

TO BE

ASIAN IN



AMERICA

BY ANGELA JOHNSON MEADOWS

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Still only 4.6 percent of the U.S. population, the Asian-American segment is experiencing astronomical growth. Between 2000 and 2050, the population is expected to surge 213 percent, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. The projected gen-

evolved into the United States of America as far back as 1763, when Filipinos traveling aboard Spanish galleons jumped ship in New Orleans to escape imprisonment and fled into the Louisiana bayou to establish the first recorded Filipino

"We spoke Chinese in the home and ate Chinese food in the home. The home life was one thing, but going out into the regular world, you have to fit in; there is a certain amount of biculturalism."

Lora Fong, Greenbaum, Rowe, Smith & Davis

eral-population growth during the same time? A paltry 49 percent.

But this growth isn't a 21st-century phenomenon. Historians have traced their presence in the land that

settlement in America. Some argue their history in the United States dates back to the 1400s.

The Chinese were the first group of Asians to arrive in great numbers, appearing in the mid-1800s. The lure? The potential economic prosperity of the 1848 California Gold Rush and job opportunities associated with agriculture and the building of the intercontinental railroad.

Asian Americans were recruited as laborers—mostly men who were enticed by the opportunity to earn money to support their families or indentured servants who were sent to work off the debts of other Asians back home.

"These people were often deceived," says Gary Okihiro, director of the Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race and a professor of international and public affairs at Columbia University. "Although these [work and payment] conditions were spelled out to them, they were oftentimes unfulfilled."

Many planned to return to their homelands when their contracted work period ended, but were prevented by U.S. immigration laws.

"They locked those that were here in the U.S.," says Okihiro. "Their remittances were crucial for the sustenance of their families back in Asia, so they were oftentimes trapped into remaining in the U.S."

Subsequent Asians came in waves, with the largest population arriving after the 1965 passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act. Immigrants and their offspring from China, the Philippines, India, Vietnam, Korea and Japan now account for the largest Asian populations in the country.



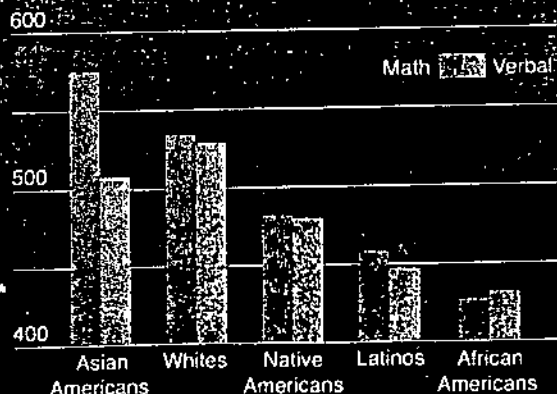
Doreen Woo Ho
President — Wells Fargo Consumer Credit Group
Wells Fargo
Age: 57
Ethnicity: Chinese

Country of origin: Born in Australia, raised in Taiwan, Japan and United States

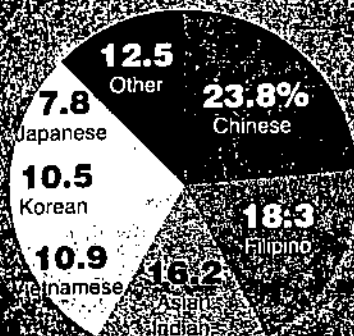
On the challenges of being Asian American: When I was in high school, I went to a small Catholic school and we took a field trip to Virginia. Our bus stopped for lunch and there was a diner with two signs. One said "Whites Only" and the other said "For Coloreds." For a moment, I didn't know where I fit. My classmates linked their arms with mine and walked me through the whites-only door. You don't know how people are going to accept you. You wonder, what are you really entitled to?



How They Score Class of 2003 SATs

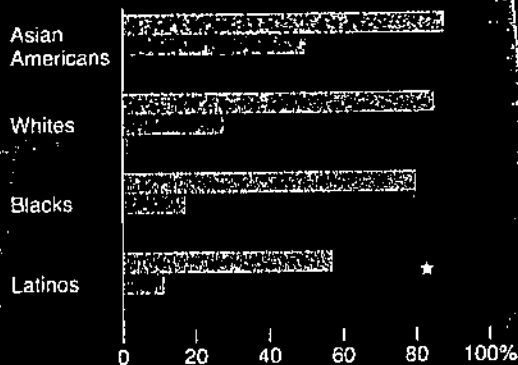


U.S. Asian Population



Educational Attainment

People 25 years and older, 2004



Legend: High school diploma, Bachelor's degree, Graduate or professional degree

Median Family Incomes

In U.S. Population 25+

Japanese	\$70,849
Asian-Indian	70,708
Filipino	65,189
Chinese	60,058
Asian-American	59,324
Other Asian	50,733
Pakistani	50,189
All U.S.	50,046
Thai	49,635
Korean	47,624
Vietnamese	47,103
Laotian	43,542
Cambodian	35,621
Hmong	32,384

Asian-American Buying Power

Projected rate of increase 1990-2009

350%



SOURCES: COLLEGE BOARD, U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA'S SEARS CENTER FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH, GRAPHIC BY STANFORD KAY

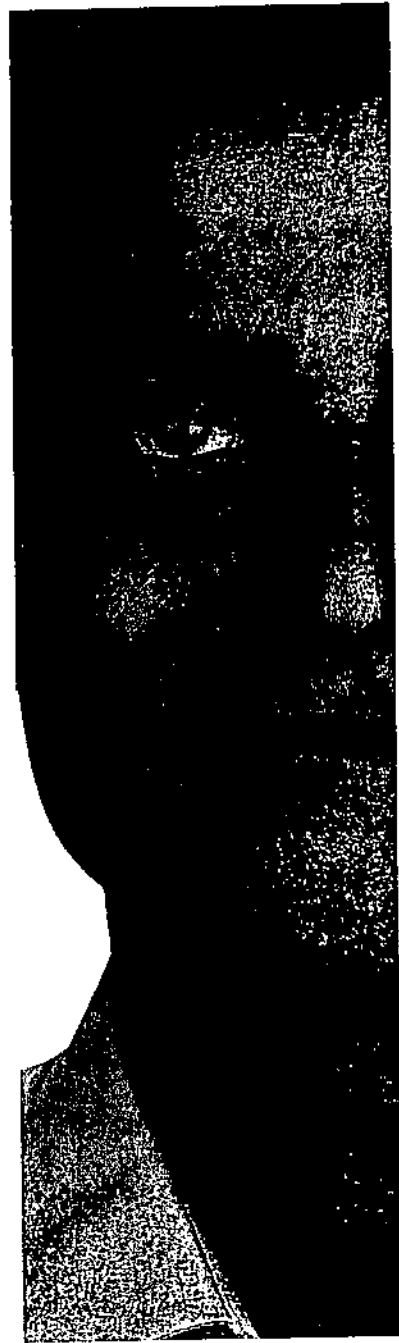


Margaret Makihara Cerrudo
 Senior Vice President — Human Resources
 SRC Communications
 Age: 59
 Ethnicity: Japanese
 Country of Origin: United States

On how being Asian American influenced her professional experience: A lot of who I am today and how I operate is a result of my upbringing and the values my parents instilled in me. An incredible work ethic, striving for excellence, the importance of family and respect for others are some of the values they taught me. It's easy to see how those qualities translate into the corporate world. Working hard and being good at what you do help you earn credibility. Treating others with respect and caring about them helps build relationships, and it's through those relationships that so much gets done, especially in a leadership role. Remembering how important family and friends are helps one keep perspective and achieve balance.

except for Filipinos (whose residence in a U.S. territory gave them the status of nationals), was halted in 1924 through the National Origins Act. It wasn't until the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 that Asian Americans were accepted into the country in larger numbers. The gates to the United States were opened, particularly to those with expertise in the medical, science and technology fields, explaining in part the proliferation of Asian Americans in those disciplines today.

In the face of language barriers, cultural adjustments and government and societal oppression, Asian Americans as a whole appear to have done quite well in America. A look at



demographic data shows that Asian Americans as a group surpass all other racial and ethnic groups in the country in median household income and education levels. And while many marketers are turned off by the small size and myriad languages of the population, the buying power of Asian Americans is projected to jump 347 percent between 1990 and 2009, compared with a modest 159-percent increase for the overall population.

For aspirational Asian Americans, social mobility is a priority and education often is viewed as the method of achievement. This focus contributes to the group's economic success.

"Researchers suggest that one legacy of Confucianism in many Asian countries (notably China, Korea, Japan and Vietnam) is the notion that human beings are perfectible if they work to improve themselves," write Yu Xie and Kimberly A. Goyette, authors of *Demographic Portrait of Asian Americans*. "Given this cultural heritage, some Asian Americans may be more likely than whites to believe that hard work in school will be rewarded."

"In China, you have a kind of high-stakes testing," adds Tchen, referring to the country's civil-service system. "The emperor constantly recruits the best to come to the capital or to work ... It's not so odd for higher education to be seen as the modern variation of that practice."

Mia Tuan's mother and father encouraged higher learning.



Praveen Iyer
 Corporate Vice President and Chief Scientific Officer
 Bausch & Lomb
 Age: 45
 Ethnicity: Asian Indian
 Country of Origin: India

On what it means to be Asian American in corporate America: It is a huge responsibility. In my experience, I believe that you need to learn and be disciplined about ensuring that you adopt and practice the behaviors respected in corporate America and not forget the learnings from your heritage.

"They lost a lot of status," says Tuan of her parents, whose migration to the United States erased the prestige of their advanced degrees. "That put pressure on the next generation to make it worthwhile."

The belief that Asian Americans

of all Asian Americans live in poverty. Twenty-three percent of Asians outside of the six largest groups are impoverished, rivaling the 24 percent of blacks of this economic status.

"With this spotlight on the talented tenth, there is neglect of

"My parents' generation? They liked the model minority stereotype. In their mind, it has served us well ... They saw it as the price you pay for being an outsider and it was a price they were willing to pay."

Mia Tuan, University of Oregon

can succeed on their own dilutes the notion that some could benefit from programs ranging from Medicaid to affirmative action. Thirteen percent



Irene Chang Britt
Senior Vice President and General
Manager, Kraft Foods

Age: 52
Ethnicity: Chinese
Country of Origin: Born in Taiwan, raised in Canada

On how being Asian American influenced her professional experience: My professional persona has been shaped by a family history of personal challenges: my grandmother and mother lived through starvation and poverty in war-torn China ... my parents worked hard and achieved much, but then gave up that comfortable life in Taiwan in the 1960s to give their children freedom of choice in the democratic West ... my childhood was heavily influenced by the Asian tradition of pressure for academic achievement and hard work in all aspects of life.

those who may be in the lower tiers," says Ng.

Tuan recalls a meeting with faculty members and graduate students in her department.

"At one point [during the meeting] a graduate student said, 'We take issue with the fact that the department isn't hiring minorities,'" says Tuan, who was one of three recently hired Asian Americans in the department. "I was stunned when the student said that, and I said, 'So, do we not count?' And his answer was basically [that] we didn't, that Asians were this middle category ... In his mind a minority hire would have been Latino, African

"Everybody cites the success of Asian Americans, yet if you compared the level of education and position with that of white people, they come below white people. Their investment in education does not pay off. There's a glass ceiling for them."

American and Native American."

In addition to not being viewed as a traditional minority, Asian Americans also have an imposed identity as "eternal foreigners."



Gary Teo Okubo
President, GM Brazil
General Motors
Age: 43
Ethnicity: Chinese
Country of Origin: Canada

On what it means to be Asian American in corporate America: Within corporate America in senior executive positions, the representation [of Asian Americans] is still disproportionately low. I serve as an important mentor and role model for people will General Motors, the automotive industry a corporate America that Asian Americans can achieve significant general-management positions in multinational corporations. There is no reason why this cannot occur. In fact when we look at the future global growth the automotive industry and many other industries ... the direction is clearly Asia. Hence, we need more Asian managers to lead this growth.

Many American-born Asians have at least one story of being asked about their origins. A reply such as Fresno

Gary Okubo, Columbia University

or Washington, D.C., is often met with the incredulous response of: "No, where are you *really* from?"

Even high-profile American-born Asians can't escape the stereotype.



ignored in the corridors of power, and collectively they can have more impact and can address issues that are more common.”

Although Fong identifies first as a Chinese American, she's also concerned about broader Asian-American issues.

“We are all sharing a unique experience in terms of people's preconceived notion of who we are and what we should or shouldn't be doing in this society,” says Fong, who is a past president of the Asian Pacific American Lawyers Association of New Jersey.

In addition to fighting shared struggles, Asian Americans have been able to collectively celebrate the accomplishments of Asian Americans of various backgrounds.

Norman Mineta, U.S. Secretary of Transportation, and Elaine Chao, U.S. Secretary of Labor, are two of the highest-ranking Asian Americans in the Bush administration. Andrea Jung, chairman of the board and CEO of Avon Products, and Indra Nooyi, president and chief financial officer at PepsiCo, are just a few people who have broken what career consultant Jane Hyun describes as the “bamboo ceiling” of corporate America. And the presence of Asian Americans in

sports and entertainment continues to flourish.

“When I was growing up ... there was not exactly a wide range,” says Tuan. “But if you were to ask—and I do ask these questions of the students—to name five prominent Asian-American public figures, they can come up with them now ... I can only see that as being a good thing, because it shifts this notion of what's possible or who or what an Asian American is or what they're capable of. That's very powerful to me.”

THE SIX LARGEST ASIAN-AMERICAN GROUPS

Chinese Americans

When Steven Fong set off for Rutgers University, he only had enough money for tuition, funds his widowed mother secured toiling long hours in a New York City restaurant. But Fong, a Chinese American whose strong-willed ancestors helped build the transcontinental railroad, didn't let that small detail deter his college dreams.

When he disembarked the train in New Brunswick, N.J., he canvassed the city in search of a Chinese laundry. Upon finding one, he approached the business, explaining that he was in need of a place to stay. He was offered room and board in exchange for ironing shirts. He soon learned that ironing was not his forte, but he kept the arrangement long enough to complete his first year of college.

After graduating from Rutgers, Fong accepted a teaching position in the Paterson, N.J., school district, a feat so notable that the local newspaper ran a story with the headline: “Chinese Man Hired as Teacher in Paterson School System.” He stuck it out, raising his family in Paterson, eventually becoming superintendent of schools.

Fong's story illustrates the progress of Chinese in the United States, who first arrived in great numbers in the mid-1800s as peasants with little or no schooling in search of better educational and economic opportunities.

Many worked clearing land and laying tracks for the Central Pacific Railroad, yet

they received little credit for their contributions. After the railway was completed, nearly all the Chinese workers were laid off. They found subsequent work in restaurants, tailors and laundries.

The Chinese population in America remained relatively stable from 1860 to the 1960s. However, after the passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act in 1965, an increasing number of blue- and white-collar workers arrived. This highly educated group included Chinese immigrants who had fled to Hong Kong and Taiwan after the Communists defeated the Nationalists in China in 1949, as well as native Taiwanese.

Today, Chinese Americans represent the largest Asian population in the United States. There are significant numbers of Chinese Americans in California and New York; however, they have spread out to less traditional areas, such as Texas and Massachusetts.

Steven's daughter, Lora Fong, an attorney at Greenbaum, Rowe, Smith & Davis in Woodbridge, N.J., is among the many successful Chinese Americans in the U.S. work force.

Chinese-American Population: 2.7 million
States With the Largest Chinese Populations: California, New York, Hawaii, Texas and New Jersey

Per Capita Income: \$22,519

Median Household Income: \$51,119

Educational Attainment: Sixty-seven percent (73 percent native-born; 65 percent foreign-born) had a college degree or greater in 2000.

Subsequent leaders have been ill-equipped to manage the country's struggling economy, enormous foreign debt and pressure from communist and Muslim insurgents, prompting a continued flow of Filipino immigration. This growth has made Filipino Americans the second-largest Asian population in the United States.

Adjusting to the United States has been less of a challenge for Filipino immigrants, as most already are fluent in English. Recent arrivals tend to be highly educated, working as doctors, nurses, engineers, accountants or teachers.

Filipino-American Population: 2.4 million
States With the Largest Filipino-American Populations: California, Hawaii, New York, Illinois and New Jersey

Per Capita Income: \$19,259

Median Household Income: \$58,323
Educational Attainment: Forty-three percent (both native- and foreign-born) of those between 25 and 34 have a college degree or greater.

Notable Filipino Americans: Peter Aduja (the first Filipino-American elected official), Lou Diamond Phillips (actor), Josie



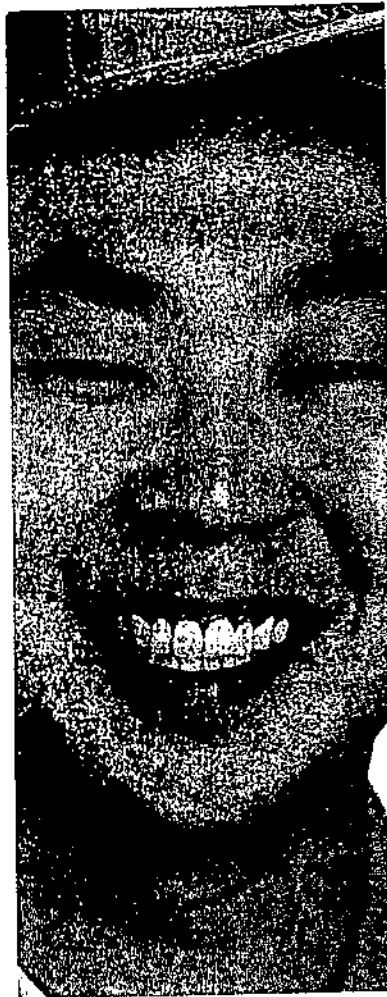
Jeannie H. Diefenderfer
 Senior Vice President, National Services
 Verizon Communications

Age: 43

Ethnicity: Korean

Country of origin: Korea

On what it means to be Asian American in corporate America: In one sense I feel that being Asian American doesn't separate me from anyone else in corporate America. However, the fact is that there are fewer Asian Americans to look across from or up to. Being an Asian American in a leadership position is an opportunity to create a path for others. I feel a sense of obligation and responsibility to be a positive role model to other Asian Americans.



Cruz Natori (fashion designer), Bobby Balceña (first Filipino American in Major League Baseball), Tai Babilonia (Olympic figure skater)

Asian-Indian Americans

Sabeer Bhatia came to the United States from India in 1988 to pursue an education. He studied math at the California Institute of Technology and went on to earn a master's degree at Stanford University.

But it was opportunities in Silicon Valley that encouraged him to stay. Two of his Stanford colleagues had gone on to create Yahoo! Not to be outdone, Bhatia developed an Internet company of his own—Hotmail, which became one of the world's largest e-mail service providers.

Bhatia is just one of several Asian-Indian Americans who have found success with the increasing dominance of the Internet and related technology. However, prior to the Internet boom (and subsequent bust), Asian-Indian Americans already were leading professionals in the

United States in medicine, technology and other occupations.

Asian Indians first came to the United States as laborers. In the early 1900s, some worked on plantations in Hawaii, while others found jobs in farming, mining or construction on the West Coast. The majority were Sikh men from the Indian state of Punjab.

Initially, Asian Indians were classified as Caucasian, providing them naturalization rights and the ability to marry white women. However, a 1923 Supreme Court decision ruled that Asian Indians were not "white." U.S. citizenship rights were stripped, and in 1924, Asian Indians, like their Asian counterparts, were barred from immigrating to the United States.

The Asian-Indian population in the United States remained relatively small until the passage of the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, which attracted a number of well-educated professionals, particularly doctors, nurses, engineers and scientists.

Asian Indians are among the most financially well-off foreign-born populations; the group has the highest median household income of all Asian-American groups.

Asian-Indian American Population: 1.9 million

States With the Largest Asian-Indian American Population: California, New York, New Jersey, Texas and Illinois

Per Capita Income: \$26,415

Median Household Income: \$61,322
Educational Attainment: Seventy-six percent (74 percent native-born; 76 percent foreign-born) of those between 25 and 34 have a college degree or greater.

Notable Asian-Indian Americans: Dalip Singh Saund (first Asian-Indian American elected to U.S. Congress), Deepak Chopra (author), Dinesh D'Souza (author/political commentator), Bobby Jindal (Congressman), Norah Jones (singer/songwriter), M. Night Shyamalan (filmmaker/writer), Indira Nooyi (president and CFO of PepsiCo)

Vietnamese Americans

The story of C.N. Le's family's evacuation from Vietnam provides a snapshot of the Vietnamese refugee experience. The collapse of the South Vietnamese government placed the lives of many in peril. To escape communist reprisals, ex-military and government officials and U.S. military

Korean-American communities often included Korean Christian churches, which had a strong influence in their homeland, and Korean schools that taught the country's language and culture.

Like many Asian groups, Koreans who immigrated after 1965 were more likely to be middle-class and well educated. Some have maintained the entrepreneurial spirit of the group by opening their own groceries, dry cleaners and other small businesses.

Korean-American Population: 1.2 million

States With the Largest Korean-

American Population: California, New York, New Jersey, Illinois and Washington

Per Capita Income: \$18,027

Median Household Income: \$40,183

Educational Attainment: Fifty-nine percent (70 percent native-born; 58 percent foreign-born) of those between the ages of 25 and 34 have a college degree or greater.

Notable Korean Americans: Chang-Rae



David A. Horn

Vice President & Associate General

Counsel

InterContinental Hotels Group

Age: 55

Ethnicity: Chinese

Country of origin: United States

On how being Asian American influenced his professional experience: I have been more effective in my profession and my industry as a result of my Asian-American background. By being part of my company's management team, I can be a reminder to others of the benefits of accepting diversity, avoiding assumptions and stereotypes and being open to an increasingly multicultural and international business world. I also believe that traditional values emphasizing family, education, hard work and perseverance have contributed to my own success and made me more effective.



But as her children got older, she discovered she had a lot more free time, which she filled with volunteer work. Her involvement led to full-time work, which brought her to the United States and her current position as chief information security officer for Eastman Kodak.

Mayahara is a relatively recent immigrant; however, the Japanese have had a presence in the United States since the early 19th century. A significant number served as plantation workers in Hawaii. After Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, Japanese replaced Chinese as cheap labor on the West Coast. Unlike the early Chinese who came to the United States with the plan of



Lee (writer), Michelle Wie (golfer), Margaret Cho (comedian), Judge Herbert Choy (first Asian American appointed to the federal bench), Angela Oh (attorney/spokesperson during and after the 1992 Los Angeles riots), Harold Hongju Koh (dean of Yale Law School/former assistant secretary of state)

Japanese Americans

As a female raised in Japan, Kazuko Mayahara was expected to get married and have children. And she did exactly that.

"Having a career was not something that was expected," says Mayahara. "Even the mentality we have is very different ... For many Japanese women, it's very important to have their husbands to succeed or the children to do well ... We put our own situation on the backburner."