

FIRST CHINESE AMERICAN FILM STAR IN HOLLYWOOD

ANNA MAY WONG

Why Does Representation Matter in Media?

Appearing in over sixty movies throughout her career, Anna May Wong was the first Chinese American film star in Hollywood and one of the first Asian American film stars in the United States. In addition to her roles in silent films, television, and stage, Wong landed a role in one of the first movies made in Technicolor. Internationally recognized for her versatility on both the screen and the stage, her legacy continues to influence entertainers around the world.

Learn More About Wong

- Anna May Wong, born Wong Liu Tsong, decided she wanted to be a movie star at the age of nine, and was cast as an extra in her first movie, *The Red Lantern*, at age 14.
- At age 17, Wong starred in her first leading role in *The Toll of the Sea* (1922), the first feature length film made by Technicolor. This movie was a silent version of a movie called *Madame Butterfly*.
- While working on films in the United States, Wong was still asked to play stereotypical Asian roles. This frustrated Wong, saying in an interview for *Film Weekly*, "I was so tired of the parts I had to play..." She found audiences more receptive in Europe and moved there in 1928.
- For her contributions to film, Wong received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 1960—one year before her death in 1961. In 2022, Wong was featured on a circulating U.S. Quarter as part of the U.S. Mint's American Women Quarters™ Program. Her coin was the fifth to be released in the series.

Take a Closer Look

- What do you notice about this photograph of Anna May Wong?
- What makes you say that?
- What more can we find?



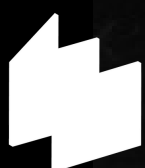
Behind the Glamour

In the photograph on the right, you may notice Anna May Wong's sophisticated outfit and detailed make up. Wong cultivated an image as a fashionable, All-American flapper in the 1920s. She did this to combat prejudice, knowing that Hollywood and viewers saw her as "foreign."

Inspire Like Anna May Wong

How will you follow your dreams? How can we all make sure that everyone is represented on big and small screens? You can continue to help change the scene, just like Anna May Wong!

Learn more about Anna May Wong and women in film here: womenshistory.org.



National Women's History Museum

