

## A CHINESE VIEW OF THE STATUE OF LIBERTY

The Statue of Liberty is an American statue known across the world for its symbolic representation of freedom, liberty, and hope for all. France, who gave America one of its most precious gifts, were responsible for the creation of the statue itself. The United States and the American people, however, were responsible for the funding and creation of the pedestal the statue was to stand on. In a race to raise funds for the pedestal in 1885, publisher of the *New York World*, Joseph Pulitzer, placed an ad in his newspaper calling for the American people to donate to fund the pedestal. In return for their donations, donor's names were published in the newspaper.

Following the ad calling for donations, Chinese immigrant, Saum Song Bo, wrote to *The Sun* editor calling out the hypocrisy of the campaign. He reminded the editor that just a few years prior in 1882, the United States had passed one of its first immigration laws aimed toward the Chinese. Saum Song Bo points out that the idea of "liberty" and "freedom" the statue represents was not the case for everyone.

SIR: A paper was presented to me yesterday for inspection, and I found it to be specially drawn up for subscription among my countrymen toward the Pedestal Fund of the Bartholdi Statue of Liberty. Seeing that the heading is an appeal to American citizens, to their love of country and liberty, I feel that my countrymen and myself are honored in being thus appealed to as citizens in the cause of liberty. But the word liberty makes me think of the fact that this country is the land of liberty for men of all nations except the Chinese. I consider it as an insult to us Chinese to call on us to contribute toward building in this land a pedestal for a statue of Liberty. That statue represents Liberty holding a torch which lights the passage of those of all nations who come into this country. But are the Chinese allowed to come? As for the Chinese who are here, are they allowed to enjoy liberty as men of all other nationalities enjoy it? Are they allowed to go about everywhere free from the insults, abuse, assaults, wrongs and injuries from which men of other nationalities are free?

### Sources

*Facing History and Ourselves*. (n.d.). *The Legacies of Chinese Exclusion*. <https://www.facinghistory.org/educator-resources/current-events/legacies-chinese-exclusion>

*Freedom and Citizenship*. (n.d.). Saum Song Bo. <https://freedomandcitizenship.columbia.edu/saum-song-bo>

Son Bo, Saum. (1885). *A Chinese View of the Statue of Liberty*. *The Sun*, 2. <https://www.newspapers.com/clip/16261363/letter-from-saum-song-bo-re-statue-of/>

*Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation*. (n.d.). *Overview + History*. <https://www.statueofliberty.org/statue-of-liberty/overview-history/>