

## A DREAMER'S SEND-OFF SCENARIO

After spending this semester thinking about contemporary applications of the Asian practices about which you read, you successfully complete and pass all your final exams and papers, and eventually get through your remaining semesters of school. Six months after graduation, you're enjoying the break from intensive schedule of classes; though you haven't yet found the perfect work, you're feeling more and more settled in your post-college life. One morning, the day after enjoying a particularly connected moment with friends, or perhaps seeing an inspiring movie or play, or hearing an energizing music performance, you wake up with a simple, quite question in your mind: "What, in my heart of hearts, do I most want to contribute to this world?" Throughout the day, you can't seem to shake this question. It keeps knocking at your door, so to speak, asking to be let in.

Strangely enough, the next day you run into a classmate, a student who ended up in your team in an Asian culture class, who tells you he's been thinking about the same question! You start talking about the idealistic dreamer of a professor who taught the course. He made you read historical sources documenting Asian cultures, not simply to get information about them, but to understand more deeply what makes human cultures tick. He asked you to apply lessons you learned from reading those sources to adapt hypothetical contemporary activities emphasizing similar aspects of American culture. Now, both of you wonder if those studies might help you answer your big question. You both gave away your reader for the course, but you remember three types of practices studied:

- A. CREATION of objects & structures to gather around, reflect about and celebrate  
(Akbar's construction of Fatehpur, Jahangir's collections, Tipu's tiger organ & other symbols, public display of Song dynasty landscape paintings, Chinese imperial city layout, planning & construction of Angkor Wat, sculpting of Thai Buddha images, making & collecting Korean tea bowls)
- B. habitually DIRECTING ATTENTION inward through worship and/or outward towards nature  
(Korean shamans channeling Changun, Caitanya Vaishnavite kirtana, recitation of Nanak's hymns, Zhu Xi's seasonal sacrifice to ancestors, meditation & daily life in the Chan "Great Assembly," viewing & painting nature landscapes, Chinese spirit writing, the Tibetan fasting ritual, Pali chanting during the Thai image consecration, the Japanese tea ceremony)
- C. written, oral and/or interactive STORYTELLING  
(the Mongolia Tsam festival, telling the story of Haridasa, janam sakhi stories of Guru Nanak, writing & reading *The Financial Expert*, ritual, stories & prayers to Mother Ten, collecting, reading & reproducing "Illustrated Explanations of the Tract of the Most Exalted," writing & reading *Travels of Lao Ts'an*, telling the Buddha's story at a Thai image consecration, writing & reading "The Moon on the Water")

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HOMEWORK: Using notes &/or sketches, plan THREE contemporary activities that you and your friend might want to initiate or join, one corresponding to each of the above categories A-C. Each should be planned & guided based on lessons drawn from one or more corresponding Asian practices.

- As usual, identify **people, roles & relationships** in the social web, **actions/objects, times & locales**, and **words** for reflection involved in each of your examples, CITING AT LEAST ONE PAGE NUMBER FOR EACH of the THREE ASIAN PRACTICES that correspond to your proposed contemporary practices. IMPORTANT: use a SEPARATE PAGE for each practice.
- For EACH of the three CONTEMPORARY activities, indicate explicitly how it (i) engages the **participation** of people with **distinct roles in the social web** to **reinforce and perpetuate** the practice; and (ii) **inspires** and **deepens** these participants' **reflection** both through the practice itself and through their familiarity with the **relationships and roles** of the **social web**.