



Chinese America

Stereotype and Reality

History, Present,
and Future
of the Chinese
Americans

Birgit Zinzius



Birgit Zinzius

Chinese America

Stereotype and Reality

History, Present,
and Future
of the Chinese
Americans



PETER LANG

New York • Washington, D.C./Baltimore • Bern
Frankfurt am Main • Berlin • Brussels • Vienna • Oxford

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Zinzius, Birgit.

Chinese America: stereotype and reality: history, present, and future
of the Chinese Americans / Birgit Zinzius.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. Chinese Americans—History. 2. Chinese Americans—Social conditions.
3. Immigrants—United States—History. 4. China—Emigration and immigration—History.
5. Taiwan—Emigration and immigration—History. 6. Hong Kong (China)—
Emigration and immigration—History. 7. United States—Emigration and immigration—History.
8. United States—Ethnic relations. 9. Chinese Americans—California—
San Francisco—History. 10. San Francisco (Calif.)—Ethnic relations. I. Title.

E184.C5Z56 305.895'1073'09—dc22 2004004007

ISBN 0-8204-6744-8

Bibliographic information published by **Die Deutsche Bibliothek**.

Die Deutsche Bibliothek lists this publication in the "Deutsche
Nationalbibliografie"; detailed bibliographic data is available
on the Internet at <http://dnb.ddb.de/>.

The paper in this book meets the guidelines for permanence and durability
of the Committee on Production Guidelines for Book Longevity
of the Council of Library Resources.



© 2005 Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., New York
275 Seventh Avenue, 28th Floor, New York, NY 10001
www.peterlangusa.com

All rights reserved.

Reprint or reproduction, even partially, in all forms such as microfilm,
xerography, microfiche, microcard, and offset strictly prohibited.

Printed in Germany

Acknowledgments

The book could not have been completed without the support of many people. Their help and, in many cases, their integration into the Chinese community enabled my access to first-hand experiences about Chinese Americans and their interaction with the mainstream American community and politics.

In particular, I would like to thank Dean Du Dao-tung in Tianjin, China, for his support. Interviews with members of the Congress, Senate, and community leaders enabled me to cover broad political opinions. Thomas A. Daschle (Senator), Robert T. Matsui (Member of Congress), Nancy Pelosi (Member of Congress), Paul Simon (Senator), John D. Trasvina, James McCormick, Rolland Lowe, Thomas Hsieh, Elaine L. Ng, and Edward A. Hailes, were particularly helpful and informative.

James Fang and Patrick Anderson (*Asian Week*), Philipp Choi, Cheryl Tsui, Vernon Kato, Rose Shirinian, Kelvin Tang, (*KTSF*), Fred Brown, Serena Chen, Elaine Sit, Franklin Wong (*East West*), and Joseph Wong (*San Francisco Chinese News*) provided excellent media support.

Thomas Chinn und Daisy Chinn (*California Historical Society*), Philipp Chow (*Chinese Historical Society*), Paul Chau-Jiunn Shie, (*Chinese American Society*), Nancy Chang, Daphne Kwok, Nancy W. Huang (*Organizations of Chinese Americans*), Yvonne Lee, Harry W. Low (*Chinese American Citizen Alliance*), Harvey Wong (*Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association*), Him Mark Lai (*Chinese Historical Society*), Gloria Tan (*Gum Moon Women's Residence*), Bill Tamayo (*Asian Law Caucus*), Henry Der, Emily Lee, Kathy Lowe (*Chinese for Affirmative Action*), and Dennis Wong (*Six Companies*) provided in-depth insight into Chinese Americans and their history.

Amado Cabezas (Asian American Studies Department; University of California Berkeley), Sucheng Chan (Asian American Studies Department, University of California, Santa Barbara), Harry H. L. Kitano (Professor of Social Welfare and Sociology, Endowed Chair, Japanese American Studies, University of California, Los Angeles), Peter Kwong (SUNY College at Old Westbury, Long Island), Betty Lee Sung (Department of Asian American Studies, Professor & Chair, City College of New York), Ronald Takaki (Professor of Asian American Studies Department at the University of California, Berkeley), Sau-Ling Cynthia Wong (Professor, Department of Ethnic Studies, Asian American Studies Program, University of California, Berkeley), and Judy Yung (American Studies, University of California, Santa Cruz), supported the work with their open and encouraging discussions. Thanks for great talks goes especially to Frank Chew Chin, Arthur Dong, Fred Ho, Gus Lee, Amy Tan, Wayne Wang, Stella Wong, and Conni Young

Yue, who provided first-hand information about the cultural awakening of the Chinese American community.

My special gratitude goes to Ling-chi Wang (Chair, Asian American Studies Department at the University of California, Berkeley). His scientific support and insights into the Chinese American community were a major source for this work.

Wei-chi Poon (Asian American Studies Collection Librarian, Ethnic Studies Library, University of California, Berkeley) was a great help and inspiration during all literature studies.

I thank Fred Brown, Jeanny Look, Elaine Sit, Chester Wong, and S.K. Wong for her friendship, and especially May Lee and her family, for treating me like a part of their family. I am grateful also to all others that have contributed, and could not be mentioned here.

Last but not least, I want to thank my family, who encouraged my path, and thus made this book possible.

Birgit Zinzius, Jakarta, January 2005

List of Abbreviations

AABDC	Asian American Business Development Council
AAFNY	Asian American Federation of New York
AAGEN	Asian American Government Executives Network
AAMA	Asian American Manufacturers Association
ABAG	Association of Bay Area Governments
ACP	Association of Chinese Professionals
API/PI	Asian and Pacific Islander/Pacific Islander
APT	Asian Pacific Triangle
CAA	Chinese for Affirmative Action
CACA	Chinese American Citizen Alliance
CADC	Chinese American Democratic Club
CAIEP	Chinese Association for International Exchange of Personnel
CAPA	Chinese American Political Association
CAPAC	Congressional Asian Pacific Caucus
CAPAL	Conference on Asian American Pacific Leadership
CASPA	Chinese American Semiconductor Professionals Association
CAST	Chinese Association for Science and Technology
CAUSE-Vision 21	Chinese Americans United for Self-Empowerment
CAVEC	Chinese American Voter Education Committee
CCBA	Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Organization
CC	Central Committee
CCC	Chinese Chamber of Commerce
CCDC	Chinatown Community Development Center
CEDG	Chinatown Economic Development Group
CIE	Chinese Institute of Engineers
CINA	Chinese Information & Networking Association
CITA	Chinese Internet Technology Association
COTN	China Oversea Talent Network
CPC	Communist Party of China
CSPA	Chinese Student Protection Act, and Chinese Software Professionals Assoc.
DPP	Democratic Progressive Party—Taiwan
EB	Employment-Based
ELL/ESL	English Language Learners/English as a Second Language
FB	Family-Based
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
HKSAR	Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
IA	Immigration Act
IFCSS	Independent Federation of Chinese Students and Scholars
IIRIRA	Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act
INA	Immigration and National Amendment Act
INS	Immigration and Naturalization Service
IRA	Immigration Reform Act
IRCA	Immigration Reform and Control Act
KMT	Kuomintang (National People's Party—Taiwan)
LEAP	Leadership Education for Asian Pacific's

LEP/NEP	Limited English Proficiency/No English Proficiency
MjD	Minzhu-jinhu Dang (Democratic Progress Party)
MOFTEC	Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation
NAACP	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
NACSA	National American Chinese Semiconductor Association
NCLB	No Child Left Behind Act
NECINA	New England Chinese Information and Network Association
NNIR	National Network for Immigration and Refugees Rights
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
OCA	Organization of Chinese Americans
PRC	People's Republic of China
ROC	Republic of China (Taiwan)
SCEA	Silicon Valley Chinese Engineers Association
SCOBA	Silicon Valley Chinese Oversea Business Association
SVCWireless	Silicon Valley Chinese Wireless Technology Association
WTO	World Trade Organization

Introduction

The ethnic composition of the United States has changed continuously over the last two centuries. Driven by economic, political, and social motives, millions of immigrants have arrived from all over the world. During the nineteenth century, early immigrants came mainly from Europe and Africa, followed by an increasing number of Hispanics in the twentieth century. The history and present situation of these ethnic groups, such as the Europeans, Blacks and Hispanics, is well-documented in literature and scholarly studies. Not as well documented is a smaller and less visible immigrant group, the Asians, and in particular the Chinese. Their unobtrusive, low-profile attitude does not place them in the immediate spotlight. Their number and influence seems, however, to be growing strongly, which may signal a new shift in the ethnic composition of the United States, especially in the twenty-first century.

It is thus the aim of this study to draw a complete picture of the Chinese Americans, from their early immigration in the mid-nineteenth century until the present day. The study also explains the social and political backgrounds of the Chinese emigration from China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, and analyzes the influence of the Chinese economic development on migration patterns, including the effects of the current economic boom. The main centers of Chinese immigration, California and the San Francisco Bay Area in particular, and New York, are the major focus areas of the study. Detailed statistics about immigrant figures will be presented and analyzed based on the historical, cultural, and political background, as well as economic, gender, and social factors—among others. Two centuries of United States' immigration laws will be reviewed in detail, with a particular emphasis on anti-Chinese legislation.

Based on these immigration data and the underlying legislation, a close look at Chinese settlements throughout the United States will be taken, from the mid-nineteenth century Chinatown in San Francisco to the suburban migration patterns at the beginning of the twenty-first century. An analysis of Chinese Americans in all States over the past 150 years will be presented to evaluate settlement patterns and developments over the entire historical period.

The educational and professional situation of the Chinese Americans will be studied thereafter, and compared to mainstream America and the other major ethnic groups: White, Black and Hispanic. The integration of the Chinese Americans will then be presented, from local social activities to their national political engagement, from arts to music and sports, politics to economics, a broad spectrum of activities of the Chinese Americans will be

studied to draw a detailed picture about their past and present situation in the United States.

Based on the findings over the past 150 years, future trends and perspectives will be outlined, and, in particular, the role of the Chinese Americans in the Pacific Rim business sector will be discussed.

My interest in China and the Chinese began in the early 1980s, when I had the chance to take up a teaching position in Tianjin. During two years in mainland China, I met several Chinese Americans who made their first trip to their ancestors' country. They were unable to communicate in Chinese and tried desperately to understand the habits and life of their ancestors. At that time I asked myself about the story of these Chinese living in the United States, a question I have researched ever since. This book conveys the essence of two decades of research of and experiences with Chinese Americans. It provides a complete and detailed overview of Chinese America in the twenty-first century from an impartial, European perspective.

Since my first encounter in China, the situation of Chinese Americans has changed significantly and become much more diversified. The dramatic economic and political changes in China, which may well become the world's largest economy within a few decades, have had a strong influence on this change. Bilateral relations between China and the United States during the twenty-first century will therefore shape the global economy and both societies. Chinese Americans may provide a crucial interface for these two distinct cultures in the future. At only one percent of the United States population, Chinese Americans are still a relatively small minority, although one with many facets and stereotypes. This study will analyze their historic and present situation in detail, including their influence on mainstream America and the United States of the twenty-first century.

Contents

List of Figures.....	xi
List of Tables.....	xiii
Acknowledgments.....	xv
List of Abbreviations.....	xvii
Introduction.....	xix
1. Chinese Emigration to California from 1848 until 1924.....	1
Changes within Classical Chinese Society.....	1
Dissolution of Social Hierarchies.....	1
Push Factors: Hunger and Revolution.....	5
Family Relationships during Emigration.....	7
Geographic Derivation and Orientation of Emigration.....	9
Economic Situation in the Destination Country.....	11
Pull-Factors: Gold and Work.....	11
San Francisco Chinatown: A New Home.....	15
<i>Immigration and Anti-Chinese Law: From “Free” Immigration (1848–1882)</i> <i>to Immigration Stop (1924)</i>	19
California Law.....	19
Regulation of the Chinese Question at the Federal Level.....	21
<i>Exclusion Acts: From 1882 until 1924</i>	24
2. Between 1924 and 1965.....	31
Development of Chinese American Relationships.....	31
Immigration Law from 1924 until 1965.....	36
1948 to 1959: Emergency Laws and Stranded Students.....	40
The <i>McCarran-Water Act</i> and the Period between 1952 and 1965.....	42
Population Development as a Result of Push and Pull from 1850 until 1965.....	43
3. Immigration between 1965 and 2000.....	51
The Regulations of 1965.....	51
Reasons for New Regulations.....	51
Immigration and National Amendments Act.....	52
Further Developments of the Laws of 1965.....	55
Law of 1986 (IRCA 1986).....	57
Immigration Act of 1990 (IA 1990).....	60
<i>Immigration Reform Act of 1996 (IIRIRA 1996)</i>	67
Definitions.....	69
Effects of the Laws since 1965.....	71

Quota and Non-Quota Immigrants.....	71
Use of the Preferential System.....	74
Chain Migration.....	78
Changes in the Situation in the Countries of Origin.....	80
People's Republic of China: Market Economy without Democracy ...	81
Taiwan: Democracy without Freedom.....	84
Hong Kong: Freedom without Democracy.....	86
4. Habitat.....	93
Nationwide Characteristics of Chinese American Communities.....	93
San Francisco Chinatown.....	100
The Old Chinatown.....	106
The New Chinatowns.....	112
Chinatowns Outside San Francisco.....	113
Social Differentiation of Chinatown Inhabitants.....	116
5. Business Structures and Income.....	119
Active Population.....	120
Income, Occupation, and Working Women.....	122
Career Opportunities.....	132
Careers and Legal Barriers.....	132
Law and Age Structure.....	134
Glass Ceiling and Occupational Downgrading.....	138
Poverty and Riches.....	140
Ethnic Business and Racial Labor in Chinatown.....	141
Sweatshops and Restaurants.....	141
Chinese American Entrepreneurs: Breaking the Ceiling.....	144
Exceptional Characteristics of Chinese American Business World.....	149
6. Education.....	153
<i>Whiz Kids</i> —Scholastic Attitude and Educational Success.....	153
Extracurricular Environment—The Home.....	154
Attitude Towards School.....	156
Primary and High Schools in San Francisco.....	158
Higher Degrees for Chinese Americans.....	165
The Influx of Chinese Intellectuals— <i>Brain Drain</i>	169
The Long Road to Top Universities.....	174
Evaluation of Recognizable Tendencies, Berkeley as an Example ...	182
Chinese Staff and Ethnic Diversity.....	184
Choice of Courses—Nerdy Math and Science Wizards.....	186
<i>Affirmative Action</i> or Multicultural Society?.....	190
From <i>Brain Drain</i> to <i>Brain Gain</i> —Returning to the Homeland.....	197

7. Family Structures.....	203
From a Bachelor Society to a Family Society—Historical Models.....	203
The Change in the Ratio of the Sexes	206
Household, Family Size, and Age Structure	210
Analysis of Current Results: Attitude of Married Couples	212
Fertility, Children, Birth Rate	213
Divorce Rate	214
Intermarriage—Interracial Dating	216
Mixed Marriages	216
Interracial Relationships	219
Marriage in the Homeland— <i>Gum San Haak</i>	223
Final Discussion of the Family Model.....	226
8. Chinese Breaking the Ceiling	229
A Model Minority?	229
Politics: From Opium Hall to City Hall.....	232
Economy: The New <i>Global Entrepreneurs</i>	243
<i>Guanxi</i> and <i>Xinyong</i> —Chinese Business Networking.....	249
Cultural Awakening	253
9. Conclusion	273
 Appendix.....	277
Bibliography.....	281
Selected Internet Sites.....	303
Index	305

List of Figures

1. Occupations of Chinese Immigrants in the United States, 1868.....	13
2. Chinese Population in San Francisco, 1860–1900.....	15
3. Chinese Immigrants in the United States, 1860–1882.....	23
4. Chinese Population in California and San Francisco, 1870–1890.....	25
5. Chinese Population in the United States, 1860–1960.....	44
6. Chinese Female Population in the United States, 1910–1940	46
7. Chinese Female Population in the United States, 1860–1910	47
8. Chinese Population in the United States, 1860–2000.....	73
9. Chinese Immigrants in the United States, 1871–2000.....	76
10. Chinese Population in the United States, by Gender 1860–2000	79
11. Admitted Immigrants from China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, 1990–2003	81
12. United States Population by Race Alone, 2000	93
13. United States Population by Race, 1970–2000	95
14. Population of California by Race, 1970–2000.....	97
15. Population of California by Race Alone, 2000	97
16. Population of San Francisco by Race, 1970–2000	98
17. Population of San Francisco by Race Alone, 1990–2000	100
18. Population of San Francisco-Chinatown by Race Alone, 1990–2000 ..	102
19. Population of San Francisco-Nob Hill by Race Alone, 1990–2000.....	102
20. Population of San Francisco-Sunset by Race Alone, 1990–2000	103
21. Population of San Francisco-Bayview by Race Alone, 1990–2000.....	103
22. Population of San Francisco-Crocker Amazon by Race Alone, 1990–2000	104
23. Population of San Francisco-Oceanview by Race Alone, 1990–2000...	104
24. Population of New York City by Race, 1970–2000	114
25. United States Population by Race, 1970–2100	118
26. Mean Household Income and Selected Characteristics of Chinese Americans, 1990.....	124
27. Occupations of Chinese Americans, 1980-1990.....	125
28. Occupations of Chinese Americans by Nativity, 1990.....	128
29. Occupations of Chinese American Women, 1920–1990	131
30. Age Distribution of Chinese American Immigrants by Nativity, 1990..	134
31. Age Distribution of Chinese Americans by Gender and Year of Immigration, 1980-1990	135
32. Minority Owned Businesses in the United States, 1992-1997.....	146
33. Absolute Share and Number of New Companies in Silicon Valley, 1980-1998	147
34. Households with Computers and Internet Access, 2000.....	155
35. Student Enrollment in San Francisco, 1967–2004.....	158

36. Enrollment of White and Chinese Students in San Francisco, 1967–2004	160
37. Percentage of College Enrollment by Age and Race, 1980	166
38. Educational Enrollment of Chinese Americans over 18 years, 1990	167
39. Foreign Students in the United States by Country of Origin, 1988–2004	173
40. Chinese Population in the United States by Gender, 1860–2000	207
41. Age Structure of the US and Chinese American Population, 1990	212
42. Foreign Direct Investment in the PR China, 1983–2003	250
43. Asian and Pacific Islander Alone Population in the United States, 2000	277
44. Chinese Alone Population in the United States, 2000	278

List of Tables

1. Chinese and Japanese Immigrants in California, 1890–1930	26
2. Number of Chinese Students in the United States, 1943–1949	41
3. Chinese Population in the United States by Gender, 1910–1940	47
4. Chinese Immigration by Ethnicity and Preferential Class, 2000	75
5. GDP Data in Purchasing Power Parity for Selected Countries, 1952, 1978, and 2002	81
6. Federal Anti-Chinese Legislation in the United States,	90
7. Regional and Local Anti-Chinese Legislation in California, Major Court Decisions	91
8 Asian and Pacific Islanders Alone in the United States, 1990 and 2000 ..	94
9 Chinese American Alone Population in Selected States, 1970–2000	96
10 Chinese American Alone Population in the Bay Area, 1970–2000	99
11. Inhabitants in Selected Districts of San Francisco by Race/Ethnicity, 2000	105
12. Median House Value in the United States, 1990–2000	106
13. Social Characteristics of San Francisco-Chinatown, 1990 and 2000	107
14. Chinatowns in the United States, 1990–2000	115
15. Residential Segregation in the United States, 1980 and 2000	116
16. Percentage of Chinese Immigrants over 16 Years, by Period and Race, 1980	120
17. Labor Force Participation of Chinese Immigrants, 1990 in Percent	121
18. Unemployment Rates of Chinese Immigrants, 1990 in Percent	121
19. Mean Household Income of Chinese Americans, 1989	124
20. Economic and Social Characteristics of Chinese Americans, 1989	126
21. Economic and Social Characteristics of Asian Americans, 1989	127
22. Chinese American Alone Population in the Bay Area, 2000	129
23. Social Characteristics of Chinese Americans in San Francisco, 2000 ..	130
24. Percentage of Married, Employed Women in the United States, 1988 ..	131
25. Chinese Immigration by Nativity and Immigration Preference, 2000 ..	133
26. Age Distribution of Chinese Americans, 1980 and 1990	135
27. Poverty Levels in the United States by Ethnicity, 1978 to 2000	140
28. Selected Chinese Professional Associations in Silicon Valley	148
29. San Francisco Unified School District-School Profiles, 2002–03	161
30. Percentage of High School Graduates by Age and Race, 1980	165
31. Average SAT-Scores by Parental Income and Race/Ethnicity, 1995	168
32. GDP Growth and Return Students in Asia, 1980–2000	198
33. Family Status of the United States and Chinese Immigrants Above 15 Years, 1980	208

34. Family Status of the United States and Chinese Immigrants Above 15 Years, 1990.....	209
35. Women's Marriage Rate, 1990.....	210
36. Birthrates of United States and Asian-American Women, 25 and 34 Years, 1980.....	210
37. Family Characteristics of Chinese Americans, 1990.....	211
38. Chinese Americans in the U.S., Fertility Rates, 1990	213
39. Interracial / -ethnic Marriages in the United States, 1960–2000.....	217
40. Accumulated Foreign Direct Investment in China, by Country, 2003...251	
41. Chinese in the United States, by State of Residence, 1870–1930	279
42. Chinese in the United States, by State of Residence, 1940–2000	280

1. CHINESE EMIGRATION TO CALIFORNIA FROM 1848 UNTIL 1924

Changes within Classical Chinese Society

Dissolution of Social Hierarchies

Over millennia, the Chinese saw their country as the center of civilization. This view, as well as its solid social structures offered little potential for influence from outside or for internal changes. First, the Chinese Emperors were not interested in diplomatic contacts with the West and second, there was no substantial interest in western products, which might have equaled the extensive demand for Chinese products. In a country with silver currency, foreign currencies were in little demand (Fairbank, 1998, 141–2; Perkins, 1999, 111). From a western viewpoint, therefore, major barriers existed at the beginning of the nineteenth-century for the development of economic relations.

To understand the eventual beginning of changes resulting from foreign influence around the middle of the nineteenth-century, one must initially look at the classical structure of Chinese society. Since state and society achieve almost religious status, the following will first show the ideal and second the actual association. Results from Sinology as an important medium for understanding the primary situation of Chinese immigrants to the United States has in the past only been touched upon superficially, if at all.¹ Confucianism was the state doctrine from the beginning of the Han-Dynasty (206 B.C.–A.D. 220) until the end of the empire (1911). The reasons for this continuity are closely related to the relative stability of Chinese social structures. Family and tribe were the basic elements of state structure within the Confucian view and also the nucleus of society. The smallest element, therefore, was not the individual, but the family, which outlives its members (Levy, Marion, 1986, 47).

The value the family had within the philosophical Confucian system can be recognized from the *five virtues*, which are described in the *Book of Changes* (*I Ching*; pinyin: *Yijing*). For Confucius, a person becomes noble not by birth but through developing *five virtues*: *humanity* (*ren*), *righteousness* (*yi*), *proper conduct* (*li*), *wisdom* (*zhi*), and *trustworthiness* (*xin*).²

¹ As I state in my Magister thesis about dangerous misperceptions about the Chinese in the United States: “Any integration should be seen not only from an American but also Chinese perspective to reveal disturbances in the hosting society.” Zinzius, 1988, 11.

² For further details see Huang, 1998. The teachings of Confucius (*pinyin*: Kongfuzi) remain influential in China and parts of Asia, especially Taiwan, Singapore, Japan, Korea and Vietnam.