

A Chinese Kaleidoscope; An American Mosaic

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Eighteen: the first Han Chinese emigrants, road construction and mining

The United States is a nation of immigrants. Many of the people originally come from another country. The earliest immigrants were from Europe, and they used colonial and dictatorial policies to massacre and drive out the original inhabitants. They took land using immoral methods, and opened the east and west of the United States up for agriculture.

The earliest immigrants came to America because they had committed crimes in Europe, and were exiled. America was originally a colony of England, and after independence was achieved, the English colonizers were driven away, even though the people of the United States were the offspring of the English. After this, American merchants brought back many black slaves from Africa.

Shortly after this the economy in Europe improved, and fewer Europeans were immigrating to the United States. Most immigrants to the United States at this time were from Central and South America, and Asia. No matter whether through legal or illegal methods, after someone immigrated to the United States they would seek to bring their entire family over as well, especially Chinese people. For this reason, the number of Asian people in the United States grew very quickly.

The earliest Chinese immigrants to the United States worked in road and railway construction. These jobs required large numbers of people willing to do heavy labor. Chinese-Americans contributed greatly to the construction of railways in the United States, particularly the Transcontinental Railroad. At the same time, numerous Chinese worked in San Francisco's gold mining industry. Before the twentieth century in the United States, there was racial prejudice. People were not open-minded towards Chinese immigrants. For this reason, very few Chinese people were able to immigrate to the United States during this time period. Each year only six hundred were allowed to immigrate.

From 1946 to 1949 China there was civil war in China. Many sailors were unwilling to return to the Chinese mainland because of the dictatorial government. Many of the people went to the United States or Europe. Many Nationalist officials, soldiers, and intellectuals sought refuge in the United States. They assumed that when the counterattack against the Communists was successful, they would be able to return to their homeland. But a successful counterattack never came, and they had no choice but to remain in the United States.

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In 1972 American President Nixon and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger visited Mainland China. There they conducted talks with Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai, and established diplomatic relations between China and the United States.

From 1972 to 1978, China and the United States engaged in economic and cultural exchanges. Formal relations were established in 1978, and at the same time brought forth new waves of immigration from China to the United States. The limits for immigration from China and Taiwan were raised to twenty thousand people each, and the limits for immigrants from Hong Kong, Macau, and Southeast Asia were raised correspondingly. Besides legal immigration, there were other methods for entering the United States from abroad, which brought ever increasing numbers of immigrants to the United States.

Illegal immigrants had to deal with the issue of residency. The easiest way for single people was to find a spouse with American citizenship. This way, one can get legal residency in just one year, and if two years go by without issue, can get a green card, which gives the right to permanent residence. In order to get a residency permit from the immigration department, one must hire an immigration lawyer. For a fee, the immigration lawyer will submit an application and complete the process.

In the past the majority of illegal Chinese immigrants were men. In order to solve the problem of obtaining legal residency, they would find South American wives. After the number of Chinese people in the United States grew, marriages between Chinese immigrants and Chinese-Americans became very common. Generally, after 5 years of having permanent resident status one can apply for citizenship.

In order to obtain citizenship, one must have some basic knowledge of English. Otherwise, one can hire a lawyer to help with the process of registration. In the past in China, there was no public registry to record births and weddings. However, currently one can go to the relevant government department to record such things. An interview at the department of immigration is a part of the process of obtaining citizenship, and sometimes there is a test, but it is not particularly difficult. If one is an exchange student or has basic knowledge of English, it is not necessary to hire a lawyer, and the forms can be filled in oneself. People above the age of sixty five receive special treatment and do not have to have an interview. There are two major benefits to citizenship. One is that you may vote in elections, and the other is that with an

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American passport you can go to seventy percent of foreign countries without a visa, and will receive protection from United States consulates in the event of any incidents.

If you want to apply for your family to have residency too, you must first get citizenship. Generally speaking it takes five years to get residency for parents, and at least ten years for siblings. Anyone applying for residency in the country from abroad must have a friend or relative living in the country who can guarantee their livelihood beforehand. For the first five years, the new resident will not have access to government economic assistance. Applicants must also undergo questioning at the American consulate before they can receive their visa.

People who invest money in the United States can also apply for immigration, in addition to people with family in the country and people on work visas (including skilled workers). One must invest over one hundred thousand dollars before one can apply to immigrate. One must have a business in the United States, with permanent offices and at least three employees. It is also necessary to report income taxes each year on time. However, when registering a business in the United States it is not required to register the amount of money being invested in the business. All that is necessary is proof from the bank that you have the necessary funds.

For this reason there are some people who live illegally in the United States who open small restaurants or businesses in order to apply for residence as an investor. If they are lucky, the restaurant is profitable and they are able to apply for permanent residence. If the business is losing money, they can simply sell it or close it down once they have obtained their green card. However, even if a wealthy foreign investor buys a great deal of American real estate or stock, he or she cannot apply for immigration as an investor because the contribution to American society has not been enough.

In the past ten years, the United States government has been trying to attract talented people and intellectuals to the country. For example, professors, engineers, financial experts, and artists can all apply for special immigration as a talented person. Many such people come to the United States despite the fact that they were quite successful in their home countries because they want to begin a new and innovative career.

Some educated immigrants, such as lawyers and physicians, cannot carry out their trade when they immigrate to the United States without first being educated in an American institution and passing the required examinations.

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The United States also welcomes immigration from workers who specialize in jobs or industries that Americans are unwilling or unable to undertake, such as farming, nursing, and childcare, and restaurant service jobs. This is especially true in the field of nursing. Since Americans in college only want to be doctors, there is a perpetual shortage of nurses. There are some Chinese doctors who immigrate to the United States, and find that they cannot work as nurses, let alone as doctors, and must change their profession.

Since Americans are unable to cook Chinese food, the ability to work as a Chinese chef has become a sort of special talent. Since the United States lacks this type of skilled labor, the immigration department has made it possible for Chinese chefs to apply for residency. If you use your work background as a nanny to apply for permanent residency and you receive a green card, it is possible to change professions afterwards without having the green card revoked. Furthermore you will still be eligible for government assistance.

After President Kennedy was assassinated in the beginning of 1963, there was a mass pardoning of crimes, and many people were able to realize their dream of legal residence in the United States. Another instance in which many illegal immigrants were able to obtain legal residency was following the Tiananmen incident in China. All Chinese people who arrived in the United States before 1990 were given residency. Even though the vast majority of such people had nothing to do with the Tiananmen incident, they were still given permanent residence. With the arrival of the millennium in the year 2000, many illegal immigrants hoped for another mass amnesty for illegal immigrants, but none such amnesty ever occurred.

The majority of Chinese immigrants to the United States before the seventies were from Taishan country in Guangdong. By the eighties the amount of immigration from China had increased by leaps and bounds, and the majority of new immigrants were from Fuzhou city in Fujian Province, and Wenzhou city in Zhejiang Province. Immigrants from China surged forth into the United States using all means possible. Today there is the saying that the United States has fifty two states: the original fifty states in addition to Wenzhou and Fuzhou.

Artists and actors from China are all eligible to apply for American residency through their position as talented individuals. Often they will apply to come to the United States for a performance, and then apply for residency once the performance has taken place.

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China has many abandoned children, some of which become homeless orphans. Such children rely on the government and non-governmental organizations to be adopted, and their lives are very difficult. In the United States there are many married couples who have good jobs and stable incomes, but do not have children. Many such couples will go to orphanages in China to adopt children. Adopting couples must first qualify, and need to be at least middle class, and be of sound character. Since parents need to provide education and other necessities for their children, proof of income is required to be submitted.

Nineteen: Illegal residents are usually not caught because there is insufficient room in detention facilities.

The number of illegal immigrants in the United States is estimated to be over two million. They constantly face the risk of being apprehended by the immigration department and deported. However, since the United States is a country focused on human rights, and since the government has no means by which to apprehend and deport all illegal immigrants, few illegal immigrants end up being caught.

If the immigration department arrests too many illegal residents, there will not be enough space in detention facilities to accommodate all of them. Since beds, escape prevention measures, food, and medical care are all required for each detainee, the necessary expenditures would be extremely large. American law permits someone who has been arrested to hire a lawyer to provide legal aid, and if the government is also obligated to provide legal counsel. After being apprehended, a detainee can raise bail to leave the detention center. After leaving, there are many ways in which he or she can apply for legal residency. Therefore with hard work, many illegal immigrants can eventually receive a green card. Moreover, they tend to be hard working and willing to accept difficult and laborious jobs. Since society needs people to carry out such work, it can be said that they contribute quite a lot to society.

There are many types of foreign students in the United States. Of course the majority study at universities, but there are also students who study at primary and middle schools. Most of the younger foreign students come to the United States because they are accompanying their parents, who come to visit relatives or travel

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In the process of immigration, going to the American consulate and applying for a visa is also an interesting subject. If you have many good reasons for going to the United States, or if you are a very fortunate person, then when you go to your interview at the consulate you will receive permission very quickly, and be able to buy your plane tickets.

Suppose that you are a laborer in China who has an opportunity to come work in the United States. In China, you would earn about one thousand Renminbi, whereas in the United States you would earn over a thousand dollars doing the same kind of work. For such a person, earning that amount is quite considerable. If there is the opportunity to do business, then the money would be even greater. Besides getting a visa from the consulate, there are other means by which one can get to the United States; however, they are very costly.

In Fuzhou one must pay a fee of sixty thousand dollars to get to the United States, and in Wenzhou it takes fifty thousand. From other places it takes twenty or thirty thousand. People from Fujian must pay a somewhat higher fee to get to the United States. Since the people coming to the United States have very high hopes, they tend to be young people who are willing to work hard in their new undertaking. Of course there are people who manage to achieve the American Dream, and there are others who are disappointed.

There are many opportunities to come to the United States. If you are a college student and you want to study abroad in the United States, you can even apply for your spouse to come with you. If you are not yet married, then you can apply for your parents to accompany you. Another method is for someone who is already a citizen to apply for their parents or grandparents to come to the United States. One can even apply for an elderly person's nurse to come. But no matter whether it is to accompany a student or live with a relative, and non-English speaking elderly person who immigrates to the United States will feel like a blind person due to their advanced age. If they move to the suburbs and are unable to drive a car, they will feel like a handicapped person, and life will be inconvenient.

Generally speaking, it is unsuitable for the elderly to live in the suburbs. Many would rather give up their luxurious homes in the suburbs and move to Chinatown where things are more convenient. Some parents who accompany their children to study in the United States, stay even after their children have finished their studies, legally or otherwise.

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By government estimates, there are about two million illegal immigrants in the United States at present. These statistics are based on the number of people who have entered the country legally and overstayed their visa. However, in reality there are many more illegal immigrants who entered the country illegally without a visa, and the size of this group is harder to estimate. These types of illegal immigrants enter through the border with Mexico or Canada, or from ships nearing the Pacific Coast. Many are from Central and South America.

The official population of the United States is three hundred million, and adding in the number of illegal immigrants it is quite a lot. If all of the illegal immigrants were to leave the United States, the effect would be drastic. There would be a lack of people to work as drivers, restaurant cooks, and nannies. It has been suggested that if all illegal immigrants were to be declared legal, the cost would bankrupt the country. Therefore illegal immigration is the immigration department's most problematic issue.

When immigrating by legal means, the process usually begins with hiring an immigration lawyer to handle the application. After the application has been ratified, the issue is handled by the local American consulate.

In order for a lawyer to submit an immigration application, family records are required. In the past China did not issue records for events such as births and marriages, but the documents were required by the immigration department. In these cases, applicants can request documentation from China's Public Security Department, which will supply them with some records that can be used for immigration applications.

In the immigration process, approval is given fastest to spouses of American citizens, then spouses of permanent residents. Unmarried children of an American citizen come before the citizen's parents, who come before siblings. Since citizens tend to apply for immigration for many of their relatives, the immigration department is quite busy with applications, and it is necessary to wait as long as three to ten years for approval.

The immigration process begins with going to a law firm and finding a lawyer. The lawyer will then have a legal assistant fill out necessary forms, and discuss the issue of legal fees. After filling out the forms, one must pay the lawyer one third of the total fee amount. Then the lawyer will give information about what sort of legal records are needed from the applicant.