

Kita Performing Arts Company



Soo Yeun and Sabrina as Fairies in the Moon from 'The Moon Lady',
Photo: Catherine Acin

Teachers' Notes for 'Performing Arts of China'

www.kitacompany.com

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About Kita

Kita Performing Arts Company presents traditional and contemporary performing arts of Asia. We are performers from different Asian countries who love to share our cultures with each other and our audiences. We are equally at home in professional theatre and in communities, schools and at festivals. Our performances are lively, colourful, interactive and educational.

Kita is an Indonesian word that means 'we'. We chose this word for our name because of its Indonesian meaning, and also because the letters of the word 'Kita' stand for our home countries; Korea, Indonesia, Taiwan and our new homeland of Australia. We met in 2001 when our original members were studying dance teaching and management at Box Hill Institute. Together with our lecturer Kim Dunphy, we formed our company. Since 2001 we have been busy performing in schools, at community and corporate events and creating our own professional works. We have been touring Victoria with Regional Arts Victoria Arts 2 Go program since 2003 and have performed to more than 30,000 students in that time.

In 2007, in addition our busy program of schools work and touring with RAV, Kita will undertake three community projects; an Artists in Schools project at Echuca West Primary School, and residencies at the Golden Dragon Museum in Bendigo and Artplay, City of Melbourne's childrens' artspace. We will work with local community members to share Asian culture and create new celebrations relating to Asian Harvest Moon Festivals.



Kita's aims

- to provide live theatre performances that are entertaining and educational.
- to offer Australian people exposure to the traditional culture and performing arts of our Asian neighbours
- to provide Asian performing artists opportunities to share their cultural heritage.
- to offer learning experiences through theatre that enrich a range of educational curriculum areas including performing arts, SOSE, (especially Asian studies), LOTE and English

Company member biographies

Kim Dunphy, Director. Kim first met the dancers who would become the founding members of Kita when she lectured in performing arts at Box Hill TAFE, and they were students. Kim's teaching experience covers pre-school to tertiary levels and professional development for teachers. Most recently she lectured in RMIT's Post-Graduate Performing Arts program and in 2007, will lecture in Deakin Uni's dance education program. Kim is also an experienced arts manager, having directed large scale performances for Ausdance, CERES Park, Brunswick and the City of Melbourne. Her project, 'A Stroll Through History' a Centenary of Federation event in the city of Bayside involving 1200 students from 16 schools, was awarded Bayside's Community Event of the Year in 2002. Kim has been a dance critic for *The Age*, and is the co-author of *Freedom to Move: movement and dance for people with intellectual disabilities* (Elsevier Reed, 2003). She regularly visits Asia to explore current cultural trends and gather new material. These trips are also shopping expeditions where Kim fills her suitcases with beautiful new costumes, props, musical instruments and ideas for the company. Kim's role with Kita involves management and artistic direction.

Sabrina Wei-Lung Chou is a singer, dancer and actor from Taipei, with extensive performing experience including a residency as principal actor and dancer with the Taipei National Theatre, with whom she performed extensively all around Asia and Canada. She has a Bachelor of Dance (Hons) from the Chinese Culture University of Taiwan and a Post-Graduate Diploma of Choreography from the Victorian College of the Arts. Sabrina is a regular performer and teacher in the Chinese community in Melbourne. She travels all around Australia to train dancers and community members to perform traditional Chinese arts for religious and cultural celebrations. In addition to her work with Kita in 2006, Sabrina choreographed and directed the Chinese performances for Chinese New Year in Melbourne city and worked with the City of Boroondara as a resident artist and performer for the Lantern Festival. Sabrina choreographs our Chinese and Vietnamese material.

Seung Hi Lee from Busan, Korea, has trained intensively in modern/contemporary and traditional dance at Busan Woman's College. Seung Hi began her career in 1994 as a dancer on a variety of projects and toured nationally with Busan's *Hang Kyung Modern Dance Company* before coming to Australia. She is a graduate of DanceWorld Performing Arts Certificate course, Box Hill Institute's Diploma of Dance Teaching and Management and Victorian College of the Arts' Masters in Choreography. Since 2005, Seung Hi has been busy with a range of projects near her home in Bendigo. These included a very successful Artist in Residence project at Flora Hill Primary School, a collaborative contemporary dance project with Japanese-Australian Koto musician in Bendigo's Allan's Walk Artist Run Space and choreography and direction of Asian cultural performances for the Bendigo Multicultural Festival. In 2007, she will be the lead artist for our residency at the Golden Dragon Museum in Bendigo. Seung Hi, together with Soo Yeun You, is responsible for Kita's Korean programs.

Soepri Soehodo is an experienced dancer and teacher of traditional and contemporary Indonesian dance and an accomplished Indonesian drummer and gamelan player. He first came to Australia in 1990 to study choreography. Soepri has since choreographed, directed and performed in many Indonesian performances including a series with the School of Music, Conservatorium Monash University, a recent collaboration with international touring artist Wahyu Roche and a special west Javanese event at Asialink. He has performed in festivals such as Moomba, Fringe, Festival of the Southern Ocean and he regularly choreographs and directs performances for Melbourne's Indonesian Cultural Festival. Soepri has worked as an Artist in Residence as part of Arts Victoria's Artists in Schools scheme and is also an experienced teacher and writer on Indonesian language and culture. Soepri is responsible for the development of new material for our Indonesian programs.



SooYeun from Korea, Soepri from Indonesia and Sabrina from Taiwan in traditional costumes

Soo Yuen You is a traditional dancer and choreographer from Seoul in Korea who has performed widely throughout Asia, Europe, the US and Australia. She has dance and physical education teaching qualifications and has been a teaching and research assistant at the College of the Arts in Korea. Soo Yeun began her Masters studies in Choreography and Performance at Han Sung Korean University and completed her Post-Graduate studies in Choreography at the Victorian College of the Arts in 2004. Soo Yeun's performing credits in Australia include her own work, *'Traces'* presented as part of the Melbourne Fringe Festival 2005 and a solo improvisation presented as part of DanceCard season at Dance House in 2006. She was one of six Australian dancers selected by P:Media Arts Company (Quebec, Canada) to perform *'Ray of Glass Needles'* in the Next Wave Festival in 2006. With Seung Hi, Soo Yeun has choreographed and directed Korean performances for Lunar New Year Festival in Melbourne since 2004.

In 2007, Soo Yeun will collaborate with indigenous choreographer Gina Rings in a new project, *'Reliquary'*, that will draw on traditional ritual dance forms and explore the similarities and differences between Korean and Australian indigenous cultures, especially their spiritual beliefs. Soo Yeun, together with Seung Hi, is responsible for Kita's Korean programs

Teachers' comments about our performance

*'All teachers were impressed with the rapport the performers had with the children. Use of audience participation was fabulous!
The children got a real buzz out of this'*

Our Lady of the Assumption School, March 2006

*'Student participation was excellent. Really good appeal to different age levels.
A quality performance'*

Elizabeth Northwood, Rangebank Primary School, September 2006

*'All teachers thought that the performance was interesting and entertaining.
Student participation was excellent. This fitted in well with our LOTE basic
understanding and increased students' knowledge of Asia'*

Macarthur Primary School, April 2006

*'Staff and students greatly enjoyed the performance. Costumes were colourful
and the music was great. I would recommend it'.*

Judy Summons, Balwyn Primary School, October 2006

*'All staff believed the entertainment and cultural value is high and the value to
students overall is excellent. Thanks a lot, Kita. Great work'*

Mont Albert Primary School, November 2006



Kita performers at Chinese New Year Festival

Origins of Chinese Dance

Chinese dance dates back nearly 5,000 years. In old China, dancers belonged to the slave class and their chief function was to perform in the courts for royalty and the nobles. As in most cultures, Chinese dance is closely linked to and reflective of life experiences and concerns. Dances can be divided into four main categories

- ceremonial, for praying to the gods for bountiful harvests,
- dramatic, for reporting and commemorating historical events,
- martial, for demonstrating fighting techniques, and
- agricultural, for celebrating nature and work.

The Han make up the majority of China's population. The rest of the population is made up of 55 ethnic groups, which includes larger minority groups such as the Mongols, the Dai, and the Miao. Each of these cultural groups has its own history, and language, distinct customs and style of dress and rich and distinctive dance tradition. Nearly 1,000 folk dances that reflect the lifestyles and customs of a people are performed throughout the nation.

Among the most common are the Han people's much beloved Yangge Dance, Dragon Dance and Lion Dance, the Colourful Lantern Dance and the Flower-Drum Dance, where the performers accompany themselves with drums. The Miao (also known as Hmong) people of southwestern China developed a lively form of responsive singing and competitive dance. Because of their island environment, the aborigines of Taiwan created hand-holding line dances as part of a harvest ritual. Other ethnic dances include the vigorous Mongolian Andai Dance; the Xianzi Dance, a Tibetan dance where the dancers wave their long sleeves; the Sainaimu Dance, an enthusiastic Uyghur dance with a characteristic neck movement; the Yi people's Courting Dance, where the dancers dance while clapping their hands; the Dai people's graceful Peacock Dance, marked by the undulations of the waist; the Korean people's Fan Dance; the Miao people's Reedpipe Dance; the Yao people's Long Drum Dance; the Li people's Straw Hat Dance; the Zhuang people's Shoulder Pole Dance; and the Tujia people's Hand-Waving Dance.



Sabrina leads participants at Chinese Kite Festival

Chinese orchestras include percussion, string and woodwind instruments. Traditional music has a distinctive sound, mainly due to the use of the pentatonic scale (which sounds as though one were playing only on the black notes of the piano). Although the western scale is now popular in China, the music does retain the traditional pentatonic sound. Gongs and drums play an important role in Chinese music, and many of the instruments are modern variations of stringed instruments that have been popular for centuries.

‘Performing Arts of China’.

Kita's repertoire of Chinese dance, music, martial arts, song and drama includes classical, folk, traditional and contemporary items. We create tailored performances and workshops so that our programs are suitable for the interests of the audience, the space, the format and the budget. We are experienced at creating shows for festivals, community and corporate events, preschool, primary and secondary schools and for teachers' professional development. The performance we create for you will include items from the repertoire described in these notes.

Our performances can be for viewing only or be designed to encourage participation from audiences. Participants might learn a ribbon dance like a fairy from the Moon Palace, play the role of one of the Ten Burning Suns or create the Parade of the Lion for Chinese New Year.

VELS Links:

LOTE	Asian culture	Dance	Music
Intercultural knowledge and understanding		Community engagement	

Preparation for our performance

Some ideas to enhance student's understanding of our program:

- Read through the stories in the notes, which give much more detail than our narration will on the day.

- Asian map exploration

Look at a map of Asia and identify the countries Kita members come from; Korea, Indonesia, Taiwan and China, particularly China as the focus of our performance.

- Vocabulary: Introduce these new words:

performing arts	performance	backstage
martial arts	feast	harvest
festival	celebration	valiant
Emperor	Heavenly	Archer
worship	palace	wealth
legend	silk	robes
consort	mirroring movements	

Dance-dramas- (most suitable for Primary and Junior Secondary age groups)

'The Farmer and the Monkeys in the Forest'

This story tells how a simple farmer turned the tables on a group of bold monkeys. It is the kind of story that Chinese grandparents tell their young ones at bedtime to warn them not to become too big for their boots. Chinese grandparents want children to stay humble, so that they keep on learning at school and at home and keep listening to the wise advice of their elders.

One fine day, a Chinese farmer set off for market carrying his basket full of hats for sale. As the day grew hotter, the Farmer's basket seemed heavier, so eventually he stopped to rest under a tree. He soon felt sleepy, and before long, dropped off for a nap. While he dozed, a cheeky Monkey climbed down from the nearby forest to investigate. The Monkey poked and prodded at the Farmer to try and wake him up, but the farmer dozed on. Eventually the Monkey found something of more interest than the Farmer- a bamboo hat from the Farmer's basket. As the Monkey pranced around with the hat pretending to be a Farmer himself, the Farmer was disturbed from his nap.

The Farmer became quite upset at the Monkey's antics. He tried everything he could to get the hat back from the Monkey, to no avail. The Farmer became angrier and angrier and began to chase the Monkey. They both tumbled over the basket, and in a moment, the whole collection of hats came tumbling out. The Monkey was first surprised and then excited to see so many hats. He called to his monkey friends in the forest and they all came jumping down. Soon all the monkeys had taken hats and were teasing the farmer by mirroring his movements.

The Farmer realised that he would never be able to catch the Monkeys, as there were so many of them and they were so nimble. He needed to use his wits to outsmart them. In one swift movement, the Farmer threw his hat into the basket. The Monkeys, thinking that they were being cheeky, mocked the Farmer and threw their hats into the basket too. The moment all the hats were in the basket, the Farmer quickly closed the lid. He shouted 'Ha hah!' to the astonished Monkeys, put his basket over his shoulder and continued on his way!

Photo: the Monkey meets the Farmer on his way



Discussion topics:

These questions could be adapted to be relevant to dance pieces. They could stimulate children's reflection on the story, Kita's presentation and the artistic elements of the performance including choreography, music and design. This could lead to development of original stories and choreographies

Discuss what you remember of 'The Farmer and the Monkeys in the Forest'

- What was your favourite part of this dance? Why?
- Can you retell the story? Where was it set? (where were the farmer and the monkeys?)
- How did the characters move? Can you describe or demonstrate any of the movements they made?
- What did they wear? What props did they have?
- How did they relate to each other? Were they friendly? Unfriendly? Happy sad? Angry?
- How did you know this: what kind of movements and facial expressions gave you these clues?
- What kind of music accompanied the dance?

Creating your own story

- Could something like this happen in Australia?
- What kind of creatures might tease a farmer in Australia?
- What kind of place would this happen?
- What would this story be called?
- What would the characters wear?
- How would they move?
- What would their props be: what would an Australian farmer take to market and how would he carry them?

Activities:

Research Projects:

Asian studies:

There are many Asian stories and dances about Monkeys. This one was from China but there are others from countries such as Indonesia, Korea and Malaysia. Find out all you can about other Monkey stories from Asia. Why do Asian people make stories about Monkeys? What other animals are featured in stories from Asia?

SOSE:

In Australia, many traditional stories, especially those told by Aboriginal storytellers, are about our indigenous wildlife including kangaroos, wombats, emus and lizards. Aboriginal performers often dance about Australian animals as well. Find out everything you can about stories and dances that feature Australian animals.

Story-writing and dance-making:

These ideas could be turned into your own story or your own dance about your characters. First, write all your ideas down to make a story. Then when you are happy with your story, you could turn it into a dance.

Create your own choreography:

Create a dance to show how creatures in Australia might tease a farmer. Some ideas to help you choreograph a dance are given in the notes following the story of Na Zha (see next pages)

'Na Zha and the Dragon King'

This legend goes back 3000 years.



The military general Li Jing and his wife had three very brave sons. The youngest son, Na Zha, was the most special of the three. It was said that Na Zha was in his mother's womb for three years and was born with special treasures including a golden universe ring, which followed him from the day he was born and a firewheel, which he could throw and catch as fast as lightning.

This picture shows Na Zha as a cartoon character. He is always dressed to look very cute, almost girl-like, with buns and ribbons on his head.

Na Zha heard that Dragon King from the Sea Palace had many special magic weapons, so he decided to pay the Sea Palace a visit. Na Zha hoped to play with the weapons and meet the magical creatures who lived there as soldiers and servants of the Dragon King. These creatures looked like humans even though they were sea-creatures and lived underwater.

On the way, Na Zha stopped at the seashore close to the Dragon Palace and began to play with his magic ribbon in the water. The red dye from the ribbon made the sea turn bright red, and its movement caused the Sea Palace to shake all over. The Dragon King became upset at this intrusion and ordered his Scallop and Turtle Soldiers, assisted by an army of small fish, to go and investigate.



Na Zha told the creatures that he wanted to play with the Dragon King's weapons, so they brought him many to choose from. He didn't like any of the weapons they presented, but instead chose a special magic stick, which turned out to be the Dragon King's favourite weapon. The magic of this stick allows it to change size, so that it can become both small enough to fit instead an ear, as well as big enough to hold up a Palace. Unfortunately, this stick is also part of the support for the Dragon Palace building. If Na Zha were to take this weapon, the Palace would fall down.

The Dragon King tried to stop Na Zha taking the stick, but couldn't get hold of it. To increase his power to challenge Na Zha, the Dragon King changed back into his original form of a Dragon. Again and again he tried to reclaim the stick from Na Zha, but each time he failed. Na Zha hid and teased the Dragon.

In the end, Na Zha escaped with the stick and the Dragon King was left angry.

Activities:

Science activity: Sea-creature studies.

The Dragon Palace dance includes sea creatures that live in the sea near China. Research what other creatures live in the sea near China and those that live near you in Australia. What are the differences and what are the same?

Visual art: Draw your creature.

Make sure you think about the colours of its body, its shape and the feel of it. Does it have scales or smooth skin? You could also draw its environment- show whether it lives in rockpools, in a cave or perhaps it too lives in the Dragon Palace.



The sea-creatures battle Na Zha

Dance: Choreograph (create) your own dance about underwater sea creatures.

Using the movements of the sea creature you have chosen, you could create your own sea creature dance. Remember the movements you saw Turtle and the Scallop making. Your sea creature might make some of these movements, or it might make some different ones.

Moving words: Begin by thinking of words that describe the way your creature moves. Write these down. Developing a movement repertoire: Then one at a time, try making these movements- how can you use your body to show the way your creature moves?

Create a movement sequence: Now think about how those movements could be connected to create a sequence. What would the creature do first? Then? And after that?

Dance form: solo or group work

Then decide whether you want to make a solo dance (by yourself) or work with other classmates to create a group dance. A small group, between 3-4 people is usually best for beginning choreographers.

A starting point:

Think about where your creature might be at the beginning of the dance. Decide the shape you will make in that place: will you be tucked inside your shell perhaps, or peeping out from behind a rock? Decide what movements you want to include in the dance- for example, will you be searching or finding some food?

In the middle:

Group work: Will all the creatures in your group make the same movements at the same time, will some of them be doing the same thing but before or after the others? Will some be doing different movements?

Experiment with different combinations. You can make the same sequence of movements over and over in your dance, or you might like to make lots of different ones.

Movement qualities: Make sure you use your movements to show the qualities of the creature's movements that you are thinking about. That is, show how the bird moves.

Body parts: what part of the creature's body moves; fins, shell, head, eyes? How do they move: do the fins flap, do its eyes swivel, does its body stretch out and in?

Dynamics: Are the movements you are showing quick or slow? strong or light? direct or indirect? bound or free flowing?

Levels: does the creature swim high, low or in between?

Space: does the creature swim fly all around the sea or does it have a particular pathway or direction?

Relationship: does the creature swim by itself, or in a group or school?

Finishing your dance:

When you have included all the movements you would like to make, or when you feel your dance is long enough, you need to think of a way to finish it. What shape would you like to make for the end: the same shape as at the beginning or a different one? Where will you be when you finish: do you want to be back where you started or in a different place? Will all the creatures be in the same place, or in different positions? Make sure you come to a complete stop and hold your position for at least 10 seconds at the end so your audience knows that your dance has finished.

Music accompaniment: find some music to accompany your sea creature dance. You might find some recorded music that is suitable for a dance about the sea, or you may have some classmates who could make some music for you.

The Moon Festival, China

The August Moon Festival or Mid-Autumn Festival is one of the biggest holidays for Chinese people. It is held on the 15th day of the 8th lunar month, which is celebrated in Australia on the 15th August. On this day, which comes at the end of the harvest season, Chinese families celebrate the end of the harvest season with a big feast that includes all kinds of delicious food, especially mooncakes. Friends and relatives also send mooncakes to each other as a way of giving thanks.

Chinese legends say that the moon is at its brightest and roundest on this day. Family members enjoy a holiday to gather together to sit and watch the moon. Under the bright autumn moon, friendships are made and renewed. It is a perfect time to fall in love. Chinese poets write about long lost lovers finding their way to each other on this special night.

The August Moon Festival is often called the Women's Festival. The moon symbolises beauty and elegance. While Westerners worship the sun (yang or male) for its power, people in the Far East admire the moon. The moon is the 'yin' or female principle and it is a trusted friend. In fact, many ancient August Moon folktales are about a moon maiden. On the 15th night of the 8th lunar moon, little children on earth can see a lady on the moon. On this magical occasion, children who make wishes to the Lady on the Moon will find their dreams come true.



Kita dancer Ruby as Chang Er, The Moon Lady

Reference: Bet Key Wong ,
www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0811826767/asianfamilycom

There are many Moon festival stories that explain how the Lady came to live in the Moon. On the 15th of August, Chinese parents tell their children stories about her. The dance Kita performs is based on this story below:

'The Legend of the Moon Lady: Hou-Yi shoots the Sun'

Long, long ago, there were ten different Suns. They came out one by one, so that on each day, only one sun was in the sky. But the suns began to feel lonely when they were out in the sky, because they were always on their own with no playmates. So one night they hatched a plan. Each day for the next ten days, after the sun came out, it didn't go home to bed, but stayed burning brightly in the sky. After ten days, all the suns were shining all day and night long. The Chinese people were feeling very worried about this, as they were very very hot and they couldn't sleep without the cool darkness of night. Plants began to die from the heat and the water began to dry up.



Sabrina and Ten Burnings Suns at the North Richmond Autumn Moon Festival

The people called upon the famous archer, Hou- Yi, to save them by shooting the suns down from the sky. Hou Yi did as requested and shot nine of the suns down so that order was restored to the land again. The people were so grateful to him for saving them that they made him their King.

Unfortunately, Hou-Yi did not use his kingly power wisely and began to treat his people very badly. He enjoyed being King so much that he began to look for the secret to eternal life, so that he could stay in power for ever. He got a chemist to make a special tablet, the Pill of Immortality, so that he would never die. Hou-Yi's wife Chang Er was very worried about this tablet, as Hou-Yi was such a cruel and despotic King. She thought that if Hou-Yi stayed King forever, he would eventually starve or kill all of his people. When the chemist produced the Pill for Hou-Yi, Change Er quickly took it and swallowed it before Hou-Yi had the chance to take it. Her body became so light that she floated up to the Moon, where she lives forever as the Lady in the Moon Palace. Chinese people look up Chang Er, the Moon Lady, and feel grateful because she saved their lives. Living with Chang-Er in the Moon Palace are many beautiful Fairies. They are dressed in silk robes, so that when they move, the silk floats and looks like clouds. In Kita's dance, the silk ribbons symbolise the silk robes worn by the Fairies in the Moon.

Here is another story about The Moon Lady.

It has the same characters, but some parts of the story are quite different.



Long long ago, there was a beautiful lady named Chang Er who was married to the heavenly archer Hou Yi. They did a lot of very brave and kind things together to help the people on earth, the most famous being saving the earth from the Ten Suns that scorched the earth. One time, after they built a big new jade palace for the Queen Mother of the West (Xi Wang Mu), she rewarded them by giving them a special magic Pill of Immortality, saying, 'If you eat this magic pill, you will live forever. But you can't eat it right away. It has very strong magic, so you have to wait one year and eat special foods and sit quietly (fast and meditate) to get your body ready for the magic.'

Hou Yi took the pill home and told Chang Er about it. Then he put it in a secret hiding place until they were ready to eat it. But after three or four days, Chang Er wanted to take a closer look at the magic pill. So she took the box out from its hiding place and opened it up and took out the pill. It was so beautiful, like a pearl, glowing white from the inside with a rainbow of colour shimmering just under the surface, and it smelled like peaches.

Hou Yi came in and found her holding the pill and asked, 'What are you doing?'. Chang Er hid the pill behind her back and said, 'Nothing'. He said, 'Are you eating the Pill of Immortality? We're not supposed to eat it until after one year. It's too strong.' She said, 'No, I'm not eating it.' He said, 'Let me see your hands.' She took one hand out from behind her back. He said, 'Let me see your other hand.' She switched the pill and showed him the other hand. He said, 'Let me see both hands.'

Chang Er didn't know where else to hide the pill, so she quickly popped it in her mouth and showed him both hands and mumbled, 'See, nothing.' She was so afraid of getting in trouble that she began to run away from Hou Yi. He chased her around the room; on top of the tables, under the chairs and around and around, until, 'gulp,' she accidentally swallowed the magic pill. Her body suddenly felt weightless, and it began to glow with a bright light and she started to rise up into the air. He said, 'Where are you going? Come back down!' She said, 'I'm sorry, it was an accident! I didn't mean to swallow it. I was just looking at it!'

The window was open and she floated out the window. He couldn't reach her, but he saw her pet, Jade Rabbit, sitting on the porch looking up at her, and he tossed the rabbit up to her so that she wouldn't be all alone wherever she was going. She caught Jade Rabbit in her arms and shouted, 'Bye bye!' And she floated up up up to the moon, where she lives until this day in the Cold Palace of the Moon.

People say that when the moon is full, you can see them there. The Jade Rabbit is busy pounding a new elixir of immortality. And on the night of the Moon Festival, you can look up at her on the moon and ask Chang Er for a secret wish...

English activity:

Compare and contrast these two stories:

What were the differences between them? Which one did you like the best? Why?

Research project:

Can you find any more stories about the Moon Lady, or other stories about the Moon? Many other Asian cultures have moon stories.

Discussion topics:

These questions could be adapted to be relevant to all dance pieces. They could stimulate children's reflection on the story, Kita's presentation and the artistic elements of the performance including choreography, music and design. This could lead to development of original stories and choreographies

- Discuss what you remember of 'The Moon Lady'
- What was your favourite part of this dance? Why?
- Can you retell the story?
- How did the characters move? Can you describe or demonstrate any of the movements they made?
- What did they wear? What props did they have?
- How did they relate to each other? Were they friendly? Unfriendly? Happy sad? Angry?
- How did you know this: what kind of movements and facial expressions gave you these clues?
- What kind of music accompanied the dance?
- Could something like this happen in Australia?
- What kind of place would this happen?
- What would this story be called?
- What would the characters wear?
- How would they move?

Story-writing and dance-making

Write your own story to explain why and how the Moon Lady ended up on the Moon. You might like to set the story in Australia – and have Australian characters in the story with her. These ideas could be turned into your own dance about your characters.

Activity: Dance-making:

Create your own dance to tell your story

Think about the movements you saw Kita performers make in 'The Moon Lady' performance including:

- body movements (leaps, spins, turns)
- levels (high, medium, low)
- patterns in the air and on the ground (figure 8, spirals, zig-zags, circles)
- dynamic qualities (fast/slow, strong/light, free/bound flow)
- relationships: how the dancers worked together (close/far, same/different, in front/behind/side by side,
- question and answer (one dancer responds to another's movement),
- moving in canon (dancers repeat the same movement after each other)

How were the dancers' feeling when they were performing this dance?

How do you know this: did they show their feelings on their faces? in their movements?

Can you describe (in words) or demonstrate (in movement) some of the movements the dancers did?

You could use some movements that you saw Kita dancers make, or your own ideas.

You might work on your own (solo), with one partner (duet), or as a group. Make sure your dance has a clear beginning and ending.

Moving words:

Think of words that describe the way your character moves. Write these down.

Developing a movement repertoire:

Then one at a time, try making these movements- how can you use your body to show the way your character moves?

Create a movement sequence:

Now think about how those movements could be connected to create a sequence. What would the character do first? Then? And after that?

Dance form: solo or group work

Then decide whether you want to make a solo dance (by yourself) or work with other classmates to create a group dance. A small group, between 3-4 people is usually best for beginning choreographers.

A starting point:

Think about where your character might be at the beginning of the dance. Decide the shape you will make in that place. Decide what movements you want to include in the dance

In the middle:

Group work: Will all the characters in your group make the same movements at the same time, will some of them be doing the same thing but before or after the others? Will some be doing different movements?

Experiment with different combinations. You can make the same sequence of movements over and over in your dance, or you might like to make lots of different ones.

Movement qualities:

Make sure you use your movements to show the qualities of the character's movements that you are thinking about. That is, show how the character moves.

- Body parts: what part of the character's body moves?
- Dynamics: Are the movements you are showing quick or slow? strong or light? direct or indirect? bound or free flowing?
- Levels: does the character move high, low or in between?
- Space: does the character travel all around the space or does it have a particular pathway or direction?
- Relationship: does the character dance by him/herself or in a group?

Finishing your dance:

When you have included all the movements you would like to make, or when you feel your dance is long enough, you need to think of a way to finish it. What shape would you like to make for the end: the same shape as at the beginning or a different one? Where will you be when you finish: do you want to be back where you started or in a different place?

Will all the characters be in the same place, or in different positions?

At the end, make sure you come to a complete stop and hold your position for at least 10 seconds so that your audience knows that your dance has finished.

Music accompaniment:

We used traditional Chinese music to accompany the Moon Lady story. You might choose a favourite song you know or some music that is related to the theme of your dance. Or you may have some classmates who could make some music for you. Or...you might create your own accompaniment.

Create your own accompaniment:

Use body and instrumental percussion to create sounds to accompany your celebration dance. Think about the sounds that would be suitable to complement your character. For example, loud percussion instruments like drums, gongs and a gamelan (a marimba or glockenspiel would be a reasonable substitute) would make strong scary sounds if you were a large and scary character. Quieter instruments like triangles might be more suitable if you are making quieter movements.

Presentation:

Perform your dance for your class. You might like to see if your classmates can guess what the dance was about after they have seen it, or you might like to tell them before you start so they can look out for some of the movements that they are going to see.

Class discussion:

When your dance is over, your classmates can tell you the things they noticed about your dance, especially the aspects they enjoyed. They might have seen things that you intended they see, or they might see things you weren't expecting.

Reflection:

When you have finished you could write down your thoughts about the process of creating your dance.

- Why did you choose your topic?
- How did it feel trying to turn that idea into a dance?
- Did adding music make it easier or harder to create your dance?
- What was it like working with another person: did that make it harder or easier for you?
- How do you feel about your dance now that it is over: were you happy with what you created?
- What was it like getting feedback from your classmates?
- Did they see the dance the way you intended?
- If you were making the same kind of dance again, what might you do differently?

Suggested Musical Accompaniment:

- K.C. Wang, (1996) **Chinese Bamboo Flute Songs**,
- Various artists, **Tealands**, Putumayo World Music
- Tchaikovsky, **The Nutcracker Suite: Chinese Dance**
- Southern Crossings, **Southern Crossings**, 'China On A Bicycle'
- or look for recordings from China in the International Music section of your music shop.

The Emperor and the Fairies in the Moon Palace

This is one of the most famous traditional dances of China. It is more than one thousand two hundred years old, dating back to the Tang dynasty in the early eighth century. The story tells of a famous Emperor, named Tang- Ming-Hwon, was in his palace with his consort, Yang Gwei Fei, when he feel asleep and had a beautiful dream.

His dream took him to the Moon Palace where he was surrounded by fairies singing and dancing. The fairies were dressed in beautiful costumes made of silk of all colours. As they danced, their silk was so light that it floated, and reminded the Emperor of clouds.

When he woke up, the Emperor wrote down the music he had heard in his dream, and it is this very same melody that you will hear accompanying the dance today.



Activities: Make your own Chinese ribbon

For centuries, the Chinese have taken great pride in producing beautiful silk ribbons. Silk is one of the most valued commodities ever produced and still has a high standing in the culture of China.

Traditionally, red is the symbol of happiness in China, so you might like to make your ribbon red

Short ribbon sticks: easy to make and suitable for very small children.

Materials: chopstick, drawing pin, silk ribbon (50 cm length for each child), needle and thread.

Method: Gather end of ribbon with thread and pin to end of chopstick.

Longer ribbon sticks: for middle primary aged children and above.

Materials: bamboo stake for each child (available from gardening suppliers), ribbon - either ready-made satin ribbon as wide as you can buy or silk fabric cut into 30 cm widths and hemmed at the sides and ends (length: child's height plus one arms length, approx 1.5 metres per child), fishing swivel for each child (available from fishing or hardware stores), fishing wire

Method: Attach one end of the swivel to the stick by threading fishing wire through the loop of the swivel and taping both ends of the wire to the stick. Gather one end of the ribbon with fishing wire and tie around the other end of fishing swivel.

Dance-making:

Create your own dance of the Fairies in the Moon Palace

Think about the movements you saw in the Fairies dance, including:

- body movements (leaps, spins, turns)
- levels (high, medium, low)
- patterns in the air and on the ground (figure 8, spirals, zig-zags, circles)
- dynamic qualities (fast/slow, strong/light, free/bound flow)
- relationships: how did the dancers work together? (close/far, same/different, in front/behind/side by side,
- question and answer (one participants responds to partner's movement),
- moving in canon (dancers repeat the same movement after each other)

Can you describe (in words) or demonstrate (in movement) some of the movements the dancers did?

Create your own ribbon dance about the Fairies in The Moon Palace. You could use movements that Kita dancers made, or your own ideas. You might work on your own (solo), with one partner (duet), or as a group. Make sure your dance has a clear beginning and ending.

Perform your dance for the rest of the class.



Art activity: Draw the dream

- a) Imagine you were Emperor Tang Ming-Hwon or consort Yang Gwei-Fei in the Moon Palace. Can you draw the Fairies who sang and danced in the dream?
- b) If you lived in the Moon Palace, what would your dream be like? Write or draw your own dream.

Traditional dances

Xio Fung Neo - The Little Cowherd Dance (China)

'The Little Cowherd' is a traditional Chinese love story set in the countryside. The dance is accompanied by traditional Chinese opera music and singing.



A beautiful young girl is out riding her horse across a field, when she sees a handsome cowherd looking after his cows. She decides to approach him, to ask whether he knows a good place for her to buy some wine. He responds with directions to the nearby village, Sing Hwa Chung. The two then strike up a conversation, and begin to tease each other. He communicates with her by singing popular country songs, and she answers back in song. They play a game of challenge, with each trying to show up the other with fast footwork and snazzy moves. The dance finishes as the girl taunts the Cowherd and takes herself off to the village without him.

Costume: In this dance, Sabrina wears a costume she has had since she was 12 years old. When we decided to include Little Cowherd in our program, Sabrina rang her Mum in Taiwan and asked her to send it to Australia. The stick that the Girl dances with symbolises both her horse and the whip she uses on her horse. The Cowherd's stick also symbolises his flute and the cow that he rides.

Discussion topics: Discuss what you remember of the Little Cowherd Dance

- What was the story?
- What kind of music accompanied the dance?
- Where was it set? (where were The Cowherd and the Young Girl?)
- How were they travelling? What were they wearing?
- What weapon did they have to move their animals?
- Can you describe or demonstrate any of the movements they made?
- How did they tease and challenge each other?
- What was your favourite part of this dance? Why?
- Could something like this happen in Australia?
- What would the story be called?
- What kind of place would an Australian Cowherd be?
- What would he wear? What would the Young Girl wear?
- What kind of music would they be listening to? How would they be travelling?
- Would an Australian Cowherd ride his cows?
- What would the Young Girl be going to buy? Wine?
- What kind of games would they play to tease and challenge each other?
- What gestures would they use in their conversation?

Lantern Dance



The lantern dance is traditionally performed by young girls at the Lantern festival that comes at the first full moon after Chinese New Year. It comes from a story that is nearly 2000 years old. When Buddhism first came to China, people could see spirits dancing in the sky under the light of the moon. One year a cloud drifted by and covered the sky. People panicked because they could not see the spirits, so they took lanterns and went in search of them. From that time on, people lit lanterns to help them look for the heavenly spirits.

In the olden days, young girls in China loved the Lantern Festival because it was one time in the year when they didn't have to stay always at home but could go out into the village with their lantern and enjoy themselves. watching fireworks, eating ricecakes and playing and dancing around.

Another story goes like this:

Once long ago, the Jade Emperor in Heaven was so angry with a town for killing his favorite goose, that he decided to destroy the town by fire. However, a good-hearted fairy heard what the Emperor planned, and warned the people of the town to light lanterns to make their town blaze with light. They did as they were told, and from the Heavens, it looked as if the village was on fire. So the Jade Emperor thought that the village was already burning, and he did not need to light another fire.

From that day on, people celebrated the special day that they were saved from the anger of the Jade Emperor, by carrying lanterns of different shapes and colors through the streets, making a beautiful backdrop for lion dances, dragon dances, and fireworks.



Make your own lantern: Check out these websites for ideas
<http://www.fortunecity.com/meltingpot/alabama/179/clantern.htm>
<http://www.myweb3000.com/Lantern3.html>
<http://www.asianz.org.nz/node/588>

Lady Peach Blossom takes the Ferry

The story is about a boatman, an old widower who teased his passenger Lady Peach Blossom while she travelled in his boat. The boatman and Lady Peach Blossom enjoyed having a singing competition, in which the loser was the first one to stop singing. After this dance, we will teach you Lady Peach Blossom's song

Hai-ur Lo Ti Hai-ur,
Ai Ur Lo Ti Ai,
Ai Ur Lo Ti Ai Ur E Do,
Hai-ur Lo Ti Hai- Ur.

Stealing The Immortal Herb

This story is from a very famous Chinese legend about Madam White Snake that is told during the Dragon Boat Festival.

In order to repay a kindness given, a white snake turns herself into a beautiful lady and marries a kind young man. During celebrations for the Dragon Boat festival, the young man asks his wife to drink a red potion that he mistakes for wine. Unfortunately, the potion makes the woman turn back into her original form of the white snake. The young man is so shocked to see his wife become a snake that he faints. In order to save her husband's life, the snake woman climbs up an immortal mountain and steals a special herb.

Madam White Snake's costume symbolizes two things; the white colour tells us that she is pregnant and the shining sequins are symbolic of the scales of snakeskin.

The Long-Sleeve Dance

This dance developed in ancient China as a way for royalty, nobles and officials to celebrate any grand occasion. Young women, wearing dresses with long, elegant sleeves, would dance to imitate the movement of fairies, and the ripples of water and air.



Chinese New Year Dance

For thousands of years, Chinese New Year has been the most important festival in Chinese Culture. On Chinese New Years Eve, families get together for dinner, and children look forward to receiving red packets from the older members of their families. The red packets we will give out today contain a Chinese coin, which is the same shape as ancient Chinese coins.

‘Fei Tien’ Flying in Heaven Ribbon Dance

'Flying in Heaven' is a famous wall painting which was found in a stone cave in Kan Su province in the north west of China. The painting is renowned through all of China. The dance shows a fairy from the wall painting gradually coming to life.

‘Fung Shou Ou’ Autumn Harvest Celebration- fan dance

Fung Shou Ou is a celebration of harvest in autumn. The dancer's fan is symbolic of knife used in harvesting- its movements mimic those of farmers cutting crops in the fields.

Lion Dance



The lion dance originated in China close to a thousand years ago. There are different variations of the lion dance in many other Asian cultures with each region possessing their own style. Chinese Lion dances can be broadly categorised into two styles; Northern dance was used as entertainment for the imperial court. This dance is acrobatic and is mainly performed as entertainment. Southern Lion Dance is more symbolic. It is usually performed as a ceremony to exorcise evil spirits and to summon luck and fortune. The southern lion exhibits a wide variety of colour and has a distinctive head with large eyes, a mirror on the forehead, and a single horn at centre of the head.

Kita's Lion Dance is based on the kind of dance you will commonly see at modern day Chinese Festivals, especially in Australia.

Marital arts-dance

'Kung Fu Shun', Iron Fan Dance

This dance is famous for its connection to the legend of the Young family, famous Chinese Kung Fu warriors.

Long ago, when China was being invaded by enemies, the Emperor called together his best fighters to defend their country. Leading them were the powerful Young family; the grandfather as army general and the father, uncles and brothers as the warriors.

But unfortunately after a brave and valiant effort, all of these men met a tragic fate and they were killed by their enemies. The Emperor then called among his people for replacement warriors, but with no men left in the Kingdom, the responsibility fell to the women. The courageous women of the Young family volunteered to defend the Emperor and their people, and they were led by Grandmother Young as army general, supported by the mothers, aunts, sisters and daughters. The Young women learned Kung Fu to use in battle and the Emperor gave grandmother a fighting stick with a dragon on its head to expand her fighting power. The women did manage to defeat the enemy warriors, and the Young family are famous to this day for this amazing achievement.

This dance shows the Kung Fu like the Young family women learned to prepare for battle. It is called 'Iron Fan' dance because of the powerful sound the fan makes as it opens. With the right skills, a Kung Fu warrior could hurl the fan in such a way that it would behead a row of enemies, before it flew back into his hand. The dancer today will leave that part out of the dance!



'Foo Chen' Weapon dance

In this dance, you will see some of the weapons that Chinese Gods use for fighting. These include the Magic Wand that also doubles as a duster, a witch-like broomstick useful for flying and a weapon for battle, as well as fans, knives, single or double swords and flags.



Flag dance

Often used in acrobatic demonstrations, the flag dance shows the power and strength of handling and synchronizing flags as an art form. This dance combines martial arts and modern music to maintain the traditional dignity of carrying flags to battle.

Tai-Chi demonstration

This dance shows movement from the quiet slow kind of martial art, Tai Chi. In Tai Chi, the focus is internal, as the dancer learns to control her movements with her breathing. This ensures that her dance is full of strength, co-ordination and skill.

Tai Chi Sword dance

The Tai Chi sword form, or Tai Chi Chuan, is taught as a developmental exercise, utilizing relaxation, control of breath and extension of energy. The energy in this item strongly contrasts with the previous fast-moving weapon dances. It is perfected to bring the mind and body into harmony. This dance fuses the art form of Tai Chi sword techniques with traditional Chinese dance to present a refreshing twist on the ageless art of Tai Chi. Both old and modern moves are combined with mastery of the Tai Chi sword to demonstrate the versatility of traditional Chinese culture.

Books about Kung Fu - hundreds of them!

- Books About Kung Fu [View](#)
- East Of England Martial Arts Centre [View](#)
- History of Kung Fu [View](#)

Spirit Of Kita

We often perform 'Spirit of Kita' as our first or last dance. This introduces all of our performers. It begins with a section of traditional dance from each of our cultures and ends on a contemporary note with a modern choreography of our shared experience in Australia.



The second part of 'Spirit of Kita' includes all of the dancers together performing contemporary dance that they have learned since coming to Australia. Near the end, they use their bodies to draw in the air, the letters of the word 'Kita', our company's name and an Indonesian word that means 'we'. They perform this in canon, that is, one after the other. Did you see it?

Dance-making: in Spirit of Kita, the dancers drew the word Kita in their air with their bodies. You could use your name as a basis for creating a dance. Using any part of your body that you like, try to write the letters of your name in the air. Now find a way to join those letters together to create your own movement signature.

Accompaniment:

You can perform this name dance without music accompaniment, or you might like to choose a piece of music to go with it. Experiment with different music to see how the mood of music affects your movements.

Partner/small group work: Now you might like to pair up with a friend or small group and create another signature dance using the letters of a word you choose. You might choose a word that is something both of you like, such as 'music', 'beach' or 'footy', or it might be something about your life, such as 'school' or 'winter'.

Create a movement sequence: using the letters from that word, create a movement sequence (several movement joined together). Now try to express the word in a different way: think about that word, perhaps make a list of all the things you can think of. For eg. if you were making a dance about 'beach', you might write waves, sand, hot, rockpools, fish.....

Now see how you might express some of those ideas with movement. You might make large wavy movements for waves, small hopping ones for hot sand or quick darting ones for fish. Then find a way to join the ideas together so that the different movements flow together easily. Choose some suitable music and voila, you have your very own original choreography.

Presenting: Perform your dance for your class. You might like to see if your classmates can guess what the dance was about after they have seen it, or you might like to tell them before you start so they can look out for some of the movements that they are going to see.

Class discussion: when your dance is over, your classmates can tell you the things they saw in your dance, especially the aspects they enjoyed. They might have seen things that you intended they see, or they might see things you weren't expecting.

Writing activity: when you have finished you could write down your thoughts about the process of creating your dance. Why did you choose your topic? How did it feel trying to turn that idea into a dance? Did adding music make it easier or harder to create your dance? What was it like working with another person: did that make it harder or easier for you? How do you feel about your dance now that it is over? Were you happy with what you created? What was it like getting feedback from your classmates? Did they see the dance the way you intended?

Resources

Organisations

Asia Education Foundation Ph: 03 8344 4800 Fax: 03 9347 1768 www.asiaeducation.edu.au

LMERC: Language and Multicultural Education Resource Centre has an extensive collection of picture books, reference books, videos and other educational resources for the study of Asia.

150 Palmerston Street CARLTON VIC 3053 **(03) 9349 1418 (03) 9349 1295**

lmerc.library@edumail.vic.gov.au, <http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/lem/lmerc>

Resource sales: China Books Specialist in China and Chinese language materials
234 Swanston St, Melbourne VIC 3000 Ph: 9663 8822 Fax: 9663 8821

Books (many of these titles are available for loan from the LMERC)

- Brewer, W (1995), Many Flowers: Folk Stories from Asia, Curriculum Corporation
- Curriculum Corporation, (1996), Access Asia: Primary Teaching and Learning Units, Melbourne.
- Dragon Tales, DAI Naidie et al (translators). Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, 2005
- Han, C. (1995) The Demon King and Other Festival Folktales of China, University of Hawaii Press: Honolulu
- Hoffman, Judith. Harvest Festivals Around the World.
- Hong, Loke Siew, Legend of the Moon Maiden, AsiaPac Books, Singapore, 1996.
- Hou, Guanbin, Chinese Folk Tales 1 and 2, Dolphin Books: Beijing
- Hu, William C., The Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival: Foods and Folklore, Ars Ceramica, Ltd., Ann Arbor, MI 1990.
- Jeremy, R. Chinese Mythology A to Z, Facts On File, New York, 2004
- Long, Hua. (1993) The Moon Maiden and Other Asian Folktales. San Francisco: China Books & Periodicals, Inc.
- Peng, Tan Huay. (1991) Fun with Chinese Festivals. Singapore: Federal Publications, USA
- Sanders, Tao Tao Liu, Dragons Gods and Spirits from Chinese Mythology, Peter Bendrick Books, New York, 1980.
- So, S. (1997) C is for China, Frances Lincoln Ltd: London
- Stepanchuk, Carol 1994, Red Eggs and Dragon Boats - Celebrating Chinese Festivals, Pacific View Press, Berkeley CA . This book contains stories related to Chinese festivals information on traditions, recipes, copies of original artwork and calligraphy. It is clearly written, and an excellent resource.
- Stepanchuk, Carol, and Charles Wong, Mooncakes and Hungry Ghosts-Festivals of China, China Books and Periodicals, San Francisco, 1991.
- Young, P.J. (ed) (1987) Looking at Asia, Asia Teachers' Association: Sydney.
- Zhu, Yifei et al, (1997) Chinese Fables and Cultural Stories, Shangai Foreign Language Education Press: Shanghai.

Websites

China Dragons <http://www.crystalinks.com/chinadragons.html>

Cathy Spagnoli Picture Books: **Asian Tall Tales and Tricksters**
<http://www.cathyspagnoli.com/books/picturebk.htm>

Five great Asian tales, beautifully illustrated in different styles,
www.nwlink.com/~spagnoli/images/kantjil.jpg

Aaron Shepard, the American children's author's page has many folktales, fairy tales, tall tales and more. Aaron is a specialist in reader's theatre, and there are also folktale scripts for reader's theatre. www.aaronshep.com/

A comprehensive site devoted to storytelling. Includes information on retelling folktales, storytelling activities & lesson plans, exploring cultures through storytelling. www.storyarts.org

Moon Lady <http://www.familyculture.com/holidays/moonlady.htm>

AsianFamily.Com: <http://www.familyculture.com/holidays/augustmoonfest.htm>

1996 Government Information Office, Republic of China:
http://www.gio.gov.tw/info/festival_c/moon_e/moon.htm

Curriculum.edu.au <http://www.curriculum.edu.au/accessasia>

Asialink www.asialink.unimelb.edu.au/our_work/school_education/curriculum_resources

Studies of Asia: A Statement for Australian Schools <http://www.accessasia.com/egi-win/imagemap.exe/aamap2?377.110> –