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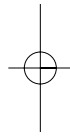
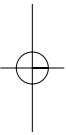


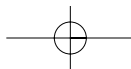
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Knight-Ridder, Inc. in funding this project.*

# **ALL - AMERICAN: How to Cover Asian America**





## Acknowledgments

The **Asian American Journalists Association** was founded in 1981 by a group of Los Angeles-based professionals with three distinct, but intersecting, goals:

- To **recruit and train** a new generation of Asian Americans in journalism,
- To **promote** fair and accurate coverage of Asians in America and highlight the community's diversity, and
- To **prepare** Asian American journalists for leadership and management roles in the country's newsrooms.

This revised handbook continues AAJA's legacy of leadership in the journalism industry and the Asian American community. Much of our work involves shedding light on America's invisible minorities. As chroniclers of history, we bear responsibility for making sure stories about our community are told fairly and with context, without any trace of racism, bias or stereotypes.

AAJA constantly strives to serve our 1,700 members and the journalism industry by providing high quality professional programs and publications. Through this book, we hope to help our fellow reporters and editors practice good journalism about one of the fastest growing—but least understood—groups in America. We hope you find it an indispensable guide.

On behalf of AAJA, I'd like to thank **Anthony Ramirez** of *The New York Times* for his time and commitment to this project. The handbook bears Tony's unmistakable wit and vast knowledge of the Asian American community.

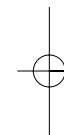
Without his deft touch and countless hours at the computer, it would have never been completed.

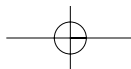
AAJA also thanks **Sreenath Sreenivasan** of Columbia University and the **South Asian Journalists Association**, our brothers and sisters in the good fight, and **Jeff Yang** and his staff at **aMedia**, who copyedited and produced this volume, particularly lead *Handbook* designer **Setiaputra Lukas**.

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Finally, a special note of appreciation to **Reginald Stuart** of **Knight-Ridder, Inc.** for his generous financial support and helpful words of encouragement to all our members.

**Catalina Camia**  
**AAJA National President**  
**1999-2000**





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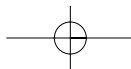
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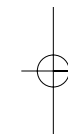
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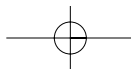
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## INTRODUCTION

### *How to Read This Book*

In 1989, the *Asian American Journalists Association* produced the first of this guide's predecessors, *Asian Pacific Americans: A Handbook on How to Cover and Portray our Nation's Fastest Growing Minority Group*. In 1991, a revised edition, with the same title, was produced. The first was 80 pages; the second more than 200.

Our goal here, as with our previous efforts, is to enhance coverage by showing ways to develop smarter and more accurate stories. In doing so, we also hope to keep what was helpful in previous editions while consigning much of what was cumbersome to the Internet, where the tables of Census data and the like can be searched and updated with greater ease. This slimmer volume, we hope, will find its way next to your *Webster's*.

In the interests of brevity, we have omitted items. You will find, for example, few references to North Korea because there are far more South Koreans in the United States than there are North Koreans, at least for now. There is relatively little discussion of Buddhism, which would take volumes to examine, and, at any rate, is only one of many spiritual philosophies, including Christianity, embraced by Asian Americans. Should conditions warrant, the Web version of the handbook will reflect the most important new changes. But the paper version of the handbook is designed to have maximum shelf life.

Whatever its form, the handbook has become even more necessary. As the 21st Century unfolds, America is becoming more black, more Hispanic, more Asian than ever.

Even as you read this, a journalist somewhere is reporting a "community reacts" story about an ethnic group she has barely heard of and does not understand.

If the days are gone, even in comic strips, when reporters were named Clark Kent and Lois Lane and their editor Perry White, then the transformation has been even more dramatic for Metropolis, whose complexion has changed while the *Daily Planet* was not looking.

Left unchanged is deadline, a round-the-clock one now because of the Internet and 24-hour news television and radio. Three principles have guided us in this most recent incarnation of the handbook:

**Principle No. 1:** *Dig harder.*

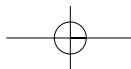
**Principle No. 2:** *Make no assumptions.*

**Principle No. 3:** *Don't give offense.*

"*Dig harder*" is the first rule of covering anything, whether it is Wall Street, the cop shop, or the NBA. Making the last possible telephone call leads to better stories. It's Journalism 101.

The second rule is the tricky one. *Making no assumptions* today helps avoid embarrassing corrections tomorrow. Racial and ethnic stereotypes are assumptions. They miss the story. The word "stereotype" originally meant a printing plate cast from a mold. In journalism, a stereotype is also a mold, an assumption, that, even at its most benign, as with the so-called "model minority," is boring because it is unvarying.

In this guide we explore stereotypes but, with some explicit exceptions, we do not proscribe words as slurs. We expect reasonable adults to know, for the most part, that



words like “Jap” are as offensive as “nigger” and should be avoided out of common decency. In the rarest, most offensive cases, we will precede the discussion with “Avoid.” Other words or phrases, like “Oriental,” we signal potential trouble by preceding the discussion with “Caution,” and explaining why some, but not all, might object to the term.

Nonetheless, we will also cite remarkable instances (see “The Hall of Shame,” p. 42) where clear-cut racial slurs have been published in editorials, cartoons and sports columns. (In the future, their counterparts in radio, television and the Internet will go on our Web sites.) Editorial cartoons in which Asians are depicted with thick glasses and buck teeth are explicit borrowings from the anti-Japanese racial propaganda of World War II.

Which brings us to our third principle: Don’t give offense. The maxim of American journalism is “comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable.” That does not in any way require ethnic insult. It is pointless. It annoys viewers and readers. And, after all, they are the ones who count.

***The Asian American Journalists Association***

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**10 | *The South Asian Journalists Association***

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**July 4, 2000**

## CHAPTER 1

*Glossary: From “All-American” to “Yellow Peril.”*

**SUMMARY:**

*Some common mistakes; what Caucasian really means; South Asian terms defined; why the fortune cookie isn’t “exotic”; “immigrant” as a pejorative; Fu Manchu and his progeny; and when a Hawaiian is not a Hawaiian.*

**ALL-AMERICAN:**

Refers to the best high school and college athletes of the year; not a synonym for white and blond. See CAUCASIAN.

**AMERICAN:**

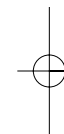
A citizen, native-born or naturalized, of the United States of America; not a synonym for white. See page 34 for MSNBC headline “American Beats Out Kwan.”

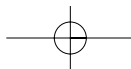
**ANGEL ISLAND:**

The West Coast counterpart to Ellis Island, New York. A holding area in San Francisco Bay established in 1910 to clear Chinese and other Asian immigrants. During World War II, Japanese Americans were confined on Ellis Island. See EXECUTIVE ORDER 9066, INTERNMENT.

**ASIAN AMERICAN:**

Form the noun without the hyphen, as in “French Canadian” to denote current group membership. In compound phrases, where the term is used as an adjective, use a hyphen, e.g. French-Canadian folklore. Similarly, with Japanese American and Pakistani American. Some Asian Americans see a pejorative connotation to “Asian-American” with a hyphen, in part





because of Theodore Roosevelt's denunciation early in the 20th Century of "hyphenated Americans" who do not join the American mainstream.

**ASIAN EXCLUSION ACTS:**

Laws in which Congress barred or sharply restricted the immigration of Asians to the United States. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 barred Chinese laborers and prohibited Chinese from applying for citizenship. Later repealed in 1943. The 1924 Oriental Exclusion Act banned immigration from Asia. The 1934 Tydings-McDuffie Act imposed an annual quota of 50 Filipino immigrants. Only after 1965, with immigration laws designed to encourage European immigration, did Asian immigration also expand. See also ISSEI and WALTER-MCCARRAN ACT.

**ASIAN GANGS:**

*Caution.* Logically equivalent to European gangs. Better to specify country or ethnicity, e.g. Vietnamese or Chinese or Filipino gangs, if relevant and the relevance can be explained to the satisfaction of the reader or viewer. Some ethnic groups, notably Italian Americans with regard to the Mafia, argue that gangs are criminals first and members of ethnic groups second, so ethnic identification can perpetuate invidious stereotypes.

**ASIATIC:**

*Avoid.* A 19th Century adjective typically used in "scientific" European treatises assuming the superiority of the white race. See CAUCASIAN.

**BINDI:**

The Hindi name for the decoration worn on the forehead by many women in South Asia. Mistakenly called

a "dot" by many non-South Asians. "Bindi dot" is redundant. Though various explanations of its religious significance have been postulated (often to satisfy the curiosity of Westerners), the bindi remains for most communities a decoration, no different from makeup or jewelry, and comes in different shapes and colors to match a woman's wardrobe. Contrary to popular perception, the bindi does not necessarily indicate the marital status of a woman. See HINDI.

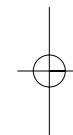
**BOMBAY: see MUMBAI**

**CANTONESE:**

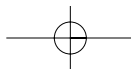
Chinese dialect spoken in the environs of Canton, now known as Guangzhou, near the South China Sea. The dialect of many of the early Chinese immigrants to the United States in the 1840s to 1870s. Also the principal dialect of Hong Kong. Still widely spoken in U.S. Chinatowns. See MANDARIN.

**CASTE SYSTEM:**

The four major castes in Hinduism are the Brahmins (priests), Kshatriyas (kings and warriors), Vaishyas (merchants and traders) and Shudras (laborers), though there are thousands of sub-castes. Although discrimination based on castes is illegal in India, the social hierarchies of the system are still recognized in various parts of the country, particularly the villages, and the diaspora. These hierarchies are a corruption of an ancient system of classification that grouped people and families by their inherited trades—priests, merchants, soldiers, laborers, et al. The lowest castes, once known as "untouchables," are now commonly referred to as Dalits. See INDIA, SOUTH ASIAN DIASPORA, UNTOUCHABLES.





**CAUCASIAN:**

Synonym for white, or light-skinned, people originally from Europe and adjacent regions of Africa and Asia. Named after Caucasus mountain range between Russia and Georgia. Coined in 1795 by Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752-1840), a German anatomist and naturalist, who concluded that because the people of the Caucasus region were “the most beautiful race of men,” they were “with the greatest probability” the first human beings created. See also ALL-AMERICAN, ASIATIC. (Footnote 1)

**CHAN, CHARLIE:**

Caution. Created by Earl Derr Biggers, a mystery novelist, in 1925, Charlie Chan became the protagonist in many popular Hollywood films from 1926 to 1981. Chan was always played by white actors in slant-eyed makeup, including Warner Oland, who also played Dr. Fu Manchu. While a skillful detective, Chan spoke stilted “inscrutable” dialogue that often began, “Confucius say...” In the novel *Behind That Curtain* (1928), Chan said, “I fear I am victim of crude philosophy from Orient. Man—what is he? Merely one link in great chain binding past with future. All times I remember I am link.” His sons, portrayed by Asian actors, were depicted as buffoons. See also CHINA DOLL; DRAGON LADY; EXOTIC; FU MANCHU; INSCRUTABLE; ORIENTAL; PROVERBS, CHINESE FONDNESS FOR. (Footnote 2)

**CHINA DOLL:**

Caution. A figurine, usually porcelain, but when used metaphorically or as a comparison the implied image of

female submission demeans women of Chinese heritage. See reverse image, as manipulative and sinister, in DRAGON LADY. See also EXOTIC.

**CHINAMAN:**

Avoid. A slur, often applied to anyone of Asian heritage. A term from the 19th Century, specifically for the poorly paid Chinese workers who risked their lives building the American transcontinental railroad, as in “Chinaman’s chance,” meaning no chance at all. (See title at Footnote 6)

**CHINESE LAUNDRIES:**

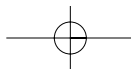
Caution. Can be racially charged in certain contexts (See OLIPHANT, p. 47, “HALL OF SHAME”). Legend has it that the first Chinese laundry was opened in 1851 by an unsuccessful Chinese miner drawn to California by the Gold Rush of 1849. Inexpensive to open and posing no competition to white-owned businesses, Chinese hand laundries proliferated, peaking in 1940, with more than 5,000 such laundries in New York City alone. In California, Chinese were once allowed to own only restaurants and laundries. The Chinese laundry declined sharply with the advent of coin-operated laundromats. (Footnote 3)

**COMBAT TERMINOLOGY:**

Caution. A journalistic cliché that becomes inflammatory when linked to Asia or Asian Americans, as in “Japan Invades Hollywood.” As invidious as “Germany Invades Hollywood.”

**COMMUNITY:**

Caution. A synonym for a neighborhood or town, but a journalistic cliché, as in “intelligence community.” By



definition, community implies unanimity where no reporter can possibly confirm unanimity. In any large group of people, whatever their ethnic or racial ties, there is a diversity of opinion. As it would be absurd to quote “white community leaders” reacting to a news event, so it would be absurd to quote “Korean community leaders” speaking, by implication, for all people of Korean heritage. Better to identify leaders and groups by name, with possible reference to the size of their membership rolls.

**DESI:**

A colloquial name for people who trace their ancestry to South Asia, especially India and Pakistan. Pronounced “DAY-see” or “DEH-see,” it is the Hindi word for “from my country.” See HINDI, INDIA, PAKISTAN.

**DRAGON LADY:**

*Caution.* A cartoon character from the popular 1930s comic strip, “Terry and the Pirates.” Variations of the Dragon Lady were later popularized in many Hollywood adventure movies of the 1940s and later. She was portrayed as sexy and evil in Chinese silk gowns with long sleeves, cigarette holder between two fingers See CHINA DOLL, a submissive variant. See also EXOTIC.

16 | **ETHNICITY:**

*Caution.* Ethnicity (the character of a group sharing a racial, religious, linguistic or cultural heritage) and race (a group distinguished by genetically transmitted physical characteristics) should be reported only when they are relevant and their relevance can be explained to the satisfaction of the reader or viewer. Race is often necessary to the physical description of a fugitive sought by

the police.

**EXECUTIVE ORDER 9066:**

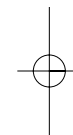
A war measure following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Signed Feb. 19, 1942 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, it led to the forcible internment in camps of thousands of Japanese heritage, two-thirds of whom were U.S. citizens. A divided cabinet recommended the measure to Roosevelt, with the Office of Naval Intelligence affirming the loyalty of Japanese Americans. The order was ostensibly designed to combat sabotage, but Americans of German and Italian heritage were largely exempt. The Supreme Court repeatedly affirmed the constitutionality of the order, but Congress, in 1983, called it “a grave injustice.” See also ANGEL ISLAND, INTERNMENT. (*Footnote 4*)

**EXOTIC:**

*Caution.* When describing women of Asian and Pacific Islander heritage, it often implies a departure from a white norm. Swedes, for example, are rarely described in the United States as exotic. See CHARLIE CHAN, CHINA DOLL, FU MANCHU, INSCRUTABLE, ORIENTAL, PACIFIC ISLANDER.

**TROPIC TREAT**

It was Alfred Hitchcock’s night, but all eyes were on Wai Reynolds at Banana Republic’s retrospective honoring the legendary filmmaker at MoMA the other night. The 20-year-old Hawaiian stunner—Banana Republic’s newest muse—was discovered a while back by Karin Models in Europe, but she put her career on hold to spend time with her family after her sister became paralyzed. “I wish my sister Nalani



were doing this with me,” said the exotic Wai. “But she still gives me the best support and is my biggest fan.” (Page Six, *New York Post*, April 1, 1999)

**FILIPINO/PILIPINO:**

Refers to an inhabitant of the Philippines, the former Spanish possession and American colony named after King Philip of Spain in the 16th Century. Some Filipino Americans, often younger, prefer Pilipino since Tagalog, the leading dialect of the Philippines, lacks an “F” sound. See PHILIPPINES, TAGALOG.

**FORTUNE COOKIE:**

American origin, possibly invented by Chinese entrepreneurs for restaurant customers in early 20th Century California, which is why the messages are written in English and the cookies are placed on top of the diners’ check. China does not have a dessert tradition. (*Footnote 5*)

**FU MANCHU:**

*Caution.* Created by mystery writer Sax Rohmer in 1913 and popularized in 1930s and 1940s films. Fu Manchu was an evil genius bent on world domination. He was portrayed by many actors, including Warner Oland, who also played Charlie Chan. Rohmer described his creation this way: “Imagine a person, tall, lean, and feline, high-shouldered, with a brow like Shakespeare and a face like Satan, a close-shaven skull, and long, magnetic eyes of the true cat-green. Invest him with all the cruel cunning of an entire Eastern race, accumulated in one giant intellect, with all the resources of science past and present, with all the resources, if you will, of a wealthy government—which, however, already has denied all knowledge of his existence. Imagine that awful being, and you

have a mental picture of Dr. Fu Manchu, the yellow peril incarnate in one man.” Later Asian and pseudo-Asian villains—like Flash Gordon’s nemesis, Emperor Ming the Merciless from the Planet Mongo and James Bond’s Dr. No—were often variations of Fu Manchu. See CHARLIE CHAN, EXOTIC, INSCRUTABLE, ORIENTAL, YELLOW PERIL. See also “HALL OF SHAME”, *Santa Fe New Mexican* editorial, 11 May 99. (*Footnote 6*)

**GANDHI:**

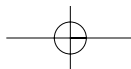
Gandhi, Mohandas Karamchand (1869–1948) Known as the Mahatma (“great soul”) and the father of modern India, M.K. Gandhi served as president of the Indian National Congress and helped lead a nonviolent movement for independence from Britain during the first half of the 20th century. He was assassinated in 1948 in a conspiracy by fanatical nationalists who accused him of betraying Hindus and favoring Muslims during the Partition of 1947. No relation to Indira Gandhi or Rajiv Gandhi. See HINDU.

**HAIJ/HAJ (typically not capitalized):**

A pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia, the birthplace of the Prophet Mohammed. Every Muslim able to afford the journey is expected to make the *hajj* at least once in his or her lifetime. A person who has undertaken this pilgrimage is known as a *hajji* (or *haji*).

**HAPA:**

Once considered by some to be derogatory, *hapa* comes from the Hawaiian phrase *hapa haole* (pronounced “hah-puh how-lee”) meaning “half white/ foreigner.” It now describes anyone whose heritage is white plus another



racial or ethnic group, but especially Asians and Pacific Islanders. The term is now considered by some to be one of positive self-identification. See PACIFIC ISLANDER

**HAWAIIAN:**

*Caution.* An ethnic group. Refers to a person who is of Polynesian descent. Unlike a term like Californian, Hawaiian should not be used for everyone living in Hawaii. The distinction is not trivial. If Wales were the 51st state, not everyone living in Wales would be Welsh. Possible alternatives: islander, Hawaiian resident. See ETHNICITY.

**HINDI:**

The primary language of about 30% of India's people, and one of almost two dozen major languages spoken around the country. It is derived primarily from Sanskrit, using the Devanagari script. Do not confuse Hindi with Hindu, which is a religious designation.

**HINDU, HINDUISM:**

Designating the religion practiced by the vast majority of Indians, and designating certain cultural features of South and Southeast Asia Hinduism is a polytheistic religion and has evolved over thousands of years. Many Hindus regard the 2,000-page *Vedas* and the *Gita* (a segment of the epic *Mahabharata*) as sacred texts. Do not confuse Hindu with Hindi, which is a language.

**HMONG (also Mong or Muong):**

An ethnic group living in southern China, Vietnam, Laos, and Thailand. Laotian civil war in mid-1970s led to an exodus to the United States.

**IMMIGRANT:**

*Caution*—a racially or ethnically charged term under certain circumstances. Like race and ethnicity, the status of being a first-generation immigrant should be mentioned where relevant and its relevance can be shown to the satisfaction of the reader or viewer. For example, a person whose accent leads to a bar brawl or whose lack of English may have led to his failure to stop when requested by police can be fairly described, along with other biographical details, as a recent immigrant (date of entry to U.S. also helpful, if available). The status of undocumented workers is another issue and should be discussed carefully both with the source and editors, as to the risks of deportation. However, an immigrant who has lived in the United States for many decades may be, depending on individual circumstances, unfairly described as an immigrant and prompt invidious racial or ethnic associations. See ETHNICITY.

**INDOCHINESE:**

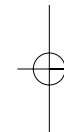
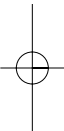
*Caution.* Refers to Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, but not nearby Thailand and Burma. Some say term has a colonialist connotation. See BURMA, CAMBODIA, LAOS, THAILAND, VIETNAM.

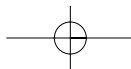
**INSCRUTABLE:**

*Caution.* Synonym for mysterious, but a racially charged adjective for describing comments attributed to Chinese or other Asians. See also CHARLIE CHAN, EXOTIC, FU MANCHU, ORIENTAL; especially PROVERBS, CHINESE FONDNESS FOR.

**INTERNMENT:**

During World War II, the incarceration of 120,000 per-





sons of Japanese ancestry, two-thirds of them American citizens. They were ordered to sell their homes and businesses, usually at fire-sale prices, to whites and then move to “relocation centers” from the California desert to the swamps of Arkansas. The last internees were released in 1946. See ANGEL ISLAND, EXECUTIVE ORDER 9066. (*Footnote 7*)

**ISLAM:**

One of the two largest religions of South Asia, the other being Hinduism. Though Pakistan and Bangladesh are officially Islamic republics, India had—until the 1970s—the largest number of Muslims in the region (and the second-largest in the world, after Indonesia). Now, Pakistan has more Muslims than does India.

**ISSEI (EE-say) :**

The first, or immigrant, generation of Japanese Americans, generally arrived in the early 1900s. The term mainly has historical meaning since immigration in the early 20th Century was so restricted that generations were sharply defined. (See ASIAN EXCLUSION ACTS.) With today’s liberalized immigration, Issei and terms referring to later generations have less social and cultural meaning. Present-day Japanese immigrants would not call themselves Issei. See NISEI, SANSEI.

**MANDARIN:**

*Caution.* The official language of China and Taiwan, derived from different dialects but not itself a dialect, or regional variety of a language, like Cockney English. The term Mandarin refers to the spoken language. One speaks Mandarin but writes Chinese. While the Cantonese dialect is more prevalent in older American Chinatowns,

Mandarin is increasingly spoken in newer Chinatowns. China has one written language using characters understood by anyone who is literate, but also many regional dialects like Shanghainese and Fukienese, which are unintelligible to Chinese from other regions. See CHINA, TAIWAN.

**MANONG (mah-nong)/MANANG (mah-nang):**

*Manong* is a term of respect that precedes the first name of older Filipino men; *manang* for older Filipina women.

**MINORITY:**

*Caution.* Not a synonym for blacks and Hispanics exclusively. (See Chapter 3, “Honorary Whites.”)

**MUMBAI:**

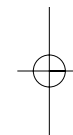
India’s largest city and commercial center, formerly known as Bombay. Although the Associated Press, *New York Times* and *Los Angeles Times* continue to use “Bombay,” the name change is official in India and has been widely recognized by other news outlets.

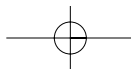
**NISEI (NEE-say):**

Second-generation Japanese Americans, born in the United States. Now mainly historical reference. See ISSEI, SANSEI.

**ORIENTAL:**

*Caution.* Many Asian Americans, especially younger ones, liken “Oriental” to “Negro.” A vestige of British imperialism, the term, at minimum, is vague. In art, it may include countries such as China and Japan, but not Turkey. In rugs, it may mean India and China as well as Turkey. In food, it may mean China or Japan, but not India, Vietnam or the Philippines. See also CHARLIE CHAN, CHINA DOLL, DRAGON LADY, EXOTIC, FU MANCHU, INSCRUTABLE, YELLOW PERIL.



**PACIFIC ISLANDER:**

United States Census term referring to one of eight groups—Fijian, Guamanian, Hawaiian, Northern Mariana Islander, Palauan, Samoan, Tahitian, and Tongan. See HAWAIIAN.

**PAKI :**

*Avoid.* A slur, referring to Pakistanis. Sometimes used in Britain as an epithet against all South Asians. A headline in the *New York Post* (June 17, 1999) read: “India: Pakis Killed POWs.”

**PILIPINO: see FILIPINO****PINOY (pee-noy)/ PINAY (pee-nai):**

Tagalog, meaning a Filipino man; *pinay* means woman. See TAGALOG.

**PROVERBS, CHINESE FONDNESS FOR:**

In China, a facility with proverbs reflects a pride in ancient Chinese culture, a way to appear superior to other Chinese, as well as a softening of unpleasant realities with pat homilies. Chinese proverbs may seem cryptic to outsiders, instructive to those in the know. Example: “The sky is high; the emperor is far away.” Meaning: Far from central authority, one enjoys relative freedom. A rough English approximation is: “When the cat’s away, the mice will play.” See CHARLIE CHAN, INSCRUTABLE. (*Footnote 8*)

**RACIAL SLURS:**

The list of disparaging racial epithets is long and so is the list of those directed solely at Asians. They include “Jap,” “Chinaman,” “Paki,” and “gook.” They are as offensive as “spic,” “kike,” and “nigger.” By definition, such slurs are designed to stigmatize an entire racial

group. Of course, not every racial slur is newsworthy, but the journalistic obligation to report such slurs grows with the slur’s potential public impact, when uttered by, say, a prominent business executive, law enforcement officer or elected official. When Senator John McCain in late 1999 and early 2000 disparaged his North Vietnamese torturers as “gooks,” nearly all of the reporters on his campaign bus during the New Hampshire primary failed to report the slur. It is unclear why. If, however, Senator McCain had said “spic,” or “kike” or “nigger,” most, if not all, of the reporters would likely have recognized the remark as newsworthy and reported it. Political candidates are subject to the judgment of the electorate and it may well be that the voters will ignore, or place less emphasis on, such remarks when evaluating a candidate’s qualifications for office. But it is the role of journalists, in a democracy, to provide the electorate with information on candidates’ potentially revealing habits of mind. See CHINAMAN, PAKI.

**SAMURAI:**

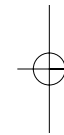
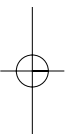
*Caution.* A Japanese warrior. Overused in business press to describe Japanese competitors.

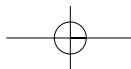
**SANSEI (SAHN-say):**

Third-generation Japanese Americans, typically post-war baby-boomers. Term is mainly of historical interest only. See ISSEI, NISEI.

**SARI (also saree):**

Often referred in the Western press as a dress worn by Hindu women. It is also worn by many Christians in India as well as by many Bangladeshi and Sri Lankan





women.

**SOUTH ASIAN DIASPORA:**

Because of the British colonial legacy and large-scale immigration, there are substantial pockets of people of South Asian origin scattered around the world (besides South Asia, of course). In some cases—Fiji, Guyana, Mauritius, Suriname and Trinidad & Tobago—South Asians make up at least 35% of the population. Other countries with large South Asian communities: Malaysia, Singapore, South Africa, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and the United States.

**TAGALOG (tah-GAH-log):**

The official language of the Philippines, but also one of scores of local and regional dialects.

**TIANANMEN SQUARE:**

The vast public square at the center of Beijing, capital of China. In May and June 1989, as many as a million protesters, led by students, demonstrated in favor of democracy, prompting a lethal crackdown by the Communist government on June 4. Number of deaths still unknown, but totaling at least in the hundreds. See CHINA.

**UNTOUCHABLES:**

Dalit (capitalized) is a more respectful and current term for castes once called “untouchables.” M.K. Gandhi coined the term Harijan (“children of God”) to refer to these castes. See GANDHI.

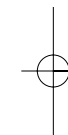
**WALTER-MCCARRAN ACT:**

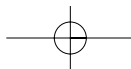
Officially known as the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, it allowed Asians to apply for citizenship but set immigration quotas from each Asian country at only 100 annually. Liberalization of this law, in 1965, allowed the

first large-scale migration of Asians into the United States in the 20th Century. See also ASIAN EXCLUSION ACTS.

**YELLOW PERIL:**

*Caution.* An imagined invasion of the United States at the beginning of the 20th Century by Asian hordes, specifically Japanese, who had become successful entrepreneurs in California agriculture. (*Footnote 9*)





## CHAPTER 2

*“And She Didn’t Even Get the Name Right!”:  
A Guide to Asian Names*

European names, for the most part, are simple; Asian names are hard. There is no more irritating indication to a reader or viewer that an article or broadcast program is wrong than when a reporter misspells or mispronounces a person’s name. Asian naming rules are as varied as the countries. They are, frankly, baffling to a Westerner but that is the point. In a thicket this thick, when in doubt, ask, especially on rules for second reference (such as Mr. Mao, but not Mr. Zedong).

Asian pronunciation and transliteration rules are also complex. For example, in Chinese, Chen is pronounced “chuhn,” Li is “lee,” and Yang “young.” However, many second-generation Chinese Americans pronounce their names as the names would read in English. Including pronunciation explainers in the text or broadcast would be helpful for the uninitiated.

First-generation Asian Americans can use the naming rules of their birth nation, but their children typically adopt Western naming rules or Western names. For example, in China a name might be Chang Su-lin; in the United States, Su-lin Chang or Susan Chang.

### **BURMA:**

also known as Myanmar: Burmese naming rules can be extremely complicated. Names typically consist of two one-syllable names, but often with a third word as an honorific, such as Daw for older women, Maa for

younger women; and Naw, Saw, Maung, and U (pronounced “oo” as in two) for men.

### **CAMBODIA:**

Typically family name first, personal name second.

Middle names rare.

### **CHINA:**

Typically family name first, personal name second, but many Chinese Americans change the word order to conform to Western practice. They also often adopt Western names in addition to traditional names in use for friends and relatives. Personal names consisting of two words (one word is typically a generational name) are sometimes hyphenated; check to see if the subject prefers a hyphen. Rules for married women adopting their husbands’ names are often elaborate. Ask. (Taiwan, consisting mainly of ethnic Chinese from the mainland, follows Chinese naming rules.)

### **HMONG (q.v.):**

Typically family name first, personal name second, often one-syllable names.

### **INDONESIA:**

Many have two names, but one name is also common.

Muslims have complex name rules. Ask.

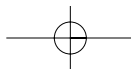
### **JAPAN:**

In Japan, typically family name first, personal name second. But in the United States, Western word order common. Women’s names often end in -ko, or “child,” as in Michiko.

### **KOREA:**

Typically family name first, followed by two-part personal name. But many Korean Americans have adopted





Western name order. Naming rules differ for men and women.

**LAOS:**

Typically family name first, personal name second, often multi-syllable names.

**MALAYSIA:**

Some Malaysians do not use family names, but, as in Burma, use honorifics. Malaysian Chinese and Malaysian Muslims follow special naming rules. Ask.

**PHILIPPINES:**

Typically follows Western name order. Spanish names common as vestige of Spanish imperialism. Use of nicknames common. Muslims may follow special naming rules.

**THAILAND:**

Typically personal name first, family name second, with long multi-syllable names, especially if Chinese. On second reference, personal name is sometimes used. Ask.

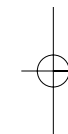
**VIETNAM:**

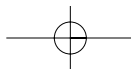
Typically family name first, personal name last. On second reference, personal name is sometimes used. But in the United States, Western word order common. Ask.

**SOUTH ASIAN NAMES:**

30 | (India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, et al) Names currently used in South Asia and the South Asian diaspora follow dozens of complex rules and vary from community to community. As a general rule, it is a good idea to ask a person you interview to explain which of his/her names are the first and last names. One Hindu may follow old caste traditions and have what he considers a first name and a last name, but his son may have

a completely different name. Similarly, Sikh and Muslim names can vary from generation to generation. Also, names and orders of names that were used in South Asia often get confused when immigrants arrive in the U.S., forcing them to adopt names and spellings more “convenient” for mainstream America. Be careful about generalizing about South Asian names, not all of which are Hindu or Muslim names. There are many South Asian Christians, as well as South Asian Jews, in America, and it may not be obvious from their names that they are South Asian. For example, Dennis Daniel, John Perry, Manuela Fernandes are all South Asian names. Moreover, there are some South Asians who have only a one-word name.





## CHAPTER 3

### *How Not to Cover Asian America*

#### **SUMMARY:**

*In the American press, Asian Americans are covered poorly or not at all. Choosing between the "Eternal Foreigner" and the "Honorary White." Offenders and their offenses discussed. A smarter, fairer reporting approach: Provide historical and cultural context.*

#### **"In Asia, there are no Asians."**

In Europe, there are no Europeans. The European Union notwithstanding, it would be odd to somehow mistake the French for the Germans, with their different languages, different food, different dress, and, above all, their history of conflict, which is not confined to World War II.

Much the same can be said about the Japanese and Chinese, yet many Americans cannot tell the difference between the two. There is nothing necessarily racist about that; you can't expect everyone to know everything about every culture.

If the confusion, however, is intentional or the result of laziness, the "mistake" takes on racial overtones, with the implication being "Well, they all look alike anyway, don't they?"

See page 45, for example, for a 1999 *New York Post* editorial cartoon that depicts President Clinton as saying, "Let me assure the American people that this Administration has not sold out to the Chinese," while showing members of the Clinton Administration wearing Japanese dress.

The term "Asian American" was born of necessity and is

far different from what Theodore Roosevelt used to deride as "hyphenated Americans." Many European Americans—whether the English, Germans, or Scots-Irish of the Colonial period or the Italians, Poles and Greeks of the turn of the 20th century—have to a great extent lost their need for a special ethnic qualifier. They joined the mainstream, in part because they are white and in part because their families long ago set down roots. After all, it would be absurd now to refer to Ronald Reagan as the Irish-American president.

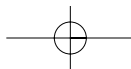
Asian Americans, in part because of race and in part because so many are recent immigrants or first-generation native-born or naturalized Americans (see *ASIAN EXCLUSION ACTS*, p. 12), are bound together solely by circumstance. Asian American is an accurate but imperfect term in its one-size-fits-all definition.

In *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans*, University of California at Berkeley professor Ronald Takaki, wrote, "There are no Asians in Asia, only people with national identities, such as Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Indian, Vietnamese, and Filipino. But on this side of the Pacific there are Asian Americans. This broader identity was forged in the crucible of racial discrimination and exclusion: their national origins did not matter as much as their race." (*Footnote 10*)

#### **The Eternal Foreigner:**

*"Where are you from? No, I mean, originally?"*

Every adult Asian American, even if English is his native language and his family has been living in the United States for many generations, has been asked the "Where are you



from?” question by well-meaning people, including reporters. Sacramento is not a sufficient answer.

Not far from the surface is the message that, unlike ethnic whites who have become American, Asians, because of their race, cannot be separated from the nations of their heritage.

One example of this unconscious assumption is a headline carried in February 1998 on the MSNBC Web site when white figure skater Tara Lipinski, an American, defeated Michelle Kwan, also an American, for the Olympic gold medal. The MSNBC headline read, “American Beats Out Kwan.”

The “Where are you from?” question itself is not racist, but when it leads to entire magazine articles, implying that race is far more important than upbringing, the assumption can carry racial overtones.

Consider, then, Frank Deford’s February 1992 *Newsweek* article about the Winter Olympics, in which he profiles skater Kristi Yamaguchi, a native-born American. He senses that “deep within her, she is still Japanese:”

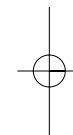
“In a sport where no woman but of white, Northern European birth or heritage has ever won the figs...the battle for the gold and all the lucre it earns sets up a duel between two young women named Yamaguchi and Ito, whose bloodlines both stretch back, pure and simple, to the same soft, cherry-blossom days on the one bold little island of Honshu. The twist is, though, that if the powerful Ito is Midori, of Nagoya, the delicate Yamaguchi is Kristi, from the Bay Area, fourth-generation American. It’s the chrysanthemum and the sword—on the ice together, worlds apart.”

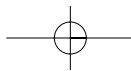
*<Deford concludes>*

“If Ito feels the proud glare of Japan upon her, Yamaguchi is more special in her native land. There has never been an American athlete—or, for that matter, an entertainer—of Japanese heritage in the first-celebrity rank, and apart from Hawaii, where Japanese descendants such as Senator Daniel Inouye have been most prominent, there have never been any notable Japanese-Americans in the public eye. And, of course, here comes potentially this first one, this exquisite wisp, drawing dreams in the ice to “Malaguena” and “The Blue Danube.” But she comes at precisely that moment when so many Americans are blaming the Japanese, rounding on them, making devils of them...and not pausing to check birth certificates.

“And now: what’s a good ole boy to do if there’s not only a Toyota in the driveway and a Sony in the bedroom and a Mitsubishi in the family room—but on the screen there, as the band plays the “Star-Spangled Banner,” is the All-American girl of 1992, and her name is Yamaguchi?

“If any of this, if any of the present implications of her heritage and the potential symbolic magnitude of her stage at Albertville fazes Yamaguchi, it is certainly not evident. ‘On Kristi’s most frustrating days,’ her coach, Kjarsgaard Ness, says, ‘she shows it—maybe—but only in her body language. That’s all.’ Of course, nobody really knows how the triple axel eats at Yamaguchi. If she just had the triple axel, it wouldn’t be any contest—who knows, she could be La Henie and Peggy and Dorothy and Katarina all rolled into one. But maybe she’s too smart even to worry about that. Certainly, deep within her, she is still Japanese—some of her must be—and if she should win it’s because, while the others have the triple axel, only she has the best of both worlds.”





### **Choose One: Asians Are “The Model Minority”...**

The phrase “model minority” dates to at least the 1960s. In the 1980s, articles praising Asian Americans implicitly criticized blacks, Hispanics, and Native Americans for failing to measure up.

*Newsweek* used the phrase in quotation marks for a 1982 article celebrating Asian American academic achievement, and *Fortune* magazine, in a story in 1986, went further, calling Asians “America’s Super Minority.”

Historian Ronald Takaki, writing in his *Strangers from a Different Shore*, said the phrase constituted a new stereotype: “In their celebration of this ‘model minority,’ the pundits and the politicians have exaggerated Asian-American ‘success’ and have created a new myth.” For one thing, he continued, Asian Americans live mainly in three states—California, Hawaii and New York—with higher average incomes but also higher living costs. He also points out that while household income for Asian Americans is high, that is because there are more workers per household than with other groups. When analyzed for subgroups, such as Korean immigrant men, the individual incomes of Asian men were equal to or below those of blacks and Hispanics and far below those of whites.

36 | And despite academic achievement, many Asian Americans complain of difficulty in getting promoted at their companies, Takaki notes, because the same passive “model minority” image paints Asian Americans as lacking leadership skills.

### **Or “Honorary Whites”...**

Asian Americans succeed at America’s best universities and

go on to become successful professionals. So some people do not consider those of Asian heritage a “disadvantaged minority” in the way blacks, Hispanics and Native Americans are considered minorities.

This assumption of Asian academic overachievement ignores the reality of widespread poverty and academic underachievement in many Asian groups (for further information, see the **AAJA Web site**, <http://www.aaja.org> ; and the **SAJA Web site**, <http://www.saja.org>). This assumption, not obviously pernicious, is often buried in the reporting and writing of an article or broadcast program.

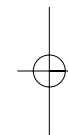
Consider: On September 1, 1999, the online magazine *Slate* critiqued the articles of four national newspapers that ignored or barely mentioned Asian Americans’ test performance on college admissions tests.

### **TEST PATTERNS**

By Scott Shuger

...The *Los Angeles Times* leads with what it claims is alarm among “education advocates” (as opposed to the rest of us?) about continuing SAT disparities between whites and nonwhites in the latest board score data, released Tuesday...

The headline over the *LAT*’s SAT lead cites an “ethnic gap” and refers to the worry that schools are failing to prepare “nonwhites.” But the story itself never mentions the SAT performance of Asians, an omission that is stunning given Southern California’s demographics and that lends false credibility to the stark picture the paper paints. False, because as a graphic accompanying the story indicates, Asians have the highest math SATs and the second-highest verbal. The *WP* [*Washington Post*] story makes the same elision, mentioning Asians only once in passing, and



never mentioning their scores. The *WSJ* [*Wall Street Journal*] also mentions Asians only once in passing but does mention their scores.

Also, the stories fail to establish any sense of context that would justify concerns over the differences in scores they report. For instance, the *LAT* notes that nationally, scores for whites “rose” one point from the year before, while blacks and Mexican Americans were each down four points in math, but there is no discussion of what a standard deviation would be on samples of SAT scores. Since test scores are known by college counselors and admissions officials to often vary dozens and dozens of points from one test-taking to the next by the same student, surely a few points can’t be the stuff of crisis. Or if it is, at least the papers need to argue the point. Similarly, the *LAT* says the national verbal score “remained mired at 505.” But wasn’t the idea behind the recentering of a few years ago precisely to put the median score as close as possible to 500? The *NYT* [*New York Times*]’s SAT piece hardly mentions the ethnic angle at all, dwelling much more on differences between boys’ and girls’ scores, and (in the online version at least), sits under a refreshingly calm headline: “College Board Scores Vary Little From Previous Year’s.”

#### Or From Nowhere in Particular...

38 | One thing often lacking in reporting about Asian Americans and other minorities is historical and cultural context. Even in the otherwise well-reported 1999 article below from *The Washington Post* about the suspected spy Wen Ho Lee, there is no discussion of how improbable it is for someone born in anti-Communist Taiwan to spy for Communist China.

In a 25-paragraph story, Taiwan is mentioned in the 11th

paragraph and never mentioned again. A partial text of the story follows.

#### EX-OFFICIAL: BOMB LAB CASE LACKS EVIDENCE

By Vernon Loeb

*Washington Post* Staff Writer

Tuesday, August 17, 1999; Page A1

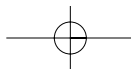
Federal investigators targeted physicist Wen Ho Lee as an espionage suspect largely because he is a Chinese American and they still do not have a “shred of evidence” that he leaked nuclear secrets to China, the former chief of counterintelligence at Los Alamos National Laboratory said yesterday.

Breaking a long public silence, Robert S. Vrooman also said he does not believe that China obtained top-secret information about U.S. nuclear warheads from Los Alamos or any other laboratory belonging to the Department of Energy. The stolen data, he said, could have come from documents distributed to “hundreds of locations throughout the U.S. government” as well as to private defense contractors.

While some Chinese American rights organizations previously have charged that Lee was unfairly targeted, Vrooman is the first high-ranking participant in the investigation to state that Lee’s ethnicity was “a major factor” in his identification as the government’s prime suspect.

<The article goes on to say>

Lee, a Taiwan-born nuclear physicist and U.S. citizen, was fired in March for alleged violations of Los Alamos’s security regulations. He has denied ever passing secrets to China, and he has not been charged with any crime. The Justice Department is weighing whether to charge him with transferring classified information from the secure computer system at Los Alamos to his vulnerable desktop computer.



### **Or Invisible.**

Because of their smaller numbers in cities and states compared to blacks and Hispanics, Asian Americans are often excluded from public opinion surveys for budgetary reasons. Expanding surveys to include enough Asian Americans for a statistically significant sample can mean costlier polls that take longer to conduct.

But for other reasons that are often unspoken (see page 36 for discussion, Asians are “Honorary Whites”), they are excluded because they are neither white nor black and therefore not seen by editors and reporters as important to public-policy debates. Expanding surveys to include and count those of Asian heritage, however, leads to fairer, more accurate polls.

When polls do not include Asian Americans in towns or regions with a significant Asian population, readers should be informed, as a matter of fairness, of the poll’s limitations.

*The New York Times* said in 1999 that its poll in the wake of a police brutality scandal indicated that fewer than a quarter of “all” New Yorkers suspected police bias. But the newspaper did not include Asian Americans in the poll and it subsequently ran an Editor’s Note alerting readers to the limitation.

the survey said they thought the police often engaged in brutality against blacks, and almost two-thirds said police brutality against members of minority groups is widespread. More than two-thirds of blacks said the policies of the Giuliani administration have caused an increase in police brutality.

### **Editor’s Note:**

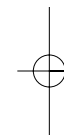
April 17, 1999, Saturday

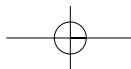
A chart on March 16 presenting results of a *New York Times* poll showed how white, black and Hispanic New Yorkers viewed the police. It did not report figures for Asian-Americans because Asians are a smaller part of the city’s population and there were insufficient respondents to provide an accurate measure of their views. The chart should have included a footnote stating this limitation.

### **POLL IN NEW YORK FINDS MANY THINK POLICE ARE BIASED**

In the aftermath of the shooting death of Amadou Diallo, fewer than a quarter of all New Yorkers believe that the police treat blacks and whites evenly, with blacks in particular viewing the police with fear and distrust, according to a *New York Times* poll.

Nearly 9 out of 10 black residents questioned in





## CHAPTER 4

### *The Hall of Shame*

#### **SUMMARY:**

*When clumsy attempts at humor shade into racially offensive commentary. Editorial cartoons that step over the line from acerbic depiction to racial caricature. Other, non-ethnic, approaches.*

Some racial slights are deliberate. In the following examples, the Asian American Journalists Association has demanded apologies in all cases, but received little or no response.

Some news organizations, including the editorial page of the *New York Post*, assert a lesser standard of fairness and taste for editorial cartoonists compared to that of reporters and editors. But depictions of individuals like Boss Tweed or Richard Nixon, however unflattering, are different from sweeping caricatures or editorial descriptions of an entire race or ethnic group.

In such cases, cartoonists and graphic artists should get a second opinion, especially on deadline. A cliché-free depiction of an Hawaiian on deadline is difficult (no grass skirts, no ukuleles), but giving a Chinese cartoon character a Japanese name begins to shade into the offensive, and giving an Asian character thick glasses and buck teeth is an explicit borrowing from the anti-Japanese racial propaganda of World War II.

Cartoonists need quick ways to mark cultural identity and often rely on visual clichés, like berets for the French. If cartoonists today, however, can depict African Americans without resorting to thick lips or Stepin Fetchit, the grin-

ning, servile character actor who embodied the movie image of blacks well into the 1940's, then the same standard should apply to other ethnic groups.

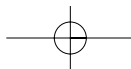
To be sure, editorial writers lean on a similar verbal grab bag (like "to be sure"), but racial parodies cannot be explained away as simply "opinion" not intended to offend.



"The Insidious Dr. Fu Manchu."

*Excerpts from Editorial, Santa Fe New Mexican, May 11, 1999*

**SO SORRY. WE'LL HIT THE RIGHT TARGET NEXT TIME**  
So sorry. We'll hit right target next time Dr. Fu Manchu, that evil-genius character created by author



Sax Rohmer, has made fools of the CIA again.

Imagine this scenario:

Sneaking into the NATO war room, the clever Chinese stole the bomb-target map of Belgrade. In its place he left a fake map showing the Chinese Embassy as the site of a Yugoslav arms-procurement office. A U.S. stealth bomber blew up the target with three bombs. "We hit what we were aiming for," a NATO official said. "But we did not mean to hit the Chinese Embassy."

Fu Manchu, however, had a much grander purpose: For 10 years, he had been stealing nuclear bomb secrets from Los Alamos National Laboratory. He had been found out. U.S. public opinion had turned against him. He was threatened with subpoenas to testify before U.S. Congressional committees. His top-secret security clearance had been canceled.

But, suddenly, Fu Manchu turned the tables. Today angry Chinese mobs riot around U.S. government offices in Beijing.

*Excerpts from Sports column, Chicago Tribune*

Wednesday, Aug. 20, 1997

Section 4. Page 1

Sports/OPINION

By Gene Wojciechowski

**IF THE KARMA IS RIGHT, GARNETT COULD BE A BULL**

"Yes, yes, you may enter my cab. Please partake of the complimentary curry chips and pay no attention to my sister (woman in hooded shawl nods) or to Uncle Shankar (old man grunts while reading New Delhi newspaper). They will say nothing.

"Oh, you are much tall. Taller than date tree. You are basketball player, yes? And you wish to go where, my hairless friend?

"Ah, yes, the Center of United. I have driven there many times. A thousand pardons, but you like

pine fresh scent bar on dash, yes?

"I am pleased so. Again, a thousand pardons, but you have a familiar look. What is your name?

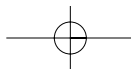
"Garnett! Kevin Garnett! I am honored so that you have chosen my cab. My Uncle Shankar (old man grunts) and I were speaking your name this very morning. You are famous man.

"What a fool I was not to recognize you. I should be trampled by a thousand diseased yaks for such stupidity. At the very least, please accept as a humble gift my cellular phone and this small television set that I often watch while driving at high speeds on Expressway of Kennedy.

**Permission for  
Reprint Withheld  
by New York Post**

*Cartoon by Sean Delonas of the New York Post, May 26, 1999. It shows President Clinton in a Mao suit, saying, "Let me assure the American people that this Administration has NOT sold out to the Chinese..." In the background Janet Reno, Madeleine Albright, Hillary Clinton and Al Gore wear JAPANESE garb. At President Clinton's elbow, a small creature wears a coolie hat, thick glasses, and appears to have buckteeth, a classic racist caricature. New York Post Editor in Chief Ken Chandler, replying to an AAJA letter of protest, wrote, "I recognize that certain aspects of this particular cartoon may have upset readers. I would like to assure you and your membership no offense was intended."*





**Permission for  
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by *New York Post*

Cartoon by Sean Delonas of the *New York Post* October 28, 1999. It shows Buddha, Zeus and South Asian gods arguing over a headline, "Buchanan Sez Christianity is the True Faith." A caricature of the elephant-headed Hindu god, Ganesha, says, "I'd like to paint his portrait," an implied use of excrement. In 1999, Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani created a First Amendment controversy when he unsuccessfully tried to remove a modern-art portrait of the Virgin Mary, prepared, in part, from elephant dung.



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Cartoon by Oliphant of the *Universal Press Syndicate*, April 30, 1999. Note small figures at lower right hand corner. One says, "The Chinese eat dogs, y'know." Other figure replies, "There's one hors d'oeuvre they could steal."



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Cartoon by Oliphant of the *Universal Press Syndicate*, May 11, 1999. Note small figure at lower left corner saying, "And we're sorry for complaining about not enough starch." See Chapter 1, Glossary, CHINESE LAUNDRIES



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#### COUNTEREXAMPLES:

##### DEPICTING ASIANS WITHOUT STEREOTYPE

Cartoon by Tony Auth of *Universal Press Syndicate*, May 26, 1999. Group of Chinese in front of nuclear missiles. One Chinese holds large instruction sheet that reads, "Nuclear Weapons Technology. Some Assembly Required." Another Chinese says, "You've got to hand it to the Americans. They've got the whole instruction thing down pat."

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TOLES © *The Buffalo News*.  
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*Cartoon by Tom Toles of Universal Press Syndicate, May 25, 1999. Accompanied by Chinese with notebook, American labeled "tour guide" points out nuclear warhead. "As we enter the most secret area of our weapons research lab," the American guide says, "we like to point out all the ways that our work here keeps the U.S. 'one step ahead' of our enemies. Follow me..." A tiny figure says, "Just wait till you see what we have available in our gift shop!"*

## CHAPTER 5

### *AN ASIAN CULTURAL CALENDAR: Everything Other Than Lunar New Year, From Shogatsu to Pongal*

The following are some events less publicized than the Lunar New Year celebrated by Chinese and certain other East Asian ethnic groups, but also of importance to Asian America. Note: Many Asian calendars, because they are based on the moon rather than the sun as in the Western calendar, have holidays and cultural events that carry no fixed date.

#### **JANUARY:**

**January 1:** Japanese New Year

**New Year's celebration for first week:** Shogatsu (Japan)

**Date varies from late January to early February:**

Lunar New Year (China, Korea, et al.)

#### **FEBRUARY:**

**Anywhere from January 21 to February 21:**

Vietnamese Lunar New Year, Tet

**Last day of winter in Japan:** Setsubun

#### **MARCH:**

**March 23:** Pakistan Day

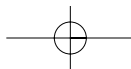
**No fixed date:** spring festival Holi (India)

**No fixed date:** Cherry Blossom Festival,

Sakura Matsuri (Japan)

#### **APRIL:**

**April 5:** Celebrates architecture characteristic of Thai royalty and religion, "Cho-fah Raising Ceremony"



**April 6:** Commemorates founding of Bangkok, Chakri Day Celebrations

**New Year celebrated April 7-15:** Songkran (Thai)

**April 8:** Japan Flower Festival, or Hanamatsuri

**April 13:** New Year (Laos),

**No fixed date in April:** Memorial of the dead, Ghost Festival (China)

**No fixed date in April:** Celebrates first kings and founders of Vietnam, Founder's Day

#### **MAY:**

**First full moon, no fixed date:** birthday of Buddha, Buddha Purnima (India, China) (*Note: April 8* is considered the birth date of Buddha by the Buddhist Churches of America, a mainly Japanese American group.)

#### **JUNE:**

**Week of June 12:** Filipino Week (Philippines):

**June 12:** Independence Day (Philippines):

#### **JULY:**

**July 4:** Filipino American Friendship Day (Philippines),

#### **AUGUST:**

**August 14:** Independence Day (Pakistan)

**August 15:** Independence Day (Korea)

**August 15:** Independence Day (India)

**August 17:** Independence Day (Indonesia)

**No fixed date:** Mid-Autumn Festival or August Moon Festival (China)

**No fixed date, but last weekend in August:** Ancestor's Day (Cambodia)

**No fixed date in August:** Nisei Week, celebration by Japanese Americans in California

#### **SEPTEMBER:**

**No fixed date, mid-September at full moon:** Korean day of Thanksgiving, Chuseok or sometimes Chusuk

**No fixed date in September:** Children's Mid-Autumn Festival (Vietnam)

**No fixed date, held in autumn:** Dragon Boat Race (China),

#### **OCTOBER:**

**October 2:** Gandhi's birthday (India)

**October 10:** Founding of Taiwanese Republic in 1911

**Date varies:** celebration of the victory of Lord Ram over the demon Ravana in a holiday known as Dusshera; Navratri (nine nights) celebrated for nine days before (India)

#### **NOVEMBER:**

**Date varies, typically 20 days after Dusshera:** Five-day-long festival of lights known as Diwali; in the business community, often marks the New Year (India)

**November 22-23:** Buddhist New Year (Thailand)

#### **DECEMBER:**

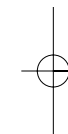
**Date varies, Winter Solstice festival:** Pongal (India)

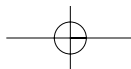
**No fixed date:** Ramadan, Islamic month of fasting (various countries).

#### **NO FIXED DATES:**

**Hairaya (Indonesia):** Muslim holiday

**Woman's Day (Vietnam):** sometime in spring





## CHAPTER 6

### *Asia and America: A Field Guide*

The following chapter defines the commonly used terms “East Asia,” “South Asia,” and “Southeast Asia,” and profiles major Asian countries by geography, capital, population, language, religion, ethnic group and literacy. It also explores concerns regarding the reporting of certain ongoing high-profile Asian and Asian American issues, including Tibet and the Dalai Lama; the Indian/Pakistani conflict in Kashmir; and the changing demographic face of the United States.

*A special note regarding religions:* Religious practice in Asia can follow a considerably different track from that of the Judeo-Christian-Islamic tradition. Temples, for instance, may not be used for “worship” but for meditation; meditation is not necessarily “prayer”; and, to many Buddhists, Buddha is not considered a god. (Buddhism itself has two major variants, Mahayana and Theravada, also known as the “Greater” and “Lesser” Vehicles, and each Asian culture has distinct subvariants. The two most commonly known in the west: Tibetan Buddhism, which emphasizes reincarnation, and Zen or Ch’an Buddhism, which emphasizes the achievement of *satori*, or “realization,” through meditation and contemplation.) Lastly, Confucianism and Taoism, much practiced in East Asia, are not religions as Westerners would commonly understand them, but informal combinations of practical philosophies, indoctrinated values, and folk beliefs.



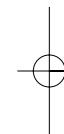
#### **ASIA:**

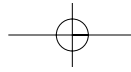
Traditionally, EAST ASIA comprises China, Japan, Korea, Mongolia, and occasionally, the Philippines. SOUTH ASIA, traditionally comprises Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. SOUTHEAST ASIA (which is occasionally combined semantically with East Asia) includes Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. In American usage, “Asian” is generally used to refer to the entire continent of Asia; occasionally, however, Asian is (mis)used as a shorthand for East Asians, or East and Southeast Asians. British usage generally treats the term “Asian” as referring only to South Asia. See ASIAN AMERICAN, ASIAN EXCLUSION ACTS, ORIENTAL, in Chapter 1, Glossary.

#### **BANGLADESH:**



Formerly the eastern section of Pakistan (known as East Pakistan), Bangladesh became independent after a civil war in 1971.





**Capital:** Dhaka.

**Population (1996 census):** 123 million.

**Official language(s):** Bangla (Bengali) and English.

**Major religions:** Islam (83%), Hinduism (16%), Buddhism, Christianity, others (1%). Ethnic groups: Bengali (98%), Jumma tribal (1%) Bihari (0.2%).

**Literacy:** 38%.



**BHUTAN:**

A mountainous South Asian kingdom located along the eastern ridges of the Himalayas (official name, Drukyul, means “Land of the Thunder Dragon”).

**Capital:** Thimpu.

**Population (1999 est.):** 2 million.

**Size:** 18,150 square miles (about the size of Indiana).

**Official language:** Dzongkha, Sharchopkha, Nepali.

**Major religions:** Buddhism 75%, Hinduism 25%.

**Ethnic groups:** Bhutanese of various types (65%), Nepalese (35%).



**BURMA:**

also known as Myanmar: Independent in 1948 from Britain. Between Bangladesh and Thailand. Slightly smaller than Texas. Border conflicts with Thailand.

**Capital:** Rangoon (government refers to the capital as Yangon).

**Population (1999 est.):** 48 million.

**Official language(s):** Burmese, minority ethnic groups

have their own languages.

**Major religions:** Buddhism 89%, Christianity 4% (Baptist 3%, Roman Catholic 1%), Islam 4%, animist beliefs 1%, other 2%.

**Ethnic groups:** Burman 68%, Shan 9%, Karen 7%, Rakhine 4%, Chinese 3%, Mon 2%, Indian 2%, other 5%.

**Literacy:** 83%.



**CAMBODIA:**

No longer known as K a m p u c h e a , Cambodia has been independent from France since 1953. Between Thailand and Vietnam. Slightly smaller than Oklahoma. Border and other international disputes

with Thailand and Vietnam.

**Capital:** Phnom Penh.

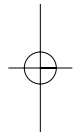
**Population (1999 est.):** 11.6 million.

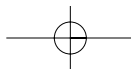
**Official language(s):** Khmer (official), French.

**Major religions:** Theravada Buddhism 95%, other 5%.

**Ethnic groups:** Khmer 90%, Vietnamese 5%, Chinese 1%, other 4%.

**Literacy:** 35%.



**CHINA:**

One of world's oldest civilizations, at more than 4,000 years. In economic decline since 19th Century, but experienced upturn in economy at end of 20th Century and now one of the world's fastest growing economies. Land mass slightly slightly smaller than the United States. Historical enmity with Japan. Communist party rule since 1949; normalized relations with U.S. since 1978. Extremely homogeneous population, see ethnic groups below, but many historical and linguistic divisions. See TAIWAN.

**Capital:** Beijing.

**Population (1999 est.):** 1.25 billion.

**Official language(s):** Standard Chinese or Mandarin (Putonghua, based on the Beijing dialect), Yue (Cantonese), Wu (Shanghaiese), Minbei (Fuzhou), Minnan (Hokkien-Taiwanese), Xiang, Gan, Hakka dialects, other minority languages.

**Major religions:** Daoism (Taoism), Buddhism, Islam 2%-3%, Christianity 1% (est.); note: officially atheist, according to Communist government.

**Ethnic groups:** Han Chinese 91.9%, Zhuang, Uygur, Hui, Yi, Tibetan, Miao, Manchu, Mongol, Buyi, Korean, and other nationalities 8.1%.

**Literacy:** 81.5%.

See CANTONESE; CHARLIE CHAN; CHINAMAN; CHINA DOLL; DRAGON LADY; FORTUNE COOKIE; FU MANCHU; INSCRUTABLE; MANDARIN; PROVERBS, CHINESE FONDNESS FOR; TIANANMEN SQUARE, Glossary, Chapter 1.

**INDIA:**

The largest and most populous nation on the Indus subcontinent. World's largest democracy.

**Capital:** New Delhi; the nation's commercial center is Mumbai (q.v.), also

known as Bombay.

**Population (world's second-largest, after China):**

1 billion.

**Major religions (1991 census):** Hinduism 82.41%; Islam 11.67%; Christianity 2.32%; Sikhism 1.99%; Buddhism 0.77%; Jainism 0.41%; others 0.43%.

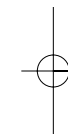
**Literacy:** 52%.

See CASTE SYSTEM, HINDI, HINDU, Glossary, Chapter 1.

**INDONESIA:**

Independent from the Netherlands in

1949. Archipelago between the Indian Ocean and the



Pacific Ocean. Three times the size of Texas. Discrimination against ethnic Chinese merchant class, as well as conflict over former province of East Timor.

**Capital:** Jakarta.

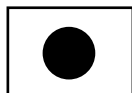
**Population (1999 est.):** 216 million.

**Official language(s):** Bahasa Indonesia (official, modified form of Malay), English, Dutch, local dialects, the most widely spoken of which is Javanese.

**Major religions:** Islam 88%, Protestantism 5%, Roman Catholicism 3%, Hinduism 2%, Buddhism 1%, other 1% (1998).

**Ethnic groups:** Javanese 45%, Sundanese 14%, Madurese 7.5%, coastal Malays 7.5%, other 26%.

**Literacy:** 83.8%.



#### **JAPAN:**

World's second-largest economy, after U.S. Land mass smaller than California. Historical enmity with China, Korea.

**Capital:** Tokyo.

**Population (1999 estimated):** 126 million.

**Official language(s):** Japanese.

**Major religions:** Observes both Shintoism and Buddhism 84%, other 16% (including Christianity 0.7%).

**Ethnic groups:** Japanese 99.4%, other 0.6% (mostly Korean).

**Literacy:** 99%.

See COMBAT TERMINOLOGY, EXECUTIVE OR-

DER 9066, INTERNMENT, ISSEI, NISEI, SAMURAI, SANSEI, YELLOW PERIL, Glossary, Chapter 1.



#### **KASHMIR:**

One of the world's most unstable regions. A disputed border area high in the frozen mountains of the Western Himalayas between India and

Pakistan. In 1949, after the first of three wars, the nations agreed to a cease-fire line that was poorly defined. The agreement said the line was to continue "north to the glaciers." In 1984, low-level skirmishes broke out between Indian and Pakistani forces, but flared into major clashes in the summer of 1999, when India and Pakistan had both become nuclear powers.

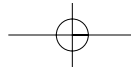


#### **KOREA, SOUTH:**

Korea divided into North Korea and South Korea after World War II. War in 1950-53 hardened division into Communist north and capitalist South. Historical enmity between two Koreas and both with Japan. South has one of world's most dynamic economies. South is slightly larger than Indiana.

**Capital:** Seoul.

**Population (1999 est.):** 46.9 million.



**Official language(s):** Korean, English widely taught in junior high and high school.

**Major religions:** Christianity 49%, Buddhism 47%, Confucianism 3%, pervasive folk religion (shamanism), Chondogyo (Religion of the Heavenly Way), and other 1%.

**Ethnic groups:** homogeneous (except for about 20,000 ethnic Chinese).

**Literacy:** 98%.



**LAOS:**

Independent from France in 1949.

Slightly larger than Utah. Between Thailand and Vietnam. Border disputes with Thailand.

**Capital:** Vientiane.

**Population (1999 est.):** 5.4 million.

**Official language(s):** Lao (official), French, English, and various ethnic languages.

**Major religions:** Buddhism 60%, animist and other 40%.

**Ethnic groups:** Lao Loum (lowland) 68%, Lao Theung (upland) 22%, Lao Soung (highland) including the Hmong (Meo) and the Yao (Mien) 9%, ethnic Vietnamese/Chinese 1%.

**Literacy:** 60%.

See HMONG, Chapter 2, Glossary.



**MALAYSIA:**

Independent from Britain in 1957.

Slightly larger than New Mexico. Borders South China Sea and Indonesia. Border and other international disputes with neighbors.

**Capital:** Kuala Lumpur.

**Population (1999 est.):** 21.4 million.

**Official language(s):** Bahasa Melayu (official), English, Chinese dialects (Cantonese, Mandarin, Hokkien, Hakka, Hainan, Foochow), Tamil, Telugu, Malalam, Panjabi, Thai. In addition, in East Malaysia several indigenous languages are spoken, the largest of which are Iban and Kadazan.

**Major religions:** Islam, Buddhism, Daoism, Hinduism, Christianity, Sikhism. In addition, Shamanism is practiced on East Malaysia.

**Ethnic groups:** Malay and other indigenous 58%, Chinese 26%, Indian 7%, others 9%.

**Literacy:** 83.5%.



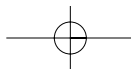
**MONGOLIA:**

Independent from China in 1921. Between China and Russia. Slightly smaller than

Alaska.

**Capital:** Ulaanbaatar.





**Population (1999 est.):** 2.6 million.

**Official language(s):** Khalkha Mongol 90%, Turkic, Russian, Chinese.

**Major religions:** Predominantly Tibetan Buddhist, Muslim 4%. Previously limited religious activity because of communist regime.

**Ethnic groups:** Mongol 90%, Kazakh 4%, Chinese 2%, Russian 2%, other 2%.

**Literacy:** 82.9%.



#### NEPAL:

A country in South Asia bounded by China on the north and India on the south. A multi-party democracy with a constitutional monarchy.

**Capital:** Kathmandu (also largest city).

**Population:** 23 million.

**Major religions:** Hinduism (official religion) 90%; Buddhism 5%; Islam 3%; other 2%.

**Official language:** Nepali.

**Literacy:** 27.5%.



#### PAKISTAN:

In Urdu language, Pakistan means “Land of the Pure.” An officially Islamic nation created in 1947 from the partition of British India upon independence. Pakistan ini-

tially consisted of two noncontiguous parts: West Pakistan and East Pakistan. After a civil war in 1971, East Pakistan, supported by India, broke away and became the independent nation of Bangladesh.

**Capital:** Islamabad. Commercial center is Karachi.

**Population:** 132 million.

**Major religions:** Sunni Islam: 77%; Shi’a Islam: 20%.

**Literacy:** 37.8%.

See PAKI, slur, Glossary, Chapter 1.



#### PHILIPPINES:

Independent from the United States in 1946. Archipelago between the Philippine Sea and the South China Sea. Slightly larger than Arizona.

**Capital:** Manila.

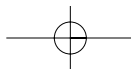
**Population (1999 est.):** 79.3 million.

**Official language(s):** Pilipino (official, based on Tagalog, q.v.), English (official).

**Major religions:** Roman Catholic 83%, Protestant Christianity 9%, Islam 5%, Buddhism and other 3%. Ethnic groups: Christian Malay 91.5%, Muslim Malay 4%, Chinese 1.5%, other 3%.

**Literacy:** 94.6%.

See FILIPINO/PILIPINO, MANONG/ MANANG, PINOY/PINAY, TAGALOG, Glossary, Chapter 1.

**SINGAPORE:**

City-state independent from Malaysia in 1965. Islands between Malaysia and Indonesia. Triple the size of Washington, D.C.

**Capital:** Singapore (comprises entire nation).

**Population (1999 est.):** 3.5 million.

**Official language(s):** Chinese (official), Malay (official and national), Tamil (official), English (official).

**Major religions:** Buddhism (among Chinese), Islam (among Malays), Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism, Taoism, Confucianism.

**Ethnic groups:** Chinese 76.4%, Malay 14.9%, Indian 6.4%, other 2.3%.

**Literacy:** 91.1%.

**SRI LANKA:**

Formerly known as Ceylon, Sri Lanka is an Indian Ocean island nation off the southern coast of India. It won independence from Britain in 1948. An armed insurgency by

Tamil rebels against the Sri Lankan army has devastated the country since the early 1980s, as tens of thousands of civilians have died in the crossfire.

**Capital:** Colombo.

**Population:** 19 million.

**Ethnic groups:** Sinhalese 74%, Tamil 18%, Moor 7%, Burgher, Malay, and Vedda 1%.

**Official language(s):** Sinhala (official and national language) 74%, Tamil (national language) 18%, note: English is commonly used in government and is spoken by about 10% of the population.

**Major religions:** Buddhism 69%, Hinduism 15%, Christianity 8%, Islam 8%.

**Literacy:** 90.2%.

**TAIWAN:**

**Caution.** Island off the southeastern coast of China. Slightly smaller than Maryland and Delaware combined. Officially a province of China (q.v.), but this fact

is (recently, with some diplomacy) disputed by Taiwanese government. Useful to specify Taiwanese or Taiwanese American, as opposed to Chinese or Chinese American. After 1949 Communist victory in China, 2 million Nationalists fled to Taiwan, partially displacing native Taiwanese and creating Republic of China. Many present-day residents of Taiwan are from rural Fujian province across the strait from Taiwan. There have also been at least two native-born generations since 1949.

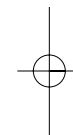
**Capital:** Taipei.

**Population (1999 est.):** 22.1 million.

**Official language(s):** Mandarin Chinese (official), Taiwanese (Min), Hakka dialects.

**Major religions:** Mixture of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism 93%, Christianity 4.5%, other 2.5%.

**Ethnic groups:** "Native" Taiwanese (including Hakka) 84% (note: most native Taiwanese are ethnically Han



Chinese, descended, as noted above, of migrants from Fujian), mainland Chinese 14% (note: this number reflects Chinese who migrated to Taiwan since 1949), aborigine 2%.

**Literacy:** 94%.



**THAILAND:**

Never colonized. Traditional founding date of 1238. Border and other international disputes with neighbors. Southeast of Burma (q.v.). Slightly more than twice the size of Wyoming.

**Capital:** Bangkok.

**Population (1999 est.):** 60.6 million.

**Official language(s):** Thai, English (secondary language of the elite),

ethnic and regional dialects.

**Major religions:** Buddhism 95%, Muslim 3.8%, Christianity 0.5%, Hinduism 0.1%, other 0.6% (1991).

**Ethnic groups:** Thai 75%, Chinese 14%, other 11%.

**Literacy:** 93.8%.

See HMONG, Glossary, Chapter 1.

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**TIBET:**

A region of China that occupies nearly a half million square miles in Central Asia, including Mount Everest. A cultural and religious entity that is officially part of China, Tibet

declared its independence from China in 1911. The Communist Chinese government reasserted control in 1951. Before the Chinese occupation, the Dalai Lama, the spiritual head of Tibetan Buddhism, was also the political leader of the nation. Buddhism was suppressed during the Chinese occupation and the Dalai Lama forced into exile in 1959. He and his followers live in the town of Dharamsala, India.

**Capital:** Lhasa.

**Population:** more than 2 million, mostly Tibetan with an ethnic Chinese minority. An additional 4 million Tibetans live in adjacent regions.



**VIETNAM:**

Declared independence from France in 1945. Partitioned into north and south after French defeat at Dien Bien Phu in 1954. Country reunited in 1976 after war with South Vietnam and United States. Refugee crisis followed end of war. Borders Gulf of Tonkin. Slightly larger than New Mexico. Historical enmity with China, which was a longtime occupant/colonizer of the region.

**Capital:** Hanoi.

**Population (1999 est.):** 77.3 million.

**Official language(s):** Vietnamese (official), Chinese, English, French, Khmer, tribal languages (Mon-Khmer and Malayo-Polynesian).

**Major religions:** Buddhism, Taoism, Roman Catholicism, indigenous beliefs, Islam, Protestant

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Christianity, Cao Dai, Hoa Hao.

**Ethnic groups:** Vietnamese 85%-90%, Chinese 3%, Muong, Tai, Meo, Khmer, Man, Cham.

**Literacy:** 93.7%.

See HMONG, Glossary, Chapter 1.



#### UNITED STATES of AMERICA:

World's largest economy.

**Capital:** Washington, D.C.

**Population (1999 est.):** 273 million.

**Official language(s):** English, with Spanish spoken by sizable minority.

**Major religions:** Protestant Christianity 56%, Roman Catholicism 28%, Judaism 2%, other 4%, none 10% (1989).

**Ethnic groups:** white 82.3%, black 12.8%, Asian/Pacific Islander 4.0%, American Indian/Native American: 0.9%. Hispanic origin 11.7% (2000 est.)

Figures and ethnic classifications subject to significant change based on final results of 2000 Census.

**Literacy:** 97%.

See ALL-AMERICAN, AMERICAN, ASIAN AMERICAN, Glossary, Chapter 1.

#### SOURCES:

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## FOOTNOTES

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Footnote 5: p. 132, ***Eastern Standard Time***, *ibid.*

Footnote 6: pp. 25-26, ***The Insidious Dr. Fu-Manchu: Being a Somewhat Detailed Account of the Amazing Adventures of Nayland Smith in His Trailing of the Sinister Chinaman***, by Sax Rohmer, Grosset & Dunlap, 1913.

Footnote 7: p.49, ***Personal Justice Denied: Report of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians***, University of Washington Press, 1997.

Footnote 8: **"Not So Ancient Chinese Proverb: Glib Truisms Gloss Over Reality,"** by Seth Faison, *New York Times*, Nov. 14, 1999

Footnote 9: p. 75, ***Ethnic Americans: A History of Immigration***, by Leonard Dinnerstein and David M. Reiners, Columbia University Press, 4th Edition, 1999.

Footnote 10: p. 502, ***Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans***, by Ronald Takaki, paperback, Back Bay, revised and updated 1998.

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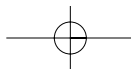
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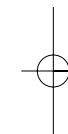
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