

Zuni Icosahedron
History Theatre

Mahjong History Theatre : Death of Old China

By the original team of 1587, A Year of No Significance

Mathias Woo × **Zhang Jianwei**

Unrolling the history of the late Qing dynasty in a mahjong contest through four key figures related to the Death of Old China



Is history authentic or fake? How to tell them apart?

Multi-perspectives of history unfold

As Li Hung-chang's protégé, Yuan Shih Kai was appointed by Empress Dowager Tzu-hsi to be Chancellor of the Grand Council for Military Affairs.

Empress Dowager intended to send Yuan to eradicate the revolutionary party and protect the Qing dynasty from falling apart.

Yet Yuan betrayed her by teaming with foreign powers and forced the Qing emperor to abdicate, ending the Manchu rule of China that lasted for more than 200 years.

Yuan was labelled as a traitor to the Qing Empire in history textbooks.

Sun Yat-sen established the Republic of China, and he was honoured in history textbooks as Father of the Nation.

Sun and Yuan were both presidents of the Republic of China. How come they are perceived so differently?

Why was Sun respected as the National Father, and Yuan demeaned as a Traitor?

Is the content of textbooks totally authentic? Scholars tend to lie? Could it be similar to what we read in tabloid news?

Was Yuan an ambitious schemer or peacemaker?

Was Sun Yat-sen a successful leader or an opportunist?

Mathias Woo joins hands again with Zhang Jianwei, screenwriter of TV serials *Towards the Republic*, following their last collaboration *1587, A Year of No Significance*. This time the history of the late Qing Dynasty will be put on stage to unravel the cause of death of Old China.

Who killed old China ?

Here comes the final in the Netherworld Mahjong Contest. The four finalists are Empress Dowager, Li Hung-chang, Sun Yat-sen and Yuan Shih-kai. On the mahjong table, the four key figures of Old China will reveal historical truths that are absent from the history textbooks of Japan - how the regimes of the Old China changed hands; how it moved from the monarchy of the late Qing dynasty to the Republic of China. Who has stolen the Old China? Who destroyed the Old China? Is China part of China? Perhaps clues can be found on the mahjong table amidst the mahjong jargon Red Green White Dragon, Grand Four Happiness, All Triplets, Pure One Suite.

Four Old China Key Figures Introduction :

Empress Dowager Tzu-hsi (Dick Wong)

Popularly known as the West Empress Dowager or the Old Buddha Master, she was a regent behind the screen during the reigns of Tongzhi (1861-1875) and Guangxu (1875-1908). She was the real ruler of China in the late Qing dynasty.

Yuan Shih Kai (David Yeung)

As head of the Beiyang Northern Sea Fleet, Yuan subdued the Boxer Rebellion. He was instrumental in bringing about the abdication of the last Qing emperor, and was elected Provisional President of the Republic of China.

Li Hung-chang (Carson Chung)

One of the four famous statesmen of the late Qing dynasty, Li was the founder of the Huai Army and the Beiyang Northern Sea Fleet. A leader of the Westernisation Movement, he was responsible for the signing of unequal treaties with Western powers.

Sun Yat-sen (Carmen Wu)

Often referred to as the Father of the Nation, Sun developed the Three Principles of the People, advocated the overthrow of the Qing dynasty through armed revolution, and established the Republic of China

Zuni History Theatre

Zuni History Theatre mainly explores aspects of Chinese history with the aim of broadening the historical dimension and reviewing our present day situation. It is also a kind of general education theatre with guided performances to empower Hong Kong secondary school students to understand and contemplate history from a variety of perspectives.

1587, A Year of No Significance, an adaptation of the book of the same name by the famous historian Ray Huang, is the most representative of the Zuni History Theatre series. A collaboration between Mathias Woo and Zhang Jianwei, screenwriter of television series *Towards the Republic* and author of *The Late Qing History Report*, the performance has been well-received and rerun many times with more than 50 performances in Hong Kong, Taiwan and the Mainland over the past 10 years. Movie director Tsui Hark praised the performance highly: "A theatrical experiment to caution the world." Mathias Woo is collaborating with Zhang Jianwei again in the coming performance *Mahjong History Theatre: Death of Old China* to take a new look at the history of the late Qing Dynasty to examine the cause of the death of Old China.

Creative Team

Scriptwriter & Director : Mathias Woo

Scriptwriter : Zhang Jianwei

Advisor of Mahjong Terminology : Jimmy Ngai

Performers : David Yeung 、 Dick Wong 、 Carson Chung 、 Carmen Wu 、 Benson Ling

Music : Edgar Hung

Performed in Cantonese

Zuni 2016 Theatre Season “The Strength of Emotions”

www.zuniseason.org.hk

Programme Information

Venue : Studio Theatre, Hong Kong Cultural Centre

Date : 7 - 8, 14-15/Oct 8:00pm

9/Oct 5:00pm

15/Oct 3:00pm

Student Tickets : \$100

Programme Enquiries : 2566 9696

Ticketing Enquiries : 3761 6661

Media Enquiries :

Mr. Luka Wong

Tel : 852-2893 8704 | Mobile : 852-6301 6569

Fax : 852-2838 7527 | email : luka@zuni.org.hk