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Finding a Path Forward

ASIAN AMERICAN PACIFIC ISLANDER NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS THEME STUDY

Edited by Franklin Odo

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Essay 16

New Asian American Communities: Building and Dismantling

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Growth and diversity characterize the development of new Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Legacies of wars fought in Asia, the passage of more equitable U.S. immigration legislation in 1965, and post-1975 Southeast Asian refugee resettlement in the United States ushered in new waves of immigration and the exponential growth of the AAPI community. The phenomena of interracial and interethnic marriages and families have also contributed to its increasing heterogeneity. In 1960, persons of Asian ancestry in the United States numbered less than one million. In 2012, the estimated number of U.S. residents who were Asian (identifying as either one race or in combination with one or more additional races) was 18.9 million. The increase in this population has not slowed in the 21st century. On the contrary, the growth of the Asian population between

View of a street in Chinatown, San Francisco, c. 1920-1930.
Photograph by Arnold Genthe, courtesy of Library of Congress.

the 2000 and 2010 censuses was 46 percent, more than any other major race group.[1] Demographic profiles present one dramatic lens to view the development of new communities. Place and culture provide others.

This essay profiles the five largest Asian groups in the United States—Chinese, Filipino, Asian Indian, Vietnamese, and Korean—in order to highlight populations that have been most impacted by new immigration. Its purpose is two-fold. First, it examines contemporary immigration as it transforms our American geographical landscape through the creation of new Asian urban and suburban communities and commercial districts. These new places reflect some upward social and economic mobility, but they are not without conflict and controversy. Their creation has also coincided with the destruction and dismantling of AAPI communities through urban renewal projects and gentrification.

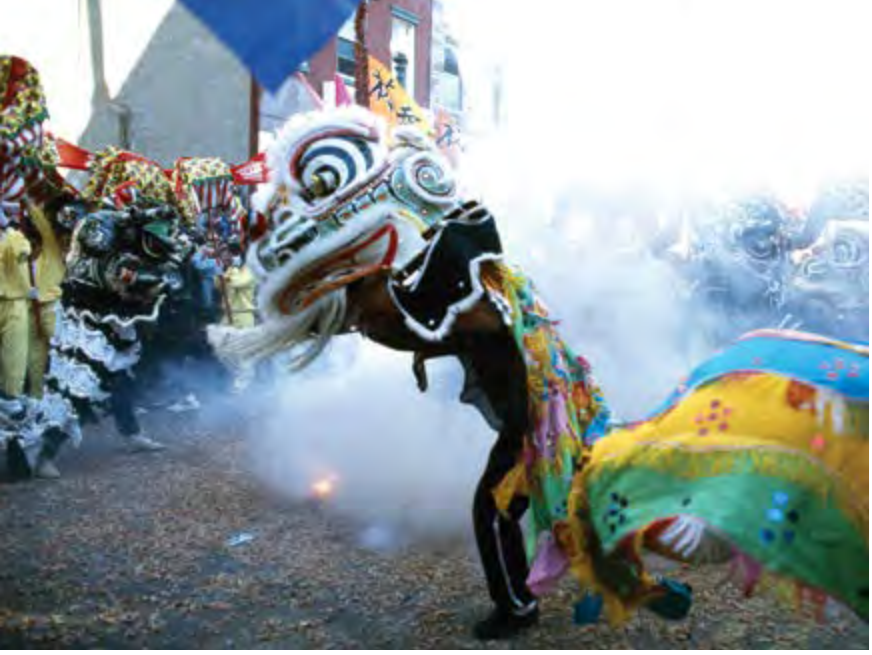
Second, this essay explores how AAPI communities have made an impact on America's cultural landscape through the revitalization of Asian cultural traditions. In the 19th and 20th centuries, racial stereotyping in world's fairs, dime novels, comics, Hollywood films, and other forms of American popular culture characterized AAPI cultures as heathen, primitive, child-like, dirty, mysterious, and exotic. These representations commodified and appropriated AAPI peoples as villains, sidekicks, sexual objects, and curiosities in popular entertainment, tourism, and consumerism. In reality, AAPI communities have employed cultural traditions in more dynamic ways. They preserve, adapt, and re-interpret these traditions in order to represent their histories, artistic contributions, and contemporary concerns with humanity, dignity, and resilience.

NEW CHINESE AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

According to the 2010 census, the Chinese population comprises the largest Asian group in the United States. The Chinese alone-or-in-any-combination population was 4.0 million.[2] A distinctive feature of the Chinese American community is that it is a product of both a long history of immigration beginning in the mid-19th century, as well as new immigration. Nearly 300,000 Chinese migrants entered the United States between 1850 and 1889. As their numbers grew, they increasingly encountered racial hostility and violence. Political movements calling for their exclusion ensued, culminating in the passage of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, which prohibited Chinese labor immigration and barred Chinese from obtaining U.S. citizenship. Although Chinese exclusion was repealed in 1943, immigration was extremely limited (annual quota of 105) until the passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 and the normalization of U.S.-China relations beginning in the 1970s. New immigration fuels the population's growth. Between 2000 and 2010, the Chinese population increased by 40 percent.[3] While Chinese Americans have settled across the United States, large proportions live in the West (49 percent) and in the Northeast (26 percent), especially in the states of California and New York.[4]

The most recognizable place-based feature of AAPI community development is the ethnic enclave, and the most well-known of these enclaves are Chinatowns. While many 19th and early 20th century Chinatowns died out as Chinese Americans were either driven out or moved out on their own to settle elsewhere, San Francisco's Chinatown, founded around 1850 and based around Stockton Street and Grant Avenue, remains a vibrant cultural center of San Francisco's Chinese American community. Tourism is a major contributor to its economy. For example, it hosts the largest Chinese New Year celebration in the Western hemisphere, attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors with elaborately decorated floats and costumes, exploding firecrackers, and an over 200-foot-long Golden Dragon. However, San Francisco's Chinatown is not solely an iconic tourist site. It is also home to a multi-generational Chinese American community. Elderly Chinese meet at the Woh Hei Yuen Park's Recreation Center to play mahjong or Chinese poker. The center also offers English classes, Chinese Lion Dancing and Kung Fu for adults as well as Kindergym and Chinese lessons for children ages 3 to 14.

There are many other Chinatowns in California as well as in states across the country, and their histories bear witness to the ways in which processes of urban renewal and suburbanization dismantle older communities. Los Angeles's older 19th century Chinatown was leveled in preparation to build Union Station. A new Chinatown was then built in 1938 with the more explicit objective of becoming a tourist attraction. A rural Chinatown in Locke, California, founded in 1915, once home to a Chinese-language school, is now predominantly a white community.



Celebrations like this one in Washington, D.C.'s Chinatown are held all over the country for the Lunar New Year, featuring "lion" and "dragon" dances accompanied by a plethora of fireworks. Photo by Carol Highsmith, courtesy of the Library of Congress.

Recent Chinese immigrants have breathed new life into older Chinatowns in California and New York, such as Manhattan's Chinatown, by investing in businesses such as sewing factories. The influx of investment boosted local employment and additional services proliferated. Many of these new immigrants come from urban areas, many of them are women, and they include both Mandarin as well as Cantonese speakers. Historian Ronald Takaki described their class backgrounds as "bipolar," comprised of a "Downtown Chinese" working class and "Uptown Chinese" professionals.[5]

Original urban Chinatowns could not contain the large influx of new immigrants, thus leading to the creation of new Chinatowns in surrounding areas, including other New York City boroughs, Queens and Brooklyn. As historian Shelley Lee writes, "Nationwide, a smaller and smaller percentage of Chinese live in city centers—in 2000, for example, just 2 percent of Chinese in the Los Angeles metropolitan area lived in Old Chinatown—although they have by and large remained in major metropolitan areas."[6]

New Chinese immigrants not only accelerated settlement across cities, they also contributed to the suburbanization of Asian American communities. A prominent example of this phenomenon is Monterey Park, California, which the media dubbed the "first suburban Chinatown." Located eight miles east of downtown Los Angeles, Monterey Park became a "majority minority" city where Asians made up 56 percent of the population by 1990. The transformation of Monterey Park grew out of the efforts of Frederic Hsieh, a realtor who had come from Hong Kong to the United States in 1963 to attend college. Hsieh arrived in the area in the early 1970s and promoted it to potential immigrants in East Asia as the "Chinese Beverly Hills." During that time, concerns over political and economic stability in East Asia motivated young engineers, scientists, and businesspeople from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the People's Republic of China to relocate and invest in Monterey Park.

More recently, gentrification has contributed to the dispersal of Chinese from Chinatowns. In a 2013 study entitled "Chinatown Then and Now," the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF) warned that gentrification threatens the sustainability of Chinatowns in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. Although these three Chinatowns are comprised primarily of small businesses related to the food industry, developers have also transformed factories and warehouses into luxury condominiums. And high-end businesses are concentrated on specific streets within, and bordering, the three Chinatowns. The AALDEF study expressed concern about the decreasing availability of green space and affordable housing. In 1990, Asians had made up more than half of the populations in all three Chinatowns, but from 2000 to 2010, their populations decreased to less than half of the residents.[7]

Another distinctive feature of new Chinese communities is related to international adoption. Since the late 1990s, China has been a major sending nation of adoptive children to the United States, topping the list of the top twenty sending countries in 2000. Adoption from China is a powerful visual example of contemporary American multiculturalism, because it is predominantly transracial with white American parents adopting the majority of Chinese children. Social, educational, and entrepreneurial organizations create and sustain communities of Chinese adoptees and their families. One of the largest is Families with Children from China (FCC), a nondenominational organization comprised of more than one hundred separate organizations across the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. The increasing ubiquity of the Internet

The Museum of Chinese in America (MOCA), in Manhattan, New York, was established in 1980 by historian John Kuo Wei Tchen and activist Charles Lai. The museum's purpose is to preserve, and make Chinese American arts, culture, and history readily available to the public. Photo by Jim Henderson, courtesy of Wikimedia Commons, licensed under Creative Commons.

has also resulted in highly specialized virtual networks for Chinese international adoptive families. These networks further diversify Chinese American communities in the new millennium.[8]

The creation of new networks is also a reflection of individual and collective agency. Individual and collective agency signifies the ability of seemingly ordinary people to make history. In the context of new AAPI communities, agency reflects the will and desire of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders to create and sustain a sense of belonging. The preservation and interpretation of history on their own terms—through the establishment of historical societies and museums, for example—are at the forefront of these endeavors. Founded in 1963, the Chinese Historical Society of America (CHSA) Museum is the oldest organization in the United States dedicated to the promotion and preservation of the history and contributions of the Chinese in America.[9] Housed in the landmark Julia Morgan-designed Chinatown YWCA building at 965 Clay Street, San Francisco, CHSA promotes the contributions of the Chinese in America. One of their recent events honored Chinese American chef and restaurateur Cecilia Chiang, who opened the Mandarin Restaurant in San Francisco in 1961 and is best known for bringing authentic, high-quality Chinese cuisine to American palates.

The Museum of the Chinese in America (MOCA) in New York began as a community-based organization founded in 1980 by historian John Kuo Wei Tchen and community activist Charles Lai.[10] One of its objectives is to make Chinese American history accessible to the general public through the appreciation of Chinese American arts, culture, and history. Educational resources for younger visitors feature learning about Chinese cultural

The Man@ngs were not able to freely get their education and, because of this, students of the Little Manila after School Program do not take their education for granted. Photo by Aldrich Sabac, courtesy of the Little Manila Foundation.

traditions like Lunar New Year and Cantonese opera, while high school-level programs include the study of U.S.-China relations and constitutional rights during World War II and the Cold War. A recent exhibition, entitled "Sub-Urbanisms," explores the controversial conversion of suburban single-family homes into multi-family communities by immigrant Chinese casino workers in Connecticut. Thus, preservation encompasses traditional Chinese culture as well as more recent immigration history in the making.[11]

NEW FILIPINO AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

Filipinos are the second-largest Asian group in the United States, with a population of 3.4 million.[12] New immigration is a major factor in the rapid growth of this group, which increased by 44 percent between 2000 and 2010. In the early 1970s, political instability (from dictator Ferdinand Marcos's declaration of martial law in 1972 until the People Power movement resulted in his ouster in 1986), high levels of domestic unemployment, and a Philippine government-sponsored labor export policy fueled the outmigration of Filipino workers worldwide. U.S. immigration legislation favoring workers with needed skills, American labor shortages (especially in the health professions), and higher salaries made the United States a favored destination. Overall, Filipino immigrants are a well-educated group with much higher education rates compared to both the native- and total foreign-born populations.[13] High levels of English language proficiency and Americanized educational training (legacies of the history of U.S. colonization of the Philippines from 1898 to 1946) and their propensity towards U.S. naturalization have also contributed to their integration into American communities.

But it would be more accurate to characterize new Filipino immigration as having a dual nature. Both working-class as well as middle-class Filipinos have immigrated in large numbers. Professional workers comprised the majority of new immigrants only in the decade after 1965. Beginning in the mid-1970s, the numbers of Filipinos immigrating to the United States as family members would comprise the vast majority of new immigrants. These immigrants were more socio-economically diverse and worked in blue-collar or low-wage service jobs such as custodial and assembly work.

New Filipino American communities are most visible in places throughout the United States that have

Built in 1832 and altered considerably over time, the YMCA building is an icon in Philadelphia's Chinatown; it once housed the Chinese Cultural and Community Center, but has been closed since 2007. Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress.

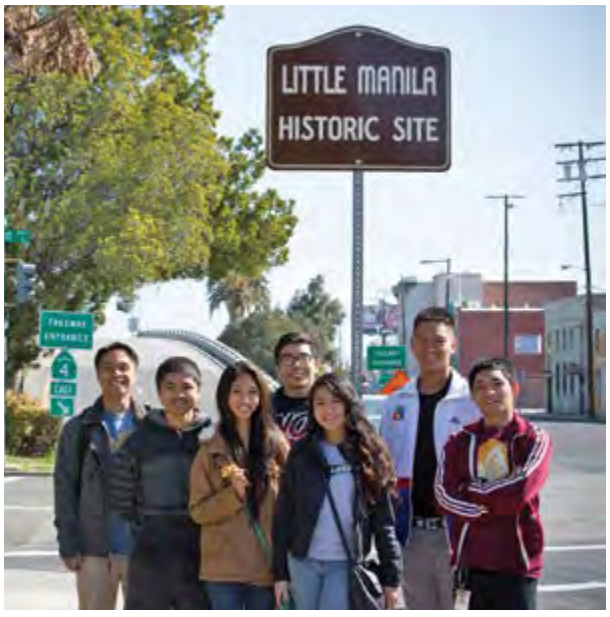
employed Filipino workers, most notably U.S. hospitals and military bases. A unique feature of new Filipino immigration is the highly visible stream of Filipino health worker immigrants. Hospitals in New York, California, Florida, Texas, and Massachusetts have been the major recruiters of nurses from the Philippines. Urban areas in the Midwest, most notably Chicago, have also been major destinations.[14] Filipino men are also immigrating as physicians and other healthcare practitioners. These workers reside in small towns as well as metropolitan areas throughout the United States. A segment of the 2003 documentary film series "Searching for Asian America" features two Filipino immigrants—Jeffrey Lim and Martin Bautista—who work as physicians in the rural town of Guymon, Oklahoma.[15]

The Philippines is also the largest source of foreign-born U.S. military personnel. As a result of its longstanding recruitment of Filipino nationals (another outgrowth of U.S. colonialism in the Philippines), the U.S. Navy has the highest number of foreign-born personnel. In the second half of the 20th century, Filipino immigration in connection to the U.S. Navy resulted in the growth of Filipino American communities near naval bases and training facilities in the United States from San Diego, California, to Norfolk, Virginia, and Bangor, Maine.

The high percentage of mixed-heritage Filipino Americans is another noteworthy feature of this group. According to the 2010 census, "the largest proportion of Asians in combination with another race(s) was for respondents who identified as Filipino (24 percent)."[16] Historian Rudy Guevarra's volume, *Becoming Mexipino*, documents the ways in which shared histories of Spanish colonialism, Catholicism, and U.S. racial segregation brought Mexicans and Filipinos together, resulting in a vibrant, mixed, multigenerational Mexipino community in San Diego as well as other parts of the Pacific West Coast.[17] In her memoir, *Twenty-Five Chickens and a Pig for a Bride*, community activist and author Evangeline Canonizado Buell records the history of her mixed-heritage Filipino and African American family in the Philippines and in Oakland and Berkeley.[18] Buell is the granddaughter of a Filipina mother and an African American soldier, one of the 6,000 Buffalo Soldiers sent to the Philippines to fight in the Spanish-American War of 1898.

A large proportion of Filipinos (66 percent) lives in the West, especially in California and Hawai'i, where they comprise the largest Asian group in these states.[19] While many Filipino-born immigrants live in urban areas such as Los Angeles, San Francisco, and New York, they have also contributed to the suburbanization of Asian American communities in the late 20th century. A prominent example is Daly City, located just south of San Francisco; it is also known as the "Pinoy capital" of the United States. According to writer Benito Vergara, Filipinos in Daly City find life there nearly indistinguishable from "back home" in the Philippines because of the presence of Filipino restaurants and shops, the celebration of Filipino cultural events, and the large concentration of Filipino residents.[20] In the 1970s, the vast majority of Daly City residents was white, but by 2008, Filipinos comprised fully one-third of its population.[21]

The creation of new Filipino communities coincided, however, with the destruction of older ones that were populated by predominantly single Filipino men who had migrated to the United States in the 1920s and 1930s. They had entered as U.S. nationals (a colonial status that enabled them to enter the United States despite restrictive U.S. immigration laws barring Asians) with dreams of furthering their Americanized colonial education. With few exceptions, however, they were relegated



Local high school students now lead tours of the Little Manila Historic Site, located in Stockton, California. At one point, Stockton had the largest Filipino population outside of the Philippines. Photo by Aldrich Sabac, courtesy of the Little Manila Foundation.

to backbreaking labor, primarily in agricultural fields on the West Coast. In the second half of the 20th century, these men, affectionately known as *man@ngs*, would become the majority of elderly residents of the International Hotel (or I-Hotel) in San Francisco's new financial district. Beginning in the late 1960s, the I-Hotel was the center of an anti-eviction fight between its low-income residents and local and international developers bent on gentrification. Despite the multi-generational and coalitional support that the tenants received, the battle would culminate in the eviction of the tenants and the demolition of the building in 1977. A parking lot took its place. Then, a gaping hole in the ground remained for decades until a new hotel was built in 2005. The new building includes low-income housing units. On the ground floor is a Manilatown Center, which preserves I-Hotel's history and serves the present-day Asian American community. While it is a testament to the political gains of the Asian American Movement, the recent escalation of gentrification and redevelopment in San Francisco's South of Market (SoMa) neighborhood is a cause of alarm for Asian American and Filipino American community organizations, including the Kearney Street Workshop, Filipino American Development Foundation, and Manilatown Heritage Foundation.[22]

Another example of Filipino American community dismantling is the history of Stockton's Little Manila, a once-vibrant community of restaurants, union halls, grocery stores, and churches. Famed Filipino American writer Carlos Bulosan used Little Manila's Lafayette Lunch Counter as his permanent address from the 1930s to the early 1950s. Stockton was home to the largest Filipino community outside the Philippines until urban redevelopment, beginning in the 1960s, demolished most of its landscape to build freeways and strip malls. The research and advocacy of community members, such as historian Dawn Mabalon and Dillon Delvo, resulted in the establishment of the Little Manila Historic Site and the creation of the Little Manila Foundation, which preserves what remains of this historic community.[23]

A community-based organization that aims to preserve and to document Filipino American history on a national as well as local scale is the Filipino American National Historical Society. Founded in 1982 by Fred and Dorothy Cordova, FANHS boasts thirty local chapters throughout the United States from Metropolitan New York to Hampton Roads, Virginia, to the Sacramento Delta and Alaska. It maintains an invaluable archival collection, the National Pinoy Archives, in Seattle, Washington. FANHS has also been at the forefront of institutionalizing the observance of Filipino American History month in October, a commemoration honored by the White House in 2015.

A similarity shared with the other fastest growing Asian immigrant groups in the United States is the centrality of a global diaspora in the Philippine experience and Filipino American transnational ties to other overseas communities throughout the world. Large numbers of Filipino migrants reside in Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Canada, and Japan, a result of the labor demands of a global economy and the Philippine government's promotion of the employment of Filipinos as OCWs (overseas contract workers) beginning in the 1970s. The significance of the Philippine diaspora throughout the world has inspired Filipino American diasporic cultural expression. The non-profit web-based organization CA+T (Center for Art + Thought) takes the Philippines and Filipinos around the world as a point of departure to explore histories, spaces, and communities. Their inaugural exhibition was entitled "Sea, Land, Air: Migration and Labor."[24] It highlighted the fact that Filipinos work everywhere and posed the question: "But where do they come from?" One of the featured visual artists is Jenifer K Wofford, a Filipina-American who was born in San Francisco but raised in Hong Kong, China, the United Arab Emirates, and Malaysia. Paintings from her "Macarthur Nurses" and "Point of Departure" series depicted Filipino nurses in their white uniforms and caps in historical re-enactments of iconic World War II images as well as in more abstract forms in recent times.

Another CA+T exhibition, entitled "Food Worlds," featured the Philippines and its diaspora as a "culinary landscape;" "a global archipelago of scent, sight, sizzle, and spice;" and "an empire of eating memories." Creative writing by Filipino American poet, playwright, and performer Aileen Suzara entitled "Litany For the Sea" connects the memories of the Philippine Islands and some of its most beloved dishes to the 18th century settlement of Filipino American villages on the bayous of Louisiana:

> *It must have been like this: like home, our seven thousand islands. And so you built a village on the bayou. The same shrimp, the marsh buzzing and singing, like the jungle. Familiar - thick like mud, like rainstorms, like pinakbet or lugaw. It must have been like this.*[25]

Cultural expression preserves the ties that bind Philippine and Filipino American history and memory.

NEW ASIAN INDIAN COMMUNITIES

The difference between pre- and post-1965 Asian Indian communities is profound. Prior to the passage of the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, the Asian Indian population was relatively small in number, comprising a few thousand by the 1950 census. In the 1990s, Asian Indians became the second-largest immigrant group in the United States, second only to Mexico.[26] According to the 2010 census, they comprised the third largest Asian group (3.2 million). Their growth between 2000 and 2010—68 percent—was the fastest among Asian American groups.[27]

Their socio-economic and cultural backgrounds also changed dramatically. In the first half of the 20th century, the majority of this population was comprised of men with farming backgrounds. They labored primarily in agricultural, fishing, lumber, and railroad industries on the West Coast. Hailing predominantly from the province of Punjab, most of them would live in California. Early 20th century exclusion campaigns targeting a "Hindu invasion" resulted in the passage of restrictive immigration acts in 1917 and 1924. In reality, most of these men were Sikh; only a small minority practiced Hinduism or Islam.

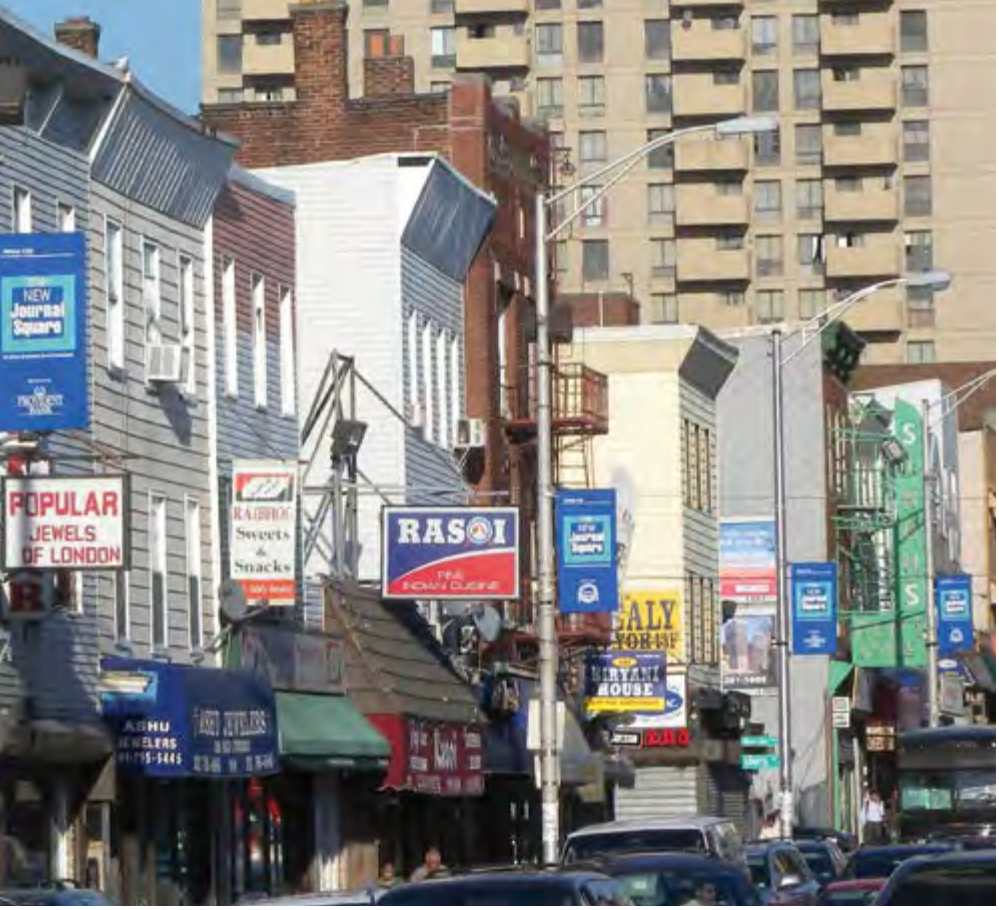
Given their small numbers and the transitory nature of their work, they formed few ethnic neighborhoods in the first half of the 20th century. This absence does not mean that they did not form communities. Rather, the conditions of their labor as well as overtly racist U.S. exclusion campaigns forced them to create communities on the move. Further, their participation in anti-British imperialist movements demanded secrecy for their survival.

The construction of gurdwaras (Sikh temples) on the West Coast attests to their presence. Baba Jawala Singh and Baba Waskaha Singh, farmers of California's Central Valley and proponents of Indian independence from British rule, built the first Sikh temple in Stockton in 1912.[28] In August 2012, the year of the temple's centennial, writer Bhira Baukhaus reflected on the significance of this history in relation to a devastating hate crime that took place in Wisconsin that same year. A gunman with ties to a white supremacist movement shot and killed six Sikh worshippers in a gurdwara in Oak Creek. At this temporal confluence of what was a commemoration and testament to Asian Indian resilience in the United States and horrific American racist violence, Baukhaus reflected:

> But I do know this: to wipe away what has come before, who we have been over the centuries, also means to forget who our own mothers and fathers were. It means that how they conducted their lives — the families they raised, the homes they built — didn't matter. It denies us that basic human impulse, to remember their stories, the unique timbre of their voices. It would be as if they had never existed at all.[29]

The Sikh Temple of Wisconsin had completed construction of the gurdwara at Oak Creek in 2007. The brick building also houses a library, a school for adults and children, and a childcare area for infants and small children. The site provides Punjabi language instruction, a mentorship program, and accommodations for visiting ragu jathas (priests) from around the world. The Sikh Temple also collaborates with the group Rangla Punjab to organize Punjabi folk dance and popular music events, such as gidha and bhangra, and other cultural activities.[30] After the massacre, the Sikh Temple has held an annual Oak Creek Sikh Memorial Commemoration. In 2015, these commemoration events included a 48-hours recitation of the Shri Guru Granth Sahib (the Sikh Holy book), meditation, a memorial 6K run/walk, and a remembrance ceremony.[31]

In the 21st century, not only had the numbers of Asian Indian immigrants to the United States increased exponentially, their population had become much more diverse. They hailed from multiple Indian states (most notably Gujarat, Punjab, and Kerala) and spoke multiple vernacular languages (with Hindi, Guajarati, Telugu, Panjabi, and Tamil comprising the top five languages).



India Square, Jersey City, New Jersey. New Jersey boasts the highest concentration of Asian Indian communities in the western hemisphere. Photo by Jim Henderson, courtesy of Wikimedia Commons, licensed under Creative Commons.

They practiced various religions including Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam as well as Sikhism.

These new communities are also much more socio-economically heterogeneous. They include urban professionals with strong English language skills as well as families of men, women, and children. The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 and the Immigration Act of 1990 featured employment-based immigration and preferences for highly-skilled immigrants. This legislation encouraged and enabled well-educated Asian Indian professional workers, most notably in medicine, the sciences, the computer industry, and engineering, to immigrate to the United States. In contrast, the legislation's family-based immigration preferences contributed to the growth of Asian Indian working-class immigrants of taxi drivers, shop owners, and gas station owners.

The diaspora of the Asian Indian population across the United States is noteworthy. According to the 2010 U.S. census, Asian Indians comprised the largest Asian group in 23 states, more states than any other Asian group. Of these states, 13 were in the South (Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia); 6 were in the Midwest (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Missouri, and Ohio); and 4 were in the Northeast (Connecticut, Pennsylvania, New Hampshire, and New Jersey).[32] Thus, while the largest populations of Indian immigrants have settled on the West and East coasts, "the South is distinctive in having a larger percentage of Asian Indians."[33]

New Asian Indian communities are concentrated in specific suburban areas as well as urban areas. Upper middle class Asian Indian families and other South Asian families, especially those in the high technology industry, were attracted to the suburbs of Silicon Valley in northern California. They are especially prominent in Fremont, which had a nearly 40 percent Asian population in 2000.[34]

One of the most visible features of new Asian Indian communities is the creation of Indian business districts—concentrated areas of Indian restaurants, grocery stores, clothing stores, and jewelry shops that are sometimes referred to as "Little Indias." Among the largest and well-known of the these places is Jackson Heights' "Little India" in Queens, New York; its expansion and popularity are partly a result of high rents in Manhattan that pushed Asian Indian businesses elsewhere. In 1991, a section of Chicago's Devon Street, the "Little India" stretch, was designated Gandhi Marg (Way). Another example—India Square on Newark Avenue in Jersey City, New Jersey—boasts one of the highest concentrations of Asian Indians in the Western Hemisphere. The Jersey City Asian Merchant Association (JCAMA) aims to organize Indian cultural activities and improve local business conditions. JCAMA helped organize a Navrati celebration in Jersey City, which involved over 100,000 participants and visitors.[35]

The greater New York City, Chicago, and San Jose metropolitan areas are home to the largest number of

Indian immigrants, accounting for about 27 percent of Indian immigrants in the United States.[36] According to the historian Vinay Lal, Indian ethnic, linguistic, and cultural divisions persist in the post-1965 Asian Indian community in Chicago. These differences are illustrated in organizations such as the Bengali Association, the Bihar Cultural Association, the Tamilnadu Foundation, the Telugu Association, the Punjabi Cultural Society, the Maharashtra Mandal, and multiple Gujarati associations. Several temples for the Hindu community, two gurdwaras for Sikhs, and a Jain temple reflect the religious diversity. However, cultural, professional, and social service organizations, such as the Indian Classical Music Circle and several Asian Indian professional organizations, promote a more encompassing Asian Indian identity.[37]

In Minnesota, five women—Neena Gada, Usha Kumar, Rita Mustaphi, Rujuta Pathre, and Prabha Nair—founded the School for Indian Languages and Cultures (SILC), a non-profit grassroots community project, in 1979. SILC students learn about Indian history, folklore, and classical culture in addition to language. School leaders point to the need for developing an "Indian cultural identity through the strength of our regional languages and cultures."[38] The staff and students represent many parts of India (Kerala, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra, etc.) and other South Asian diasporic locations. Elective courses include instruction in instruments like the tabla, regional cooking, folk and classical dance, yoga, and folk art. While some classes read folk stories to complement their study of Indian history, others use Indian narratives and characters to write about current U.S. issues.

The diaspora of Asian Indians in the United States and other parts of the world is also linked to a broader South Asian American history of peoples who trace their heritage to Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Tibet, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. The South Asian American Digital Archive (SAADA) is a non-profit organization that aims to create a more inclusive society by documenting, preserving, and sharing the stories of South Asian Americans. Over 2,500 archival items are available on their online archive on themes including community, media, family, and political engagement. SAADA strives to build archival collections reflecting South Asian national, religious, regional, socio-economic, gender, sexual orientation, and cultural diversity: "We believe that diversity is a strength."[39]

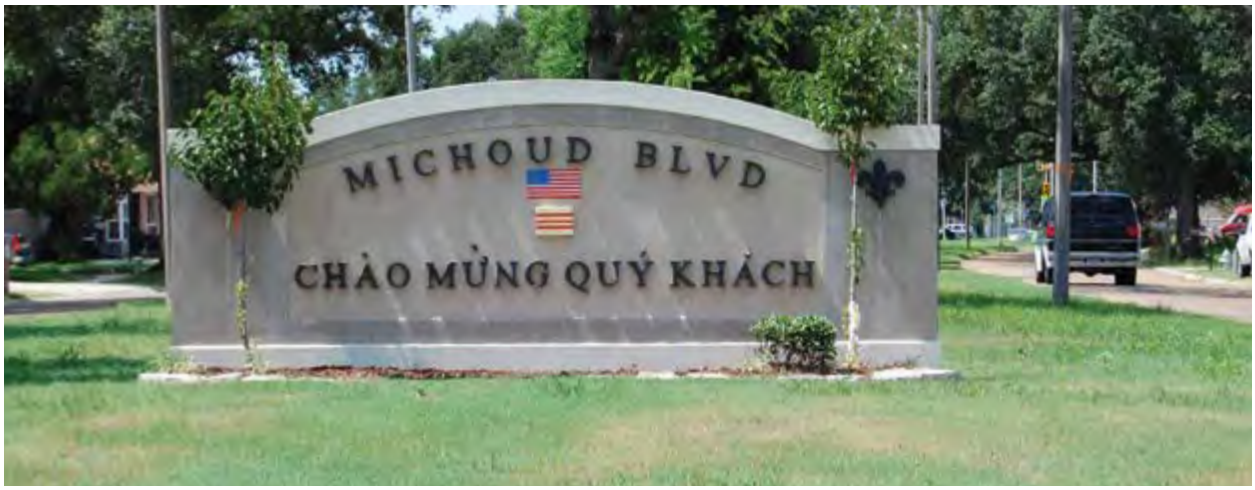
NEW VIETNAMESE AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

The initial rise of new Vietnamese American communities can be directly attributed to the aftermath of war. U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War was the catalyst that transformed a once tiny population into the fourth largest Asian group in the United States. At the end of the war in 1975, the defeat of U.S.-backed South Vietnamese forces to Northern Vietnamese communist forces resulted in an American-orchestrated evacuation of approximately 125,000 Vietnamese refugees fleeing persecution from their homeland.

Beginning in the late 1970s, hundreds of thousands more Vietnamese and other Southeast Asian refugees—Laotians, Hmong, and Cambodians—followed their exodus, making Southeast Asia the largest source of refugees to the United States at the end of the 20th century. By the early 1990s, Southeast Asian refugee flows to the United States declined as formal refugee admissions programs, such as the Orderly Departure Program, ended. However, Vietnamese migration continues primarily through the family reunification provisions of the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act.

Vietnamese migration to the United States thus occurred in three waves, each taking place within a specific political context and each having a distinct socio-economic composition. Military personnel and urban, educated professionals who were associated with the U.S. military or the South Vietnamese government comprised the first wave. The second wave—known as the "boat people"—were predominantly uneducated Vietnamese refugees from rural areas and ethnic Chinese-Vietnamese who had also become targets of communist persecution. The third wave entered the United States primarily through family-based immigration. It also included thousands of Vietnamese Amerasians (children born of U.S. servicemen and Vietnamese women) as well as political prisoners. In the 21st century, California, Texas, Washington, Florida, and Virginia are the states where most Vietnamese immigrants have settled.[40]

A distinctive feature of the history of Vietnamese American communities is the active role of the U.S. government in their early formation. The U.S. federal



Sign marking one of the two main entrances to Village de L'Est. in New Orleans. The sign is relatively new and is part of the Vietnamese American community's many post-Katrina infrastructure improvements intended to support their cultural heritage. Photo by Christopher A. Airriess, used with permission.

government and voluntary agencies throughout the country initially aimed to prevent large concentrations of Vietnamese refugees by deliberately dispersing them across the United States. By the end of 1975, most of them were in California, but they also settled in the Midwest with the aid of social service organizations, such as the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, as well as in the South where some found employment in chicken processing plants and nursing homes. Unsurprisingly, refugees left their initial places of settlement in increasing numbers to be closer to family and to seek new work opportunities. This relocation on their own accord (sometimes referred to as secondary migration) created sizable Vietnamese populations in Orange County and San Jose, California, and Houston, Texas. Subsequently, Vietnamese-owned businesses, including mom-and-pop stores as well as big supermarket chains like Wai Wai Supermarkets, fast-food *banh-mi* shops such as Lee's Sandwiches, and restaurant franchises like The Boiling Crab, proliferated in these areas.

In 1988, then-governor of California George Deukmejian officially designated the area in Orange County bordered by Westminster Boulevard, Bolsa Avenue, Magnolia Street, and Euclid Street as "Little Saigon." The sight and sound of Vietnamese language and the smell of Vietnamese cuisine permeated such ethnic enclaves and added to the diversity of the American landscape. For Vietnamese refugees, who left their homeland involuntarily and for whom there is often no return because warfare obliterated their hometowns and villages, these places had a deeper social and spiritual meaning. In one study on the significance of Orange County's Little Saigon, researchers emphasize that the enclave is not solely a commercial hub but also an emotional focal point of the Vietnamese community in America.[41] They argue that one of the ways that Little Saigon communicates a distinctive identity and presence reminiscent of Vietnam is through its architecture. For example, temples and other structures are built according to the principles of phong thuy, a Vietnamese form of the Chinese practice of feng shui. Familiar architectural forms, such as arches and curved roofs; artifacts like Buddhist statues; and landscaping with plants and trees from Vietnam remind refugees and immigrants of the places they left behind.

Places like Little Saigon are equally powerful for those Vietnamese Americans who were born in the United States and those who have little memory of Vietnam. They create a new place-based identity that forges connections between them and their immigrant parents and Vietnamese ancestors. These connections are sometimes conceptualized in spiritual terms as multigenerational communities and encourage Vietnamese Americans living outside of Little Saigon to make pilgrimages. The Vietnamese diaspora flocks to Orange County to attend the world's largest Tet festival, the most celebrated holiday outside of Vietnam. Little Saigon's cultural influence goes beyond its geographic borders through print and

other forms of media, such as its 24-hour Vietnamese radio and television broadcasts.[42]

In the Bay Area, the Diasporic Vietnamese Artists Network (DVAN) started in 2007 with the dual mission to promote artists from the Vietnamese diaspora and to enrich Bay Area communities through cultural programs that address Vietnamese American history, culture, and traditions. DVAN regards literature, films, and visual arts as tools for empowerment and healing. Recently, it has supported other Southeast Asian cultural productions of the diaspora by launching a San Francisco International Southeast Asian (I-SEA) Film Festival in 2015 in order to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the end of US military involvement in Southeast Asia.[43]

It is not, however, simply large concentrations of people and businesses that constitute a community. In the American South, a relatively small Vietnamese American community in New Orleans' Village de L'Est became a focal point of national attention after Hurricane Katrina, one of the deadliest hurricanes in U.S. history, devastated the city in August 2005. Although Vietnamese Americans constituted less than 1.5 percent of the city's population, they received inordinate attention from the press as many former residents returned to New Orleans and rebuilt their community in the aftermath of the hurricane.

Elderly vendors at the Saturday morning market in New Orleans that has been in existence for 30 years. With the gradual passing of the elderly Vietnamese American population, the number of vendors and cultivators of vegetables has declined. Photo by Christopher A. Airriess, used with permission.

Some observers attributed their resilience to innate Vietnamese family values and strong work ethic. Yet Asian American studies scholars cautioned against such ahistorical analysis, warning that it perpetuated a "model minority" stereotype and myth about Asian immigrants in relation to the negative stereotyping of African Americans. Rather, scholars, such as Karen J. Leong, Christopher A. Airriess, Wei Li, Angela Chia-Chen Chen, and Verna M. Keith, argue that the resiliency of New Orleans' Vietnamese American community can be largely attributed to their particular history and recent collective memory.[44] The violence and trauma of their experiences as refugees in relation to war in Vietnam shaped a different, more hopeful way of understanding their return to Village de l'Est. From their perspective, Village de l'Est was a place that Vietnamese American leadership and their social networks had forged out of relatively recent refugee displacement and resettlement. All was not lost. It was a place that they could re-inhabit and build anew.

NEW KOREAN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

Korean Americans comprise the fifth largest Asian American group. Their growth from a group of less than 10,000 in the early 20th century into a population numbering 1.7 million people in the United States can be primarily attributed to the U.S. military presence in Korea, the aftermath of the Korean War (1950-1953), and the passage of more equitable U.S. immigration legislation in 1965. By 2013, approximately 1.1 million Korean immigrants (the vast majority of whom are from South Korea) resided in the United States. Most Korean immigrants have settled in California (31 percent), New York (10 percent), and New Jersey (6 percent). They reside in large numbers in the metropolitan areas of New York, Los Angeles, and Washington, D.C.

Early 20th century Korean migration was relatively small. In the early 1900s, approximately 7,000 predominately male laborers migrated to work on sugar plantations in Hawai'i. However, the 1908 Gentleman's Agreement between the United States and Japan barred the entry of U.S.-bound Korean as well as Japanese laborers because, by that time, Korea had become a protectorate of Japan. Thus, with the exception of approximately 1,000 "picture brides," who arrived between 1910 and 1924 to join their prospective Korean husbands, Korean mass migration was halted until the 1950s.

In the late 20th and early 21st centuries, the growth of the Korean American population can be attributed to two waves of mass migration. The first is connected to U.S. involvement in the Korean War (1950-1953) and resulted in the migration of Korean military wives and children of U.S. servicemen as well as war orphans, mixed-race adoptees, refugees, professionals, and students. According to historian Ji-Yeon Yuh, nearly a hundred-thousand Korean military brides of American servicemen immigrated to the United States between 1950 and 1989. Some of these marriages were based on loving relationships, but stereotypes of Korean wives as fallen women or prostitutes in the Korean camptowns located near U.S. military bases in South Korea were pervasive. Further, their new homes in the United States—from rural Kansas to urban Philadelphia to Fort Collins, Colorado—were usually based on their husbands' family histories. These Korean women were often the only Korean, if not the only Asian, immigrants in the local area. Often isolated and marginalized, they reached out to one another, sometimes traveling great distances to share Korean food in each other's company. Furthermore, Yuh points out that these "women have been the critical first link in chain migrations of Koreans throughout the 1970s and 1980s and, as such, have been instrumental in the construction of Korean immigrant communities."[45]

Another group whose migration can be traced to the Korean War is adoptees. International adoption from Korea became the first mass wave of international adoptions in global history. Beginning in the mid-1950s, the phenomenon has spanned six decades and involved over 200,000 Korean children adopted by families in Western nations (primarily the United States, but also France and Sweden). What began as a post-war humanitarian effort to adopt primarily the mixed-race children of Korean women and American servicemen had transformed into a large-scale industry by the 1980s.

Although the numbers of Korean international adoptions have declined in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, this longstanding history has resulted in the presence of multiple generations of Korean adult adoptees in the United States.[46] They have been at the forefront of creating a sense of community among adoptees. Minnesota Adopted Koreans (MAK), founded

in 1991, would become the first official Korean adoptee organization in the United States. The number of Korean adoptees in Minnesota is the largest in any one place in the world. Productions by Mu Performing Arts (founded in 1992 as Theatre Mu in the Twin Cities) have featured Asian international adoption stories, such as *Walleye Kid*. Written by R.A. Shio and Sundraya Kase, *Walleye Kid* features a Korean girl who miraculously appears as a baby out of a huge walleye; she then becomes the daughter of the couple that caught the fish. They take a magical journey back to the land of her birth in this modern American fable "inspired by Korean and Japanese folk tales."[47]

The second wave of Korean mass migration in the second half of the 20th century is the result of the liberalization of U.S. immigration policy beginning in 1965 and widening social, economic, and political inequality in Korea. A lack of job opportunities and political insecurity under a Korean military dictatorship in the 1960s and 1970s pushed many educated Koreans, along with their families, to emigrate for work and educational opportunities abroad; at the same time new U.S. immigration preferences for highly-skilled labor and family reunification pulled them to the United States. As a result, the number of Korean immigrants living in the United States grew rapidly, increasing from 290,000 in 1980 to 568,400 in 1990 and 864,000 in 2000.[48]

Although a large proportion of the post-1965 Korean immigrants were highly-educated, professional workers, many of them engaged in new forms of labor because of barriers related to English language fluency and professional licensure in the United States. Miliann Kang's ethnographic study of late 20th and early 21st century Korean-owned nail salons in New York City illuminates how beauty work increasingly relies on the labor of immigrant women of color. According to industry sources, women comprise 97 percent of nail technicians. In New York, over 80 percent of this workforce is Korean. In the 1970s and 1980s, constraining domestic roles, in addition to limited job opportunities and repressive politics, pushed middle-class South Korean women with financial capital to emigrate, while the perception of socio-economic opportunities and political freedom pulled them to the United States. Once in the United States, however, language and licensing issues hindered their participation in professions such as nursing and teaching. The prescient innovation of a small group of Korean women who took advantage of the open regulation of the nail industry prior to 1994 led to Korean immigrant women's occupation of this labor niche. Whereas a manicure was previously considered a private affair, it became increasingly commercialized. According to a 2006-2007 report, nail salons had become a $6.16 billion industry.[49]

Many new Korean immigrants also became small business owners. Entrepreneurship, especially the ownership of small grocery and liquor stores in predominantly black and Latino neighborhoods in New York and Los Angeles that were increasingly abandoned by white business owners, presented a means of socio-economic mobility. Separately, Korean immigrant small business owners were also at the forefront of creating new ethnic enclaves, known as Koreatowns. Koreatowns have visually transformed American urban landscapes with the establishment of various businesses—Korean groceries, restaurants, hair salons, dental offices—and Korean Presbyterian churches.

Some of these Koreatowns, most notably in Los Angeles, have developed into more sprawling, multiethnic communities in contrast to the more traditional dense and compact ethnic enclaves. In Los Angeles, Latinos comprise a majority of Koreatown's population; in 1990, its population was 68 percent Latino.[50] The enclave also includes a large number of businesses run by other Asians and Latinos. While this spatial layout and multiethnic composition may have contributed to the invisibility of Los Angeles's Koreatown, the racial, cultural, and economic tensions, especially between Korean shop owners and African American customers, have garnered an incredible amount of coverage in mainstream media. This visibility was largely the result of highly publicized African American boycotts of Korean-owned businesses in New York City and Los Angeles in the early 1990s and the shooting death of a black teenager Latasha Harlins by Korean shopkeeper Soon Ja Du.

These tensions have also escalated into grave violence and community destruction. On April 29, 1992, a California jury found the four white police officers charged with the beating of a black man, Rodney King, not guilty. Korean Americans painfully remember that day as *Sa-i-gu*, a day that unleashed, in the media's terms, the 1992 Los Angeles riot. California's governor declared

a state of emergency and dispatched 6,000 National Guard troops in the city. When the unrest ceased, the human toll included 58 deaths and 2,400 injuries. Fire, vandalism, and looting resulted in $800 million in damages. Over 3,000 businesses were impacted; most of these businesses were Korean-owned.[51]

The conflicts in these communities also gave rise to new Korean American leadership and organizations, as well as new ways of reflecting upon and preserving diverse community histories. For example, media artist and scholar Kristy H.A. Kang is the creator of *The Seoul of Los Angeles: Contested Identities and Transnationalism in Immigrant Space*, an online platform for community storytelling and cultural history on the multi-ethnic identity and development of Los Angeles' Koreatown. Although many visitors conceive of Koreatown as an extension of Seoul culture, Kang points out:

> . . . what most people may not know is that the majority of inhabitants who comprise its residential and working class population are not Korean, but Latino. Though the majority of businesses are owned by struggling first generation Korean immigrants or, in some cases, financed by Korean transnational capital, the everyday space of this community is largely inhabited by a mix of immigrants coming from Mexico, Central and South America, and even Bangladesh.[52]

Kang continues that, although these multi-ethnic communities have unique cultural histories, they converge in the urban space of Koreatown. These community formations challenge popular conceptions of ethnic enclaves as ethnically homogenous. They illuminate a contemporary truth about Korean immigrants and other new Asian immigrant groups: Asian Americans are transforming as well as being transformed by American landscapes and places.

Finally, similar to other Asian American communities whose growth is fueled by new immigration, Korean Americans' transnational ties to Korea and diasporic connections to overseas Koreans are significant. These ties to Asian homelands and connections to Koreans overseas in many parts of the world influence the missions of new community institutions and research centers. For example, the Research Center for Korean Community at Queens College in Flushing, New York was established in Fall 2009 to promote and disseminate research on Korean Americans to the local community, overseas Koreans, and the Korean government.[53] Its main activities include helping faculty members from Korea and other countries visit the Center and publicizing research on Korean Americans through its online Korean American Data Bank. The reach of the Center is yet another example of how the impact of new Asian American communities is multi-layered and intersectional. New Asian immigration and community formations must be understood at local, regional, national, transnational, and global levels.

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