



Porcelain white faces with beautifully painted flowers, petals and a butterfly. Bright saturated colours of the clothes. Gracious movements of the hands. These are the students dancing at the Lantern Festival Fair. They look like dolls, posing with the beautiful masks of their faces. And after minutes, lanterns with the most bizarre shapes and sizes will rise high in the sky. Traditional globes, fish, dragons and goats will live in the blue sky.

- Lantern Festival in Guangzhou, China.
- It is celebrated on the 15th day of the first Chinese lunar month and traditionally ends with the Chinese New Year.
- Part of the Spring Festival, it marks the return of spring and symbolizes the gathering of the family. It can be traced back to 2000 years ago.
- Lighting and launching of lanterns is the main activity of the festival. When the festival comes, lanterns of different shapes and sizes - traditional globes, fish, dragons, goats, are released into the air.
- The art of lanterns shows bright traditional Chinese images such as fruits, flowers, birds, animals, people and buildings.
- Lighting lanterns are a way for people to pray and express their best wishes for their families. Women who want to become pregnant touch a lantern and pray for a child.





The light of a candle flashes from within the orange pumpkin, with its carved eyes and mouth. Down the street the masked children walking happily: a cardboard robot, a white sheet is ghost, a warrior knight, and a small man with a witch hat. In an old Celtic tradition, to protect themselves from the spirits, people put on Halloween costumes, light bonfires, make pumpkin lanterns, and hand out delicious candy. Nowadays Halloween is a favorite childhood feast and an opportunity for scary stories and dressing up in marvelous costumes. The costumes can be scary, or festive, or simply - very funny.

- Halloween or The All Saints' Holiday is celebrated on October 31st. Black and orange are the traditional colours.
- Originally people in Ireland and Scotland carved beetroots. Over time, they replaced those with pumpkins because they are much larger and easier to carve.
- The origin of the feast is related to the ancient Celts. They celebrated their New Year - Samhain in late October. They believed that this night opened the border between the dead and the living.
- In order to protect people, they lit fire in the fireplaces and tried to look as frightening as possible. People left food for the ghosts so they would not insist entering their home.
- In 853 AD, Pope Gregory IV established October 31 as Day of All Saints, a day of glorification to all Christian saints and martyrs.



These strange people, masked like horses, take part in the Russian feasts for Maslenica. The horses like heads and folklore dressing. Throughout Russia for seven days the Slavic people celebrate the end of the winter and the coming of spring. The famous parade ends up at a buffet rich with dishes of all kinds of pancakes. Mmm... pancakes with caviar, salmon and all kinds of sweet things like sour cream, jam, butter filling. The name Maslenica comes from “maslo”, meaning butter, because butter is used to make the appetizing treats for the holiday.



- Maslenica contains pagan Slavic and Christian traditions and is celebrated during the seventh week before Eastern Orthodox Easter.
- The most characteristic part of the festival is pancakes - the Russians celebrate "blin", which are round and gold pancakes made up of rich foods that are still admitted by Orthodox tradition.
- Dumplings are made from butter, eggs and milk.
- Another important part of the celebrations is horse riding, with which people in Russia meet spring.
- According to archaeological data, Maslenica has been celebrated ever since the 2nd century.
- Perhaps this is the oldest surviving Slavic holiday.
- In Slavonic mythology, Maslenitsa is a festival of the sun, embodied by the ancient god Volos, and a feast of the upcoming end of the winter.
- In the Christian tradition, Maslenica is the last week before the beginning of the Lent.



People masked like animals - a ram, a goat, and a bull, run with heavy footsteps and shout loudly with copper bells. The Kukeri procession, marking the new agricultural year, began in Pernik, Bulgaria. The skins of animals are worn on the bodies of their new owners - the young men of the village. They scare evil powers and spirits away in order to ensure fertility and a good year. They have preserved this tradition from the ancient Thracians, and the local people today anticipate with joy the kukeri and holidays related to the relationship between nature and man.

- The kukers appear in honor of the coming New Year, not in the calendar year, but in the agricultural year.
- The custom of Kukerism symbolizes the departure of the winter and the return of the new life, and its origins began 6,000 years ago.
- The word "kukeri" is of Thracian origin and means "tall, masked people". The root of the word kuker "kuk" means "height, curvature, high place".
- Most players in the Kuker Games wear high hats. They dress with a mixture of feminine and male clothes and wear fearful masks. The masks have a wooden construction. Multi-coloured threads, pieces of cloth, mirrors, and other elements stick to the mask. The mask must be ugly and terrible to "frighten" the evil. The oldest masks are in the form of a ram, a goat, and a bull. Some masks have two faces.
- Only men, bachelors, can participate in the custom. Kukers run like they sound as strong as the bells.





This heavy mask was made of gold, a precious substance that was believed to be the Flesh of Gods. It was made for an important person. People have always wanted to understand the world after death. In Ancient Egypt people believed that when a person dies the soul lives and returns to the body. This bright, sunny and yellow mask, that reminds us of the Sun, was made for him. Can you see the soul in there? The expression?

Every little detail on the mask has a meaning. The beard that looks like a pigtail wasn't real. It was worn on important occasions. It was a symbol of the gods and emphasized Tutankhamun's status as a living god. At the back of the mask there is a hieroglyphic inscription, a magic spell which protects the mask. People have translated the spell in English too!

- In Ancient Egypt Death masks were made in the likeness of the deceased.
- Early masks were made from wood, in two pieces and connected with pegs.
- Later for a lower class Egyptians used, so called, cartonnage, a material made from papyrus or linen and soaked in plaster and then moulded on a wooden mould.
- For royals death masks were made from precious metals, first of all – gold or gold leaves on bronze.
- Tutankhamun was only the age of nine when he became king of Egypt during the 18th dynasty of the New Kingdom (c. 1332–1323 B.C.E.).
- His tomb was discovered in 1922 by the archaeologist Howard Carter in the Valley of the Kings, in Egypt.
- The mask originally rested directly on the shoulders of the Tutankhamun's mummy inside the innermost gold coffin.
- It is constructed of two sheets of gold that were hammered together and weights 10.23 kg (22.6 lb).





This iron mask was called the Mask of Shame. The purpose of the mask was simple: to reveal to the community who has done the crime. Have you ever misbehaved and got punished? You were lucky not to live during the *medieval times* and the *Renaissance*. Back then people who talked badly behind people backs or had violent behavior were forced to wear it.

People saw it see it as a mask of torture because, the person wearing it couldn't eat, or drink because the mask has an iron bit, and any attempt to open the mouth ended with a pierced tongue.

How would you feel wearing it? What a relief and joy it must have been to finally take it off.

The mask was kept in a public place to remind people of the harsh consequences for inappropriate actions. It was reminder to others not to misbehave.

- Mask of Shame was used in Europe during the middle ages until 18th century.
- Comes from German *Schandmaske* – a “shame mask”.
- Germans added an iron bell to the design to draw attention to the gossip, thus making it more offensive.
- In Britain called “scold’s bridle” and mostly used on women.
- In Scotland, sometimes they were chained to the public square so that everyone could come by and abuse them.
- This device also travelled across the Atlantic to Americas.
- Masks were usually made of cold, unyielding metal, and were created in various mortifying designs.
- The masks were often made to look or sound silly and give folks an idea of the individual’s sin. For instance, some had donkey ears to signify a fool, or giant pig noses to indicate the person was “dirty.” Some even made whistling sounds every time the wearer exhaled—much to the amusement of onlookers.
- The length of time the mask was worn varied, but was upwards of 24 hours.



Every day you tell loads of stories to others. What if, to tell the story, you could only use movement and dance? Masks would be there to help you to get into the character because without them you would always be just yourself.

Topeng dance in Indonesia begins with an appearance of the characters that may not be related to the story. The rest of the play is played by four to five actors that wear masks that prevent them speaking. They play all the characters. Help comes from two narrators or jesters whose faces are only partly covered so they can tell the story from two points of view. During the performance you might see dance sections, fights and special effects. The story can be interrupted by including current events or local gossip to make people laugh.

How hard it must be to follow the story with so much going on stage. How skilled the performers must be to be able to get the message across!



- Topeng (in Indonesian “mask”) is a traditional Indonesian dance where one or more performers wear a mask.
- The music present in the show is performed by the band (“gamelan”) that usually includes xylophones, metallophones, drums, bamboo flutes and gongs. The singer can be involved too.
- Topeng dance is present on the Indonesian islands of Java, Bali and Madura. It is believed that it was first performed in the 15th century. There are several types of topeng – Balinese, Cirebon, Jogja, Surakarta, Betawi and Malang topeng.
- The most famous of all topeng dances is the Balinese topeng.
- Dancers wear masks and bright costumes that represent characters in the play.
- Some of the actors can have about 40 Topeng masks.
- Topeng dance originated from tribal dances that were held in the honor of ancestors. Dancers with masks were playing roles of messengers of gods. Later themes became wider.



Do you like carnivals? Dressing up and being somebody else? Not being recognized by anybody? Long time ago, people dressed up and put masks on their faces during social events. They became somebody else for several hours during that evening--people loved it. They had the freedom to be anybody! These events, called Masquerade balls, started about 500 years ago in Venice, Italy. People dressed in a different way, wondering whether they would be recognized or not. During the ball, people enjoyed dancing, and a banquet of food and drinks. It became a tradition and nowadays, every February in Venice, people dress up like the people back then and parade around the city.

- Masquerades include lots of music and dancing. They are used to entertain people who were invited. These big lavish parties always took place in the evening. The atmosphere was happy and lively, and the other things that made it so merry were the eating, drinking and gambling.
- You can still find masks lining the canals of Venice during the carnival and the occasional grand ball in the dance halls of France.
- Hiding one's identity is the theme behind wearing masks at masquerade events. No one would reveal who they are until well after midnight.
- Also normal citizens participated in the ball. It was a great chance for them to enjoy the event without worrying about social classes.
- The event turned out to become a “guess the guest” game.
- People usually wore humorous and extraordinary masks.



Imagine a country located far east of us: a country called Japan, that is completely surrounded by sea. It is a small country and it was very important for the people to grow crops by themselves. Growing crops successfully depend a lot on good weather. But Japan, being an island, has to suffer from occasional typhoons. The people needed help. They asked for help from a power they could not see—the gods. People in Japan worshipped the gods of nature. They asked the gods for good harvests and they invented a special way of making so by making ceremonies using masks. Talking to gods is a big deal. Gods are sacred and holy. A normal person cannot and should not talk to them. So people thought about making masks of the gods' faces to use them during the ceremony, so that at least the people can seem only "half-human". Masks are used to hide the people's uncleanness, so that they can communicate with the holy gods.



- Different kinds of dances such as lion dances, acrobatics, juggling, and a great variety of other entertainments were performed on stages at another type of Kagura (Daikagura).
- Some masks use Japanese thin paper as a material. Many others use wood. Nowadays, there are only a few specialized handworkers making these traditional masks.
- There are over 250 kinds of Kagura masks with the face of male and female gods, devils, farmers, foxes and other animals.
- The first Kagura recorded was seen in 807 A.D., seen from the historical book Kogoshuui.
- Kagura is done only in shrines, mostly at night time from 6 PM.
- Kagura has changed in many directions over the span of more than a thousand years. Today it is very much a living tradition, with rituals closely bound to the rhythms of the agricultural calendar.



What is he doing? Some of you might have seen him in accident scenes or even on TV. He is wearing a special kind of mask with glasses, plastic and tubes so that he can do his job safely. Usually, when a place engulfed in flames, you see and smell smoke. The smoke can even cause death when someone breathes it in for a long time. For a firefighter, entering a burning building can mean walking into difficult conditions like smoke, heat, flames and falling debris. This mask helps the firefighter to breathe in dangerous places where it is flaming hot and there is not enough oxygen. Since the mask is covering the whole face, it also protects the firefighters' eyes, allowing him to see almost 180 degrees.

- The whole equipment is called a self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA).
- The SCBA contains a air tank which the person carries on his back, a pressure regulator to set the right amount of air to breath in, and a connector with a mouthpiece and the face mask.
- Bunker gear or turnout gear is the term used by many fire departments to refer to the protective clothing worn by firefighters. The name "bunker gear" was derived from the fact that the pants and boots were traditionally kept by the firefighter's bunk at the fire station and ready for use. Firefighter gear has since moved out of the sleeping areas and into the engine room.
- The bunker gear includes: helmets, SCBA face piece, gloves, turnout pants, turnout coat, boots, two-way radio, flashlight, hood, ax, thermal imaging cameras and hoses.



Look at those masks, what do you see? What are they trying to express? Maybe the masks are representations of certain feelings, inner states, or certain type of characters?

Usually when we feel joy our face changes, lightens up, it is immediately visible; there is a sparkle in our eyes or a smile on our lips. The same thing is true with sorrow, anger, pain; we change. Imagine if we had to do a play right now and we had those two masks: which one would you chose for a young man, cunning, irresponsible, always ready for a joke on somebody's else account? Which one would be older man, sad, always complaining, maybe in pain, disappointed, afraid that he won't make it?

We humans are incredibly creative. We see the mask, and each one of us can tell a story, maybe a different but a personal story about what we see. That is beauty. That is art. We love to tell stories, we love to give interpretations and personal touches. A long, long time ago in ancient Greece, humans just like us, out of this same love, created theatre.



- The origins of theatre and of drama plays as we know them today are found in Ancient Greece (600BC to 400BC).
- The centre of theatrical performances and playwriting was Athens, where plays were performed as part of the religious festivities which took place every year in an amphitheater (semi circular theatre).
- There was only one actor on the stage at a time.  
He performed all the roles in a play and was changing his voice and appearance in order to match various roles.  
He could be a soldier, mother, merchant or a priest in a single play.
- For impersonation of these various roles he used a wooden or clay mask.
- Three most famous writers of that time were Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides.
- The first type of a play that was performed was a tragedy which was typically a tale that would have a sad or tragic ending.



- In ancient Rome when a wealthy person would die, his family would place warm wax on his face that would in a few hours stiffen and create a perfect imprint or mask of his face.
- In a funeral procession the deceased would be carried in a chair while the dancers wearing the person's death mask and ancestral masks would dance around and pantomime events from their lives.
- From such a wax mask artists would sometimes create a more enduring plaster mask.
- The mask would be later on kept in an honoured and sacred place in a family house where his loved ones would go to worship their ancestors and remember them.

Look at those masks, what do you see? People with eyes closed, relaxed, in peace. Do you think they are asleep? We humans like to trick time. When we love someone we want to have her picture in our wallet, or to draw her, to remember her always, or to have her near even when apart. We are afraid that we will forget, even though we have such an amazing memory. We close our eyes and we can recall and see people that we love, that are important to us. So just like us, people of the ancient Roman Empire wanted to remember and honor the loved ones who died. A long, long time ago there were no photos so they invented funeral masks. They were masks made of wax placed on the face of the one who passed away, to capture the imprint of the face to honor person and celebrate the life he or she had.

**Lantern Festival in Guangzhou, China**

**Halloween, USA**

**Maslenica festival, Russia**

**Kukeri festival, Bulgaria**

**Tutankhamun's mask, Egypt**

**Mask of Shame, Europe**

**Topeng dance, Indonesia**

**Masquerades, Venice, Italy**

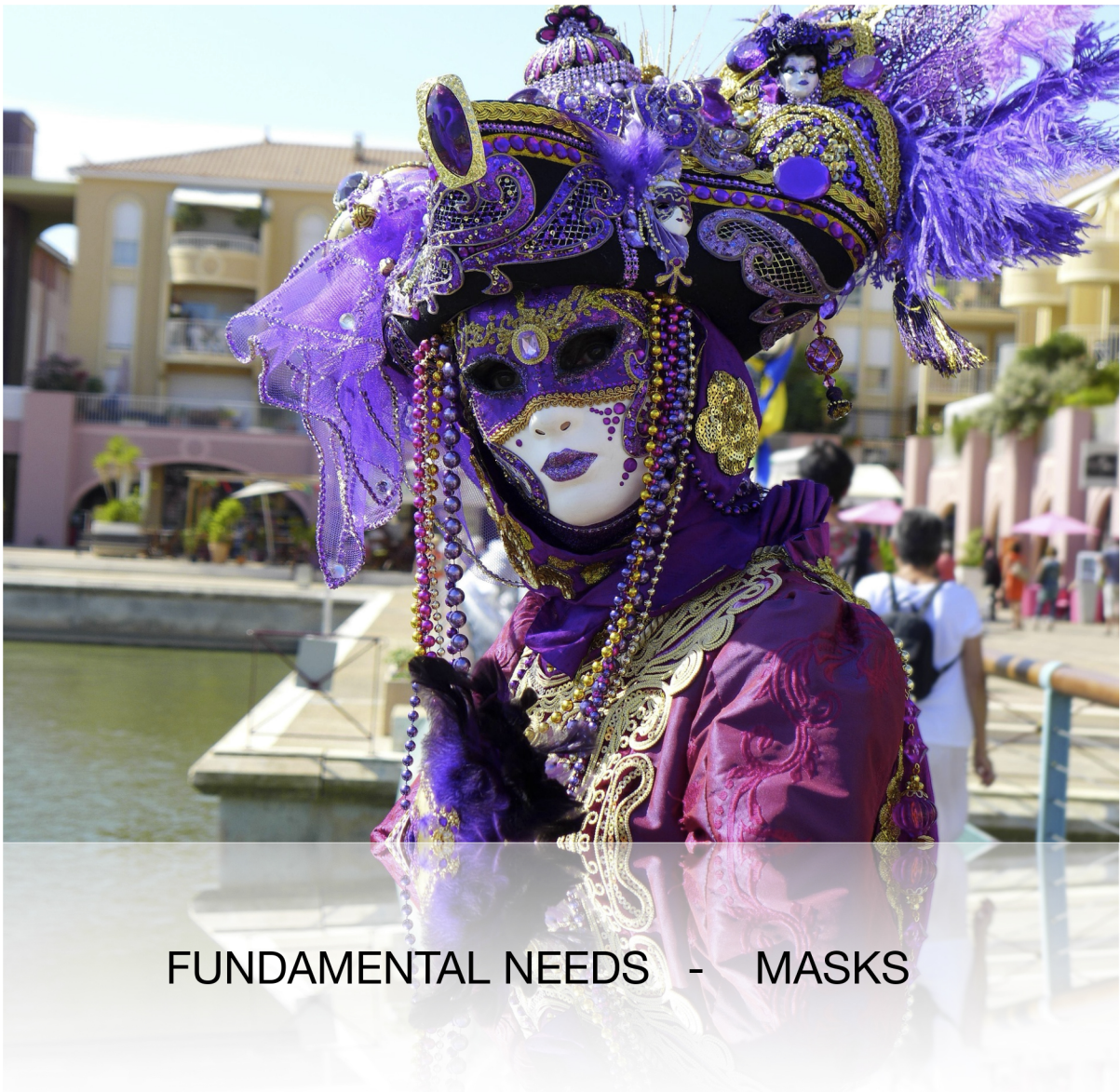
**Kagura masks, Japan**

**Self-contained breathing apparatus, USA**

**Theatrical performances masks, ancient Greece**



## Death masks, ancient Rome



FUNDAMENTAL NEEDS - MASKS