

Diwali: Reading Museum Collection Resource



About this Resource

This resource is designed to be used with our Loan Box Activities Resource:

<https://www.readingmuseum.org.uk/loan-box-activities-resource>

It can also be used with our Literacy Resource: <https://www.readingmuseum.org.uk/teachers-creative-writing-resource>

The objects below are some of the objects you can borrow from our loans service or explore in our online catalogue: <http://schoolloans.readingmuseum.org.uk/results>

The catalogue contains information about the history of the objects in our boxes and how they were used.

About this Resource (continued)

We also have an extensive online collection which you can explore here:

<http://collections.readingmuseum.org.uk/index.asp?page=resulta&mwsQueryTemplate=%5B%7Bcontrol%3Dsearch3Prefix%7D%7Bindex%3Dsearch%7D%7Brelation%3D%3D%7D%5D&search3Prefix=india>

Explore Diwali with our Loan Boxes

Many objects are part of the celebration and story of Diwali. Use our Loan Boxes to explore how Diwali is celebrated in India. You can search loan boxes here: <http://schoolloans.readingmuseum.org.uk/results>

- G31 (A-C) - Other Cultures: Asia - India and Pakistan
- G150 (A-B) - General: Musical Instruments from around the world
- N13 - Needlework-General: India, Embroidery
- G181 - Other Cultures: Asia - India and Pakistan

You can find more information on how to book our loan boxes here: <https://www.readingmuseum.org.uk/schools/school-loan-boxes>

Brass Lion Lamp

This brass lion has a hole in its head where oil would have been poured. A wick was then put into the hole and lit. The tail of the lion forms a handle. Thousands of oil lamps are used during Diwali, the Hindu festival of lights.



Sandals

According to the Ramayana Hindu Epic story Wooden pair of Rama Sandals were placed on the Throne by Bharata Rama's younger brother till Rama, Lakshmana and Sita got back to Ayodhya their kingdom to take over the throne. They were called Sandals of Rama.

On Diwali Rama's presence was there and the sandals were put on his feet. Wooden sandals were worn to aid circulation of blood and had ayurvedic reasons. Some of these were made from sandalwood as it was never hot to put on in summer seasons.



Vishnu and Lakshmi

All gods in Hinduism are different expressions of the supreme God Brahman. Hindus usually choose one of these gods to worship and the most popular is Vishnu. He is the creator and preserver of the universe and has visited earth nine times.

Vishnu worshippers believe that the next time he visits will be the end of the world. This statue is probably carved from the ivory of an Indian elephant tusk. It has been illegal to buy and sell ivory since the 1970s but it still happens occasionally.

Lakshmi is goddess of wealth and prosperity worshipped on the day of Diwali and they met on the day of Diwali.



Trimurthi

Vishnu took the form of Rama in the Rama and Sita story it was his 7th incarnation hence this is important to the Diwali festival.

Rama came home from Exile with his younger brother Lakshmana and wife Sita - returning back to Ayodhya.

The people were excited to see their king return back to take over the throne and lit a lap called Diva lamp rows of them and that's called Diwali. Diwali is to signify good over evil, a new beginning, hope, faith and community spirit.



Lota

This small metal vase is from India. When it was donated to the Museum, it was said to be from Tanjore, a city in the south of India. The outer surface of the vase has a decorative leaf motif, a characteristically Islamic style which became popular in India after the influence of seventeenth century Mughal emperor Shah Jahan.

This type of vase is known as a 'lota', a vase often used in cleaning and ritual washing. This lota was probably used as a water vase, and its metallic leaf patterning suggests that it may have had a decorative or ritual function.

This would have been used at the time of Rama and Sita in the Panchavati forest bringing water from rivers, lakes and streams.



Daf

The usual name for this instrument in Europe is tambourine, but in India, where this example comes from, it is called a daf, also a duf, a daphu, a daffali ... and other related names.

Usually it lacks jingles. In south India there is an instrument called a kanjira, which is a small tambourine made by stretching a lizard skin over a wooden frame, which has a single jingle.

All of these instruments are used to accompany dancing. This example with several jingles, from Bombay, may well have been influenced by the style of European tambourines.



Khartal

This musical instrument is from India, where it is known as a 'khartal' or 'Khadtaal'. A khartal consists of two wooden clappers with metal discs. Two blocks are held in each hand, and the player clashes them together, resulting in the sound of the wooden blocks colliding as well as the jingling of the metal discs.

Khartal blocks are widely used in both India and Pakistan to accompany traditional music and dancing. The name 'khartal' is thought to derive from a combination of the Hindi words for 'hand' and 'clapping'. This pair of blocks have different hand holds - one for holding with the thumb, and one for holding with the four fingers of the same hand.



Object Investigation Activity

Object handling and investigation is an excellent activity to help your students understand how people lived in the past.

The activities and questions below will help your students to become detectives, making observations about their chosen object to discover how it was used.

Starter activity:

Use the questions below to investigate these unfamiliar objects in our collection.

- Does it look familiar?
- What does it look similar to?
- Who do you think might use this?
- What is it made from?

Object Investigation Activity

Activity 1:

Choose an object and Explore our collection online and the internet to answer the questions below.

- What is this object made from?
- Who used this object?
- What was this object used for?
- Does it have moving parts?
- Does it seem heavy?
- Do you think it would have been difficult to use? Why?
- When was it used?
- Is the object old or new?

Object Investigation Activity

Activity 2:

Once you have investigated your object, use the information you gathered to write a description for your object for a leaflet about South Asia and Diwali.

Use the Questions below to help you write a description for someone who might have never seen or heard of your object before!

- What is it?
- What is it made from?
- What colour is it?
- Is this kind of object always made from the same materials?
- Who uses it?
- How do they use it?

Object Investigation Activity

Activity 3:

Make a detailed drawing of your object to put in your leaflet.

- Make a large drawing to show the whole object
- Zoom in on details in your object that people might miss in the bigger picture
- Use different materials to make your drawings, different materials and different colours can show your object in a different light!