

A visit to Sanskriti Museum

July 18, 2019



A visit to the Sanskriti Museum with our KG-C and KG-D students was scheduled for today (Wednesday July 18). It had been planned much in advance and we have been talking about museums over the past few days so that children can appreciate it better. It was raining very hard since morning. Though the rain, which gave us respite from the heat and humidity, was more than welcome we were worried that we might have to cancel our visit. Fortunately, we did not have to.

After the children arrived at school we had a short circle time in which the children talked about museums in general. Children said that: A museum is a place where you find old objects. Some shared their experiences of earlier visits to museums with family. 'I saw dinosaur. It was made of bones' said one. We discussed that the Sanskriti Museum has old objects made from clay, metal and cloth. We took a pledge that 'we won't touch the objects in the museum but we will see the objects and listen to what ma'am says'. And then we were ready to go.

On our way to the Museum

Sanskriti museum is located in Anandgram on MG Road. The bus started from school at 9.15 a.m. and reached Anandgram in about half an hour. The rain had taken a break then. On the way children were excited to see the train moving on the metro tracks. Some pointed out to lovely paintings on the walls of some metro stations.

Potter's workshop

At anandgram we got down from the bus and stood in a line while waiting under a beautiful banyan tree at the entrance. On our way to the pottery room we greeted the two terracotta horses standing at the gate. Inside the pottery room we saw people working with potter's wheels and trying to mold clay into lovely vessels. The children were very excited and some of them, when invited, touched the clay on the spinning wheel to get a feel of how the clay took shape. Some even asked a few questions to the artists at work. Others observed with keen interest.

Museum of Indian Terracotta

It started raining again when we were on our way to the terracotta section of the museum. Teachers and the bus bhaiyas held a large waterproof sheet like a moving canopy over the line/train we had made and guided us to the section. Here we saw very old terracotta objects from all over the country: very large pots which were used to store grains and pulses, clay pots which were used to cook food, other utensils, a beautiful water bottle, clay animals (cows, cats, dogs, mice, monkeys, tigers, lions, horses, elephants, deer, snakes, peacocks, other birds etc.,) and of course idols of many gods and goddesses. We also saw a village house. Most of the rooms in this section had mud floor. We also saw a large vessel from Manipur made by hand without the use of the potter's wheel.

Museum of Everyday Art

Next we entered the metal section. This section was divided into four parts according to the phases of human life starting from childhood to old age and very old metal objects were arranged accordingly: toys for babies, utensils for babies, pen, ink pots, other household items: pots and pans for cooking, instruments for grinding and cutting, containers for storing grains, pulses, water and spices; belan-chakki, plates, bowls, glasses, box for storing pan and betel nut), mirror, comb, hair pins, necklaces, jewelry, container for storing kajal, a tiger shaped vanity box, clock, photo frame, hand fan, walking stick, decorative items for home, huge bell used in temples, lock and key, diyas, incense stick holder, containers for puja offerings, human figures of different shapes and sizes in postures of everyday activities, figures of various animals and birds, figures of gods and goddesses. We also saw a large ceiling fan made of wood and cloth which was used when there was no electricity.

Museum of Indian Textiles

The textile section was small with cloth and clothing of various kinds from different parts of the country. The museum guide explained how cotton and silk is made, talked about vegetable colour and showed us saris, lehengas, shawls, chaddars, hankys. All these objects had beautiful designs in bright beautiful colours. We saw two small video clips on the process of making cloth, colour and clothing. We also saw some beautiful Madhubani paintings.

Different children enjoyed seeing different objects in the three sections. When some objects caught someone's imagination the person took a few extra minutes to stand in front and observe. Most were excited about the animal figures made of clay and metal and also the pictures of animals embedded in the designs on textile. They could identify the animals. The tallest boy took a good look at the earthen vessels for storing grains and identified the one he would fit in. Outside the museum sections some tried to have fun by jumping into the puddles and splashing water. Though a few curious souls pretended that they were about to touch some objects we kept our pledge and had a lovely experience.

Back to School

By the time we boarded the bus most children were hungry and some felt sleepy. They ate their tiffin in the bus and some did fall asleep. We were back to school by about 12.45 p.m.