Archive Investigation: Saum Song Bo's letter to the *New York Sun* (1885)

Directions

1. Utilize the annotation station strategy to read an excerpt of Saum Song Bo's letter to the *New York Sun*, published in 1885:
   - ❍ Circle words you don't know, and take a moment to find the definition.
   - Highlight in YELLOW phrases that confuse you. Use context clues to figure out their meaning.
   - Highlight in RED any phrases that describe injustice or discrimination.
   - Highlight in GREEN any phrases that describe rights or protections enjoyed.
   - ☆ Star the phrase or line that you find most important.
2. Rephrase the text in your own words.
3. Reflect on your knowledge and answer the Thinking Like a Historian question.

Vocabulary

- **liberty** State of being free to act, think, and make decisions without oppressive restrictions, while still respecting the rights of others.

Step 1: Read and Annotate

Excerpt of Saum Song Bo's letter to the *New York Sun*:

> Seeing that the heading is an appeal to American citizens, to their love of country and 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. … 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?

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Step 2: Rephrase in Your Own Words

Step 3: Thinking Like a Historian

Note: In *Chae Chan Ping v. United States*, the Supreme Court upheld the Chinese Exclusion Act, ruling that the federal government has the power to control immigration and can deny entry to noncitizens, even if they were previously allowed into the U.S.

How does Saum Song Bo's letter challenge the idea of the United States as a "land of liberty" in light of the immigration laws and the decision in *Chae Chan Ping v. United States* (1889)?

I think Saum Song Bo's letter challenges the idea of the United States as a "land of liberty" in light of immigration laws and the *Chae Chan Ping v. United States* decision by ...

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