8. Chiz comments on her life in Kansas by saying, “*I live here. I make the best of it.*” How is she different from the other wives? What does she do to “make the best of it?”

9. Japanese “war brides” experienced culture shock upon moving to places like Junction City, Kansas. From listening to TEA, what do you think were the most difficult things the women encountered in their new foreign homes?
10. Several of the wives made mistakes when they first came to America (like driving a car through a car wash). Have you ever made mistakes when visiting another culture or country because you did not know the customs? Describe what happened and how you felt.
11. Commenting on the children from their marriages, Himiko says, “*They are between two worlds,*” and Setsuko says, “*I have created something new.*” What do you think each character is saying?
12. Write a short essay on this statement made by Chiz: “*Countries last; love is mortal.*”
13. Many immigrants struggle with the tension between wanting to maintain their cultural identity and wanting to assimilate fully into American culture. Each character in TEA chooses a particular way of approaching this dilemma. If you or someone you know lives with this struggle, describe how the issue of cultural identity is resolved or not. Which character in the play, in your opinion, is able to keep their sense of self and still participate in American culture?
14. Before the “war brides” left Japan they were ordered by an American Army Officer to “keep [their] shoes on” and given other specific instructions. What do you think these instructions meant to the women? Invent a story from the point of view of your favorite character in the play describing the journey from Japan to Kansas.
15. The characters in TEA mention the idea of losing one’s soul. What do you think is meant by that idea? Explain.
16. We learn from Atsuko that her husband’s parents died in an internment camp in California. Research the history of internment camps for Japanese Americans during World War II. Where were they located? Why were they created? How has the U.S. government apologized for this injustice?
17. How could the women have been better prepared for their new life in Kansas? Write a letter to one of the characters and tell her about America.
18. The suicide of Himiko was a shock to the other women. Why do they gather in her home following her death? What does it mean in Japanese culture?
19. Pick one character who experienced an incident of racial prejudice and explain the effect of that incident on the life of the character.



Core Curriculum Support



FOCUSING EXERCISES: LISTENING

Objectives:

To increase evaluative listening skills.
To stimulate cognitive learning.

1. TEA moves easily between the present and the past. How does this audio production indicate to the audience that time has shifted? How does this production use sound to convey place and time?
2. When you listen to audio theatre your imagination is free to create your own images. Pick a scene from the play. Draw or paint some part of the scene as you imagine it (for example, Himiko's house) or create expressive images that are inspired by a particular scene in the play. Choose colors that correspond to the emotions of the chosen scene.
3. Images from nature can evoke a feeling. Write down descriptions of nature you hear in the play (trees, sea, wind, grass, fire, etc.) and write your own story using these same words and images.
4. While listening to the play, write down all the moments of conflict between the different characters. Then list how each conflict is resolved.
5. Listen for the many ways the characters talk about tea. What is your favorite scene with tea? Why?

Activities

UNIT I:

CREATING HAIKU POEMS

- ☺ The word “*Haiku*” means “*beginning*” in Japanese. Each poem is strictly structured in the following way:

only three lines; 1st line.....Five Syllables
 2nd line.....Seven Syllables
 3rd lineFive Syllables

- ☺ Haiku is often about the natural world and often suggests the cycles of the year and of life. There is no rhyme.
- ☺ The intrinsic rhythm of a Haiku poem is that of the length of a breath drawn in, held for a moment and then released. In this way, the Haiku provides a sense of wonder; the time is “now” but evokes timelessness, the place is “here” but evokes everywhere. Ancient Haiku often expresses the wisdom and way of life of Zen Buddhism.
- ☺ Haiku teaches discipline because of the limitations placed on its structure. It offers a visual experience much like a painting. Because this form of poetry is linked to the moods of earth, single words in Haiku can communicate limitless sensations.

Study the following Haiku poems for examples and inspiration.

The old man juggles.
Gracefully he smiles at us
And is young again.

Over the wintry
forest, winds howl in a rage
With no leaves to blow.

An old silent pond
A frog jumps into the pond,
splash! Silence again.

1. Ask students to write a Haiku for each character in TEA.
2. Have the students write a Haiku that expresses their sense of identity or their culture.
3. Encourage students to write a Haiku about some favorite place in nature near their home or an intense experience they have had with weather.
4. Compile the best of the student Haiku poems into some book or magazine form for distribution.

Activities

UNIT II:

PRACTICING ARTISTIC EXPRESSION FROM JAPANESE CULTURE

The possibility of art exists everywhere and in all things.

Divide the class into teams to research and create an item or something similar from the following list and then organize an exhibit of all the student work:

Sitting cushions	Tatami mats
Origami gift boxes	Kimono dress
Flower arrangements	Daruma Doll (<i>a symbol of good luck; shows the idea of resistance to physical limitation with its round bottom</i>)
Masks (<i>one for each character in TEA</i>)	

UNIT III:

CREATING SILENT TABLEAUX

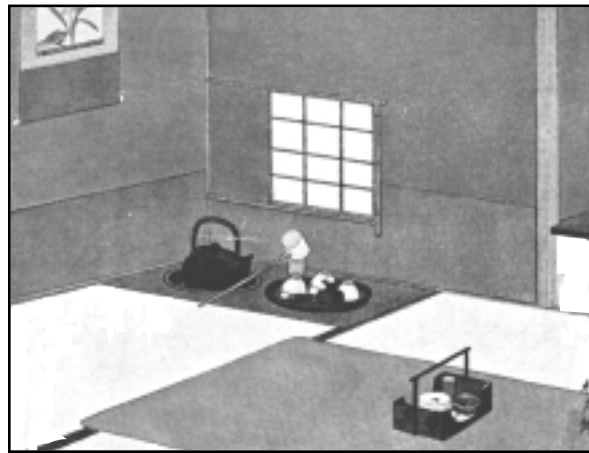
“**Tableau**” is a French word with no real English equivalent—it means a “**frozen picture**” made of bodies. (The plural of tableau is tableaux.) Movement, sound and emotion can be indicated through expression and gesture, but the participants must be still and silent for each tableau.

- Divide the class into groups of five to eight students each and have them listen together to a scene from TEA or choose another source of inspiration.
- Each group will design a story based on a theme suggested by this source material (the theme of friendship, culture shock, love/hate, cultural alienation, etc.).
- After the students have been assigned to a group, they are to invent a story told in four to seven tableaux. Each tableau is a silent and motionless representation of a scene in the story the students have created and is not to be accompanied by any words, sounds or movements. It needs to be simple, clear and easy to portray in a few images.
- Give the groups twenty-five minutes to create and plan their story and four to seven tableaux that will illustrate it. When the time is up, each group presents their story. You need to know how many tableaux will be shown and clap for each change. You and the class also need to know the theme for the tableaux.
- Every student in each group must be part of each tableau. He or she may be a person, a tree, a step, a doorway, a part of a building, a star or anything else; the only requirement is that no one sit out for any of the tableaux.
- After each presentation, the class observers may try to reconstruct the story in words. Be sure to allow enough time for audience interpretation and discussion.

Teachers Guidelines for Further Study

UNIT I: JAPANESE TEA CEREMONY

The Tea Ceremony in Japan is an intricate and precise ritual. It is intended to bring the participants to a state of reflection on an aspect of life in general or on their life in particular. The ceremony is called a living tradition, an art form. In Japanese tradition, art means “Katachi”—form and design. In this sense, every living form has the capacity to fulfill both a functional and spiritual purpose. The concept of harmony in all things is at the heart of traditional Japanese culture. In preparing and serving of a bowl of tea, all participants in the ceremony experience “harmony, respect, purity and tranquility.”



The artistry of the Tea Ceremony is related to the ideas of Zen Buddhism. An important aspect of this belief is the idea of transcending traditional ways of thinking about existence. Every part of the ceremony is organized to move one toward contemplation. There are rituals for entering and leaving the room, making and serving the tea and appreciating the choice of flowers.

The room where the ceremony takes place is supposed to be of the utmost simplicity and is called a “Cha-shitu.”

1. What is the significance of drinking tea in the play? Discuss the ways tea symbolizes the dynamic between the women. Remember to think of qualities of tea: temperature, strength, flavor, etc.
2. Create a conversation between each character in the play and her cup of tea. As the bowl of tea, tell her what you wish for her. What quality do you think she needs that the tea ritual may offer? How do you hope her life will change after drinking tea in Himiko's home? How can she leave the tea ceremony described in the play having an improved sense of her self?
3. If there is a Japanese community or any other Asian community in your city or area, visit it. Find a church or community center and have the students arrange to interview an elder about the meaning of that culture's tea ceremony from the elder's perspective. Present a report to the class.
4. Create an original tea ceremony in your class—perhaps serve the tea cold. Divide the class into teams and have each team choose an idea from the play for discussion while serving and drinking the tea. Have one member of the team act as the Host or Hostess. Students can bring a favorite small bowl from home. Allow each team time to develop their own rituals for the Tea Ceremony before they actually drink tea together. Ask for volunteers to bring in kettles and to make a variety of tea flavors, perhaps ones that match the new ceremonies. Discuss the experience.
5. Have the students research the history of a ceremony or a ritual that is common in their culture or perhaps a ritual related to a holiday, such as New Year's or Christmas. Create an opportunity for a "show and tell" with each student making a class presentation demonstrating folk items, art objects and/or food items that are used in their cultural ceremony.
6. The Tea Ceremony offers a way of feeling serene, a way to arrive at a state of tranquility and inner peace. It is a way of being with people. Perhaps you and your students have rituals (or habits) that involve friends and provide some of the same benefits as the Tea Ceremony. Think about your habits and activities with your friends (taking walks, drinking coffee, sharing a meal, etc.) and explain some regular experiences you have that leave you with a feeling of peace.
7. Discuss the contrast between the qualities of the traditional Tea Ceremony and the agitation, anxiety, anger, sadness and fear that is present among the characters in the play when they first gather in the home of Himiko.



Teachers Guidelines for Further Study

UNIT II: SIDE BY SIDE: IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES LIVING TOGETHER

TEA provides an opportunity to look at the changing face of America. Immigrant groups have settled across the country, from the big cities of the coastal areas to out-of-the-way places in the Midwest like Junction City, Kansas where TEA takes place. In some areas the percentage of the total population is so great that the immigrants are not simply adding to society, they are transforming it.

1. Ask students to research the various waves of immigrant groups that have come to your town and/or the surrounding towns. What brought these groups to your area? Why did they leave their countries of origin? What has happened to the communities where they settled? In what ways have they and their offspring become Americanized? How has their culture become part of the mainstream, or not? How did the majority population receive them when they first arrived? What is the attitude towards them now? Has anything changed?
2. Create a classroom map of the United States, color coding the main immigrant groups (make a list in advance) that have come here in the 1980's and 1990's and where they are living. Develop a research project to learn about how two or more immigrant groups living next to each other are getting along. Learn how they are working together and what problems they may be having with each other. If this situation is characteristic of some parts of your area, visit these blended communities and interview representatives of each community.
3. Often fear of the "other" or of the unknown scares people. Knowledge is often an antidote to prejudice. Have your students spend a month getting to know a culture other than their own. If possible, have them visit churches, restaurants, community centers and ceremonies. If there is a language barrier, see if they can find a peer who is bilingual to translate. Require a report at the end of the month that details their experiences and what they have learned.
4. For students who are children of immigrants, create a panel presentation to the class to discuss their experiences or their families' experience coming to America. How were they treated as newcomers? How would they describe their community? Do they interrelate with others from different immigrant groups? How do they think people can begin to appreciate and celebrate the differences and the contributions each culture has to offer?



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Resources on the Internet

<http://www.art.uiuc.edu/tea/main.html>

- introduction to the Tea Ceremony
- glossary of terms
- links to web pages on Japanese culture

<http://www.art.unt.edu/ntieva/artcurr/japan/wabisabi.htm>

- detailed history of the Tea Ceremony
- introduction into the Japanese aesthetic
- history of tea
- bibliography

<http://www.home.sol.no/~heitoy/haiku.html>

- detailed explanation of the origins of haiku, rules for writing haiku and examples from ancient and modern haiku masters
- links to other haiku pages

<http://www.clovisusd.k12.ca.us/alta/bitter/bitter3/TEACHER~1.HTM>

- different interpretation of Tea Ceremony history
- description of the traditional Tea Ceremony room
- list of Tea Ceremony utensils

<http://users.aol.com/kendato/guest.htm>

- guide to preparing different kinds of tea
- guidelines for the host and guest(s) of a traditional Tea Ceremony
- extensive bibliography of Tea Ceremony reference books

http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/esp/aasc/aj/aj17_1.html

- page of the University of California at Los Angeles' Asian American Studies Dept.
- information on Amerasia Journal and other publications

http://www.sacbee.com/news/beetoday/newsroom/ent/072896/ent09_25632.html

- Sacramento Bee review of the play TEA, with summary and short analysis of plot

<http://pier21.ns.ca/warbride.html>

- personal stories of European "war brides" that landed in Nova Scotia, Canada following World War II, including description of "war brides" meeting for tea

