

Newsletter 3-6

Asia Mania

Back together again after the festive holiday season, we were all delighted to see each other and share our New Year wishes and greetings; and what better way to celebrate 2024 than by enjoying the famous “Galette des Rois” followed by pancakes for la Chandeleur? January and February also decided to treat us (if not to warm us up...) with dishes straight from the regions of the “Rising Sun”. In fact, we decided to settle down in Asia for the length of this period!

Across the continent to China and Thailand via Japan, the children were able to take out the Asia puzzle daily to identify all these exciting, far eastern countries. We were also fascinated by their flags, languages and colourful cultures, often very different from our own.

Around the pagodas and rice fields, the asian wildlife came to life. The elephant, the asian black bear and the charismatic panda have invited themselves to our gatherings to show us their unique habitats and way of life. However, the “animal” that was crowned the star of our ambiance was most definitely the dragon, the emblematic symbol of Asia.



新年
快乐





Culture and traditions

What better way to celebrate this period than welcoming in the year of the dragon! A most legendary creature on this continent. With the lunar calendar starting in February, we decided to join in with the celebrations of this rather special New Year. This mythical animal with a long reptilian body, announces prosperity and luck, everything we wish to you! The children were able to discover what their Chinese astrological signs were: in our ambiance we found dogs, pigs, rats and buffaloes, and even a dragon! Yes, one of our educators found themselves in the spotlight as they celebrate their Chinese astrological year.

Every party deserves a costume, so we welcomed a student of Indian origin from the 6-12 class who shared with us her traditional outfits. We were introduced to clothing such as her long embroidered skirt called *lehenga* and even her traditional *sari*. Following that, we asked ourselves: what are these clothes made from? So we took the Silk Road all the way from China to Turkey, and what a surprise to learn that the humble silkworm is the origin of such precious fabric!





Tasting Time



With the cold outside, it was time to stock up! We went to the kitchen to discover Vietnamese *pho*, Indian *chicken tikka*, Korean *tteokbokki* and we were even able to try the soft Japanese *mochis*, small cakes made from sticky rice.

Rice, it's a way of life! Strongly present in Asia, we learned more about its cultivation which requires a lot of water and spectacular rice terraces. Basmati rice, black rice or round rice, there is something for everyone. Another cereal coveted by our Asian neighbors, buckwheat, found its way into our Chandeleur pancake recipe for a slightly saltier touch.

To digest all this, how about a nice cup of tea? With Asia being the world's leading producer of tea leaves, we first observed how the water changes colour as the aromas diffuse during the infusion in our glass teapot, then the children were able to taste chai tea, first created in India, and the well-known black tea.

Finally, all the children from school gathered at the table to enjoy an Asian meal just before the holidays. On the menu: Cantonese rice and vegetarian spring rolls!





Arts



Asia being a fabulous source of art of all kinds, the children were inspired to create a collage representing a dragon, create a branch of sakura, Japan's flagship tree, with watercolor pencils, and make a dragon mask for Mardi Gras.

They also tried their hand at Japanese calligraphy by reproducing characters designating everyday words. In the ambiance, the children discovered Hiroyuki Nakajima, a versatile artist combining calligraphy with his *tai chi* skills.

We also trained our ears with musical listening, trying to find the country of origin for different pieces of traditional music.

Finally, our Friday groups were devoted to reading Asian tales, as well as writing exercises in various alphabets much different from ours, learning how to say and write "Hello" to all the people we might meet on this fabulous continent!



From all of us in the 3-6 team, we wish you a wonderful **2024** to come, and a great winter break!

