

# *THE CHINESE LADY*

Study Guide 2022/23

**studio180theatre**



ASIAN CANADIAN THEATRE COMPANY

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# About Studio 180 Theatre

**studio180theatre**

Inspired by the belief that people can engage more fully in the world through the experience of live performance, Studio 180 Theatre engages, provokes and entertains audiences by producing dynamic live theatre and innovative Beyond the Stage experience that delve into social and political issues, asking big questions about our world, our communities and ourselves. 2022/23 marks our 20th anniversary season.

Our inaugural production of The Laramie Project played to sold-out houses at Artword Theatre in Toronto in 2003. Its success led to a 2004 remount at Buddies in Bad Times Theatre, which earned two Dora Award nominations. Since then, Studio 180 has continued to stage acclaimed productions of plays that tackle difficult issues and generate powerful audience and community responses.

As an independent theatre company, we are a nomadic group of artists. We create and produce our work in various spaces and venues across Toronto and we frequently partner with other companies in order to stage our plays. Our partnerships have included collaborations with Buddies in Bad Times Theatre, Canadian Stage, Coal Mine Theatre, The Musical Stage Company, The Theatre Centre, Tarragon Theatre and The Harold Green Jewish Theatre Company. Indecent marks our seventh collaboration with Mirvish Productions and our sixth play at the CAA Theatre.

In addition to our producing partners, we have a proud history of collaborating with community and advocacy organizations to raise funds and awareness around issues, causes and communities. Through special events, art exhibits in our theatre lobbies, pre- and post-show conversations, and panel discussions, we work together with artists, community leaders and subject matter experts to bring conversations ignited by our plays Beyond the Stage. Community partners have included Supporting Our Youth, The Triangle Program, Givat Haviva, Palestine House, Democrats Abroad, The 519, AIDS ACTION NOW!, AIDS Committee of Toronto, Toronto People With AIDS Foundation, Positive Youth Outreach, HIV & AIDS Legal Clinic Ontario, Peace Now, The PolishJewish Heritage Foundation of Canada, Women in Capital Markets, Black Coalition for AIDS Prevention, CATIE, Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention, the Cities Centre at U of T, Feminist Art Collective, Shameless Magazine, Next Gen Men, ResQ Youth, Bad Subject, 2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations and the Dotsa Bitove Wellness Academy.

Outreach to high school audiences has always been a crucial component of our work. In 2010 we launched Studio 180 IN CLASS, an innovative workshop model that fosters productive dialogue, encourages critical thinking, and promotes empathy by exploring the uniquely humanizing capacity of live theatre. Over the years, our Studio 180 IN CLASS program has grown to reach more than a thousand students across the GTA each year. We are proud education partners of the Toronto District School Board.

We love plays that ask big questions about our communities and our world, and we have introduced Toronto audiences to a significant number of socially relevant plays from international stages. In 2015, inspired by our eagerness to investigate more locally rooted questions, we launched Studio 180 IN DEVELOPMENT. Working with both established and emerging playwrights and creators, we provide financial and artistic resources to a broad range of issue-based works at various stages of development. We then invite student and public audiences to hear the work and contribute to the development process. Learn more about Studio 180 Theatre, our current season, and 20-year history at [www.studio180theatre.com](http://www.studio180theatre.com).

# About fu-GEN Asian Canadian Theatre Company



## THE MISSION

fu-GEN is Canada's longest running not-for-profit theatre company dedicated to the development of the professional Asian Canadian theatre artist by: producing works of the highest artistic caliber that explore the Asian Canadian experience; fostering emerging voices, and developing a strong culturally artistic community.

Created to provide a home for Asian Canadian artists, fu-GEN cultivates and produces new or underrepresented works in order to explore, celebrate, and address our roles and identities. We exist to make our artists and our stories visible in the theatre community, the Toronto community, and the Canadian community at large. Ultimately, we strive to build a stronger, truly multicultural Canadian landscape.

## THE STORY

Founded in 2002, fu-GEN Asian Canadian Theatre is a dynamic company determined to carve out a space in the Canadian cultural landscape for vibrant Asian Canadian voices. fu-GEN was born out of a driving need to build a home for a community that was underserved, and underrepresented. For nearly 15 years, we have been fiercely striving to shape our city and country's cultural landscape, and we have been recognized and rewarded with critical and audience acclaim, sold-out shows, numerous awards and nominations.

fu-GEN quickly garnered a rapport for its high calibre work and innovative styles with emerging Asian artists. With over 19 Dora Mavor Moore nominations and ongoing development support programs that have served over 100 emerging artists, fu-GEN Theatre is a champion in amplifying Asian voices in all artistic disciplines.

## THE WORK

fu-GEN incubates new plays from development to production, investing in Asian Canadian writers. We continually commission and develop more vital stories by offering residencies to playwrights and artists/artistic companies. Some highlights to our residencies and fostering includes providing development support, resources, mentorship and community to establishing artists. We cultivate emerging voices through our annual playwriting and creation lab, "The Kitchen." Some acclaimed shows which had their genesis in Kitchen include *lady in the red dress* and *Kim's Convenience*. On top of this, fu-GEN has produced 2 professional cultural conferences, including the first ever Asian Canadian Theatre Conference, GENesis (2010), followed by GENesis: Pocket Conference (2022), and Walk the Walk: National Festival of Asian Canadian Women (2016). We sustain a hub for Asian Canadian artists, as the home of this community; not only do we support the individual artist, we take into perspective the larger mission of uncovering the Asian North American experience through storytelling.

We are thrilled to be celebrating our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary season alongside Studio 180 Theatre. The last 20 years of fu-GEN Theatre have been momentous for Asian artists, and have led to pivotal works such as *Lady in the Redress*, *Kim's Convenience*, *Banana Boys*, and much more. Learn more about fu-GEN Theatre's history and our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary season events at [www.fu-gen.org](http://www.fu-gen.org).

# Guidelines for Brave Classroom Discussion

Thank you for bringing your class to *The Chinese Lady*. We hope your students will have the most positive and engaging theatre experience possible. To that end, we have created this Study Guide to support your pre-show preparation and post-show follow-up in the classroom.

For the most robust examination of the characters and themes of *The Chinese Lady*, we recommend booking a Studio 180 IN CLASS workshop led by our experienced Artist Educators. We use drama-based activities to promote empathy and inspire critical thinking in three immersive sessions, delving into the big questions of the play. Please contact Jessica Greenberg to learn more or book a workshop.

Studio 180 and fu-GEN are known for provocative shows that tackle potentially sensitive, personal, upsetting and controversial topics and *The Chinese Lady* is no exception as it examines anti-Asian racism, colonization, sexism, xenophobia, and cultural appropriation, among other topics. As educators we know that we can never guarantee that all participants will feel 100% comfortable; however, we have developed the following guidelines to promote a safer space and help you lead brave and productive pre- and post-show sessions aimed at empowering all students to feel valued, respected and able to contribute openly and honestly to the discussion.

- Class members should make a commitment to respecting one another. Invite suggestions from students as to what respect means to them. Some of these guidelines may include commitments to confidentiality, avoiding side chatter, and never ridiculing or putting down participants or their ideas.
- Your class may include students from a wide variety of cultural, racial, and religious backgrounds. A wide range of gender and sexual identities are likely represented amongst your students. Teachers and students must resist the urge to place individuals in the spotlight based on their perceived identity, history or point of view. Students will engage in the conversation as they feel comfortable.
- It is important to be mindful of family diversity and avoid generalizations and assumptions that could isolate or alienate individuals. Frequent reminders that there will often be as many different perspectives as there are people in the room and that there are many ways to make a family, are useful and help reinforce the value of a multiplicity of ideas and points of view.
- It is the moderator's role to establish a space of respect and inclusion, and they must take special care to ensure that students holding a majority opinion do not vilify those "on the other side" who hold a minority view. The moderator should also pose questions to the class to help keep the conversation on track.
- The point of a classroom discussion about *The Chinese Lady* should not be to reach a class consensus. The goal should be to establish a forum for a free and respectful exchange of ideas.

# Attending the Play

Prior to the performance, please ensure that your students are well prepared. The better prepared they are, the more they will gain from the experience. The following guidelines should help you and your students get the most out of attending *The Chinese Lady*:

- **Please arrive early.** When travelling in the city, whether by school bus or TTC, it is always best to leave extra time in case of traffic or transit delays. Weekday matinées begin promptly at 2PM. To avoid disruption, LATECOMERS may not be admitted.
- All **photography and recording** of the performance is strictly **prohibited**.
- Please impress upon your students the importance of **turning off all cell phones** and electronic devices. If students understand why it is important to refrain from using electronics, they will be more likely to adhere to this etiquette. Remind students that they will be seeing people performing live and, as a rule, if you can see and hear the actors, the actors can see and hear you. Even **text messaging** – with its distracting, glowing light – is extremely disruptive in the theatre. Please be courteous.
- **Masks** are not mandated, but Toronto Public Health strongly recommends wearing a well-fitting, high-quality mask in indoor public settings such as theatres. Please take a moment to remind students that since actors must perform unmasked in this small, intimate space, they are highly vulnerable to illness, thus making the entire production vulnerable to a Covid-19 outbreak. Your consideration is appreciated.
- Outside **food and beverages** are not permitted in the theatre. Spills are messy and noisy snacks and bottles can be disruptive for performers and patrons alike. Please ensure that students have the opportunity to eat lunch prior to attending the performance. There are affordable food options in the immediate vicinity if students wish to arrive early and purchase lunch before the show.
- We encourage **student responses and feedback** and are pleased to offer talkback sessions with cast members. If students are aware of the post-show talkback, they will be better prepared to formulate questions during the performance – and they will remember to remain in their seats following the curtain call! After the show, kindly take the time to complete our online Teacher/Student Response Form ([studio180theatre.com/education-feedback](https://studio180theatre.com/education-feedback)). Your feedback is extremely valuable to us!

## Content Warning

This play includes descriptions of **violence and cruelty**, **mild sexuality**, and themes of **prejudice and racism**.

We are very happy to discuss the play's content and suitability for your students. Please contact Studio 180 Director of Youth and Community Engagement, Jessica Greenberg at [jessica@studio180theatre.com](mailto:jessica@studio180theatre.com) or 416-669-5377 with your questions or to request a reading copy of the script.

## About the Playwright: Lloyd Suh

An award-winning and proud Chinese American playwright, Lloyd Suh's body of work speaks volumes about the Asian North American lived experience. He is the recipient of the Helen Merrill Award (2016) and the Herb Alpert Award in the Arts (2019). His body of work includes *The Far Country*, *The Heart Sellers*, *The Chinese Lady*, and *Bina's Six Apples*, among others. Suh's work is praised for its provocative unearthing of Chinese North American history, and has been produced on an international level, in places such as Manila, Philippines, and Seoul, Korea.

Originally from Indianapolis, Indiana, Suh received his Bachelor of Arts from Indiana University and his Master of Fine Arts from the New School for Social Research.

He served as Co-Director of the Ma-Yi Writers Lab from 2005-10 and Director of Artistic Programs at The Lark from 2011-20. He was elected in 2016 to the Dramatists Guild Council.



## About the Play: The Chinese Lady

Inspired by the true story of the first known Chinese woman to step foot in America, Lloyd Suh's critically-acclaimed play, *The Chinese Lady*, is a tale of dark poetic whimsy and a unique portrait of the United States as seen through the eyes of a young Chinese girl. In 1834, 16-year-old Afong Moy sailed into New York Harbor and was immediately put on display for a paying public who were mesmerized by her exotic ways and horrified by her tiny bound feet. As audiences follow Moy's travels through America as a living exhibit for decades, *The Chinese Lady* shares her impressions of a young country struggling with how to define itself.

The consumption of Asian culture and Asian bodies has a significant place in North American history, and Lloyd Suh sought to uncover the forgotten history of Afong Moy's story. She can be found in documentation during her younger years, but as she grows older, all traces of Afong Moy disappear. Startling to Suh, he wondered why this is. It then dawned upon him that after a certain age (presumably after she was less than a desirable embodiment of "The Orient"), the public just *didn't care about her anymore* and disposed of her from the narrative of American history.

To Lloyd Suh, the story of Afong Moy is integral for understanding the Asian North American experience; a story of exploitation, loss of identity, erasure of culture and history, and commodification, Afong Moy represents a long chronicle of Asian struggle in North America.



## Pre-show preparation

Get to know a bit about the history Afong Moy is brought into during the late 1800s in America. Here, we have resources that discuss the Chinese Exclusion Act, Chinese railway workers, and anti-Chinese prejudice and racism in Canada. The parallels that exist across the border are significant, and highlight how Afong Moy's story of misfortune is *not* a uniquely American issue.

### The Chinese Exclusion Act: America, 1882

The Chinese Exclusion Act was supported and passed due to the anti-Chinese movement that was gaining traction in the United States. Why did the anti-Chinese movement start? There was an influx of Chinese immigration for the California gold rush (1848) and massive labour projects such as the transcontinental railroad (1863-1869). These Chinese immigrants were blamed for low wages, criminal activity, and impacting the overall “white way” of living in America. Here, you can see a political cartoon from 1886 depicting the Chinese Exclusion Act.



Check out this video about the Chinese Exclusion Act in the United States:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zmcpLUm3EeM>

### Chinese Railway Workers: America

When white workers didn't sign up to work on the railway in the numbers America had anticipated, they sought labour elsewhere. Hiring Chinese labourers was originally objected to due to prejudice, but relented because no other options were available. Chinese immigrants worked in extreme conditions and were given the dangerous tasks involving explosives and tunneling. They were also paid 30-50% less than their white colleagues (*and* had to pay for their own food and shelter), \$26 a month working 6 days a week (that's about \$520 in today's currency).





Keep in mind the transcontinental railway was a pivotal moment in US history, as this connected the Western coast to the Eastern coast, making economic export and American development skyrocket. Check out this video about Chinese railway workers on the transcontinental railroad: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OspEUdi4a4g&ab\\_channel=Newsy](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OspEUdi4a4g&ab_channel=Newsy)

## Anti-Chinese Prejudice and Racism in Canada

### WHAT IS THE CHINESE IMMIGRATION ACT?

The Chinese Immigration Act of 1923 (also known as the Chinese Exclusion Act) banned the entry of virtually all Chinese immigrants for 24 years. All persons of Chinese descent (whether born in Canada or naturalized), were required to register for an identity card. If they did not comply, the penalty was imprisonment or a fine of up to \$500.

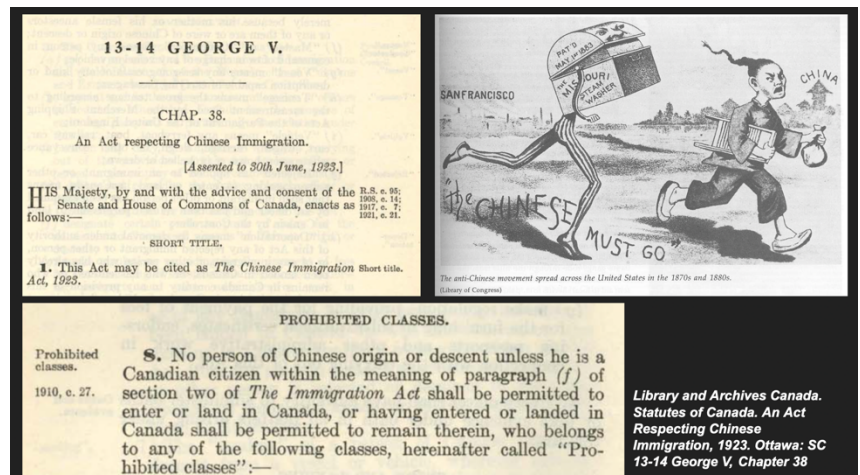
### WHY WAS THE ACT PUT IN PLACE?

The anti-Chinese movement took root after the first wave of Chinese immigration to British Columbia for the gold rush of 1858. There was a second influx of Chinese immigration during the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway from 1881 to 1885. These Chinese labourers were essential in the development of Western Canada, but the media

and politicians viewed these Chinese labourers as undesirable citizens for a “White Canada forever” (this phrase derived from the White Canada policy written into the Immigration Act of 1910). The Canadian government went as far as placing a hefty head tax on Chinese immigrants, but soon found a harsher solution: exclusion.

### WHAT’S A HEAD TAX?

Chinese immigrants had to pay \$50 per person (about \$1300 in today’s currency) to be able to enter, live and work in Canada. This was raised to \$100 (about \$2700 in today’s currency), and then raised again to \$500 (about \$15 000 present day currency). For reference, during that time \$500 could buy two homes, and was equal to about two years’ salary. This was used to deter Chinese immigrants from coming to Canada / make it



harder for established Canadian-Chinese immigrants to bring their families from China. The scan here is an example of head tax paperwork from 1913.

#### WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME?

Families were torn apart, as approximately 80% of men in Canada had left wives and children behind in China with the intention to bring them after their arrival. The Act halted the influx of Chinese immigrants and severely restricted economic, social and community development. Intergenerational trauma and setbacks are still taking time to repair in the Chinese community.

A formal apology was issued by Prime Minister Stephen Harper in 2006, and symbolic payments were made to surviving head-tax payers and to the spouses of deceased payers.

Check out this article on Chinese railway workers in British Columbia in the 1880s:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/multiculturalism-anti-racism/chinese-legacy-bc/history/building-the-railway?keyword=chinese&keyword=railway&keyword=workers>

# Glossary of events, people, and places

## People

**Afong Moy:** Also known as “The Chinese Lady,” Afong Moy is based off a real girl who was brought to America in 1834 to perform for its citizens. She is the protagonist of Lloyd Suh’s play, *The Chinese Lady*.

**Atung:** Based on the Chinese interpreter who accompanied Afong Moy on her tours, Atung is the only companion of our protagonist on her journey through America.

**The Carne Brothers:** Traders Nathaniel and Frederick Carne are the brothers who brought Afong Moy to America and commodified her for American onlookers.

**Andrew Jackson:** The 7<sup>th</sup> President of the United States of America, and notably the president who met Afong Moy in 1835.

**P.T. Barnum:** American showman, businessman, politician, and “circus king”. Barnum is known for exploiting the disabled and racially marginalized in horrific circus acts. One of his well-known “performances” includes that of the public autopsy of Joice Heth.

**Pwan Ye Koo:** Became the new Chinese Lady in 1850. Described as a “Chinese Belle,” Pwan Ye Koo was said to be younger and more docile than the older Chinese Lady, Afong Moy.

**George Washington:** The 1<sup>st</sup> President of the United States of America.

## Places

**Guangzhou, China:** This is where our protagonist, Afong Moy, is from. Guangzhou is historically one of the most important trading ports in China. Located along the Pearl River, this was the third most populated city during the 1800s.

**Washington, DC:** The capital of the United States of America.

**New York, NY:** This is where Afong Moy is first taken by the Carne brothers as an exhibit in 1834.

## Events

**Opium Wars:** There are two opium wars (1839-1842, and 1856-1860). The First Opium War: This was a fight over trading rights, open trade, and diplomatic status. Britain began selling opium to Chinese smugglers, which led to widespread demand and addiction in China. The emperor made opium illegal due to the serious economic and social disruptions it was causing.

throughout China. Britain viciously attacked China for this, which eventually led to the signing of the Treaty of Nanking. The Second Opium War: This was fought over China's stance on not legalizing opium. Other Western nations became involved like France and USA. It eventually ended with the Treaty of Tientsin... which was not in China's favour.

**Gold rush:** From 1848-1855, people from all over the globe came to the West coast of North America to try their luck at finding fortune. During this time, many Chinese labourers came over to work the gold rush.

**Transcontinental railroad:** From 1863-1869, Chinese labourers worked with very little pay in hazardous conditions to create the historical Transcontinental Railroad, which made America's economy and trading exports boom. Chinese immigrants have often been left out of photographs and records from the railroad's creation.

**Chinese Exclusion Act:** Signed by President Chester A. Arthur, the Chinese Exclusion Act was put in place in 1882 and prohibited all Chinese immigration to the USA. This was not repealed until 1943.

## Helpful terms

**Qing Dynasty:** Was an absolute monarchy from 1636-1911 in China. This was the government of China at the time Afong Moy immigrated to the United States.

**Guangzhou Cantonese:** Afong Moy's native language.

**Orient:** Derived from the Latin word meaning "East", this term was used by Western societies in the past to describe countries of Asia, specifically Eastern Asia. This is now an outdated term and considered an insult towards Asian communities.

**Oriental:** Derived from the Latin word meaning "East", this term was used by Western societies in the past to describe something that is from, of, or a characteristic of Asia, specifically Eastern Asia. This is now an outdated term and is not considered an appropriate adjective to describe something that is from, of, or a characteristic of Asia.

**Treaty of Nanking:** The treaty signed as a result of the end of the First Opium Wars.

# THE CHINESE LADY: TIMELINE OF HISTORICAL EVENTS



1834

14 year old Afong Moy, the first documented Chinese woman on American soil, immigrates to New York City, USA from Guangzhou, China by traders Nathaniel and Frederick Carne. She was promptly put on display as an exhibit labelled "The Chinese Lady".



1849

Chinese immigrants begin coming to California, USA to become miners for gold. Anti-Chinese sentiments begin to permeate, and a fee was put in place for non-American miners. Most Chinese miners left due to the high fees and created the first Chinatown in San Francisco.



1850

Afong Moy, now 30 years old, is exhibited for a final documented time in New York City. This is the last time history hears of Afong Moy, records of her completely disappear.



1863

The Transcontinental railroad begins construction and over 20,000 Chinese immigrants worked on its construction in dangerous conditions (tunnelling and explosives) for low wages (30-50% less than their white colleagues).



1882

The Chinese Exclusion Act is put into effect in America, prohibiting the immigration of all Chinese labourers until 1943. During this time, multiple massacres occurred targeting Chinese immigrants. In Canada, work on the Canadian Pacific Railway begins.



1885

Right after the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway, Canada passes the Chinese Immigration Act, stipulating that all Chinese immigrants must pay a hefty head tax to enter the country.



1923

The head tax not giving the government the results they wanted, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1923 is enacted. This banned most forms of Chinese immigration to Canada.



1943

In America, the Chinese Exclusion Act is repealed, mainly because China was a member of the Allied nations during WW2. Canada repealed their bill in 1947 and the Chinese community received an apology from Steven Harper in 2006 and symbolic payments were made to those effected by the act that were still living.

# Prompts to Examine Theatrical Presentation

## ISSUE-BASED THEATRE

Studio 180 Theatre & fu-GEN produce plays that speak to socially and politically relevant issues. We gravitate to works that ask questions rather than provide answers. What are the social or political issues in *The Chinese Lady* and how effective are the play and the production in illuminating them? Reflect on what was new, surprising or revelatory to you. Reflect on what was familiar, affirming or empowering. Reflect on what was confusing or challenging.

**Why live theatre?** What makes theatre an effective art form through which to explore themes, issues and human behaviour? Consider what is specific about your intellectual, emotional and communal responses to attending live theatre compared to engaging in other forms of art, such as reading a novel, watching a movie or looking at a painting.

**HINT:** *How does live theatre HUMANIZE issues and why is the humanization of social and political issues important?*

Brainstorm issues that you would like to see turned into a piece of theatre. **If you were going to see another play, or write a play yourself, what would you want it to be about?** This question may serve as a jumping off point for drama students to begin their own issue-based theatre projects around stories and topics of particular relevance to them.

## POINTS OF VIEW – CHARACTERS

How effective is *The Chinese Lady* at exploring multiple perspectives or points of view? Which points of view came into direct conflict with one another? Did that conflict propel compelling drama? Was the play even-handed? Did you feel that a multitude of opinions and points of view were expressed? Were the characters portrayed fairly? Do you believe an even-handed or fair portrayal is important when it comes to seeing a play? Which characters and stories were the most memorable? Which voices remained with you the longest and why? Which moments had the greatest impact? Which characters surprised you? Did the play create questions for you regarding the characters or their circumstances? Did you form an emotional attachment to any of the characters? Who were you rooting for? Who did you want to see more of? Did you disagree with what some of the characters were saying or doing? What would you ask those characters, given the chance?

## POINTS OF VIEW – PLAYWRIGHT

What is the playwright's point of view regarding the characters and their circumstances? Do you think Lloyd Suh is on the same "side" as any of the characters? Who would he be rooting for? After seeing the play, generate a list of open-ended "Big Questions" that might have inspired the writing of this play.

**DESIGN**

How did the design of the production affect the presentation of the piece? What mood or ambience was created? How did colour, texture and space add to the theatrical experience? How was lighting used to create mood or ambience? How did lighting work to define space and setting? How did the set and lights work in combination with one another? How were costumes used to define characters? How did the sound designer utilize sound and music to create ambience, mood, time period and location? Which design elements were instrumental in depicting the passage of time in the play?

**BEYOND THE STAGE**

We like plays that provoke big questions about our selves, our communities and our world: plays that we hope will inspire conversations that continue long after you leave the theatre. After seeing *The Chinese Lady* and participating in the IN CLASS workshop sessions, what are you curious about? What do you want to learn more about? Students are encouraged to select a topic or theme, inspired by the play and conduct their own research using articles, books, documentaries, or other resources. Findings can be presented in written, or oral reports, or through various artistic mediums such as video, a performed scene, poetry or fictional prose, or a painting, drawing or sculpture together with an artist statement. If your students generate creative responses to *The Chinese Lady*, please share them with us by contacting Studio 180 Director of Youth and Community Engagement, [Jessica Greenberg](#).



# Post-show readings & discussion

Take a moment to connect with the following material. What are the parallels between Afong Moy's experience in 1834 and present-day Asian North American experiences?

## **Atlanta Spa Shootings on March 16, 2021**

*Think about:* The objectification and fetishization of Afong Moy in comparison to present-day fetishization of Asian women.

<https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/03/17/us/shooting-atlanta-acworth>

## **Covid-19 Anti-Asian Violence and Racism**

*Think about:* The widespread anti-Asian movement of the 1800s leading to the Chinese Exclusion Act & Chinese Head Tax to present-day Covid-19 xenophobia.

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/05/12/covid-19-fueling-anti-asian-racism-and-xenophobia-worldwide>

## **Performativity of Asian-ness: Yellowface in Hollywood**

*Think about:* How Afong Moy is put on display to represent Chinese culture and how that culture is now exploited and appropriated for performance today.

<https://www.teenvogue.com/story/yellowface-whitewashing-history>

## **Discussion Questions**

1. Why do histories like Afong Moy's disappear?
2. How are Asian women today objectified like Afong Moy? How can we protect marginalized women?
3. How did racism infuse the way Afong Moy was perceived in America? Can we see parallels in our present day culture?
4. Is Atung a bystander or a victim in Afong Moy's exploitation?
5. How much of this history did you know before coming into this workshop? Were there surprises for you?
6. The struggles of being Asian in America very much become a part of Afong Moy's identity by the end of the play. Do you see a semblance of this in your own identities in present-day Canada? If this is not your personal experience, do you recognize this struggle in the experiences of your friends and family?
7. What part of the play resonated with you the most and why?
8. How can art and theatre change the way we treat other people?
9. Is theatre an effective way to uncover forgotten histories?
10. Have we learned from our country's past?