A resource kit for teachers of Studies of Asia in the Middle Years
New Gold Mountain

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Sovereign Hill Education Service 2002
in collaboration with Studies of Asia, Languages Strategy, DE&T
Introduction

Purpose

Sovereign Hill's award-winning educational activities and resources for schools studying the Chinese on the Australian goldfields are being used widely by teachers of Studies of Asia.

The Sovereign Hill Education Service, in collaboration with the Department of Education & Training, has therefore developed this kit with a specific Studies of Asia focus to further enrich the educational experience of students in the middle years (years 5-9) who visit Sovereign Hill.

Aims

For students:
- To develop knowledge and understanding of the history of Australian Chinese
- To empathise with the experiences of Chinese immigrants in 19th century Australia.

For teachers:
- To provide primary and secondary resources for student use
- To provide pre and post visit activities to engage students and to foster student enquiry.

The content in the kit is presented chronologically in the following five sections:
- China before the Australian Gold Rushes (Pre-excursion)
- The Journey (Pre-excursion)
- What to see and do at Sovereign Hill (Excursion)
- Life in New Gold Mountain (Post-excursion)
- Looking Back (Post-excursion).

Each section includes:
- Background Notes
- Activities (Any part of the kit may be photocopied for classroom use).

Scope

While this kit begins with a brief history of China, it finishes in the late 19th century. Teachers are strongly advised to extend this investigation with an examination of modern China.
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New Gold Mountain
Pre-excursion activities

China before the Australian Gold Rushes
China before the Australian Gold Rushes

Background

Chinese civilization dates back at least 5000 years, making it one of the oldest in the world. Historically, the Chinese were peaceful, artistic and scholarly and were responsible for many inventions we take for granted today.

For centuries they had been aware of the Western world; however, they had resisted all contact, regarding themselves as self-sufficient and superior to all uncivilized foreigners.

Trouble: the Opium Wars and the Taiping Rebellion

Trouble arose in Chinese society, however, as trading contact with the outside world grew. During the 18th century, there was a huge demand for Chinese tea and silk in England. The Chinese insisted they needed nothing that the English could trade in return and they insisted on payment in silver. They also confined all Europeans to the port of Canton.

Alarmed at the decline of their silver reserves, the English introduced opium (an addictive drug) to the Chinese in the hope that the Chinese would then want to trade their silks and tea for opium, rather than silver. A demand was soon established and, by 1833, English profits from the opium trade were enormous.

The Chinese moved to ban opium, leading to what became known as the Opium Wars. These wars lasted from 1839 until 1842, ending with the defeat of China and the Treaty of Nanking, which gave Britain control of Hong Kong and access to five other trading ports. It also guaranteed Chinese the right to enter any British port, including those in Australia.

In 1850, China’s troubles continued with the Taiping Rebellion, an internal uprising in which millions died and China’s agricultural economy suffered. Many Chinese hoped the Western world would provide new prosperity.

At this time, Western nations held China in contempt, believing it to be a backward nation in need of modernizing. Agents in Hong Kong sought to meet a demand for cheap, indentured labour by shipping Chinese coolies overseas; others left China willingly but were still considered coolies and treated as such.

The Californian Gold Rush: The Golden Mountain

In 1848, gold was discovered in California. Sailors on Chinese ships returning to Hong Kong brought news of a sunny land with untold riches. After years of hardship, whole villages in China’s Guangdong province pooled resources to send young men in search of fortune on the Californian goldfields. The rush to the Golden Mountain was on.

Then, in 1851, gold was discovered in Australia. European traders had become rich shipping coolies around the world and Chinese miners to California. Now these traders advertised passage to Victoria which the Chinese called New Gold Mountain. Word of this new gold rush quickly spread through the areas around Hong Kong and Canton, and large numbers of Chinese miners began arriving on the Victorian goldfields.
Push-pull factors

"About one third of those who came to Australia paid their own way. They came as artisans, shopkeepers, merchants, a few as gaming-house keepers. The rest came on credit tickets, not on contract. They borrowed the money to come from money-lenders, bankers, village elders, families or entrepreneurs. They put up their land as security; in some cases they mortgaged their very families. People were saleable."

Rolls, E. Sojourners, p. 106.

The decision to migrate from your home country to another is very complex and difficult. There must be very good reasons to leave your whole family. We sometimes talk about "push" and "pull" factors. Push factors are reasons to leave your home. Pull factors are reasons to go to a certain place.

Activity

Imagine you are a Chinese man in the 1850s. Make lists of push and pull factors helping you decide to migrate to Australia, the New Gold Mountain.

Push factors

Pull factors
New Gold Mountain
Pre-excursion activities

The Journey
The Journey

Background

The rush to New Gold Mountain

In 1851, gold was discovered in Australia. European traders had already become rich shipping coolies (indentured labourers) around the world and Chinese miners to California. Now, these traders advertised passages to Victoria, which they called Hsin Chin Shan or New Gold Mountain.

A small Chinese group arrived in Australia in 1852, returning to China wealthy in 1853, to spread the word and gather their countrymen. By 1854, there were 3,000 Chinese in Victoria and by 1855, their number had grown to 11,500. These Chinese stood out as a distinct social group because of their different appearance, language and customs.

Victoria’s Chinese came mostly from Guangdong (previously called Canton), a province that was divided into 12 main districts. Most came from the fourth district – the district of See Yup. (You may also see alternative spellings of this name e.g. Su Yup.)

Many borrowed money to finance the trip. Some families pooled their resources to buy a fare for a family member who, in return, spent his first year as a miner in Australia repaying the debt. After this, any profits he made went home to his family or village.

Activities

1. Why did the Chinese call Victoria "Hsin Chin Shan" or "New Gold Mountain"?

2. Locate Canton (Guangdong) in an atlas.

What did they bring from their villages?

Each man carried a “ta’am” (a pole held over one shoulder with baskets of belongings slung from each end). Able-bodied men could carry 62 kilo loads including clothing, bedding, cooking pots, utensils and eating bowls, food (rice, tea, salted fish and cabbage) and even mining equipment. Cobbler, cooks, barbers, scribes and herbalists also carried their tools.

Travelling to New Gold Mountain

The Chinese travellers walked to Canton and then caught a boat to Hong Kong where agents crowded them into cramped, vermin-infested rooms. Conditions on ship were sometimes so bad that men were locked below decks to prevent protest riots. Food and water were sent down and toilet buckets taken up. Many smoked opium or gambled to overcome boredom.

On a diet of rice and water for several months, in stale air and unsanitary conditions, many Chinese suffered from seasickness, scurvy and dysentery.

Typically, groups arriving in Australia included a scribe (scholar) to write letters, keep credit records and send money home, as well as a herbalist who attended to the diggers’ health, and a barber. Chinese men, like their emperor, wore plaited pigtails called “queues”.

Activity

From Melbourne, write a letter to your brother in China, telling him of your travelling conditions, your safe arrival and your hopes for the future.
Aboard ship

"The would-be diggers had to be careful what ship they got on ... An American ship, the 'Rosa Elias', left Cumsingmoon for Callao early in the hot March of 1853 with 201 coolies aboard. Captain Westby allowed them one pint (about half a litre) of water each day for cooking, drinking and washing. They begged for more at the first port of call but Westby said he had been given no funds for extra water. The coolies killed him along with the mate and six European seamen."

"To move anywhere by water was to risk pirates. They were in extraordinary numbers ... Almost every day newspapers reported attacks, many involving the deaths of thirty or forty people and the sinking of several boats. The stinkpot was a favourite pirate weapon ... cleverly made earthen jars packed with gunpowder and plastered on the outside with a line of 'slow match' that the thrower lit."

"On the voyage out, the diggers behaved normally. They gambled, they played dominos, cards, chess. The musicians with them played fiddles, flutes, drums and cymbals."

Gittins, J. Diggers From China, p. 45.

Activities

1. Use an atlas to construct an illustrated map of the journey from China to Australia. Add important place names.
2. Complete a short diary account of a day aboard ship.
3. Imagine you are a reporter for a Melbourne newspaper. What questions would you ask the new Chinese arrivals?

Settling in

Arriving in Victoria, the Chinese often faced an expensive ferry ride up the Yarra to the wharves. Melbourne had an established Chinese community and in the early days of the Gold Rush, Chinese traders had set up the See Yup Society to provide friendship, protection and advice for new arrivals. Society guides met ships, and escorted the Chinese diggers to cheap lodgings or to the large Chinese camp on the Yarra banks – near the site of the present Arts Centre. Members of the See Yup Society cost 25 shillings per year (an average weekly wage in 1855) plus one shilling per month thereafter. New members received assistance and a list of rules to help them settle quickly and peacefully. They were advised to wear European clothes to avoid offending Europeans with their bare legs. They were to be calm and peaceful and had to abide by European mining methods. Society officials flogged those who broke these rules.

After purchasing supplies in Melbourne, the Chinese walked single file to the diggings. Some possessions were carried in "ta'ams" and heavy gear went on drays.

Activities

1. Design a pamphlet/brochure advertising the benefits of the See Yup society for new Chinese diggers.
2. What disadvantages might there have been in belonging to the See Yup society? Explain.
Off to the diggings

Activity

Many Chinese diggers walked hundreds of kilometres to the goldfields. They had to carry all their possessions.

Imagine you are a Chinese man in Melbourne, planning to travel to the diggings. You must decide what to take to the diggings. Draw pictures or write lists around the man below to show what you would take. Think carefully about what you will need when you get to the diggings.

From Robe to Ballarat

Because of the £10 poll (head) tax imposed on Chinese landing in Victoria, thousands of Chinese sailed to Adelaide or Guichen Bay (Robe) in South Australia. They then faced a long and often dangerous walk to the Central Victorian diggings.

"Smeaton said the Chinese carried their own tents with them as they walked overland, using their bamboo shoulder poles as tent poles at night. 'Ten feet by six feet (3.1 metres x 2 metres of tent) sufficed for six men.'... They travelled in stages of about 20 miles (32 kms) a day. There were mid-morning and afternoon breaks, and a stop for a midday meal ... Wells were dug at major stops ... there were casualties along the way."


"And so they set off in the gently falling rain on their long march to the gold fields. A winding column of small men in blue tunics and trousers with European jackets or capes to keep out the cold and their wide conical hats on their heads. Each man carried with him a long pole balanced on his shoulder and a basket or bundle suspended from each end.

They moved in the Chinese way with a fast, shuffling step that eats up the ground at a surprising speed and can be kept up for hours at a stretch, their feet barely leaving the ground and the harsh swish-swish of their thick soled boots making a rhythm that kept them going in step."


Activities

1. Use the outline map of Victoria and South Australia (on page 14) to create a map for Chinese diggers to follow. Show their overland route from Robe to the diggings.

2. You are the editor of a country newspaper in a small town. A large group of Chinese has just passed through. Develop a front page story describing the event. Include pictures and interviews with townsfolk and Chinese diggers.
Contemporary views

Many Europeans in the mid 19th century worried that Australia would be over-run by Chinese diggers. Some people feared the Chinese simply because they were different – they looked different, spoke a different language, worshipped different gods and had different customs. These cartoons show some of that fear, ignorance and prejudice.

Activities

1. Write five words to describe the way the Chinese are shown in this cartoon.

2. Why is the word “flood” used in the title of the cartoon?

3. How would a cartoon like this increase anti-Chinese feelings?

Activities

1. Who do the woman and kangaroo represent?

2. Why has the cartoonist used a young woman, rather than a man, in this picture?

3. Who is trying to push open the door?

4. Which character is represented as threatening?
New Gold Mountain
Excursion activities

What to see and do at
Sovereign Hill
What to see and do at Sovereign Hill

Teacher notes

This kit is intended to develop within students an empathy for the Chinese people who came to Australia during the goldrush era. The pre-excursion activities provide background information concerning life in China and the voyage to New Gold Mountain.

The excursion activities at Sovereign Hill allow students to experience life on the diggings from the Chinese perspective. We do not seek to demonise either 19th century Chinese or Europeans, but rather to understand each group’s point of view.

Focus questions

The Sovereign Hill Excursion will help answer the following:
- What were living conditions like for Chinese diggers?
- How did European diggers treat the Chinese?
- Why were some European diggers afraid of, or racist towards, the Chinese?
- How did the religious practices of Chinese diggers differ from those of European diggers?
- What contributions did the Chinese diggers make to life on the diggings?

Activities to be completed at Sovereign Hill

Chinese Village Trails may be downloaded from the Sovereign Hill Internet site and photocopied for students. The trails help focus their attention on exhibits and encourage students to analyse and draw conclusions. (www.sovereignhill.com.au/education)

Choose a number of students to act as guides during the student visit. These students familiarize themselves with an exhibit from the following pages. They then become experts, guiding classmates through the Chinese Village and other exhibits. They could even develop questions for classmates to answer.

Sovereign Hill Education Officers will conduct activities on the Chinese on the goldfields. A one-hour session examines treatment of the Chinese and includes a tour of the Chinese Village and Temple. A two-hour program also includes a viewing of The Secret Chamber in the Quartz Mine and finishes with Chinese tea and a bowl of rice. Discuss the most suitable programs for your students with the School Bookings Officer at the time of booking your class visit. Telephone (03) 5337 1188.

Background notes for teachers and students

Sovereign Hill portrays the lives of Chinese diggers in various ways. These notes will help teachers guide students through the exhibits. They could also be used by students themselves to enhance their understanding of what they see at Sovereign Hill.

The Chinese Village

Sovereign Hill's Chinese Village, at the bottom of the Red Hill Gully Diggings, is based on Ballarat’s original 1859 Golden Point Village. At one time, all Chinese on the goldfields had to live in such villages. These villages were set up by goldfields authorities and run by a European "Protector". This protectorate system was supposed to care for Chinese diggers and prevent violence by separating Chinese from Europeans.

Look for the Europeans’ huts. Compare them to the Chinese tents. The clothes and belongings in the Chinese tent provide a glimpse of the owners’ lifestyles. You might notice that some tents belonged to "new chums" while others were inhabited by "old hands". The communal fireplace suggests a lack of family life, while the vegetable gardens and piggery show how Chinese fed themselves.

Discussion

Would you like to live here? Explain.
How did living conditions in the Chinese Village compare to those of the Europeans?

The Chinese Store

The store sold both Chinese and European goods to the Chinese diggers.

Discussion

What Chinese goods can you recognize?
What Western goods were for sale?
Why would the storekeeper have sold these?
Chinese Gods

The Sovereign Hill temple, which is used by the local Chinese community, houses three special gods. Quan Gong, at the central altar, is a warrior god who protects people from evil spirits. The spear symbolises his military power, and the yellow flags represent his eleven armies. Choi Bak, on the side altar, is the god of wealth. He wears golden robes and holds a gold ingot. Mun Goon, the door god, has a small altar without a statue, just inside the door. The fire-place on the left wall is not for heating but to burn paper offerings of food, money or clothes to help Chinese ancestors on their journey to heaven.

Discussion
Why would Chinese diggers have had the God of Wealth in their temple?
What would they have asked him for?

The Chinese Protector's Office

In 1855, the Victorian Government established the Chinese Protectorate system to prevent violence between Europeans and Chinese. Ballarat’s Protector was William Foster. Foster carried out his difficult job with humanity. He oversaw several Chinese villages like that at Golden Point and enforced the many rules and regulations governing the Chinese. Here, his office contains pictures of Chinese on the goldfields and documents of the time. His original office would have been at the Government Camp. This is why our replica of his office is located near the Sovereign Hill Lodge, our representation of that camp.

Discussion
Why was William Foster’s office at the Government Camp rather than the Chinese village?

The Chinese Temple

Chinese temples were sometimes called Joss Houses. Some people say the word “Joss” comes from the Portuguese “dios” or “god”. Others suggest that “Joss” means ancestors. This temple is a replica of an original temple at the Golden Point Chinese Camp. The original temple was moved a couple of times, but was located in Main Road, Ballarat when it was finally demolished in the late 1950s. You can find it in a photograph of the Chinese Village in the post-excursion activities section, on page 30.

Discussion
Why would Chinese diggers have built such an expensive temple?
How is it different to a Christian church?

The Scribe’s Hut

Chinese characters (words) numbered into the thousands. Not all the Chinese on the goldfields could read and write. The Scribe’s Hut shows how an educated man could make a good living by writing letters and translating English laws for his countrymen. Look for his ink block and writing brushes.

Discussion
Why might Chinese who were unable to read or write need to employ the Scribe?

The Herbalist’s Hut

The Chinese Herbalist was like a well-respected doctor, or chemist. He used acupuncture and herbal teas to treat the sick. He kept a herb garden beside his hut and dried his herbs inside. Many Europeans found his herbal teas more acceptable than the leeches and remedies of 19th century European medicine.

Discussion
Can you recognize any herbs?
How did the herbalist cut his herbs? (Look for the foot wheel.)

What to see and do at Sovereign Hill
John Alloo's Restaurant
Main Street, Sovereign Hill

This building is based on sketches by the famous goldfields artist S.T. Gill. The original restaurant, in Ballarat's Main Road, was popular with both European and Chinese diggers. John Alloo sold Chinese meals as well as soups, stews and pies for European customers. Inside, the plain furnishings include wooden candle holders. This building is closed to visitors when used by Sovereign Hill's Ragged School.

Discussion
Why would John Alloo have sold European food? Do you think wealthy people would have dined here?

The Secret Chamber

A visit to The Secret Chamber in the Sovereign Quartz Mine, must be pre-booked with the School Bookings Officer (telephone 03 5337 1188). A small extra charge applies.

This state-of-the-art audio-visual show, set in Sovereign Hill’s Quartz Mine, presents the adventures of two young Chinese men whose experiences typify those of the Chinese diggers who sought their fortunes in Ballarat. When their father sent Chin Tem and his brother to New Gold Mountain their mother gave them a jade talisman for good luck. In Ballarat, the brothers worked for a mine owner as “tributers”, keeping a small share of gold for themselves. One night, after blasting rock, they found a fortune in gold. But their jade talisman had broken and their joy was short-lived. The mine collapsed and the gold was lost. The brothers were rescued; however, they left mining for other businesses, which made them wealthy. When Chin Tem’s brother died, his body was taken back to China, but his spirit remained in Ballarat. Here, he tells their story and waits to protect those who come searching for gold.

Discussion
Why was the jade talisman important?
Background

Official actions to control the Chinese

As increasing numbers of Chinese on the goldfields led to tension, discrimination and acts of violence, the colonial government felt it had to act.

A Royal Commission, established to investigate miners’ grievances after the 1854 Eureka Rebellion, recommended restricting Chinese entry to the colony before the colony was over-run.

To discourage Chinese from entering Victoria, a poll (head) tax of £10 ($20) was levied on all Chinese entering Victorian ports. Limits were placed on the numbers of Chinese each ship could carry and a Protectorate system was established to restrict Chinese to designated camps, which were controlled by government appointed Protectors. In 1856, Ballarat’s 5,050 Chinese were governed by Protector W. H. Foster.

Many Chinese avoided the tax by landing at Adelaide or Robe in South Australia. Often, however, shipping companies or captains charged and kept the entry tax, abandoning the Chinese in South Australia. Hundreds of Chinese then grouped, with a paid guide and bullock drays, to walk to the goldfields. Such processions, a couple of kilometres long, were recorded by writers and artists of the time.

South Australia imposed a similar tax in late 1857, after some 14,600 Chinese had arrived in Robe. The Chinese then landed in New South Wales. Anti-Chinese violence, the worst being the 1861 Lambing Flat Riots, led to New South Wales passing a Chinese Immigration Act, restricting Chinese entry.

Discussion

Why did Victoria introduce a poll tax?
How did Chinese migrants avoid paying the poll tax?

The government next appointed the Fawkner Committee to formulate a law to "prevent the Gold Fields of Australia from becoming the property of the Emperor of China and of the Mongolian and Tartar hordes of Asia". The result was a law requiring Chinese to buy, annually, a residential licence costing £6 ($12). Despite protests from Foster and petitions from others, claiming the law was unjust, it was passed. The Chinese became the most overtaxed citizens in the colony.

Not everyone saw the Chinese as immoral, dirty and troublesome. In 1856, C.H. Nicholson, a Victorian policeman, stated before the Select Committee on Chinese Immigration:

"The Chinese are a remarkably quiet people ... they give less trouble to the police than any other proportion of the population ..."

By 1860, tensions decreased as many Chinese (10,000 in 1860) moved to New South Wales goldfields. However, they were treated no better than in Victoria. Anti-Chinese violence, the worst being the 1861 Lambing Flat Riots, led to New South Wales passing a Chinese Immigration Act, restricting Chinese entry.

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Life in New Gold Mountain

Background

Resentment of Chinese on the goldfields

Many Europeans disliked the Chinese. The Chinese were different in appearance, customs, lifestyles, language and religion. They smoked opium and loved gambling. They kept domestic animals in their camps and used cesspools of human sewerage to fertilize vegetable gardens. Evidence at the 1855 Goldfields Commission of Enquiry described the camps as "squalid".

Some Europeans worried because Chinese groups contained only men, even though there were good reasons why the men left their families in China. Australia was unknown and distant and few could afford extra fares for wives and children. To ensure their return, some Chinese villages kept the men's families in China. Records from 1855-1859 show several thousand Chinese men, but only two Chinese women on Ballarat's goldfields.

The Chinese often misused precious water supplies, diverting water for their vegetable gardens and allowing muddy residue from mining to pollute clean water-holes.

Above all, Chinese success in finding gold caused jealousy and resentment. The Chinese were very frugal, hoarding and sending home their wealth. They were seen as parasites, not contributing to community life and draining the colony of its wealth.

Activity

Europeans found Chinese dress offensive so the Chinese quickly began wearing European-style clothes. However, the Chinese were still different.

List the ways Chinese and Europeans of the 1850s were different. How were they the same?

Activity
In groups research the Buckland River Riot or the Lambing Flat Riots. Prepare a report for the class.

By the 1860s, many Chinese had returned home, but some remained and found work off the goldfields. In rural areas, many Chinese became market gardeners and fruit and vegetable merchants. In Melbourne, Chinatown expanded as many became successful businessmen, establishing restaurants, a coach line, newspapers and furniture making businesses. Taxes and restrictions eased. The residential licence ended in 1862 and the entry tax in 1865.

However, racist attitudes persisted. As well as an overwhelming belief in white superiority, many people feared competition for jobs and trade unions saw the Chinese as a threat to wages.

Eventually, racist fears led to the first national immigration restriction policy in 1901. The issue was so important that this Immigration Restriction Act was the first Act passed by the new federal government. Known unofficially as the White Australia Policy because it prevented Asian and dark-skinned people from entering Australia, the Act was not repealed until 1972.

Ballarat East Chinese camps

Activity
Study the map on page 27, then locate and mark:
Main Road
Red Hill Lead (bottom left corner. This is the site of Sovereign Hill today.)
Three Chinese Villages – at Golden Point, Eureka and Clayton’s Hill.
Names or features which show that Ballarat East was a mining area in 1861.
Activities

1. Examine the picture on page 28. How many Chinese people can you locate in this picture? What do they appear to be doing?

2. The large tent in the picture is perhaps a Chinese theatre or circus. What does this suggest about Chinese lifestyle on the goldfields?

3. Read the following paragraph:

"There were six villages in the Ballarat warden's district, three of which can be located on a map of Ballarat East in 1861. The main one, near Golden Point, was in the middle of the flood-ravaged Yarrowee Flat. A sketch of that village in 1868 is a horrifying sight. The low-lying, crowded villages were unparalleled health hazards. During 1856 and 1857 as many as 150 exhausted Chinese struggled into Ballarat every day in long files. They had come, weak and unacclimatized into a death hole, often bringing new infections with them. In October 1857 mortality was so high from dropsy and chest infections that the health of the whole Ballarat East population was threatened. The local council considered the camps at Golden Point and Eureka a disgrace."

Bate, W. Lucky City: The First Generation at Ballarat, 1851-1901. pp. 150-1.

"A sketch of that village in 1868 is a horrifying sight." Do you agree with Weston Bate's opinion of this picture? Explain your answer.
Activities

1. What evidence can you find in the photographs opposite and below to support Weston Bate’s opinion that the Chinese villages were "death holes"?

2. Locate the Chinese Temple. Circle the boundaries of the camp as you see it. Note the shops in the foreground. What similarities and differences do you see between the Chinese Village and the European area?

3. Pretend you are the man who is knocking on the door in the picture below.

Who are you?

Why are you there?

What are you thinking?

What happens next?
Chinese on the goldfields

Activities
1. The boxes below are jumbled up. Cut them out and arrange them in chronological (time) order to create a timeline. Think of a suitable title for your timeline.
2. Use these events and research a few more of your own to develop a board game, such as “Snakes and Ladders”, called “Chinese on the Goldfields”.

8 December, 1848
121 Chinese arrive in Geelong aboard the Nimrod. Many work as indentured labourers.

1854-1855
The Gold Fields’ Commission of Enquiry suggests solutions for the “Chinese problem”.

1863
Victorian poll tax (£10 ($20) per head) dropped for two years. It is never re-instated. It is officially dropped in 1865.

June 1851
Gold found in Victoria, sparking massive immigration.

1865
New South Wales drops laws restricting Chinese entry into the colony.

May 1857
A group of Chinese, walking from South Australia, discovers gold at what is to become Arrarat. Europeans chase the Chinese from their claims, but they soon return.

August 1857
Ballarat Chinese and 43 leading European citizens petition the Victorian Government against increasing the residency fee.

November 1878
January 1879
Seamen in Melbourne strike over the use of cheap Chinese workers.

November, 1857
Victorian laws increase the Chinese residency ticket to £6 ($12) per year. If Chinese do not buy a residency ticket, their claims can be “jumped” by Europeans.

3 December, 1854
The Eureka Rebellion leads to the Gold Fields’ Commission of Enquiry.

1862
Residency ticket and Protectorate system abolished in Victoria. Chinese now free to live outside the camps.

14 July, 1861
Lambing Flat Riots in New South Wales. Thousands of white diggers attack Chinese camps, burning tents and belongings. Half the Chinese are, reportedly, injured.

February, 1858
The Chinese Camp at Smythes Creek, near Ballarat, is burned and looted, leaving two Chinese dead after disputes over water and mining claims.

1881
At the Intercolonial Conference, the colonies (later the states of Australia) decide to discourage large scale Chinese immigration.

1859

1901 Federation
The first law passed by the new Federal Government is the Immigration Restriction Act. This leads to a total ban on Asians entering Australia.

4 July, 1857
100 Europeans attack camps of 2000 Chinese at Buckland River in north-eastern Victoria. Property is destroyed and some Chinese are killed.

12 June, 1855
A new law charges all Chinese entering Victoria a £10 ($20) poll (head) tax. Chinese Protectorate camps are set up and Chinese pay £1 ($2) per year to finance the regulations.

1881
At the Intercolonial Conference, the colonies (later the states of Australia) decide to discourage large scale Chinese immigration.

1878
January 1879
Seamen in Melbourne strike over the use of cheap Chinese workers.

12 December, 1873
Clunes Riot. Mine management attempts to break a strike by using Chinese workers who are confronted by over 1000 men, women and children.
Contemporary views

Activities

The following two extracts, presented as questions and answers, have been taken from the official records of the 1854-5 Gold Fields’ Commission of Enquiry which was appointed to investigate conditions on the Victorian goldfields.

Extract 1

Q 1364. "There are a great number of Chinamen here now are there not?
A – Yes; and they are the greatest nuisance on the diggings, and the Government ought to take some steps, if not for their removal, at all events to prevent their increase; they are a nuisance; they spoil all the water on the Gold Fields, and will merely work upon the surface."

Q 1365. "How do they spoil the water?
A – By washing (gold) in it; they do nothing but surfacing."

Q 1366. "Is there any other disadvantage connected with them?
A – They are a notorious set of thieves."


Extract 2

Q 3102. "Are there any others but Chinese of the inferior races here?
A – I do not think that any but the Chinese would be complained of by the diggers. We have American blacks, and I have seen two or three Lascars (Indians); but the principal are the Chinese."

From evidence presented by Henry Melville, a publican (formerly a storekeeper), Castlemaine, on 30 December, 1854, pp. 159-60. (Reprinted in McLaren, I.F, The Chinese in Victoria: Official Reports and Documents, p. 9.)

1 Why was a Commission of Enquiry necessary in 1854?

2 Who do you think is asking the questions in Extracts 1 and 2?

3 If you were a Chinese digger in the 1850s, which of the comments would you find most offensive and why?

4 Why has the artist drawn a European man cleaning a Chinese man’s boots?

5 Why would the English-speaking public, in 1865, find this image alarming?

The fourth extract is from official records of the Select Committee of the Legislative Council on the Subject of Chinese Immigration, printed 17 November, 1857.

Extract 4

"Thursday 4 June, 1857.
Chinese Immigration. – The Honorable J.P. Fawkner moved, in accordance with notice, That a Select Committee of seven members (of Parliament) be appointed to frame a Bill to control the flood of Chinese immigration setting in to this Colony, and effectually prevent the Gold Fields of Australia Felix from becoming the property of the Emperor of China and of the Mongolian and Tartar hordes of Asia."


6 J. P. Fawkner is proposing a new law or "Bill". What does he want that law to achieve?

7 What do the words "flood" and "hordes" suggest about Fawkner’s attitude to the Chinese?

8 Would his views be acceptable today? Why/Why not?
Extract 5

The Chinese Question

"Sir, - What are we to do with the Chinese? A pole (sic) tax of £10.0.0 per head has been found insufficient to stem the tide of almond-eyed asiatics from the 'flowery Land' to the land of gold ... how will the future welfare and prosperity of this country be effected (sic) by the wholesale immigration of those pagans? They are a people with whom we do not associate; on whom, in fact, we look down with contempt...

... I would suggest His Excellency, the Governor should authorize the formation of volunteer corps ... who might be armed, for want of better, with old muskets ... and ready to act in concert with the military and police, in several districts.

... Reports are current that the Chinese have large quantities of gun powder, and that they are well provided with short, sharp, cut and thrust swords ..."

Extracts from a letter to the editor by John B.L.S. Holmes, The Ballarat Times, 14 July, 1857. p.3.

Why does John B.L.S. Holmes believe that voluntary corps (soldiers) should be set up? What does he fear?

---

Extract 6

Influx of the Chinese

Petition to the Victorian Parliament, 1857

"To the Honorable The Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly, sitting on Chinese business, we are much obligated –

We Chinese on first coming to this Gold Field thought the English very kind ... Now we learn that the newspapers complain that we Chinamen bring no wives and children to this country; our reason is, that we wish to leave some of the family to look after our aged parents as the climate there is very rough; ... Again you complain that we Chinese do not buy any land and work farms, that is because too much capital is required ... As soon as we get a little money we will try to get home to our aged parents ... just the same as the English Englishmen go home rich, Chinesemen (sic) go home poor ... Now we hear you are going to put a tax of a pound a month and we much sorry we not know what to do. The digging is difficult, and is hard to get even a living. If we pay the pound a month we cannot get anything to eat. We pray your Honorable House will feel for the poor man, and not exact this money, and then all the Chinese will be happy and ever honor the Governor ... (Here follow signatures.)"


---

Extract 7

Influx of the Chinese

Petition

"To The Honorable The Speaker And Members Of The Legislative Assembly

The Humble Petition of the undersigned Storekeepers and Traders, resident in the district of Castlemaine:

SHEWETH

4. That the Chinese materially benefit the trade of this country, by their large consumption of European manufactures ... and by gold which they obtain from localities that have been found unremunerative (unproductive) by the European digger.

5. That any enactment (law) which should tend to drive away from this district its Chinese residents would seriously injure the storekeepers of Castlemaine and its neighbourhood ...

6. That the Chinese as a body, are among the most orderly and inoffensive of the population on the gold-fields, and that they have, as yet given no cause for a measure of so stringent (harsh) a nature ...

Ordered by the Legislative Assembly to be printed 21 August, 1857.

These petitions were sent to parliamentarians.

Which of these petitions represents the view of the Chinese themselves? How do they respond to the charges made against them? What do they want?

Why did Castlemaine businessmen want the Chinese to stay?

---
Summing up

Activities

Some of these 19th century sources would be considered racist today.

1. What does racist mean?

2. Which of the sources seems most racist to you? Explain.


Rules of the Ballarat See Yup Society

(Su-Yap is sometimes used as an alternative spelling of See Yup.)

Extract from:

The Members of this Society all belong to the Su-Yap clan.

1. The Su-Yap people, no matter whether new chums or old residents, shall, each man subscribe £1 5s.
   towards... their club-house.

2. All our country people who come and dig for gold must love and help each other...

5. If any individual... commit[s] theft... he shall be made to pay double the amount of the value of the
   article stolen, and be beaten, besides... with thirty stripes... [and] he shall be taken to the
   English magistrate for punishment...

10. Europeans pay strict regard to cleanliness. No heaps of fetid... stuff must be allowed to
    accumulate... [any offenders] shall be punished with twenty stripes.

12. Europeans are also very particular about their clothes, hats and shoes... Anyone going bareheaded
   or barefooted will not only be laughed at by Europeans, ... the fine of £2 shall be inflicted upon him...
   [and] The manager of the club-house shall, with his own hands, administer to the offender
   twenty stripes.

27. The costume of the Chinese being very much disliked by Europeans, ... [Chinese] are forbidden to
    wear Chinese trousers... the offenders shall be summarily visited with twelve stripes, and fined besides
    in the sum of £2...

28. ... That all may get plenty of gold is our wish for our clan-fellows."

Translated by Rev. W. Young in his Report on the Condition of the Chinese Population in Victoria, 1868. Presented to both
and Documents, pp. 45-6.)

Activities

Most Chinese diggers joined a society of people from their home districts in China. These societies
helped sick diggers and also set rigid rules for them to live by.

1. Which of these rules do you find most interesting? Why?

2. Are all these rules fair? Explain.

3. Why did the See Yup Society enforce these rules? What were they trying to achieve?

4. In small groups, role-play a scene where a See Yup Society member is accused of stealing gold.
Life in New Gold Mountain

Ballarat census 1868

"Ballarat.

Statistics of Chinese Population, and particulars of their Employments, furnished by the Chinese Interpreter, Abboo Mason.

800 Chinese, total population. 21 Chinese married to European women.
370 Chinese in the largest encampment. 3 Chinese have Chinese wives.
260 Chinese are married men; wives in China. 48 Chinese children: eight go to school.

The larger portion of the Chinese are miners. Each miner gets two ch'in; some of them barely earn their food.

Twelve men is the largest number of those who form themselves into companies.

Over 170 Chinese are employed at European claims; each of the men so employed gets £1 10s. a week.

About 100 Chinese were engaged in harvesting last year; their wages were from £1 10s. to £1 15s. each a week, with rations; or £2 without rations; they were employed from four to six weeks.

7 large Chinese shops 6 barbers' shops 8 fishmongers
3 eating-houses 120 hawkers of vegetables 28 hawkers of useful and fancy articles
32 market gardeners 4 tailors' shops 50 unemployed Chinese
5 butchers' shops 3 carpenters' shops 15 Chinese admitted into the hospital

Chinese subscriptions (donations) to the hospital, £16 11s
8 Chinese inmates of the Benevolent Asylum last year, £23 16s 6d
10 lepers
3 club-houses. The rules of those clubs enjoin friendly feelings ... and mutual assistance.

4 gambling-shops
2 lottery-shops. The way in which gambling ruins the people is this: When moneyed Chinese gamble, whether they win or lose, they harbour feelings of animosity. About 80 out of 100 persons are gamblers.

2 lottery-shops. The evils of opium smoking are: It ruins the constitution of those who are addicted to it; their bodies get decayed and weak, their skin becomes sallow, and their persons emaciated.

10 Chinese are lepers
32 market gardeners
50 unemployed Chinese

Chinese characters in Ballarat

The following extracts are from Lionel Welsh's Vermillion and Gold: Vignettes of Chinese Life in Ballarat.

Ah You

"Ah You lived in a tent on the rise of the hill on Golden Point. It was a small tent, eight feet long by six feet wide, with the side barely two feet high, and the height of the ridgepole no more than five feet. Still it sufficed to cover Ah You and his scant belongings."

Ballarat's Detective

"He was equipped in tip-top style; ... natty Napoleons (knee-length boots), swallow black cap, cap of military cut. He spoke English fluently yet there was no misunderstanding his Chinese physiognomy. Who was he? None other than James Ah Poo, detective. And for the next five years he was the terror of Chinese lawbreakers who came under his sharp oblique eye ... His biggest feat in criminology was his tracing of the murderers of Sophia Lewis – two Chinese, who were ultimately hanged in Melbourne."

The Storekeeper

"... Lee Gow set up as storeman in the historic Main Road, and what is more, prospered in a small way. The dingy shop with the mean house attached to it in due time became his own. The little store was never quite empty of customers, nor the little house minus children. Sons and daughters were born to the Chinese couple – for Lee Gow's wife, like her husband, was a full-blooded Cantonese, being, in fact, the one of only three Chinese women then resident in Ballarat."

The Pao-Chung Shop

"Charley Lih Chung, as I remember him, was a sparsely-fleshed Chinaman, already elderly. In earlier years he had been miner and storeman, but in the days of our acquaintance he worked a small vegetable garden, varying this occupation for five or six weeks in the year when he became a shopkeeper again ... A month or so before bonfire night, Charlie would open his pao-chung (fireworks) shop ... Jumping jacks, jackie wheels, sparklers, bung bungs, Roman candles, flower pots – and, of course the very base of all bonfire celebrations – crackers; ... And then there was Charlie himself, with the inevitable cap or hat on his grey head, and the unflinching smile all over his skeleton features ..."

The Gardener

"... Ah Lok bought a share in a garden worked by a company of eight other gardeners. For this privilege he paid exactly £100, which covered the cost of garden, house, horse and cart ... In that little community of nine where each man lived alone, and slept alone, Ah Lok fitted perfectly. The routine was simple. Every Monday the full company put in a whole day's work in the garden. On Sundays they rested – or did light jobs at the most – dressed themselves in their best clothes to worship in their own chapel, and sought out their fellow compatriots for a sociable chat, and maybe a surreptitious game. The five days between were devoted to the duties of the market, and the demands of the rounds."

Laundryman

"When Sam Wah came to Ballarat at the turn of the century he brought with him several irons, some boards and cloths, a stick of Chinese ink, and a writing brush. On arriving he acquired a stove and a ramshackle house, and in Sam Wah, Laundryman, was in business ... Sam himself was a placid, soft-spoken, slow-moving man affecting indoors blue trousers, a shirt of immaculate whiteness which was an incontrovertible advertisement of his own tradesmanship, unheeled slippers, and a cap which concealed the plaited pigtail wound around his head ... "

Activities

1 Which of these facts might be used to argue that the Chinese were a bad influence in Ballarat in 1868?

2 Which of these facts might be used to argue that the Chinese made a valuable contribution to Ballarat in 1868?
Activities
1. Choose one of Ballarat's Chinese characters. Use this character's description and your imagination to draw a sketch of him.
   or
2. Use the description and your imagination to either draw a plan of, or sketch, his house or shop.
   or
   tend you are this person. Write a letter to your family in China describing your life in New Gold Mountain and explaining why you cannot return home yet.
   or
3. In small groups, choose 4 to 6 characters and role-play a scene on Sunday when the friends come together to socialize. They might talk about the events of the last week, how well they are doing, memories of China, missing friends and family etc.
Looking back

Chinese contributions to Australian society

Activities

The following pictures depict ways in which Chinese people contributed to Australian society in the 19th century. Use them to complete one of the following activities:

1. Make an artwork entitled "Chinese Contribution".
2. Create a museum display of the same name.
3. Write a short feature column for a magazine.

WONG CHOCK-SON,
Chinese Doctor,
13 GRENVILLE STREET
BALLARAT.

Qualifications: Born in Hong Kong. Trained in China.Fully qualified Medical Practitioner. Only the finest Herbs used.
Fully qualified Medical Practitioner. Only the finest Herbs used.
This doctor is highly skilled. Prosecutors in China have years with healing Doctors.
Treatise may be sent on application.

HENRY LAHILL. 13, Grenville Street, Opposite Exhibition

Advertisement for Chinese Doctor.
Reproduced with kind permission of the Gold Museum, Ballarat.

John Allen's Chinese Restaurant, Main Road, Ballarat, 1853.

Kong Meng Co.
Chinese Mine, c. 1860. La Trobe Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria.

Chinese at Work in Melbourne, 1867.
La Trobe Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria.
Looking back

Chinese Fishermen in Hobson’s Bay 1873.
La Trobe Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria.

Chinese Procession at Ballarat Charities Fete, 1875.
Illustrated Sydney News, 11 December, 1875.
National Library of Australia.

Activities

Look closely at the photographs of Bobby Fun Yet and Ah Pen.

1. Do you think Bobby is wearing his own clothes? Explain.

2. How old do you think the men were when they were photographed? Explain.

Read the letter from the Creswick Historical Society on page 48.

3. Who were Bobby and Ah Pen?

4. Why do you think they were photographed?

5. If you could meet Bobby and Ah Pen, what would you say to them?
2nd. October, 2000

re CHINESE AH PEN AND BOBBY FUN YET.

We have no information on Ah Pen, and no confirmation that he was buried in the Cemetery.

BOBBY FUN YET.

We have a letter from Mrs Singleton (Mildura) saying that in the photograph Bobby Fun Yet is wearing her grandfather’s wedding suit (Mr. Lloyd). On comparing the photo with her grandfather’s wedding photo, she is not sure if the trousers are Mr. Lloyd’s, but confirms the coat and the waistcoat are the same.

The obituary from the Creswick Advertiser for Bobby Fun Yet is below, he was buried in the Creswick Cemetery on 6 July 1923. It is thought that Ah Pen may have been the remaining Chinese in the town.
Glossary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taiping Rebellion</td>
<td>A civil uprising in China during the 1850s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opium Wars</td>
<td>Wars between Britain and China, over opium selling, 1839 to 1842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treaty of Nanking</td>
<td>The agreement which ended the Opium Wars and gave Britain control over Hong Kong in 1842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tributers</td>
<td>A party of diggers who dug in someone else’s mine in return for a percentage of the value of the gold they found</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talisman</td>
<td>A magic charm or object</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Chum</td>
<td>Someone new to the diggings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lacquer</td>
<td>Hard, coloured varnish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese Protectorate</td>
<td>A system set up by colonial authorities to look after Chinese diggers and prevent violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold Mountain</td>
<td>Chinese name for Californian goldfields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Gold Mountain</td>
<td>Chinese name for Australian goldfields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indentured labourers</td>
<td>Workers hired/bound to their master by a formal contract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coolies</td>
<td>Name for Chinese and Indian hired labourers in 19th century Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acupuncture</td>
<td>Form of medical treatment involving the pricking of skin or body tissue with needles. Originated in China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pounds, Shillings and Pence</td>
<td>Imperial Units of Currency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jade</td>
<td>Semi-precious stone, usually green in colour and regarded as lucky by the Chinese</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bibliography


For Further Reading


Useful internet sites

www.askasia.org


Updated daily.


Two Internet Sites for Chinese Inventions www.askasia.org/frclasrm/lessplan
(then click on 1000019.htm) www.sdcoe.k12.ca.us/score/chinin/chinintg.htm

Chinese Heritage of Australian Federation www.chaf.lib.latrobe.edu.au