

2. Fu Chi Hao Reprimands Americans for Anti-Chinese Attitudes, 1907

America has always been a very sweet and familiar name in my ears, because I have been told by my American friends that it is the only free country in the world, the refuge of the oppressed and the champion of the weak; so I have had a great affection for this country since my childhood days. I had an idea for a great many years that America was the best nation on the earth, and a good friend to China.[...]

There is a close connection between America and China. The modern invention of steamboats brought these two nations nearer together. The great Pacific Ocean served as an indestructible tie. It is America that sent out her missionaries and merchants to China early in the nineteenth century, to instruct her people and help her to open the long-closed doors, and thus to get into contact with the new civilization of the twentieth century. We of China owe a great debt to America, especially during the Boxer uprising in 1900. It is largely due to America that China stands intact as she is today. Without America China might have been divided among the European nations seven years ago. Certainly America is China's best friend.

Don't be shocked if I tell you that, after six years of careful study and close observation, and after the personal treatment I have received from your country, my attitude toward America is totally changed. America is not so good a friend to China as I had mistakenly thought, because in no part of the earth are the Chinese so ill treated and humiliated as in America.

I hope I shall not be misunderstood. I have no hard feelings whatever against the American people. I can sincerely say that some of my best friends are Americans, and I have a great many sympathetic friends all over the country, but I do hate the misinterpretation of the Chinese exclusion law by your Government. The original idea of the law is lost. The officials on the Pacific Coast have made it their special business to find errors in the papers of every Chinese who came to this country, so as to send them back, whether they were laborers or not.

Pardon me if I give you a brief review of the personal treatment I received from America a few years ago. In the fall of 1901 a college-mate and myself were brought by an American missionary to this country, with the hope of getting an

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American college education which would enable us to take part in the uplifting of China in the near future. Glad indeed were we when the steamer Doric entered the Golden Gate on September 13, 1901. The peril of the water, the seasickness on the boat, were both ended. Christian America was reached at last. Our hearts were full of anticipation of the pleasure and the warm welcome we were going to receive from our Christian friends.

I was very much surprised to learn, after waiting several days on the steamer, that the passports which we had with us were not accepted by the American Government. There were several objections to the papers. In the first place, we ought to have got them, not from Li-Hung-Chang, the highest and most powerful official in North China at that time, but from his subordinate, the Customs Taotai, the Collector of the Port at Tientsin. In the second place, our papers were in the form of passports, while the law of this country requires certificates. The careless American consul at Tientsin had made still other mistakes and omissions in his English translation. We learned that we were denied the privilege of landing, and were to go back to China on the same steamer one week later.

I wish I could end the story with the deportation, but fortunately, or, if you please, unfortunately, our friends in this country did their best to have us stay. Letters and telegrams began to fly to the Chinese Minister and the Secretary of the Treasury Department in Washington. We were finally allowed to stay in the detention shed when the Doric left for China.

The detention shed is another name for a "Chinese jail." I have visited quite a few jails and State prisons in this country, but have never seen any place half so bad. It is situated at one end of the wharf, reached by a long, narrow stairway. The interior is about one hundred feet square. Oftentimes they put in as many as two hundred human beings. The whitewashed windows and the wire netting attached to them added to the misery. The air is impure, the place is crowded. No friends are allowed to come in and see the unfortunate suffering without special permission from the American authority. No letters are allowed either to be sent out or to come in. There are no tables, no chairs. We were treated like a group of animals, and we were fed on the floor. Kicking and swearing by the white man in charge was not a rare thing. I was not surprised when, one morning, a friend pointed out to me the place where a heartbroken Chinaman had hanged himself after four months' imprisonment in this dreadful dungeon, thus to end his agony and the shameful outrage.