

# Asia Explorers



Exploration and Investigation

## What does it mean “to explore”?

Humans are natural explorers and investigators. We have been exploring lands unfamiliar to us for centuries. The first explorations saw humans moving out of Africa, settling in new lands, and developing distinct cultures in relative isolation.

- examine or investigate something systematically
- travel somewhere searching for discovery
- examine and experience first-hand without any particular purpose
- exploration can include the Earth, the deep sea, or outer space.

# China

## Imperial Power

### Dragons

- The five-clawed dragon is the emperor's sacred symbol of imperial power
- they are symbols of the natural world
- they are the rulers of the seas and the skies.

The Qing emperors followed Confucianism as their official religion.

**Confucianism** is an ancient Chinese belief system, which focuses on the importance of personal ethics and morality.



“Manchu Boy’s Semi Formal Court Surcoat (Jifu) with five-clawed dragon and wave design”, red silk satin with silk floss

# Japan



## Ainu People

- believed all things were endowed with a spirit or god: **animists**
- lived closely entwined with nature
- livelihoods relied on hunting, gathering, and fishing.
- they would not decorate garments or household items with animals or plants

**Ainu Women, Monbetsu** 19th-20th century, Gertrude Bass Warner

# Korea

## Beliefs and Symbols

- a guardian spirit residing in the mountains: ***Sansin (Mountain God)***
- associated with mountain tigers
- Still encouraged in Korean Buddhist temples
- In the early religion of Korea, worship of sacred mountains gradually gave way to the worship of wild bears, wolves, and especially tigers, who roamed the mountains.
- Korean people were encouraged to adopt Confucian ideals and doctrines into their society.
- Buddhism was accordingly discouraged, and occasionally Buddhists faced persecutions



“Mountain God with Tiger, Crane and two attendants”,  
framed painting, ink and color on paper

## Ask yourself:

- Do I want to explore our world or an imaginary world?
- Where is this world?
- Who lives in this world?
- If there are people in this world, what does their culture look like?
- How do they live? What are their religious or spiritual beliefs?