

# CHINESE EMIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION

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# It's Complicated...

- ▣ Just as the waves in the sea are ever seething and multi-directional in their unpredictability, so too is immigration
- ▣ Immigration and emigration are “mind-meltingly complex” in history and scope
- ▣ Some highlights included in this presentation:
  - Current Emigration
  - Recent and current Immigration
  - Brief History of Chinese Immigration to the US

# The Present Situation: Emigration

- ▣ Half of the “super rich” (assets over 100 million yuan) are considering emigration
- ▣ 14% are in the process
- ▣ Why?
  - Children’s Education
  - Safety of Wealth
  - Preparation for retirement
  - To a lesser extent, social progression

This is causing some concerns about lost talent and the stability of the economy.

Source--CCTV

# The Present Situation: Emigration

- ▣ The *Economist* claims Chinese immigration to Africa is “mass” “Chinese diaspora”
- ▣ Accurate estimates are impossible, but perhaps one million people or more have moved to Africa in the past decade
- ▣ Why?
  - Big Chinese company contracts
  - Bring own people to do menial jobs

# The Present Situation: Emigration

- ▣ Why else are the Chinese moving to Africa?
  - Chinese companies and investors are buying raw materials
  - As a result, large numbers of the lowest socio-economic populations are moving to Africa, in addition to a few of the very wealthy
  
- ▣ The Chinese and the Africans are not embracing one another, a wary racism pervades

# Recent History: Immigration

- ▣ Immigration policy from 1985 to 2012 was very open.
- ▣ Even though China has historically been a nation of emigration, immigration has increased 35x since 1985
  - However, the immigration numbers are still very low in comparison to our US conception
- ▣ An expanding economy and low cost of living make living there attractive

--Source: Migration Policy Institute

# The Present Situation: Immigration

- ▣ According to the Migration Policy Institute, in 2010 there were 594,000 immigrants living in China.  
(Small compared to 1.35 billion population)
- ▣ Where are the immigrants coming from?
  - North Korea
  - US
  - Japan
  - Burma
  - Vietnam
  - Africa (individual nations not parsed out)
    - ▣ This is also an interesting population because there are many students from African nations studying in China.  
Think: old political ties
    - ▣ Traditional migrant populations from Africa exist, too

# The Present Situation: Immigration

- ▣ Economic Consequences:
  - Overwhelmingly positive
  - Assist in their export trade
  - Foreign talent adds value
  - Tourist and foreign students bring income
  
- ▣ Social Consequences:
  - Growing concerns about “low-quality” immigrants coming from North Korea and Vietnam
  - Perceived social instability



# How is China dealing with Immigrants?

- ▣ Similar to the US, it's complex!
  - There is now an immigration fast track for talented professionals and those with family ties
  - Political Asylum now exists!
- ▣ Undocumented Immigrants:
  - Officially--monetary fine and potential incarceration for:
    - ▣ working illegally
    - ▣ illegal entry
    - ▣ overstaying one's visa
  - Unofficially--these penalties are **unevenly applied** to immigrants, depending on **country of origin** and **economic status**, among other factors

# More on Dealing with Immigrants

- ▣ Some migrants, especially the poor and undocumented, get trapped in the system!
  - A Catch-22 can exist:
    - ▣ Exit visa with housing registration needed to leave
    - ▣ However, to register for housing, valid travel documents needed
    - ▣ Results: It's expensive and timely
      - buying forged documents
      - OR paying the fine and enduring jail time
- ▣ In addition to country of origin, economic status, etc., the rules are not applied evenly throughout the country.

# Chinese Immigration to US: Pre-1882

- *Voices from the Bottom of the South China Sea: The Untold Story of America's Largest Chinese Emigrant Disaster* by Robert S. Wells
- ▣ Most immigration pre-1882 is via Hong Kong from the Guangdong Province
- ▣ They entered the US through San Francisco
- ▣ Credits for Book and Info:
  - Cedric Yeh, Deputy Chair, Division of Armed Forces History at National Museum of American History, Smithsonian
  - Functionally, a Chinese-American culture and immigration expert

# Chinese Immigration to US: Pre-1882

- ▣ Between 1867-1881, over 100,000 Chinese immigrants were shipped to the US
- ▣ As many as 1200 immigrants on a single boat
- ▣ Menial labor jobs:
  - Mining
  - Railroad construction
  - Gold Rush support (i.e. servants, laborers)

Source: *South China Sea* reading

# Chinese Immigration to US: Pre-1882

- ▣ The Chinese immigrants were not well treated upon arrival
  - “John, as the Chinese were called, ‘is an inveterate smuggler, and is a perfect adept at all kinds of tricks to further the nefarious trade.’”  
--customs officer
  - “Special consideration was taken with the 30 [of 1200] women passengers... they were held aboard under suspicion that they had been sent for purposes of prostitution.”
    - ▣ Eventually the shipping company fought to have the women released

Source: *South China Sea* reading

# Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882

- ▣ The Exclusion Act of 1882 forbade any Chinese citizens from immigrating to the US
- ▣ Only time in US history that people from a specific nation are barred from entry
- ▣ The Exclusion Act was preceded by fear driven thinking like this... “The Chinese labor question is destined within the next ten years—five years perhaps—to become what the slavery question was a few years ago, to break down, revolutionize and reorganize parties, completely change the industrial system of many of our States and territories and modify the destination of our country for generations to come.”
  - Atlantic Monthly, Nov. 1869
  - Sound familiar...?

# Repeal & Apology from Exclusion Act

- ▣ The Exclusion Act was repealed in 1943
  - During WWII, we need allies against the Japanese
  - This is the impetus for the repeal
- ▣ Congress did eventually apologize... in June 2012!
- ▣ Hart Sellar Act (1965):
  - Immigration gets easier for everyone outside of Western Europe/North America (at least for a while)

# Fun Facts

- ▣ WWI—Shipped “helpers” from China, across Canada, over the Atlantic, to the Western Front
- ▣ Large numbers of Chinese in Peru



# Resources

- ▣ Migration Policy Institute
- ▣ *Voices from the Bottom of the South China Sea: The Untold Story of America's Largest Chinese Immigrant Disaster* – Robert S. Wells
- ▣ The Economist
- ▣ CCTV (China Central Television)
- ▣ Cedric Yeh
- ▣ *The Wave* – Susan Casey