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### Asian American Pacific Islander Hate: A Breakdown

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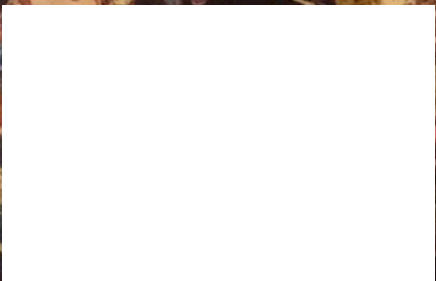
English 102 Fall 2021 with Anthony Robert Joseph Guerrero

the *Atlantic*

**Asian  
American  
Pacific  
Islander  
Hate at an  
All Time  
High**

Eight Killed  
in Atlanta Spa  
Shootings, six of  
Asian descent.  
The life of Suncha  
Kim.

**AMERICA  
IS ON A  
RAMPAGE**



# The Price of Hate

anti-Asian sentiments and crimes were running rampant due to the COVID pandemic. It doesn't help that Asians and Asian women, in particular, have long been fetishized as "exotic" and "docile" and Long himself admits his crimes were sexually motivated. Long may not have intended to be racist, he may have told the police that he was not racially motivated, he may have not been charged with a hate crime, but the actions he took and the words he chose paint the obvious opposite (Shyong). His ignorance of the weight of the words he chose and the actions taken by both the police and himself illustrates a larger, more systematic problem.

**O**n March 16th, 2021 in Atlanta, Georgia and at approximately 5 PM, Robert Aaron Long took to a shooting spree across three spas, murdering eight people in the process (Shyong). Long was eventually arrested. Of the eight people killed, six were Asian women. This massacre was one of the worst incidents of 2021 and caused uproar amongst the Asian-American community and the world.

After being arrested and questioned, Long stated that the killings were incited by a sexual addiction the spas represented that was at odds with his Christianity (Shyong). He took up his guns to eliminate this addiction.

However, this massacre was taking place during a time when

Mass rallies across the world mourning those lost due to the heinous shooting and protesting against AAPI (Asian American Pacific Islander) violence followed this incident (Shyong).

The names of those killed are as follows:

**Soon Chung Park  
Hyun Jung Grant  
Suncha Kim  
Yong Ae Yue  
Delaina Ashley Yaun  
Paul Andre Michels  
Xiaojie Tan  
Daoyou Feng  
(Miller)**



*Robert Aaron Long after being arrested for the spa shootings in Atlanta, GA.*

*(Shyong)*



Top: Vigil in New York City on March 17th, 2021 (Miller).

Middle Top: Picture of Talia Young (right) and various others (left) who attended a vigil in Philadelphia, PA on March 17th, 2021 (Miller).

Middle Bottom: Vigil held in the Chinatown area of Washington, D.C. on March 17th, 2021 (Miller).

Bottom: Vigil held in Acworth, GA on March 17th, 2021 (Miller).



Soon Chunn Park  
Hy  
Su  
Young A  
Delaina  
Paul An  
Xiao Jie Tan  
Daoyou Feng



*A picture of Suncha Kim 10 years before her death.*

*(Lee)*

# AMERICA WAS WHERE SHE CALLED HOME

**S**uncha Kim, at 69, was one of the eight killed that day, shot twice in the chest after opening the front doors of Gold Spa for Robert Aaron Long. In an interview with the Washington Times, Kim's family stated that she had been living in America for the past four decades (Lee). She loved everything about America; it was the place that Suncha Kim thought she and her family belonged (Lee). Despite her terrifying, gruesome death, Kim's family said that they hoped she would be remembered for the love and selflessness that she represented to them (Miller).

Kim's family told the Washington Times the following. Kim lost her mother as a child and as a result was left to care for her three younger sisters and her father, eventually even helping bring

them over to America and paying for her sisters' tuition (Lee). At 29 years old, Kim had arrived during 1980 to the state of Texas with her young son, leaving behind her daughter and husband who would later join them in 1985 (Miller).

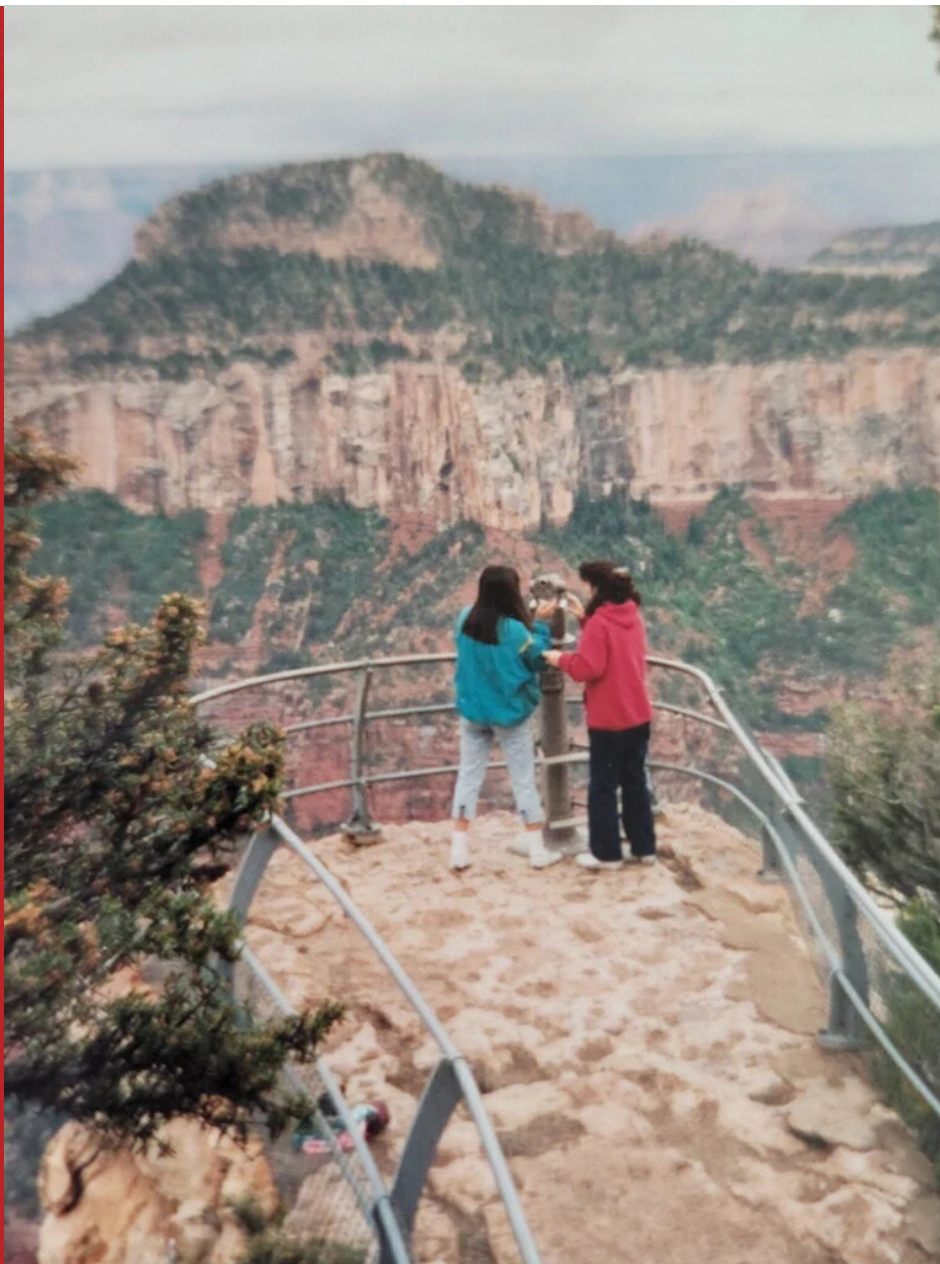


*A picture of Suncha Kim and her son in the late 1980s in Texas.*

*(Lee)*

As a first-generation immigrant, Kim, like many others, sacrificed much to make a new living in America. She did not speak a lot of English and had to work two to three jobs to get by (Lee). She worked and worked and worked; proud when she saved enough money to buy herself a car even if it was practically falling apart (Lee). Kim cared deeply even despite her hardship. Working so often meant she would return late in the night when her children were already sleeping. So often was she gone that she began leaving notes for them in their textbooks and notes letting them know they were loved (Lee). Even if she wasn't there to show it, she was always trying her hardest.

Kim attended church regularly, helped the homeless and underprivileged children, cooked for the old, and raised money to fight child hunger (Lee). She



**“Oh Granddaughter, it’s Grandma. Nothing is wrong with you, right? Grandma called but you didn’t answer. Work hard, hard, hard, always work hard at all things. Thank you, bye-bye.”**

**“Granddaughter! It’s Grandma. Hmm, call me back. I love you.”**

*Two separate voicemails left by Suncha Kim to her grand-daughter (Lee).*

*Left: A picture of Suncha Kim and her daughter in the late 1980s in visiting the Grand Canyon.*

*(Lee)*

volunteered her help so much that she was even awarded a President’s Volunteer Service Award (Lee).

Before her death on March 16th, Kim had bought sneakers for her daughter and herself so that they could go on walks together (Lee). On the morning of the 16th, Kim texted her daughter a picture of the sneakers. “Look, this is for you and me” she had said (Lee). Later in the day, she called her daughter, asking about lunch, talking about their new shoes, and sharing

future plans and retirement (Lee). Kim would never get to wear those sneakers with her daughter and her future plans would never come to fruition.

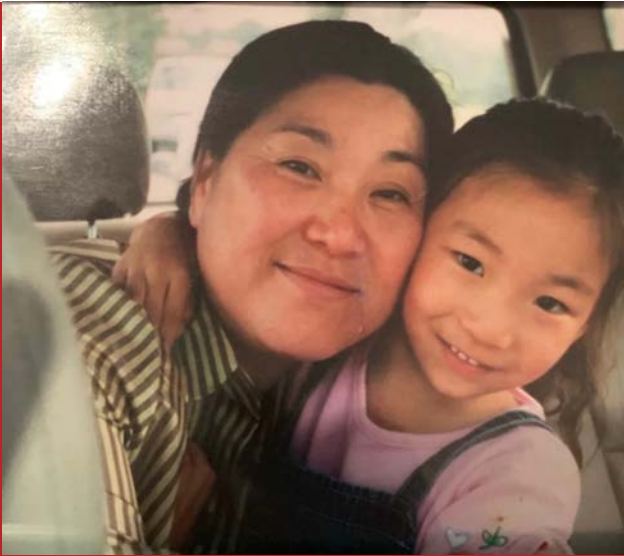
America is going through intense change right now. Before her death, Kim knew this too, telling her family to be careful in public, “Be careful when you go out... They’re angry at Oriental people” (Lee). Despite this, Kim was proud to be living in America. She was proud to live in a country so diverse and full of culture, proud

to have made her living there (Lee). How ironic that it would also be the place where, in the end, she died alone and fearing for her life, bleeding out with two bullets lodged in her chest.

On her GoFundMe page, the original goal of \$20,00 was surpassed by more than six times that (Miller). A quote from Hillary Li states the following in response:

“It brings tears to our eyes that you are all standing with us and our





*A picture of Suncha Kim and her granddaughter at different ages.*

*(Lee)*



beloved halmoni (grandmother), mother, and wife. Suncha was such a strong, loving presence in all of our lives and we miss her so much" (Miller).

"While there's evil in this world, when we see things like that (the support), there's still hope, and we see that there's still more love in the world... and my mother would have loved that. My mother would have known that there's still love and positivity in the world." - one of Suncha Kim's children (Lee).

**"While there's evil in this world, when we see things like that (the support), there's still hope, and we see that there's still more love in the world... and my mother would have loved that. My mother would have known that there's still love and positivity in the world"**

*One of Suncha Kim's Children (Lee).*

# RALLYS IN MILWAUKEE



*A picture of Wisconsin State Rep. Francesca Hong who spoke at the Milwaukee rally.  
(Volpenhein)*

**T**wo days after the Atlanta spa shootings, a rally was held outside the Milwaukee City Hall to mourn the victims and to raise conversation on racism in America (Volpenhein). Wisconsin State Representative Francesca Hong, the first Asian American Wisconsin state legislature, spoke at the rally and called the killings clear acts of racial bias, “act[s] of terrorism” (Volpenhein).

To review, the official status of the shooting is that it was a crime brought about by a sexual obsession that conflicted with Long’s beliefs. However, in light of the very apparent rise in anti-Asian sentiments during the pandemic, this reasoning from Long seems ignorant.

In Wisconsin, hate crime to this scale seems far away, but even if Wisconsin isn’t in the news for larger, more prominent crimes against Asian Americans, this doesn’t mean that it isn’t a problem. Even here in Wisconsin, Asian Americans have reported being targets of harassment and vandalism. In Stevens Point a man was charged with a hate crime after harassing two Hmong people, stating that he believed “the Chinese were ‘poisoning us’ with the coronavirus” (Volpenhein).

Lee Her, a Hmong American who was at the Milwaukee rally says, “My parents and my grandmother have become more vocal about it, about being careful where you go, because of who you are... Even though it’s always been there, we never really talked about it. But definitely in the last year, it has



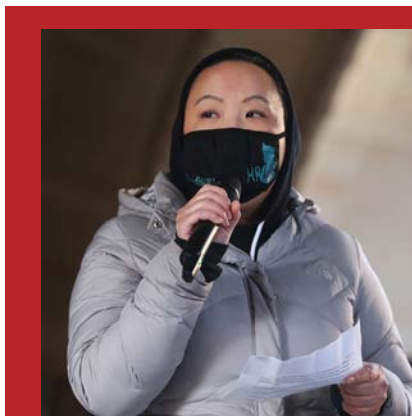
Participants at the Milwaukee rally in the Milwaukee City Hall.

(Volpenhein)

been more openly discussed” (Volpenhein).

Tammie Xiong, the executive director of the Hmong American Women’s Association in Milwaukee, states “So many of us are highly aware that we could lose our lives to people who do not see our humanity as a woman and as an Asian woman... We are hypersexualized and so often are the victims of violence. And violence against Asian women by white men is not anything new. Asian women have been experiencing violence from white men through our histories of colonialism” (Volpenhein).

Xiong continued, calling for people to speak out against not only Asian hate, but hate against marginalized groups in general and to “support local organizations that are working to combat racism and misogyny” (Volpenhein).



**“So many of us are highly aware that we could lose our lives to people who do not see our humanity as a woman and as an Asian woman...”**

*Tammie Xiong, the executive director of the Hmong American Women’s Association in Milwaukee, who was at the Milwaukee rally (Volpenhein).*

# ASIAN AMERICAN PACIFIC ISLANDER HATE SURGES TO ALL TIME HIGHS AMID COVID OUTBREAK

As everyone is aware, the last few years of America have been extremely unstable ones. The actions of past-president Donald Trump and the incident involving George Floyd, an innocent black man, who was murdered by police over \$20, divided the country. The entire society was and still is falling apart. The coronavirus pandemic was just the icing on the cake, increasing the tensions in America to an all time high. Part of these high tensions has been the surge in anti-Asian sentiments. The fact that the virus originated from China has caused many to unfairly attribute COVID to Asians all over the world. Although anti-Asian sentiments have always existed, the pandemic and various incidents have caused these sentiments to become more apparent.



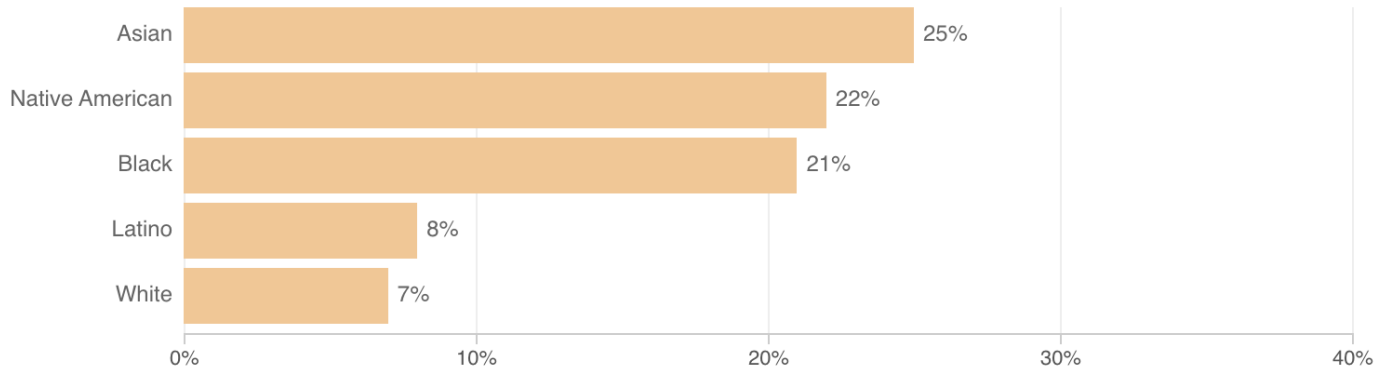
*Former President Donald J. Trump calls COVID, which originated from Wuhan, China, the “Chinese Virus” causing uproar across the nation.*

*(Follows)*

Most notably is when past president Donald Trump called COVID the “Chinese Virus” in a Twitter tweet and on live television multiple times. Even prior to this, the “... Asian Pacific Policy & Planning Council... documented over 1,000 reports from Asian people of corona-virus discrimination and hate crimes from March 19th to April 1st [of 2020]” (Chen), and the FBI has reported a 70% increase in

hate crimes targeting people of Asian descent in 2020 compared to 2019, the number heavily speculated to be even higher as many of these crimes have gone unreported (Mangan). In their article, “Anti-Asian sentiment in the United States - COVID-19 and history,” H. Alexander Chen states that this increase in hate crimes and the use of phrases like “Chinese virus” point to the “personification of COVID-19

## 1 in 4 Asian households reported the fear of being threatened or physically attacked in recent months



### Notes

Respondents were asked: In the past few months, was there ever a time when you feared that someone might threaten or physically attack you or anyone living in your household because of their race or ethnicity?

Source: NPR/Robert Wood Johnson Foundation/Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health poll of 3,616 adults conducted Aug. 2-Sept. 7. Sample includes 1,726 non-Hispanic white adults, 634 Black adults, 669 Latino adults, 388 Asian adults and 112 Native American adults.

Credit: Daniel Wood/NPR

NPR, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health has stated that in a recent study they found that 1 in 4 Asian Americans have experienced fear that they or their family would be attacked or threatened because of their race and/or ethnicity.

(Fadel)

as Asian people” (Chen). Former President Trump’s role as a “world leader” at the time and the statements he made solidified this rhetoric. The increasing divide has caused nationwide unrest among minority groups who are widely at the brunt of all this, especially Asian-Americans. NPR, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health has stated that in a recent study they found that 1 in 4 Asian Americans have experienced fear that they or their family would be attacked or threatened because of their race and/or ethnicity (Fadel). Overall, incidents that strike fear, like the pandemic, led to the majority

blaming minorities, furthering ideas of “otherness.”

More prominently, many Asian-Americans are scared of potential microaggressions. NPR cites stats from Stop AAPI (Asian American Pacific Islander) Hate, a non-profit organization looking to stop AAPI hate. The data shows that out of the 9,000 hate incidents that have been reported to them in the 15 months after their formation during the pandemic, 90% of them come in the form of microaggressions, refusal of service, or verbal harassment (Fadel).

*The use of phrases like “Chinese virus” point to the “personification of COVID-19 as Asian people” (Chen).*

# no one came to help her

**O**f note was a crime that happened not too long after the deadly Atlanta shooting. On March 29th of 2021, a 65-year-old Asian American woman was on her way to church when she was assaulted. As she walked down West 43rd Street in New York City, a man approached her. He yelled “Fuck you, you don’t belong here” before kicking her to the ground in front of a Brodsky owned luxury apartment complex and brutally stomped on her head several times. One of the staff, as shown in a security video recording of the attack, witnessed the entire assault and did not make a single move to intervene. When the assailant left, two guards from off camera moved into frame and closed the front doors of the lobby on the woman. The woman, according to the NYPD, “sustained a serious physical injury” and was taken to a local hospital (Elfrink).

The man in question, Brandon Elliot, 38, was previously convicted of murder in 2002 for stabbing his mother in the heart three times, killing her. He was on life-time parole for this crime. After this assault, Elliot was arrested two days later in Manhattan. He is being charged with “felony assault as a hate crime” according to info The Washington Post received from the NYPD (Elfrink).

There have been several other brutal crimes against innocent Asian Americans, such as an Asian man who was brutally beaten in a subway train and then choked into unconsciousness or another Filipino man who was slashed across the face with a boxcutter on his way to work (Elfrink). There was even a case involving an 84-year-old Thai American, Vicha Ratanapakdee, who was forcefully pushed down while on a morning walk and later died due to brain hemorrhaging (Lah). He never woke up after the initial assault, as stated by the man’s daughter, Monthanus Ratanapakdee (Lah). He never got to say his goodbyes.

"He never wake up again... I never I see him again (sic)" she said (Lah).

While these three incidents cannot be classified as hate crimes due to a lack of evidence pointing toward this conclusion, it’s not hard to see why someone would think so. Again, in a nation so filled with tension, the concerns of Asian Americans should not be pushed to the side. These are real people with lives and families that are being threatened due to baseless prejudice. Something needs to change.

A black and white illustration of a coastal town. In the foreground, a large ship with a single mast and a sail is on the water. The sail has the name 'ALTONOWEP' written on it. In the background, a town is built on a hillside. A sign on a building reads 'BUTCHER TOWN'. Three figures with long, shaggy hair and grotesque, mask-like faces are standing in the foreground, looking towards the viewer. The overall style is reminiscent of a woodcut or a detailed drawing.

**A NATION  
BUILT ON  
EMPTY  
PRIDE**

*keep on reading for more*

# A History of Anti-Asian Hate

**A**nti-Asian sentiments in America have existed since the first Asian immigrants arrived in 1800s. These events are simply the resurfacing of long-ignored discrimination. In fact, similar to the rise of anti-Asian sentiments during the covid pandemic, in the 1900s San Francisco had an incident involving the bubonic plague that sparked similar existing sentiments. Chinatown in San Francisco was seen by the white population as a place of disease, the source of malaria, leprosy, smallpox, etc. because the area was crowded (they ignored the fact that San Francisco was, in general, a very crowded city) (Trauner). Many even believed that certain diseases only affected Asians because they were inherently “dirty”. One day, a Chinese man came back to America in San Francisco feeling sick (Trauner). As medical facilities barred people of color, the man’s condition worsened and he died (Trauner). His death was attributed to being most likely caused by the bubonic plague (Trauner). In the following months, the Chinese neighborhood in San Francisco was closed off from the white population (Trauner). Even as the plague spread across the continent, the city proclaimed that the Black Death had not reached them (Trauner).



San Francisco's "Three Graces"—malaria, smallpox, and leprosy—stalked the city throughout the '70's and '80's, and health officials incorrectly traced them to Chinatown's "vapors" and crowded conditions.

*A graphic featured in Trauner's essay "The Chinese as Medical Scapegoats in San Francisco, 1870-1905." The caption of this reads, "San Francisco's 'Three Graces'--malaria, smallpox, and leprosy--stalked the city throughout the 70's and 80's, and health officials incorrectly traced them to Chinatown's 'vapors' and crowded conditions."*

(Trauner)



# The Beginnings

**T**he Asian Nation states that one of the very first incidents of discrimination against Asians in America happened directly after the first Chinese migrants arrived in 1848 during the Gold Rush in California. A Foreign Miner Tax was implemented on migrants, stating that a certain amount of tax was to be taken away from every foreign miner. These taxes were, in reality, only being collected from Chinese immigrants despite the fact that there were migrants from European countries as well. When the Chinese miners tried to protest against the unfair taxes, they were beaten or murdered. When they tried to take the issues to court, they were denied trials. Hundreds of murderers escaped without consequence for their heinous acts (Nation).

The writers of Asian Nation continue, saying that following this, Chinese-Americans continued to be discriminated against in various ways. During the construction of the Transcontinental Railroad, Chinese immigrants were made to do the most grueling work

and despite this were only paid wages that were 60% of what their European counterparts were being paid. If they protested, they were starved or beaten. When the monumental railroad was finished in 1869, a picture commemorating the success was taken, but the Chinese immigrants who had contributed so much to the project were not allowed in it and were even forced to walk the long road back to their homes, banned from riding the very railroad they had helped build. Eventually, in 1882, the very first law overtly barring a specific ethnicity from entering America was created, the Chinese Exclusion Act (Nation).

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# The Japanese Internment Camps

**D**uring World War II, Britain and France were at war with Japan, Germany, and Italy. When Japan launched an attack on Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, U.S., America joined the war in 1941. As the writers for History state in one of their articles, in 1942, through President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066, a policy was implemented that allowed the U.S. government to incarcerate anyone of Japanese descent in camps, even if they were already U.S. citizens. Overall, about 120,000 Japanese people were affected, most of them already naturalized (Japanese).

History's article reports that anyone who was at least 1/16 Japanese was removed. This included 17,000 children under the age of 10 and thousands of elderly and disabled. They were given six days to throw away their belongings, allowed to bring only what they could carry with them. Violence occurred in the relocation camps occasionally, with several men and women being shot down and killed for reasons like walking too close to the barbed wire fences surrounding their enclosures and protesting against food shortages, unsafe conditions, and overcrowding (Japanese).



*Top: A picture of the conditions in the internment camps.*

*Top-middle: The Mochida family waiting to be shipped to the internment camps.*



*Bottom-middle: The last of the Japanese Americans in Redondo Beach are forced out by truck.*

*Bottom: A photo of the government provided shacks at the internment camp in Santa Anita, Los Angeles county.*



*(Japanese)*

# Aiko Herzig-Yoshinaga



A picture of Aiko Herzig-Yoshinaga.

(Staff)

**A**iko Herzig-Yoshinaga was in her senior year at Los Angeles High School when Japan bombed Pearl Harbor. Her principal had gathered her and her Japanese peers and told them "You're not getting your diplomas because your people bombed Pearl Harbor." Yoshinaga, at the time, had been dating. Worried about being separated from her boyfriend, she eloped. She was placed in a camp with her new in-laws in Manzanar, close to Death Valley. Her family was sent to a different camp in Santa Anita, California and were later moved to Jerome, Arkansas (Migaki).

Yoshinaga says that what she remembers from those first days is the heat. The barracks were hot and dusty, and with so many families sharing the space, the place was crowded (Migaki).

"The only thing that was in the 'apartments' when we got there were army metal beds with the springs on it, and a potbellied stove in the middle of the room... That was the only thing. No chest of drawers, no nothing, no curtains on the windows. It was the barest of the bare" (Migaki).

At one point, Yoshinaga was given a canvas sack and told to fill it with hay to make a bed (Migaki).

Many spent the rest of their days in these camps,

like Yoshinaga's own father who would die after becoming gravely ill. Others were forced to make livings in the camps and make do with the little supplies they had. Yoshinaga would give birth to her daughter in these camps.

Yoshinaga remarried her third husband, Jack Herzig, several years after the Japanese Americans were released from the camps, becoming Aiko Herzig-Yoshinaga. With her husband and several others, Herzig-Yoshinaga played a crucial role in passing the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 which offered an apology to Japanese Americans and reparations of \$20,000 to the families affected.

She had discovered a document that "quoted a government official saying that there was no national security reason for incarcerating the Japanese-Americans during the war" (Migaki). It was an admittance to the unreasonable incarceration of Japanese Americans.

Aiko Herzig-Yoshinaga passed away in 2018 at the age of 93 (Staff). She did eventually get the high school diploma she had been denied upon her incarceration (Migaki). Despite the fact she is gone, she has left with the Asian community in America a legacy.

# THE MODEL MINORITY MYTH

*T*he term “model minority” is used to refer to minority groups that have achieved socioeconomic success and is most commonly attributed to Asian-Americans. The term is controversial as many see it as a harmful stereotype/myth. To many, the idea of a “model minority” pits different minority groups against each other despite the fact they are all, essentially, in the same boat (Practice).

The model minority myth also fails to acknowledge the racism and discrimination that Asian-

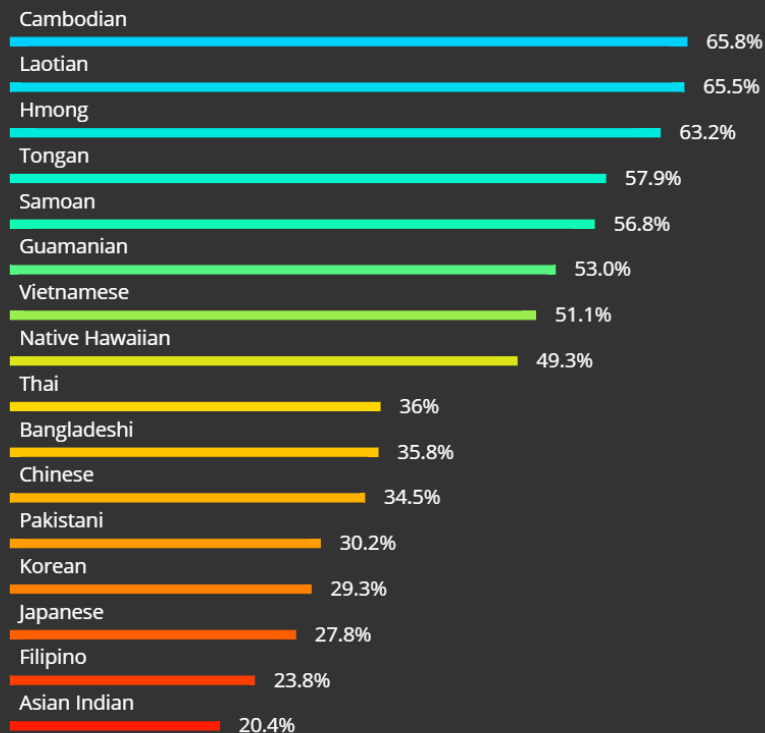
Americans continue to face on a day-to-day basis. In their article, “Debunking the ‘model minority’ myth: How positive attitudes toward Asian Americans influence perceptions of racial microaggressions”, Jennifer Y. Kim states that despite Asian-Americans being a “model minority” and subsequently apparently not experiencing racial discrimination, a “... national survey, [states that] approximately 35% of Asian American professionals reported that they have experienced some form of overt or covert racial

discrimination at the individual or systemic level” (Kim). As already stated, the pandemic has made these anti-Asian sentiments more apparent, showing that the model minority is indeed a myth.

While Asian-Americans are statistically shown to have the highest median income when compared to other minority groups, they also have the widest wage gaps compared to other minorities (Practice). Harvard Law School states in an article that, “As of 2016, the top 10th percentile of Asian Americans

## Percentage of Adults (25 Years or Older) Who Have Not Attended College

According to a 2011 report based on 2006-2008 data compiled by the National Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islander Research in Education, access to higher education differs among Asian American and Pacific Islanders.



ASIAN  
AMERICA

Source: American Community Survey, 3-Year Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS)

*This graphic from NBC Asian American shows the large disparities in access to education across some of the ethnic groups of the Asian-American group.*

*(Fuchs)*

earns 10.7 times as much as the bottom 10th percentile, compared with 9.8 for black earners and 7.8 for both Hispanic and white earners” (Practice). The graphic above from NBC Asian America shows the large disparities in access to education across some of the ethnic groups of the Asian-American group (Fuchs). Several other factors make many question the validity of the model minority, such as the role of selective immigration of Asian-Americans in only allowing highly educated professionals into the nation or the social and/or cultural contexts

of Asian-American families (Yoo). In short, “the model minority argument often privileges generalizations based on surface-level analysis at the expense of more-refined and nuanced investigation” (Practice).

# ORIENTALISM

## Namrata Verghese

Orientalism is defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary as “Something (such as a style or manner) associated with or characteristic of Asia or Asians” (“Orientalism”). It’s a seemingly harmless word that can be attributed to anything Eastern. It’s used to refer to certain shops, certain foods, certain styles; all of which are different from the perceived “norm” of America. This assumption, however, is entirely false. In their article “What Is Orientalism? A Stereotyped, Colonialist Vision of Asian Cultures,” Namrata Verghese states that orientalism is a made-up concept that furthers ideas like of the “other” and the “perpetual foreigner,” concepts that haunt Asian-Americans constantly due to their differences and perceived exoticness. It’s “a collection of binaries — between ‘East’ and ‘West,’ foreign and familiar, civilized and uncivilized, primitive and progressive, colonizer and

colonized, self and Other” (Verghese).

Orientalism is a way of idolizing the West as superior and reaffirms Western white supremacy (Verghese). And yet, because of this, the West cannot exist without the East that it has belittled because so much of its identity has been built on this need for superiority and dominance, to be seen as a savior for these “uncivilized” and “barbaric” cultures (Verghese). “To be ‘Oriental’ is to be ‘Orientalized’ — to inhabit whatever vessel deemed appropriate for you at any given time, whether that be a bloodthirsty terrorist or hypersexualized yogic fantasy” (Verghese). Even though Asian cultures have so often been attributed to disease and barbarity, the West cannot help but appropriate the pretty parts of these cultures and “hypersexualize” them to their liking.

The Atlanta shooting is directly related to this idea of orientalism in the United States. Asian women are often hypersexualized, with many finding appeal in the fetishizing stereotype that Asian women are quiet and subservient. Robert Long took to shooting down Asian-owned spas and killing several Asian women due to an undisclosed sexual obsession. It’s not difficult to presume that this sexual obsession was this intense hypersexualization of Asian women. And yet, throughout the pandemic we have seen Asian people across the nation also be beaten and killed for their Asian background; attributed to disease and death.

Orientalism is a deadly concept. It takes Asian culture and subverts it, dirties it, soils its origins. It’s only as the meek illusion orientalism paints of the East that the West feels comfortable enough to completely dominate and appropriate.



**“It’s Steve McCurry achieving global fame after National Geographic published his photograph, ‘Afghan Girl,’ while the portrait’s subject, Sharbat Gula, not only never received a penny for the photo but was allegedly imprisoned because of its impact.”**

*(Verghese)*

As Namrata Verghese states in her article:

“Orientalism is yoga studios and bindis at Coachella. It’s Starbucks profiting off a popular South Asian drink by rebranding it a “golden turmeric latte.” It’s Bridgerton romanticizing the aesthetics of British aristocracy while glossing over where (and who) the heroes’ riches came from. It’s a white woman falling “in love” with chai after visiting India and then proceeding to make millions selling the drink. It’s calling COVID-19 “kung flu.” It’s my former history teacher asking her students to debate the “pros and cons” of colonialism, while consistently mixing up the only two South Asian girls in her class. It’s every “empowering” Netflix show that depicts a Muslim woman taking off her hijab for a mediocre white man. It’s the fact that, as of 2017, the majority of The New York Times’s Chinese and Indian recipes were written by white people. It’s Trump saying, “I love Hindu,” and then striving to impose a Muslim ban. It’s the British Museum hoarding looted Indian artwork in glass display cases. It’s Steve McCurry achieving global fame after National Geographic published his photograph, “Afghan Girl,” while the portrait’s subject, Sharbat Gula, not only never received a penny for the photo but was allegedly imprisoned because of its impact. It’s the pervasive rhetoric painting U.S. military imperialism as “a fight for the rights of women” who are in desperate need of saving from their barbaric homelands by white Christian Westerners” (Verghese).

# A

## *The Atlantic*

There is no perfect person which of course means that there can be no perfect country. The only thing we can do as a nation is try to be better, but if recent events have anything to say about it, we would know that America seems to lack the ability to see its flaws and take on the responsibility of improving itself. Asian American Pacific Islander Hate has existed since the birth of this gilded nation and with it the brutalization of an entire race of people. So deeply rooted this oppression is, there is no way anyone could say that it will disappear anytime soon. There is no denying the fact that the nation, especially in the last few years, is in a state of drastic change. While the crimes against Asian-Americans have long gone under the radar, the events during the pandemic and afterward have brought to light some of the disgusting realities of this country. From the constant highs and lows of “dangerous terrorists” that and “diseased barbarians” this to “submissive, exotic beauties” there and “intelligent model minority” here, America cannot decide how it wants to feel about Asia and its Asian Americans. Despite this, one thing is clear. America is manipulative. It seeks to dominate over others as a nation of grandiosity and gold and infinite acceptance, but underneath we can see that it has built itself upon the broken down bodies of cultures milked for all their worth. With smiles on their faces, they stomp on others for being different, steal the parts they find pleasing, and butcher the cultures of those they have killed to fit their own hypersexualized ideal. America is on a rampage hidden under the guise of a savior, and if no one does anything about it, the whole world is bound to suffer.

# FACADES



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