



pamelabowell
drama for creative learning

The Fire Dragon

- a drama of courage and cooperation

Yr 2

This drama scheme takes place in China many years ago. The children will play two different roles during the course of the drama, which is focussed on problem-solving and working together. There are a number of different challenges to be met but the sustained setting and roles hold them together. Although a list of possible learning objectives is given it is not definitive and teachers may wish to focus on certain objectives or add or substitute others of their own. I have written up the sessions in blow-by-blow detail to support you, if you need it, but this is flexible, of course.

Learning Objectives:

- ◆ To respond in role to develop the drama
- ◆ To respond to teacher in role
- ◆ Use drama to explore ideas
- ◆ Adopt appropriate roles in small and large groups and consider alternative courses of action
- ◆ To make adventurous word and language choices appropriate to the style and purpose of the text
- ◆ To develop confidence

Dramatic Context: where the drama is set:

- ◆ In a village in China

Roles: Who the children are going to be in the drama:

- ◆ Villagers and Travelling Entertainers

Who you are going to be in the drama:

- ◆ A villager, an entertainer and, perhaps, a dragon!

Frame: the thing that gives tension to the drama:

- ◆ How to stop the dragon eating all the watermelons so the show can go on

Sign: things that help children focus in the drama

- ◆ Session 1: Pictures of paddy fields
- ◆ Session 1: Some rice
- ◆ Session 1: Chinese music: **Dragon Boat** 4:20 – You just need the first 2 minutes
Xu Zhengyin & Zhang Weiliang (for the water flowing through the channel)
Ancient Chinese Music: Lofty Mountains and Flowing Water
- ◆ Session 2: Pictures of watermelons
- ◆ Session 2: Chinese music: **Frantic Dances of Golden Serpent** 1:32
Xiao-Peng Jiang & The Chinese Orchestra of Shanghai Conservatory

Splendid Jubilant New Year - The Collection of Chinese Festival Music (for the entertainers' show)

- ◆ Session 5: a large watermelon
- ◆ Session 5: the same music as in Session 2
- ◆ Session 5: a rolled up piece of sugar paper or the inside tube from tinfoil to be a telescope
- ◆ Session 6: Chinese Music: **Prelude to Spring Festival** 5:21- 2min 15 secs is enough
Xiao-Peng Jiang & The Chinese Orchestra of Shanghai Conservatory
Splendid Jubilant New Year - The Collection of Chinese Festival Music (for the dragon dance)
Session 6: pictures of dragon dancers

Strategies: the different ways of working in drama

- ◆ Individual and Group Still image
- ◆ Mime
- ◆ Conscience Alley
- ◆ Improvisation
- ◆ Teacher in role
- ◆ Thought tracking
- ◆ Sound Collage
- ◆ Dance Drama

Session 1

- ◆ Out of role ask the children to sit on the floor in a circle - you need to be in the circle, too. You need the pictures of paddy fields and your rice sample near to hand.
- ◆ Explain that you have been thinking about where our drama could be today and that you've had an idea. Explain that you've brought along some pictures to give a clue about where the drama is going to be.

If you wanted to, you could remain in the classroom and present the pictures as a slide show using a data projector but you will need to be able to move into the hall or else already have moved the desks back in the classroom.

- ◆ Ask the children to talk to the person next to them and discuss the images and see if they can work out what they are looking at. Ask them what they think the people are doing.
- ◆ We need eventually to acknowledge that these are paddy fields where rice is grown and that the people are planting the seedlings.

Now you need to establish that our story will take place long ago, before there was radio, television, computers, cars, aeroplanes and mobile phones etc. We are avoiding modern technology in this drama because we want the children to solve the problems that arise for themselves.

- ◆ Ask the children if they can work out who we are going to be in the drama – we need to get to our being rice farmers.
- ◆ Explain to the children that rice grows in lots of places in the world that are hot but in our drama we are going to be rice farmers in a village in China – a long way away on the other side of the world. It is a nice village, next to a stream in a valley next to a big mountain.
- ◆ Explain to the children that you are going to be in the drama with them and are going to be a rice farmer, too.
- ◆ Agree a signal with the children that might be a click of the fingers or a clap or whatever you feel comfortable with. This will indicate when the drama starts and stops.
- ◆ Explain that when they hear the signal the drama will have begun and you will be in the village square having a very important meeting.
- ◆ Then in role, “ Good morning fellow villagers. We have come to one of the most important times in the year. It is time to prepare a new paddy field for rice planting. As usual we will all have to work together to make sure we get the work done.

“First, we will have to dig the ground over. Then we will have to make sure we clear all the weeds. Then we will have to pick up all the big stones. When all that is done we will have to dig a new channel from the stream so we can bring water to the new field and flood it ready for planting. It’s going to be a great deal of hard work and the sun is already making the temperature rise. So, let’s pick up our spades and follow me to the field.”

- ◆ Now you need to ‘follow my leader’ to the field and end up with the farmers standing all around the edge of the field. “Now, everyone let’s start to dig the soil over so we can get some fresh air into it.”

What you need to do here is dig with the children gradually working inwards so that all over the ground is dug. In role, encourage the farmers to take it slowly and carefully and make sure that you make plenty of comments about how hot it is and how difficult it is to dig. Once the children are digging you could move around them and support their roles by questions and comments. “That looks a very hard piece of ground”, “How are you managing?”, “Do you think we will manage to do it all by the end of today?” etc etc

- ◆ Once the ground is dug. “Villagers, I’ve brought our baskets to the side of the field for weeds. Come and put your spade here and get your basket.” Obviously, you will not have real baskets so you need to mime distributing to the villagers.
- ◆ “Once you have your basket stand at the edge of the field ready for weeding.” You will need to go to the edge of the field and get down on your hands and knees to

model the painstaking weed picking as you all work your way across the field. Turn around and come back and pick up the big stones.

- ◆ “If your baskets are very full, you might have to help each other carry the baskets to the edge of the field.
- ◆ Now, gather the villagers around you telling them that we’ve worked so hard in such hot weather that we deserve to sit down for a little rest.
- ◆ As you are resting talk about how hot it is, ask how the field preparation has gone. Any problems? Do they think it is ready so we can go on and dig the water channel? If the children say there are some problems get them to deal with them before moving on to digging the water channel.
- ◆ Use your signal and tell the children that you are stopping the drama just for a moment. Explain that we can make drama happen in lots of different ways and when we start again you are going to tell the story of the digging of the water channel as the children carry out the actions. Ask the children to find a partner (or you may wish to pair them up yourself) and explain that they are going to make two lines facing each other, partner to partner. Get them to do this so that we make the place where the water channel will be dug. Then, in story telling mode:
 - ◆ “After they had had their well deserved rest, the villagers once again picked up their spades and face each other across the very place where the water channel was to be dug. Slowly and carefully they began to dig, making the channel deep so that water would easily flow through it from the stream to the field. It was very hard work. The villagers’ backs were aching as the sun beat down upon them. They were grateful to be wearing their big straw hats. At least they kept the sun from their eyes. At last the villagers looked up and down the channel and were glad to see that it was finished. Just ready for the moment when they would burst the river bank and let water into the channel.”
- ◆ Use your signal and stop again. Explain that we are going to use another way to find out what it was like when the water went through the channel. Ask the pairs to think of some words and sounds that they think the water would sound like as it leaves the river and rushes down the channel towards the newly prepared field. Get them to decide on two words or sounds each so that each pair has 4 between them.
- ◆ Now explain that they need to find the best ways of saying them so that they make them sound as much like the water as possible. Have a mass practice.
- ◆ Now, explain that when we begin the drama again we will make the channel again with ourselves.
- ◆ Next, explain that starting with the pair at one end of the channel, they are going to move through the channel and as they do so the others will keep repeating the words they have rehearsed. Also tell the children that you have a piece of music to help create the water. (Make sure you have your sound system set up at the

beginning of the session.) The piece of music is called Dragon Boat but I think it sounds good for running water. You can stop it after 2 minutes.

- ◆ As each pair reaches the end of the channel they will join their lines again at the end and start saying their words. As they do so, the next pair at the front of the line will journey through and join at the end until every pair has experienced the water rushing to the field.
- ◆ Use your spade to break the riverbank and as you do so play the music and the children begin to make their water noises/words and the process begins.
- ◆ When the last pair has been through. In role, ask if the field is flooding. You can't quite see from where you are standing. Then: "Well done, all of us! Now pick up your basket with the rice plants and let's put them into the ground under the water. We'll have to wade carefully."

Plant your rice plants too alongside the farmers.

- ◆ Then: "That's the last one planted. It's the end of a difficult day. We are all tired. So let's go home!"
- ◆ Use your signal and tell the children it is time to stop the drama for today. But next time we will discover that all is not well in the village. There is something very important that you haven't told them, yet. The villagers have a huge problem that is threatening the very existence of the village. And we will also meet another group of people who might be able to help them solve it.

Writing opportunity: the children could make a collective set of instructions on how to prepare the ground for planting rice.

Writing opportunity: the children might begin to write the story of the rice farmers. Each lesson could become another chapter in it.

Writing opportunity: in pairs the children might use the water sound words and illustrate a picture of the water rushing down the channel to the paddy field.

Session 2

- ◆ Out of role, recap last session. You might share some of the writing as a way of doing so.
- ◆ Remind the children that you told them last week that the village had a very difficult problem and that there were also going to be some other people in our drama.
- ◆ Ask the children if they would like to find out what the problem is first or meet the new people first. It won't make any difference to how the drama outcome but it gives them real choice.

- ◆ If they say they want to know the problem first then tell them:

“Well, rice isn’t the only thing that the farmers in our village grow. They also grow these.” – show pictures of watermelons or better still a real one if you can get hold of one. Ask the children if they know what they are. Ask if anyone has ever tasted one. We are trying to get to the fact that they are juicy and refreshing and the sort of thing that, if you are hot and tired, would be delicious to eat. Remind them about how hot and tired the farmers got when they were preparing the paddy field for planting the rice.

“Well the fact is that our villagers grow some of the best watermelons in the whole of China and they would absolutely love to eat them after working so hard in the paddy fields. But they don’t! They don’t eat a single, solitary one. Not even a mouthful. It’s not because they are not nice and it’s not because they don’t like them. No, the problem is much, much worse than that. Are you sure you want to know what it is? Well, the people of the village don’t eat the watermelons because they are SCARED to! Would you like to know why they are scared? Are you sure? Well, you see the big mountain over there behind the village? Well, near the top of that mountain is a deep, dark cave and in that deep, dark cave there lives a large, green, fire-breathing dragon! And every year at watermelon time he comes out of that cave and down the mountain and into the village and eats up all the watermelons!

Once, a long time ago, the villagers tried to hide some so they could have some to eat, themselves. But, you know what long noses dragons have, don’t you? Well, he could smell them and found them hidden in the houses. It made that dragon cross and you know what dragons do when they are cross, don’t you? They breathe fire! And can you imagine what happened to the houses! Gone in a puff of smoke. So, you can see why the villagers are scared to eat their beautiful watermelons.

- ◆ How do you think they feel?” - what we want to get to is the children realising that the villagers are actually quite sad.
- ◆ But before we go back to the village, you know I was telling you about the other people. They are important in our drama, too, but they don’t know anything at all about the dragon problem. We are going to leave the village for a moment and when we start our drama, we won’t be the villagers we’ll be people like these.” - show pictures of the Chinese entertainers.
- ◆ “Who are they” What do they do? etc”
- ◆ Explain to the children that we are going to become the entertainers who are travelling around China earning their living by putting up their tent and performing their wonderful show for the people in the villages they visit.
- ◆ Ask each child to decide for themselves without telling anyone what sort of a performer they are – juggler, tightrope walker, acrobat etc etc.
- ◆ Tell them that when they hear your signal you would like them to find a space and then when they hear your signal again to freeze as if they were a statue of

themselves juggling, spinning plates, etc etc. Tell them that if they do it really well, you'll be able to tell just by looking at their statues what tricks they do.

- ◆ Now walk around the group – “Oh! Here’s a tightrope walker.” “This looks like someone juggling” etc etc.
- ◆ Now explain to the children that when you give you signal again, you will be the manager of the entertainers and you will be having a company meeting.
- ◆ “Gather round everyone. It’s a lovely morning and we’ve got lots to do. We have got to get to the next village in the valley next to the mountain, before this evening because we have to set up the tent, put up the posters and get ready for our performance there tomorrow night. I’d like to have a rehearsal here before we move on so I’d just like you all to practice your tricks and then we will look at each other’s performances and I’ll introduce you to the music we are going to use. I’ve taken a long time to chose it so I hope you think it gives a good happy sound.”
- ◆ You need to move around the group now supporting the children as they work out what they are going to do – remember you are in role. The performers ‘acts’ needn’t be very long just a minute or so. Now divide the group into 4 and let each quarter perform their tricks whilst others watch. Give comments in role “Excellent, I think the customers will like that” “That’s a new trick, isn’t it?” “Well done” etc etc
- ◆ Now play the music and get the entertainers all to perform together while it plays. The piece I’ve chosen only last a minute and a half.
- ◆ After they have performed, gather them together to give comments in role as the manager. Good timing, make sure you look as if you are enjoying yourselves. We don’t want the customers looking at faces that aren’t smiling. Hope all the costumes will be ready for the performance etc etc.
- ◆ “Now everyone, we really need to get going so will you please go and pack your things. Make sure you remember everything and roll everything neatly into your bundle so you can carry it over your shoulder. It will probably take us about an hour to walk there so best foot forward, please.
- ◆ You can use the ‘follow my leader’ technique here, leading in the way and helping to build the drama by comments along the way. ‘What a spectacular mountain”, “Look at all those beautiful, big watermelons growing”. “Perhaps we’ll be able to have some when we get to the village.” “Look the people are in the paddy field planting baby rice plants. Encourage children to talk about what they are seeing on the journey and speculate on how well the show will go down. Will they have a full house etc etc. This will help extend vocabulary that can feed into the writing, later.
- ◆ Now use your signal and stop the drama for a moment. Tell the children that went the drama starts again, they will be villagers again, up to their knees in water bending over, slowly planting baby rice plants very carefully in the paddy field but you will still be the entertainers’ manager. Ask them to remember the hard life they have working in the rice fields, how hot it is and ask them how they feel because of the problem with the dragon.

- ◆ Use your signal and then in role: “Roll up, roll up! The Extraordinary Hosin Entertainers are here. Gather round people of the village and hear about the amazing performers we have. We have got an extraordinary show for you to see tomorrow evening in this very village. We are delighted(let your voice trail off and lose its enthusiasm) Excuse me everyone, if you don’t mind my saying so, you don’t look very happy to see us. We usually get a warm welcome from people when we arrive but to be honest you look thoroughly miserable. Is it something to do with us?”
- ◆ Tease out from the villagers the story of the dragon. “I’m amazed. I’ve never heard of such a thing before in all of our travels in China. No wonder you people of the village are looking sad. No wonder you don’t feel much like coming to see the show. This is dreadful, if you don’t come to the show we won’t be able to earn our living but we don’t want you to come when you can’t enjoy it.”
- ◆ “Look, the entertainers and I would be willing to help you solve the problem but before we go to all that trouble shouldn’t we go up the mountain and check that the dragon is in the cave? We might find out that he’s gone somewhere else in which case we won’t need to worry.”
- ◆ Get the children to discuss this. Encourage debate. We are trying to get to a consensus view that we will go.
- ◆ “We’ll have to be brave but I think we can manage it if we all go together. If you think you are among the bravest people in the village will you put your hand up? I just hope everyone is brave because we need everyone to help.”
- ◆ “Good, then we must set off to climb the mountain and look in that cave to see if the dragon is there. We’re going to have to be careful because it’s steep and the ground is rough and there isn’t a road. But we’ve got to do it! Are we ready? Off we go!”
- ◆ “Freeze! And this is where we must stop our drama for today. We’ll have to wait until next time to find out what happens when the villagers and entertainers go up the mountain.

Writing opportunity: the children could design and produce the poster advertising the Hosin Entertainers Show.

Writing opportunity: the children could write the next chapter in the story based on what happened in today’s drama.

Session 3

- ◆ Out of role, recap the last session remind the children that the villagers and entertainers are just setting off to go up the mountain in search of the dragon’s cave. You might read out some of the children’s writing from last week.

- ◆ Explain to the children that there are lots of ways to make drama happen and we are going to use another one to find out what happened when the villagers climbed the mountain.
- ◆ Divide the children in groups of about 4. Ask each group to find a space and listen carefully. Ask them to decide what was the most important or exciting moment that their group had on the journey up the mountain BEFORE they reached the cave.
- ◆ Once they have done this you are going to get them to make a group still image of the moment, as if they were a statue of the moment.
- ◆ Once they have done this, they need to decide what they were saying at that moment. A word or a sentence at most.
- ◆ Now they need to make their group still image and work out the order of what they are saying.
- ◆ Have a practice altogether. You counting 1, 2, 3 Freeze! They speak as soon as they freeze.
- ◆ Then share the work, with each group in turn presenting their image and dialogue.
- ◆ Next, ask them to make another still image of just a moment before the one they have and another a moment after – again with a line of dialogue – so that they can put them together as a series of three – just before the moment, the moment, just after the moment.
- ◆ Again you can practise these all together and share them individually.
- ◆ Finally, tell the children to imagine that what they have is like a video of the climb and that it's like they have been using the freeze frame button. Now what we are going to do is play the tape in slow motion so that instead of having the three images with stops in between we are now going to see what it would look like if we didn't stop, like it was really happening.
- ◆ Once these have been practiced, share them, group by group.
- ◆ Once they have all been presented, slip immediately back into your Entertainers Manager role and gather the villagers around you.
- ◆ “Quiet everyone. (lowering your voice) We are very near the cave and I'm not sure but I think I can hear a noise. It sounds a bit like snoring to me.” Do you think if we tiptoed really quietly we could get close enough to look in without waking up whatever is inside?
- ◆ “Right, let's creep a bit closer and then be absolutely still.”

What we are trying to do is ensure that every child looks inside the cave. After you have peeped in for a second or two, you need to gasp! Then say, “Freeze” and stop the drama.

Ask the children to come and make a circle all facing out. Explain that when you give your signal you want them all to turn to face into the middle of the circle and straightaway say one word that sums up what they saw. This will give a snapshot of the moment and I bet every child will say “Dragon” and this will make a dramatic high point to end the session. Then ask them to turn out and this time when they hear the signal to turn back in and say one word which sums up how they are feeling having looked inside the cave.

Then: “But this is where we must stop our drama for today. We’ll have to wait until next time to see how the people in our drama solve the problem of the dragon and the watermelons”.

Writing opportunity: the children could write up the next chapter of the story.

Writing opportunity: the children could write/illustrate a poem about what they saw in the cave.

Session 4

- ◆ Out of role recap the last session. You could draw on some of the writing the children did to describe the dragon in the cave. Explain that one of the good things about drama is that if there is a part of the story you don’t need, you don’t have to have it so when we begin our drama today we will be back in the village having a meeting.
- ◆ “Well everyone, I’m glad to see that we all got down the mountain safely even if we were coming down quickly.
- ◆ “You know when you first told us about the dragon when we entertainers arrived in the village, I wasn’t sure I really believed you but now we’ve all seen the evidence with our own eyes, there’s no doubt about it. We’ve got a dragon problem on our hands!
- ◆ “What we need is a plan! So, let’s just sit down and see if I’ve got this right. Now, you grow watermelons? And they are really nice ones? And you really would like to eat them but you don’t? And that’s because (lower your voice) we-know-who comes and eats them all every year. And you said you’d tried hiding some but that just made him cross and he breathed fire and burnt houses down. But between us we must be able to work out what to do.
- ◆ “If only we could work out why a dragon would want to eat watermelons then maybe we could find a way of stopping him doing it. Let’s all think. Talk to the villager next to you and see if you can think what is it about watermelons that would make a fire-breathing dragon want to eat them all. What are they like?”

- ◆ You now need to take the ideas from the children and make them into a plan. My expectation would be that they will think that the dragon eats them because he is thirsty and hot because he breathes fire. If they come up with this then you then have to ask what would make him not want the watermelons any more. I'm guessing they will say we have to put his fire out.
- ◆ In the process of developing the plan (and it really will be their plan, I'm not suggesting one) if a child suggests killing the dragon. I would respond like this:
- ◆ "Well, I suppose we could try and kill it but the thing is that dragons are magic creatures and we might not kill it and we might just make it angry and we all know what dragons do when they get angry. You could lose your houses all over again and we could lose our tent and costumes and the equipment we use for our tricks!!"
- ◆ When you have got the plan – putting the fire out in whatever way they decide, you'll need to gather together the equipment that they will need (whatever it will be - buckets of water or who knows what!)
- ◆ Now, use your signal and stop drama. Tell the children that you are stopping for a moment because you have an important question to ask them. "When we get to that part of the drama, would you like to have an imaginary dragon or would you like me to be the dragon for you?"

Whichever the children chose will make no difference but my guess will be that they will want you to be the dragon for them.

- ◆ You now need to have a practice so that when the dragon comes, everything will work well. Especially you need to ensure that they are going to stand still in hiding and wait to see if the plan works.
- ◆ Now you need to tell the children that you are going to another part of the room and that when you come back you will be the dragon and they will have to put the plan into operation and watch to see what happens. *****
- ◆ Now, in your role as dragon, move slowly, sniffing the air hunting for watermelons. I can't tell you exactly what to do at this point because it will all depend on the plan that the children have devised for putting your fire out!!
- ◆ However, what we are going to do is get away from the cliché of a dragon being fearsome. So once the plan has been carried out. Test your breathing – blow out as if you were trying to breathe fire and put your hand in front of your mouth to test your breath. Do this several times and then notice the farmers. In your dragon's voice ask them if they were the people who put your fire out. Be extremely grateful and tell them how fed up you were with always being hot and thirsty. Tell them that was why you were always looking for watermelons to eat. Tell them it has been nice to be able to talk to someone because until now people have always run away when they saw you coming. Say sorry for causing them so much worry and fear and tell

them that you are going back to the cave and won't bother them anymore. You need to walk off slowly with your head down looking rather sad.

- ◆ Now, ask the children to make a circle facing outwards and on our signal to turn in and say one word which sums up how the dragon is feeling. Then repeat but with a word that sums up how the villagers and entertainers are feeling now the problem is solved.
- ◆ "Freeze" And that is where our drama is going to end for today. We'll have to wait until next time to find out what happens next in our story.

****** If the children chose to have an imaginary dragon then at this point rather than taking on the role, you will need to narrate and the children carry out their plan.*

Something like: "Once everything was ready the villagers waited patiently and anxiously for the dragon to come. Finally, the villagers with the sharpest eyesight saw a movement high up on the mountain. They all looked hard and then all at once they all were sure what it was – THE DRAGON. Slowly it came down the hillside etc etc"

Writing opportunity: the children could write a collective step-by-step copy of the plan so that no one forgets how to put out a dragon's fire - just in case.

Writing opportunity: the children could write the next chapter of the story.

Session 5

- ◆ For this session it would be wonderful to have gained parental permission for children to taste some watermelon. However, it can be done without it. You will need your sound system set up ready to play the music. You will also need your telescope near by.
- ◆ Recap the last session.
- ◆ Explain that when we begin our drama again, today, we will be going back to find out what happens to the Entertainers now that the dragon problem is sorted out.
- ◆ So, remind them that when they hear your signal the drama will have begun and they will be the entertainers and you will be the Manager. You'll be having a meeting.
- ◆ "Gather round everyone. This has been the strangest reception we have ever had on all our travels around China. Fancy having to go dragon-hunting and put out a dragon's fire before we can do our show and earn our living. Still all the villagers are in a very happy mood now, so I'm hoping they will all come tonight.

- ◆ “I’m sure we will be a bit rusty after all this excitement so I would like us to unpack, put the tent up and make sure the costumes and equipment are all right before we do a quick rehearsal. We’ve got to be good tonight!
- ◆ So, will you all please unpack your bundles and check your costumes and equipment. You need to move around them now, supporting them with questions like “ Has anything been damaged?” “Does your costume need washing?” “I hope you’re not too tired to do the show” etc
- ◆ Right, everyone, if we could all just gather round. We really need to get the tent up. Let’s make a circle around it and we can carry it into position then we can all pull on the ropes and get it up.
- ◆ Ask half of the entertainers to lift the tent and carry it to its spot. Then unfold it and each get hold of one of the ropes ready to pull.
- ◆ At the same time ask the other half of the entertainers to fetch the big pole that holds the tent up.
- ◆ Once everything is ready, the rope holders should count 1, 2, 3 pull and repeat and watch it go up. Then you’ll need the others to carry the big pole into the middle and push it up so the tent stays up.
- ◆ Now get the entertainers to tie the ropes to stop them moving and then gather them around again.
- ◆ “Well done, everyone. Now I’d like to practice the show. Just take a few minutes to go through your tricks and then we’ll do it with music. Are the jugglers, here? The tightrope walkers etc etc” In role, you need to support the children as they bring back to mind what they practiced earlier.
- ◆ “Excellent everyone, Now let’s try with the music!”
- ◆ Play the music and start the rehearsal.
- ◆ After a very short time abruptly stop the music and ask people to be quiet. Tell them you can hear a strange noise and it seems to be coming from the mountain. Lead everyone out of the tent to listen. Then: “I don’t know about you but it sounds to me like crying, listen.” Now make a crying noise, yourself – not obviously.
- ◆ “I wonder who could be crying up on the mountain? I haven’t a clue. Does anyone else have an idea? (If necessary get them to discuss in pairs first). I’m pretty sure they will come up with the dragon.
- ◆ “Can anyone see him on the mountain?” I’d bet there will be a chorus of ‘Yeses’!
 “I’ll get my telescope. Where did you say you thought he was? Oh! I see. You are absolutely right. The dragon is outside his cave and he does look as if he is crying. What should we do?”

I am pretty sure that the children will want to ask the dragon why he is crying. They may say go up and ask him or they may say send a message or something else. But what ever they say you need to put into practice. My guess is that they will say go and talk to him.

We don't need to dramatise climbing the mountain again. So, use your signal and stop the drama for a moment and then tell the children that another good thing about drama is if there is a part of the story you don't need, you don't have to have it. So, when we begin again, we'll be up the mountain by the cave and the dragon will be there.

- ◆ Restart the drama and take the role of the dragon again. Be surprised that the entertainers have come to see you. They are sure to ask you why you are crying and you will need to explain to them that you are sad and lonely up on the mountain by yourself. You've been watching the tent go up and hearing the music playing and you just wish that you could come and see the show. Explain that you haven't breathed even the smallest puff of smoke since your fire was put out so you are sure that you won't be a danger to anyone. Tell them that you'll just go and sit in your cave until they make a decision. Walk away.
- ◆ Ask the children to make a circle facing outward and on your signal turn in and say out loud straightaway a word that they think sums up how the dragon is feeling.
- ◆ Now come back as the Manager and ask them what they think we should do. Do they think we need to discuss it with the villagers? Encourage discussion.
- ◆ Then call the dragon back to let them know if he is able to come and watch the show. If you play your dragon role with sympathy and pathos the children are sure to say you can come and watch.
- ◆ Tell the dragon to come down in time for the show that will start as soon as the sun goes down.
- ◆ Now use your signal to stop the drama and explain that we can move on in the story and start the drama again back in the village. Explain that they will still be the entertainers but this time you will be a villager.
- ◆ Start the drama again and then: "Hello. I'm so glad to see you. We were in the paddy fields earlier and saw you leaving the village. We were beginning to think that you weren't coming back! We are really looking forward to the show. Especially now we know we are safe from you-know-who! Where did you go?"
- ◆ You need to draw out from the children about visiting the dragon and get them to explain that he is going to come and watch the show. Be a bit uncertain so that they have to persuade you that the villagers have nothing to worry about. Explain that everyone was thinking it would be good to have a watermelon party at the show this evening but now you are not so sure. In the end you need to agree.

- ◆ Now stop the drama for a moment and explain that when we begin again it almost be time for the show to begin. Then in story telling mode whilst the children mime their actions: “At last all the time everyone had been waiting for arrived. The sun set over the mountain and the entertainers put their costumes on and made sure that they had everything they needed for their tricks. At last the tent was full of visitors and as entertainers peeped out, they could see the very special visitor sitting quietly in a corner. Then the Manager stepped out in front of the audience and said:
- ◆ “Ladies and gentlemen and dragon. The Hosin Entertainers welcome you to their show. We all hope that you enjoy what we are going to show you.”
- ◆ The play the music and the entertainers do their tricks. At the end, take the role of the dragon and clapped and cheer. Tell them how wonderful it was.
- ◆ Then “Freeze!” Tell the children that they might think that that was the end of our drama story but explain the villagers and the dragon, who got really friendly during the show, asked the entertainers to do one more really surprising thing. But, we’ll have to wait until next time to find out what it is.

Writing opportunity: the children could create the programme for the show.

Writing opportunity: the children could use the experiences of this session to write the next chapter of the story.

Session 6

- ◆ Out of role recap on the last session. Remind the children that the entertainers have been asked to do one more thing by the villagers and dragon and when the drama begins the entertainers will find out what it is. Explain that you will be the dragon and they will be the entertainers.

You will need to have the pictures of the dragon dancers to hand and also the sound system set up for the dragon dance music.

- ◆ Use your signal and then in role as the dragon. “I really enjoyed your show yesterday and thanks to you I now have lovely new friends in the village. I’m going to help them with the growing the rice and watermelons – but I won’t be eating any. But we’ve got a big favour to ask you. I’ve often wished that I could be in a travelling show but it’s no good. I’m not very good at the things you do. But the villagers had an idea and they felt sure that if I asked you nicely you would be able to do something that would mean that I would sort of be travelling with you wherever you go. I’m not sure I dare ask. Would I be all right if I asked. (What we are trying to do here is build the tension so that the children will be crying out for you to tell them.)
- ◆ Well, I’ve got a favourite piece of music and I thought, that is the villagers and I thought that if I asked you very nicely you might be kind enough to make up a

dragon dance to go with the music and they you could perform it every night in your show. That way, wherever you are in China, I'll be there, too. Would you? Could you? I'll wait over there until you decide. Walk away and come as the Manager.

- ◆ “Well, what should we do? Do you think we could make a dragon dance? He does seem a very nice dragon now his little problem is solved.
- ◆ At this point, stop the drama for a moment and look at the dragon dancers pictures. The children will see that the dancers work in pairs and sometimes come together to form a very big dragon. Explain that these dragon dancers are from today but although our story is set a long time ago. This is how the dragon dances were then.
- ◆ The best way to facilitate this, I think, is to begin with the children working in pairs. The music is very rhythmic, just the basic Chinese running step. What I have in mind is that each pair works on its own small dance motif being a dragon but that they eventually all join together to weave a path. If necessary you could take on the orle of the dragon again to lead this.

You'll need to rehearse this until the children have polished what they are doing and then firmly back in role as the entertainers and the dragon get the children to tell the dragon that the dance is ready.

- ◆ Perform the dance and be ecstatically happy as the dragon with their dance. You truly will be everywhere they go.
- ◆ And as a specially thank you produce some watermelon to eat. (if allowed).
- ◆ Ask the children to form a circle facing outwards then on your signal ask them to turn in and say out loud how they think the villagers feel and again ask them how they think the dragon feels.
- ◆ And tell them that that is the end of the drama.

Writing opportunity: finish the last chapter of the story.