

The History of Asians in America

VISIBILITY AND INVISIBILITY

In November 2004, Public Television (PBS) aired a four-part series, *They Made America*, profiling sixty-four influential innovators and entrepreneurs who gave birth to commercial milestones like the steamboat and important cultural symbols like the Barbie Doll. This seemingly innocent documentary series touched a raw nerve to *AsianWeek* columnist Emil Guillermo who began a personal campaign to boycott the program. The cause of Guillermo's angst was that out of all the individuals highlighted, not one was Asian American. The series is based on the book by the same name by Sir Harold Evans, the author of the acclaimed *New York Times* bestseller *The American Century* and Editor at Large of *The Week* magazine. Evans was also the founding editor of *Condé Nast Traveler*, editorial director of *U.S. News & World Report*, and president of Random House, where he published a record number of bestsellers. "That should give you the book's perspective in a nutshell," Guillermo writes. "It's a British snob's Eastern-elitist view of American history. . . . So, of course, in that context, the heroes will never be the oppressed, the workers, the slaves, the ones exploited by the boardrooms and financiers on whose labor the profits are made." Although three African Americans were highlighted in the television series, Guillermo complained, "In technology alone, the failure to include an Asian American on the list is pretty curious. . . . A little perspective and balance would have been more than helpful for the show and book. It would have been accurate." Guillermo was particularly offended that the series and the book are being heavily marketed to public schools for inclusion in the core U.S. history curriculum. "An all-white history presented to schools that are majority Asian, black and Latino just makes a mockery of the diversity that's all around us."¹

Guillermo's observations speak loudly to the fact that Asian Americans are at once visible, yet invisible. This is particularly true with regard to the history of Asians in the United States. The historical experience of Asian Americans is not at all atypical of other minority groups. As a distinct racial minority group, and as immigrants, Asian Americans faced enormous individual prejudice, frequent mob violence, and extreme forms of institutional discrimination. But Asian Americans have not merely been victims of hostility and oppression; indeed, they have also shown remarkable strength and perseverance, which is a testimony to their desire to make the United States their home.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF ASIANS IN AMERICA

Immigration

Between 1848 and 1924, hundreds of thousands of immigrants from China, Japan, the Philippines, Korea, and India came to the United States in search of a better life and livelihood. Although this period represents the first significant wave, these immigrants were by no means the very first Asians to come to America. Recent archaeological finds off the coast of Southern California have led to speculation that the West Coast may have been visited by Buddhist missionaries from China in the fifth century. Direct evidence of this claim is still being debated, but it is known that the Spanish brought Chinese shipbuilders to Baja California as early as 1571, and later Filipino seamen were brought by Spanish galleons from Manila and settled along the coast of Louisiana. Chinese merchants and sailors also were present in the United States prior to the discovery of gold in California in 1848. Most people are unaware that Asian Indians were brought to America during the late eighteenth century as indentured servants and slaves.²

The California gold rush did not immediately ignite a mass rush of Chinese immigrants to America. In fact, only a few hundred Chinese arrived in California during the first years of the gold rush, and most of them were merchants. However, large-scale immigration did begin in earnest in 1852 when 52,000 Chinese arrived that year alone. Many Chinese came to the United States not only to seek their fortunes but also to escape political and economic turmoil in China. As gold ran out, thousands of Chinese were recruited in the mid-1860s to work on the transcontinental railroad. Eventually more than 300,000 Chinese entered the United States in the nineteenth century, engaging in a variety of occupations. During this same period Chinese also immigrated to Hawaii, but in far fewer numbers than to the continental United States.³

Large capitalist and financial interests welcomed the Chinese as cheap labor and lobbied for the 1868 Burlingame Treaty, which recognized "free migration and emigration" of Chinese to the United States in exchange for American trade privileges in China. As early as 1870 Chinese were 9 percent of California's population and 25 percent of the state's work force.⁴ The majority of these Chinese were young single men who intended to work a few years and

then return to China. Those who stayed seldom married because of laws severely limiting the immigration of Chinese women and prohibiting intermarriage with white women. The result was the Chinese were forced to live a harsh and lonely bachelor life that often featured vice and prostitution. In 1890, for example, there were roughly 102,620 Chinese men and only 3,868 Chinese women in the United States, a male-to-female ratio of 26:1.⁵ Despite these conditions, Chinese workers continued to come to the United States.

Following the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869, large numbers of unemployed Chinese workers had to find new sources of employment. Many found work in agriculture where they cleared land, dug canals, planted orchards, harvested crops, and were the foundation for successful commercial production of many California crops. Others settled in San Francisco and other cities to manufacture shoes, cigars, and clothing. Still others started small businesses such as restaurants, laundries, and general stores. Domestic service such as house boys, cooks, and gardeners were also other areas of employment for the Chinese. In short, the Chinese were involved in many occupations that were crucial to the economic development and domestication of the western region of the United States.⁶ Unfortunately, intense hostility against the Chinese reached its peak in 1882 when Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act intended to "suspend" the entry of Chinese laborers for ten years. Other laws were eventually passed that barred Chinese laborers and their wives permanently.⁷

The historical experience of the Japanese in the United States is both different yet similar to that of the Chinese. One major difference is that the Japanese immigrated in large numbers to Hawaii; they did not come in large numbers to the United States until the 1890s. In 1880 only 148 Japanese were living on the U.S. mainland. In 1890 this number increased to 2,000, mostly merchants and students. However, the population increased dramatically when an influx of 38,000 Japanese workers from Hawaii arrived in the U.S. mainland between 1902 and 1907.⁸ The second difference was that the Japanese were able to fully exploit an economic niche in agriculture that the Chinese had only started. The completion of several national railroad lines and the invention of the refrigerator car were two advancements that brought tremendous expansion in the California produce industry. The early Japanese were fortunate to arrive at an opportune time, and about two thirds of them found work as agricultural laborers. Within a short time the Japanese were starting their own farms in direct competition with non-Japanese farms. By 1919 the Japanese controlled over 450,000 acres of agricultural land. Although this figure represents only 1 percent of active California agricultural land at the time, the Japanese were so efficient in their farming practices that they captured 10 percent of the dollar volume of the state's crops.⁹

The third major difference was the emergence of Japan as an international military power at the turn of the century. Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905) impressed President Theodore Roosevelt, and he believed a strategy of cooperation with the Japanese government was in the best interest of the United States. Roosevelt blocked calls for complete Japanese exclusion and

instead worked a compromise with the Japanese government in 1907 known as the "Gentleman's Agreement." This agreement halted the immigration of Japanese laborers but allowed Japanese women into the United States. With this in mind, the fourth difference was that the Japanese in the United States were able to actually increase in population, start families, and establish a rather stable community life.¹⁰

Filipino immigration began after the United States gained possession of the Philippines following the Spanish-American War in 1898. The first Filipinos to arrive were a few hundred *penionados*, or students supported by government scholarships. Similar to the Japanese experience, a large number of Filipinos went directly to Hawaii before coming to the U.S. mainland. Between 1907 and 1919, more than 28,000 Filipinos were actively recruited to work on sugar plantations in Hawaii. Filipinos began to emigrate to the U.S. mainland following the passage of the 1924 Immigration Act, which prohibited all Asian immigration to this country, and the increasing need for agricultural and service labor.¹¹

Because Filipinos lived on American territory, they were "nationals" who were free to travel in the United States without restriction. In the 1920s, more than 45,000 Filipinos arrived in Pacific Coast ports, and a 1930 study found 30,000 Filipinos working in California. These Filipinos were overwhelmingly young, single males. Their ages ranged between 16 and 29, and there were 14 Filipino men for every Filipina. Sixty percent of these Filipinos worked as migratory agricultural laborers, and 25 percent worked in domestic service in Los Angeles and San Francisco. The rest found work in manufacturing and as railroad porters. Unlike the Japanese, Filipinos did not make their mark in agriculture as farmers, but as labor union organizers.¹² Both Filipino farmworker activism and Japanese farm competition created a great deal of resentment among white farmers and laborers.

Koreans and Asian Indians slightly predated the Filipinos, but arrived in much smaller numbers. Between 1903 and 1905, more than 7,000 Koreans were recruited for plantation labor work in Hawaii, but after Japan established a protectorate over Korea in 1905, all emigration was halted.¹³ In the next five years, Japan increased its economic and political power and formally annexed Korea in 1910. Relatively few Koreans lived in the United States between 1905 and 1940. Among those included about one thousand workers who migrated from Hawaii, about one hundred Korean "picture brides," and a small number of American-born Koreans. The Korean population in the United States during that time was also bolstered by roughly nine hundred students, many of whom fled their home country because of their opposition to Japanese rule. Like other Asian immigrant groups, Koreans found themselves concentrated in California agriculture working primarily as laborers, although a small number did become quite successful farmers.¹⁴

The first significant flow of Asian Indians occurred between 1904 and 1911, when just over 6,000 arrived in the United States. Unlike the other Asian groups, Asian Indians did not work in Hawaii prior to entering the U.S. mainland, but they did work primarily in California agriculture. Similar to the Chinese, Filipinos, and Koreans, they had an extremely high male-to-female ratio. Of the

Asian Indians who immigrated to the United States between 1904 and 1911, there were only three or four women, all of whom were married.¹⁵ Eighty to ninety percent of the first Asian Indian settlers in the United States were Sikhs, a distinct ethno-religious minority group in India. Despite this fact, these Sikhs were often called Hindus, which they are not. Sikhs were easily recognizable from other Asian immigrant groups because of their huskier build, their turbans, and their beards. But like other Asians in the United States at the time, they also worked primarily in California's agricultural industry. Asian Indians first worked as farmworkers and, like the Japanese, they also formed cooperatives, pooled their resources, and began independent farming.¹⁶ Immigration restrictions, their relatively small numbers, and an exaggerated male-to-female ratio prevented Asian Indians from developing a lasting farm presence. One major exception can be found in the Marysville/Yuba City area of Northern California, where Asian Indian Sikhs are still quite active in producing cling peaches.¹⁷

Anti-Asian Laws and Sentiment

The United States is a nation that claims to welcome and assimilate all newcomers. But the history of immigration, naturalization, and equal treatment under the law for Asian Americans has been an extremely difficult one. In 1790 Congress passed the first naturalization law limiting citizenship rights to only a "free white person."¹⁸ During the period of reconstruction in the 1870s following the Civil War, Congress amended the law and allowed citizenship for "aliens of African nativity and persons of African descent."¹⁹ For a while there was some discussion of expanding naturalization rights to Chinese immigrants, but that idea was rejected by politicians from western states.²⁰ This rejection is exemplary of the intense anti-Chinese sentiment at the time.

As early as 1850 California imposed the Foreign Miners Tax, which required the payment of \$20 a month from all foreign miners.²¹ The California Supreme Court ruled in *People v. Hall* (1854) that Chinese could not testify in court against a white person. This case threw out the testimony of three Chinese witnesses and reversed the murder conviction of George W. Hall, who was sentenced to hang for the murder of a Chinese man one year earlier.²² In 1855 a local San Francisco ordinance levied a \$50 tax on all aliens ineligible for citizenship. Because Chinese were ineligible for citizenship under the Naturalization Act of 1790, they were the primary targets for this law.²³

The racially distinct Chinese were the primary scapegoats for the depressed economy in the 1870s, and mob violence erupted on several occasions through the 1880s. The massacre of twenty-one Chinese in Los Angeles in 1871 and twenty-eight Chinese in Rock Springs, Wyoming, in 1885 are examples of the worst incidents. It is within this environment that Congress passed the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act. The act suspended immigration of Chinese laborers for only ten years, but it was extended in 1892 and 1902. The act was eventually extended indefinitely in 1904.²⁴ The intense institutional discrimination achieved the desired result: The Chinese population declined from 105,465 in 1880 to 61,639 in 1920.²⁵

Anti-Chinese sentiment easily grew into large-scale anti-Asian sentiment as immigrants from Asia continued to enter the United States. During the same period that the Chinese population declined, the Japanese population grew and became highly visible. As early as 1910 there were 72,157 Japanese Americans compared to 71,531 Chinese Americans in the United States.²⁶ Japanese farmers in California were particularly vulnerable targets for animosity. One of the most sweeping anti-Asian laws was aimed at the Japanese Americans but affected all other Asian American groups as well. The 1913 Alien Land Law prohibited "aliens ineligible to citizenship" from owning or leasing land for more than three years. Initially, Japanese Americans were able to bypass the law primarily because they could buy or lease land under the names of their American-born offspring (the *Nisei*), who were U.S. citizens by birth. The law was strengthened in 1920, however, and the purchase of land under the names of American-born offspring was prohibited.²⁷

Several sweeping anti-immigration laws were passed in the first quarter of the twentieth century that served to eliminate Asian immigration to the United States. A provision in the 1917 Immigration Act banned immigration from the so-called "Asian barred zone," except for the Philippines and Japan. A more severe anti-Asian restriction was further imposed by the 1924 National Origins Act, which placed a ceiling of 150,000 new immigrants per year. The 1924 act was intended to limit eastern and southern European immigration, but a provision was added that ended any immigration by aliens ineligible for citizenship.²⁸

Asian Americans did not sit back passively in the face of discriminatory laws; they hired lawyers and went to court to fight for their livelihoods, naturalization rights, and personal liberties. Sometimes they were successful, but oftentimes they were not. In the case of *Yick Wo v. Hopkins* (1886), Chinese successfully challenged an 1880 San Francisco Laundry Ordinance, which regulated commercial laundry service in a way that clearly discriminated against the Chinese. Plaintiff Yick Wo had operated a laundry service for twenty-two years, but when he tried to renew his business license in 1885 he was turned down because his storefront was made out of wood. Two hundred other Chinese laundries were also denied business licenses on similar grounds, although eighty non-Chinese laundries in wooden buildings were approved. The Supreme Court ruled in favor of Yick Wo, concluding there was "no reason" for the denial of the business license "except to the face and nationality" of the petitioner.²⁹

The inability to gain citizenship was a defining factor throughout the early history of Asian Americans. The constitutionality of naturalization based on race was first challenged in the Supreme Court case of *Ozawa v. United States* (1922). Takao Ozawa was born in Japan but immigrated to the United States at an early age. He graduated from Berkeley High School in California and attended the University of California for three years. Ozawa was a model immigrant who did not smoke or drink, he attended a predominantly white church, his children attended public school, and English was the language spoken at home. When Ozawa was rejected in his initial attempt for naturalization, he appealed and argued that the provisions for citizenship in the 1790

and 1870 acts did not specifically exclude Japanese. In addition, Ozawa also tried to argue that Japanese should be considered "white."

The Court unanimously ruled against Ozawa on both grounds. First, the Court decided that initial framers of the law and its amendment did not intend to exclude people from naturalization but, instead, only determine who would be included. Ozawa was denied citizenship because the existing law simply didn't include Japanese. Second, the Court also ruled against Ozawa's argument that Japanese were actually more "white" than other darker skinned "white" people such as some Italians, Spanish, and Portuguese. The Court clarified the matter by defining a "white person" to be synonymous with a "person of the Caucasian race." In short, Ozawa was not Caucasian (although he thought himself "white") and, thus, was ineligible for citizenship.³⁰

Prior to the *Ozawa* case, Asian Indians already enjoyed the right of naturalization. In *United States v. Balsaera* (1910), the Supreme Court determined that Asian Indians were Caucasian and approximately seventy became naturalized citizens. But the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) challenged this decision, and it was taken up again in the case of *United States v. Thind* (1923). This time the Supreme Court reversed its earlier decision and ruled that Bhagat Singh Thind could not be a citizen because he was not "white." Even though Asian Indians were classified as Caucasian, this was a scientific term that was inconsistent with the popular understanding. The Court's decision stated, "It may be true that the blond Scandinavian and the brown Hindu have a common ancestor in the dim reaches of antiquity, but the average man knows perfectly well that there are unmistakable differences between them today."³¹ In other words, only "white" Caucasians were considered eligible for U.S. citizenship. In the wake of the *Thind* decision, the INS was able to cancel retroactively the citizenship of Asian Indians between 1923 and 1926.

Asian Americans also received disparate treatment compared to other immigrants in their most private affairs, such as marriage. In the nineteenth century, antimiscegenation laws prohibiting marriage between blacks and whites were common throughout the United States. In 1880 the California legislature extended restrictive antimiscegenation categories to prohibit any marriage between a white person and a "negro, mulatto, or Mongolian." This law, targeted at the Chinese, was not challenged until Salvador Roldan won a California Court of Appeals decision in 1933. Roldan, a Filipino American, argued that he was Malay, not Mongolian, and he should be allowed to marry his white fiancée. The Court conceded that the state's antimiscegenation law was created in an atmosphere of intense anti-Chinese sentiment, and agreed Filipinos were not in mind when the initial legislation was approved. Unfortunately, this victory was short-lived. The California state legislature amended the antimiscegenation law to include the "Malay race" shortly after the Roldan decision was announced.³²

World War II and the Cold War Era

For Asian Americans, World War II was an epoch, but the profound impact was distinct for different Asian American groups. For more than 110,000 Japanese

Americans, World War II was an agonizing ordeal soon after Japan's attack of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. The FBI arrested thousands of Japanese Americans who were considered potential security threats immediately after the Pearl Harbor bombing raid. Arrested without evidence of disloyalty were the most visible Japanese American community leaders, including businessmen, Shinto and Buddhist priests, teachers in Japanese-language schools, and editors of Japanese-language newspapers. Wartime hysteria rose to a fever pitch, and on February 19, 1942, President Franklin Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066. This order established various military zones and authorized the removal of anyone who was a potential threat. Although a small number of German and Italian aliens were detained and relocated, this did not compare to the mass relocation of Japanese Americans on the West Coast of the United States.³³

The order to relocate Japanese Americans because of military necessity and the threat they posed to security, was a fabrication. Even military leaders debated the genuine need for mass relocation, and the government's own intelligence reports found no evidence of Japanese American disloyalty. "For the most part the local Japanese are loyal to the United States or, at worst, hope that by remaining quiet they can avoid concentration camps or irresponsible mobs," one report stated. "We do not believe that they would be at least any more disloyal than any other racial group in the United States with whom we went to war."³⁴ This helps explain why 160,000 Japanese Americans living in Hawaii were not interned. More telling was the fact that Japanese Americans in the continental United States were a small but much resented minority. Despite government reports to the contrary, business leaders, local politicians, and the media fueled antagonism against the Japanese Americans and agitated for their abrupt removal.³⁵

With only seven days' notice to prepare once the internment order was issued, and no way of knowing how long the war would last, many Japanese Americans were forced to sell their homes and property at a mere fraction of their genuine value. Japanese Americans suffered estimated economic losses alone of at least \$400 million. By August 1942 all the Japanese on the West Coast were interned in ten camps located in rural regions of California, Arizona, Utah, Idaho, Wyoming, and Arkansas. Two thirds of the interned Japanese American men, women, and children were U.S. citizens whose only crime was their ancestry: even those with as little as one-eighth Japanese blood were interned. The camps themselves were crude mass facilities surrounded by barbed wire and guarded by armed sentries. People were housed in large barracks with each family living in small cramped quarters dubbed "apartments." Food was served in large mess halls, and toilet and shower facilities were communal. Many of the camps were extremely cold in the winter, hot in the summer, and dusty all year round. The camps remained open for the duration of the war.³⁶

After the first year of the camps, the government began recruiting young Japanese American men to help in the war effort. The military desperately needed Japanese Americans to serve as interpreters for Japanese prisoners of war and translators of captured documents. But to the military's incredulity, most American-born Japanese had only modest Japanese language skills and

needed intense training in the Military Intelligence Service Language School before they could perform their duties.³⁷ It was, however, the heroic actions of the 100th Infantry Battalion, which later merged with the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, that stand out the most to historians. The two segregated units, made up of Japanese Americans, engaged in numerous campaigns and served with distinction throughout Europe. By the end of the war in Europe, for example, the Nisei soldiers of the 442nd suffered over 9,000 casualties, and earned more than 18,000 individual decorations of honor. The 442nd was the most decorated unit of its size during all of World War II.³⁸

Compared to the Japanese American experience, other Asian American groups fared far better during and after World War II. Changes for Chinese Americans were particularly dramatic. Prior to the war, the image of the Chinese was clearly negative compared to the Japanese. A survey of Princeton undergraduates in 1931 thought the top three traits of the Chinese were that they were "superstitious, sly, and conservative," whereas Japanese were considered "intelligent, industrious, and progressive."³⁹ Immediately after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Chinese store owners put up signs indicating they were not Japanese, and in some cases Chinese Americans wore buttons stating, "I am Chinese." To alleviate any further identification problems, *Time* magazine published an article on December 22, 1941, explaining how to tell the difference between Chinese and "Japs." The article compared photographs of a Chinese man and a Japanese man, highlighting the distinguishing facial features of each.⁴⁰ Just months later, a 1942 Gallup Poll characterized the Chinese as "hardworking, honest, and brave," and Japanese were seen as "treacherous, sly, and cruel."⁴¹

Employment opportunities outside the segregated Chinatown community became available to Chinese Americans for the first time during the war and continued after the war ended. Chinese Americans trained in various professions and skilled crafts were able to find work in war-related industries that had never been open to them before. In addition, the employment of Chinese American women increased threefold during the 1940s. Leading the way were clerical positions, which increased from just 750 in 1940 to 3,200 in 1950. In 1940 women represented just one in five Chinese American professionals, but by 1950 this increased to one in three. On another level, Chinese actors suddenly found they were in demand for film roles—usually playing evil Japanese characters. Shortly after the war, writers such as Jade Snow Wong and Pardee Lowe discovered the newfound interest and appreciation of Chinese Americans could be turned into commercial success through the publication of their memoirs.⁴²

On the military front, Asian Americans also distinguished themselves. Over 15,000 Chinese Americans served in all branches of the military, unlike the Japanese Americans who were placed only in segregated infantry units and in the Military Intelligence Service. Similarly, more than 7,000 Filipino Americans volunteered for the army and formed the First and Second Filipino Infantry Regiments. About one thousand other Filipino Americans were sent to the Philippines to perform reconnaissance and intelligence activities for Gen. Douglas MacArthur.⁴³ Equally significant was the War Bride's Act of 1945, which

allowed war veterans to bring wives from China and the Philippines as nonquota immigrants. This resulted in a rapid and dramatic shift in the historic gender imbalance of both groups. For example, between 1945 and 1952, nine out of ten (89.9 percent) Chinese immigrants were female, and 20,000 Chinese American babies were born by the mid-1950s. Similarly, between 1951 and 1960 seven out of ten (71 percent) Filipino immigrants were female.⁴⁴

On the broad international front, alliances with China, the Philippines, and India eventually began the process of changing the overtly discriminatory immigration laws against Asians. The Chinese Exclusion Law was repealed in 1943, and an annual quota of 105 immigrants from China was allotted. In 1946 Congress approved legislation that extended citizenship to Filipino immigrants and permitted the entry of one hundred Filipino immigrants annually. Also in 1946, the Luce-Cellar Act ended the 1917 "Asian barred zone," allowing an immigration quota of one hundred from India, and permitted Asian Indians to apply for citizenship for the first time since the *United States v. Thind* case of 1923. Although these changes were extremely modest, they carried important symbolic weight by helping create a favorable international opinion of the United States during and immediately after the war.⁴⁵

Geopolitical events during the Cold War era of the 1950s and 1960s immediately following World War II continued to have important ramifications for Asian Americans. After the 1949 Communist Revolution in China, about five thousand Chinese students and young professionals were living in the United States. These "stranded" individuals were generally from China's most elite and educated families and not necessarily anxious to return to China because their property had already been confiscated and their livelihoods threatened. They were eventually allowed to stay in the United States.⁴⁶ Several other refugee acts in the late 1950s and early 1960s allowed some 18,000 other Chinese to enter and stay in the United States. Many of these refugees were well-trained scientists and engineers who easily found jobs in private industry and in research universities. These educated professionals were quite distinct from the vast majority of earlier Chinese immigrants because they usually were able to integrate into the American mainstream quickly, becoming the basis of an emerging Chinese American middle class.⁴⁷

The Cold War affected immigration from Asian countries as well, but in a very different fashion. During and after the Korean War (1950–1953), American soldiers often met and married Korean women and brought them home to the United States. Between 1952 and 1960 more than a thousand Korean women a year immigrated to the United States as brides of U.S. servicemen. At the same time, orphaned Korean children, especially girls, also arrived in the United States in significant numbers. Throughout the 1950s and up to the mid-1960s, some 70 percent of all Korean immigrants were either women or young girls. Korea was the site of the actual conflict, but large numbers of troops were also stationed in nearby Japan. Even higher numbers of Japanese women married American soldiers, left their home country, and started a new life in the United States. Roughly six thousand Japanese wives of U.S. servicemen immigrated annually to the United States between 1952 and 1960, which was more than 80 percent of all

immigrants from Japan. These Korean and Japanese war brides and Korean orphans were spread throughout the United States and, as a result, had very little interaction with other Asian Americans already living in this country.⁴⁸ These war bride families were, however, a significant part of the biracial Asian American baby boom that is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 7.

POST-1965 ASIAN IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

A number of factors have clearly influenced Asian immigration and refugee policies including public sentiment toward immigrants, demands of foreign policy, and the needs of the American economy. World War II and the Cold War years were epochal for Asian Americans, but the period since the mid-1960s has proven to be even more significant. An overview of U.S. immigration statistics shows just how important recent immigration reforms and refugee policies have affected Asian Americans.

Official records on immigrants entering the United States did not exist before 1820, but since that time it is quite obvious that the largest number of immigrants come from European countries. Between 1820 and 2004, just over 40 million Europeans immigrated to the United States (see Table 1-1). In contrast, about 10 million immigrants came from Asia during the same period of time. Looking at this figure more closely, however, we find over 8.6 million immigrants from Asia arrived in the United States in the period between 1971 and 2004. Although the Chinese and Japanese have the longest histories in the United States, the largest group of Asian immigrants since 1971 has come from the Philippines. More than 1.7 million Filipino immigrants entered the United States between 1971 and 2004. It is also significant to note that over 90 percent of Filipino, Asian Indian, Korean, and Vietnamese immigrants have entered the United States since 1971.

This next section focuses on three broad events that have directly influenced both the numbers and diversity of Asians entering the United States since 1965: (1) the passage of the 1965 Immigration Reform Act, (2) global economic restructuring, and (3) the Vietnam War.

The 1965 Immigration Reform Act

Why did the dramatic increase in Asian immigration take place? What changes in the law or public attitudes facilitated such a rapid influx of immigrants from Asia? One important reason was the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, which brought international attention to racial and economic inequality in the United States—including its biased immigration policies. This attention is the background for the passage of the 1965 Immigration Reform Act, the most important immigration reform legislation. This act, along with its amendments, significantly increased the token quotas established after World War II to allow the Eastern Hemisphere a maximum of 20,000 per country, and set a ceiling of 170,000.

Table 1-1 Immigration to the United States by Region, Fiscal Years 1820–2004

Region	Total 1820–2004	1971–2004	% of Immigrants Since 1971
All countries	69,017,450	24,956,619	36.2
Europe	40,046,794	3,641,014	9.1
Asia	10,045,332	8,608,347	85.7
China*	1,528,836	1,127,394	73.7
Hong Kong [†]	439,239	355,890	81.0
India	1,068,829	1,044,883	97.8
Japan	564,218	199,964	35.4
Korea	878,404	852,754	97.1
Philippines	1,731,227	1,648,912	95.2
Vietnam	864,279	859,604	99.5
North America			
Canada and Newfoundland	4,577,196	629,960	13.8
Mexico	6,850,660	5,439,816	79.4
Caribbean	4,029,581	3,025,618	75.1
Central America	1,600,894	1,386,702	86.6
South America	2,057,564	1,620,255	78.7
Africa	907,377	871,873	96.1
Oceania	280,216	173,105	61.8
Not specified	348,917	108,365	31.1

* Beginning in 1957, China includes Taiwan.

[†] Data not reported separately until 1952.

Source: Office of Immigration Statistics, 2003 *Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2004), Table 2, pp. 12–14 and 2004 *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*, Table 3 at <http://uscis.gov/graphics/shared/statistics/yearbook/2004/table3.xls>.

This act created the following seven-point preference system that serves as a general guideline for immigration officials when issuing visas: (1) unmarried children of U.S. citizens who are at least 21 years of age; (2) spouses and unmarried children of permanent resident aliens; (3) members of the professions, scientists, and artists of exceptional ability; (4) married children of U.S. citizens; (5) brothers and sisters of U.S. citizens who are at least 21 years of age; (6) skilled or unskilled workers who are in short supply; and (7) nonpreference applicants.

U.S. immigration policy also allowed virtually unrestricted immigration to certain categories of people including spouses, children under 21, and parents of U.S. citizens. These provisions served to accelerate immigration from Asia to the United States. The primary goal of the 1965 Immigration Reform Act was to encourage family reunification, however, a much higher percentage of Asian immigrants initially began entering the United States under the established occupational and nonpreference investment categories. In 1969, for example, 62 percent of Asian Indians, 43 percent of Filipinos, and 34.8 percent

of Koreans entered the United States under the occupational and investor categories. By the mid-1970s, however, 80 to 90 percent of all Asian immigrants entered the United States through one of the family categories.⁴⁹ Studies show that most post-1965 Asian immigrants tend to be middle-class, educated, and urbanized, and they arrive in the United States in family units rather than as individuals compared to their pre-1965 counterparts.⁵⁰

The framers of the 1965 law did not anticipate any dramatic changes in the historical pattern of immigration, but it is clear Asian immigrants have taken advantage of almost every aspect of the 1965 Immigration Reform Act. Asians were just 6.1 percent of all immigrants to the United States between 1951 and 1960; this rose to 12.9 percent between 1961 and 1970, and increased to 35.3 percent between 1971 and 1980. The percentage of Asian immigrants peaked at 37.3 percent between 1981 and 1990 but declined to 30.7 percent between 1991 and 2000 (see Table 1-2). This decline was due to the sudden increase of mostly Mexicans who were able to apply for legal status following the passage of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA). By the late 1990s, about 3 million aliens received permanent residence status under IRCA. The percentage of immigrants has remained relatively steady since 2000, although there was an increase in 2004.

This “amnesty” provision was only a part of IRCA, which was fully intended to control illegal immigration into the United States. IRCA also required that all employers verify the legal status of all new employees, and it imposed civil and criminal penalties against employers who knowingly hire undocumented

Table 1-2 Percentage of Immigrants Admitted by Region, Fiscal Years 1901–2004

Decade/Year	Europe	Asia	North America*	South America	Africa
2004	13.5	34.8	36.0	8.9	7.0
2003	14.5	33.4	35.8	7.7	6.5
2002	16.7	30.7	38.1	6.9	5.7
2001	16.7	31.7	38.1	6.4	4.7
1991–2000	14.9	30.7	43.3	5.9	3.9
1981–1990	10.4	37.3	43.0	6.3	2.4
1971–1980	17.8	35.3	37.5	6.6	1.8
1961–1970	33.8	12.9	43.9	7.8	.9
1951–1960	52.7	6.1	36.0	3.6	.6
1941–1950	60.0	3.6	32.2	2.1	.7
1931–1940	65.8	3.1	28.8	1.5	.3
1921–1930	60.0	2.7	35.9	1.0	.2
1911–1920	75.3	4.3	19.2	.7	.1
1901–1910	91.6	3.7	3.2	.2	.1

* Includes Central America and the Caribbean.

Note: Figures may not add to 100 due to rounding. Oceania and unspecified regions are not listed.

Source: Office of Immigration Statistics, 2003 *Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office), 2004, Table 2, pp. 12–14 and 2004 *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*, Table 3 at <http://uscis.gov/graphics/shared/statistics/yearbook/2004/table3.xls>.

workers.⁵¹ While IRCA closed the "back door" of illegal immigration, another reform, the Immigration Act of 1990, was enacted to keep open the "front door" of legal immigration. Indeed, this law actually authorizes an *increase* in legal immigration to the United States. In response to uncertain economic stability at home, growing global economic competition abroad, and the dramatically changed face of immigration, the 1990 law sent a mixed message to Asian immigrants.

First of all, the law actually authorized an increase in legal immigration, but at the same time placed a yearly cap on total immigration for the first time since the 1920s. For 1992 to 1995, the limit was 700,000 and 675,000 thereafter. This appears to be an arbitrary limit, but it still allows for an unlimited number of visas for immediate relatives of U.S. citizens. This may not have a negative effect on Asian immigration because, as a group, Asians have the highest rate of naturalization compared to other immigrants.⁵² Second, the law encourages immigration of more skilled workers to help meet the needs of the U.S. economy. The number of visas for skilled workers and their families increased sharply from 58,000 to 140,000. This was generally seen as a potential boon for Asians who, since 1965, have been among the best educated and best trained immigrants the United States has ever seen. Third, the 1990 immigration law also sought to "diversify" the new immigrants by giving more visas to countries that have sent relatively few people to the United States in recent years. This program has been popular with lawmakers who want to assist those from Western European countries at the expense of Asians. For example, up to 40 percent of the initial visas allocated for the diversity category were for Ireland. Noted immigration attorney Bill Ong Hing found sections of the Immigration Act of 1990 "provide extra independent and transition visas that are unavailable to Asians."⁵³

It is clear from the descriptions of Asian American history here that the conditions for the post-1965 Asian migrants are quite distinct from pre-1965 migrants. This seemingly obvious observation reflects the fact that international migration is not a simple, stable, or homogeneous process. Even with this in mind, the most popular frame of reference for all movement to the United States continues to be the European immigrant experience throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The popular European immigrant analogy is highlighted in these words by Emma Lazarus honoring the Statue of Liberty:

Give me your tired, your poor,

Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,

The wretched refuse of your teeming shore;

Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,

I lift my lamp beside the golden door!

The European immigrant experience, however, is by no means universal, and it is only part of what scholars today see as a much broader picture of the international movement of people and capital. Understanding the broader dynamics of global economic restructuring is useful in comparing and contrasting post-1965 Asian immigrants with other immigrants and minority groups in the United States.

Global Economic Restructuring

What makes people want to leave their home country and migrate to another country? The most commonly accepted answer is found within what is known as the push-pull theory. This theory generally asserts that difficult economic, social, and political conditions in the home country force, or push, people away. At the same time, these people are attracted, or pulled, to another country where conditions are seen as more favorable. On closer examination, however, this theoretical viewpoint does run into some problems. Most significantly, the push-pull theory tends to see immigration flows as a natural, open, and spontaneous process, but it does not adequately take into account the structural factors and policy changes that directly affect immigration flows. This is because earlier migration studies based on European immigration limited their focus on poor countries that sent low-skilled labor to affluent countries with growing economies that put newcomers to work. The push-pull theory is not incorrect, but is considered to be incomplete and historically static. Recent studies have taken a much broader approach to international migration and insist that in order to understand post-1965 immigration from Asia, it is necessary to understand the recent restructuring of the global economy.⁵⁴

Since the end of World War II, global restructuring has involved the gradual movement of industrial manufacturing away from developed nations such as the United States to less-developed nations in Asia and Latin America where labor costs are cheaper. This process was best seen in Japan in the 1950s through 1970s, and accelerated rapidly in the 1980s to newly industrialized Asian countries, namely Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and South Korea. Other Asian countries such as India, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines also followed the same economic course with varying degrees of success. In the 1990s mainland China increased its manufacturing and export capacity dramatically and was steering on the same economic path of other Asian nations.

Among the effects of global restructuring on the United States is the declining need to import low-skilled labor because manufacturing jobs are moving abroad. At the same time, there is an inclining need to import individuals with advanced specialized skills that are in great demand. According to research by Paul Ong and Evelyn Blumenberg (1994), this phenomenon is evidenced in part by the increasing number of foreign-born students studying at U.S. colleges.⁵⁵ In the 1954–1955 academic year the United States was host to just 34,232 foreign exchange students; this number increased to 586,000 in 2003.⁵⁶ Of those 586,000 foreign students, 367,000 are from Asia. In 2002 foreign students earned 60.7 percent of the doctorates in engineering, 53.3 percent of doctorates in mathematics, and 53.4 percent of doctorates in computer science.⁵⁷ The National Science Foundation reported that between 1985 and 2000, students from China, Taiwan, India, and South Korea earned more than 50 percent of science and engineering doctoral degrees awarded to foreign students in the United States (see Table 1-3). Many of these foreign graduate students planned to work in the United States and eventually gained permanent immigrant status. Companies in the United States have, of course, been eager to

Table 1-3 Asian Recipients of U.S. Science and Engineering Doctorates by Field and Country of Origin: 1985–2000

Field	All Asian Recipients				
	China	Taiwan	India	South Korea	
All fields	80,310	18,508	16,029	17,075	
S&E	68,550	15,487	13,274	13,255	
Physical sciences	11,987	6,356	1,856	1,852	
Earth, atmospheric, and ocean sciences	1,731	972	180	252	
Mathematics	3,585	1,954	438	579	
Computer/information sciences	3,221	673	839	531	
Engineering	25,923	7,207	7,518	6,146	5,052
Biological sciences	12,251	6,790	2,175	1,766	1,520
Agricultural sciences	2,333	901	601	316	515
Psychology/social sciences	7,519	1,681	1,490	1,394	2,954
Non-S&E ^a	11,760	2,164	3,021	2,755	3,820

^a Includes medical and other life sciences.

Note: Foreign doctorate recipients include permanent and temporary residents.

Source: National Science Foundation, Division of Science Resources Statistics, Survey of Earned Doctorates, special tabulations, 2003 at <http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/seind04/c2/c2s4.htm#c2s4t1>.

hire foreign-born scientists and engineers. Not only are highly-skilled immigrants valuable to employers as workers, but many also start their own high-tech businesses. For example, Vinod Khosla is the co-founder of Sun-Microsystems, and Gururaj Deshpande is co-founder of a number of high-tech businesses worth around \$6 billion.⁵⁸

The medical profession is another broad area where Asian immigrants have made a noticeable impact. Researchers Paul Ong and Tania Azores (1994) found that Asian Americans represented 4.4 percent of the registered nurses and 10.8 percent of the physicians in the United States in 1990. Ong and Azores estimate that only a third of Asian American physicians and a quarter of Asian American nurses were educated in the United States. Graduates of overseas medical and nursing schools have been coming to the United States since the passage of the 1946 Smith-Mundt Act, which created an exchange program for specialized training. Although this exchange was intended to be temporary, many medical professionals were able to become permanent immigrants. A physician shortage in the United States during the late 1960s and early 1970s, coupled with the elimination of racial immigration quotas in 1965, brought forth a steady flow of foreign-trained medical doctors from Asian countries. A 1975 U.S. Commission on Civil Rights report found five thousand Asian medical school graduates entered the United States annually during the early 1970s. But, under pressure from the medical industry, Congress passed the 1976 Health Professions Educational Act, which restricted the

number of foreign-trained physicians who could enter the United States. Despite the passage of this law, the American Medical Association reported there were 194,600 foreign medical graduates out of 768,500 professionally active physicians in the United States in 2002.⁵⁹

Asia is also the largest source for foreign nurses. The Philippines, in particular, is the world leader in nurse migration. A demographic profile of registered nurses in 1990 by the Center for Immigration Studies (1998) found there were 1,896,606 registered nurses in the United States. The same study found 166,708 were foreign-born registered nurses 49,033 of whom were from the Philippines (29.4 percent). A recent survey conducted by Judith Berg and her colleagues (2004) found that Filipino nurses were generally better educated and worked more full-time hours than U.S. native-born nurses. The researchers also found that Filipino nurses had higher job satisfaction. Filipino nurses find work in the United States attractive because they can earn up to twenty times the salary they can make in the Philippines, and their English-speaking abilities make them highly desired by employers. The growth of the health care industry in the United States has resulted in a shortage of hospital nurses. As a result, employers see foreign-born nurses as the best solution and this has been supported by congressional legislation. Filipino nurses are attracted to the United States because of liberal policies that eventually allow them to stay permanently. Most foreign-trained nurses are brought to work initially on a temporary basis. But the passage of the Immigration Nursing Relief Act of 1989 allows nurses to adjust to permanent status after three years of service.⁶⁰

According to Christine Ceniza Choy (2004), the origins of Filipino nurse migration to the United States is not a new phenomenon. Its roots lie in early twentieth-century U.S. colonialism and the "Americanized training hospital system" in the Philippines. Additionally, Choy argues that Filipino migration abroad cannot be reduced to an economic logic; rather, it must be understood as part of a larger transnational process "involving the flow of people, goods, services, images, and ideas across national borders."⁶¹ This analysis further challenges the general explanations for the origins of migration found in the push-pull theory described earlier. Global economic restructuring is an important context for understanding not only why Asian immigrants have come to the United States but also how well they have adjusted and been accepted socially, economically, and politically. Note that not all Asian immigrants are middle-class and successful professionals; a sizable number of other Asian immigrants, especially refugees, have also found their lives in America extremely difficult. The extreme diversity among Asian Americans is due in large part to the third major event affecting migration from Asia—the Vietnam War.

The Vietnam War and Southeast Asian Refugees

Since 1975, large numbers of Southeast Asian refugees have entered the United States, and today California is the home for most of them (see Table 1-4). Roughly two thirds of all Southeast Asian refugees are from Vietnam, with the rest from Laos and Cambodia. Unlike most other post-1965 Asian immigrants

Table 1-4 States with the Largest Southeast Asian Populations, 2000*

State	Vietnamese	Cambodian	Laotian	Hmong	Total
California	484,023	84,559	65,058	71,741	705,381
Texas	163,625	8,225	11,626	422	163,625
Minnesota	20,570	6,533	11,516	45,443	84,062
Washington	50,697	16,630	9,382	1,485	78,194
Massachusetts	36,685	22,886	4,449	1,303	65,323
Virginia	40,500	5,180	3,076	55	48,811
Wisconsin	4,505	856	5,405	36,809	47,575
Pennsylvania	33,204	10,207	2,536	844	46,791
Florida	37,086	3,040	4,126	163	44,415
Georgia	31,092	3,405	5,220	1,615	41,332

* Asian detailed group alone or in any combination.

Source: Max Niedzwiecki and TC Duong, *Southeast Asian Statistical Profile* (Washington, DC: Southeast Asian Resource Action), 2004.

who came to the United States in a rather orderly fashion seeking family reunification and economic opportunities. Southeast Asian refugees arrived as part of an international resettlement effort of people who faced genuine political persecution and bodily harm in their home countries. Southeast Asian refugees to the United States can be easily divided into three distinct waves: the first arrived in the United States in 1975 shortly after the fall of Saigon, the second arrived between 1978 and 1980, and the third entered the United States after 1980 and continues to this day. The United States has accepted these refugees not only for humanitarian reasons but also in recognition that U.S. foreign policy and military actions in Southeast Asia had a hand in creating much of the calamity that has befallen the entire region.

U.S. political interests in Southeast Asia actually began during World War II, although for years efforts were limited to foreign aid and military advisers. Direct military intervention rapidly escalated in 1965 when President Lyndon B. Johnson stepped up bombing raids in Southeast Asia and authorized the use of the first U.S. combat troops to contain increasing communist insurgency. The undeclared war continued until U.S. troops withdrew in 1973 at the cost of 57,000 American and 1 million Vietnamese lives. The conflict also caused great environmental destruction throughout Southeast Asia and tremendous domestic antiwar protests in the United States.⁶²

As soon as the U.S. troops left, however, communist forces in Vietnam regrouped and quickly began sweeping across the countryside. By March 1975 it was clear that the capital of South Vietnam, Saigon, would soon fall to communist forces. As a result, President Gerald Ford authorized the attorney general to admit 130,000 refugees into the United States.⁶³ In the last chaotic days prior to the fall of Saigon on April 30, 1975, "high-risk" individuals in Vietnam, namely high-ranking government and military personnel, were hurriedly airlifted away to safety at temporary receiving centers in Guam, Thailand, and the Philippines. This group marked the first wave of Southeast Asian refugees

who would eventually resettle in the United States. The first wave is distinct in that they were generally the educated urban elite and middle class from Vietnam. Because many of them had worked closely with the U.S. military, they tended to be more westernized (40 percent were Catholics), and a good portion of them were able to speak English (30 percent spoke English well). Another significant feature is that roughly 95 percent of the first wave of Southeast Asian refugees were Vietnamese, even though the capitals of Laos and Cambodia also fell to communist forces in 1975.⁶⁴

Once these first-wave refugees came to the United States, they were flown to one of four military base reception centers in California, Arkansas, Pennsylvania, and Florida. From these bases they registered with a voluntary agency that would eventually help resettle them with a sponsor. About 60 percent of the sponsors were families, while the other 40 percent were usually churches and individuals. Sponsors were responsible for day-to-day needs of the refugees until they were able to find jobs and become independent. The resettlement of the first wave of refugees was funded by the 1975 Indochinese Resettlement Assistance Act and was seen as a quick and temporary process. Indeed, all the reception centers closed by the end of 1975, and the Resettlement Act expired in 1977.

The second wave of Southeast Asian refugees was larger, more heterogeneous, and many believe even more devastated by their relocation experience than the first wave. The second wave of refugees were generally less educated, urbanized, and westernized (only 7 percent spoke English and only about 7 percent were Catholic) compared to their predecessors; at the same time they were much more ethnically diverse than the first wave. According to statistics, between 1978 and 1980, about 55.5 percent of Southeast Asian refugees were from Vietnam (including many ethnic Chinese), 36.6 percent from Laos, and 7.8 percent from Cambodia. The second wave consisted of people who suffered under the communist regimes and were unable to leave their countries immediately before or after the new governments took power.⁶⁵

In Vietnam, the ethnic Chinese merchant class was very much the target of resentment by the new communist government. Many of the Chinese businesses in Vietnam were nationalized, Chinese language schools and newspapers were closed, education and employment rights were denied, and food rations were reduced. Under these conditions, about 250,000 escaped North Vietnam, seeking refuge in China. Roughly 70 percent of the estimated 500,000 boat people who tried to escape Vietnam by sea were ethnic Chinese. The treacherous journey usually took place on ill-equipped crowded boats that were unable to withstand the rigors of the ocean or outrun marauding Thai pirates. The U.S. Committee for Refugees estimates at least 100,000 people lost their lives trying to escape Vietnam by boat.⁶⁶ Along with the Chinese, others in Vietnam, particularly those who had supported the U.S.-backed South Vietnamese government and their families, were also subject to especially harsh treatment by the new communist leadership. Many were sent to "reeducation camps" and banished to work in rural regions clearing land devastated by thirty years of war.

The holocaust in Cambodia began immediately after the Khmer Rouge (Red Khmer) marched into the capital city of Phnom Penh on April 17, 1975.

That same day the entire population of the capital was ordered to the countryside. It has been broadly estimated that after three years between 1 and 3 million Cambodians died from starvation, disease, and execution out of a population of less than 7 million. In 1978 Vietnam (with support from the Soviet Union) invaded Cambodia, drove the Khmer Rouge out of power, and established a new government under its own control. Famine and warfare continued under Vietnamese occupation, and by 1979 more than 600,000 refugees from Cambodia fled the country, mostly to neighboring Thailand. In Laos, the transition from one government to another was initially rather smooth compared to Vietnam after the fall of Saigon. After over a decade of civil war, a coalition government was formed in April 1974 that included Laotian communists, the Pathet Lao. But shortly after communists took power in Vietnam and Cambodia, the Pathet Lao moved to solidify its full control of the country. It was at this time that troops from both Laos and Vietnam began a military campaign against the Hmong hill people, an ethnic minority group that lived in the mountains of Laos, who were recruited by the U.S. government to fight against communist forces in the region. The Hmong were subjected to massive bombing raids that included the dropping of napalm and poisonous chemicals. Thousands of Hmong were killed in these fierce assaults, and those who remained had little choice but to seek refuge in neighboring Thailand. The Hmong were not the only people in Laos who were persecuted. By 1979 roughly three thousand Hmong were entering Thailand every month, and as late as 1983 an estimated 75 percent of the 76,000 Laotians in Thai refugee camps were Hmong people.⁶⁷

The world could not ignore this massive outpouring of refugees from Southeast Asia, and in 1979 President Jimmy Carter allowed 14,000 refugees a month to enter the United States. In addition, Congress passed the Refugee Act of 1980, which set an annual quota of 50,000 refugees per year, funded resettlement programs, and allowed refugees to become eligible for the same welfare benefits as U.S. citizens after thirty-six months of refugee assistance (this was changed to eighteen months in 1982).

Many of the Southeast Asians who came in the third wave are technically not considered refugees, but are in actuality immigrants. This has been facilitated by the 1980 Orderly Departure Program (ODP), an agreement with Vietnam that allows individuals and families to enter the United States. ODP was a benefit for three groups: relatives of permanently settled refugees in the United States, Amerasians, and former reeducation camp internees. By the end of 1992, more than 300,000 Vietnamese immigrated to the United States including 80,000 Amerasians and their relatives, as well as 60,000 former camp internees and their families.⁶⁸ The resettlement experience, the development of Southeast Asian communities, as well as the influx of Amerasians to the United States are respectively discussed in greater detail in Chapters 2 and 7.

Although most Southeast Asian Americans live in California, many are surprised to see how widely dispersed this population is. For example, the population of Hmong Americans living in Minnesota and Wisconsin is larger than the number of Hmong Americans in California. Next to California, the largest number of Cambodians can be found in Massachusetts. More than

25,000 Vietnamese American lived in Louisiana, 6,000 lived in Mississippi, and 5,000 lived in Alabama prior to the devastation wrought from Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Many former refugee Vietnamese Americans were forced to become refugees once again as they were displaced and relocated following the massive storm and flood damage to their homes and businesses. The media coverage focused overwhelmingly on the black and white victims of the hurricane so Vietnamese American communities throughout the U.S. took it upon themselves to raise money, send supplies, and offer homes to other Vietnamese Americans in the Deep South. Many Vietnamese Americans have resettled in places like Houston, Texas, as well as in San Jose and Orange County, California that already had large Vietnamese American communities.⁶⁹

CONCLUSION

This chapter briefly describes the history and recent growth of the Asian population in the United States. Historians as well as legal scholars such as Bill Ong Hing (1993 and 2004), Angelo N. Ancheta (1998), and John S.W. Park (2005) have also examined Asian American experience and have shown the tremendous legal barriers faced by Asian Americans in the United States.⁷⁰ The notion of Asian Americans as the "perpetual foreigner" has had a distinct impact on their experiences with discrimination and violation of civil rights at the hands of the legal system. At the same time, this chapter also highlights the significance of the 1965 Immigration Reform Act, global economic restructuring, and the Vietnam War as three broad events that profoundly impacted both the number and type of migrants who have come to the United States from Asian countries. To examine post-1965 Asian Americans comprehensively, it is particularly important to look at the rapid growth of the population, personal history, nativity, length of time in the United States, premigration experiences and traumas, education, socioeconomic background, and gender. Chapter 2 details the social and economic diversity of immigrant and American-born Asians, as well as their settlement patterns and impact on various communities across the United States.

NOTES

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55. Paul Ong and Evelyn Blumenberg, "Scientists and Engineers," in Paul Ong (ed.), *The State of Asian Pacific America: Economic Diversity, Issues & Policies* (Los Angeles: LEAP Asian Pacific American Public Policy Institute and UCLA Asian American Studies Center, 1994), pp. 113-138. Note that I am distinguishing between foreign exchange students who are overseas nationals from Asian American students who happen to be foreign born.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 173; and U.S. Department of Commerce, *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 2004-2005* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2005), p. 171, Table 265.
57. U.S. Department of Commerce, *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 2004-2005* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2005), p. 515, Table 775.
58. "The Golden Diaspora: Indian Immigrants to the U.S. Are One of the Newest Elements of the American Melting Pot--and the Most Spectacular Success Story," *Time Select/Global Business*, June 19, 2000, pp. B26-27.
59. Paul Ong and Tania Azores, "Health Professionals on the Front-Line," in Paul Ong (ed.), *The State of Asian Pacific America: Economic Diversity, Issues & Policies*, pp. 130-164 and U.S. Department of Commerce, *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 2004-2005* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2005), p. 107, Table 150.
60. Paul Ong and Tania Azores, "The Migration and Incorporation of Filipino Nurses," in Ong et al. (eds.), *The New Asian Immigration in Los Angeles and Global Restructuring*, pp. 166-195; Mangiatco, *Contemporary American Immigrants*, pp. 42-43; Leon Bouvier and Rosemary Jenks, "Doctors and nurses: a demographic profile." Available at <http://www.cis.org/article/1998-10docandNurses.htm>; and Judith A. Berg, Daisy Rodriguez, Valerie Kading, and Carolina De Guzman, "Demographic Study of Filipino American Nurses," *Nursing Administration Quarterly* 29.3 (July-Sept., 2004): 199-207.
61. Catherine Cecilia Choy, *Empire of Care: Nursing and Migration in Filipino American History* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003), pp. 7, 11.
62. Literature on the Vietnam conflict is voluminous. For an excellent and readable overview, see Stanley Karnow, *Vietnam: A History* (New York: Penguin, 1991).
63. The quota for refugees under the 1965 Immigration Reform Act was only 17,400, so President Gerald Ford instructed the attorney general to use his "parole" power to admit the

- 130,000 refugees. The use of parole power was also used to bring European refugees to the United States during the 1950s. For more detail, see Hing, *Making and Remaking Asian America*, pp. 123–128; and Paul J. Strand and Woodrow Jones, Jr., *Indochinese Refugees in America: Problems of Adaptation and Assimilation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1985).
64. Chan, *Asian Californians*, p. 128; and Choi-Swan Ngim, "The Acculturation Pattern of Orange County's Southeast Asian Refugees," *Journal of Orange County Studies* 3:4 (Fall 1989–Spring 1990): 46–53.
65. Ngim, "The Acculturation Pattern of Orange County's Southeast Asian Refugees," p. 49; and Ngan Le, "The Case of the Southeast Asian Refugees: Policy for a Community 'At-Risk,'" in *The State of Asian Pacific America: Policy Issues to the Year 2020* (Los Angeles: LEAP Asian Pacific American Public Policy Institute and UCLA Asian American Studies Center, 1993), pp. 167–188.
66. For more details, see Strand and Jones, *Indochinese Refugees in America*; Barry L. Wain, *The Refugee: The Agency of Indochina Refugees* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1981); and U.S. Committee for Refugees, *Uncertain Harbors: The Flight of Vietnamese Boat People* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1987).
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