

Befriending the “Yellow Peril”: Chinese Students and Intellectuals and the Liberalization of U.S. Immigration Laws, 1950–1965

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The extensive literature concerning America’s exclusion of Asians has emphasized primarily the domestic contexts for restricting trans-Pacific migrations. Fears of a “Yellow Peril” invasion and conquest were used to justify the earliest American attempts to limit the entry of races and nationalities deemed too different and incompatible to integrate and participate on equal terms in a republic dominated by European arrivals and their descendants. Asian American Studies scholars in particular have mined the rich vein of documents delineating the formative legacy of anti-Asian laws, ideologies, and institutions shaping the still deeply troubled patrolling of American borders today. Less attention has turned to the influence of foreign policy considerations and their role in carving out categories of migrants exempted from exclusionary laws. For example, the Chinese Exclusion Law of 1882 made exceptions for merchants, merchant family members, students and teachers, diplomats, and tourists. Those who retained rights to cross borders, often with families intact, demonstrate that considerations of class and cultural capital shaped immigration restrictions toward pragmatic and away from racialist concerns. The genealogy of the exempt classes highlights how U.S. foreign policy goals came to operate in concert with modifications of immigration laws and policies so that by the mid-twentieth century, Congress was crafting immigration laws that could also further its diplomatic ends. In examining this relationship, I seek to explain more clearly the mid-twentieth-century diminishing of racial segregation and the refining of immigration restrictions—particularly during the Cold War era and culminating with the 1965 Immigration Act—and the seemingly

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dramatic transformation of Asians from the “Yellow Peril” to model immigrants by that century’s end.

I explore the intersection of foreign policy, immigration restriction, and the growing acceptability of Asian immigrants by focusing on Chinese who have long served as canaries in the coal mine signaling long-range shifts in immigration laws and policies. They were the first racial group targeted for federal entry restrictions passed in 1862, 1875, and 1882 that laid the foundations for an expanding wall of barriers directed at a widening array of other groups culminating in the global system of quotas set by race and national origin imposed by the 1924 Immigration Act.¹

Chinese were also the first to benefit from the diminishing of American nativism when the 1943 repeal of the exclusion laws also granted them the right to citizenship by naturalization for the first time. Over the course of the next two decades, they and other nationalities slowly gained greater rights of entry, settlement, and citizenship capped by the relative liberality of the 1965 Immigration Act which emphasized family reunification, economic demands for certain kinds of professionals and workers, investment capacities, and refugee status. This version of immigration restriction removed the quota system and thereby simultaneously demonstrated America’s egalitarian openness to all peoples of the world while screening for those more likely to contribute to America’s political and economic agendas.

To highlight these transformations, this article focuses even more narrowly on the entry of ethnic Chinese students and intellectuals who I argue played pivotal roles in enabling American immigration ideologies and legislation to shift away from their early preoccupation with racial differences and national origins to emphasize instead economic and foreign policy considerations. Students and intellectuals represented a more acceptable and potentially useful sort of Chinese than their working-class and petty entrepreneurial counterparts entrenched in American Chinatowns. As multilingual, cosmopolitan elites eager to attend the best American universities and colleges, they could foster better relations between the two nations by sharing their presumed appreciation for U.S.-style republicanism and economic achievements with their fellow Chinese.² During the 1930s, the soft diplomacy of educational and cultural exchange began hardening into a more substantive political partnership as the United States sought China’s support against Japan’s

1. Also known as the Johnson-Reed Act of 1924 (43 Stat. 153, 1924).

2. Madeline Y. Hsu, “Domesticating the Yellow Peril: Students and Changing Perceptions of the Indigestibility of Chinese Immigrants, 1905–1950,” in Ruth Mayer and Vanessa Kuneman, eds. *Trans-Pacific Interactions: The United States and China, 1880–1950* (New York, 2009).

growing ambitions in the western Pacific. Under the leadership of the Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek (1887–1975) and his American-educated wife, Soong Mei-ling (1897–2003), under whose influence he had converted to Christianity, China seemed finally to be regaining its international standing. Chiang's Nationalist Party (Kuomintang, KMT)³ had loosely reunified the country in 1928 and the Chiangs seemed to be setting China on a path toward modernity emulating that of America. China's first couple and its struggle against Japanese aggression received constant and sympathetic media coverage from heavyweights such as Henry Luce (1898–1967), the publisher of *Time* and *Life* magazines, and the Pulitzer and Nobel-winning author, Pearl Buck (1892–1973). World War II cemented this budding friendship which contributed directly to the repeal of the Chinese exclusion laws.

The intertwining of foreign policy agendas and U.S. immigration law solidified during the Cold War. After World War II, the Nationalists lost control of the Chinese mainland to the Communists led by Mao Zedong (1893–1976), and Chiang and his bedraggled followers fled to Taiwan. Until 1971, in the global struggle against the Communist threat, the United States would insist that the Nationalists, and thus Taiwan, represented the "real" government of China. Ethnic Chinese associated with the Nationalists or the anti-Communist cause thereby gained preferential admissions status and treatment within the United States. After World War II, permission to enter increasingly emphasized political beliefs and affiliations along with educational and professional potential. Chinese who entered as refugees from communism and as well-educated intellectuals starting in the late 1940s were relatively privileged compared to their predecessors. They were perceived as allies and potential friends and benefited from improving legal conditions securing for racial minorities greater rights of entry, employment, residency, and citizenship. Understandably, these new classes of immigrants—called the "uptown Chinese" by Peter Kwong—attained unprecedented levels of economic, social, political, and cultural success and visibility for newly minted Americans of color, symbolized most potently by the Nobel laureates Chen-ning Yang (b. 1922) and Tsung-Dao Lee (b. 1926). Their achievements affirmed the utility of admitting certain categories of "good" immigrants and provided reassurance that removing race and nation-based limits on entry would not wholly undermine American society and civilization.

3. Here I use the more commonly known Kuomintang, rather than the standard pinyin Romanization, Guomindang. This is also the case with Chiang Kai-shek (Jiang Jieshi) and other KMT leaders.

American Immigration Restriction: Laws Regarding Exclusion and Exemption

Occasional economic downturns worked with steadily rising tides of nativism and isolationism to cultivate increasingly severe immigration restrictions starting with the anti-Chinese restrictions and culminating in the 1924 Immigration Act. Not until the watershed of World War II catapulted Americans into the heady embrace of internationalism would attitudes to immigration slowly liberalize. The growing stridency of nationalism in Europe and North America during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries fed desires to control borders. Beliefs in racial compatibilities and inequalities determined the desirability attributed to particular groups and national alliances. Weaker nations were inhabited by weaker races who could, and should, be prohibited from entering the United States.

For example, the openly racist Chinese exclusion laws, and their intention to eliminate Chinese settlement altogether, targeted a country and people sinking steadily into a quagmire of demographic crisis, a weak and corrupt government, a floundering economy, and mounting fears that China's once-magnificent civilization was doomed to partition by imperialist aggressors. China's utter defeat in the First Opium War of 1839–1842 inspired an array of imperialist powers to claim ever increasing privileges through a succession of wars and unfair treaties. Americans despised Chinese whose ineffectual government and low international standing undermined most efforts to protest against the insult of the discriminatory entry restrictions. After the Alien and Sedition Laws of 1798, Chinese were the first targets of immigration restriction. In 1862, Congress passed "An Act to Prohibit the 'Coolie Trade' by American Citizens in American Vessels."⁴ The 1875 Page Act singled out Chinese and Japanese coolies and prostitutes and in practice severely diminished the numbers of Chinese women coming to the United States. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 was a more sweeping effort and the only immigration restriction to specify an excluded group by race. Congress intended it to end settlement by Chinese altogether and cared enough only for economic, diplomatic, and educational exchanges to permit the entry of the five exempt classes listed previously. Congress voted to renew these laws every decade until deciding in 1904 that no reconsideration was needed and decided to retain them in perpetuity. In response to this insult, a coalition of urban Chinese merchants and students based in China and Southeast Asia organized a boycott of Ameri-

4. Moon-ho Jung, *Coolies and Cane: Race, Labor, and Sugar in the Age of Emancipation* (Baltimore, Md., 2006), 36–37. This law was never enforced because the term "coolie" was so vaguely defined. It was also contradicted by the 1868 Burlingame Treaty, which sought to ensure American access to Chinese workers.

can goods over the objections of a Chinese government facing pressure from the United States. This boycott was effective enough to attract the concern of President Theodore Roosevelt along with various China supporters such as missionaries and educators.⁵

The ascendance of Japan as a world power led to a very different implementation of immigration restriction. Like Chinese, the Japanese "race" was considered too different and inferior to ever be compatible with the majority Euro-American population. However, Japan's rapid industrialization and militarization after the Meiji Restoration of 1868 had produced a rising global power that had defeated both its larger neighbors, China in 1895 and even European Russia in 1905. After permanent renewal of the Chinese exclusion laws, anti-Asian activists had turned their attention to Japanese, forcing the U.S. government to negotiate entry limits but with consideration for Japanese national pride and international standing. Rather than be humiliated by restrictions imposed by the United States, the Japanese government agreed to stop issuing passports for Japanese laborers to travel to America in the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1908. In return, Japanese enjoyed greater rights than Chinese. Japanese living in the United States could bring immediate family members, including picture brides acquired through arranged marriages. They also gained the status-saving concession that Japanese children could continue to attend schools with white children, rather than be segregated into "Oriental" or "colored" schools with other Asians. Otherwise, the exempt Japanese classes replicated that of Chinese in the form of students, merchants, diplomats, with the addition of religious workers.

World War I did little to mitigate the fervor of American nativism. The next major immigration restriction, the Barred Zone Act of 1917, delineated a physical "Asian Barred Zone" encompassing much of eastern Asia, islands in the western Pacific, extending through Southeast Asia, India, and much of the Middle East, from which people could not immigrate to the United States although exceptions were made for non-immigrant entries such as students. In concert with eugenicist thinking of the time, this law banned racial inferiors from entry along with others thought to be genetically inferior such as illiterates, idiots, feeble-minded persons, epileptics, and insane persons.⁶ In 1934, Congress completed its prohibition against migration from Asian regions by voting to give

5. Despite government pressure, the boycott ended only when the heavy damage of San Francisco's 1906 earthquake diverted resources. See Wang Guanhua, *In Search of Justice: The 1905–1906 Chinese Anti-American Boycott* (Cambridge, Mass., 2001).

6. The full title is Immigration Act of 1917 (a.k.a. Barred Zone Act), 5 Feb. 1917. Quoted from Franklin Odo, ed., *The Columbia Documentary History of the Asian American Experience* (New York, 2002), 162–63.

independence in ten years to its colony, the Philippines, in part to be able to ban any more Filipinos from coming to the United States. Their unrestricted entry as nationals had been but one of the costs associated with retaining an imperial possession found to bring inadequate economic returns. Making Filipinos foreign enabled their exclusion.⁷

The 1920s witnessed the peak of U.S. isolationism and racism marked by key Supreme Court decisions cementing the racial ban on access to citizenship by naturalization. First articulated in the 1790 Nationality Act—which limited this right to “free white persons”—this legal assertion of the inassimilability of non-white persons, “aliens ineligible for citizenship,” was further clarified by two cases.⁸ To ensure that the U.S. government indeed wished to so insult the Japanese government, the Supreme Court waited several years before handing down the 1922 *Ozawa v. U.S.* decision which affirmed Japanese as non-white and therefore racially incompatible and incapable of adapting to American standards of civilization. The Bhagat Singh Thind decision of 1923 actually reversed previous practices and definitions in finding that although Asian Indians had been considered by anthropologists to be Caucasian, in “the understanding of the common man” they were not white and therefore ineligible for citizenship. In addition to denying the citizenship application of Thind, this judgment also revoked the citizenship previously granted to about seventy other Asian Indian immigrants.

The 1924 Immigration Act was the culmination of these processes and quantified both American friendship and disregard for other countries and their peoples by imposing a system of unequally discriminatory nation-based quotas and banning the entry of all “aliens ineligible for citizenship.” Congress derived the quotas from percentages of census counts taken in 1910, 1890, and eventually 1790. The chief targets were immigrants from southern and eastern Europe who experienced the greatest drops in numbers. However, according to Mae Ngai, the 1924 Immigration Act “also divided the world formally in terms of country and nationality but also in terms of race. The quota system distinguished persons of the ‘colored races’ from ‘white’ persons from ‘white’ countries.”⁹ Only “white” nations received quotas with American friends

7. See *ibid.*, 230–33, for the text of the Tydings-McDuffie Act (Public Law No. 127), 24 Mar. 1934.

8. African Americans gained the right to citizenship by naturalization with the Civil War and Emancipation. Some of the amendments passed to ensure the equal rights of former slaves, particularly the Fourteenth Amendment, also benefited Chinese and other Asians under principles of equal protection. See Charles McClain, *In Search of Equality: The Chinese Struggle against Discrimination in Nineteenth-Century America* (Berkeley, Calif., 1994).

9. Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton, N.J., 2004), 27.

such as Great Britain and Northern Ireland having the largest at 65,721. Asian countries such as China and Japan received the minimum quota of 100 which was reserved for those racially eligible for citizenship, eliminating those of Asian ancestry.¹⁰ America's efforts to secure its borders against the racially inferior, and admit primarily those of compatible stock, climaxed with the 1924 Immigration Act. Its quota system, and its variations, remained the chief means of immigration restriction until the 1965 Immigration Act legislated the turn of U.S. foreign policy prerogatives and racial ideologies to embrace politically like-minded countries and people regardless of the color of their skin.

American Internationalism and Expanding the Exempt Classes

Chinese were also at the forefront of America's mid-twentieth century liberalization of racial and immigration attitudes as the United States turned from isolationism to aspirations of global leadership spurred by the forced collaborations of World War II. The repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Laws in 1943 was the first of many congressional decisions to reform laws concerning immigration and citizenship to gradually abolish altogether race-based restrictions on entry and citizenship. These trends culminated in the relatively color-blind 1965 Immigration Act with its emphasis on family reunification and employment categories. The face of America has changed dramatically since 1965 with the burgeoning inflow of persons of color from the once dammed-up areas of Asia, the Caribbean, South and Central America, and Africa who thereby gained greater rights of entry *and* permanent settlement. In terms of demographics, culture, and politics, the United States has become a more truly democratic and multicultural nation. Although the 1965 Immigration Act receives much of the credit for these transformations, I argue here that they stem from a longer history of linking foreign policy objectives with promoting selected immigration flows that began as early as 1905 in the case of Chinese and intensified with the sharp partisanship of the Cold War era. The hinge that enabled the once despised "Yellow Peril" to become acceptable as allies and then as immigrants was the exempt class of students and intellectuals who demonstrated the capacity of Chinese to be educated in Western ways well enough to become friends, contributors to America's economic and military efforts, and even neighbors. They revealed that immigrants selected on the basis of educational and professional criteria, rather than race, could be assets to America, paving the way for the removal of the offensive national origins-based quotas. The United States' paternalistic regard for China,

10. *Ibid.*, 21–27.

especially in its struggles to modernize, fueled the evolution of more nuanced immigration restrictions emphasizing considerations of class and education.

In 1905, American missionaries and educators gained national support for their belief in the benefits of recruiting Chinese students. They gained presidential and congressional attention under the confluence of Japan's growing influence in the western Pacific, the anti-American boycott, and Congress's need to find a diplomatic means of returning excess funds extracted from China under the Boxer Indemnity. Pro-China lobbyists called attention to the advantages of offering scholarships recruiting Chinese to study in the United States. The advantages were various. Students were non-immigrants whose short-term stays posed little threat to the United States compared to more permanent residents. Upon receiving their American degrees, these Chinese intellectuals would return home bearing presumably positive impressions of U.S. democracy and culture. They would become leaders of China and set that once great ancient civilization on a path toward modernity emulating American-style republicanism while maintaining American access to Chinese markets.¹¹

Between 1909 and 1929, the Boxer Indemnity scholarships brought about 1,300 Chinese to the United States, who earned undergraduate and graduate degrees.¹² Many other students came through private funds or other, less prestigious scholarships offered by provincial governments as well as American institutions. Although figures are somewhat sketchy, Y. C. Wang estimates that 20,906 Chinese studied in the United States between 1854 and 1953, most after 1905.¹³ The figures for the years between 1903 and 1945 are: 1903 (50), 1909 (239), 1910 (292), 1911 (490), 1914 (830), 1918 (990), 1921 (679), 1943 (1,191), and 1945 (1,972).¹⁴

Although Chinese faced the greatest entry restrictions, they were among the most numerous international students in the United States. For example, in 1924, China sent the highest number at 1,467, followed by Japan at 708, and Canada at 684.¹⁵ These unexpectedly high numbers demonstrate that student migration operated in contradiction to the logic

11. Hsu, "Domesticating the Yellow Peril."

12. Weili Ye, *Seeking Modernity in China's Name: Chinese Students in the United States, 1900–1927* (Palo Alto, Calif., 2001), 51.

13. Y. C. Wang, *Chinese Intellectuals and the West, 1872–1949* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1966), 177.

14. *Ibid.*, 158. These numbers are probably not complete as the government had a hard time tracking self-supporting students until after 1943.

15. Stacey Bieler, "Patriots" or "Traitors"?: *A History of American-Educated Chinese Students* (Armonk, N.Y., 2004), 379–80. This information was originally compiled by the Institute of International Education and appears in the Annual Report of the Director, New York.

of exclusion. Chinese students were recruited for, and in turn avidly sought out, opportunities to study in the United States. The reciprocal advantages of their sojourns, their more egalitarian yet still unequal interactions with Euro Americans, nurtured the possibility that Chinese and Americans might someday even become friends. Before World War II, however, most of the Boxer Indemnity students, including Hu Shih (1891–1962) and Madame Chiang's older brother and the future finance minister, T. V. Soong (1894–1971), returned to China. Although all enjoyed good relations with America and Americans as multilingual, educated elites, their primary career trajectories were in China.¹⁶ Although a small minority of Chinese in America, U.S., they were much more visible as highly cultured, accessible cosmopolitans who evoked the glorious past of Chinese civilization while promoting the advantages of American-style modernity.

Perhaps more than any other individual, Madame Chiang Kai-shek persuaded Americans that Chinese could be appealing friends. Speaking flawless English with a slight southern accent, charismatic and impeccably dressed, Madame Chiang courted American support for China very effectively, particularly during its anti-Japanese struggles. She exemplified how powerfully educated Chinese could appeal to the American public and its leaders with the idea of saving China and Chinese people by helping them to adopt American-style democracy and modernity. It was a highly paternalistic relationship, colored by missionary and educator views of China, but one that worked to the advantage of the Chiangs and the KMT.

Madame Chiang was born into a wealthy Christian Chinese family whose patriarch, Charles Jones Soong (1863–1918), known as Charlie Soong, made his fortune publishing bibles. Soong sent all three of his daughters to study in America along with two of his sons.¹⁷ The future Madame Chiang arrived at the age of nine and remained in the United States for the next ten years, only returning to China after her graduation from Wellesley College. She had to relearn to speak Chinese after so many formative years away. After a lengthy courtship, she married Chiang Kai-shek in 1927, thereby securing her path to national and interna-

16. The Harvard-trained linguist, Y. R. Chao, was also a Boxer Scholarship student and presents the exception that proves the rule. Unlike his fellow scholarship students, after returning to China in the 1920s, he eventually made his career in the United States. His wife, Buwei Yang Chao, published the first popular Chinese cookbook in English. However, Chao's opportunity to remain permanently in America did not happen until after the shifting tides of World War II.

17. All three Soong sisters married prominent men. The eldest, Soong Ai-ling, married the wealthiest man in China, H. H. Kung, while the middle daughter, Soong Qingling, married Sun Yat-sen. They are commonly described as having married for money, ideals, and power.

tional prominence. As argued by Karen Leong: “With her command of the English language and her international status as ‘China’s First Lady,’ Madame Chiang embodied not only China, but also Sino-American unity against Japan during the Second World War. American acceptance of Madame Chiang as an educated, modern, beautiful and Christian Chinese woman”¹⁸ did much to persuade Americans that the Nationalists were following an American-style path to democracy and capitalist development. In support of this vision of Asia’s largest and most populous country as their disciple and ally, the United States would pour millions in aid to support the Nationalists during World War II and the Cold War. America also began amending its immigration laws to give credence to its new claims of alliance and friendship with China.

Under the leadership of the Generalissimo and Madame Chiang, China did seem poised to regain its international standing. In the Northern Expedition of 1926–28, Chiang’s Nationalist Revolutionary Army restored China to loose unity from its warlord-era fragmentation. The Chiangs proceeded to implement nation-building programs such as the New Life Movement and economic reforms. Madame Chiang actively sought American missionary support for many of her social programs.¹⁹ Despite such promising beginnings, Japanese aggression soon threatened these modernizing efforts starting with its conquest of Manchuria in 1931. Colored by Pearl Buck’s sympathetic portrayal of long-suffering Chinese farmers in the award-winning *The Good Earth* (1931), the 1930s witnessed a flourishing of American interest in China as led by the valiant Chiang couple’s efforts to modernize an ancient land, heroic Chinese resistance to fascist Japan, and the grinding poverty gripping everyday life which contrasted with the Chinese modernity represented by its leaders.

Madame Chiang spearheaded improving impressions of Chinese through well-managed media campaigns targeting American paternalism and curiosity about the exotic Orient. The Chiang’s friendship with the publisher, Henry Luce, was instrumental and Madame Chiang appeared multiple times on *Life* magazine’s “Ten Best Dressed Women in the World” features. The Chiangs attained newsreel familiarity for most Americans peaking in late 1936 with the successful conclusion of the Xi’an kidnapping incident and their elevation to “Couple of the Year” by *Time* magazine. Although Chinese had been fighting against Japan officially beginning in 1937, America’s entry into World War II in December 1941 precipitated the intensification of these nascent feelings of friendship. The military alliance permitted even greater audiences and

18. Karen J. Leong, *The China Mystique: Mayling Soong Chiang, Pearl S. Buck, and Anna May Wong in the American Imagination* (Berkeley, Calif., 1999), vii.

19. *Ibid.*, 118, 121–23, 138.

influence for Madame Chiang. Taking advantage of her presence in the United States for medical treatment in 1943, the White House staff of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt unofficially coordinated a three-month speaking tour with stops in venues such as the Hollywood Bowl and Madison Square Garden.

Madame Chiang impressed all of her American audiences, even as the first private citizen and only the second woman to speak before both houses of Congress. She spoke eloquently and articulately of China's need for American friendship and aid. According to one observer in February 1943:

The Madison Square Garden appearance of China's First Lady . . . was the event of a lifetime. Madame Chiang herself . . . has rightly captivated the hearts of the American people, and I think has accomplished in one visit what centuries of formal friendship between China and America could not do. She has made Americans realize that the Chinese are like us: our differences superficial, our similarities fundamental. Restaurateur and laundrymen (and none better) the American people knew, but now they know there are the educated, the cultured, the beautiful, the tolerant, the Christian in China as well.²⁰

Madame Chiang did the heavy lifting in elevating Chinese over the wall separating inassimilable foreigners from embraceable friends. On the heels of her lecture tour, a focused political campaign, led by the likes of Luce and the publisher Richard Walsh, Pearl Buck's second husband, called for the repeal of the now unacceptably racist Chinese exclusion laws. This outpouring of support for elite Chinese like Madame Chiang had its practical elements. The United States feared that China would break their alliance and form a race-based one with Japan instead. Japanese propaganda cited the Chinese Exclusion Laws in wooing Chinese to their side. Under such wartime conditions, Congress quickly voted to end Chinese exclusion. Martin Kennedy (R-N.Y.), the sponsor of the bill, dedicated it to Madame Chiang. Roosevelt signed the new law in December 1943 citing "a historic mistake."²¹

In practical terms, Repeal did not make it easier for Chinese to immigrate to the United States, for they became subject to the terms of the general 1924 Immigration Act under which they received a tiny quota of 105. Symbolically, however, Chinese penetrated a key racial barrier by acquiring the right to citizenship by naturalization—the first Asian race to do so. Chinese had gained legal acknowledgment of their capacity to

20. Geraldine Fitch, Newsletter to "Friends," Huletts Landing, N.Y., 1 July 1943. Fitch Papers, Harvard Yenching Library, Harvard University. Quoted in *ibid.*, 106.

21. Leong, *China Mystique*, xvii. Also see Xiaohua Mao's lucid account of the anti-Exclusion forces in "The Sino-American Alliance During World War II and the Lifting of the Chinese Exclusion Acts," *American Studies International* 38 (June 2000).

become Americans. The other key Asian allies, Filipinos and Asian Indians, had to wait until after the war to gain naturalization rights in 1946. The racial restriction on citizenship was removed altogether with the 1952 McCarran-Walter Act allowing Japanese and Korean immigrants finally to gain naturalization rights as well.

The idea that Chinese and Americans could stand on semi-equal ground as friends and fellow citizens contrasts starkly with the stereotypes and prejudices that had sanctioned passage of the Chinese exclusion laws in 1882. As described by scholars such as Stuart Creighton Miller, Alexander Saxton, Elmer Clarence Sandmeyer, and Andrew Gyory, a coalition of labor interests and political leaders spearheaded a campaign of attack which portrayed Chinese as a race fundamentally incapable of Euro-American standards of civilization and republicanism.²² After passage of the immigration restrictions, open violence and legal discrimination produced a ghettoized, predominantly Cantonese, Chinese community that did little to contradict these negative impressions with its predominantly male population employed largely in the service occupations of laundries and restaurants and associated closely with the vice industries of drugs, prostitution, gambling, and the violent, cleaver-wielding, secret society hatchetmen.

The American embrace of Madame Chiang Kai-shek reflected a full reversal in attitudes regarding Chinese although limited primarily to those of the educated upper and middle classes. The ideological and legal shifts wrought by the World War II alliances continued to evolve through the Cold War as the mainland fell to the Communists and Taiwan, under Nationalist rule, became “an outpost of the American empire, one of Washington’s Asian trenches in the Cold War: a vital staging area for the US forces fighting in Vietnam, CIA activities in South-East Asia and Tibet, and a strategic base for nuclear weapons targeting China.”²³ The foreign diplomacy possibilities of changing immigration policies acquired even greater weight as the United States realized that it could fortify the anti-Communist bloc through the exchange of techni-

22. Stuart Creighton Miller, *The Unwelcome Immigrant; The American Image of the Chinese, 1785–1882* (Berkeley, Calif., 1969); Alexander Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the Anti-Chinese Movement in California* (Berkeley, Calif., 1971); Elmer Clarence Sandmeyer, *The Anti-Chinese Movement in California* (Urbana, Ill., 1939); and Andrew Gyory, *Closing the Gate: Race, Politics, and the Chinese Exclusion Act* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1998). Gyory has been widely criticized for attempting to exonerate altogether organized labor for its role in the anti-Chinese movement. However, his monograph highlights how the anti-Chinese movement became a national cause through the efforts of presidential candidates campaigning to win California’s electoral votes in the 1876 and 1880 elections.

23. Perry Anderson, “Stand-Off in Taiwan,” *London Review of Books*, 3 June 2004, 11.

cally and economically expert persons who would help to cultivate their capitalist and defense capacities.

Migration and Cold War Alliances

Chinese had sought to learn Western approaches to science and technology as early as the 1870s when the first Chinese to receive an American B.A. degree, Yung Wing (1828–1912, Yale 1854), led the Chinese Educational Mission (1872–81) of approximately 120 young Chinese men to study in preparatory schools and colleges in New England.²⁴ Although this program was cut short by the imminent passage of the Chinese Exclusion Law and Chinese ambivalence about learning from other civilizations, by the turn of the twentieth century many Chinese patriots fully embraced the notion that only by emulating the West could China survive. A steady stream of Chinese students would flow into the United States after 1908 and the receptiveness signaled by the Boxer Indemnity scholarships. Most of these Western-educated Chinese returned to China and did indeed attain positions of considerable influence as hoped by the U.S. politicians, missionaries, and educators who had pressed for the scholarships. By 1939, an astonishing 71 percent of Chinese appearing in annual *Who's Who* lists had been educated abroad. Of these, about 36 percent had studied in the United States, a sharp rise in American-educated Chinese leaders from the 9.5 percent of 1916.²⁵ Chinese intellectuals and elites continued even during World War II and in increasing numbers after the war as legal barriers continued to ease. On the heels of Madame Chiang's enthusiastically received lecture tour, the Nationalists quickly responded to American interests in aiding China's modernization. In 1943, they began recruiting elite Chinese for further education and training in America in the belief that such expertise would be critical to China's development once the war ended. College presidents, professors, and government officials recommended talented young professionals to study in America often with fellowships from either the Chinese government or U.S. institutions. Between 1942 and 1949, approximately 5,000 Chinese gained entry to the United States as non-

24. For more information about Yung Wing and the Chinese Educational Mission, see Yung Wing, *My Life in China and America* (New York, 1909) and Thomas E. La Fargue, *China's First Hundred: Educational Mission Students in the United States, 1872–1881* (1942; Pullman, Wash., 1987).

25. Wang, *Chinese Intellectuals*, 177. The very high numbers of prominent foreign-educated Chinese stemmed in part from the low numbers of institutions of higher education within China. After the rapid decline of the Confucian academies which had once dominated the educational system, it took some time to establish new universities and colleges modeled on Western institutions. Many of China's early post-secondary schools were founded by American missionaries.

immigrants whose ranks included students, KMT officials, consular representatives, tourists, businessmen, government officials, journalists, priests, and other temporary visitors including some very wealthy refugees.²⁶ By 1948, 2,710 Chinese students were enrolled in 405 colleges in every state across the nation excepting only Nevada and North and South Dakota. Chinese were the second largest contingent of foreign students, exceeded in number only by Canadians. One quarter studied applied and pure sciences, a second quarter engineering, and the rest were in arts, humanities, social sciences, business, and education.²⁷ The relatively high concentration of Chinese international students in scientific and technical fields continues to the present day.

By 1948, when the impending Communist victory in China left these students without KMT support and no safe home to which to return, the U.S. government intervened to save them not only from statelessness, but also to ensure that they had funding to complete their education programs, legally seek employment in the United States, and later to apply for permanent residency and citizenship status. Educational administrators in conjunction with the China Institute in America first realized the dire situation facing Chinese students and notified State Department officials of the crisis. In turn, the State Department appealed to Congress for a solution. The China Area Aid Act of 1950 (Public Law 535, Title II, passed 5 June 1950) provided up to \$6,000,000 to help Chinese citizens legitimately registered at colleges and universities with tuition, room and board, travel costs, and medical care. Students and researchers were all eligible to request aid.²⁸ Congress had acted quickly

26. In 1942, before Japan occupied China's major cities, there were over 1,500 Chinese students in the United States. Fearing Japanese would gain access to Chinese funds in America, the Chinese government, in July 1941, requested that the U.S. government freeze all Chinese assets. Chinese students in the America lost their access to financial support. The China Institute in America, which administered the Boxer Indemnity and other fellowships, asked the U.S. government for help. In April 1942, the State Department Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs set up the "China Program" which sent monthly allowances of \$75 to selected Chinese graduate students. The Chinese embassy also extended some assistance. The China Institute of America tracked the total numbers of Chinese students: 1943–44 (706), 1944–45 (823), 1945–46 (1,298), 1946–47 (1,678), 1947–48 (2,310), 1948–49 (3,914). Shih-shan Henry Tsai, *The Chinese Experience in America* (Bloomington, Ind., 1986), 120–22.

27. Rose Hum Lee, *The Chinese in the United States of America* (Hong Kong, 1960), 89. Lee is citing a survey conducted by the Committee on Friendly Relations among Foreign Students in 1947 and 1948 and published in *Wah Mei Yat Po* (New York Daily), 9 Jan. 1954.

28. Tsai, *Chinese Experience*, 122. The U.S. government not only allowed these refugees to stay, between 1949 and 1955 the State Department spent \$7,899,879 for tuition, transportation, living expenses, and medical care for the Chinese students.

to ensure that Chinese students could finish their degree programs or research projects but soon realized that more long-term measures were needed as the students were graduating but still could not return to China. The U.S. Attorney General promulgated Public Law 535 on 13 April 1951, which permitted any Chinese citizen approved to study in the United States by the secretary of state under the China Area Aid Act of 1950 "to accept employment in the United States during the period he is a participant in such a program if he makes application to the district director having jurisdiction over his place of residence for permission to accept employment, and such application is approved." In this piecemeal fashion, Chinese students gained the legal and often financial support needed to change their non-immigrant status into legal employment, permanent residency, and eventually citizenship.²⁹ The student mode of entry into the United States, which had been numerically unrestricted in part because it required eventual departure, became after World War II a fairly reliable path to immigrate in the United States through the concern displayed for the group of extremely privileged Chinese that the sociologist Rose Hum Lee labeled "the stranded scholars."³⁰

More ethnic Chinese gained legal entry as the U.S. government recognized the need of its political allies for new homes as refugees from communism. Through this route, an estimated 32,000 Chinese were admitted into the United States between 1953 and 1961 in numbers that far exceeded the quotas imposed by Repeal and the 1952 McCarran-Walter Act. For example, the Refugee Relief Act of 1953 permitted the entry of 2,777 refugees from the People's Republic of China (PRC). Congress legalized more non-quota immigration spaces in the Refugee-Escape Act of 1957, which enabled federal authorities to grant some visas independently of quota restrictions and to admit more refugees—including around two thousand from the PRC. The Act of 8 August 1958 advanced a registry and amnesty provision to those who had entered prior to 28 June 1940 (*Statutes at Large* 72:546). Between 1962 and 1965, 15,111 more Chinese who had fled to Hong Kong gained entry under special provisions as refugees.³¹

29. Lee, *Chinese in the United States*, 91. This concern for the well-being of Chinese students and intellectuals contrasts starkly with U.S. government enforcement of the Chinese exclusion laws under which it limited the rights of even those claiming U.S. citizenship as their right for entry. For example, the 1905 *Ju Toy* decision determined that those applying for entry to the United States as U.S. citizens who were denied by the Immigration Bureau had no recourse to the U.S. court system for appeal.

30. See Lee, *Chinese in the United States*, and idem, "The Stranded Chinese in the United States," *Phylon* (1958), 256–69.

31. Bill Ong Hing, *Making and Remaking Asian America through Immigration Policy, 1850–1990* (Stanford, Calif., 1993), 252n28.

Although they arrived under conditions of flight and upheaval, the Cold War Chinese refugees reaped considerable advantages shared with the “stranded scholars.” They continued to enjoy American sympathy as fellow combatants, first against Japan and then Communist China. They thus received more opportunities to find employment and homes. Although materially destitute upon arrival, many of the refugees were comparatively well educated since the screening of refugee applications included considerations of education and employability as did immigration laws more generally. The 1952 McCarran-Walter Act had retained the discriminatory quota system but added preference categories, the first of which specified “College professors, chemists, meteorologists, physicians and surgeons, dentists, nurses, veterinarians, engineers, tool designers, and draftsmen.” Such priorities made it possible for employers of the “stranded scholars” and refugees to petition on their behalf for first-preference classification to remain in the country.³²

Educated Chinese received other kinds of preferential treatment. The non-profit organization, Aid for Refugee Chinese Intellectuals (ARCI), which was founded in 1952 and chaired by staunch Nationalist supporter Congressman Walter Judd (R-Minn.), identified and advocated on behalf of about 25,000 Chinese college graduate refugees in Hong Kong. ARCI fundraised to establish offices in Hong Kong and Taiwan to facilitate their resettlement to prevent the loss of valuable human resources to the Communist side.³³ The majority remained in Hong Kong or Taiwan where ARCI helped them find jobs and build homes. A select few thousand entered the United States through the refugee legislation with considerable ARCI assistance, including the processing of applications, arranging of employment, and publicity among sympathetic American audiences.

32. S. W. Kung, *Chinese in American Life: Some Aspects of Their History, Status, Problems, and Contributions* (Seattle, Wash., 1962), 112. In 1967, 2,047 of 2,472 Chinese were studying in the United States while others went elsewhere in Asia, Canada, and Europe; whereas in 1968, the U.S. figure was 2,272 out of a total of 2,711. Their applications for permanent residency were charged against the quota of 205, which meant that many were turned down.

33. The darker side of exchanging persons (whether through immigration, tourism, diplomatic or scientific missions, trade and so forth) to fortify alliances was the controlling of interactions and migration with the opposite side. Some Chinese Americans suspected of leftist leanings were deported. Others with valued scientific expertise, most notably the missile scientist Qian Xuesen (b. 1911), were prevented from leaving the United States. Qian was imprisoned for five years before being allowed to leave in 1955 for the PRC where he founded the Chinese rocketry program. See Renqiu Yu, *To Save China, to Save Ourselves: The Chinese Hand Laundry Alliance of New York* (Philadelphia, Pa., 1992); Iris Chang, *Thread of the Silkworm* (New York, 1995).

The ranks of these refugees and "stranded scholars" included individuals of extremely high accomplishment such as the physicists Tsung-dao Lee and Chen-ning Yang whose successes and easy acclimation vindicated America's openness in allowing Chinese intellectuals to remain and develop new careers beneficial to the United States. Lee was only thirty and Yang thirty-four when they received the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1957. This feat prompted newspapers to call for the amending of U.S. immigration laws because without recourse to special refugee legislation, Lee would have been forced to return to China. As one editorial argued on behalf of Chinese scientists, "They come from a country and an area of the world against which our immigration and naturalization laws discriminate. . . . Surely, in this instance, there is evidence of the need to drop our quota system based on national origins and replace it with one which judges applicants on the basis of equality and desirability instead of race and colour."³⁴ To add weight to such arguments, between 1950 and 1965, the ranks of refugees and the "stranded scholars" were reinforced by a small but steady stream of well-educated and highly motivated Chinese whose activities in the United States would confirm the benefits of admitting educated and scientifically adept immigrants into the country.

After the Nationalists relocated to Taiwan, they continued to emphasize the importance of American-educated experts in modernizing the economy and government.³⁵ The United States reciprocated this interest in hosting technically and scientifically talented students who could contribute research in defense fields so critical to the competition with the Communist bloc. Each year, about 2,000 students, primarily in the sciences and engineering, would arrive as non-quota immigrants from 1950 to 1965.

In 1949, Taiwan was a relative wilderness for the new arrivals from the mainland with only one full university and few job opportunities for the highly educated and skilled KMT elite. Under such conditions, the Nationalist government actively encouraged, and students of Taiwan competed vigorously for, opportunities to study overseas. By 1955, the Ministry of Education required extensive testing before selecting, in partnership with the U.S. consulate, the cream of Taiwan's university graduates for education abroad, primarily in the United States.

34. Lee, *Chinese in the United States*, 415. Lee is citing a summary of reports of leading American newspapers and periodicals, *Chinese News Services*, 1–15 Nov. 1957.

35. "The Chinese Ministries of Economics and Communications worked out an agreement with the government of the United States whereby undergraduates could be admitted for advanced training and could gain practical experience in specialized fields, needed for China's postwar rehabilitation." Lee, *Chinese in the United States*, 89–91. This relationship was coordinated in 1950 by the United States Technical Assistance Program.

The former chancellor of University of California, Berkeley, Chang-lin Tien (1935–2002), came to America through this route. His affluent family lived first in Wuhan and Shanghai until they lost their fortune in the flight to Taiwan in 1949. Tien's father died a broken man at the age of fifty-four, leaving behind a family of twelve living in a one-room home. Tien worked his way through high school and college at the most prestigious National Taiwan University. He applied to 240 schools in the United States and received a full fellowship from the University of Kentucky. Although he had to borrow money to fly to Seattle in 1956 and endured a seventy-two-hour bus ride to Louisville, Tien received his M.A. within one year and went on to attain his doctorate in mechanical engineering at Princeton and became a professor at Berkeley—rising through the ranks to become full professor, department chair, vice chancellor of research, and eventually the first Asian-American chancellor of a University of California campus.³⁶

Like Tien, most of the Chinese who came to study remained in the United States. Congress passed special legislation in the late 1950s that made it easier for them to apply for permanent residency and later citizenship.³⁷ Between 1950 and 1969, 22,319 students left Taiwan to study, but only 1,346 returned (6.5 percent). According to U.S. government statistics, between 1962 and 1969, 15,959 Chinese students arrived but only 486 went back for an approximate overall return rate of just 3 percent.³⁸ They remained in America and added to the highly visible entry of Chinese into the American middle classes. In contrast to the ghettoized Cantonese of earlier Chinatown formations, the stranded scholars, refugees, and Chinese from Taiwan appeared in growing ranks as faculty and researchers in American universities and defense industries across the nation. This class of Chinese American lived in the suburbs and

36. Iris Chang, *The Chinese in America: A Narrative History* (New York, 2003), 302. Tien conducted research on the Saturn booster rocket design, heat-shield problem in the space shuttle, and superinsulation for high-speed levitation trains in Japan, and also mentored well over two hundred Ph.D. graduates.

37. Kung, *Chinese in American Life*, 121. Public Law 85-316 authorized the attorney general to adjust the status of a "limited number" of skilled aliens present on 1 July 1957 and in possession of approved first-preference petitions filed before 11 September 1957. In 1958, Public Law 85-700 provided non-quota status for first-preference immigrants in possession of petitions approved by the attorney general before 1 July 1958. These special legislations were intended to relieve oversubscription on the quota set by the McCarran-Walter Act.

38. Shu Yuan Chang, "China or Taiwan: The Political Crisis of the Chinese Intellectual," *Amerasia Journal* (Fall 1973), 53–54. This "brain drain" generated some alarm on both sides of the Pacific, but until the 1970s, Taiwan's economy had not developed enough to employ so many university graduates. Since the 1970s, the percentages of Taiwan's returning students have increased with the island's economic development.

appeared in urban Chinatowns only to shop for groceries and visit restaurants. Without much apparent struggle or encounters of discrimination, they enjoyed many of the comforts of middle-class American life once categorically denied to the majority of Chinese. The housing discrimination case of Sing Sheng illustrates the changing circumstances of Chinese seeking new lives in America.

Sing Sheng and the Influence of Foreign Policy on Domestic Inequality

During the 1950s, Chinese immigrant intellectuals and students experienced a relatively easier entry into American suburban middle-class life compared to other minority groups and even American-born Chinese. For example, when Chia-ling Kuo compared two groups of Chinese living on Long Island during the late 1960s, American-born contrasted with "stranded scholar" and refugee Chinese, the latter claimed that they had never encountered racism whereas the former appeared scarred by "the effect of discriminatory practices against their parents or themselves during their childhood."³⁹ The immigrant Chinese had benefited in part from American concerns that domestic racism would influence its foreign policy relations. Christina Klein describes this concept as "the global imaginary of integration" which "represented the Cold War as an opportunity to forge intellectual and emotional bonds with the people of Asia and Africa. Only by creating such bonds . . . could the economic, political, and military integration of the 'free world' be achieved and sustained. When it did turn inward, the global imaginary of integration generated an inclusive rather than a policing energy."⁴⁰ Allies could be wooed through integrationist policies and practices just as they could turn away at discriminatory ones. "Questions of racism thus served to link the domestic American sphere with the sphere of foreign relations, proving their inseparability: how Americans dealt with the problem of race relations at home had a direct impact on their success in dealing with the decolonizing world abroad."⁴¹ The 1952 housing discrimination case of Sing Sheng showcases American inclinations to entwine the civil rights of Chinese Americans with the foreign image of the United States.

After serving as a captain in the Nationalist forces, Sing Sheng decided to join his American-born, China-raised wife in the United States to study international relations at Earlham College in Indiana. As the

39. Chia-ling Kuo, "The Chinese on Long Island—A Pilot Study," *Phylon* 31 (1970), 285, 283.

40. Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945–1961* (Berkeley, Calif., 2003), 23.

41. *Ibid.*, 40.

Communist takeover became inevitable, the Shengs decided to remain in America and Sing Sheng accepted a job as an accountant with Greyhound Bus Lines. By 1952, the couple had two children and decided to buy a house in the all-white, South San Francisco neighborhood of Southwood to accommodate their growing family.⁴²

Their legal right to break the residential color barrier had been established with the 1948 Supreme Court case, *Shelley v. Kraemer*, which invalidated racially restrictive housing covenants. Judicial proclamations regarding the unconstitutionality of segregationist practices did not, however, prevent the residents and homeowners of Southwood from bitterly protesting the impending arrival of the Shengs on the grounds that racial integration would bring down property values. They felt strongly enough to send threats to the Sheng family.⁴³

Sing Sheng responded with shock and proposed a neighborhood vote on the matter. He was infuriated by the Southwooders' rejection but claimed that "I was sure everybody really believed in democracy, so I brought up this vote as a test." However, despite Sheng's assertion that "The present world conflict is not between individual nations, but between Communism and Democracy," and that "democracy is in a fight with communism and I believe that if I am defeated here it will be a defeat for democracy the world over," the Southwood residents voted by 174 votes to 28 to prevent the Shengs from becoming their neighbors.⁴⁴

To the surprise of the Southwood residents, their rejection of the Shengs received national attention and criticism. According to Charlotte Brooks, "numerous observers commented on Southwood as if it were as much a foreign policy issue as a matter of civil rights. A *Life* magazine editorial argued that, after Southwood, 'in Asia they will . . . be asking whether American democracy is still worth betting on.'"⁴⁵ Southwood critics frequently linked the family directly to the Chinese Nationalist struggle against communism. Brooks argues that American need for Asian allies promoted this sense of connection. "[C]itizens, journalists, and officials branded the unrepentant Southwood residents inadvertent communist collaborators."⁴⁶ After all the negative publicity heaped on the Southwood homeowners, the all-white neighborhood of Menlo Park welcomed the Sheng family with open arms to become their neighbors.

The Southwood residents received sympathy from unexpected sources. Ironically, only those who had experienced residential discrimi-

42. Charlotte Brooks, "Sing Sheng vs. Southwood: Residential Integration in Cold War California" *Pacific Historical Review* 73 (2004), 463–64, 467–68.

43. *Ibid.*, 468–69.

44. *Ibid.*, 470.

45. *Ibid.*, 474.

46. *Ibid.*, 481–82.

nation firsthand supported the Southwooders' contention that the vote was simply about racial prejudice in the United States. Few African-American activists in California regarded Southwood with any interest. The obstacles blacks encountered in gaining access to decent housing throughout the state dwarfed what the Shengs had experienced in South San Francisco.⁴⁷

White homeowners were forced to accept Chinese as their neighbors because to discriminate would reflect poorly on the United States among its Asian allies. However, the segregation of African Americans mattered less and continued for decades longer. "Indeed, publicized incidents of anti-Asian American housing discrimination drew widespread condemnation throughout the 1950s while African Americans and many Mexican Americans who faced harsher prejudice received comparatively little sympathy." Brooks further stressed that "Numerous white Californians still saw Asian Americans as foreigners, but with Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, and Taiwan now allies, and the rest of Asia seemingly up for grabs, the significance of being 'foreign' had changed since the early twentieth century. 'Foreignness' set Asian Americans apart from African Americans, Mexican Americans, and other nonwhite Californians."⁴⁸ As strategically important "foreigners" whose experiences of American democracy bore the weight of the U.S. foreign policy aspirations in the Pacific, Chinese encountered much more receptive conditions as they established their new American lives.

Conclusion

Whether they came as refugees or students, these waves of post-World War II immigrants became a new class of Chinese Americans that Peter Kwong called "the uptown Chinese."⁴⁹ Associated with America's anti-Communist campaigns and originating from higher classes socioeconomically and educationally, these immigrants outperformed the largely working-class Chinese who had borne the brunt of American discrimination during the Exclusion era. Chia-ling Kuo observed:

It seems that although the majority of the American-born Chinese are engineers by profession, the rest of the members hold less prestigious jobs, including post office clerks, small business proprietors, salesmen, elementary school teachers, etc. But most of the stranded-Chinese are engaged in prestigious professions other than engineering, such as university teaching, medical research or practice, or management in big

47. *Ibid.*, 483.

48. *Ibid.*, 489–90.

49. Peter Kwong, *The New Chinatown* (New York, 1987).

corporations. Thus, the stranded-Chinese as a group are more successful in their professions than are the American-born. All of them have received the master's degree and many hold the Ph.D. degree. A small number of them occupy top-ranking teaching, executive, managerial, or research positions in American firms, corporations, banks, and universities.⁵⁰

Both groups of Chinese had benefited from the diminishing of open discrimination and legislation regarding residence, employment, and educational access. As a result, more American-born Chinese were able to attain middle-class status once denied to their parents' prewar generation. The American-born Chinese, however, who reflect more clearly the likelihood that racial minorities can overcome discrimination to ascend from the lower to the middle classes did not succeed to the same striking degree as did their immigrant Chinese counterparts. The latter not only attained the middle classes but showed up in increasing numbers in prestigious occupations such as teaching in elite universities and colleges besides working as engineers, architects, and scientists.⁵¹ In her 1967 monograph, Betty Lee Sung cited a Chinese Embassy survey of 1961 showing that more than 1,300 persons of Chinese ancestry were on faculties of 88 U.S. institutions of higher learning, of whom 30 were department heads, 130 full professors, and 300 or more associate professors. The most elite universities of Harvard, Princeton, and Yale employed a total of 98 Chinese professors.⁵² Based on such examples, Chinese clearly had broken through to higher circles of socioeconomic attainment in the United States. Much of their success, however, rested on the cultural and economic capital that they brought with them as immigrants and as beneficiaries of the U.S. alliance with the Nationalists on Taiwan.

Kuo's findings and the observations of other contemporary scholars such as S. W. Kung, Rose Hum Lee, and Sung suggest the ways in which such late twentieth-century attainments are products not only of *entry* into a capitalist, democratic society but also indelibly tied to the economic, social, and cultural capital that such immigrants *brought to* the United States. Their highly visible successes in the realms of education,

50. Kuo, "Chinese on Long Island," 286.

51. Not all refugee or Taiwan Chinese were able to move so readily into the American professional occupations. Many fell back on the tried and true strategy of opening a Chinese restaurant as the most accessible means of making a living in the United States. Although many such establishments required the difficult, day-to-day commitment of any family business, some restaurateurs such as Cecilia Chiang and her partner Linsan Chien, formerly the Chinese consul for San Francisco, attained great fortune in opening upscale restaurants.

52. Betty Lee Sung, *Mountain of Gold: The Story of the Chinese in America* (New York, 1967), 252.

employment, and middle-class affluence, however, have played key roles in rearticulating perceptions of race relations and racial inequality in America. As purported "model minorities," Chinese Americans have served as powerful symbols that American democracy does indeed reward all players equally, regardless of their racial markings. That recent Chinese-American successes are so closely bound to the selectiveness imposed by immigration restrictions, which have come to be substantively shaped by U.S. foreign policy goals and considerations of class and cultural capital, often disappears from this portrayal.

Our current immigration laws privilege certain kinds of immigrants, a relationship that is especially clear in the case of Chinese. In the last half of the twentieth century, immigration laws and the reception given to particular kinds of immigrants were shaped in large part by U.S. Cold War foreign policy goals to develop and cultivate an international circle of capitalist, if not democratic, allies in the global war against communism. Through this chain of relationships, U.S. foreign policy prerogatives have also shaped contemporary discourses regarding race and inequality for the socioeconomic gains made by the Chinese American "model minority" under such favored conditions has been deployed more generally to argue that the United States has already become a racially egalitarian state. The reality is, of course, far more complicated and the socioeconomic trajectories of different ethnic and racial groups are heavily influenced by American relations with their states of origin.

For the time being, America's ongoing friendship with Taiwan and eagerness to cultivate trade relations with the PRC serves to protect the status of Chinese Americans relatively well. It is better, after all, to be a model minority rather than the "Yellow Peril." However, because their lives are so closely associated with America's foreign relations with China, Chinese Americans are still shadowed by the potential threat that many newspapers and politicians see in the PRC's political ideology, its size and massive population, together with its rapid economic growth, and increasingly competitive resource acquisition. As China becomes more powerful, the danger grows that Chinese Americans regardless of their citizenship, place of birth, political loyalties, or whether their families originally came from Taiwan, Hong Kong, the PRC, or elsewhere will be caught up in America's discomfort at sharing global influence with the world's most populous nation and third largest economy.

Just a decade ago, Chinese Americans were widely suspected of contributing to a PRC-conspiracy to control the Clinton White House through illegal campaign contributions. Although such influence-buying is commonplace in Washington, only Chinese Americans were targeted as an ethnic group for federal investigation and a few instances of prosecu-

tion. Such racialized fears of Chinese reemerged again at the onset of another presidential election cycle in 1999 with the unwarranted prosecution of the scientist Wen Ho Lee, who is Taiwanese American and a naturalized U.S. citizen, on the suspicion that he had been spying for the PRC at the Los Alamos nuclear laboratory facilities. In reality, the only charges for which the Federal Bureau of Investigation could indict Lee were mishandling classified information, which Lee had downloaded to insecure computers so that he could work from home. In this instance, being a well-employed, hardworking scientist contributed to Lee's downfall.⁵³ In both these cases, political scare-mongering and a news-hungry press successfully demonized Chinese Americans as foreign threats from within the United States. Despite their late twentieth-century ascent as "model minorities" into the circles of American friends, ethnic Chinese are still quickly vulnerable to being seen as dangerous enemies. The contradictory nature of American regard for Chinese serves as a troubling reminder of the persistent, pernicious tracking of racial differences today.

53. For more details of Lee's story, see Wen Ho Lee, with Helen Zia, *My Country Versus Me: The First-hand Account by the Los Alamos Scientist Who Was Falsely Accused of Being a Spy* (New York, 2001).

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