

## VOCABULARY AND TERMS

**fan tan**—a Chinese gambling game. Americans tended to dwell on the “vices” of the Chinese community of which gambling was one. This contributed to the image of the Chinese as greedy, cunning, untrustworthy, and morally corrupt.

**emigrate**—to leave one’s country to live in another country.

**ethnology**—the science that deals with the division of mankind into races and their distinctive characteristics.

**heathen**—a person who does not acknowledge the God of the Bible. It is a derogatory term that is also applied to nations and carries with it the idea of “uncivilized.” The term “heathen” was commonly used to refer to Chinese and Chinese Americans.

**hypocrisy**—a false appearance of virtue or goodness.

**idolatry**—the worship of a physical object as a god. This word is often intended to have a negative connotation, to mean a senseless devotion to something that is defined as non-religious and devoid of spiritual value.

**immigrate**—to take up permanent residence in a country that is not one’s native country.

**Mandarin**—Chinese government official.

**Mongolian**—One of several human races. In the 19th century, the word was used for people coming from all parts of the region now called East Asia and the Pacific Islands.

**opium**—an addictive drug made from the dried juice of the opium poppy and inhaled through a long pipe. Americans dwelled on the use of this drug among Chinese immigrants, sometimes claiming that the Chinese used the addictive qualities of opium to entrap unsuspecting whites, especially women, into a life of sin. The exaggerated image of the Chinese as opium addicts bolstered the claims of Exclusion supporters that the Chinese posed a moral threat to white Christian society.

**segregation**—the separation or isolation of a race, class, or ethnic group. Segregation can be voluntary or involuntary, imposed by another group or chosen by the group itself.

**Social Darwinism**—the theory that applied Darwin’s biological theory of natural selection and evolution (survival of the fittest) to human society. Life was a struggle and it was the fit (individual, nation, or culture) that survived and thrived. Success was the proof of fitness.

**stereotype**—a commonly held mental image or characterization of a group of people that represents an overly simplistic and often largely inaccurate view.

**Yellow Peril**—the notion that Chinese immigrants posed a threat to the American people, their culture, and the nation. In novels, political propaganda, and the media Chinese were often depicted as mysterious characters who harbored a secret ambition to overrun white American culture even though they appeared subservient and accepted menial jobs at low wages.

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