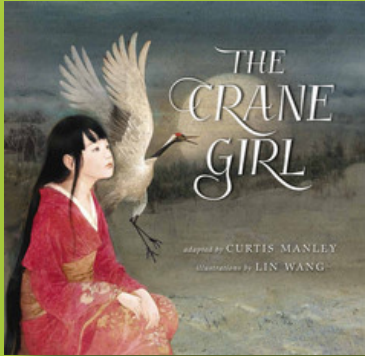


## TEACHER'S GUIDE



LEE & LOW BOOKS

# The Crane Girl

*written by Curtis Manley*

*illustrated by Lin Wang*

## About the Book

**Genre:** Fiction (Folklore), Poetry (Haiku)

**\*Reading Level:** Grade 4

**Interest Level:** Grades 1–4

**Guided Reading Level:** R

**Accelerated Reader® Level/Points:** N/A

**Lexile™ Measure:** N/A

\*Reading level based on the Spache Readability Formula

**Themes:** Kindness and Compassion, Nature, Poetry (haiku), Animals (Crane), Empathy, Respect, Gratitude, Greed, Impatience, Friendship, Folktales and Traditional Literature, Asian/Asian American Interest

## SYNOPSIS

While gathering firewood, Yasuhiro comes upon an injured crane hidden in the snow. He rescues and comforts the bird, then watches it fly away over the wintry hills.

The next night, a mysterious young girl arrives at Yasuhiro's home seeking shelter from the cold. The boy and his father welcome the girl, named Hiroko, to stay with them. But when Hiroko notices that Yasuhiro's father is struggling to earn money, she offers to weave silk for him to sell. After the fabric fetches a good price, the boy's father becomes impatient for more silk, and his greed has a life-changing effect on them all.

Lyrical storytelling deftly interwoven with original haiku create a magical adaptation of popular Japanese folktales—an inspirational story of friendship and the power of kindness to transform lives.



## BACKGROUND

### From the author's note:

**Crane Folktales:** Folktales were told and retold by wandering Japanese storytellers for hundreds of years. Storytellers often changed a tale for the specific audience they were entertaining. Even well-known tales have many versions that differ in details but share the same plot.

This adaptation of the crane story is based on several beloved folktales from Japan, where a multitude of retellings exist. In the West, only two versions are known well. In *The Crane Wife* (*Tsuru Nyobo*), a young man rescues a crane and then gives shelter to a mysterious young woman. They fall in love and get married, but when she begins weaving wonderful cloth, his greed and curiosity drive her away. In the version known as *The Grateful Crane* (*Tsuru no Ongaeshi*, literally “the crane’s return of a favor”), an old, childless couple gives shelter to a young woman, but again the crane leaves when her identity is discovered.

In other versions written down by Japanese folktale collectors in the early twentieth century, different animals—such as a wild duck, a wild goose, and even a white rat—take the place of the crane. These and many other collected folktales are described and discussed in *The Yanagita Kunio Guide to the Japanese Folk Tale*, edited and translated by Fanny Hagin Mayer (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1986).

An important theme in all these versions is the Japanese concept of *on*—an obligation that must be repaid. The rescued animal feels compelled to return the favor to the human who saved her life. When the human breaks the one agreement they have—to not look while she is weaving—the obligation ends; the animal gives up her human form and leaves her rescuer forever.

**Japanese Poetic Forms:** Haiku (pronounced “hi-koo”; the plural is also *haiku*) is the best-known form of Japanese poetry. In Japan, it is written in one line, vertically down the page. Elsewhere in the world, it is usually written in three short horizontal lines. Although many people are taught that a haiku must have a pattern of 5-7-5 syllables, this is not strictly true. In Japan, counting 5-7-5 refers to Japanese language sound symbols, which are different—and shorter—than English syllables.

Most contemporary poets who write literary haiku in

English do not try to force their haiku to fit the 5-7-5 rule. Instead, they try to keep their haiku no longer than about seventeen syllables (most often around ten to fourteen syllables) and pay more attention to including a reference to the season, using images based on one or more of the five senses, and presenting the poem in two parts (one of the parts being spread over two lines). The separate images or ideas of each of the two parts can interact in surprising ways—and can make a haiku very powerful even though it is such a short poem.

Other poetic forms are based on or related to haiku. Many poems that look like haiku are actually *senryu* (pronounced something like “send you”). Whereas haiku usually concern the seasons and tend to have a serious tone, *senryu* (singular and plural are the same) can be about human foibles and often poke fun. *Haibun* (“hi-boon”) is a Japanese term used for prose writing that contains one or more haiku or *senryu*—like this story. *Haiga* (“hi-guh”) combines a painting with a haiku in calligraphy. The type of poem at the end of the story, written by two people in collaboration, is known as a *tan-renga* (“tan-ren-guh”). Haiku is very popular in Japan, and nearly a thousand haiku clubs exist where members can improve and share their poetry. There are similar groups in the United States and other western countries, such as the Haiku Society of America, Haiku Canada, the British Haiku Society, and smaller regional and local organizations.

**Japanese Names:** Many Japanese names have special meanings. Yasuhiro can mean “honest” or “peaceful,” Hiroko can mean “generous child,” and Ryota can mean “stout” or “strong.”

**The Red-Crowned Crane:** The red-crowned crane (*Grus japonensis*) is the second-rarest species of crane. Fewer than three thousand of them remain in the wild. Many red-crowned cranes spend their summers in northeastern China and Siberia (eastern Russia) and then migrate to warmer areas for winter. One group of the cranes, however, lives year-round on the Japanese island of Hokkaido. Laws now protect those birds and the land they live on, and food is put out for them in winter fields and marshes. For hundreds of years, the Japanese people have considered the crane a symbol of happiness and long life. Songs, poems, and stories about the crane are popular, and wedding kimonos are often sewn from fabric woven with crane designs.



### VOCABULARY

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

The story contains several content-specific and academic words and phrases that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary below. Encourage a variety of strategies to support students' vocabulary acquisition: look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, create a specific action for each word, list synonyms and antonyms, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.

#### Content Specific

buckwheat, firewood, landlord, crane, feathers, hearth, kimono silk, loom, thread, fabric, scarf, market, weave, bean sprouts, bolt, merchant, village, gold, tofu, ginger, docks, burdens, dawn, marshes, sea, rivers, beaks

#### Academic

sharp, stubble, nearly, invisible, unharmed, shuddered, gently, soft, suddenly, wintry, pale speck, hurried, flight, shivering, frozen, bowed, warmth, unloading, returned, sadness, whispered, wove, finest, stroked, nodded, request, finer, boast, rhythm, paced, flecked, slammed, stumbled, darkness, bear, gazing, pluck, gentle, flew, sobbing, flap, clacked

### BEFORE READING

#### Prereading Focus Questions

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strands 4–5 and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

Before introducing this book to students, you may wish to develop background knowledge and promote anticipation by posing questions such as the following:

1. What do you know about folktales and folklore? What is the purpose of a folktale? What are they used for?
2. What is a *haiku*? What are some reasons that people write poetry? How do you think their reasons differ from people who write prose?
3. How would you define the word *greed*? What does it mean? How might someone act greedy?
4. What do you know about cranes?
5. What do you know about Japan?
6. What stories do you know about someone showing kindness towards someone else and having to repay that kindness or being in debt to someone's kindness? (e.g. Aesop's *The Lion and the Mouse* or *Rumpelstiltskin*)
7. Read the author's note about Japanese names' special meanings. Ask students to make predictions about the characters based on their names. At the end of reading the book, return to students' predictions to see if they were correct.

#### Exploring the Book

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strand 1, Craft & Structure, Strand 5, and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

Read and talk about the title of the book. Ask students what they think the title, *The Crane Girl*, means. Then ask them what and whom they think this book will most likely be about. What places or situations might be talked about in the text? What do you think might happen? What information do you think you might learn? What makes you think that?

Take students on a book walk and draw attention to the following parts of the book: front and back covers, title page, dedications, pronunciation guide, illustrations, author's note, and author and illustrator bios.

Point out that the pronunciation guide shows that each haiku is color-coded to reveal each character's unspoken thoughts.



## Setting a Purpose for Reading

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

Have students read to find out:

- Hiroko's obligation to Yasuhiro and Ryota
- how kindness can transform lives
- the consequences of taking advantage of someone's generosity
- what folktales reveal about culture
- poetry and prose forms of storytelling
- haiku poetry features

Encourage students to consider why the author, Curtis Manley, would want to share this story with young people and adapt a Japanese crane story for today's readers.

## AFTER READING

### Discussion Questions

After students have read the book, use these or similar questions to generate discussion, enhance comprehension, and develop appreciation for the content. Encourage students to refer to passages and/or illustrations in the book to support their responses.

**To build skills in close reading of a text, students should cite evidence with their answers.**

### Literal Comprehension

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3 and Craft & Structure, Strand 4)

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strand 4)

1. From whose point of view is the story told? From whose point of view is the haiku told? How do you know?
2. What does Yasuhiro find in the field? What does he do?
3. Why is the crane nearly invisible in the snow? What does this tell you about the crane?
4. How does the crane show its appreciation to Yasuhiro?
5. What does the girl at Yasuhiro's door want?

6. What agreement does Ryota offer the girl?
7. What does Ryota do for work?
8. Why does Ryota cry the name of Yasuhiro's mother?
9. What skill did Yasuhiro's mother have?
10. What does Hiroko bring to Ryota and Yasuhiro? How does Hiroko help them?
11. What is Hiroko's one request? What do Ryota and Yasuhiro agree to?
12. What is a *loom*?
13. How much does Ryota earn selling the silk fabric at the market?
14. What does Ryota do with the money he earns?
15. Why isn't Ryota working? How does he spend his afternoons?
16. What does Ryota demand of Hiroko?
17. Why is Hiroko taking longer than expected to weave the silk?
18. What agreement does Ryota break?
19. Why won't Ryota have to bear any burdens for a long time after selling the silk?
20. Why are the crane's feathers flecked with blood? What does Hiroko use to weave the silk fabric?
21. Why does Hiroko leave? What drives her away?
22. What happens to Yasuhiro after Hiroko leaves? What does he become?

### Extension/Higher Level Thinking

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3, Craft & Structure, Strands 4–6, and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strand 4–5)

1. How does the author differentiate voice in the haiku text?
2. Compare and contrast the haiku poetry to the prose in *The Crane Girl*. How are they similar? How are they different? Why do you think the author chose to use both haiku and prose to tell the story? What does the haiku help convey?



★“A popular Japanese folk tale in which a crane pays back an obligation by becoming human is retold with an unusual ending and with haiku-sprinkled prose.”

–*Kirkus Reviews*, starred review

“The language is straightforward and the illustrations add authenticity to the words, conveying the plot beautifully.”

–*School Library Connection*

### Did you know?

FACT: As with all cranes, red-crowned cranes (featured here in the story) pair for life. Both the male and female red-crowned crane help build the nest and protect the eggs.

3. What do the lines, “an animal’s sudden cry— its fear and mine,” mean? How does Yasuhiro feel?
4. Why do you think the author, Curtis Manley, chose a crane for this story? What is the crane’s symbolic significance in this story?
5. What does the line, “If you are lazy or steal from me, you cannot stay,” foreshadow?
6. What do the lines “cup by cup— his father swallows all the money” tell the reader about how Ryota spends his money?
7. How does Ryota break his agreement with Hiroko?
8. How does Yasuhiro rescue Hiroko? How does Hiroko rescue Yasuhiro?
9. Do you think Yasuhiro is compassionate? Why or why not?
10. Why does Hiroko offer to weave silk for Ryota and Yasuhiro? Why does she feel obligated to do so?
11. How does Ryota’s character change throughout the story? What events in the story cause or lead to this change?
12. What do the illustrations indirectly reveal about Ryota and Hiroko’s characters throughout the story? How do the illustrations change?
13. How does Hiroko’s kindness affect Ryota? Yasuhiro?
14. Compare and contrast how Ryota and Yasuhiro treat Hiroko. What does it reveal about their character?
15. How is Ryota’s greed rooted in fear? What is the deeper cause of Ryota’s greed?
16. How does greed affect Ryota? How does Ryota’s greed affect Hiroko and Yasuhiro?
17. Why does Ryota run away into the darkness? How do you think he feels?
18. How do you think Ryota feels after Hiroko and Yasuhiro leave?
19. What does Yasuhiro mean when he says “her love for me threaded through the silk”?
20. How does kindness transform Yasuhiro’s life?
21. What do you think allows Yasuhiro to transform into a crane?
22. What parallels exist between the beginning and the end of the story?
23. How does the haiku supplement the narrative story?
24. How does the haiku’s different perspectives help convey intense emotion? What do the different perspectives provide to the story?
25. Refer to the author’s note in the back of the book. How does haiku differ in Japan?
26. What elements of Japanese culture are present in the story?
27. What message does this story send about gratitude and greed?



## Reader's Response

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1 and 2 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4–6)  
(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strand 1 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4 and 6)

Use the following questions and writing activities to help students practice active reading and personalize their responses to the book. **Suggest that students respond in reader's response journals, essays, or oral discussion.** You may also want to set aside time for students to share and discuss their written work.

1. Describe a time you helped someone or someone helped you. Why did you or that person need help? How did this event make you feel? How did you or this person show appreciation?
2. Do kind acts need to be repaid? Does the receiver owe anything to the person performing the kind act? Why or why not? Have you ever done something kind for someone without expecting anything in return? Why? How did you feel? What are the different ways people can show their appreciation for kindness?
3. Is it always easy to be kind to others? Why or why not? What challenges does kindness sometimes need to overcome? Have you ever found it difficult to be kind to someone? How did you feel? What did you do? What advice can you give to others about being kind even when it is difficult?
4. Ryota takes advantage of Hiroko's kindness and becomes filled with greed. What do you think causes greed? What are the effects of greed? How does greed influence people's lives? How can people overcome greed and control their desires?
5. Revisit the author's note in the back of the book about crane folktales. What is the unifying theme across the different adaptations of the crane story? How does obligation drive or motivate people? What types of obligations do you have? How are intrinsic obligations different from external obligations?

## ELL/ESL Teaching Activities

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–6)  
(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

These strategies might be helpful to use with students who are English Language Learners.

1. Assign ELL students to partner-read the story with strong English readers/speakers. Students can alternate reading between pages, repeat passages after one another, or listen to the more fluent reader.
2. Have each student write three questions about the story. Then let students pair up and discuss the answers to the questions.
3. Depending on students' level of English proficiency, after the first reading:
  - Review the illustrations in order and have students summarize what is happening on each page, first orally, then in writing.
  - Have students work in pairs to retell either the plot of the story or key details. Then ask students to write a short summary, synopsis, or opinion about what they have read.
4. Have students give a short talk about the power of kindness and compassion or the message of the story.
5. The book contains several content-specific and academic words that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary. Expose English Language Learners to multiple vocabulary strategies. Have students make predictions about word meanings, look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, list synonyms and antonyms, create an action for each word, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.



## INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

(Introduction to the Standards, page 7: Students who are college and career ready must be able to build strong content knowledge, value evidence, and use technology and digital media strategically and capably)

Use some of the following activities to help students integrate their reading experiences with other curriculum areas. These can also be used for extension activities, for advanced readers, and for building a home-school connection

### English Language Arts

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strand 4, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9, Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1–2, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4–6)

1. In a graphic organizer, have students list the story elements and characteristics of the different types of folktales: *fairytale*s, *fables*, *myths*, *legends*, and *tall tales*. How are they similar? How are they different? In a paragraph, students should explain which type of folktale *The Crane Girl* is and use the evidence from their graphic organizer.
2. In a chart, have students define and describe the following Japanese poetic forms: *haiku*, *senryu*, *tanka*, *haibun*, *haiga*, and *tan-renga*. Then have students demonstrate the relationships between these words in a visual concept map ([http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/concept\\_maps](http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/concept_maps)).
3. Have students practice writing poetry with the All Together Now: Collaborations in Poetry Writing (<http://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson-plan/all-together-now-collaborations-poetry-writing#sect-introduction>) and Can You Haiku? (<http://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson-plan/can-you-haiku>) lesson plans from EDSITEMent, the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) website for K–12 teachers, school librarians, and students.
4. Ask students to write a series of haiku about gratitude, greed, or the power of kindness.
5. Have students complete a character analysis using a chart, such as this one from [ReadWriteThink.org](http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson167/CharacterAnalysisChart.pdf) for Ryota ([http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson\\_images/lesson167/CharacterAnalysisChart.pdf](http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson167/CharacterAnalysisChart.pdf)). What does the character say and do? What do his actions reveal? How do the illustrations portray him? How does Ryota change throughout the story? Why does Ryota change? Find specific examples from the story.
6. Ask students to imagine what comes next in *The Crane Girl*. In a new scene, have students consider answering: Does Ryota return to the house? What does Ryota do after Hiroko and Yasuhiro leave? How does Ryota feel about learning Hiroko is a crane and their departure? Does Ryota learn anything from the experience?
7. a.) Provide students with at least two different adaptations of the crane story, such as *The Crane Wife* and *The Grateful Crane*, to read, interpret, and analyze. In small groups, have students compare and contrast the following elements in various versions of the crane story in a chart: characters, settings, conflict, resolution, and themes.
  - b.) Ask students to select a different Japanese folktale to read, interpret, and present their findings to the class. What folktale elements are present? Describe and summarize the characters, setting, and events in the story. What is the overall theme or message? What does the story reveal about Japanese culture and tradition?
8. In small groups or as a class, have students create and participate in a Reader's Theater activity using *The Crane Girl*. Provide students with a script using the thoughts in haiku and dialogue in the prose to create character roles from the story: *Yasuhiro*, *the crane*, *Ryota*, *Hiroko*, *Hiroko as a crane*, *Yasuhiro as a crane*, and several *narrators*. Read through the script as a class and differentiate between dialogue and narration. Assign students various roles and have them reread and practice their parts with emotion and voice. Use the Reader's Theatre rubric for evaluation from [ReadWriteThink.org](http://www.readwritethink.org), a website developed by the International Reading Association and the National Council of Teachers of



English (<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/printouts/readers-theatre-rubric-30698.html>).

9. In teams of three, have each student write a diary entry from the perspective of Yasuhiro, Hiroko, or Ryota before and after Hiroko arrives. How does each feel before and after her arrival? What is life like for each character? What does each desire? How does each of their lives change after Hiroko arrives? How do you think Ryota feels after Hiroko and Yasuhiro leave?
10. Have students write a letter from the perspective of Ryota to Hiroko. How does Ryota feel about how he treated Hiroko? What does he want to say or express to her? How does Ryota explain his behavior to Hiroko? What does he regret or hope for?
11. Ask students to imagine that they are going to interview author Curtis Manley and illustrator Lin Wang of *The Crane Girl*. Students should design interview questions they would ask the author and illustrator if they were on a talk show, news show, or radio show. What do students want to learn more about in terms of the writing process, the illustration process, inspiration or research for the story, folktales, and haiku?
12. Have students read other books about haiku: *Poems in the Attic* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/poems-in-the-attic>), *Cool Melons— Turn to Frogs! The Life and Poems of Issa* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/cool-melons-turn-to-frogs-the-life-and-poems-of-issa>), and *Yum! ;Mmmm! ;Qué Rico! Americas' Sproutings* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/yum-mmmm-que-rico-americas-sproutings>). Ask students to compare and contrast each story to *The Crane Girl*. How are the stories similar and different? How does haiku tell or support the story?
13. Have students read other books about the power of kindness and friendship: *Under the Lemon Moon* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/under-the-lemon-moon>) and *Destiny's Gift* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/destiny-s-gift>). Ask students to compare and contrast each book to *The Crane Girl*. How are the titles connected? How do they

differ? What themes do they share? What lessons or morals do they teach?

14. Refer to the author's note about Japanese names. Have students explain in a paragraph whether or not these names for the characters are suitable. In a second paragraph, ask students to argue whether or not they think a character's name can allude to his/her destiny and why.
15. Have students investigate other folklore about someone showing kindness towards someone else and having to repay that kindness or being in debt to someone's kindness. For example, students may want to look at stories such as Aesop's *The Lion and the Mouse* or *Rumpelstiltskin*. Create a list of such stories and their countries of origins. To begin, consider the International Children's Digital Library (<http://en.childrenslibrary.org/>) and "Generosity of Spirit in World Folktales and Myths" from Learning to Give (<http://www.learningtogive.org/resources/generosity-spirit-world-folktales-and-myths>). As a class, reflect on why so many stories and cultures explore kindness and the obligations of repaying the kindness or paying it forward.

### Social Studies/Geography

(Reading Standards, Craft and Structure, Strand 4, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7 and 9)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1 and 2, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strand 4, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–6)

1. Have students research and create a concept map about Japan's culture and geography ([http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/concept\\_maps](http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/concept_maps)). Where is Japan located? What is the relative size and topography? What is the capital? What is the climate like? How does Japan's geography and climate influence agriculture and industry? What language(s) are spoken there? What are the traditional foods and customs? What are the traditional religions?
2. Using a Venn diagram, have students compare and contrast Japanese haiku to western haiku. How are they similar? How are they different? What are the characteristic elements and qualities? What are the guiding rules?





3. Have students research the history and origin of Japanese haiku. Using their research, ask them to create a timeline depicting the evolution of haiku in Japan. How did haiku develop? What are the characteristic elements of Japanese haiku? Who were some of the famous or influential Japanese haiku poets? How does contemporary Japanese haiku differ from traditional Japanese haiku? Consider starting with the book: *Cool Melons— Turn to Frogs! The Life and Poems of Issa* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/cool-melons-turn-to-frogs-the-life-and-poems-of-issa>).
4.
  - a.) Have students research the history and origin of the crane in Japanese culture and present their findings in a media presentation. What is the crane a symbol of in Japan? What does it mean? What is its significance and why is it a symbol? What are examples of crane symbolism in Japanese culture and history? What is the origin of crane symbolism in East Asia and Japan?
  - b.) Encourage students to select another Japanese folktale to read and research. What elements of Japanese culture and symbolism are found? What is the origin and/or significance of the symbolism? What influences of Japanese culture and beliefs are present?
5. Ask students to research the historical origin and symbolism of origami paper cranes in Japan. What is the origin of the one thousand origami paper cranes tradition? What does the paper crane symbolize? What is the significance and meaning of this tradition? How have paper cranes evolved to represent a symbol of healing and peace in Japan?
6. In a Venn diagram, ask students to compare and contrast a western adaptation of the crane story, *The Crane Wife* or *The Grateful Crane*, to a Japanese adaptation of the crane folktale, such as *The Crane Girl*. What is similar and different in terms of story structure, character, and theme? What cultural elements, customs, and symbolism are present?

### Science/STEM

(Reading Standards, Craft and Structure, Strand 4, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7 and 9)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1 and 2, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strand 4, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–6)

1. Have students research and create an informational poster or media presentation about the red-crowned crane. Describe their natural habitat, adaptations, lifespan, behavior and social patterns, feeding behavior, reproductive behavior, and role in the ecosystem. What do they look like? Where can they be found? What physical or behavioral adaptations allow the red-crowned crane to survive in its environment? What environmental or human threats do they face? What conservation efforts exist to protect the red-crowned crane? Visit the International Crane Foundation for more information (<https://www.savingcranes.org/species-field-guide/red-crowned-crane/>). Then ask students to present their findings to the class.
2. Prior to scientific investigation, many cultures have often used storytelling to attempt to explain natural phenomena, such as why the sun rises and sets, or in *The Crane Girl* how cranes came to mate for life. Share another folktale that explores why or how something came to be in the natural world and then have students investigate the scientific truth. Alternatively, students can create a story to explain something about the natural world, such as why cranes have long necks or how cranes became white.



## Art/Media

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)  
(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4–6)

1. Have students create origami paper cranes with the 1,000 Cranes Lesson Plan by Arts of Asia in Reach Program from the Allen Memorial Art Museum at Oberlin College (<http://www.oberlin.edu/amam/asia/crane/Default.html>).
2. Provide students with paper and painting materials to illustrate and publish their haiku from English Language Arts/Writing activity no. 3. Ask students to think about how they will visually represent their haiku. Encourage students to try *haiga*, which combines simple painting with a haiku in calligraphy, to illustrate their haiku.
3. Have students present their Reader's Theater performance from English Language Arts activity no. 7 to another class in the grade level or to a younger grade. Students can create invitations and posters advertising the coming performance.

## School–Home Connection

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strand 4)  
(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strand 2, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strand 4, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–8)

1. Have students write three or more pairs of haiku with a parent or guardian. The student and adult will agree on a subject(s) to write about for each pair of poems and then write his or her own poem. Each poem should be written and illustrated on a separate piece of paper. Bind or staple the completed poems together with a front and back cover to share with the class.
2. Ask students to interview a family member about a favorite folktale. What is it about? Who is involved? Where and when does the story take place? What happens? What is the moral of the story? Then have students retell and share the story to the class in their own words.
3. Help spread kindness and take the Random Acts of Kindness pledge for Random Acts of Kindness Week (in February) ([www.randomactsofkindness.org/](http://www.randomactsofkindness.org/)).

As a class, brainstorm a list of kind acts that the students would like to perform and encourage in their school, home, or community, and challenge them to complete at least two random acts of kindness from the list each week. Encourage students to document their acts of kindness in a reflective journal, and record how they felt when they performed or witnessed an act of kindness. What did you do, say, or see, and why? What, if any, was the reaction of the recipient of the act of kindness? How did you feel?

4. Have students interview a parent or guardian about kindness. How has someone's kindness helped or encouraged the person? How does the person use kindness to help or encourage others? How does receiving kindness compare to giving kindness? How does being kind make the person feel? Does the person ever find it difficult to be kind? If so, why? What can the person do to encourage the spread of kindness in the future?

## Additional titles to teach about poetry, including haiku:

**Poems in the Attic** written by Nikki Grimes, illustrated by Elizabeth Zunon

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/poems-in-the-attic>

**Cool Melons— Turn to Frogs! The Life and Poems of Issa** written by Matthew Gollub, illustrated by Kazuko G. Stone

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/cool-melons-turn-to-frogs-the-life-and-poems-of-issa>

**Amazing Faces** written by Lee Bennett Hopkins, illustrated by Chris Soentpiet

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/amazing-faces>

**Yum! ;Mmmm! ;Qué Rico! Americas' Sproutings** written by Pat Mora, illustrated by Rafael Lopez

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/yum-mmmm-que-rico-americas-sproutings>



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Curtis Manley** is a full-time writer and a member of the Haiku Society of America. He enjoys watching the behaviors of birds and other animals—whether in his backyard or in the forests, deserts, and canyons of the western United States. In his travels, he always hopes to see a sandhill crane. Manley grew up in western Pennsylvania, but now lives in the Seattle area with his wife and daughter. Visit him online at [curtismanley.com](http://curtismanley.com).

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

**Lin Wang** is a classically trained portrait painter with a Masters in Fine Arts from the Savannah College of Art and Design. Wang has loved to draw and paint since she was very young. She has illustrated several books for children, including Lee & Low's *Shining Star: The Anna May Wong Story*, praised for its enchanting illustrations by *Booklist*. Her work has been recognized by the Society of Illustrators Original Art Show. Wang lives with her husband and their children in the San Francisco Bay Area.

## ABOUT LEE & LOW BOOKS

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## ORDERING INFORMATION

### On the Web:

[www.leeandlow.com/contact/ordering](http://www.leeandlow.com/contact/ordering) (general order information)

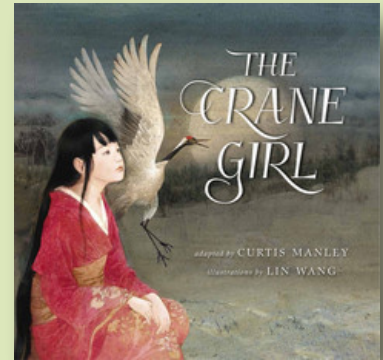
[www.leeandlow.com/books/the-crane-girl](http://www.leeandlow.com/books/the-crane-girl) (secure online ordering)

**By Phone:** 212-779-4400 ext. 25

**By Fax:** 212-683-1894

**By Mail:** Lee & Low Books, 95 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016

## Book Information for *The Crane Girl*



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32 pages, 10 X 8-1/2

\*Reading Level: Grade 4

Interest Level: Grades 1–4

Guided Reading Level: R

Accelerated Reader® Level/  
Points: N/A

Lexile™ Measure: N/A

**THEMES:** Kindness/  
Compassion, Nature, Poetry  
(haiku), Animals, Empathy,  
Respect, Gratitude, Greed/  
Impatience, Friendship,  
Folktales, Asian/Asian American  
Interest

### RESOURCES ON THE WEB:

[https://www.leeandlow.com/  
books/the-crane-girl](https://www.leeandlow.com/books/the-crane-girl)

*All guided reading level placements may vary and are subject to revision. Teachers may adjust the assigned levels in accordance with their own evaluations.*