

The Uncertain Path

by

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BLACK SCREEN

NARRATOR (V.O.)

When Chinese immigrants first began coming to the U.S., most of their migration was focused in Californian coastal cities. From here, they journeyed across the country.

DISSOLVES into TITLE SCREEN where the text says 'Why did Chinese immigrants come to New England?' while V.O repeats the question.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Why did Chinese immigrants come to New England?

A picture of an antique map appears on screen to show the distance between California and New England.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Chinese immigration prior to 1882 is important to study because, in 1882, the Chinese Exclusion act took effect.

CUT to a reenactment of Congress passing the Chinese Exclusion Act in the capital, voting on it, then cut to President Arthur signing it.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

This act outlawed Chinese immigration.

DRAMATIC MUSIC CUES, CUT TO ESTABLISHING SHOT of Angel Island

CUT TO MONTAGE of interrogation pictures.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

For the first time, Federal law banned entry of an ethnic working group on the premise

(cont'd) (V.O.)

that it endangered the good order of certain areas. It satisfied the white population who wanted racial purity restored, and catered to workers demands.

A picture of an 1870's downtown Chicago map appears on screen.

NARRATOR (V.O)

Before the Exclusion Act took place, a doctor from San Francisco, Dr. C.C. O'Donnell, gave a speech in downtown Chicago to a very enthusiastic audience.

CUT TO Dr.O'Donnell giving a speech in Chicago, he is on a stage in Chicago's town square. Dr. C.C O'Donnell is a white male wearing a suit. He is behind a podium yelling to the crowd, who's cheering and agreeing with him. The crowd is filled with angry Americans, with no Chinese immigrants in sight.

EXT. STAGE IN A TOWN SQUARE -DAY

DR.C.C O'DONNELL

These creatures from China bring nothing but disease and misery to our great country. These immigrants are the scourge of their society and are only here to ruin ours!

CUT TO audience reaction which is happy, cheerful. L.S of crowd cheering with some C.U of reactions.

DR. C.C O'DONNELL

Leprosy will be brought into this country by these creatures if they are not stopped!

DISSOLVE TO cartoon from New York newspaper depicting a Chinese immigrant in the foreground of Lady Liberty, with a mob of American workers yelling.

DISSOLVES INTO

EXT. STREET -DAY

Worker, a white male in his 30's, is aggravated at Chinese immigrants about taking jobs from other Americans.

WORKER

We don't want you here! Go back to China where you belong! This is our country!

CUT to reaction shots of Chinese workers who are fearful and scared of the American workers FADE to BLACK SCREEN with text "Why would the Chinese people continue to immigrate?"

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Our evidence has shown that the immigrants came to New England for schooling and job opportunities.

EXT. ZHEJIANG -DAY

INSERT FILM REEL about the Chinese political situation in Hong Kong.

NARRATOR (V.O)

During the Taiping Rebellion, many Chinese lost their family and friends. The following reflects the stories of many Chinese immigrants during this time.

EXT. DOCK - DAY

CUT TO enactment of Bo, leaving his family on a dock in Zhejiang.

(con't) (V.O.)

Foreign trade agreements now allowed
merchants from other countries to come
to Zhejiang to sell their goods, creating
competition in the market, forcing some
into other types of work, and further
making low class labor difficult to find.

FADE TO BLACK

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO DOCK - DAY

DISSOLVE TO Bo arriving by boat, at a dock in San Francisco. There
are white men working on the dock they are angry and yelling at the
immigrants coming off the boat.

CUT TO furious crowd of white male workers on the dock.

WHITE AMERICAN WORKER

Get back on the boat and go back
to where you came from!

CUT TO small group of Chinese immigrants, at the end of the dock,
that includes Bo's brother, Kang, pushing through the crowd. Bo runs
to his brother once he sees him and pats him on the back.

KANG

Welcome brother! How was your trip?
We are going back to Chinatown so we
can be among friends. In China, it
was just you and me. Here, we have
a whole neighborhood of people like us.

BO

This reminds me of home. Before the
rebellions. When life was simple.

EXT. CABLE CAR- DAY

KANG

There isn't much to worry about here. The locals are not friendly to us, so we have to be careful. But as long as we mind our business, we are not a problem to them.

BO

Yes, they yelled some terrible things at me when I came off the boat.

KANG

That is fairly common. But just focus on yourself and you will be okay. Tomorrow we can go talk to my boss about getting you a job. I already told him you'd be coming.

FADE TO BLACK

NARRATOR (V.O.)

During the 1800s in the United States, the transcontinental railroad project created thousands of jobs.

EXT - CONSTRUCTION SITE OF THE RAILWAY - DAY

In a dark tunnel, there are noises of digging rocks, men swearing in a Chinese dialect, other men are shouting in Polish.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Being low wage and often dangerous jobs, immigrants saw this as an opportunity to make some money and also migrate away from the west coast. As the project neared completion, the workers on the project were mostly Chinese immigrants.

EXT. RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

Bo, Kang, and half a dozen Chinese men squatting on the ground eating lunch. Kang and others joke in Chinese dialect. Bo eats his lunch without paying attention to others. He looks at a long distance.

ZOOM OUT to the skyline beyond hills.

INT. GAMBLING DEN - NIGHT

Kang and a few Chinese men are in a seedy basement. Loud noises everywhere, people shouting in Chinese dialects. Kang with a serious expression puts down all of his chips as everyone else throws in. With a smile he reveals his cards thinking he's won, but someone pulls a better hand and he loses

The noises abruptly fall into silence. CU of him covering his face with both of his hands.

CUT TO

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Bo counts a stack of bills, tallies up his income on a piece of paper. He carefully puts the bills in a wooden box and puts it underneath a mattress in a bunk bed. Then he walks over to a corner in a cluttered room with six bunk beds. He takes out a piece of newspaper printed in English. He blows the dust away, and squeezes his eyes at it.

BO (muttering and talking to himself)
To-day in Wa ... Wa-shington,
po-lit-ions ... praise coast-to-coast
ray-il-way

DISSOLVE TO enactment of Bo, Kang, and the other Chinese immigrants walking through Chinatown, ending up at a Chinese restaurant.

INT. RESTAURANT-DAY

CUT TO Bo and Kang eating together at a small table.

KANG

So you have been living here for a year now. Are you going to stay here with your brother in San Francisco?

BO (fed up)

I don't want to stay in a place with so much hatred and racism. I already felt the need to go back to China when I came off the boat. I came here for a better life, one without the burdens, but here in America, we are not welcome. Did I make a mistake?

KANG

I've told you, here, in Chinatown, you won't experience that hatred that you experience out there.

BO

It won't make a difference, I would still be in San Francisco. Living here is like living back home, not being able to go out without worrying about danger. I've been trying to come up with a way to make it better for us. Working on the railroad is good work, but we don't need to stay here. It's expanding, it can take us anywhere we want. There are many cities in this country. I think we can find one that is better. One without the hatred here. I don't want to be afraid to go outside.

KANG (dismissive)

Go on your own. I am not leaving San Francisco. My life is here, my people are here. I worked hard since the day I got off

(cont'd) KANG

the boat to have a life that is better than
China. We had nothing there, but here, we
have something. And we aren't alone.

CUT TO an antique image of a railroad trailing from San Francisco to
New England.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Bo's story was a difficult one that many may
have shared on their trip to new homes.

FADE TO BLACK.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Although some Chinese immigrants were
fortunate to find financial success, life in
America was not without struggle.

CUT TO pictures of Allan Tow and his family.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Professor Tow was a professor of
Migration Theory here at Suffolk
University and a 3rd generation Chinese
American, whose grandparents
came to America for a better life.

CUT TO Allan Tow talking.

ALLAN TOW

The people who migrate to these places
without this social capital are the
independents thinkers. The people who are
pulled for whatever reason to living in a
new world where they truly start their own
life.

INT. OFFICE -DAY

ALLAN TOW

Sojourners- Young men would come to the United States and work because China was in a bad shape early 1800s. Brothers and sisters of people who were already in America came to the U.S. and when they got here they already had a network.

CUT TO photo-reel of Chinese immigrants being persecuted.

(cont'd) (V.O.)

Some moved from the West to East, sometimes driven away from violent racism.

SHOTS of his family members in business attire and cutting a ribbon for a restaraunt.

(cont'd) (V.O.)

They went into the restaurant business because that's what their network already established. Then they started their own restaurant.

CUT TO picture of the restaurant that they started.

(cont'd) (V.O.)

Everyone is now in the restaurant business. During and post World War II my family started to make money opening more and more restaurants. First wave of Chinese restaurants in New England, became very successful.

CUT TO pictures of Chinese Immigrants being yelled at and beat up by white male Americans in 1870's.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Tow mentioned that there was racism and violence that caused many Chinese immigrants move from the West coast to the East coast. Unfortunately that was common for Chinese Immigrants to experience that back then.

CUT TO MONTAGE of various Chinese families show on screen.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Tow's family is similar to many other Chinese families who immigrated to America because of the economy in New England. They had many more opportunities here than they would have if they stayed in China.

CUT to VIDEO of Chinatown in 1870's-early 1880's.

ALLAN TOW

Social Capital is when immigrants come to a new area and they follow in the footsteps of those who came before.

CUT TO MONTAGE of various Chinese families around New England.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The Chinese try to integrate their own culture into New England but the barriers are still strong, preventing them from complete success. In the end, the Chinese still struggle with prejudice and will soon be faced with the Chinese Exclusion Act, which suspends all Chinese labor immigrants for the next 10 years.

FADE to BLACK