Racial and Ethnic Relations
in America, 7/e

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Sample Chapter

The pages of this Sample Chapter may have slight variations in final published form.
Millions of Asians have immigrated to the United States since the end of World War II. This massive immigration has included many refugees and undocumented people. Here, a boatload of Chinese are denied entry into the United States.
race matters because it shapes every aspect
of my life—and everyone else’s.
—Frank Wu

Western peoples are brought up to regard Orientals
or colored peoples as inferior. . . .
I was completely disillusioned when
I came to know this American attitude.
—Carlos Bulosan

Jesus could not get into America because. . . . He would be an Asiatic.
—Sir Rabindranath Tagore

In Chapter 11 we saw some examples of the prejudice and discrimination directed toward the Japanese in America. We also glimpsed some of the struggles of the members of that group to make a place for themselves within American society. In the present chapter we continue to explore these themes through brief discussions of four additional Asian American groups.1 Three of these—the Chinese, Korean, and Filipino Americans—originated in the Far East, and one—the Asian Indian Americans—originated in South Asia. Each of these groups was represented in the American population by 1910; but, as discussed previously, the ebb-and-flow of immigration since that time has paralleled the changes brought about by American immigration and naturalization laws during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the establishment of the Asian “barred zone” in 1917, and the Immigration Quota Act of 1924 combined to reduce immigration from China, Japan, and Korea to a trickle. A law curbing Filipino immigration was passed in 1934. During and following World War, special laws were passed concerning Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese naturalization. Additional laws, noted in previous chapters, concerned Japanese citizenship, war brides, family members, and orphans. These laws revived Asian immigration to a small extent; but the historically large flow we have called the Third Great Immigrant Stream began with the passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act Amendments (INAA) of 1965. These legal changes stimulated three discernible periods of immigration to the United States within each of the Asian groups discussed in this chapter.

In addition to changes in American immigration laws, the global expansion of capitalism and colonialism played an important role in Asian emigration. As the European powers competed for economic advantages in Asia during the nineteenth century, the United States also attempted to capture portions of the newly “opened” markets. The emigration of people from these Asian countries was, therefore, partly a consequence of the social and economic dislocations created by the global reach of Western economic and colonial power.
Recall that the first large immigration of Chinese people to America began as a part of the California gold rush of 1849. The exciting news of the gold strikes in California led people to dream of the enormous fortunes that might await those who could make the perilous journey to work in the mines. Declining living standards and social turmoil in China also stimulated the desire to emigrate, particularly from the southeastern part of China. Historically, China had been a self-sufficient country with greater interest in maintaining its ancient social structure and its dominant position in Asia than in trading with nations outside its sphere of influence. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, however, the Manchu (Qing) dynasty, in power since 1644, had become weak and corrupt. Rebellions broke out against the ruling class (Takaki 1998:32–33; Tong 2000:18). These conditions assisted the Western powers to force China to open its markets to foreign trade.

Britain, for example, was exporting opium grown in India and wished to continue selling it in China. After Chinese officials destroyed British opium cargos in the harbor of Canton, the two countries went to war. China was defeated in the Opium War of 1839–1842 and then reluctantly signed a treaty agreeing to accept shipments of British opium. China also was required to pay the costs of the war and to cede Hong Kong to Britain. This “unequal treaty” was soon followed by similar treaties granting trading privileges to France and the United States.

The lure of riches in America and the declining living standards in China were joined by still another powerful force encouraging Chinese people to cross the Pacific. In 1862 the U.S. Congress authorized the construction of a transcontinental railroad and, in 1868, approved the Burlingame Treaty between the United States and China. The building of the railroad required large numbers of laborers to do hard and dangerous work for low wages; and so the Central Pacific Company recruited Chinese immigrant workers. Uncounted numbers of these workers lost their lives in the process of building the railroad. Jiobu (1988a:35) quoted the historian Alexander Saxton as saying that “No man who had any choice would have chosen to be a common laborer on the Central Pacific during the crossing of the High Sierra.” The journey of over 100,000 Chinese to America during the 1850s and 1860s was—as we have seen for other immigrant groups—a result of both push factors in the homeland and pull factors in the country of destination (see Table 12.1).

It is one thing, of course, to wish to emigrate and quite another to be able to do so. The vast movement of people out of China during these years, mainly to places other than the United States, was conducted in various ways. Large numbers of poor people were tricked or forced into the slavelike “coolie” trade. These practices inflamed the fears of American workers and led, with only a few exceptions, to a prohibition on the entrance of additional Chinese people. Because of a previous treaty between the United States and the Kingdom of Hawaii, which was not yet a part of the United States, many Chinese people were able to enter Hawaii to work as contract laborers on sugar plantations. A few of these people later paid their own way to the American mainland. The great majority,
though, came under a form of sponsorship called the “credit ticket system” (Kitano and Daniels 2001:23; Takaki 1998:35). In this system, migrants would receive loans with which to pay the costs of the trip. In the typical case, the borrowers would later repay the lenders the original amount along with a substantial amount of interest.

The Chinese immigrants who came to America were similar in some respects to other immigrants we have considered. For one thing, the vast majority of these immigrants were men and, in most of the groups we have discussed, women did not emigrate as freely as men. In most cases, both wives and single women of good reputation generally were expected to remain at home; however, in the case of the Chinese, American laws and policies were expressly intended to keep Chinese women out (Takaki 1998:40; Tong 2000:28). Another resemblance between the Chinese and other immigrants is that, generally, these Chinese men did not intend to remain in the United States. They planned to go to Gam Saan (the “Gold Mountain”) and return home with their riches (Takaki 1998:31–36). As was true of many second-stream immigrants from Europe who reached

### Table 12.1 Chinese Immigration to the United States, 1820–2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1820–1850</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1851–1860</td>
<td>41,397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861–1870</td>
<td>64,301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871–1880</td>
<td>123,201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881–1890</td>
<td>61,711</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891–1900</td>
<td>14,799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901–1910</td>
<td>20,605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911–1920</td>
<td>21,278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921–1930</td>
<td>29,907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931–1940</td>
<td>4,928</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941–1950</td>
<td>16,709</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951–1960</td>
<td>9,657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961–1970</td>
<td>34,764</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971–1980</td>
<td>124,326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981–1990</td>
<td>346,747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991–2000</td>
<td>419,114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,333,490</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

America’s East Coast during the latter half of the nineteenth century, the Chinese reaching the West Coast at this time were largely “birds of passage” or sojourners. As noted in Chapter 5, residents of the West Coast greeted the arrival of the Chinese with various forms of hostility. After the completion of the Central Pacific Railroad in 1869, thousands of men (most of whom were Chinese) were thrown out of work and into direct competition with native workers for other jobs. Hundreds of Chinese people were harassed, expelled, and sometimes killed—all of which went largely unpunished (tenBroek, Barnhart, and Matson 1954:15). In Los Angeles in 1871, anti-Chinese violence resulted in the deaths of as many as 21 Chinese (Daniels 1988:59). As the Chinese population spread out of California into other Western states, even more deadly assaults occurred. In Rock Springs, Wyoming, in 1885, 28 Chinese were killed; and 2 years later in the mines along the Snake River, another 31 Chinese were killed. General expulsions of Chinese people took place in many locations throughout the West, including Canada and Alaska; and, along with the loss of lives, millions of dollars of property were confiscated or destroyed.

Throughout this period, and especially during the 1880s, the Chinese received little help from U.S. law officers and courts. Even when law officers arrested suspects, those arrested were seldom convicted (Daniels 1988:58–66). Understandably, then, large numbers of Chinese decided to leave the United States after the exclusion law went into effect. As a result, between 1882 and 1943, even with the addition of small numbers of Chinese people admitted as exceptions to the exclusion law, the Chinese population in America gradually declined.

Those who remained, or were later admitted, increasingly protested exclusion and the other forms of discrimination in the United States. Chinese people made speeches, published newspaper articles, and enlisted support from their friends in China to put pressure on the American government to improve their condition in the United States. They also filed court cases, some of which had important consequences for the developing Chinese American community. For example, in United States v. Gue Lim (1900) the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that, under the Burlingame Treaty, the Exclusion Act’s prohibition did not apply to teachers, students, and merchants and their families, among others (U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service 1943). Additionally, Chinese merchants were permitted to bring their wives and minor children to join them (Kitano and Daniels 2001; Lai 1980:223). This and other rulings increased to some extent the number of Chinese wives and children in the United States—an increase that was crucial to family and community development.

Roots of the Chinese American Family and Community

When exclusion went into effect, Chinese men in the United States greatly outnumbered Chinese women. Although this situation was common among other immigrant groups in America, it was more pronounced among the Chinese. The numerical imbalance between the sexes gradually declined after 1882, as did the total Chinese population, because as many Chinese men left the country, additional Chinese women were admitted.
Also, as time passed, increasing numbers of Chinese American women reached marriageable age. Still, the decline in the sex ratio was painfully slow. For instance, in 1890 the sex ratio was almost 27 Chinese males to each Chinese female. Fifty years later, even though the sex ratio had declined markedly, there were still nearly three times as many Chinese males as females in the United States (Daniels 1988:69; Kitano and Daniels 2001:25).

These adverse sex ratios slowed family formation (Hing 1993:54) and led at first to the establishment of a “bachelor society” in which families were rare. The pace of family formation was slowed further by the prohibition in some states of intermarriage between Chinese and Whites (Lai 1980:223). These factors, along with the general unfamiliarity of the Chinese with American culture and the extreme hostility of Americans toward Chinese people, led to the creation of “Chinatowns” that were segregated from the life of the surrounding communities.

The Chinese in America at this time were mainly from the southeastern Chinese province of Guangdong (Kwangtung). Most of the people were of the same ethnicity, spoke the Cantonese dialect, and were peasants and wage laborers. When they reached the United States, most of the immigrants settled mainly in rural areas where they could find jobs. Many of the immigrants staked claims to gold mines and continued as mine workers even after they were forced by rival American miners and anti-Chinese legislation to give up ownership. They also continued in railroad work after the Central Pacific was completed; and they gradually moved into various kinds of farm work. Those who were able to find spouses married, had children, and began the work of creating Chinese American institutions. Chinese women often combined working at home and raising a family with outside employment, typically as domestic servants (Chow 1996:116).

The relative isolation of the Chinese, the hostility directed toward them, and their intention eventually to return to China combined to discourage them from attempting to adopt American models of community organization (Nee and Wong 1998:1). Chinese communities in America, therefore, followed the traditional patterns of China and were based on kinship and regional ties. People who had the same last names and were presumably related organized family associations. People who came from the same districts of Guangdong Province formed district associations.

The district associations, or “companies,” formed a still more general organization called the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA), which, as the name implies, attempted to help its members in numerous ways. The CCBA helped people to maintain their contacts with China, to arrange funerals, and to find jobs, medical care, and housing. In general, the CCBA served the same welfare functions we have observed among the community organizations of other immigrant groups (Kitano and Daniels 2001:27–30; Lai 1980:218; Takaki 1999:38). In addition, however, the CCBA represented the community in its political and legal interactions with the Anglo American community and maintained order within the Chinatowns (Daniels 1988:24). Until the first Chinese legation was established in the United States in 1878, the CCBA acted as an unofficial diplomatic agency for the Chinese (Tong 2000:49).

The formation of Chinese families, businesses, and community associations moderated the excesses of the bachelor society and laid the foundations of cultural and secondary assimilation among the small American-born portion of the population (Kitano
and Daniels 2001:27). Some associations were formed expressly to encourage these forms of assimilation. For instance, in 1895 a group of Chinese Americans in San Francisco formed an association that during the next 20 years developed into the Chinese American Citizens Alliance (CACA).\textsuperscript{11} The members of this organization felt that the commitment of the CCBA to China and traditional Chinese culture was not the best model for American citizens to follow (Tong 2000:53). Moreover, Chinese Americans were often ridiculed by traditionalists because “of their lack of knowledge and appreciation of traditional Chinese culture” (Chung 1998:152), which only strengthened the resolve of the CACA members to stress that they were Americans, albeit of Chinese ancestry. The traditionalists’ charge of cultural assimilation indicates these processes were occurring among the second generation. As the CACA matured, it aimed to strengthen the ties among Chinese Americans, to fight all forms of anti-Chinese discrimination, to elevate the members’ moral standards, to encourage education, to enlarge and protect legal rights, and to encourage assimilation into American society (Chung 1998:154–157).

When the CACA was organized, the Chinatowns were still dominated by Chinese men and the CCBA; nevertheless, important changes in Chinese American society were underway. By 1900 about 11 percent of the people were American-born (Tong 2000:53). Throughout the period of Chinese exclusion, most of the Chinese American population lived in the western states, especially in California; but this figure declined steadily. For example, in 1880 almost 97 percent of the Chinese population of the United States was located in the West and 71 percent were in California. By 1940 these figure had declined to about 60 and 51 percent, respectively (Daniels 1988:73). New York by then had the second largest Chinese-ancestry population (Lai 1980:224). Along with this geographical dispersion, the Chinese increasingly moved from rural settings and lines of work into urban areas. For example, the proportion of Chinese people living in cities rose from about 22 percent in 1880 to about 71 percent in 1940 (Daniels 1988:69).

Important changes in international affairs, however, presaged later improvements in the status of Chinese Americans. In 1912, the Chinese overthrew the dynasty that had ruled China since 1644 and adopted a republican form of government (Chen 1961:388). Then in 1931, Japan attacked and invaded China. Tensions between the United States and Japan had been building for many years and American sympathy for China’s plight rose sharply. Simultaneously, American stereotypes of Chinese people became more favorable.\textsuperscript{12} When Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, China and the United States became military allies; so, in addition to the glaring contradiction that already existed between American’s national ideals and their treatment of the Chinese, a new contradiction now arose. On the one hand, there was increasing praise in our country for the resistance of the brave Chinese people and their leaders against the aggression of the Japanese; but, on the other hand, the Chinese exclusion laws remained in effect.

By 1943, the idea of repealing the Chinese Exclusion Act had gained substantial backing, and congressional hearings on the matter took place. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, a number of leading congressmen, a committee comprised of influential people,\textsuperscript{13} and a number of businessmen who either already had ties with China or who hoped to have access to China’s markets after the war, all favored repeal (Chung 1998:162; Kitano and Daniels 2001:41). On December 17, 1943, following a debate in
Congress, all of the previous acts that had established and supported exclusion were repealed. For the first time, the Chinese were given a quota under the Immigration Act of 1924. And, also for the first time, Chinese immigrants and legal residents became eligible for citizenship (U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service 1943). Nevertheless, Chinese immigration rose only modestly in the two decades immediately following the repeal of the Exclusion Act.

World War II brought labor shortages that permitted Chinese workers to fill jobs that previously had been off-limits. Unlike the Japanese Americans, Chinese Americans were not forced into internment camps and were immediately eligible to serve in the armed forces. Additionally, in 1946, the War Brides Act and, in 1947, the G.I. Fiancées Act permitted the admission of women outside the quota limit, thus accelerating the balancing of the sex ratio among Chinese Americans (Posadas 1999:28). These changes helped consolidate the position of the Chinese family and community in America. As conditions improved for Chinese Americans there was a gradual exodus of people from the Chinatowns, leaving them with a dwindling population of aging, still predominantly male, residents. These communities had assisted sojourners to settle, establish families, and prepare children for a new life in American society; but they now seemed destined to become only honored remnants of the past. Instead, as large numbers of new Chinese immigrants entered the United States after 1965, the Chinatowns participated in a broad process of Chinese American cultural renewal.

Chinese American Assimilation

The upsurge of Chinese immigration after 1965 created a greatly enlarged and more variegated Chinese American community. Of the more than 1.3 million Chinese immigrants counted between 1820 and 2000, about two-thirds have arrived since 1965. This rising immigration also has created a far more complicated pattern of Chinese American assimilation than existed previously. Some Chinese Americans now may trace their ancestry through as many as six generations while many others are part of a new first or second generation.

We are restricted here to presenting only a few illustrations of the workings of certain aspects of some of the assimilation subprocesses. In particular, we focus on cultural assimilation, as indicated by English-language proficiency; secondary assimilation, as indicated by education, occupation, and income; marital assimilation, as indicated by out-marriage; and identificational assimilation, as indicated by levels of naturalization. As we have pointed out previously, assimilation may occur differently among different population segments, and the main trends that may be seen within a given ethnic group may not be occurring in some segments of it. These divergences from the expectations of classical assimilation theory are the subject of scholarly debate (Zhou 1997).

The recent groups of Chinese immigrants differ from the earlier groups of immigrants in a number of sociocultural respects. The earlier immigrants were male, usually illiterate and unskilled sojourners who came from a single province on boats. The new immigrants typically come on airplanes, bring their families with them, are highly literate and skilled workers, and have come from Hong Kong, Taiwan, various parts of main-
land China, or various Chinese communities in other countries (Tong 2000:100; Zhou and Cai 2002:420–421). The early immigrants were mainly Cantonese speakers who concentrated in Chinatowns in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and New York City. The new immigrants speak a variety of languages and dialects but use Mandarin (China’s official language) as a common language. They have settled in large numbers both within and outside of the old Chinatowns and, also, in a number of large cities and states beyond the traditional ones. To illustrate, in 1998 California and New York were still the top two destinations for Chinese immigrants, receiving 27 and 24 percent of the newcomers, respectively; but also in that year over 49 percent of the new arrivals went elsewhere. Illinois, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Texas each received around 3 percent (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2001:12). Still, the metropolitan areas of the traditional “gateway cities,” such as San Francisco and New York, continue to house the largest Chinese populations (Zhou and Cai 2002:422–423).

These contrasts between the earlier and more recent Chinese immigrants are important for our assessment of the processes of assimilation. As we have noted, many obstacles to assimilation were faced by Chinese people in America during the first and second periods of immigration, and these obstacles delayed or prevented most members of the first generation from becoming fluent in English and from adopting other aspects of American culture. The second generation, however, attended American public schools, learned English, played American sports, and were exposed to American mass media—even though many of their activities, including school attendance and sports participation—were carried out in segregated settings (Tong 2000:65). As a result, they were far more assimilated culturally, by substitution, than were their parents and gradually became the leaders of the Chinese community. Many Chinese Americans then sought to move outside the ethnic communities and into the mainstream of American society.

A key idea of classical assimilation theory we have analyzed in this book assumes that, among assimilation subprocesses, cultural assimilation typically commences first and develops more rapidly than the other subprocesses. It prepares the way for each of the other forms of assimilation, all of which have been set into motion simultaneously. Among many of the post-1965 Chinese, however, there appears to be an anomaly. Since so many of the new Chinese immigrants are highly educated and skilled people when they arrive, they often go directly into professional, technical, and managerial positions, rather than going first through a lengthy period of cultural adjustment. For example, 42 percent of the foreign-born Chinese in 1990 had more than 4 years of college education (compared to 21 percent of non-Hispanic Whites in the United States) and 35 percent also held professional jobs (compared to 27 percent of non-Hispanic Whites). At the same time more than 80 percent of the foreign-born stated they speak Chinese at home and 60 percent stated they do not speak English “very well” (Zhou and Cai 2002:422–423). The ability of highly-educated Chinese immigrants to achieve rapid occupational assimilation, even though they sometimes may have only limited proficiency in English, may be due to their concentration in fields requiring mainly technical expertise.

Taken together these facts suggest that secondary assimilation may be occurring more rapidly among the newcomers than is cultural assimilation (Tong 2000:99); and, if true, that situation presents a startling contrast to the experiences, not only of the earlier
Chinese immigrants but, also, to the experiences of most other immigrant groups in American history as well. This conclusion may be premature, however, because highly educated immigrants may have a greater grasp of American culture than is readily apparent. Additionally, professionals must often first accept jobs beneath their levels of qualification and may face slower advancement even when they do move into the fields of their choice. Still further, they may then face income ceilings (Tong 2000:108). Those having lower qualifications than is typical for the group face the prospect of dead-end jobs, downward mobility, and a form of segmented assimilation in which they take on the characteristics of the working class African and Hispanic Americans in the communities where they live (Zhou 2002:89).

Consider another contrast between the occupational experiences of the earlier and more recent Chinese immigrants: entrepreneurship. Since the workers of the earlier groups were generally forced into less desirable occupations, few were able to amass the funds needed to start large, competitive, businesses. Many did, however, establish small, family business enterprises that required little capital and could be maintained by hard work, long hours, and low profit margins—such as garment factories, laundries, grocery stores, and restaurants. The initial funds used to found these businesses often were accumulated by rotating credit associations or woi, resembling the Japanese tanamoshi (Takaki 1998:241). Wealthier Chinese entrepreneurs also started larger businesses in the oil, automotive, cannery, banking, and shipping businesses, though most of these did not survive (Lai 1980:224). Still, the Chinese immigrants in America gradually became well known as entrepreneurs.

A number of the new Chinese immigrants have gained prominence as professionals and in business; and, unlike their earlier Chinese predecessors, they have not been restricted to small ethnic economy businesses in Chinatowns. They have rapidly established large businesses that cater to a broad market outside of the Chinese community, are well capitalized with both foreign and domestic funds, and have important transnational connections (Tong 2000:112–113). By 2000, business ownership among Chinese Americans had become so widespread that there was about one Chinese-owned business for every 10 Chinese Americans. Moreover, the reduction of anti-Chinese discrimination during the last century suggests there now appears to be a better chance than earlier that these business ventures will continue to succeed.

These indications that cultural and secondary assimilation are rapidly taking place among at least some segments of the Chinese American population give us reason to suppose that various members of this ethnic group also participate in a broad range of social interactions with non-Chinese Americans. Friendships formed in this way may lead them to select non-Chinese American spouses. We now consider briefly some findings from a study of Asian American intermarriage that included information on all four of the ethnic groups of interest to us and also distinguished between the foreign-born and the American-born within each group.

The study, conducted by Liang and Ito (1999), was based on U.S. Census data for the New York City Region. The researchers found, overall, that the average level of out-marriage among Chinese, Korean, Filipino, and Asian Indians of both sexes who were born in America was quite high (about 48 percent). In each of the four ethnic groups, out-marriage was very much higher among those who were American-born than among...
those who were foreign-born. In regard to Chinese Americans, the study showed that about 33 percent of the American-born Chinese men in the New York Region had married out of their ethnic group. Moreover, this was the lowest percentage of out-marriage among either the males or females of the four American-born Asian groups we are comparing. The level of out-marriage among Chinese American women (45 percent), although higher than for the men, was still the lowest among all of the American-born Asian women studied (Liang and Ito 1999:885).

The researchers considered various possible explanations of these findings and found that (1) the main factor affecting intermarriage is a similarity in levels of education and (2) the Chinese were “polarized” in that respect. The Chinese group included the second highest number of Ph.D. holders studied; but, the average level of education among the entire Chinese group was the lowest (13.3 years) of those considered (Liang and Ito 1999:883).

The marriage of a minority-group person to a majority-group person is an example of the formation of an especially important interethnic primary relationship. It also suggests, though not necessarily so, that the minority-group spouse may be moving toward identificational assimilation. Naturalization, on the other hand, is strong evidence of an increase in a person’s identification with the United States and other Americans. A study by Yang (2002) showed that the average (mean) level of naturalization between 1961 and 1998 among the Chinese, Korean, Filipino, and Asian Indian Americans was very high (58 percent), with a range of 49 to 68 percent. By contrast, the average level of naturalization among immigrants from Europe has steadily declined, averaging about 19 percent from 1961 to 1998 (U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service 2000:170). Among the Asian groups, the naturalization of Chinese immigrants equaled the overall average of 58 percent. To help explain why naturalization levels vary among groups, the researcher examined several factors, including the length of time people have lived in the United States, their language proficiency, the number and density of immigrants in their present community, and the gross national product of their countries of origin. He concluded that three categories of factors—conditions in the home country, the number and density of coethnics in a person’s present community, as well as a person’s individual characteristics—largely explain why immigrants do or do not choose to become U.S. citizens (Yang 2002:380). Other factors, such as the citizenship requirement that one must learn English or must possess certain legal documents, may also hinder naturalization.

The balance between a second-generation person’s identification as Chinese or American also reflects the opinions of their parents and other family members. A study by Kibria (2002:299–300) of ethnic identity among second-generation Chinese Americans found that many of those in her study sample spoke of “belonging to the ‘Chinese race’ . . . ” and that this idea of a “primordial” or blood tie was transmitted by parents and the immigrant community. If one accepts this view, then identifying oneself as an American poses a special problem. How can one “choose” to be an American if she or he is Chinese “by blood?” Kibria (2002:301) stated that the second-generation members of her sample held the idea of a “blood tie” in an “uneasy and unresolved tension with more individualistic ones” and were aided in maintaining this contradiction by “their recognition of the significance of race in the United States.”
On average, the Chinese Americans have rapidly achieved educational and occupational “success” in pursuit of the American Dream. Their attainments lend support to the view that in American society those who work hard and persevere may overcome many obstacles to worldly success. As a result, this group has been called a “model minority,” as have the other three groups discussed in this chapter. But as discussed in Chapter 11, this view is freighted with political overtones, distracts attention from the condition of those portions of the group that are downwardly mobile, conceals continuing discrimination against even those who are most successful, and is deservedly controversial. We return briefly to one aspect of this issue in the closing section of this chapter.

Korean Americans

The Korean peninsula extends approximately 600 miles from the Northwest Coast of the mainland of Asia, separates the Yellow Sea and the Sea of Japan, connects in the north to China, touches Russia to the northeast, and is separated from Japan to the south by the narrow Korean Strait. The proximity of China, Russia, and Japan has influenced the development of the distinctive culture and society of Korea for millenia.

The influence of China has been of the greatest importance among these countries (Hu 1961:292). During the Silla Unification Period (668–892), Korea’s rulers installed tax systems and civil service exams that were similar to those used in China. Later, during the Koryo Dynasty (918–1392), Confucianism supplanted Buddhism as the chief ethical system and guide to correct living among most Koreans. Later still, during the Yi Dynasty (1392–1910), Confucianism was adopted as the Korean state creed (Wagner 2002:551).30

Japanese influence in Korea began to increase over 400 years ago when the Japanese invaded the Korean peninsula. The Chinese joined the Koreans in their resistance to Japan, and the combined armies and navies expelled the invading forces after a long struggle. The Koreans subsequently drove the Chinese army out of their country and, except for a continuing tributary relationship to China, Korea was largely isolated from world events for about 300 years. It became the “Hermit Kingdom” (Wagner 2002:551).

During the last half of the nineteenth century, however, the world knocked on Korea’s door. In 1866, some French priests were killed there, and France sent an invasion force to retaliate. Shortly afterward, an American warship was sunk in Korean waters, and the Americans also retaliated. Then, in 1876, after Japan forced Korea to sign a commercial treaty with them, the United States and Korea concluded a treaty in 1882. Subsequently, several European powers also signed similar treaties (Hu 1961:296; Wagner 2002:552). Because of Korea’s long period of self-imposed isolation, only a few Koreans had either been permitted to travel or wished to travel abroad; but the political and economic turmoil created by the conflicts on the peninsula encouraged departures. Following the treaty with the United States, the efforts of some American missionaries created the possibility of travel to the United States. Between 1885 and 1905, some 67 Koreans—64 of whom were students—came to the United States (Kim 1980:602).

Americans also played key roles in the migration of a group of Korean laborers to Hawaii. The United States annexed Hawaii in 1898, extending the reach of the Chinese Exclusion Act and halting the flow of Chinese labor to the islands. The sugar planters in
Hawaii then became interested in Korea as a new source of workers. After some negotiations, the Korean emperor permitted 7,226 Korean immigrants, including 637 women and 541 children, to go to Hawaii, beginning in 1903.

Japan’s increasing power in the region heightened the rivalry between Japan, China, and Russia for control of the Korean peninsula. In successive wars, Japan defeated both China (1894–1895) and Russia (1904–1905); so by 1905 Korea became, in effect, an occupied colony of Japan. In 1905, the Japanese cancelled the arrangement permitting workers to go to Hawaii and stopped the further migration of Koreans (Hurh and Kim 1984:39). Nevertheless, the foundation was laid for a Korean community in Hawaii; and over a thousand of the Koreans in Hawaii later migrated to the U.S. mainland (Takaki 1998:270). In 1910, Japan formally annexed Korea and ruled the country harshly until the end of World War II.

The Gentlemen’s Agreement between the United States and Japan, discussed in Chapter 11, affected the lives of Korean immigrants as well as those of Japanese immigrants. Since Japan now ruled Korea, the provisions of the Gentlemen’s Agreement included Koreans. The United States no longer permitted the entry of people with Korean passports and, as agreed, the Japanese limited the issuance of passports to both Japanese and Koreans. Additionally, a number of the Korean immigrants who had come previously to the United States returned to Korea. The combined effect of these changes was to limit the growth of the Korean population in Hawaii and on the mainland for the next four decades. Only two significant additions to these populations took place during those 40 years. The provisions of the Gentlemen’s Agreement permitted the entry of women who were the wives of U.S. residents or were to be married as picture brides, and a group of young political activists who were fleeing from Japanese rule were admitted as “students.” Altogether, 1,100 Korean picture brides and over 500 political refugees were permitted to enter Hawaii and the United States prior to the further restrictions imposed by the immigration act of 1924 (Hurh and Kim 1984:42).

Given America’s anti-Asian laws and the small number of Koreans who reached the United States during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, official statistics on their arrival were not listed separately. Americans’ attitudes toward Koreans were illustrated in 1941 after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Even though Koreans were unwilling subjects of Japan, made no secret of their hatred of the Japanese, and very strongly supported America’s effort to defeat Japan, they were nevertheless classified as enemy aliens and subjected to the regulations entailed by that status (Kim 1980:603).

At the end of World War II, Japan was forced to relinquish control of Korea. The United States and the Soviet Union agreed that the Americans would occupy the Korean peninsula up to the thirty-eighth parallel while the Russians occupied the country north of that line. Subsequent efforts to agree on a unified Korean government for the entire peninsula failed; so in 1948, an election was held in the south under American auspices and the government of the Republic of Korea (ROK) was established. A few months later, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) was established in the north under Russian auspices (Henderson 2002:552–553). Each of the two new Korean governments proclaimed itself to be the rightful ruler of the entire peninsula. These competing claims escalated into the conflict that became the Korean War (1950–1953).32

This war abruptly brought together the affairs of the United States and South Korea. The United States and other members of the United Nations sent a large expeditionary
force to Korea, beginning in 1950; and when a truce was declared in 1953, a large contingent of American forces remained in Korea. The continuing presence of U.S. military forces in Korea has stimulated innumerable interactions and exchanges between the peoples of the two countries for more than a half a century. Early effects of the Korean War included changes in America’s official views of Korean immigrants. These changes, in turn, stimulated a second period of Korean immigration to America that reinforced and enlarged the population created during the first period of settlement. This second period merged into the much larger post-1965 period (see Table 12.2).

Table 12.2  Korean Immigration to the United States, 1941–2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1903–1905</td>
<td>7,226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910–1924</td>
<td>1,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941–1950</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951–1960</td>
<td>6,231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961–1970</td>
<td>34,526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971–1980</td>
<td>267,638</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981–1990</td>
<td>333,746</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991–2000</td>
<td>164,166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>814,740</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Americans and the members of the Chinese and Japanese communities that already existed in Hawaii. They organized also to regulate the social interactions of their group’s members with one another and with outsiders (Kim 1980:603). Although the group of Koreans who reached the mainland was even smaller than the group in Hawaii, they, too, founded some churches and language schools.

Some of the initial circumstances of the Korean immigrants’ lives did not favor the formation of families and communities. In the first place, the sex ratio among Korean immigrants was highly unbalanced, as it was among those from China and Japan. In addition, even when families were formed, family members had to struggle to maintain the family relationships prescribed by the Confucian ethic. These prescriptions include observing the specific duties and responsibilities of the father and son, husband and wife, elder and younger brother, and friend and friend (Min 1988:207–208). Like the Japanese and Chinese, the first Korean immigrants planned to return to Korea. They, therefore, did not initially view themselves as permanent residents of the host country. Nevertheless, the arrival of picture brides assisted in the formation of families. Moreover, because Korea was being taken over by Japan, the immigrants knew they could not return to their home country until Japan’s domination ended (Kitano and Daniels 2001:123). As a result, the political situation in the mother country became the primary focus of family and community life among the Korean immigrants. Their sense of Korean identity was increased, and they formed political associations with the purpose of assisting to free their country from Japan (Kim 1980:603).

As matters developed, three of the 64 Korean students who came to the United States before 1905—Syngman Rhee, Pak Yong-man, and Ahn Chang-ho—became outstanding political leaders, first in the immigrant communities and, later, in Asia. Different views concerning the independence of Korea existed among Koreans, however, and discord was evident in the competing strategies favored by the organizations established by the three young patriots. The work of each helped the Korean immigrants to maintain high morale and mobilize the resources needed to keep alive their hope of independence for their country.

In the early years though, while Korean immigrants in the United States organized and tried to devise ways to attain Korea’s freedom, the immigrants also had to take care of the day-to-day tasks of working and—when possible—starting families and raising children. Those who worked on the sugar plantations in Hawaii spent long hours at hard labor, and most of what they earned was used to provide life’s necessities and the repayment of the money they had borrowed to pay for the tickets to Hawaii. Koreans on the mainland worked mainly as field hands or as domestic servants. They were unable in either location to gain access to higher paying jobs because of widespread discrimination against Asians. Under these circumstances, most immigrants could save little from their wages. Some individuals, nevertheless, accumulated enough capital to establish various businesses. Others were able to fund businesses through participation in a rotating credit association or kye (Light, Kwuon, and Zhong [1990]1998:132). For instance, Kim Hyong-soon and Kim Ho formed a fruit wholesaling company that expanded to include orchards and packing houses. They also developed new types of fruit, including the nectarine. The business of another farming entrepreneur, Kim Chong-nim, was so successful as a producer of rice that he became known as the “rice king” (Kim 1980:604; Takaki 1998:276).
Throughout the first period of Korean immigration to America (up to 1948), the ratio of males to females continued to be unbalanced. Although the picture brides who were admitted during the 1910–1924 period did enable many men to head families in which both spouses were Korean, many other men did not have that option. Instead, they were forced either to remain bachelors or to marry non-Korean women. This situation was eased somewhat by the admission of more Korean women in the period during and following the end of the Korean War (1950–1953), though many of these women were the wives of U.S. servicemen. In addition, the Korean American population increased prior to 1965 by the admission of over 6,000 orphans of the Korean War and also of about 6,000 students (Hurh and Kim 1984:50–51). Altogether, during the first two periods of Korean immigration to the United States (1885–1948 and 1948–1965), 22,353 Koreans had been counted as admittees to the United States.

Korean American Assimilation

Between 1965 and 2000, 784,061 Koreans were admitted to the United States; and over 20 percent of this large group entered the country after 1990. The recency of the arrival of these immigrants is reflected in the fact that by the late 1990s more than 70 percent of the Korean Americans were first-generation immigrants (Hurh 1998:80).

More Koreans live in the western states (44 percent) than in any other region of the country, but each region is home to a sizable segment of this group’s population. About 23 percent of the Koreans live in the Northeast; 21 percent live in the South; and the remaining 12 percent live in the Midwest. The new Korean immigrants, as a group, differ from the Korean settlers of the first period of immigration in many respects. They are much more likely than their predecessors to come from an urban area, to be highly educated, to be trained as professional, technical, and managerial workers, and to come as family units. To illustrate, studies of Korean Americans in Los Angeles and Chicago by Hurh and Kim (1984) found that among the most recent arrivals from Korea, almost 78 percent were graduates of Korean colleges. In a subsequent study in Chicago, these researchers found that almost 50 percent of the sample members had held professional/technical and administrative/managerial jobs in Korea (Hurh 1998:42–43). Their geographical dispersion in America and their urban backgrounds spurred the development of large Koreatowns in Los Angeles, New York City, Chicago, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C. (Min 1988:205). The largest of these, in Los Angeles, has been officially dedicated by the city as “Koreatown” (Hurh 1998:119, 163).

These characteristics favor cultural assimilation among those who wish to adopt American ways. There is evidence that the Koreans favor cultural assimilation by addition rather than substitution (Hurh 1998:79), and that their transnational ties and cultural homogeneity increase the feasibility of this mode of adaptation (Min [1991]1998:226; Min 2002:141–144). Another fact favoring cultural assimilation among Koreans is that a majority of them are Protestants. A special problem of adaptation among Korean Americans, however, is that their acquisition of and proficiency in English has been lower than among the other main Asian American groups. For instance, about two-thirds of the Korean participants in the Los Angeles sample studied by Hurh and Kim (1984:215) rated themselves as not being either “fluent” or “moderately fluent” in speaking, reading, or
writing English. The respondents in the two Chicago samples rated themselves more highly in speaking ability but only about 40 percent considered their English to be “good” or “fluent” (Hurh 1998:42).

Another indication that English-language proficiency may be a problem among first-generation Korean Americans is that, in general, their jobs in the United States have not been commensurate with their educational and occupational backgrounds. For instance, in a 1986 study, Hurh and Kim (Hurh 1998:43) found that of the 45 percent of those sampled who had held high-status jobs in Korea, only 28 percent held such jobs in the United States. The researchers also found that more than twice as many Koreans in their sample made their living as owners of small, labor-intensive retail and service businesses than had done so in Korea. These are the kinds of businesses that have been available to the impoverished and uneducated early settlers from many different ethnic groups who faced discrimination in the workplace (Min 2002:288–289). In addition, Hurh and Kim (1984:117) found in a previous study that those employed in the White community were likely to be segregated at work. The extent to which such circumstances may be traced to language difficulties or to discrimination or both is unclear; but, in any event, by 2000 a higher proportion of Korean Americans were business owners than was true for any other American immigrant group. At that time, there was about one Korean-owned business for every eight Korean Americans.

Liang and Ito (1999:885) also have found evidence showing that first-generation Korean men were less likely than the men of the Chinese, Filipino, or Asian Indian groups to have spouses of European descent. First-generation Korean women, however, were more likely than Chinese or Asian Indian women to have married outside their ethnic group. The higher proportion of out-marriages among first-generation Korean women may stem from the presence of American troops in Korea since 1950. The situation among second-generation Korean Americans, however, was quite different. Sixty-three percent of the women and 45 percent of the women married outside their group.36 These figures suggest a rapid movement of Korean Americans toward marital assimilation. This movement may come at an emotional price to those experiencing it, however. Kibria’s (2002) findings concerning the “blood tie” idea are again pertinent. One of her informants, Sandra, stated that “Koreans are very nationalistic, they want to keep the Korean blood pure” and that her father had told her “it was unacceptable for me to marry a non-Korean” (Kibria 2002:301).

The general findings concerning marital assimilation among second-generation Korean Americans suggest, nevertheless, that they are accepting and being accepted by other members of American society and may be moving toward a strong identification with America. A high level of naturalization among Koreans strengthens this impression. Yang (2002:380) reported that over 56 percent of the Korean immigrants in his national sample had become U.S. citizens.

**Filipino (Pilipino) Americans**

The Philippine Islands lie between 300 and 750 miles off the eastern mainland of Asia and span a distance of about 1,150 miles from northeast to southwest. The islands were
populated primarily by various groups of Malay people who migrated from more southerly portions of the Malay Archipelago. These were joined much later by a small number of Chinese people who originally came as traders. Later still, during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Arab missionaries reached the Philippines and converted the Moros of the southern island of Mindanao to Islam (Melendy 1980:355).

The first Europeans arrived in the Philippines in 1521 when Magellan's Spanish expedition sailed into the islands and claimed them for Spain. Twenty-one years later the leader of another Spanish expedition named the islands Las Islas Filipinas in honor of King Phillip II. During the 1570s, Spanish colonies were established on Cebu and also on the main island of Luzon. From these islands the Spanish extended their control, as well as their efforts to convert the native population to Christianity. These efforts were largely successful except in the southern and southwestern islands where Islam remained dominant. Spanish rule was never welcomed, however, and the Filipinos made frequent efforts to regain their independence. Altogether, Spain's rule continued over 300 years until the final years of the nineteenth century (Fifield and Romulo 1962:333, 341). This long period of Spanish domination established the Spanish language and culture as markers of elite social status in the Philippines (Melendy 1980:355).

Recall that the doctrine of White supremacy flourished during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Americans spread westward across North America under the banner of Manifest Destiny. At the same time, the major European countries continued to move aggressively to subjugate indigenous populations in other parts of the world, establishing far-flung colonial empires. Before the Spanish–American War, the United States took several steps toward becoming a “Great Power” in the Pacific, thrusting itself into the internal affairs of Japan, China, and Korea. The biggest imperialist move by the United States in the Pacific during the nineteenth century, however, began in February, 1898, when America declared war on Spain. In June of that year Filipinos, led by Emilio Aguinaldo, declared independence and joined with American forces to invade the island of Luzon and capture the city of Manila.

The rebels believed that if the United States won the war, they would be granted immediate independence; but instead, in the concluding treaty, Spain agreed to cede the Philippines to the United States. President William McKinley explained that it was the “duty” of the United States to assume control of the islands. We could not in good conscience, he stated, avoid the task of “educating,” “uplifting,” and “civilizing” the Filipinos (Faulkner 1948:568). A “special relationship” was thus formed between the United States and the Philippines through which the Americans exercised colonial rule over the islands for 48 years (Posadas 1999:1). The Americans promised to set the Philippines free when they were deemed “ready” to govern themselves. Aguinaldo and his rebels felt betrayed, again declared independence, and resumed fighting—this time against the Americans. After two more years of fighting for Philippine independence, Aguinaldo was captured and required to sign an oath of allegiance to the United States (Fifield and Romulo 1962:341).

A five-man Philippine Commission, led by future president of the United States William Howard Taft, was appointed to govern the islands; and Taft was selected to be the first American civil governor. The colony that Taft governed, and attempted to Americanize, consisted of about 7,100 islands clustered in three main groups. The largest is-
land in the northern group is Luzon, where Manila is located; the southern group centers on the even larger island of Mindanao, which is the center of Islamic culture. Between these two large island groups lie the Visayans, which include the most densely populated islands of the country. The people of these many islands speak at least 80 different dialects. Communication among the different groups is fairly easy, though, because most people speak one or more of several languages belonging to the Malayo–Polynesian group of languages (Fifield and Romulo 1962:442; Melendy 1980:355).

To pursue the goals set forth by U.S. President McKinley, the Philippine Commission conducted general elections, and the first elected Filipino national assembly was seated in 1907. Also new public schools were opened in which the children were taught the English language and American ideas of democracy. Between 1900 and 1921, the number of children enrolled in the primary schools rose from 150,000 to more than 1 million (Posadas 1999:9). In addition, Governor Taft started an educational program through which several hundred young Filipino men, called pensionados, were sent to the United States to attend colleges and universities. Between 1903 and 1910, several hundred students received training in this program and then returned to the Philippines. Many members of this group later became political and economic leaders. Their example and experiences in America encouraged many others also to cross the Pacific.

Although the free elections pleased most Filipinos, as did the colonial government’s initiatives in education, the people were far from pleased to have traded Spanish for American rule. For instance, even though the members of the national assembly were elected, this body held only limited powers. Moreover, the American system left in place the social and political elite that existed under the Spanish (Posadas 1999:9). As a result, the political party that opposed U.S. rule and favored independence, the nacionalista, was the most popular party in the country and dominated national elections for decades.

The war with Spain had further consequences that are pertinent here. In addition to bringing American control and ideas to the Philippines, it also converted the Filipinos into American nationals (but not citizens) who could travel freely between the islands and the United States. Additionally, the American public’s enthusiasm for the war provided an opportune moment to annex Hawaii to advance further the military and commercial strength of the United States in the Pacific. These changes and the discontinuation of the supply of Korean and Japanese workers to both Hawaii and the mainland, led the sugar planters of Hawaii to actively recruit Filipinos.

The first recruiting efforts centered on the populous island of Cebu and the city of Manila on Luzon. Most of the workers from these areas spoke the Tagalog (Pilipino) language and the Cebuano dialect of the Visayan language. Later on, recruitment focused on people who spoke the Ilocano language because the members of this group were poor and eager to find work. Between 1909 and 1931, over 113,000 Filipinos went to Hawaii. As usual, a large majority of these immigrants (about 87 percent) were sojourning men, 55,000 of whom eventually became permanent residents of Hawaii. About one-third of the other 58,000 eventually moved to the mainland, and the rest returned to the Philippines (Fifield and Romulo 1962:341–342; Melendy 1980:356–357).

In addition to the pensionados and those who migrated from Hawaii to the mainland, thousands of other Filipinos, again mostly men, went directly to the mainland.
from the Philippines, especially to California. The main surge of this second group of immigrants took place after World War I and, by 1930, around 45,000 Filipinos were living in the United States (Kitano and Daniels 2001:92). About 30,000 of these migrants lived in California working mainly in agricultural jobs, but many found work in other states across the country and in a wide range of other jobs. Some worked in post offices; others joined the navy; still others worked in restaurants, homes, factories, the merchant marine, and hotels (Melendy 1980:359–360).

In the meantime, the U.S. government was unsure what to do with the Philippines and Filipino immigrants; consequently its official policy toward the territory vacillated. Even though the immigrants were American nationals, often imbued by American teachers and missionaries with idealistic visions of equal participation in American society, on the mainland they met the same hostility and discrimination that had greeted the Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans. They were labeled with negative stereotypes, called names, blocked from the best jobs, denied access to public accommodations, and attacked by White workers (Takaki 1998:324–326). Those who had come to America to receive an education sometimes were unable to find jobs in their chosen fields. Thousands of Filipino men recruited into the U.S. Navy learned that they were restricted to being servants and entertainers (Posadas 1999:20, 23).

Finally, in 1934, the Tydings–McDuffie Bill elevated the Philippines from territorial to commonwealth status within the American political system and set a date for independence. Under the provisions of this bill, the Filipinos adopted a constitution and elected a president. In 1946, after the end of World War II, the Philippine Islands finally became an independent country. The Tydings–McDuffie Bill also, however, exacted a price: In return for independence Filipinos were reclassified as aliens and placed under the quota limitations of the Immigration Act of 1924 (Takaki 1998:332). These changes brought a sharp drop in Filipino immigration (Melendy 1980:361). Not until the passage of the INAA in 1965 did Filipino immigration reach, and then exceed, the earlier levels (see Table 12.3).

**Roots of the Filipino American Family and Community**

Filipinos had even more difficulty forming families and communities in America than the other Asian groups we have discussed, although many of the obstacles they faced were not unique. For instance, Filipinas were scarce, and the immigrants confronted high levels of discrimination in all areas of life; and, as was true for the other Asian groups, Filipinos were viewed as representatives of an “alien” race who threatened to undermine the standard of living of the American worker. Also, even though they were American nationals, they—like all other Asians—were ineligible for citizenship.

The circumstances of Filipino life in Hawaii and on the mainland during the period before World War II did not encourage immigrants to reproduce the sociocultural patterns of the home islands. In the islands both culture and religion had supported the importance of family unity, loyalty, and reciprocity; and of vital importance within the
family system was the tradition of *compadrinazgo* (ritual co-parenthood). This tradition created and maintained an interclass and intercultural network of fictive kinsmen and affected practically all activities in Philippine society, but that network was difficult to re-create in America.

A unique problem of the Filipinos, however, arose from an ironic source. Since they were American nationals, rather than resident aliens, their orientation toward life on the U.S. mainland was generally different from that of the other Asian ethnic groups. They often believed initially that they would be well received and would have a realistic chance of participating in American life on a nearly equal footing. Also since they could move back-and-forth freely between their homeland and the United States, they saw little reason to construct large, distinctive ethnic enclaves possessing permanent social and economic institutions along the lines followed by most other immigrant groups. The Little Manilas, therefore, remained small and inconspicuous (Yu [1980]1998:103) and that situation, in turn, meant it was generally not profitable to start businesses to serve other Filipinos. Most Filipinos found they could satisfy their needs by shopping at the many Chinese and Japanese businesses that already existed. As a result, unlike the Chinese, Japanese, and (at a later time) Korean immigrants, Filipinos did not develop a distinctive merchant class (Yu [1980]1998:108).

The absence of large concentrations of Filipinos in distinctive ethnic enclaves impeded the development of the mutual benefit and protective associations that have been founded in other immigrant communities. Also, until after 1965, Filipinos started comparatively few newspapers that might have helped to stimulate community development and keep the group's members informed about events in the United States and in the homeland. The main force drawing Filipinos together into loosely organized communities

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**Table 12.3 Filipino Immigration to the United States, 1931–2000**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1931–1940</td>
<td>528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941–1950</td>
<td>4,691</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951–1960</td>
<td>19,307</td>
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<tr>
<td>1961–1970</td>
<td>98,376</td>
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<td>1971–1980</td>
<td>354,987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981–1990</td>
<td>548,764</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991–2000</td>
<td>503,945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,530,598</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

were shared languages, with Cebuano, Tagalog, and Ilocano (in that order) being spoken by about 85 percent of the Filipino American population (Melendy 1980:355, 360).

The most volatile problem arising from the Filipinos’ status as American nationals concerned interracial dating, sex, and marriage. Recall that before 1948 the laws of California prohibited intermarriage between a White person and any person defined as non-White. Such laws were passed because of the widespread racist belief and fear that non-White men would “mongrelize” and “pollute” the “pure white race.” Under these circumstances, any behavior that seemed to Whites to suggest that a non-White man might be making “improper advances” to a White woman was likely to stir up great resentment and, in many cases, provoke retaliation for violations of the etiquette of race relations. Since most Filipinos were descendants of the Malay peoples of the islands, rather than of people who were referred to in the law as “Mongolians,” there was no valid legal barrier to Filipino–White relationships. Filipino men, therefore, departed from the pattern of men in the other Asian groups, refused to accept their “place,” and openly associated with White women, especially prostitutes and those who worked in what were known as “taxi” dance halls (Takaki 1998:338–340). In such establishments, a man could purchase a single dance for 10 cents and then publicly embrace his partner for the short period of the dance. Since large numbers of Filipino men patronized the taxi dance halls, this form of Filipino recreation drew the attention of news reporters and led to racist, anti-Filipino headlines in many newspapers (Kitano and Daniels 2001:92).

The outrage of Whites over having Filipino men dance with White women was surpassed by the further fact that the associations between these men and women sometimes led to lasting relationships and, in some cases, marriages. Nativists proposed and supported legal measures to close this loophole in the intermarriage laws and, in 1933, California extended its legal prohibition on intermarriages to include unions between Whites and “Malays” (Kitano and Daniels 2001:93). The Tydings–McDuffie Bill, passed soon afterward, limited further immigration by Filipinos to the United States. In the following years, 12 other states also passed laws prohibiting Filipino–White intermarriages (Takaki 1998:330).

The combined effects of racist policies, discriminatory actions, negative racial stereotypes, an unfavorable balance of males and females, and an ambiguous legal status established and reinforced a pattern of transient employment among Filipino men and, thus, interfered with the development of well-organized and distinctive Filipino American communities. Indeed, after the quota principle was extended to Filipinos in 1934, their aging population went into a period of decline. Nevertheless, as time passed some Filipinos did settle down, get married, raise children, create neighborhoods and civic organizations, join labor unions, and help to introduce various elements of Filipino culture into American life (Posadas 1999:24).

With the onset of World War II and the Japanese conquest of the Philippines, one of America’s important wartime goals became to recover the islands and fulfill the promise of granting them independence. The islanders strongly supported the American war effort, and thousands of Filipinos living in the United States volunteered to serve in the armed forces. Thousands of noncitizen Filipinos volunteered for service, and a policy that barred Filipinos from service was quickly changed to permit them to enlist. The First and Second Filipino Infantry Regiments were formed, and thousands of these men served in the Pacific and in Europe (Posadas 1999:26; Yu [1980]1998:106). The right to
became a citizen was extended to these servicemen in 1943; but not until 1946 did all Filipino nationals become eligible for naturalization (Melendy 1980:361).

Family and community formation among Filipino Americans was accelerated by a sharp increase in the Filipina American population after the War Brides and Fiancées Acts were passed. To illustrate, in 1930 less than 3,000 (6.5 percent) of the 45,208 Filipinos in California were women; by 1960, of 114,179 Filipinos in the United States, 67,435 (37.1 percent) were women. In addition to the women who came as war brides and fiancées, others were married to men who were recently naturalized and had returned to the islands to find a wife. Still another important impetus to Filipina immigration was the Information and Education Exchange Act of 1948 (EVA). This act created opportunities for additional training and work in the United States for foreign nursing students. A large number of those who came were from the Philippines (Posadas:1999:30). Thus, many factors stemming from the “special relationship” created between the Philippines and the United States during the American colonial period helped spark a massive Filipino immigration in the post-1965 period.

Filipino American Assimilation

The post-1965 period has produced a much larger and more diverse Filipino American population than existed previously, although the Filipino American group was substantially larger than the immigration statistics of Table 12.3 indicate. Since Filipinos at first were American nationals, they were not counted as immigrants until after 1934. By then, thousands of Filipinos had come to Hawaii and the mainland. The Filipino American population grew also by natural increase, and by 1950 the total Filipino American population exceeded 120,000 (Kitano and Daniels 2001:92). Since 1960, however, that population has increased twelvefold through immigration alone.

The educational and occupational skills levels of the new Filipino immigrants, like those of the other Asian American groups discussed, generally have been very high—and very much above those of the earlier Filippino arrivals. For instance, Yang (2002:388) found in an analysis of U.S. Census data that 40 percent of the Filipino immigrants had Bachelor’s degrees or higher and that 68 percent of them held professional and managerial jobs. In addition, the new Filipino immigrants typically possessed a higher level of proficiency in English than their predecessors, with 94 percent saying they spoke English “well” or “very well.” Still further, Filipino immigrants typically have arrived with a working knowledge of American culture. These characteristics are assets to those who wish to assimilate culturally, either by addition or substitution.

Unlike the Filipino immigrants of the earlier period, who were prominent in farm work and military service, the post-1965 Filipino immigrants are much more likely to work in the professions. Probably the most noticeable occupational concentration of the new Filipino immigrants is in the health care industry. This development was fostered by the opportunities offered to foreign students of nursing under the EVA. Because many Filipinas who participated in the program already spoke English and, also, had been trained in American-style nursing programs, they were especially welcomed in American hospitals and other health care settings. This new avenue of upward social mobility encouraged many young women in the Philippines to enter nursing programs;
and between 1948 and 1953, the number of nurses in the Philippines increased from 7,000 to 57,000. By 1973, over 12,000 of these nurses had migrated to the United States (Posadas 1999:30). Filipino doctors and other kinds of health care workers have followed the path pioneered by the student nurses. By 1990, 20 percent of employed Filipino Americans over age 16 were working in some form of health care, though it is unclear how many of these workers were in professional-level jobs (Posadas 1999:78).

We stated earlier that during the first and second periods of Filipino immigration to America, the Filipinos were the least entrepreneurial of the four Asian American groups discussed in this chapter. This difference among the groups has continued into the contemporary period. In 2000, there were about 22 Filipino Americans for each Filipino-owned business. The comparatively low level of business activity among Filipinos has not prevented them from attaining a high level of household income through other lines of work. Indeed, as a group, Filipinos rank near the top of the average income list among various ethnic groups. For instance, among 60 ethnic groups in America in 1989, the median household income of Filipinos ranked third. At the same time, the median income of households headed by native-born Filipinos was about 16 percent lower than of those headed by Filipino immigrants (Posadas 1999:82–83).

Liang and Ito (1999:885) found that among the Chinese, Korean, Filipino, and Asian Indian American groups we are discussing, Filipinas were more likely to marry outside their ethnic group than either the women or the men in any other group. This was true among both the foreign-born and the native-born groups, with nearly three-fourths of the American-born Filipinas marrying out. These findings probably reflect the fact that Filipinas have immigrated in large numbers. They also may reflect the rise of the mail-order bride business through which non-Asian American men may acquire Asian brides (Kitano and Daniels 2001:199). Overall, Filipino men still were more likely to marry outside their group than were Chinese, Korean, or Asian Indian men; however, in a comparison of the American-born Asian men in the study, the Filipino men ranked second among the four groups studied.

Given the historical relationship of the Philippines and the United States and the high levels of marital assimilation among Filipino immigrants, we should expect that their rates of naturalization also would be high. That, in fact, is the case. Among the four groups in our comparison, Yang (2002:380) found that Filipino immigrants had the highest level of naturalization (68 percent) among Asian Americans. The English-language proficiency of the Filipino Americans, their familiarity with American culture, their level of educational and occupational attainment, and their high rates of out-marriage and naturalization all indicate a rapid adaptation to American society. There is some evidence, though, that many second-generation Filipino youths still identify themselves more strongly as Filipino Americans than as Americans (Wolf 2002:263).

Asian (East) Indian Americans

Europeans had known for many centuries of the existence and riches of India through the reports of adventurers, merchants, and soldiers. The Europeans’ ability to exploit India’s
riches, however, was severely limited by the fact that several Muslim powers controlled the overland trade routes running from the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea to India. Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama’s discovery of an uncontrolled sea route in 1498 set into motion a vast expansion of European commercial, military, and colonial activities in Asia.

India’s people at the beginning of the sixteenth century comprised, as they do today, an intricate cultural mosaic created through a long and tumultuous history. The various empires and dynasties that have existed in India over a period of several millennia left diverse cultural imprints. Here we note a few of the major features of the sociocultural setting into which the Portuguese thrust themselves.

The two main families of Indian languages originated with very early peoples known as Dravidians and Indo-Iranians (or Indo-Aryans). During a long period, beginning over three thousand years ago, a flourishing Dravidian civilization in the valley of the Indus river was disrupted by invading tribes of people from the northwest. The invaders spoke what are now called Indo-European languages—the language group that contains Hindi, the official language of the modern Republic of India (Bharat). Most of the Dravidians were gradually driven south into the great peninsula below the Vindhya Mountains. This region, referred to as the Deccan because it contains the large Deccan Plateau, comprises roughly one-half of the contemporary Republic of India. The conquering fair-skinned Indo-Iranians established a social barrier between themselves and the darker-skinned Dravidians, thus initiating an hereditary caste system that became increasingly elaborate with the passage of time. The importance of this social system increased and became more rigid as the Indo-Iranians incorporated it into the developing Hindu religion. Hinduism itself developed slowly over a long period of time and is the most prevalent religion of India. This ancient religion’s sacred scriptures (written mainly in the Sanskrit language) had no single founder, but many religious reform groups have been started by individual Indians who disagreed with some or many of the doctrines of Hinduism (Mayhew 1961:225; Brown 2002:869).

The second most prevalent religion in India, Islam, was brought into the country forcibly by Mahmud of Ghazni in the year 1000 following a long period of internal conflicts in India. As had been true of the Indo-Iranians previously, groups of Islamic warriors came into India through the northwestern mountain passes connecting India and Afghanistan. The descendants of these groups dominated India for the next four centuries; but even though Mongol invaders supplanted this dominant group, the Mogul Sultans and Shahs were also Muslims whose leadership continued to foster the spread of Islam (Majumdar 2002:945).

This process was far advanced by the time Vasco da Gama reached India’s southwest coast. Although da Gama was courteously received by the Hindu Raja of Malabar who offered “cinnamon, cloves, pepper, and precious stones” as trade goods (Durant 1954:613), local Muslim merchants had sufficient power to disrupt da Gama’s effort to negotiate a trade agreement. Two years later another Portuguese expedition tried to establish trade relations but, again, could not overcome the opposition of the Muslim merchants. In 1502 da Gama returned with an armed fleet of 14 vessels, bombarded the coast, and destroyed a fleet the Muslims sent against him. This show of force led to a long-lasting Portuguese trade monopoly, and the establishment of Portuguese bases and colonies on the Malabar Coast.
During the sixteenth century, the maritime power of Spain and Portugal enabled those countries to explore widely and to invade other people's homelands, subordinate them, and establish foreign colonies. During the seventeenth century, however, the dominance of these powers in the Far East was successfully challenged by Holland, England, and France, beginning in each case with the establishment of an East India Company.

As we saw in Chapter 3, these companies were commercial enterprises chartered by their respective governments and given certain rights to establish and manage trade in the East Indies. Early in the seventeenth century, the English and Dutch companies cooperated to some extent in their efforts to undermine the power of Portugal; but the alliance withered as the Dutch took control of the Malay Archipelago and the Moluccas (the “Spice Islands”) and drove the English out. The English East India Company then concentrated its efforts on India. By 1620, the English company had established ties with the Mogul emperor, defeated the Portuguese, and set up trading posts in the Indian provinces of Madras and Bombay. Throughout the remainder of the century, the company expanded its bases and territories to other parts of India and, by 1700, the British government had given the company the authority to rule the colonies as well as to carry on trade.

During the first half of the seventeenth century, the French East India Company also established bases in Bombay Province and on the Coromandel Coast. Both the English and French sought alliances with native princes and both enjoyed some success. The competition of these two colonial powers, not only in India but also in America, led to a long conflict that circled the globe. When the fighting subsided in 1763, the French relinquished nearly all of their possessions in India. The English, therefore, continued to expand their presence in India until—over rising native opposition to numerous forms of oppression, bribery, and theft—they controlled the entire Indian subcontinent, including what later became Pakistan and Bangladesh. After some of the Indian troops employed by the English East India Company rebelled in 1857, the British government relieved the company of its ruling authority; and, until 1947, India was governed as a British Royal Colony.

The British Raj (rule) built roads, railways, telegraph and telephone systems, factories, schools, universities, and a unifying bureaucracy; but the accompanying oppression and conflicts led to widespread political unrest and an increase in nationalistic sentiments among the Indians. The Indian National Congress was founded in 1885 to bring Hindus and Muslims together and to unify the country in opposition to the British. Many manifestations of hostility toward Britain followed. Some Muslims, however, feared that an independent Hindu-ruled India would lead to the oppression of Muslims; so the Muslim League was formed in 1906 to oppose the Indian National Congress.

Earlier in the nineteenth century, as the African slave trade declined, plantation owners in various parts of the world turned to India for replacement workers; hence Indian coolie laborers were sent to such places as the West Indies and Africa (Melendy 1977:184). Hawaiian sugar planters also considered the possibility of using Indian workers but, as we have seen, were able to recruit workers from China, Japan, Korea, and the Philippines. On the American mainland, however, Asian Indians were still needed to fill jobs for the railroads, in lumbering, and in agriculture; so during the first two decades of the twentieth century, almost 6,800 Asian Indians were admitted to the United States (see Table 12.4). A small group of these entrants were students who attended American universities and became vocal advocates of Indian independence (Melendy 1977:185).
As was true of the other Asian groups we have discussed, the Asian Indian immigrants were overwhelmingly men who initially intended to sojourn in America, make money, and return to their homes in India. Most of the immigrants were poor, illiterate farmers who in India had lived in crowded areas where making a living was very difficult. Some of these men also had previously served overseas in the British army or police forces and were unhappy with their lives after they returned to India; but these men had the advantage of being able to speak, read, and write English (Jensen 1980:298). All of these immigrants believed they could earn enough on the Pacific Coast to live well when they returned to India; so, using methods resembling the Chinese credit-ticket system, they headed for San Francisco and Vancouver, B. C. (Kitano and Daniels 2001:105; Melendy 1977:185–186).56

Table 12.4  Asian Indian Immigration to the United States, 1820–2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>1821–1830</td>
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<tr>
<td>1831–1840</td>
<td>39</td>
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<tr>
<td>1841–1850</td>
<td>36</td>
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<tr>
<td>1851–1860</td>
<td>43</td>
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<tr>
<td>1861–1870</td>
<td>69</td>
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<tr>
<td>1871–1880</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881–1890</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891–1900</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901–1910</td>
<td>4,713</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911–1920</td>
<td>2,082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921–1930</td>
<td>1,886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931–1940</td>
<td>496</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941–1950</td>
<td>1,761</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951–1960</td>
<td>1,973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961–1970</td>
<td>27,189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971–1980</td>
<td>164,134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981–1990</td>
<td>250,786</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991–2000</td>
<td>363,060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>818,776</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Roots of the Asian Indian American Family and Community

As was true of the other Asian groups we have discussed, the Asian Indian immigrants were overwhelmingly men who initially intended to sojourn in America, make money, and return to their homes in India. Most of the immigrants were poor, illiterate farmers who in India had lived in crowded areas where making a living was very difficult. Some of these men also had previously served overseas in the British army or police forces and were unhappy with their lives after they returned to India; but these men had the advantage of being able to speak, read, and write English (Jensen 1980:298). All of these immigrants believed they could earn enough on the Pacific Coast to live well when they returned to India; so, using methods resembling the Chinese credit-ticket system, they headed for San Francisco and Vancouver, B. C. (Kitano and Daniels 2001:105; Melendy 1977:185–186).56
Since this first sizable group of Asian Indian immigrants reached America during a peak period of anti-Asian hysteria, they too suffered the same sort of hostility, discrimination, and humiliation faced by Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Filipino immigrants. Although the Indians had Caucasian features, their Asian origin, religious observances, dark skin, and exotic costumes (especially the turbans) marked them as beyond the acceptable limits for newcomers. Each of these traits became focal points of unfavorable criticism and attack. In addition to racial epithets, the Asian Indians were generally referred to as “Hindus” or “Hindoos” even though very few members of the initial group actually were Hindus. These immigrants were overwhelmingly from the state of Punjab in northwest India. Panjabi, not Hindi, was their main language. Approximately two-thirds of them were Sikhs, and about one-third were Muslims (Sheth 2001:17; Takaki 1998:295).

The anti-Asian groups who clamored for the exclusion of all Asian immigrants added the Asian Indians to their list for specific abuse. Samuel Gompers, president of the American Federation of Labor, attacked the “Hindus,” as well as the Chinese and Japanese, for undermining the standards of American laborers. The Asiatic Exclusion League stated that the “Hindoos” were “undesirable” because, among other charges, they were unclean and insolent to women, sentiments that were echoed in some official documents of California and the federal government. Physical, as well as verbal assaults, also occurred in Bellingham and Everett, Washington, near Portland, Oregon, and in the Sacramento Valley of California, among other places (Melendy 1977:192–195; Takaki 1998:296–297).

This campaign of vitriol and violence was rewarded by several governmental actions. Immigration officials increasingly denied Asian Indians admission to the United States; and when Congress created the “barred zone” in 1917, Asian Indians were named as a barred group (Takaki 1998:297). Moreover, when some Asian Indians were denied the right to become naturalized citizens of the United States and took their cases to court, they were rebuffed after a few successes. Some lower-court decisions held that since Asian Indians were Caucasians, they were also “white persons” and, on this basis, over 100 Asian Indians became naturalized citizens. Nevertheless, in U.S. v Bhagat Singh Thind (1923), the U.S. Supreme Court overturned these decisions. The Court reasoned that even though Asian Indians might be Caucasians they were not White within the meaning of the naturalization law of 1790 (Kitano and Daniels 2001:107; Takaki 1998:298–299). Finally, the Immigration Act of 1924 stopped the further immigration of Asian Indian workers.

As we have seen in our discussions of the other Asian immigrant groups, the effects of sojourning, an unbalanced ratio of the sexes, and official and unofficial discrimination combined to impede the formation of Asian Indian families and communities in America. The small number of Asian Indian immigrants and the transient nature of agricultural work prevented the development of permanent and distinctive Indian towns; and under the Alien Land Laws, Asian Indians were prevented from buying and owning land. Moreover, there were virtually no Asian Indian women available as marriage partners to help found families. By 1914, according to various reports, there were as few as 12 and no more than 30 Asian Indian women in the United States.

In order to start families and circumvent the land laws, skilled and hardworking Punjabi farm workers—who were outstanding producers of rice, fruits, nuts, vegetables,
and cotton—selected wives from other ethnic groups, particularly Latinas, and with their savings were able to buy or lease farmland (Sheth 2001:19; Takaki 1998:309–311). The first Punjabi–Mexican marriage took place in the Imperial Valley in southern California in 1916; and, by 1949, around 300 Punjabi–Mexican families had been established in the area. Since the men in this community may have constituted as much as one-third of the total Asian Indian population of California, it is an important example of early Asian Indian family and community life in America (Leonard 1997:49–51).

The small Asian Indian community in the United States at this time was not totally confined to the West Coast. A few hundred educated, mainly Hindu, Asian Indians who left India mainly for political reasons lived in eastern and midwestern states. Most of these individuals vigorously advocated freedom for India; and the Sikh merchant J. J. Singh founded the India League of America to promote peaceful methods of gaining independence (Kitano and Daniels 2001:109). Indian nationalists also operated on the West Coast. Taraknath Das, a student at the University of Washington who soon became a U.S. citizen, published the newspaper Free Hindustan; and Har Dayal, a lecturer at Stanford University, founded the Hindu Association of the Pacific Coast. Dayal also joined Das, Ram Chandra, and others to found the revolutionary Ghadar (Mutiny) Party. The leaders included Sikhs, Muslims, and Hindus. During World War I, the U.S. government suspected the Ghadar party of plotting revolution, and 17 Asian Indians, including Ram Chandra, were arrested. Of these, 14 were convicted (Jensen 1980:298; Melendy 1977:210–211).

Following the Thind decision, officers of the federal and some state governments began an effort to rescind the U.S. citizenship that had already been granted to a number of Asian Indians and, also, to deprive them of lands they had purchased. In addition, some highly educated Asian Indian professionals were threatened with the loss of licenses and jobs. These actions led to numerous law suits and protests that, in some cases, succeeded in stopping the citizenship reversals (Melendy 1977:219–222). The discrimination suffered by Asian Indians, regardless of education or social standing in Indian society, encouraged the cause of Indian independence by weakening regional, linguistic, and caste lines among the Asian immigrants (Jensen 1980:298). During the period of the global Great Depression and World War II, the idea of American citizenship for Asian Indians gained support. In 1946, people from India received the right to become American citizens and, also, a small admissions quota (Kitano and Daniels 2001:110). During the interim between the end of World War II and the passage of the INAA, Asian Indian immigration began slowly to rise.

**Asian Indian American Assimilation**

Fewer than 14,000 Asian Indians came to the United States before 1960, and almost half of those came between 1900 and the establishment of the Asian “barred zone” in 1917. As late as 1965, the Asian Indian American population may have reached no more than 20,000 people (Sheth 2001:33). In the remaining years of the twentieth century, however, more than 800,000 additional Asian Indians entered the United States. Over one-third of that number arrived between 1991 and 2000.
Before the new immigration of Asians began, second- and third-generation Americans of Asian Indian ancestry had reached a high average level of cultural and secondary assimilation. To illustrate, in 1980 over one-half of the members of this group were college graduates, and their annual average household incomes exceeded the U.S. national average (Sheth 2001:31). Although the Asian Indian newcomers did not markedly alter these aspects of the picture, the contemporary portrait of Asian Indian Americans now reflects overwhelmingly the characteristics of the new immigrant population. The newcomers brought with them a high level of English language proficiency. Like Filipino immigrants, Asian Indian immigrants come from a society in which English is a commonly used language; and like Filipinos, over 90 percent of them report that they speak English well or very well (Yang 2002:388).

The secondary assimilation of the new Asian Indians also appears to be taking place rapidly. At least 55 percent of the members of this group hold a Bachelor’s degree or higher; and around two-thirds of the Asian Indians employed in the United States hold professional, managerial, or white-collar jobs (Leonard 1997:79; Sheth 2001:31; Yang 2002:388). In addition, more Asian Indians have gone into business (Leonard 1997:83). By 2000, there was about one business owned by Asian Indians for every 10 members of the group. Probably the most widely noticed example of business success among Asian Indians has been the work of a group of entrepreneurs who came to America from the state of Gujarat. Starting with a small, leased hotel in San Francisco, a cohesive group of people named Patel,64 with support from various segments of the Asian Indian American community, undertook the development of a motel/hotel chain that now extends throughout the United States (Sheth 2001:287–304).65

Given the English-language proficiency of Asian Indian Americans and the rapidity with which cultural and secondary assimilation appear to be taking place among them, one might expect the members of this group to be especially likely to marry outside their ethnic group. That expectation was not supported by Liang’s and Ito’s (1999:885) study of intermarriage. Although the level of out-marriage among the American-born Asian Indian men surely may be described as high (45 percent), comparable Korean and Filipino American men had still higher levels. Additionally, marrying outside the group was lower among American-born Asian Indian women (about 24 percent) than among any of the other groups analyzed in this study.

A similar placement of Asian Indian Americans among the four groups discussed in this chapter also was revealed by Yang’s (2002:380) study of naturalization. Although each of the four groups had very high rates of naturalization when compared to all immigrants from Europe since 1970,66 the Asian Indian Americans’ level of 49 percent, though high, still ranked fourth among the four Asian groups.67

Findings from interview studies of second-generation immigrants show that balancing Asian Indian identity and American identity may create personal dilemmas for the individual. For instance, Levitt (2002:132–133) learned in interviews with Priti, a 27-year-old Asian Indian who had been in the United States for 20 years, that Priti felt she had led a “double life” as a child. While doing her best to “fit in” with her peers at school, she was surrounded at home by Indian family members and friends. When Priti was about age 14, her father joined the Swadhyay spiritual movement and required Priti to attend the youth meetings. Although at first she hated attending the meetings, she grad-
ually came to value what she was learning and felt strengthened by it. She stated that she no longer cares about “...‘being brown’ because I am a Swadhyayee. . . .” She now has traveled to India and is proud of her Indian heritage.

Some Additional Observations on Asian American Assimilation

We have examined various studies showing the rates at which the Chinese, Korean, Filipino, and Asian Indian American groups experienced cultural, secondary, marital, and identificational assimilation during the last third of the twentieth century. The members of all four groups have moved with remarkable speed to adopt American culture, often by addition, and to enter into the mainstream of American society. The transformation of these groups from despised and hated foreigners during their early years in the United States to their present status as “model minorities” could not have occurred without substantial reductions in the anti-Asian prejudices and discriminatory actions and laws that existed in America prior to 1965.

Substantial reductions in prejudice and discrimination, however, do not mean that barriers to further assimilation among those who choose that option have disappeared. Asian Americans frequently write and speak about the many daily experiences that remind them of that fact. A common theme in personal reports is that, unlike European immigrants who are regarded as White, Asian Americans—no matter how American they may feel—are identified by their phenotype and are frequently thought to be foreigners. Racial, not ethnic, identification often takes precedence as a regulator of their interactions with other Americans. It seems to many Asian Americans that they may remain “forever foreigners” (Tuan 1998).

We cannot safely assume that the most significant current forms of anti-Asian prejudice and discrimination center primarily on signs of disrespect for, or misunderstanding of, Asian Americans by dominant-group members. Consider, for instance, the U.S. government’s handling of an investigation of missing secret documents at the Los Alamos Laboratories. Dr. Wen Ho Lee, an American citizen of Chinese descent, was the only scientist to be investigated for espionage even though dozens of other scientists of European ancestry had had the same level of access to nuclear secrets as had Lee. When no evidence of spying was uncovered, Lee was charged with “mishandling classified information,” a charge that had never been used before (Zia 2002:6). Recall, too, the violent attacks on Korean merchants in Los Angeles in 1992, discussed in a previous chapter. Asian Americans are well aware of the dangers of complacency in the face of such events; indeed, these concerns serve as stimulants for the pan-Asian ethnic movement and for active participation in conventional party politics.

Within this context, we briefly consider one further question of great practical, as well as theoretical, importance: Is the current level of anti-Asian prejudice and discrimination still high enough to prevent Asian Americans from receiving “equal pay for equal work?” A number of excellent sociological studies have concluded that the answer
to that question is “yes.” The central pertinent finding of many studies has been that even Asian Americans who were receiving pay that was equal to, or higher than, non-Hispanic Whites in the same jobs were still underpaid when their levels of education and experience were taken into account. The difference between what highly trained workers ought to receive, according to their qualifications, and the amount that they actually receive, even if that amount is relatively high, may plausibly be attributed to discrimination.

Iceland (1999) conducted a carefully designed and executed study to see whether the earlier findings were still valid. His study was based on a large, nationally representative sample that included employed Chinese, Korean, Filipino, and Asian Indian men and women, as well as a large comparison group of White men and women. The study’s findings present strong evidence that, at this time, it is no longer true that employed Asian American men and women typically suffer discrimination in the pay they receive for their work. Iceland did find that foreign-born Asian men were at a disadvantage and, further, that the amount of disadvantage varied according to the men’s countries of origin. He emphasized, too, that since most of the Asian ancestry people in America today are foreign-born that the problem of discrimination toward them is a large and important one. Nevertheless, it now may be true that American-born people of Asian ancestry may invest in education and job training with the realistic expectation that they may look forward to receiving pay in the workplace that is in line with their qualifications. If this finding is confirmed, it is important evidence that the principle of achievement is not an empty ideal.

We note in closing that much of the information presented in this chapter concerns group averages. A full interpretation of these facts must focus also on the large numbers of people in these ethnic groups, even among the American-born, who still face serious problems of employment, acceptance, and social welfare in our society.

Chapter 13 briefly discusses Vietnamese Americans, a group originating in Southeast Asia, and Arab Americans, a group originating initially in the opposite corner of Asia, the Middle East. Although the Arab Americans have been represented in the U.S. population for a much longer period of time than have the Vietnamese Americans, the immigration of most members of each ethnic group was stimulated by European and American economic, political, and military activities in their homelands.

Discussion Questions

How did European and American economic expansion during the nineteenth century contribute to the emigration to the United States of people from China, Korea, the Phillipines, and India?

How did incentives provided by American laws and businesses contribute to the decisions of people from the four countries discussed to come to the United States?
How were the Asian immigrants received in America during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries? Has discrimination affected their upward mobility? How?

What factors impeded the formation of families among the Asian immigrants of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries?

What are the social characteristics of the Asian immigrants of the second great immigrant stream and the third great immigrant stream and how are they different? Similar?

What are some of the reasons that the four groups discussed in this chapter may have been characterized as “model minorities?” What are the limitations of this characterization in regard to each of these groups?

Key Ideas

1. The global economic expansion of Europe and America during the nineteenth century contributed to disorder and unrest in the countries of the Far East and South Asia, stimulating emigration from China, Korea, the Philippines, and India. These emigrants went to many different countries, including the United States.

2. American businessmen in Hawaii and on the West Coast—especially sugar planters and railway owners—needed large numbers of low-wage workers. The efforts of the agents of those business groups helped recruit successive waves of Chinese, Korean, and Filipino workers. Some Asian Indians were also attracted, though the members of this group were not specifically recruited.

3. The members of each of the four groups discussed in this chapter encountered high levels of hostility, rejection, and violence in America. Anti-Chinese sentiment led to a generalized anti-Asian sentiment, and the legislative program of the supporters of Chinese exclusion was generalized to all Asian peoples.

4. The obstacles impeding the settlement of Asian people in America curtailed the growth of these populations. Each group declined in size between 1924 and World War II.

5. Changes in American immigration and naturalization laws affecting Asians between World War II and 1965 included the repeal of the Exclusion laws, the assignment of small immigration quotas, the extension of citizenship eligibility, and the admission over the quota limits of wives and family members.

6. In 1965, the INAA overhauled and liberalized America’s immigration laws, setting into motion the Third Great Immigrant Stream. By 2000, this new immigration had exceeded in absolute numbers each of the previous two great streams.

7. The post-1965 Asian immigrants and their children are, as a whole, highly educated and skilled. They have moved rapidly toward the adoption of American
culture, by substitution and addition, and have enjoyed a high level of worldly success in work and business. The American-born segments of these populations are still, overall, smaller than the foreign-born segments; but the American-born have high rates of marital assimilation. The foreign-born members of these groups have high levels of naturalization and, presumably, identificational assimilation.

8. The rapid overall adaptation of the members of these groups to U.S. society has led each group to be called a “model minority.” The critique of this concept as it applies to Japanese Americans, presented in Chapter 11, is also applicable in the case of Chinese, Korean, Filipino, and Asian Indian Americans.

Notes

1. The term Asian American has been used increasingly since the 1960s. It usually refers to “Everyone with origins east of Afghanistan” (Zhou and Gatewood 1999:8). Officially, it refers to anyone with origins in any one of 29 countries listed by the U.S. Census Bureau (Hurh 1998:137). Asian Indians are also referred to as East Indians.

2. Included under this rubric are immigrants from mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and people of Chinese ancestry from communities throughout the world.

3. The Burlingame Treaty permitted Chinese laborers to enter the United States with the same rights and protections as other aliens. The treaty was amended in 1880 to permit the United States to “regulate, limit, or suspend” but not “absolutely prohibit” the entrance of Chinese people (U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service 1943).

4. Takaki (1998:85) states that “The construction of the Central Pacific Railroad line was a Chinese Achievement.”


6. Many of the immigrants were married, and they were expected to send money home for their family’s support. The households of these men are often referred to as “mutilated” or “split” (Wong 1988:234).

7. Many of these laborers came from a single county (Tong 2000:24).

8. The CCBA was known informally as the Six Chinese Companies because the first CCBA, formed in San Francisco, consisted of six district associations (Kitano and Daniels 2001:28; Lai 1980:222).

9. Small Chinatowns were often dominated by a single clan (Daniels 1988:81; Kitano and Daniels 2001:27).

10. The main internal challenge to the authority and power of the CCBA within the Chinatowns were the secret societies (tongs). These societies were both criminal and political organizations (Daniels 1988:26; Lai 1980:222).

11. The CACA was modeled after the White organization the Native Sons of the Golden West and originally was named the United Parlor of the Native Sons of the Golden State (NSGS). The name was changed in 1915 to permit an expansion to Boston, Chicago, Detroit and a number of other cities (Chung 1998:154–155).

12. One factor contributing to a rapid change in Chinese stereotypes was the acclaimed novels of Chinese life by Pearl S. Buck and the movies based on them (Kitano and Daniels 2001:39). Another factor was the popularity among Americans of Madame Chiang Kai-shek (Mei-ling), the Chinese leader’s wife, who was fluent in English, a persuasive public speaker, and a graduate of Wellesley College (Taylor 1961:335).
13. The Citizens Committee to Repeal Chinese Exclusion was led by Richard J. Walsh, the husband of Pearl S. Buck. Chung (1998:176) cites a study by Fred W. Riggs that “attributes the repeal...” to the influence of this group.

14. Among the arguments presented for repeal were that it would strengthen the support of Chinese Americans for the war, combat Japanese propaganda that (correctly) claimed Chinese people in America were mistreated, help boost morale in China, and bring American practices into line with our professed beliefs. The opponents of repeal argued that we should not debate divisive issues during wartime and that it would lead to an “invasion” of Chinese workers.

15. China’s quota was only 105 people per year. Anyone of Chinese descent was counted against the quota limit.


17. Over 11,000 Chinese were admitted between 1945 and 1953. Of these, 90 percent were female (Kitano and Daniels 2001:42).

18. Chinese immigration rates have remained high, and the Chinese American population has continued to grow rapidly; but, by 2000, the foreign-born portion of this population of over 2.4 million had declined to about 45 percent (calculated from tables in U.S. Census Bureau 2001:24, 45).

19. Important exceptions to these generalizations include Yung Wing, the first Chinese graduate of an American college (Yale 1854), and Sun Yat-Sen, considered the founder of the Chinese Republic (Lai 1980:225).

20. There are wide differences among Chinese immigrants from the Mainland, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. The Taiwanese are the most highly educated, followed by those from Hong Kong, and then by those from the Mainland. The same ordering is found also among those holding professional jobs (Chen 1998:202; Zhou and Cai 2002:422).

21. Although the extent of transnational ties today greatly exceeds the earlier period of immigration, transnationalism is not a new phenomenon (see, e.g., Hsu 2000).

22. The comparable figures for Latinos and Black Americans were about 29 and 42 percent, respectively. These and subsequent figures concerning the number of businesses per capita were calculated from tables in U.S. Census Bureau (2001:24, 487).

23. Many Chinese have chosen to move into suburban areas, including largely Chinese suburban neighborhoods (Zhou and Cai 2002:423). This choice may promote residential assimilation and increase the chances, especially among children, of developing primary relationships with non-Chinese people outside of the home or workplace. Increasing primary assimilation may include marital assimilation and, also, stimulate other processes of assimilation.

24. The New York City Region includes areas of Connecticut and New Jersey. The data for this study were taken from a 5 percent, nationally representative public use microdata sample (PUMS) gathered in 1990 by the U.S. Census Bureau. Despite some shortcomings, these data are among the best available because they contain sufficiently large samples for the analysis of each Asian American group. They also contain a wide range of social and cultural variables that researchers may use to investigate many questions of interest.

25. Since the total number of foreign-born people within each ethnic group was greater than the total number of those who were American-born, the overall amount of out-marriage was much lower (15 percent) than among the American-born portion alone.

26. Another study, by Hwang, Saenz, and Aguirre (1997), focused on competing explanations of ethnic and gender variations in out-marriage but, also, presented some pertinent descriptive statistics. They found that for the entire country, Filipino and Asian Indian men were the most likely to marry outside their group and, among women, that Filipinas and Korean women were the most likely to marry outside their group.

27. This study was based on two sets of data, one from a special longitudinal study.
conducted by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service between 1977 and 1995 and another from the 1990 PUMS collected by the U.S. Census Bureau.

28. Many Koreans prefer to call this body of water either the East Sea or the Korean Sea.

29. From which Korea's present name derives. Many Koreans, however, believe the correct spelling is Corea.

30. During the Yi Dynasty, and also during ancient times, Korea was known as Choson.

31. Admiral Yi Sun-sin's naval victories included the use of his invention the “turtle-boat”—the first ironclad ship (Wagner 2002:551).

32. Russian and American troops were withdrawn soon after North and South Korea were established (Hu 1961:296). When the North invaded the South in 1950, the United Nations asked its member countries to help South Korea. The United States and at least 15 other countries sent a large body of troops to join in the defense of the South.

33. In the United States, the order of Korean names is often reversed and, also, may be Anglicized. Rhee Syngman, thus, became Syngman Rhee; and Pak was called Young Man Park. Ahn Chang-ho is also known by the pseudonym Do-San. Rhee earned a doctorate from Princeton in 1910 and, in 1948, became South Korea's first president. Rhee and Pak Yong-man split over strategies to gain independence, with Rhee favoring education and diplomacy and Pak favoring a military solution (Takaki 1998:282). Ahn Chang-ho’s approach resembled Rhee’s (Kim 1980:603).

34. Even so, they sent money to their families in Korea when they could.

35. Because there was little out-marriage, approximately one-half of the Korean men remained bachelors (Hurh and Kim 1984:42–43).

36. In sharp contrast to the earlier period of immigration, Korean women now outnumber men, increasing the probability of out-marriage by women (Min 1988:216).

37. Pilipino is pronounced Filipino. It refers to both the people and the official language of the Philippines.

38. Posadas (1999) reports that about one-twelfth of the population presently are Islamic.

39. John Hay described this conflict as “a splendid little war” (Nasaw 2002:13).

40. Although American forces defeated Aguinaldo’s forces, the Moros in the southern islands continued fighting for an additional 12 years (Melendy 1980:356).

41. Small Philippine communities had previously been established in the Louisiana bayou country and in New Orleans, possibly by Filipino sailors who left their ships (Melendy 1980:359; Posadas 1999:14).

42. In Hawaii, the situation was more favorable for family and community formation. The sex ratio there was much lower than on the mainland, and Filipino men were able to marry women from other non-White groups more easily (Melendy 1980:358).

43. For descriptions of an assault on Filipinos in Watsonville, California, see Melendy (1977:54–55); Posadas (1999:20), and Takaki (1998:327–328).


45. English is an associate official language. There are 15 national languages and at least 800 languages and dialects, 30 of which have more than one-half million speakers. Both Indo-Iranian and Dravidian languages are spoken throughout the country, though Hindi is the main language; and nearly three-fourths of the population speaks some Indo-Iranian language. The main Dravidian languages are most often used within the Deccan (Jensen 1980:297; Thieme 2002:882).

46. The castes that developed, in order of their social importance, were the (1) Brahmins (priests), (2) Kshatriyas (warriors), (3) Vaisyas (merchants), and (4) Sudras (artisans, peasants). Below these castes were those having no caste, that is, the outcasts or “Untouchables” (Mayhew 1961:225). India’s constitution now forbids discrimination on the basis of caste, but the movement to create equality and assimilation of Untouchables is still underway (Leonard 1997:7, 31–32).
47. Outstanding among these are the founder of Buddhism, Gautama Buddha (c. 500 B.C.); the founder of Jainism, Mahavira (c. 500 B.C.); and the founder of Sikhism, Guru Nanak (1469–1538). Buddhism was the leading religion of India for about a century, beginning with the reign of Asoka (273–232 B.C.). Hinduism is noted for its tolerance of diversity of thought and many of its precepts are present also in the reform religions.

48. Ghazni was a small state in eastern Afghanistan.

49. Mogul is often spelled Mughal. Both terms are derivatives of Mongol.

50. The term East Indies may be used in a wide sense to include India and all of Southeast Asia. More narrowly it refers to the islands of the Maylay Archipelago (van der Kroef 1961:22).

51. This was the conflict in which the English occupied New Amsterdam in America.

52. The American phase of this conflict was the French and Indian War.

53. The rebellion of the Sepoys (Indian soldiers in the Bengal Army) spread throughout northern India and lasted until 1859.

54. Despite the many legitimate grievances of the Indians against Britain, large numbers of Indians were loyal to the Empire. At the beginning of World War I, Gandhi urged his countrymen to support Britain, saying that “We are, above all, British citizens of the Great British Empire” (Ferguson 2003:23). Over 1 million Indians answered the call to arms.

55. When India and Pakistan became independent nations in 1947, the subcontinent was partitioned along religious lines with predominantly Hindu areas being allocated to India and predominantly Muslim areas being allocated to Pakistan. Pakistan’s areas were on both the east and west sides of India; so the two provinces of East and West Pakistan were established as a single Muslim nation. Soon after the partition, violence erupted and millions of refugees fled India for Pakistan and vice versa; but many people of each religion remained in each country. In 1971, East Pakistan broke away from West Pakistan and became the new country of Bangladesh (Morse and Hendelson 1972a: 258–261).

56. The Asian Indians received hostile receptions in both the United States and Canada. A special problem for the Canadians was that both they and the Indians were subjects of the British Empire (Melendy 1977: 187–191).

57. Among the few who were received favorably was Swami Vivekananda, a Hindu guru who appeared unexpectedly at the Chicago World’s Fair in 1893. According to Durant (1954:618), Vivekananda “captured everyone by his magnificent presence (and) his gospel of the unity of all religions....” Melendy (1977:184) states that Vivekananda established societies for the study of Vedantic philosophy “throughout the United States.”

58. The titles of two publications in 1910 were “The Tide of Turbans” and “The Hindu Invasion” (Sheth 2001:35).

59. A few of the immigrants were from Uttar Pradesh, Bengal, and Gujarat (Melendy 1977:185).

60. Sikhs are disciples of Guru Nanak whose religious doctrine of universal brotherhood is prominent in the Punjab region of India.

61. Thind had received citizenship after being drafted, serving, and being honorably discharged from the U.S. Army (Melendy 1977:218). The Court’s decision in Thind narrowed still further the interpretation of the meaning of “White” given in Ozawa (1922).

62. Students and merchants were still permitted to enter.

63. A study by La Brack and Leonard of nearly 400 early Asian Indian families found that these marriages were not very successful (cited by Kitano and Daniels 2001:108). Sheth (2001:19) suggests that “cultural factors” were largely responsible for the problems in these marriages.

64. By 1994, Asian Indian Americans owned or leased some 20,000 motels and hotels. Gujaratis, such as the Patels, have a long history of entrepreneurial success. Gujaratis now comprise more than 40 percent of the Asian Indian American population (Sheth 2001:287, 307).
65. This mode of business development has been called the "Patel-motel model." About 10 percent of the members of the Asian American Hotel Owners’ Association are Korean or Chinese. Of the remaining 90 percent, the majority are Gujaratis, and most of these are named Patel (Sheth 2001:287).


67. The high rates of naturalization among Asian Americans are even more remarkable when we consider that the advantages of citizenship—as compared to those of permanent residency—have declined. Many social services are now open to people of both categories (Schneider 2001:188).

68. Some evidence suggests that the members of the new first generation of Asians who hold jobs in multiethnic settings generally work amicably with other Americans but socialize mainly with co-ethnics.

69. When Asian Americans meet non-Asian Americans and are asked "Where are you from?" the question is often asked with the expectation that the answer will be the name of a foreign country rather than some U.S. state or city.

70. This study was based on the 1990 5 percent PUMS of Asian Americans and, also, the one in 1,000 PUMS for non-Hispanic Whites. It is the most comprehensive study of this important issue to date.