

A Chinese Kaleidoscope; An American Mosaic

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Why do Chinese people want to come to the United States? Generally speaking the monthly wages earned by such people amount to about 1500 dollars. The wages for such work in China are much lower. Chinese people come to the United States for work to improve their lives and earn a little more money. However it is not easy to come to the United States at all. In the past, the majority of Chinese people coming to the United States for work were from Guangdong province. At that time about seventy percent of the residents of New York City's Chinatown were from Guangdong, especially the Taishan region of the province. Things have changed in the past twenty years however; in recent times many people from Fujian province have come to the United States by different means. If you make arrangements to come to the United States through standard legal channels, then there are few costs. However, if you come to the United States by some other means, then the fees can be quite large. To arrange for a tourist visa, it can cost thirty to forty thousand dollars; to cross the border illegally can cost fifty to sixty thousand dollars; and to arrange for a fake marriage can cost sixty to seventy thousand dollars. In the past twenty years, the number of Fujian people in New York City's Chinatown has become equal to the number of Guangdong people. Furthermore, the number of Fujian people is constantly rising.

Members of the Chinese Diaspora in the United States all love their ancestral home, no matter what their hometown is, or what dialect they speak, or whether they were born in the United States, or whether they came here directly or indirectly. Later generations of Chinese people abroad still feel a close connection to China, especially because of the relatives and friends that still live there. Members of the Chinese Diaspora feel great pride when they hear good news about China, such as success in the space program or when China successfully bid for the 2008 Olympics. Many people also send money back to their hometowns for construction. This not only improves things for the town, but the people who invested in construction also make money. Once things have settled for a Chinese immigrant to the United States and he or she wishes to do some travelling, his or her first choice will always be to go back to China to visit home.

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The Taigu Shipping Company is an international shipping company started by an Englishman. The company was originally headquartered in Shanghai. In addition to sea-going ships, the company also operated a fleet of riverboats that served the Yangtze River. The company has made a lot of money in China. After the revolution, the company left Mainland China and moved its headquarters to Hong Kong. The highest-level employees in the Company are all English people. Chinese people only occupy the lower levels in the company. An important position occupied by Chinese people is one that mediates disputes between higher-level English employees and the Chinese employees working beneath them, including ship hands, workers in the boiler room, cooks, service people, and other low-level positions. Taigu Shipping is a subsidiary of the Taigu Corporation. Since the company was not able to compete with other shipping businesses, the Taigu Corporation now deals mainly in finance and real estate.

I once worked for Taigu Shipping. On my first journey we made stops at Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Japan, and Indonesia. It was on an old ship named Beihai that had a displacement of about three or four thousand tons. There was a middle aged Chinese man who worked in the administrative department. He had worked on ships for a long time, and had been promoted a number of times because of his hard work. He occupied a midlevel position and his duties included purchasing food supplies and administration of internal affairs. At each port the ship docked at, small powered skiffs would come to take someone from administration and some workers to the shore to procure food. In South East Asian countries, the people piloting the skiffs and the sailors would all be Chinese, so when they saw each other there would be a big fuss. The sailors of other nationalities would not understand, so each time they saw the little skiffs they would shout gibberish at them.

The first journey lasted about three or four months before we returned to Hong Kong. I had a good impression of the man in administration because of my time working with him procuring food supplies. On the second journey, the man in administration had some urgent family matters to attend to and was not able to embark with us. Since he knew me, he gave me the responsibility of procuring food supplies at port. Although my English was not good, I was able to cope by using hand gestures.

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Making a living in Hong Kong was very difficult then, and I was unable to make ends meet. I heard that in the United States the wages were high and that it was easy to save money. Hearing this, it is only natural for someone to wish to go to the United States and build a life. As luck would have it, one of my relative's neighbors, Mr. Zhao, worked for the human resources department of the Golden Mountain Shipping Company. Thereupon I paid a visit to Mrs. Zhao to introduce myself. I implored her to ask Mr. Zhao to help me out by finding me a job on one of the ships since the pay was so good. In my heart I planned to find a way to get on one of the ships headed to the United States and find a job there. At the same time I asked one of my cousins for her help; she knew a couple by the name of Yu who lived in the United States and would be able to help me get settled once I arrived. When everything was arranged, I began work at Golden Mountain Shipping. After working there for nearly a year, I was assigned to work on a ship heading to Portland harbor. When I arrived, I took shore leave and pleaded with a Chinese restaurant owner there to help me buy a ticket to New York. Thereupon, I flew to New York by myself, where I met Uncle and Aunt Yu and was received with warmth and hospitality. Uncle Yu helped arrange a job for me at a Chinese restaurant.

Twenty: Manufacturing grows by leaps and bounds; initial investments of 200 dollars turn into returns of 100 million dollars; the China miracle.

In the Early nineties, China's largest plastics machinery manufacturer was located in Ningbo. It was called the Hai Tian Plastics Machinery Factory. It was a small privately-owned company that set the precedent for the region, the Wenling County in Taizhou prefecture of Zhejiang province. Many families in the area began small businesses manufacturing plastic products using the plastics machinery. Some owned just one or two of the machines, but through hard work they managed to succeed. Soon the local inns were full of people, and the sound of the machinery could be heard late into the night. These local entrepreneurs ran their operations practically twenty-four-hours-day in order to maintain the best efficiency. These small-scale factories produced all manner of plastic products, such as wash basins, buckets, and cups. and the products sold well all over the country.

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Jumping forward to the year 2000, products made in China have become increasingly common. Not only did this represent China's supply of cheap labor, but more importantly it showed Chinese people's diligence and knowledge. In Europe and the United States, production of all industrial products other than high-level technology products was in decline. The main reason for this was that the wages in the United States and Europe were too high and the so were welfare benefits. The cost of manufacturing became too much and had a negative effect on the consumer price. These circumstances led to popular demand for Chinese products. This was especially true of products such as those sold in the store 99 Immortals. If these types of products were made in Europe for instance, then labor and administration costs would raise the price a great deal; it would not even be enough to cover the costs of production. Since the purchasing of the average person is limited, he or she will choose the product with the cheaper price. These circumstances led to the rapid development of China's manufacturing industry.

The World Expo was held in Shanghai in 2010, and was perhaps the most impressive World Expo in a hundred years. The previous World Expo was held in Japan in 2005 and there were 17 to 20 million visitors, which was the record at the time. The Shanghai World Expo had about 70 million visitors.

During the Qing Dynasty, China shut itself off from the world. It was during the late Qing period that Europe and the United States entered the Industrial Revolution and transformed from agricultural societies to industrial ones, developing their economies in the process. But the Chinese leaders at the time did not recognize the advances the Europeans and Americans were making, and stuck to the small agricultural model. It was only after the Xinhai rebellion and the overthrow of the Manchu Qing government that leaders finally began to gradually modernize. Industry still lagged behind, but the transformation from a small industrial economy to a large one had begun.

This was the case until 1949, when the Communist Revolution occurred. Then all industry was nationalized. It was not until thirty years later during the economic reforms that China's potential for industrialization finally began to be realized.

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China is known as the world's factory. New factories open every day in every province and city. The members of the local population in those provinces and cities then have employment opportunities as factory managers or workers. The majority of factory workers come from China's inland provinces. The Chinese government encourages manufacturers to export their many different types of products to markets abroad. The government gives benefits to manufacturers, such as eliminating tax on imported raw materials and on the exportation of goods. These measures are very effective at attracting investors. In the past twenty or thirty years, not only has civilian industry become developed, but so too have the arms and space industries. Although the Chinese government has not decided to invade any foreign countries or declare itself hegemon, American and European powers still fear China's growing power. They have portrayed China as a threat when in fact China is only protecting social stability. China's prosperous development cannot be impeded by any foreign powers; China will continue to develop in the future.

In the past thirty years, China has constructed many power plants, including hydroelectric power plants and nuclear power plants. Hydroelectric power takes advantage of natural resources and incurs very little cost. Other forms of power production include solar power and wind power. There are risks to nuclear power production. In the United States, nuclear power is not used because the population fears leaks and the accumulation of nuclear waste.

Twenty-one: Money comes to China both through the sale of exports and remittances from Chinese people abroad.

After becoming the world's factory, large numbers of products were manufactured in China. At first these products relied on domestic markets, but afterwards they began to be sold abroad. How were products promoted abroad? Products were promoted through sales exhibitions and trade fairs in China and abroad. The most famous of these are the trade fairs that take place in Guangdong province in the spring and fall seasons. A new exhibition hall has been built especially for these magnificent trade fairs.

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Today in China, no matter whether it is in the coastal regions or far inland in the northwest, preferential treatment and policies are used to attract foreign investment for local businesses and factories. Before the business opens, the foreign investor will choose whether to establish an independent company or a joint stock company. Since most American and European businesspeople are not familiar with Chinese government policies or cultural customs, the majority of foreign businesspeople in China are from Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, and overseas Chinese communities. Since these people share the same culture and race, it is easier for them to understand each other and communicate cooperatively. This also makes disputes easier to resolve.

Since many businesses are operated jointly, there are frequent disputes. The Chinese part of business partnerships is often a government owned enterprise. The person in charge is more of a representative than an owner, so it is unlikely that he or she will make a real effort to develop the business. If the business the foreign investor is creating utilizes advanced facilities then generally speaking a special project like this will develop more easily. However if second-hand technology is used, then there will be safety issues and disputes between the Chinese and foreign side of the operations will arise. The foreign partner occupies an advantageous position in these disputes. The foreign partner can file a complaint with the government about the Chinese partner, but the Chinese partner cannot do the same. Sometimes before a resolution has been reached, the foreign partner will simply withdraw the investment, and the Chinese partner will have no means of recourse. Therefore although the economy has become very developed, disputes within joint stock companies are still quite common.

Even amongst all of the development happening in China, there are two industries the development of which is not encouraged: lottery and gambling. The government opposes these because they are speculative and based on chance. Despite government opposition, Chinese people still enjoy gambling as a matter of habit. Although the law permits some raffles and lotteries that are associated with charitable events, gambling is not permitted. Nevertheless, many members of Chinese delegations visiting the United States will go to Las Vegas to gamble.

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During China's thirty years of economic reforms, China's manufacturing industry had already become world famous. Not only did Chinese manufacturing supply the vast domestic market in China, but bulk amounts of goods were being exported to markets all over the world. From my personal observations, small factories manufacturing machinery during the Cultural Revolution were only able to at best maybe carry out crude repairs on farming equipment. However, by the nineties although the scale of such factories was still small, the operators had the foresight to attract foreign investment and monopolize the manufacture of plastics machinery. Many such factories grouped together to do things like file taxes together and also to list type H stock on the Hong Kong market. After raising money on the stock market, they would expand old factories into many new ones with modern equipment. The factories' products were aimed more towards the domestic market, but there were also many orders from markets abroad. Many dormitories were built for factory workers, and top-notch monitoring machines were installed to ensure workers' safety. Money was also invested in public parks to give everyone places to relax during leisure time.

Twenty-two: The silent birth of the insurance business in China; insurance will be a rapid growth industry in China.

Chinese people are relatively conservative; if any accidents or great hardships occur, they will first rely on themselves to solve the problem. Therefore most Chinese people are not conscious of the usefulness of insurance. Due to government-enforced regulations, you must have auto insurance to drive a car, so people are forced to pay for insurance in this case. Another important type of insurance is shipping insurance, which covers the potential cost of any shipped goods in the case of damage while they are being shipped.

Life insurance is especially popular in Europe and the United States. In these places, most everybody will buy at least some form of life insurance; however in China it is very rare for someone to purchase life insurance. Of course by far the most popular forms of insurance are auto insurance, shipping insurance, housing insurance, and health insurance. In the future, selling these types of insurance in China will be a thriving business.

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Each country in North America and Europe has several big insurance companies looking for business. Insurance is not sold directly to consumers from the insurance company, but is rather sold through insurance brokers. When the insurance fees are paid to the company, a percentage is given to the broker. The income earned by insurance companies from fees is in the hundreds of millions, but the money that they have to pay out to policy holders is much smaller. Therefore insurance companies are very profitable, and they invest their profits into real estate, stocks, and government bonds.

The insurance industry appears to have a bright future. Imagine a five-story building in New York City. The first floor is occupied by retailers, and floors two through five are rented as office space. How much business can insurance companies get from this building? First of all, the landlord will have bought insurance. The retailers on the first floor will have bought insurance as well. Additionally, each employer using the office space will need to buy insurance covering employees and perhaps customers. One can see that there is a vast market for insurance. In several decades, China will be like the West in that insurance policies will be mandatory in many industries.

In China, not only are the workers paid less than their Western counterparts, but they also lack social security, worker's health insurance, and insurance against workplace injuries. In the past in China, all workers were insured sickness and injury since all enterprises were government owned and insurance was provided by the government. Since then industry has undergone a great transformation, and national industries have become privately owned. A private company's economic situation is not at all as good as a government-owned one; if a worker gets sick or is injured, a private owner of a business cannot afford to help the worker. A private company's profit always goes into the owner's pockets, and nothing extra is ever given to the workers.

Now China promotes better circumstances for workers, and in addition to retirement money, workers also receive health insurance and insurance against workplace injuries. In the United States and Europe, someone who is handicapped through a workplace accident will receive long-term health insurance as well as lifelong wages. China's health insurance system is a little bit farther behind, but will hopefully improve gradually as time goes by.

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Now that the common people are well fed and clothed in China, many people have taken to going traveling abroad. The travel industry there has grown rapidly because of this. Not only has business been getting better for China's largest travel agencies, but the same has been happening for the many small ones too. There are tour groups traveling by plane, ship, bus, and train. There are many famous spots for natural scenery in China, and new areas for sightseeing are constantly driving the tourist industry forward. The tourist industry has been a boon to hotels, shopping centers, and restaurants. The growing popularity of travel has also created a market for traveler's insurance, which helps tourists cover medical costs while traveling, or the cost of replacing lost luggage. One special thing about traveler's insurance is that it covers the entire length of the journey, from the original departure to the trip back home. After such an insurance policy had been purchased, then at any point in the journey if the policy holder should have any sort of accident, then he or she will receive compensation from the insurance company. Travel groups in the United States and Europe automatically purchase insurance to prepare for any possible accidents. Traveler's insurance will likely grow quickly as an industry within China in the near future.

Twenty-three: Four important players in the establishment of diplomatic relations between the United States and China: Richard Nixon, Henry Kissinger, Mao Zedong, and Zhou Enlai.

Relations between the United States and China were very strained before Henry Kissinger's visit to China. In the beginning of 1972, President Nixon sent Kissinger to China to meet with Chairman Mao Zedong and Prime Minister Zhou Enlai. In the following year, President Nixon visited China himself, and relations between the two countries began to thaw. The representative that the United States sent was the future President Bush Sr., while the representative China sent to the United States was the foreign relations expert Huang Hua. After effort on both sides to communicate, bilateral relations between the United States and China were officially established in the fall of 1978. The first ambassador to China sent by the United States was Wood Cook, and the first ambassador sent by China to the United States was Chai Zemin. Chinese officials knew that the Chinese-American community loved their home country from the support that they had given, for example during natural disasters. Therefore, whenever Chinese officials visited, they would be sure to meet with local Chinese groups.

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China's leadership is divided into the following groups: Government Department, Daily Affairs Committee, Government Department Committee, and the three levels of the Central Committee. Members of the Central Committee are at the same level as Department-level leaders and provincial governors. The Central Committee includes retired members of the Party's old leadership, as well as senior military officials. Right now the most powerful leaders, who have sway over both political and military affairs, are the general secretary of the Communist Party, the chairman of the Central Military Committee, and the national chairman. The most powerful leaders are the general secretary and the chairman of the Central Military Committee.

In the West, prime ministers and presidents are all elected officials, their positions given to them by the citizens. Local government officials are also elected by the people. Chinese officials are not elected by the citizens; they are appointed in small meetings or by high-level party members. Since Chinese people do not have voting rights, all government officials are appointed, except for the highest level officials, who are selected through so-called indirect election.

The Chinese Civil War was fought between two factions. The first faction was established before World War II. The second was established after the end of the Second Sino-Japanese War. This faction, the Communist Party, was composed of poor farmers and laborers, who fought bravely with crude weapons. Since they were brave and not afraid to die, they were able to overthrow the first faction, the Nationalist Party. Although the besieged several times by the Nationalists, the Communists were able to escape. Communist soldiers made it known that they fought for freedom and democracy, to help those living in poverty, and improve the lives of the common people. They opposed landlords and capitalists, which won them the support of the common people. After victory against Japan, the Communists called themselves the People's Liberation Army. Although they had many weapons left behind by the Japanese, the Nationalists had many American weapons; however, many of these found their way into the hands of the Communists. The Communists won a swift victory. During the fifties, there was the Korean War. The Liberation Army fought in Korea with American weapons, but there equipment was in bad condition. However, since they did not fear death, they did not experience defeat.