# AAFC 2025 Workshops at Tabor

## A Workshops

**Connecting Through Art: Exploring Shared Heritage & Building Asian American Solidarity From Turkey to Japan** | Yasmeen Alam | Winsor School

Asia is the largest continent in the world both in terms of landmass and population. As a result, the diversity of the Asian American identity can often make our community feel fractured along regional and cultural boundaries. In this workshop we will learn about the rich cross-cultural exchange that has taken place between different regions of Asia for centuries through unexpected examples of shared artistic heritage. We will then discuss the "Asian" identity as a construction and explore how the artistic connections between a variety of Asian cultures can help us as Asian Americans build a cohesive, unified community and a sense of solidarity amongst all. Finally, we will create a mural to simultaneously showcase and celebrate both the diversity and historical connection of our community.

**The History of Hot Pot** | Nausicaa Chu, Mack Barrett, Mabelle Chen | St. Paul's School

For nearly 2,000 years, hot pot has been a staple of Asian cuisine. It's found at both intimate family gatherings and large-scale restaurants in places ranging from China, Thailand, Switzerland, and more recently, the United States. Brought to you by the presenters of the past two years' hit workshops "The History of Fried Rice" and "The History of H-Mart," this workshop will explore how hot pot went from its origins in China to around the world. "The History of Hot Pot" will feature an actual hot pot tasting, complete with broth, tofu, vegetables, noodles, and more. We will discuss how this popular dish has come to represent more than just delicious food, becoming an emblem of both close-knit Asian American communities and a "melting pot" of cultures around the world. Join in for a taste of home or a new culinary experience!

**Asian Pop Fusion Fest: Celebrating Asian Culture & Identity Through Dance** | Tiffany Guo, Chloe Yeo | Milton Academy

For many Asians, the rise of Asian pop on a global scale empowered many people who, growing up, were only exposed to a white-dominated music industry. With the initial rise of Blackpink, BTS, and other Asian pop groups, many Asians saw their language, music, and dance being widely celebrated by non-Asian groups. We envision a dynamic and inclusive dance workshop where

Asians can celebrate their culture and the success of Asian pop by learning the choreography of a remix of popular songs. Our vision is to unite Asians to celebrate the success of Asian pop, fostering connections and creativity. We strive to create a space where every fan, regardless of their background, can express their love for Asian pop, share their talents, and celebrate the diversity of this increasingly global phenomenon.

**Brushstrokes of Identity: Asian American Stories Through Art** | Lucy Domingo, Amber Yung | Choate Rosemary Hall

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This interactive workshop explores how Asian American artists have used visual art to express identity, heritage, and lived experiences. Participants will analyze works by influential Asian American artists (e.g., Hung Liu, Isamu Noguchi, Ruth Asawa, and Maya Lin) and discuss how their art tells personal and collective stories.

**Me Love You Long Time: Debunking Western Tropes of East Asian Women** | Leanne La | Choate Rosemary Hall

Both fetishized and invisible, East Asian women are subjected to discrimination in the Western World. As explained in Kimberle Crenshaw's theory of intersectionality, disadvantages compound – exemplified in the case of East Asian women, who face both sexism and racism. Starting with the Page Act of 1875, which barred many Asian American women from immigrating to the U.S., and concluding with America's current fascination with anime and manga, this workshop will explore how racism in U.S. history has materialized into the stereotypes that persist today. Additionally, participants discuss how East Asian Women, as they navigate their American identity, can combat these tropes and rise above societal confines.

**Am I Asian Enough?: Imposter Syndrome in the Asian Experience** | Ella Paterniti, Aria Wang | The Winsor School

Our workshop will seek to answer the question: "What does it mean to be Asian?" through a discussion of how Asian portrayal in the media and Asian cultural expectations intersect with participants' own experiences, and how Asian stereotypes can lead to feelings of Impostor Syndrome within the Asian community when people feel they are not living up to societal norms. Participants will be able to learn from other AAFC attendees about how the Asian experience can vary, based on a number of factors such as their family structure or local community, and they will have the chance to express their Asian identity artistically. Despite their vastly different experiences, participants will find commonalities in exploring the various interpretations and meanings of "being Asian" and finding belonging in the AAPI community.

**Mahjong: A Rich History and Present** | Gracie Zhou | The Winsor School

Mahjong has deep roots in both Asian and Asian-American cultures. From casual family get-togethers to appearances in pop culture, the game is a way to connect with our local communities and heritage. Remember that scene from *Crazy Rich Asians*? In this workshop, participants will explore the origins of this tile-based game, tracing its roots in China to its growing prominence in Asian-American culture in the 20th century. Finally, we will investigate the many variations that exist across the globe today, and learn to play some Mahjong!

**The Influence of Asians in Sports** | Ashley Suh | Phillips Academy Andover

The Influence of Asians in Sports will cover the influence that Asians have had on the sporting world. From Korea's Archery clean sweep in the Paris Olympics to the Philippines debuting their first National Lacrosse Team, it will emphasize the ever-changing sports world and the unrecognized impact Asian's have made. Furthermore, it will also delve deep into how Sports have

changed Asian society, breaking prehistoric stereotypes and improving other's views on the sporting culture in Asia.

**Reclaiming and Reconnecting to Our Cultural Roots: Celebrating Stories Through Chinese Dance and Guzheng** | Julia Xu, Hannah Jung | Phillips Academy Andover

This workshop will showcase the celebration which comes with the storytelling art of Chinese dance and guzheng, and how personal experiences of community, belonging, and culture are vital to the Asian American identity. We will begin with an overview of Chinese performing arts before diving into its history and different forms of traditional Chinese dance and guzheng, along with how it has been used to express stories for hundreds of years. We will also share personal anecdotes about our individual journeys with our respective arts, as Asian American children of immigrants, and how we have found community and connection to our culture. There will be a short guzheng demonstration, along with examples of different costumes and styles of dance from various regions. Students will have the opportunity to share their own experiences while celebrating and uplifting cultural traditions in the context of an identity that is uniquely Asian American.

**"Threading Our Stories: The Red String of Asian American Connections"** | Wendy Xue, Yuki Zhou'27, Katherine Lian'28 (Worcester Academy) | Tabor Academy

What if every meaningful connection in your life was tied by an invisible red thread? In Asian cultures, the red thread is more than fate—it's a symbol of luck, love, and protection. From Chinese folklore, where it binds soulmates, to its use in warding off bad luck during zodiac birth years, the red thread weaves through traditions in magical ways. Join us for a fun, interactive workshop! Share your "fateful connection" stories, create with red thread, and explore how this timeless symbol ties us to love, luck, and community. Let's celebrate the bonds that make us who we are!

**Asian Literature: From the Ancient Times to Modern Authors** | Leah Han, Kaylin Lam | Choate Rosemary Hall

The workshop will include an overview of the history of Asian languages. We will explore the evolution of different languages—such as Chinese, Korean, Cantonese, and Filippino—by diving deeper into the story behind their dialects, writing systems, and literature. Moreover, during the second half of the workshop, students will have the opportunity to share their personal experiences of language—a group discussion will be held regarding the topic of how language has impacted their personal identity and cultural heritage as Asian Americans, especially in ways such as code-switching and multilingualism. Students will also engage in an interactive activity by creating an outline of their own book that reflects their own story surrounding languages.

**The Tea Culture in Asian identities** | Grady Gao | Tabor Academy

Across Asia, tea serves both as a drink and a symbol that represents traditional hospitality and personal identity. This workshop explores the historical journey of tea, from its origins in China to its spread across the continent, adapting to the customs of Japan, India, the Middle East, and beyond. We will examine how different regions developed their own tea traditions and how tea became a

global phenomenon through trade and cultural exchange. As a substance with significant historical significance, it defines cultural traits and individual identity in a prominent way. Our approach to tea preparation and serving, as well as our tea consumption patterns, demonstrate personal and cultural values, social traditions, and national identity. In some cultures, tea represents mindfulness and spiritual reflection, while in others, it signifies hospitality, social connection, or resistance to colonial influences. For many, tea is also a personal and familial tradition, passed down through generations, connecting them to their heritage. Through discussions and personal reflections, we will explore how tea culture continues to evolve in the modern world and what it means to individuals and communities today. To conclude, participants will experience a guided tea tasting, sampling teas from different regions to appreciate their unique flavors, brewing techniques, and cultural significance. Through this interactive program, you will have time to understand the meaningful link between people and cultural heritage and history.

**Whitewashed: Redefining the Conversation** | Sasha, Siotia, Bonnie Shao | The Winsor School

The term "whitewashed," while originally referring merely to an object's having been painted white, has evolved into an controversial adjective often heard by people of color. But what does this word really mean? Does it have a universal definition, or does its meaning vary along with the people using and hearing it? This discussion-based workshop will examine the connotations of this descriptor, the contexts in which it is used, and the different impacts that it has on its recipients. Attendees will have the opportunity to share their experiences with the word and connect with peers over both shared and differing stories.

**Music, Expectations, and the Asian Experience** | Seongheon Kim, Victoria Han | Walnut Hill School for the Arts

Did you grow up playing an instrument like the piano or violin? Do you love music but feel pressured to pursue a more "practical" career, such as a doctor or lawyer? This workshop will explore how family and societal pressure can lead to the irony of students being encouraged to study music at a high level but discouraged from pursuing it professionally. We'll discuss how to maintain a meaningful relationship with music, regardless of career choices. The session will begin with a lecture on the classical music industry, where Asians are well-represented but often face discrimination and identity struggles. Topics include: challenges of performing Western classical music, underrepresentation of Asians in leadership roles, and the stereotype of Asian musicians as "technicians" rather than artists.

~~**Asian, Christian, and Connected: Sharing Our Stories** | Eric Liu, Daniel Sun | Tabor Academy~~
CANCELLED

This workshop will provide a welcoming space for Asian and Pacific Islander students, both domestic and international, to engage in meaningful conversations about Christianity. It will be open to everyone—regardless of their faith background. It offers a chance to explore how Christianity intersects with Asian identity, culture, and community. Through open discussion, storytelling, and reflection, participants will share their experiences, appreciate their faith journeys, and connect with others in a supportive environment.

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**Tangyuan Traditions: Exploring Unity and Cultural Connection through Historic Dessert** | Isabella Kao, Evana Jang | Miss Porter's School

Our workshop explores the tradition of making 汤圆 (tangyuan), a Chinese dessert symbolizing unity, harmony, and cultural connection, with a special focus on its historical significance in Hong Kong. Participants will learn about the role tangyuan has played in Hong Kong's cultural identity, particularly during festive occasions such as the Winter Solstice and Lantern Festival. Through a hands-on activity making tangyuan with traditional fillings like black sesame and red bean, participants will gain knowledge into the importance of preserving traditions while creating community and cultural exchange.

**Activist Art and Storytelling: Destigmatizing Mental Health in AAPI+ Communities** | Mai Do | Pingree School

Mental health has become a "trending" topic in the media, and it's steadily been increasing in visibility in AAPI+ communities. There is such a stigma around mental health in AAPI+ families, and in this workshop we will explore how art can be used for activism, telling stories of identity, mental health journeys, and more. We will discuss ways to destigmatize mental health in AAPI+ families, statistics on AAPI people and mental health in the US, the "Stop Asian Hate Movement" of 2020, and you will even be making your own art. The art making will include pins and (hopefully) stickers! I will even be showing my own T-shirt, totebag, and poster prints that I am making for my studio art class, which is where the idea of this workshop came from.

**Growing up as a third culture kid** | Haewon Kim, Stella Pham | Middlesex School

This workshop aims to spark discussions of how growing up in multiple environments separate from your ethnic homeland affected your relationship with its culture. We hope to help others with their sense of identity and connectedness to culture.

**Taking A Deep Dive Into The Asian Identity: The Power of Microaffinity in Bridging Cultural Gaps in the Asian Community** | Keita Narusawa | Phillips Academy Andover

Different Asian communities and cultures are often clumped together when spoken about in the media and by administrations, despite each Asian community and culture being incredibly unique and multifaceted in it of themselves. This clumping together of Asian cultures is what causes this divide, as each Asian culture and community takes it upon themselves to separate from those they are clumped with. Building on microaffinities, we hope to empower young Asians by allowing them to express both the uniqueness and similarities of their own Asian culture along with others. This workshop will explore the vastness of the Asian diaspora and the significance of representing individual identities beyond ethnicity, including cultural practices, habits, and social norms. By honing in on the concept of microaffinity—smaller cultural and social identities within the broader Asian community—participants will gain a deeper understanding of how these nuances shape personal and collective identity. The session will emphasize how recognizing and navigating these cultural differences and similarities fosters unity and inclusivity. Through interactive discussions, personal storytelling, and collaborative activities, participants will engage in meaningful dialogue

about their own experiences and perspectives, ultimately strengthening their ability to find connection within diversity across the Asian community.

**The Shrinking Generation: Asia's Birthrate Decline** | Everett Woo, Fumi Kimura, Ibuki Hada, Yui Takeuchi | Phillips Academy Andover

Asia is facing an age demographic shift because of declining birth rates. This has caused shrinking workforces, cultural changes, and economic uncertainty. This workshop explores the root causes of this trend, from economic pressures to shifting social norms and government policy. We will examine long-term effects and also discuss potential countermeasures such as government incentives, workplace reforms, and cultural shifts.

**Boba and the Bible: Exploring the Intersection of Asian American and Christian Identities** | Julia Oh | The Winsor School

Have you ever skipped youth group to study for a math test? In this interactive workshop, we'll dive into the unique experiences and challenges that come with navigating these two powerful identities. Through discussions, personal stories, and thought-provoking activities, participants will explore how Asian American communities engage with Christianity, and how these intersections shape faith, culture, and belonging. We'll unpack the ways cultural expectations, family traditions, and faith beliefs influence one another, and reflect on how this blend of identities plays out in real life. Whether you're exploring your own faith journey or simply curious, this workshop offers a chance to connect, share, and gain insight into how Asian American identity and Christianity can coexist and empower you. *This workshop is open to anyone, but will likely draw participants who identify as Christian!

**Neuro-Narratives: Navigating ADHD and other learning disabilities** | Rachel Ding, Arin Kim | St. Mark's School

Through our workshop, we will uncover the experiences of Asian Americans with learning disabilities. We hope to explore the existent societal stigmas regarding learning disabilities within Asian American communities and how it may shape our personal experiences with or perceptions on learning disabilities. With group wide discussions of our stories, we will delve into how cultural stereotypes and taboos can intersect with learning disabilities through questions that promote empathy and understanding. By creating a safe space for sharing and listening, we will foster conversations that aim for a deeper understanding of learning disabilities within our own communities.

~~**We are Neither Virus Nor Model Minority: Covid-19, Racism, and Asian American Identity** | Nathan Chun | Phillips Academy~~ CANCELLED

Asian Americans are rarely the focus of public aid or relief programs. Why is that? In this workshop, I will use the COVID-19 pandemic as a window to examine how the struggles of Asian Americans are often overlooked due to racism. The toll of COVID-19 on people of color is well-documented, but less known is that Asian Americans were also among the hardest hit. This fact, however,

remains largely invisible in public data and discussions. We will delve into how myths surrounding Asians and Asian Americans, such as the Model Minority and the perception of Asians as a monolithic group, obscure the disparities faced by different Asian subgroups. This contributes to the erasure of Asian Americans from conversations about research and policy needs, further reinforcing the model minority myth (the idea that "Asians are doing well"). Throughout the workshop, we will share how COVID-19 has affected our own lives and communities, uncover additional examples of this vicious cycle in other realms and discuss strategies to break it. Participants will leave with a deeper understanding of how to advocate the diverse needs of Asian subgroups while fostering a collective Asian American identity.

**Listed as Interactive Activity - now called Where Do I Stand?** | Symphony Shi, Chloe Kim | The Hotchkiss School

In this interactive activity, participants will engage in a physical representation of their beliefs by positioning themselves along a spectrum in response to a series questions. One side of the room will represent agreement to the prompted question and the other will represent disagreement. The goal is to create an interactive space for respectful discussion, encouraging participants to ask questions, and refine their perspectives through a visual demonstration of their experiences along a spectrum.

**An Analysis of Abolition of DEI Policies and How It Applies to South Asian Americans** | Kadie Singh, Srisiri Chadalawada | Hotchkiss School and Milton Academy

This workshop explores the history and experiences of South Asian Americans, focusing on how the abolition of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) policies and other political changes impact this community. Participants will learn about the early immigration of South Asians to the U.S., their contributions, and the systemic discrimination they faced—from exclusionary laws to post-9/11 racial profiling. The session will also address current challenges, including restrictive immigration policies, the erasure of South Asian histories in education, and the potential consequences of dismantling DEI initiatives on access to opportunities. Through a combination of historical analysis, group discussions, and an engaging Kahoot quiz, participants will critically examine how these issues persist in the 21st century. The workshop aims to increase awareness, encourage conversations, and inspire advocacy for equitable policies that reflect the diverse histories and realities of South Asian Americans.

**Thriving Asians: Mental Wellness Expanded** | Sia Reddy, Sammi Zhu| The Hotchkiss School

The workshop, titled "Thriving Asians: Mental Wellness expanded" aims to broaden the definition of mental wellbeing to culturally-grounded contexts. It provides the platform to recognize and reclaim Asian cultural values and practices that support mental wellbeing while dismantling the narrative that Asian culture is a necessary barrier to mental health.

~~**Chopsticks & Choices: Celebrating Cultural Foods** | Alex Cha, MJ Choi | Suffield Academy~~
CANCELLED

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Discuss food stereotypes and generalizations made to the AAPI community, coming from other students, faculty, and even the dining hall. Then expand further into how each student in their schools gets accommodations to their own type of diet, whether in the dining hall or through other campus activities. It will allow students to get ideas to bring back to their own schools, in order to help educate all people and to make a better environment for students.

**Visual Arts and Creative Writing of the Asian Diaspora** | Zimon Li, Noelle Lee | The Rivers School

Asian American creative writing and visual arts have long been overshadowed, yet their significance to the broader AAPI narrative is profound. Works like Maxine Hong Kingston's The Woman Warrior and Ocean Vuong's On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous explore themes of identity, migration, and resilience, offering counter-narratives to mainstream discourse. Similarly, visual artists like Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, whose seminal work Dictee blends text and image, challenge traditional forms and reclaim cultural memory. Despite their impact, Asian American art and literature remain underrepresented in school curricula, erasing vital perspectives from the cultural canon. This year's AAFC core theme, storytelling, underscores the power of these works to preserve history, resist erasure, and foster empathy. By amplifying these voices, we honor their contributions and expand the narrative of what it means to be American.

**Why Is Death Game Cinema So Popular in Asian Culture?** | Vivien Qiu, Beau Ahluwahlia | Walnut Hill School for the Arts

Have you ever wondered why death games are so popular in Asian cinema? From Battle Royale to Squid Game, these stories have captivated audiences with compelling storytelling and high-stakes survival. But why does this genre resonate so strongly in Asian creators and audiences, especially teens? This workshop will explore the historical and cultural roots of death game media, analyzing how these narratives convey themes of societal pressure, competition, and social hierarchy. We will examine popular works within the genre and discuss their status as both social critique and entertainment. We hope you will join us for a conversation on this fascinating media phenomenon and its impact on audiences all over the world.

**One Language? More like 121** | Ashwini Menon, Bhumika Prem | Middlesex School

When people think of South Asia, they often assume a single, monolithic culture—one where everyone speaks Hindi. But that couldn't be further from the truth. With hundreds of languages and dialects, language isn't just about communication—it's about identity, history, and belonging. As South Asians, we've experienced the power of language firsthand—both in how it connects us and how assumptions about it can erase our diversity. In this workshop, we'll explore the linguistic richness of the subcontinent, challenge stereotypes about language, and discuss how it shapes our identity in the diaspora.

**Orientalism and America: Crafting the Asian American Narrative** | Erin Han, Asha Masoudi | Phillips Exeter Academy

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In our workshop, we will explore the history of Orientalism in American discourse, both in political and personal contexts. We hope to examine the effects that such a Euro-centric study of Asia — as ignorant as it is potent — has had in the telling of the Asian American narrative. We will be reading from a selected array of specific primary sources and opening up to a discussion. Students will be prompted to reflect on the modern-day presence of Orientalism in our everyday lives today through the observation of prepared “Orientalist” objects, artwork, and even pop culture items. We will be discussing how the Orientalist aspects of American culture add pressure to how we as Asian Americans are meant to tell our stories, and how we can reclaim our rights to tell our stories as authentically as possible.

**Breaking Ankles and Barriers: Asians in Basketball** | Matthew Wei, Edward Zhang | Phillips Andover Academy

It's unfortunate that the stigma of Asian Americans in football is prevalent on every court. This workshop will present the history of Asian Americans in basketball, and we'll explore the stigmas of the "right" kind of player. We'll also have fun Kahoots and optional games of knockout and around the world.

## B Workshops

~~**Exploring the impacts of Karma in Asian Culture: the past, present, and future** | Xinyu Zhang, Navya Swarna | St. Mark's School of Southborough~~ CANCELLED

We often talk about karma in our daily lives as an excuse for many things that happen. This panel will focus on tracing back to the history of Karma, related anecdotes, debunking myths around karma, and explaining how karma can be incorporated into our daily lives and the long-term impacts it may have. We will also explore its deeper meanings across different Asian communities and its relevance to contemporary Asian American experiences. Participants will be encouraged to engage in reflective discussions to share related experiences that can guide personal growth and a better mindset.

**Painted Narratives: Identity and Storytelling through Chinese Opera Masks** | Qianxun (Cindy) Ren, Zhuoer (Andrea) Yin | Tabor Academy

Opera Masks explores the rich cultural tapestry behind one of China’s most iconic art forms. We begin with an introduction to Chinese Opera’s long and storied history—tracing its roots, evolution, and enduring importance in Chinese heritage. Participants will also learn how different types of opera are classified and the distinct characteristics that define each style. Delving into Peking Opera, we will uncover the dramatic flair of its performances and discover how specific colors on the masks symbolize character traits—turning vibrant hues into powerful storytelling tools. Finally, in a hands-on activity, the audience will draw inspiration from their own life experiences to create a personalized opera mask that captures their identity. With an opera documentary in the background, they’ll spend 25 minutes painting, experimenting with color, and reflecting on how these visual choices can narrate their personal story, just as the actors do on the Peking Opera stage.

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**Fluent in Culture: Exploring Connection to Culture Through Language** | Demira Parekh, Emma Birdsong | The Winsor School

Language is a key to cultural identity and connection, but what happens when you don't speak your heritage language fluently, or even at all? What if, even if you do speak the language, you still don't feel "Asian" enough? In this workshop, we'll address common feelings of disconnection and exclusion due to communication challenges while also exploring and acknowledging the multitude of Asian languages. Through open discussions and a collaborative mural activity, participants will reflect on the intersection of language and identity. Whether you're multilingual, learning, or don't speak your heritage language at all, this space is open to everyone! Cultural identity is not defined by language fluency, but instead by the connections we create and the stories we carry.

**Cut, Paste, Express: Collage Poetry Workshop on Asian Queer Experience** | Jiajia (Jennifer) Guo | Tabor Academy

Poetry and art are powerful ways to express identity, love, and resistance. In this interactive workshop, we will explore the intersections of queerness and Asian identity through collage poetry—a creative form where participants cut and assemble words, phrases, and images into poetic expressions. Using texts from queer Asian poets and artwork by queer Asian artists, participants will create personal and collective poems that reflect their experiences, emotions, and dreams. No prior poetry or art experience is needed—just a willingness to experiment and express yourself! We will close with an optional sharing session to celebrate the stories we've created.

**Paper, Past, and Presence: Exploring Asian American identity through Art and Discussion** | Ella Cheong, Madeline Kebalka | Kimball Union Academy

In this workshop, we will be reflecting on our personal identities with Asian American culture. We aim to discuss our experiences with stereotypes, microaggressions, model minorities, and more as Asian American high school students in New England. During the workshop discussion, we will be creating collages that help artistically depict our connections with our cultures as individuals and as a community. Collages serve as a metaphor for the fragments of our experiences, influences, and memories that help shape us into who we are as people.

**Bua Loy: Crafting Thai Sweet Dumplings** | Kosolpisit Natcha, Mongkhonvanit Phi | Groton School and Governor's Academy

Join us for a hands-on cultural experience as we make bua loy, a beloved Thai dessert of colorful rice flour dumplings in warm coconut milk. In this workshop, high school students will explore the significance of bua loy in Thai culture, learn traditional preparation techniques, and get creative with natural food coloring. Through this activity, participants will gain an appreciation for Thai culinary traditions while developing teamwork and fine motor skills. No prior cooking experience is needed—just curiosity and a sweet tooth!

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**Spill The Chai** | Khokha Zahabiya, Gopika Sheth and Arushi Krishnan | Choate Rosemary Hall

Chai is more than just a drink; it symbolizes hospitality, connection, and history. In this workshop, we will discuss the cultural importance of chai in Indian households, from health purposes to daily rituals. While this drink is enjoyed worldwide, many overlook the history and controversy surrounding chai. We will discuss colonization within India, the global tea trade exploitation of South Asia, and its current impacts on Indians, specifically how tea impacted India. We will teach students how to make masala chai and "spill the chai" on reclaiming our narratives and how colonial history continues to impact the experiences of Indians in the US and globally.

**From Seoul to Soul: Finding Yourself in K-Dance** | Youjin Choi | The Winsor School

In this workshop, we will explore choreography in K-pop to engage in movement and experience how we are able to share our stories through the language of dance. We will learn choreography ourselves, taking a moment from our hustle-filled lives to move and connect with each other. This connection through shared movement will empower dancers, celebrating the expression and joy that come with music and dance. By creating a space to dive into the world of dance in K-pop, we will be able to bond over shared music tastes, and more importantly, have fun! And absolutely no experience is required.

**Asian Affinity Groups: How to Move Forward** | Grace Huang | Northfield Mount Hermon School

This workshop examines the complex dynamics behind Asian Affinity groups between the need for a joint Asian affinity and separate Asian cultural groups. By examining the development of Asian Affinity groups at NMH from school archives and interview of various students opinions, we'll discuss and examine together the most ideal "affinity group structure."

**How To Lead: A Forum for Aspiring Leaders to Understand the Nuance of Leading Cultural Clubs and Affinity Groups** | William Yee, Ethan Li-Kato '27 | Hotchkiss School

In this meeting, we would like to offer a space for students to discuss their experience and share their insights on leading clubs and affinity spaces. Many schools attending AAFC have active Asian clubs and affinity spaces, while others do not. AAFC is a space for these varying experience to meet, and we'd like to take this opportunity to learn from each other.

**Stories through Stanzas: Poetry & Shaping the Asian Narrative** | Lee Remy, Jerry Fan | The Hotchkiss School

Poetry can be a powerful tool for self-expression and storytelling – but even today, Pan-Asian voices are underrepresented. This workshop aims to examine the marginalized stories of Pan-Asians through active discussion and engagement regarding Pan-Asian poetry. By exploring the works of prominent Asian or Asian-American writers, as well as providing a chance for students to share poetry from their own life, the themes of Pan-Asian pride, subsidisation, and identity will be tackled through the art of language. We will warm up with a roundtable discussion analyzing a few works that capture the Asian experience. Afterwards, attendees will have the opportunity to share the

poetry that relates to their own identities—whether an original work or that of another author. We hope that with this workshop, one will be able to use the power of poetry to inspire change within yourself and your community.

**Reflections of Beauty: Understanding and Breaking Beauty Norms Through Art** | Liao Stella, Umezawa Rikako | The Hotchkiss School

What defines beauty, and how do these standards shape the way we see ourselves? In this workshop, we will explore the impact of Asian beauty norms and challenge the expectations that influence our self-perception. Through an engaging presentation, we will examine the origins of these ideals and how they affect identity and self-worth, particularly within Asian American communities. Participants will then take part in an open discussion to share personal experiences and reflections. The workshop will conclude with a self-portrait drawing activity, an exercise in facing ourselves honestly and embracing our unique beauty. By the end of the session, we hope to foster self-acceptance, encourage self-love, and inspire participants to redefine beauty on their own terms.

**Sweet but Short-Lived: RedNote, TikTok Refugees, and the Social Media Sugar Rush** | Rebecca Tu, Elizabeth Tu | The Frederick Gunn School

The recent eruption of RedNote following the banning of TikTok raises an intriguing question: Was it a moment of cultural exchange, or did it have a more complicated, perhaps negative, impact? This workshop will examine the rise of "TikTok Refugees", questioning how nationalism, privilege, and digital culture intersect in global interactions. We'll also look at how social media has reshaped tourism perceptions of Japan and Korea, debating whether influencers' experiences signal colonization or reflect evolving global influence. Join us as we discuss how social media shapes belonging, identity, and power in an interconnected world.

**Unveiling the Unspoken: Poetry as a Bridge to Belonging** | Renee Tse | The Governors Academy

Poetry is more than an art form—it is an act of resistance, healing, and self-realization. This workshop invites participants to explore how poetry can be used to reclaim identity, challenge stereotypes, and voice the complexities of personal and collective experience. Through engaging writing exercises, an analysis of contemporary poets from diverse backgrounds, and open discussion, we will examine how poetry serves as a bridge between isolation and belonging.

**Does Cultural Purity Truly Exist? China & Japan's Cultural Interaction** | Ruike (Vincent) Liu, Shengxi (Jerry) Zhang | The Governor's Academy

We will explore how China and Japan have mutually influenced each other's cultures through cultural interactions from ancient to modern times by diving into four fields, two for ancient times and two for modern times. This workshop invites participants to reflect on their own identities—are they shaped solely by their country's culture, or do outside cultures play a role? We will also explore the idea of cultural purity by asking: Does it truly exist? How should we perceive cultural interaction? Do we prefer original traditions or their evolved forms? These questions encourage

participants to recognize the impact and importance of cultural interaction while considering their own attitudes toward it. Aligning with this year's theme, Jerry and I want participants to recognize the unnoticed influences that shape cultural narratives and reflect on how to tell complete stories in an era of globalization.

**Ink and Inspirations: Crafting Poetry in Asian styles** | Tess Ho and Katie Kim | Deerfield Academy

Join us for an immersive workshop that explores the rich tapestry of Asian poetry, from ancient traditions to contemporary forms. Participants will delve into diverse poetic forms, including haiku, senryu, renga, and free verse, while examining the cultural and historical context that shape these works.

**Lost But Not LOLst: Figuring Out "Who I am. Where am I? And, Why Is EVERYTHING So Different?** | Amina Wang, Aidan Song | The Hotchkiss School

Entering a new environment–whether it is school, country, or community–comes with many different challenges. Ranging from cultural differences to academic expectations to social dynamics, Asian Americans may find adapting to be difficult. This workshop will highlight the struggles, including microaggressions, identity crises, separation from family, others' expectations, and feelings of isolation, which individuals may face. We will provide a safe environment for us to discuss, connect, and reflect on our personal experiences. While embracing our own changes, and having a more comfortable relationship with reaching out for help or finding ways to simply just help yourself.

**A separation of our cultural backgrounds and our personal lives in a multicultural society of "Americanization": finding one's niche through and beyond Asian identities.** | Steve Ma, Benjamin Jiang, Lucy Wu | Middlesex School

How do we retain our cultural identities in face of a perceived "necessity" to assimilate into mainstream American culture? On the other hand, how do we refrain from confining ourselves to single-perspective echo chambers through only interacting with those who share our cultural backgrounds? This workshop aims to address and examine the tensions, conflicts, and benefits of living in a multicultural community. We seek to discuss what defines and characterizes "Americanization" through Asian historical and cultural lens. We specifically discuss the different opinions toward "Americanization" in Asian communities. Through the acknowledgment of the multifaceted nature of cultural identities, we can learn to balance our degree of incorporation, adopting beneficial aspects of American ideals while understanding that we don't need to sacrifice the vitality and integrity of our preexisting cultural identities. We advocate for the separation of political and cultural narratives of our Asian origins. We encourage participants to find their own paths to tackle this seemingly mandatory societal expectation without losing our uniquely Asian roots. Through this workshop, we hope to help participants find their "niche" in subcommunities beyond cultural identities. Phase 1: Americanization & assimilation: benefits & detriments Phase 2: Asian identity: Embracement and pride in our roots vs Becoming overly attached to our origins and rejecting the development of new identities Phase 3: Finding one's niche Connecting with those of a common culture & Finding one's community beyond one's cultural background.

# AAFC 2025 Workshops at Tabor

**"Game Changers: Asian Americans in Athletic Leadership"** | Ryan Bang, Rony Pang, Felicity Liao, Rico Wang | Cushing Academy

Asian Americans have been underrepresented in leadership roles in athletics, often facing certain stereotypes that limit our potential. Many of the students also struggle with balancing academic expectations and leadership responsibilities in sports. These circumstances can be ameliorated, however. This workshop aims to discuss these problems and possible solutions that Asian student-athletes can take through the format of open discussions and some presentations sharing experiences from the presenters. Subtopics like breaking stereotypes and promoting inclusivity will be discussed.

~~**Between the Lines: Navigating Identity as a Minority Within a Minority** | Arthi Vithiananthan | Noble and Greenough School~~ CANCELLED

What does it mean to belong, but not quite? Many of us straddle multiple cultural, ethnic, or linguistic identities, and often times our identities aren't accurately represented by the ideas typically evoked by broad labels like "Asian" or "Latino." This workshop will explore the challenges of holding onto identity in majority-dominated spaces, specifically the experience of being a minority within a minority, using the Sri Lankan Tamil identity as a case study. Whether it's language loss, cultural erasure, or the struggle for representation, we'll discuss how people across different backgrounds relate to these challenges and how we can reclaim space for our stories. Through discussion, storytelling, and interactive activities, we'll reflect on the complexities of belonging, both within and outside our own communities.

**Pretty Privilege: Analyzing Eurocentric Beauty Standards** | Avery Im | Phillips Exeter Academy

This workshop aims to attack society's eurocentric beauty standards by delving into the past, present, and future: how has the media's villainization of POC resulted in the pervasion of white divinity? What is "pretty privilege," and how has it manifested in society from a simple free dessert to a favorable jury decision? Will society continue to glamorize unattainable standards of physicality even as our nation continues to diversify? By investigating these questions, this workshop aims to address racial inequality and target BIPOC insecurity.

**A Constant State of Nepantla : Exploring Many Identities** | Asher Gupta | St. Paul's School NH

For third culture kids and minorities taking up many identities as we continue to grow, we find ourselves in a constant liminal space. Who are we? What rules are we meant to conform to in a seemingly fluid state of straddling many cultural identities? This workshop focuses on finding and sharing joy amidst the hybrid identities we take up each and every day, in and out of our homes and schools.

**From Eric Ou to Bobby Lee: Portrayals of Asian Americans in Social Media** | Victor Wang, Alvin Zhang | Middlesex

# AAFC 2025 Workshops at Tabor

Analyzing stereotypes associated with asians in social media. Topics include the impact of representation on public perception, the role of comedy in challenging or reinforcing stereotypes, and the ways in which social media has provided a platform for diverse narratives.

**Our Depiction in The Media** | Julia Liu, Cookie Danchaivijitr | Loomis Chaffee School

Asians and Asian Americans have long been underrepresented, misrepresented, and stereotyped in Western media—from the "dragon lady" and martial arts masters to the nerdy sidekicks and wealthy oriental socialites. But who creates these images? How do they impact our identity, perceptions, and opportunities? This interactive workshop dives into the roots and evolution of Asian and Asian-American portrayals in Western film. Through interactive discussions, critical media analysis, as well as a chance to pitch and design our own, more comprehensive film, participants will get the chance to both explore and reimagine the past, present, and future of Asian representation.

**Navigating Cultural Identity: Finding Belonging in Between** | Andrea Lo, Gray Liu | Tabor Academy

How do we balance the pressures of assimilation with the desire to stay true to who we are? Our workshop aims to create a space where we can openly discuss our experiences as individuals who may feel less represented in our school. We want to explore the challenges and nuances of navigating cultural identity, particularly when we may not fully fit into the dominant narratives or expectations within our own communities. It will be a safe space to talk freely on the subject and learn about each other's thoughts and experiences.

**A World on a Plate: How Food Unites Cultural Identities** | Celine Ding, Tiger Wu | Middlesex School

What is something everyone loves and cannot live without? Food. Yes, food serves as a powerful link to our culture, tradition, and identity. Our workshop will explore how food connects people to their own heritage and to others from all around the world. Growing up, every one of us had a different experience of food. In many Asian households, food was a means of spreading love. We want to use food was a gateway to dive deeper into the topic of Asian identity and open up the conversation about how food connects us back to our roots and our people.

Listed as Asian Influence on Global Economies: From Silk Road to Silicon Valley is now called **Rethinking Success and Identity in the Asian Experience**| Michael Huang, Alex Hu'26 | Tabor Academy

Rooted in the Confucian concept of *功名* (gongming), this workshop explores how the pursuit of achievement, honor, and recognition has shaped generations of Asian and Asian American identities. From ancient imperial exams to modern college admissions, the pressure to "make it" has become more than just a goal — it's often a measure of one's worth, family pride, and cultural belonging.