

# Get To Know Asia

## Teachers' Notes

### **The Asia Rap** By Greg Howard © 2017.

(The words underlined are on the beat)

This is the Rap song that Karina uses to teach the countries in South East Asia.

You can Rush-in to China from Mon gol i a  
Over on the right there's North and South Korea  
Out in the ocean are the islands of Japan  
Go South to Laos, and Vi et nam

My an mar longs for Cam bod ia  
The islands of the Philippines and In do nesia  
Tiny Brunei n Sing a pore, Thailand n Malaysia  
And this is only part of what we call Asia.

Bhutan, Bangladesh don't forget Nepal  
India, Sri Lanka and that's still not all  
There's seven countries whose names end in stan  
To remember them all that is my plan

I'll give it a go to see if I can  
Pakistan Afghanistan n Turkmen-i-stan  
Tajikistan Kazakhstan - Kyrgyzstan (*pronounced Keer Gus stan*)  
But that's only six , I know Uzbek-i-stan

There's more countries but I don't want to faze ya

So we'll focus on central and south east Asia.

The first country Karina talks about is Malaysia. She went there as a child. The painting that she shows is of the huge statue of the Hindu, Lord Murugan. To give students an appreciation of just how big this statue is it is worth googling Batu Caves or Lord Murugan statue and show them photos with people beside it. There are hundreds of them. The other image that will come up when googling the Batu Caves is the steps and that will also give students a true appreciation of the climb to enter the caves.

## **Environmental issues**

The two puppet creatures in the performance were the Moon Bear and the Grey Shanked Douc Langur. The Grey Shanked Douc Langur is one of the world's 25 most endangered primates. Their biggest threat is from habitat loss when humans clear the forests that they live in. The total population of Grey Shanked Douc Langurs is estimated at 550 to 700. They are listed by the WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature) as critically endangered.

The Moon bear is not endangered but is still suffering from habitat loss. They feed at night and sleep during the day in caves and trees. Their strong arms and sharp claws make it easy for them to climb trees. They are also called Asiatic Black Bears, Himalayan Black Bears and Tibetan Black Bears. Interesting fact about the Moon bear, it is said that they can smell honey from 5 kilometres away and they love honey.

## **Trade**

Some of the things

Australia sells to Asia

Iron Ore, Coal, Natural Gas, Aluminium, Copper, Gold, Meat, Wheat, Wool, Telecom, Computer and Information Services.

Australia buys from Asia

Petrol, Computers, Cars, Medicines, Electric Fans – Heaters - Air Conditioners, Furniture, Mattresses Cushions, Clothing, Toys and Sporting Equipment.

## **Buildings**

In the show Karina shows students 3D representations of buildings in Asia. It is worth googling these buildings to show students how big or unusual they really are.

St Basil's Cathedral (it is worth noting that this building is in the European part of Russia) 48 metres tall.

The Robot Building in Bangkok Thailand – Headquarters of the Bank of Asia. 83 metres tall.

Ryugyong Hotel Tower in North Korea. 330 metres tall.

The Guangzhou Circle (Donut Building) in Guangzhou on the bank of the Zhujiang River. 138 metres tall.

The Piano Building is said to be the most romantic building in China (this is the one that Karina showed a photo of).

## **Hats and Headwear**

The coolie is still worn by farm workers across Asia today. It is traditionally made of straw and woven in villages all over Asia. They are very cheap to buy and very good at keeping the sun off when you are working in the fields.

The turban is like that saree the Karina wrapped around her. It is a length of material. Each time the person wearing it, puts it on, they wrap it around their head. Turbans are usually not pre-wrapped like the one that Karina used in the show. They are usually worn by Sikh men (pronounced Seek men) and they are worn not to keep the sun off the person's face but to protect their hair. It is also worn to identify the men as belonging to the Sikh religion.

The circular tube like hat with all the small pom poms hanging around the head was purchased in Laos. These hats are worn at special occasions particularly weddings.

I don't have a lot of information about the long flat head dress from Pakistan. A friend of mine was travelling in Pakistan near the Afghanistan border and was taken to a very elaborate feast. After the feast he was asked if he wanted to buy something so he bought the hat. He gave it to me telling me I should use it in one of our shows. It is interesting to note that while the head wear is covered with shells, these were being made and worn hundreds of kilometres away from the coast.

The hat that the cut out puppet boy wears is of course an angry birds hat and is of course made in China but you wouldn't call it a Chinese hat. It is worth having a conversation with students about traditionally made items and things made today in Asia because it is cheaper to get them made in Asia than in the country the idea originated or the thing was first designed.

## **Asian New Year**

While most Asian countries traditionally celebrate New Year at the same time as each other, the date of their New Year changes each year and is associated with the phases of the moon. However, there are exceptions. In 2018 China and Vietnam will celebrate New Year on February 16<sup>th</sup>, but Laos will

have their New Year celebrations on April 12<sup>th</sup>. Myanmar will have five days of public holidays from Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> February to Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup>.

There are many different customs observed in the different countries of Asia at New Year. Some customs are the same in many different countries and others are only practised in one or two cultures. These include cleaning the house (Vietnam), making lots of noise to chase the evil spirits away (Bali), giving money to relatives and friends (China), pouring water over the hands of your elders and young people throwing buckets of water at each other (Thailand), eating round food because coins are round and eating round food is supposed to bring you riches in the new year (Philippines).