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SOLIDARITY, COMMUNITY & CELEBRATION

AN ASIAN AMERICAN AND
PACIFIC ISLANDER RESOURCE GUIDE

2021



INTRODUCTION

The Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community has been shaping American culture, politics and society throughout history.

Yet structural forces continually stereotype, exoticize and “other” AAPI individuals and communities as “perpetual foreigners.” And major events like the shootings in Indianapolis and Atlanta as well as the surge in xenophobic hate crimes and microaggressions further fueled by anti-Asian sentiment during the pandemic continue to remind us of the long road ahead to true justice in America. Additionally, the recent rise in COVID-19 infection rates and the devastating numbers of deaths across India are felt deeply across the world, especially for South Asian communities and families.

May is AAPI Heritage Month. The month of May was chosen to commemorate the immigration of the first Japanese individual to the United States on May 7, 1843, and to mark the anniversary of the completion of the transcontinental railroad on May 10, 1869. The majority of the workers who laid the tracks on that railroad were Chinese immigrants. This month pays tribute to the generations of Asian and Pacific Islanders who represent a key part of the history of the United States and are crucial to its future.

As APCO employees, we hope to demonstrate solidarity in the fight for equity and justice. We recognize the intersectionality among justice-oriented movements, from Stop AAPI Hate and the Black Lives Matter movement to #MeToo and the environmental justice movement. We also hope to create space for healing, education and collaboration as a rich and diverse community — during AAPI Heritage Month and beyond. This resource guide should serve as a primer on some things you might not know about AAPI individuals, communities and issues as well as give you actionable steps you can take to advance the fight for justice and equality.

— The 2021 AAPI Heritage Month Planning Committee

AN AAPI RESOURCE GUIDE

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THE BASICS

A API Heritage Month presents an opportunity to examine the words and phrases we use in reference to the A API community. Below are some relevant terms, both well-known and uncommon, that are important to know.

KEY TERMS

A API: Asian American Pacific Islander is a common way of referencing Americans of Asian and Pacific Islander descent. While A API is used commonly, including by advocacy organizations such as Stop A API Hate, additional terminology to reference the community includes “Asian American” and, separately, Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders (NHOPI).

Bamboo ceiling: Analogous to the term “glass ceiling” for women, “bamboo ceiling” has been used to describe the specific obstacles and barriers that Asian Americans face in reaching the upper echelons of leadership and management.

Model minority myth: A term often used to refer to a minority group perceived as particularly successful, especially in a manner that contrasts with other minority groups. The term is often applied to the A API community, who, as a group, are often praised for apparent success across academic, economic and cultural domains — successes typically offered in contrast to the perceived achievements of other racial groups and often used to diminish or downplay acts of racism against the A API community.

Orientalism: Coined by the late academic Edward Said, orientalism refers to a colonialist Western attitude that stereotypes, inferiorizes and “others” Asian, North African and Middle Eastern societies. “Oriental” is an outdated and offensive term used to refer to persons of Asian descent.

Perpetual foreigner: The perpetual foreigner stereotype is a racialized form of nativist xenophobia in which naturalized and even native-born citizens (including families that have lived in the country for generations) are perceived as foreign because they belong to minority groups.

Yellow peril: A racial epithet common in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries that characterizes persons of East Asian descent as an existential danger to the Western world. Many Native and non-Western cultures also have their own words and designations for nonbinary genders.

THE NUMBERS

A Diverse Community



The Asian population in the U.S. **nearly doubled** between 2000 and 2019. As of 2019, there are 23.2 million Asians living in the country.

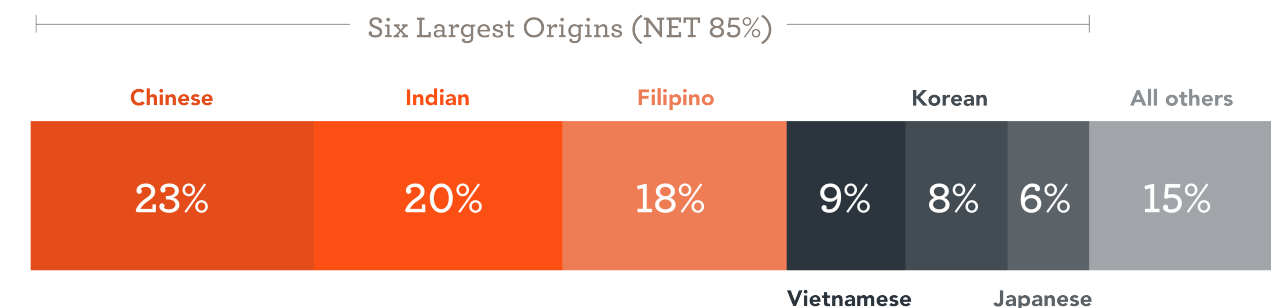
The U.S. Asian population is **projected to reach 46 million by 2060.**

Multiracial and Hispanic Asians comprise **14%** and **3%** of the Asian population in the U.S. respectively.

45% of U.S. Asians live in the West, with nearly a **third (30%)** living in California alone.

57% of Asian Americans, including 71% of Asian American adults, were **born in another country.**

Six origin groups make up 85% of all Asian Americans

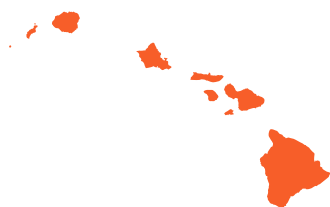


Note: “Chinese” includes those identifying as Taiwanese. “All others” includes the 3% of U.S. Asians in the category “Other Asian, not specified.” Figures may not add up to 100% due to rounding. Figure for all origin groups include mixed-race and mixed-group populations, regardless of Hispanic origin.

Source: [Pew Research Center](#)

The Current Landscape

IN NUMBERS



As of 2019, there are around **1.4 million Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders alone or in combination with one or more races residing in the U.S.**, representing around 0.4% of the U.S. population.¹

Asian Americans are **three times less likely** to seek mental health services than White Americans, and are the least likely racial group in the U.S. to seek mental health services.²



Anti-Asian hate crimes **increased by nearly 150%** in 2020.³

AAPI COMMUNITIES ARE NOT A MONOLITH

Too often, Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities are lumped together as a monolithic group. However, consisting of more than 50 ethnic groups with different cultures and histories in the United States, the diversity of AAPI heritage and experience is truly too vast to simplify under such a simple label.

Asia, broadly speaking, is home to many different religions, faiths, cultures and languages — over 2,000 languages and dialects are spoken across the continent.

Each culture has its own views on educational attainment, financial security and filial duty. Each group has its own social and familial pressures that it faces every day. In short, the second-generation Indian university student has a vastly different experience from the recently immigrated Vietnamese family of four.

Notably, the original intent behind the term “Asian American” — first publicly used by student activists Emma Gee and Yuji Ichioka in 1968 — was to unite various groups of people of Asian descent, not to generalize across a wide range of diverse communities. Although it may now not seem like such a momentous moment in history, **the term Asian American was “a radical label of self-determination that indicated a political agenda of equality, anti-racism and anti-imperialism. Asian American was an identity that was chosen, not one that was given.”**

The diverse socioeconomic experiences of Asian Americans are often homogenized — owing in large part to the workings of the model minority myth.

Yet Asian Americans are the racial group with the nation’s largest wealth gap. Income inequality within the Asian American community nearly doubled between 1970 and 2016, and the highest-income Asians now make more than 10 times as much as their lowest-income counterparts. And stark income disparities translate into a vast gamut of lived experiences with racism and of priorities when it comes to the fight for justice. While some see the fight for representation as key, others have found it to be largely an issue for the privileged. Many lower-income Asian communities, especially lower-income Southeast Asian communities, are dealing with struggles that include being targets of deportation, police brutality and displacement spurred by gentrification.

1. Office of Minority Health

2. Center for the Study of Hate & Extremism

3. American Psychological Association and Mental Health America

A SHORT TIMELINE of ASIAN AMERICAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER HISTORY

• 1790

The Naturalization Act of 1790 limited naturalization in the U.S. to “free white persons of good character” and excluded specific groups of individuals, including Asians, from becoming naturalized citizens.

• 1867

5,000 Chinese railroad workers went on strike. They were working long hours despite being compensated less than their white counterparts and, unlike white workers, had no lodging. In response, railroad baron Charles Crocker cut off the miners’ food supply.

• 1871

A mob of around 500 attacked, robbed and murdered Chinese residents in Los Angeles’ Old Chinatown. Seventeen Chinese immigrant men were lynched, making this event one of the largest mass lynchings in U.S. history.

• 1875

The Page Act of 1875 effectively prohibited the entry of Chinese women into the U.S.

• 1882

The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 prohibited the immigration of Chinese laborers for 10 years. It was extended in 1892 for another 10 years by the Geary Act, made permanent in 1902 and finally repealed in 1943.

• 1898

Following the end of the Spanish-American War in 1898, the Philippines became a U.S. colony, along with Puerto Rico and Guam. The U.S. had also annexed Hawaii earlier that year.

• 1898

United States v. Wong Kim Ark recognized the U.S. birthright citizenship of an American-born child of Chinese parents.

• 1943

Filipino lettuce pickers spearheaded the Salinas Lettuce Strikes, taking a stand for higher wages, union recognition and improved working conditions. Wages were raised to 40 cents an hour, and the Filipino Labor Union was recognized as a legitimate union.

• 1943

Executive Order 9066 forced the removal, incarceration and relocation of 120,000 individuals of Japanese ancestry living on the West Coast, two-thirds of whom were American-born citizens, to internment camps for the duration of the war.

• 1944

A federal district court convicted Fred Korematsu, who refused to comply with Executive Order 9066, of defying military orders. Korematsu appealed the decision, and the case went to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1944, which upheld the constitutionality of incarcerating Japanese Americans, citing “military necessity.”

• 1952

The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 ended racial restrictions on citizenship. On paper, it created opportunities for Asian immigration; in reality, however, it continued to heavily discriminate against Asian would-be immigrants.

• 1954-1968

The Civil Rights Movement, a struggle for justice and equality for Black Americans led by Black activists, gave rise to vital pieces of civil rights legislation protecting minority groups.

• 1965

The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 overhauled the nation’s immigration system and gave rise to a large increase in the total number of immigrants as well as the share of immigrants from Asia.

• 1968-1969

In 1968, the Asian American Political Alliance (AAPA) at San Francisco State University and UC Berkeley joined with Chicano, Native American and Black students in the Third World Liberation Front (TWLF). Students demanded curricula that reflected the histories, needs and experiences of BIPOC, resulting in the longest student strike in U.S. history and culminating in the creation of the first School of Ethnic Studies in the nation.

• 1982

Vincent Chin, a Chinese American man, was beaten to death by two white men in Detroit. Chinese Americans, Japanese Americans, Korean Americans, Filipino Americans and Black Americans joined together to spearhead one of the largest interracial and pan-Asian campaigns to call attention to violence targeting Asian Americans.

• 2001

Since 9/11, South Asian Americans have faced increased profiling and surveillance by government agencies and officials, among other forms of systemic racism.

• 2020-2021

Over the past year, there has been a surge in anti-Asian violence in the U.S. and around the world, and recent events such as the shootings in Atlanta and Indianapolis remind us of the long road ahead to true justice in America. Moreover, the rise in COVID-19 infection rates and the devastating numbers of deaths across India are felt deeply across the world, especially for South Asian communities

WHAT CHALLENGES DO YOU FACE

AS AN AAPI-IDENTIFYING PERSON

IN THE WORKPLACE AND IN THE
BROADER COMMUNITY?

Being mixed-race means I'm frequently asked, 'where are you from?' which, although sometimes well-intended, can make me feel **otherized or like I don't belong.**

GRACE BOYLE

I sometimes find it difficult relating to others in the AAPI community, given my multiracial background. On top of that, it's tricky when individuals see me or hear my last name, and make assumptions about my background, upbringing, heritage etc. — without actually knowing anything about me.

MICHAEL NGE

To this day, people jump to conclusions about my personality based on my name and physical appearance. And because of the **perpetual depiction of these stereotypes in our everyday lives, it's uncommon to see those of Asian descent in executive, director or managerial roles.** Most of us have navigated our professional journeys without many Asian role models or mentors, which has made and still makes career advancements challenging.

PRIYA RAMANATHAN

This may be something that is specific to my experience, but I've always felt like I stood out in the workplace, **mainly due to the lack of representation of Asian Americans among my colleagues at work; I've often felt like the sole token Asian.** This, in turn, often led to awkward conversations and microaggressions centered around my Asian identity — ranging from comments about my English skills to the infamous "where are you from?" question — that were never called out as my colleagues did not see them as being problematic.

Sadly, for some Asian Americans, including myself, this challenge extends to my personal life as well. In many Korean American communities that I've lived in — and I've moved around a lot; more than 20 times — it's common to find groups of people who almost exclusively have Korean American or Asian American friends (from school, church, temple, etc.). I have never felt the need for my Korean American identity to determine my friends and therefore, my close friends have been from a diverse range of backgrounds and identities. However, this also meant that I've often been **the sole Asian person** in my group of friends and, there have been times that I've laughed off a racist comment or joke — often supplemented by "hey, you know I'm just joking" or "we're friends so you know I'm not serious" kind of qualifiers.

JIMMY KOO



As seen throughout history and the media, there exists a **perception that people of Asian descent tend to be 'passive', 'submissive', or 'quiet'.** While these labels might not seem particularly disruptive to our day-to-day lives, they can impact how people expect us to behave and interact with others — from supporting assumptions that we are unhindered by key decisions, to limiting opportunities for us to express our points of view.

JOSH CHEUNG

It needs to be understood that the **model minority myth isn't a 'positive' form of racial bias.** Not only is it inherently harmful as a narrow stereotype — it fails to consider the racism within AAPI communities, and also pits us against other groups of POC. That infighting is a product of white supremacy, and that often isn't recognized broadly.

KIKA CHATTERJEE

Stereotypical assumptions about my ethnic background, demeanor and skillset. Presenting as an AAPI person also seems to invite remarks on my physical appearance, which at its worst has been racist, and at its best has been uncomfortable.

ANNA-LEIGH ONG



HOW CAN FOLKS WHO DON'T IDENTIFY AS AAPI

SHOW SOLIDARITY & BE GOOD ALLIES?

Give us space to process, heal and vocalize our struggles. Understand and acknowledge your privilege in conversations on AAPI issues. Recognize the interconnectedness of the many struggles for justice. Read up on anti-racism (and follow through with meaningful action), and don't expect AAPI folks and other BIPOC to take on the emotional labor of educating those around them.

MINTY PHAM

Recent events have underscored the need to include more diverse voices in areas like business leadership, government, and the media. **People of Asian descent are still quite underrepresented in these areas** — but if clients, constituents and consumers persistently demand more inclusive practices, policies and perspectives, perhaps these entities will evolve to reflect the diversity of those whom they serve.

JOSH CHEUNG

Speak up if you witness a racist encounter or micro-aggression. Remain respectful of any cultural differences you observe and never assume anything.

ANNA-LEIGH ONG

Don't be a bystander to racist attacks or microaggressions — speak up and call it out. And take some time to **learn about the origin of the model minority myth and how it causes harm** to not only the diversity of Asian American cultures, but to all underrepresented groups.

PRIYA RAMANATHAN

The onus is on our white colleagues to look around the room and speak up for the identities not represented there. **BIPOC can't lift their own voices in rooms they haven't made it into.** Don't settle for minimum representation in your project teams, brainstorming and practices. Use your privileged position to push even harder for change.

KIKA CHATTERJEE

I think it must start with self-reflection — look into their own preconceptions about Asians and Asian Americans — and education, not only about Asian American history, but Asian history as well. **Understanding the past struggles and achievements will help to understand the current environments in which Asian Americans live and work,** and doing so will help to recalibrate one's lens through which they view the world — to be more sensitive to the trials and tribulations experienced by AAPI communities.

JIMMY KOO

By demonstrating that they recognize what the AAPI community is currently going through and **making an active effort to support us** by getting to know us and educating themselves about the many different subsets and communities within the broader AAPI community.

MICHAEL NGE

Listen to what we have to say. Be patient and supportive as we process and learn to feel okay speaking up. Give us the courtesy of your attention and care when we ask for help.

NICOLE ROBERTSHAW

Further Your Knowledge & Celebrate Heritage

RESOURCES TO EXPLORE

ORGANIZATIONS AND INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT AND FOLLOW ON INSTAGRAM

[AAPI Women Lead](#); @aapiwomenlead
[Asian Americans Advancing Justice](#); @advancingjustice_aajc
[Asian Mental Health Collective](#); @asianmentalhealthcollective
[Chefs Stopping AAPI Hate](#); @chefsstoppingaapihate
[National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum](#); @napawf
[Red Canary Song](#); @redcanarysong
[Stop AAPI Hate](#); @stopaapihate
[3 in 5](#); @3in5movement

ACTIVISTS TO KNOW

Emma Gee
 Frank Emi
 Fred Korematsu
 Grace Lee Boggs
 Larry Itliong
 Philip Vera Cruz
 Yuji Ichioka
 Yuri Kochiyama

FILMS, TV SERIES AND DOCUMENTARIES TO WATCH

TV SERIES

[Kim's Convenience Store](#)
[Never Have I Ever](#)
[Nora from Queens](#)

DOCUMENTARIES

[Asian Americans \(PBS\)](#)
[Call Her Ganda](#)
[The Chinese Exclusion Act \(PBS\)](#)
[Conscience and the Constitution](#)

FILMS

[A Village Called Versailles](#)
[Always Be My Maybe](#)
[Better Luck Tomorrow](#)
[The Farewell](#)
[The Half of It](#)
[In the Visible \(short film\)](#)
[Minari](#)
[Over the Moon](#)

AAPI READING LIST

BOOKS

[Alien Capital](#), Iyko Day
[The Making of Asian America: A History](#), Erika Lee
[The Next American Revolution: Sustainable Activism for the Twenty-First Century](#), Grace Lee Boggs
[Things We Lost to the Water](#), Eric Nguyen
[The Sympathizer](#), Viet Thanh Nguyen
[Minor Feelings: An Asian American Reckoning](#), Cathy Park Hong
[Orientalism](#), Edward Said
[No-No Boy](#), John Okada

ARTICLES

["The racial triangulation of Asian Americans,"](#) Claire Jean Kim
["How a shared goal to dismantle white supremacy is fueling Black-Asian solidarity,"](#) Kat Moon
["Why this wave of anti-racism feels different,"](#) Morgan Ome
["The Asian-American activism you won't see on Instagram,"](#) Kim Tran
["The inadequacy of the term "Asian American,"](#) Li Zhou

OTHER MISCELLANEOUS RESOURCES

ANTI-ASIAN VIOLENCE RESOURCES

[AAPI Resource Carrd](#)

PRONUNCIATION GUIDES

[Pronouncing Chinese names](#)
[Pronunciation guide to Atlanta spa shooting victims](#)
[Pronouncing common Korean names](#)
[Pronouncing common Vietnamese last names](#)
[Pronouncing common Vietnamese first names](#)

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

[Workplace Mental Health Resources for AAPI Professionals \(Mind Share Partners\)](#)
[Effects of White Supremacy and Xenophobia on Asian Communities \(Verywell\)](#)



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