

# **Unpredictable Dynamics in Sino-American relations**

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Sino-American relations were not always good. The U.S. passed the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882; this marked the first time the U.S. had restricted immigration. In 1924 the law barred further entries of Chinese; those already in the United States had been ineligible for citizenship since the previous year. Also by 1924, all Asian immigrants (except people from the Philippines, which had been annexed by the United States in 1898) were utterly excluded by law, denied citizenship and naturalization, and prevented from owning land.

By the middle of the 19th century, though, the relationship had grown. American churches led the way, seeking converts to Christianity among China's enormous population. American missionaries began preaching in China in the 1830s, even when they could not legally visit many areas. Missionaries were among the first Americans to study the Chinese culture and language, and helped to shape American perceptions of Imperial China. Starting in the 1870s, American missionaries began developing educational institutions in China.