

ASIAN-AMERICAN BASELINE ESSAY: SOCIAL SCIENCE

By

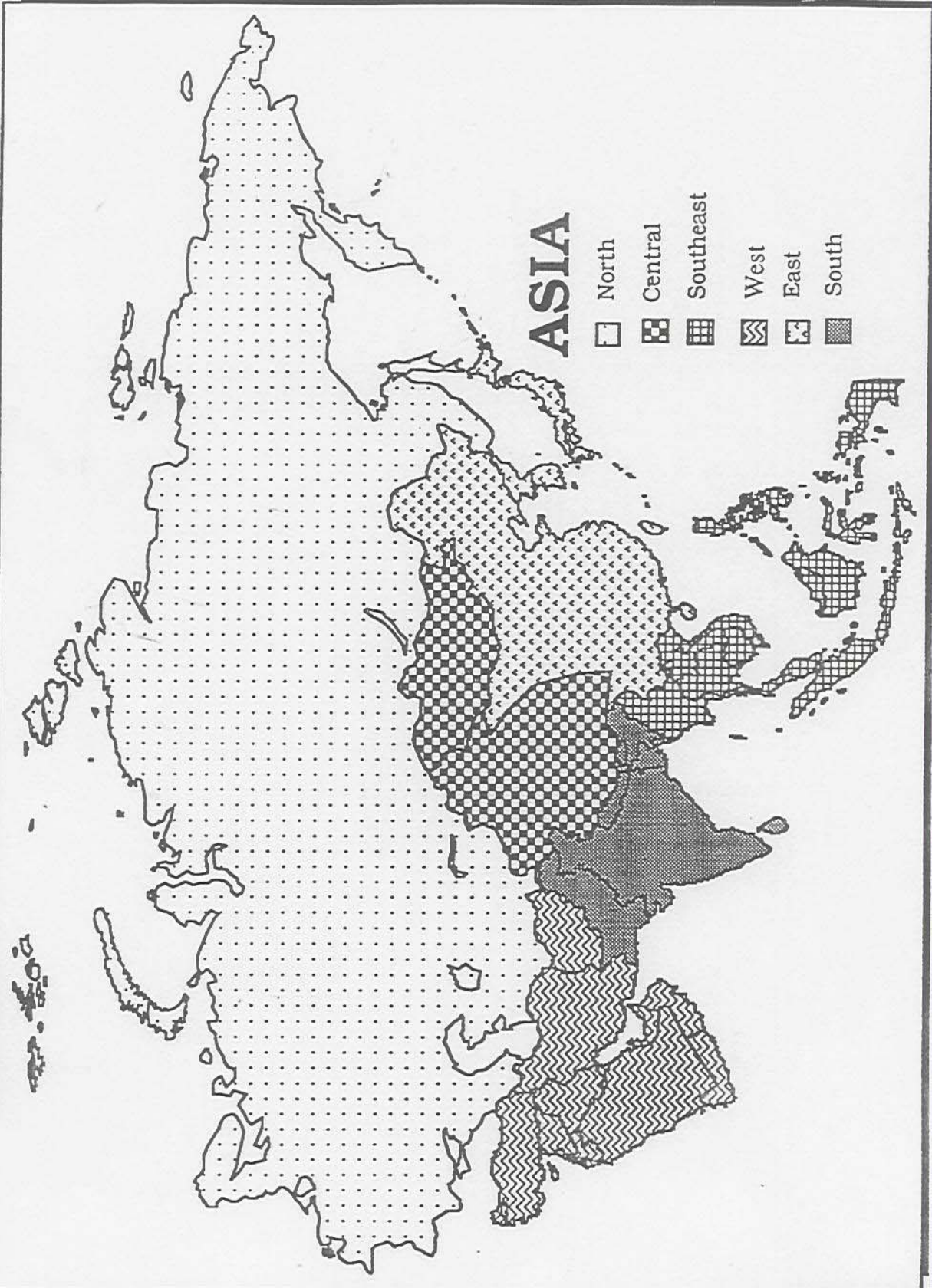
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Asian-American Social-Science Baseline Essay

Critical Topics

1. Most people in the world profess religions and philosophical outlooks that originated and developed in Asia.
2. Some of the earliest known and most advanced civilizations developed in ancient and medieval times on the continent of Asia.
3. A number of Asian inventions and products continue to affect the daily lives of people: e.g., the wheel, compass, magnet, porcelain, the phonetic alphabet, a measurement system based on units of 60, Hindu-Arabic numerals, zero, algebra and the introduction of various cereals, fruits, spices, and other plants.
4. The people of Asia constitute a complex, multiracial, multiethnic and multicultural group; yet may share one or more of the following: language, alphabet, belief system, philosophy, heritage, values, and customs.
5. Trade and travel routes transfer ideas and technologies as well as products.
6. Most Asians struggled against predominantly European colonialism which dominated vast areas of the Asian continent in the last several centuries.
7. U.S. foreign policy and military involvement have affected much of Asia.
8. Emigration from Asia to the United States began in the second half of the 19th century.
9. Due to U.S. federal and state laws as well as social discrimination, Asian-Americans as a geocultural group and as specific ethnic groups have experienced prejudice and racism.
10. The contributions of Asian-Americans have enriched the quality of life in the United States.

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INTRODUCTION

When students in eastern Siberia are going to school in the morning, students in western Turkey will be preparing to go to sleep the night before. Turkey is the westernmost country in Asia, and the eastern shores of Siberia form Asia's easternmost limits. Asia is the largest of all continents with 17,139,000 square miles (44,390,000 square kilometers), greater than North and South America combined. From east to west, it extends through ten time zones; from north to south, it stretches from the Arctic Circle down to ten degrees south of the Equator.

Asia is a land of great contrasts. Its tallest peak, Mount Everest (also known as Chomo Langma) on the Tibet-Nepal border, rises majestically to 29,028 feet (8,848 meters) and is the highest point on earth; in contrast, one of the saltiest bodies of water in the world, the Dead Sea on the Israel-Jordan border, lies 1,312 feet (400 meters) below sea level and is the lowest point on the surface of the earth. The land mass of the Asiatic part of Russia is almost 5 million square miles (12.7 million square kilometers), which is larger than the United States, Mexico and all of Central America. Yet the smallest country in Asia, the Maldives (near the coast of India), has a land mass of only 115 square miles (298 square kilometers), twice the size of Washington, D.C. With its population of 3.3 billion people, Asia is the home of more people than all of the other continents combined. Three out of five people on earth live in the forty-nine countries of Asia. Asia also contains the world's two most populous countries, China and India. One-third of the world's population live in these two countries. Yet the total population of three Asian countries, Bahrain, Brunei and Qatar, is less than one million people. All representatives of the human race are found in Asia. Hundreds of languages and thousands of dialects are used for communication among its peoples.

Most of the world's peoples profess religions and philosophical outlooks that originated in Asia. Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam originated in West Asia. Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism emerged in the Indian subcontinent in South Asia. Confucianism and Daoism (Taoism) originated in China and spread to other parts of East Asia. Shinto started in Japan and continues to be its official religion.

In ancient times, great civilizations developed along the Asian river valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates in Iraq, the Indus, Ganges and Brahmaputra in India, and the Yangzi (Yangtze) in China. These valleys and deltas, made fertile by the melting snows of the highlands, became centers of powerful empires and diverse cultures. Much of Asia served as a transcontinental thoroughfare for mass migrations of peoples. A wealth of languages, religions, art forms and technologies developed and expanded as a result of trade, travel and military conquest. The civilizations of Asia and their contributions to humanity in science, mathematics, religion and literature became a cornerstone of Greco-Roman culture. Indeed, Greece inherited a legacy of arts and sciences carried to its shores from the cities of Asia. Drawing on both Asian and African legacies of science and the arts, the Greeks built their own distinctive culture and disseminated it to other regions.

Since ancient times, Asians have migrated both within their continent and to other continents. Most historians believe that migrations from Asia to North America began before the end of the last Ice Age when Asians crossed the Bering Sea land bridge to Alaska. From there they moved south to the rest of the Americas. Beginning in the 19th century, successive waves of emigrants from Asia arrived to the West and East coasts of the United States and enriched American society with elements of their own cultural heritage.

Today in the United States, there is an increasingly larger proportion of people of Asian descent. The number of Asian-Americans has increased rapidly since the 1965 Immigration Act removed racial quotas. According to U.S. Immigration and Naturalization records for 1995, about 40 percent of new immigrants annually are from the continent of Asia. This translates to over a quarter of a million Asian immigrants (267,931) admitted to the United States in 1995. Asian-Americans have emerged as an important community and the group with the fastest growth rate within American society. Though represented in every state and in every sizable community in the country, little is known of Asian-Americans and their cultural background, which is as diverse as the continent of Asia itself. Historically, most Asian-Americans have been victimized by

distorted stereotypes and racist legislation. Likewise, the history and civilization of Asia itself, as found in many publications and in the media, suffers from bias and inaccuracies.

This Social-Science Baseline Essay is directed to school educators to broaden teacher and student awareness of Asian-Americans in the development of this nation. This essay attempts first to explore the highlights of Asia's historic and cultural heritage, underlining Asia's importance to world civilization. It then follows the trek of contemporary Asians into the United States, tracing their social, economic, and political contributions to the rich multicultural mosaic that is the United States of America.

The purpose of this essay is not to repeat information easily found in standard textbooks or reference works, but to present an accurate portrait of Asian-Americans often overlooked. Yet, for reasons of space, many social and economic topics are either not covered or inadequately explored. For further information, we include a bibliography containing teaching units and books on specific topics and controversial issues. Also included is a list of organizational resources. Additionally, other Asian-American essays in the Portland School District's baseline series explore Asia's cultural heritage in the fields of art, music, literature, science and mathematics.

Because of its vastness and diversity, Asia is divided into five regions with distinct geographic and cultural characteristics. Not everyone may agree fully on the details of this division, but most understand that it makes Asian studies more manageable. These regions are:

WEST ASIA: It includes the area from the eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea in the West to the eastern borders of Iran and Afghanistan, and from the Caucasus Mountains in the North to the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean in the South. Included in this region are Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Armenia, Cyprus, Israel, the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and Gaza, Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

NORTHERN AND CENTRAL ASIA: It extends north and south from the Arctic Ocean to the Caspian Sea, and from the Ural Mountains in the West (which form the natural boundary between Europe and Asia) to the Pacific Ocean in the East. Included in the region of Northern and Central Asia are Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Siberia, Mongolia, Xinjiang and Tibet.

SOUTH ASIA: It covers the entire Indian subcontinent, extending from the Himalayan Mountains in the North to the Indian Ocean and the Bay of Bengal in the South. Flanked on the West by the Arabian Sea, on the North by the borders of China, and on the East by Myanmar (formerly Burma), the region of South Asia includes India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon), Nepal, Bhutan and the Maldives.

EAST ASIA: Extending from the western borders of China to the mid-latitudes of the Pacific Ocean in the East, this region includes China, Japan, North Korea, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao.

SOUTHEAST ASIA: It encompasses the southeastern peninsula of Asia that juts into the South China Sea, together with the Malay Peninsula and the Indonesian and Philippine Archipelagos. Included in this region are the countries of Myanmar (Burma), Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam on the mainland; the island countries of Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore and Brunei; and Malaysia located in both regions.



WEST ASIA

West Asia, encompassing the Asian regions of what is commonly known as the Middle East, is located at the crossroads of Asia, Africa and Europe. At present, it includes Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Armenia, Cyprus, and Israel; the Arab countries of Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen; and the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and Gaza. It is the home of Arabs, Turks, Iranians, Israelis, Armenians, Kurds, Afghanis, and several smaller national and ethnic groups. The Tigris and Euphrates valleys—along with the Nile valley in Africa—have the oldest continuous civilizations in the world. In its river valleys and around its oases, early humans formed communities, built dwellings, developed the wheel, cultivated crops and domesticated animals. Its written history is at least 6,000 years old. From West Asia came the first states and empires, the first writing using a phonetic alphabet, the first calendar and clock, the first use of silver and gold as standards of commercial exchange, the first letters of credit, the first legal codes and the first monotheistic principles.

THE SPIRITUAL HERITAGE OF WEST ASIA

Judaism, Christianity, and Islam originated and spread from West Asia. Four out of nine persons in the world adhere to one of these faiths. Before and concurrent with the early days of these three faiths, other religions existed in the region. People worshipped deities representing the sun, rain, major rivers, fertility, and other manifestations of nature.

Zoroastrianism: An early development of monotheism was Zoroastrianism, which emerged in Persia some 3,500 years ago (c1500 BCE). A Persian priest, Spitaman Zarathushtra (known to the ancient Greeks as Zoroaster) taught that there was but one god, Ahura Mazda, the “wise lord.” Zoroastrians believe that mankind is the central figure in the cosmic struggle between the forces of good and evil. The sacred scriptures of Zoroastrianism are the 21 volumes of the *Avesta*, a collection of surviving hymns and

texts recorded in the 7th century BCE. For over a thousand years (549 BCE-CE 652) Zoroastrianism was the state religion of three Persian empires: the Achaemenians, the Parthians and the Sassanians. Many Zoroastrian doctrines such as a world savior, devils, angels, hell, paradise, and a last judgment influenced post-exile Judaism.

Zoroastrianism declined in Persia (Iran) following the Islamic Arab, Turk and Mongol invasions beginning in the 7th century. Today about 30,000 continue to survive in Iran, mostly in Yazd and Kerman. In India where the majority of Zoroastrians live, they are called Parsis (or Parsees) referring to their origins in Persia. Numbering over 130,000, they live mainly in Bombay and the Gujarat. There is a small community of approximately 3,000 Zoroastrian/Parsis in the United States.

JUDAISM: Judaism, the religion of the Jews, was the first comprehensive monotheistic religion in the world. Its history is closely associated with the history of the Hebrew people. Jewish tradition dates their history to approximately 4,000 years ago (1950 BCE) when the patriarch Abraham and his family left the city of Ur in modern-day southern Iraq and migrated northwest to the city of Harran (near the present Syrian-Turkish border). Moving south, they settled among the people of Canaan (present-day Israel/Palestine and parts of Jordan) where, according to Jewish tradition, Abraham entered into a covenant with God.

A severe drought during the time of Abraham's grandson Jacob (also called Israel) led the Hebrews into Egypt where they settled for nearly 500 years as farmers. According to biblical accounts, the Hebrews were then enslaved by the Pharaoh Ramses II. Jewish tradition also maintains that God revealed the Ten Commandments to Moses as he led his people out of Egypt. The five books of Moses, *Torah* or the Law, are the basic source of teachings of Judaism.

Two hundred years after their conquest of Canaan (1200 BCE) the Hebrews, also called the Israelites, established their first kingdom in 1025 BCE. Three successive kings—Saul, David, and Solomon—ruled until 933 BCE. Upon Solomon's death, the kingdom split into two, Israel in the north and Judah in the south. Jerusalem became the capital of the southern kingdom. An invasion by the Assyrians in 722 BCE destroyed

Israel in the north. In 586 BCE the Babylonians ended the southern kingdom of Judah, destroyed the First Temple (built by Solomon) in Jerusalem, and took much of its population into captivity in Babylon (in present-day Iraq).

The Babylonian exile lasted until 538 BCE when the Persian king Cyrus the Great captured Babylon and permitted the Jews to return. Many Jews returned to Jerusalem under Persian rule and rebuilt the Second Temple. A large number of Jews, however, remained in Persian-ruled Babylon where the Babylonian community became the most important in world Jewry. This period became crucial to the history of Judaism. It was in Babylon that the Hebrews were first called Jews, monotheism emphasized, the Mosaic Torah compiled, the concept of the Messiah developed, and the Babylonian Talmud recognized as the highest legal authority for Jews throughout the world. The synagogue became an institution; and Hebrew, though it remained the language of religion and learning, was replaced by Aramaic as the everyday language of the Jews.

Jerusalem remained a vassal city of Persia until the young Alexander the Great stood at its gates and demanded its surrender. In the middle of the 2nd century BCE, an independent Jewish kingdom was revived but came under Roman rule. Jewish revolts in CE 70 and CE 135 resulted in Roman destruction of Jerusalem and the Second Temple. The area was renamed Judea Palestine after the earlier coastal inhabitants, the Philistines.

Most Jews were dispersed throughout the Mediterranean world. In later years some reached Eastern Europe and Russia. During the 8th century, the upper class amongst the Khazars (a people of Turkish stock from the Caspian Sea region) converted to the Jewish faith and made it their state religion. When their powerful empire fell in the 11th century, many Jewish Khazars settled in Eastern Europe, joining there with other Jews who had migrated from the west. European Jews are referred to as *Ashkenazi* Jews.

For much of the Middle Ages (7th to 15th centuries) many Jews lived in prosperity in Muslim Spain and in other parts of the Islamic world—at a time when Jews in much of Europe often suffered from persecution. Beginning in 1492 with the reconquest of Muslim Spain by the Christians, all remaining Jews and Muslims who did

not convert to Christianity were expelled or killed. The Jews left for other parts of Europe, North Africa and West Asia. Jews originally from Spain and Portugal together with some Jews from North Africa and West Asia are called *Sephardic* Jews.

In the latter part of the 19th century, anti-Semitism, the discrimination against the Jewish people, escalated into massacres (called pogroms) in Russia and parts of Eastern Europe. Taken together with intensified discrimination in Western Europe, this led to the development of Zionism, a Jewish national movement advocating the return of the Jews to Palestine. The darkest moment in Jewish history was the Holocaust during the Nazi regime in Germany when close to 6 million Jews were killed. Nazism accelerated Jewish immigration to Palestine during and after World War II and led to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948.

The Jewish Scriptures consist of two works: the expanded *Torah* (the Law) or Bible, which Christians call the Old Testament; and the *Talmud* containing rabbinical commentaries on Jewish law. The Jewish community's traditions include circumcision of male infants and the *bar mitzvah* (male) or *bat mitzvah* (female) ceremony signifying the beginning of religious responsibility for Jewish youth. Traditions also include dietary laws and daily, weekly, monthly and annual cycles of prayer. Chief annual observances include *Rosh Hashanah* (New Year); *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement); *Sukkoth*; *Pasach* (Passover), celebrating the liberation of the Israelites from Pharaonic Egypt; *Shavuot*; and the minor holidays of *Hanukkah* and *Purim*.

Today, almost 20 million Jews live in many countries with more than half living in the United States and Israel. The United States is the home of the largest Jewish community in the world. Of modern Israel's Jewish population of about 5 million, 65 percent are originally from Asia and Africa. In West Asia, there are small Jewish minorities in Turkey, Iran and several Arab countries.

CHRISTIANITY: Christianity has more adherents than any other religion in the world. It began in West Asia and for centuries was the religion of the majority of its people.

Jesus was born in Bethlehem in the Roman-ruled province of Judea Palestine. After Jesus' crucifixion, his disciples committed themselves to preach his teachings to the world. From Palestine—the name that the Romans gave to the land of Canaan—disciples and converts sent missionaries to near and distant places in West Asia and the Mediterranean region. The apostles Peter, Paul and Barnabas traveled to Syria and preached in the city of Antioch (Antakya, now a Turkish city) where the disciples were first called Christians (Acts 11:6). John brought Mary to Ephesus (Efes, in present-day Turkey) where it is believed she died. The apostles Thaddeus and Bartholomew established churches in Armenia; the apostle Thomas in present-day Iraq.

In the 3rd century, Armenia was the first state to declare Christianity its official state religion. By the early 4th century, the Roman emperor Constantine converted to Christianity and elevated Christianity to a legal religion. The new religion extended over the entire Mediterranean region with Byzantium (Constantinople) as its capital. The emperor Theodosius the Great (346-395) declared Christianity the official and the only religion permitted within the Roman Empire. Today, Christianity is estimated to have almost 2 billion followers worldwide, the vast majority living in Europe, North and South America, sub-Saharan Africa and Oceania. Yet it is also the faith of over 325 million people in Asia.

At present, there are some 8 million Christians in West Asia (including Armenia). This is a small number compared to the total population of the region. However, the history of Christianity is deeply rooted in the history of West Asia. Most of the Christian churches in this area trace their foundation to the early apostles of Jesus such as Peter, Paul, James, Thomas, John, Mark, and Barnabas. They are divided into three major groups: the Eastern Orthodox, the Oriental Orthodox, and the Eastern Catholic churches. The three share many basic doctrines. They all believe in the Trinity, the Virgin Birth, and the divinity of Jesus. The Eastern Orthodox Church, like the Catholics, believes that the two natures of Jesus, the divine and the human, are equal in importance. The Oriental Orthodox churches (Monophysites) believe that the divine nature of Jesus takes precedence over his human nature. The Assyrian Church of the East, an independent ancient church (once known as Nestorian), emphasizes Jesus'

separate humanity and divinity (dyophysite) and uses neither icons nor images other than a simple Cross. These and other doctrinal differences have divided the Christians in West Asia since the 4th century.

The Eastern Orthodox Church represents the patriarchates of Antioch and Jerusalem in the Greek Orthodox Church. The Oriental Orthodox churches (Monophysites) include the Coptic Orthodox, the Armenian Orthodox (also called Armenian Apostolic or Armenian Gregorian), and the Syrian Orthodox (or Jacobite) churches.

The Eastern Catholic churches (Uniates) include the Greek Catholic (or Melkite), the Coptic Catholic, the Armenian Catholic, the Syrian Catholic, and the Assyrian Catholic (or Chaldean Catholic) churches—all offshoots of the various Orthodox churches. Beginning in the 16th century, European Catholic missionaries, predominantly French and belonging to the Carmelite, Dominican, and Franciscan orders, attracted a segment from among the Orthodox Christian communities to the Catholic faith. An independent Eastern Catholic (but not Uniate) body is the Maronite Church, which dates from the early centuries of Christianity. The various Eastern Catholics (Uniates) accept the Pope as the supreme leader of the Church whereas the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox churches regard the Pope only as a Bishop of Rome and a Patriarch of the West. These ancient churches all retain their historical liturgies and apostolic traditions with their own hierarchy and holy synod.

During the 19th century, Protestant churches in Europe and the United States sent missionaries to preach and convert people in West Asia. At first Jews and then Muslims were the prime target for missionary work, but most Jews and Muslims remained loyal to their traditional faith. Converts to Protestantism, less than 3 percent of West Asian Christians, came mainly from among the Orthodox Christians. Nevertheless, these foreign missions played a prominent cultural role in the area, building a number of influential schools, hospitals and colleges.

Of all the West Asian countries, Armenia's population of 3.5 million has the highest percentage of Christians (95 percent), followed by Cyprus (75 percent) and Lebanon (45 percent). Syria, Jordan, Iraq, and the Palestinian territories all have

Christian minorities. There are also smaller Christian minorities in Israel, Turkey, and Iran. Some have held high cabinet positions and played leading political roles in several West Asian countries.

ISLAM: With over one billion adherents worldwide, Islam is the second largest religious community in Asia as well as throughout the world. It is the fastest growing yet youngest of the three Abrahamic religions. The word “*Islam*” in Arabic literally means “to surrender” (to God). It has been the principal religion of West Asia for over a thousand years. Muslims, as the followers of Islam refer to themselves, form about 95 percent of the population of West Asia.

Islam as a religion began in the 7th century in the Arabian peninsula. A young merchant named Muhammad (CE 570-632) emerged as the Arab prophet of Islam. Islamic tradition believes that in a series of revelations God (*Allah* in Arabic) spoke to Muhammad through the angel Gabriel. In 622, persecuted by his community in *Makkah* (Mecca), Muhammad left with his supporters and took refuge in the city of Yathrib—later renamed *Madinah* (Medina). Muslims call this migration from *Makkah* (Mecca) to *Madinah* (Medina) *Hijrah* and use this important event to mark the beginning of their Islamic calendar.

The words revealed to Muhammad were later collected in one book called the *Qur'an* (Koran). The essence of Islamic beliefs includes the following: belief in one God who is omnipotent and compassionate, His angels and prophets (of whom Muhammad is the last in a series of prophets that include Abraham, Moses and Jesus), individual responsibility, salvation, the Day of Judgment, and the resurrection of the soul. Muslims believe that Judaism and Christianity were part of a series of divine revelations that culminated in Islam. In the case of Jesus, Muslims believe that he was a prophet born of the spirit of God through the Virgin Mary. However, unlike Christians, they do not believe in his divinity nor in the doctrine of the trinity. Islam regards Jews and Christians as “People of the Book,” meaning believers in Holy Scriptures.

Islam’s five fundamental duties are often referred to as the “Pillars of Islam.” The first is *Shahadah*, or the profession of faith that “There is no god but God, and Muhammad is the Messenger of God.” The second duty is *Salat*, the five daily ritual

prayers. The third is *Zakat*, or charity to the needy. The fourth is *Sawm*, the dawn-to-sunset fast during the lunar month of *Ramadan*, the ninth month in the Islamic lunar calendar. The fifth, if one is physically and financially able, is the *Hajj* or pilgrimage to *Makkah* (Mecca).

The two major branches of the Muslim community are the Sunnis and the Shiites. About 85 percent of the world's Muslims are Sunnis, located primarily in parts of the Indian subcontinent (Pakistan, India and Bangladesh); in sub-Saharan Africa (from Senegal to Somalia); in the Arab countries of West Asia and North Africa; in Southeast Asia (Indonesia and Malaysia); in Turkey, Afghanistan and in Central Asia; and as a small minority in western China and the Philippines. The Shiites number 10-15 percent of Muslims worldwide. The majority of Shiite Muslims in West Asia live in Iran where they form 93 percent of the population. Shiite Muslims also form the majority in Iraq and Bahrain, are the largest community in multi-sectarian Lebanon, and have a strong representation in Yemen and the eastern provinces of Saudi Arabia. In South Asia, there is a Shiite minority among Muslims in India; the majority in Azerbaijan in Northern Asia is also Shiite.

The Sunni and Shiite communities agree on the major Islamic doctrines and beliefs. Their chief differences lie in the issue of leadership of the Islamic community, in different interpretations of Islamic law, and in some practices. The tradition of mysticism in Islam, called Sufism, emphasizes the inner life of the spirit and is found among both groups of Muslims. Tending to approach other religions with greater open-mindedness, Sufism has played a significant role in the diffusion of Islam, particularly in South and Southeast Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.

Muslim social traditions include circumcision of male children and dietary restrictions similar to Jewish traditions. The chief annual observances are '*Id al-Adha*, commemorating the willingness of the patriarch Abraham to sacrifice his son, and celebrated at the end of the *Hajj* season; and '*Id al-Fitr*, celebrated at the end of the month-long fast of Ramadan. In addition to these chief Islamic holidays, the Shiite community also observes '*Ashura*, an annual period of mourning and penitence commemorating the martyrdom of the prophet Muhammad's grandson, Husayn.

Today it is estimated that there are over 1.2 billion Muslims worldwide, less than one-fifth of whom are Arabs. Most Muslims live outside West Asia (the Middle East), mainly in other parts of Asia and Africa with smaller numbers in Europe and the Americas. The Southeast Asian country of Indonesia with over 200 million inhabitants contains the world's largest Muslim population (180 million). Here in the United States, there are an estimated 5 million Muslims.

HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS OF WEST ASIA

EARLY CIVILIZATIONS: The discovery of agriculture, the domestication of animals and the beginnings of village and city life all began in West Asia. Excavations show evidence of these developments as far back as 8000 BCE in Jericho (in the Palestinian-administered West Bank) and in 7000 BCE in Çatal Huyuk, Turkey.

By the 4th millennium BCE, the people of West Asia had developed thriving cities. In southern Mesopotamia (in present-day Iraq), twelve Sumerian city-states established a union and maintained peaceful trade relations. They also developed the oldest known system of writing in history—cuneiform written in syllables on clay tablets. Their contributions also include the wagon wheel; the arch-style in architecture; a calendar of twelve lunar months; and a computation system based on units of 60 that we still use in measuring time, circles, and angles.

During the third millennium BCE, several Semitic city-states rose to eminence in Mesopotamia, in the interior of Syria, and along the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea. One such city was Akkad in Mesopotamia whose ruler, Sargon the Great, established the first great empire in history. It covered most of West Asia from the Mediterranean Sea to the Persian Gulf. By the 1900s BCE, the Babylonians ruled over ancient Iraq and expanded their control over much of Southwest Asia. The most famous Babylonian ruler was Hammurabi the Great (1792-1750 BCE). His comprehensive code of law collected and systematized earlier Sumerian and Akkadian laws. Consisting of 282 sections, the code outlined property rights, inheritance law, and criminal law so "that the strong may not oppress the weak . . . and to further the welfare of the people."

Other kingdoms and empires or confederations of cities replaced the Babylonians in controlling wide areas of West Asia. The Hittites, an Indo-European people, came from Asia Minor (in present-day Turkey). They dominated West Asia from 1400 to 1200 BCE. They were one of the earliest people to use iron.

The Aramaeans in interior Syria were skillful merchants and dominated overland trade routes in the region. By the beginning of the 7th century BCE, their Semitic language, Aramaic, became the *lingua franca* of much of West Asia and remained so for nearly 2,000 years. It was adopted by the Persian ruler Darius as the *lingua franca* of his Achaemenid empire. Aramaic was also the mother-tongue of Jesus, and it had a major influence on Arabic, which later replaced Aramaic as the *lingua franca* of West Asia.

Along the Mediterranean coast (in present-day Syria and Lebanon) a Semitic Canaanite people, the sea-faring Phoenicians carried out trade and traveled throughout the Mediterranean and the Black Sea and into the Atlantic Ocean. They contributed the first phonetic alphabet; it consisted of 22 consonants, each representing a sound. They taught it to the Greeks who in turn taught it to other Europeans. Some historians speculate that the Phoenicians circumnavigated Africa some 2,000 years before Vasco da Gama did in the 15th century CE.

In the 10th and 9th centuries BCE, the Assyrians from their capital of Nineveh in ancient Iraq swept through the entire region of West Asia. They built a good network of roads for troops and trade while their use of iron weapons, cavalry, and bow and arrows gave them military superiority over their adversaries.

The Assyrians were defeated by the Chaldaeans (sometimes called the Neo-Babylonians) in the 7th century BCE. The Chaldaeans rebuilt Babylon on the Euphrates River into a splendid city. The ancient Greeks considered the Hanging Gardens of Babylon as one of the Seven Wonders of the World. Chaldaean/Babylonian scholars were especially interested in astronomy. They studied orbits and eclipses of stars and planets and determined the dates of solstices and equinoxes. Many Greek and Arabic names for constellations, as well as some names for metals, drugs, plants, musical

instruments, and weights and measures are but translations, even transliterations, of Babylonian or Assyrian names—e.g., cane (*kanu*), alcohol (*guhlu*), gypsum (*gassu*), myrrh (*murru*), saffron (*azupiranu*) or naptha (*naptu*).

The Persian Medes, ancestors of the modern Kurds, soon overran Assyria and Persia from their center in the rugged mountains of Kurdistan. Unlike the Hebrews, Aramaeans, Babylonians, Phoenicians and Assyrians who were all Semites, the Medes were an Indo-European people. Though their tenure in power was brief (900-500 BCE), they passed on to Persia (Iran) their Indo-European Aryan language, their alphabet of thirty-six characters, their famous code of laws, their development of writing materials (parchment and pens) which replaced the use of clay tablets, and their religious belief in Zoroastrianism. The Medes' religious belief in Zoroastrianism also greatly influenced the Persians.

The next great empire to rule over West Asia was that of the Persians, an Indo-European people closely related to the Medes. Cyrus the Great (d. 530 BCE) united the Persians, Medes and other Indo-European people of ancient Persia around 550 BCE and established the great Achaemenid dynasty. Under his leadership, the Chaldaean empire of the Babylonians and most of West Asia were conquered. The Persian empire under the Achaemenids ultimately stretched from Egypt to India, and was the largest empire of pre-Roman times. The dynasty's Aryan language as well as its official religion of Zoroastrianism came to dominate Persia—the name "Iran" itself is taken from "Aryan").

This was a well-governed empire. It used Aramaic, the *lingua franca* of West Asia, in its imperial correspondence; imposed a common law on its subject peoples; and tolerated all of the various religions of the region. Under Darius (521- 486 BCE), the Persians built the world's first highway, the stone-paved Royal Road, a network of roads over 1,679 miles (2,702 kilometers) long. It had rest stations every 14 miles that served postal runners as well as travelers from the Aegean Sea to the Persian Gulf. The Royal Road inspired Herodotus, a Greek historian, to make the statement later adopted by the United States mail service, "Neither snow, nor rain, nor heat, nor gloom of night keeps these couriers from their appointed rounds."

In the late 330s BCE, a Greek and Macedonian army under the leadership of Alexander the Great of Macedonia challenged Persian rule over much of West Asia. Alexander's forces defeated the Persians, looting and destroying the rich Persian cities of Susa, Ecbatana and Persepolis. After Alexander's death, his great empire in West Asia disintegrated yet Hellenized local dynasties continued to rule for over 250 years. Nevertheless, Persia remained an important artery linking the Mediterranean world with India and Central Asia.

In the 1st century BCE, after defeating the Armenian empire of Tigran the Great, the Roman empire threw its mantle over Syria, Palestine, and Asia Minor. The Romans and Persians competed for this region for 500 years until the collapse of Rome at the end of the 5th century CE. The eastern regions of the Empire survived as the Eastern Roman Empire, often called the Byzantine Empire. Its capital of Constantinople was one of the great centers of civilization during the Middle Ages.

Byzantine civilization was a mixture of Greek, Roman, Aramaean and Arab cultures. During the centuries of Roman and Byzantine rule, hundreds of miles of new cobblestone roads, numerous amphitheaters, colonnades and aqueducts were constructed in this region. Most of the people of West Asia became Christians.

In Persia (Iran), the Persian emperors of the Sassanian dynasty beginning in the 3rd century CE extended their empire to central Asia in the north and to India in the east. They also built great monuments in their cities and continued their ancient tradition of good administrative organization of the country. Christianity, mostly Nestorian Christianity, had gained followers in Persia and spread eastwards to India and China. However, the majority of Persians maintained their adherence to Zoroastrianism, the religion of their ancestors.

Meanwhile, the feuding Byzantine Greek and Persian empires fought many wars with each other over the centuries. The frequency of these wars increased during the 6th and early 7th centuries. Constant warfare sapped the strength and resources of the Byzantine and Persian empires. It alienated the war-weary peoples of Mesopotamia (ancient Iraq), Syria and Armenia whose ravaged lands became battlegrounds. This was one of several factors that allowed the newly converted Muslim Arab forces to

defeat the Byzantine and Persian armies easily. Muslim conquests extended their dominion to Iraq, greater Syria (present-day Syria, Lebanon, Israel/Palestine, and Jordan), Persia, Armenia, Egypt and the rest of North Africa.

MEDIEVAL TIMES: Within one hundred years of Muhammad's death, Arab-Islamic conquests extended to much of West Asia (including Persia), parts of India (Sind), North Africa, and Spain in the west. Later conquests were to take various Muslim invaders (Arabs, Berbers, Persians, Turks, Mongols, and others) into India, Central Asia, and Europe.

Upon Muhammad's death in 632, *Madinah* (Medina) became the political center of a new Arab-Islamic empire ruled by a caliph (*khalifah*, in Arabic). In 661, the capital of this new empire moved to the ancient city of Damascus in Syria. Less than 100 years later in 749, the center of power shifted to Iraq. From the new capital of Baghdad, an Arab Islamic empire (known as the Abbasid Caliphate) remained in power for the next 500 years (749-1258). In 1258, the Mongols destroyed Baghdad and killed the last Abbasid caliph.

However, in its heyday in the 800s, the Abbasid Caliphate reached its zenith in intellectual brilliance and military strength. At its height it extended from West Asia to the borders of China. Its famous caliph Harun al-Rashid had contacts and exchanged gifts with the Frankish emperor Charlemagne. Baghdad was one of the greatest cultural centers of the medieval world. Harun's son, the scholarly caliph al-Ma'mun, established a research academy there called *Bayt al-Hikmah* (House of Wisdom). An important cultural institute, library and observatory, it attracted scholars from the entire Islamic world. Works in science, mathematics, philosophy and literature from the rich intellectual heritage of Greece, Syria, Persia, and India were translated into Arabic. Arabic writings preserved much Greek knowledge in philosophy, mathematics and the natural sciences—some later lost in the original Greek versions. These works, enriched with further contributions from West Asian scholars, spread to Europe.

Scholars, artists, and poets from many ethnic backgrounds contributed to this Golden Age of Islamic culture—Arabs, Persians, Syrians, Greeks, Kurds, Afghans, Turks and Indians. Some did not profess Islam but were Christians, Jews, Sabaeans,

Zoroastrians, and Hindus. The Arabic language became the *lingua franca* of the empire and the chief literary and scientific language of much of West Asia and North Africa.

West Asian scholars during the Islamic period made important contributions in mathematics. The 9th-century Persian scholar al-Khwarizmi (from whence we derive the word “algorithm” or “algorism”) was the first mathematician to use the term *al-jabr* (the Arabic word for reduction) from which the word “algebra” is derived. Al-Khwarizmi also wrote the first book in Arabic employing Indian numbers. This sophisticated place-value system came to be called “Arabic numerals” by Europeans who adopted the system in the 12th century. We also refer to this system as “Hindu-Arabic numerals.” In addition, many Muslim scholars influenced Latin scholarship: the Persians al-Razi (in Latin, Rhazes), Ibn Sina (Avicenna), al-Biruni; the Arabs al-Battani (Albatenius), al-Kindi, and Ibn al-Haytham (Alhazen); and then al-Farabi (Alfarabius) who is claimed by Turks and Persians (he was born in Turkestan of Persian ancestry) and many others made remarkable progress in the study of geometry, optics, medicine, astronomy, geography and navigation. Indeed, Latin translations of Greek and Arabic scientific works in these fields greatly influenced early European scientists. For example, the Latin translation of al-Kindi’s work on optics, *De aspectibus*, greatly influenced England’s foremost medieval scholar, Roger Bacon. Moreover, books by the Persian scholars al-Razi (the first to diagnose measles and smallpox) and Ibn Sina (author of the encyclopedic “Canon” of medical knowledge) were used as standard textbooks at European universities as late as the 16th and 17th centuries.

In literature, the adventurous tales of *The One Thousand and One Nights*, an accretion of Indian, Persian and Arabic stories, and the great masterpiece of Persian literature, the epic *Shahnamah*, date from this period. From Spain to the borders of China, West Asian artists excelled in architecture, miniature paintings, rugs, carpets, silk and cotton textiles, calligraphy, illuminated manuscripts, arabesque art, tooled leather, metalwork, glassware and glazed tiles.

West Asian trade caravans dominated the trade routes—the great “Silk Roads”—from China to the Mediterranean Sea until the 15th century while their merchant ships controlled the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea. Caravans and ships carried spices, ivory, gold, silk, porcelain, metalwork, rugs and carpets, perfumes, and incense. The

trading routes served as conduits of information and technology, transmitting in both directions scientific and technological advancements as well as literary and religious ideas.

However, fragmentation within the Islamic domains brought economic and military weakness. Beginning in 1096, European Christendom launched numerous military campaigns against the small Muslim princely states along the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea. Whereas Europeans refer to these campaigns as the “Crusades,” contemporary Arab historians of the time spoke of the “Frankish invasions.” The Crusaders sacked the cities of Constantinople and Jerusalem where they massacred many Muslims, Orthodox Christians and Jews.

The first Crusade was launched for religious reasons to regain the Holy Land for Christendom. Crusades thereafter were driven by economic motives—control of the lucrative trade in silk, jewels, gold, perfume and spices that came across Asia to the seaports of the eastern Mediterranean. For about 200 years (1096-1291) European Crusaders occupied areas in Palestine, Lebanon and Syria. Eventually, a series of Mongol, Seljuk Turk, and Kurdish leaders with their Muslim armies drove out the Crusaders. The most famous Muslim leader during this time was the Kurd Salah al-Din, known to the West as Saladin. Later medieval epics celebrate his chivalric encounters with Richard I, “the Lion-Hearted”, of England.

The Crusades caused a traumatic rift in the relations between Muslim West Asia and Christian Europe. Notwithstanding, the Crusaders introduced into Europe many products and technologies they learned from contact with West Asia. Among these were glass mirrors, stained glass windows, rugs and tapestries, the rosary, paper-making, leather-working, cotton and silk textile-making, and the distillation of sugar and alcohol. While in West Asia, the Crusaders acquired new tastes in the food, spices and perfumes of Arabia, Persia, India, and the Indonesian and Malaysian islands. On their return to Europe, the Crusaders introduced the use of Asian spices such as cloves, nutmeg, cinnamon, pepper, and ginger as well as new plants introduced simultaneously into Europe from Muslim Spain and Sicily. They included sugarcane, sesame, carob, rice, alfalfa, millet, lemons, oranges, apricots, pears, melons, dates and other plants.

MODERN TIMES: At the end of the 11th century, the Seljuk Turks from Central Asia established a powerful state in Asia Minor (modern Turkey). In the 14th century under the Ottoman dynasty, they began expanding into southeastern Europe and eastward toward Persia (Iran), taking over Armenia, once a powerful empire in Asia Minor, and neighboring Kurdish territories. In 1453 the Ottoman Turks captured Constantinople and ended the declining Byzantine Empire, then the most ancient surviving empire of Europe.

By the 16th century, all of West Asia except Persia, most of North Africa, and Southeast Europe as far north as Hungary was under Ottoman Turkish control. At the helm of this vast and powerful empire was a sultan who ruled from Constantinople (Istanbul), a city whose population of nearly a million was more than twice the size of any European capital. The population of the Ottoman Empire included Arabs, Turks, Greeks, Armenians, Kurds, Jews, Macedonians, Albanians, Slavs, Bosnians and other smaller ethnic groups.

Ottoman power reached its peak in the 16th and 17th centuries especially under Sultan Sulayman I who ruled from 1520 to 1566. He was called “The Magnificent” by Europeans and earned the name “The Lawgiver” by his own people for his military, educational and legal reforms that brought stability to the Ottoman empire. It was also a period of brilliant artistic, architectural and literary activity. Many dazzling buildings—palaces, mosques, colleges, hospitals, and various royal buildings—were designed by the famous court architect, Sinan Pasha. The buildings were then decorated by Ottoman craftsmen who excelled in tilework, metalwork, stonecarving, and woodcarving inlaid with ivory and mother-of-pearl.

Meanwhile in Persia, the Safavid dynasty founded by Shah Ismail in 1502 established Shiite Islam as the official state religion. Under Shah Abbas (1587-1629) Persia entered a new golden age. Blue-tiled mosques, schools, hospitals and other public works graced the magnificent capital city of Isfahan. The subsequent Zand dynasty (1750-1794) transformed the Persian city of Shiraz into a beautiful capital city. With the next ruling dynasty, the Qajar dynasty (1794-1925), the Persian government increasingly came under Russian and British pressure.

The Ottoman Turkish empire, especially during the late 18th and 19th centuries, declined steadily despite several attempts at reform. Nationalist struggles for independence by many of the Ottoman empire's subject peoples undermined the government. European powers, especially Britain, France, Russia and Italy, were eager to take advantage of a weakened Ottoman empire. Before long, the 20th century was to usher in dramatic changes to the region.

Prior to World War I, a group of reformist Turkish nationalists ("Young Turks") took over the government from the Ottoman Sultan. They aligned themselves with the Central Powers, Germany and Austro-Hungary, during World War I. Turkey's defeat in this war resulted in the complete loss of its empire. The Ottoman Empire ceased to exist; and the traditional office of Sultan/Caliph was abolished. A Turkish republic was declared in 1923 under the leadership of President Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. The new Turkish republic adopted measures to Westernize and secularize the country. Islam was de-emphasized, new legal codes adopted, and the Turkish script (formerly written in the Arabic alphabet) was replaced by the Latin alphabet.

With the end of World War I, new states were to emerge in West Asia from the "smoke-filled rooms" of the victors in Paris and London. In 1918 an Armenian state came into being and forcibly joined the Soviet Union as its smallest republic in 1921. Among the various national groups promised, but later denied, an independent state were the Kurds. They found themselves divided among a resurgent Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria and the Soviet Union. During World War I, Arabs also had been given British promises for independence in exchange for the Arab revolt against Turkish rule. The Arab provinces, dismembered from the former Ottoman Empire, were divided into separate countries under European colonial rule, their boundaries largely determined by European strategic interests. Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Palestine, Jordan and southern Yemen struggled against British and French occupation (Saudi Arabia, Oman and North Yemen alone were not colonized). Only in the decades after World War II did most Arab countries achieve full independence, while the goal of a pan-Arab national movement for a unified Arab state has remained elusive and difficult to realize.

One of the areas that came under British occupation after World War I was Palestine. The British government issued the Balfour Declaration in 1917 to the nascent

Zionist national movement in Europe whose goal was the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Palestinian Arab nationalism and Zionism, or Jewish nationalism, clashed repeatedly over their claims. The creation of Israel in 1948 generated a deep sense of bitterness among the dispossessed Palestinian refugees. Recurrent hostilities between Israel and the Arab countries have led to several wars and to Israeli occupation of Arab territories. Although there has been some movement towards peace in the 1990s, the Palestinian issue and Arab-Israeli relations remain a source of conflict in the region.

The Arab states of the Persian Gulf—Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and what later became known as the United Arab Emirates—had come under British control earlier. They gained their independence in the 1960s and 1970s. The discovery of oil changed the lives of the Persian Gulf people at a dramatic pace. Fishing and pearling villages were transformed into thriving modern cities within one generation. Currently, the world's largest proven oil reserves are in Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait, and Iran. Their strategic importance propelled these and other oil-producing countries into prominence in world politics and economics.

In Persia, intense Russian and British rivalry increased tensions in the area. In 1908, the first oil discovered in West Asia was in southwestern Persia. The Anglo-Persian Oil Company now known as BP (British Petroleum) held the oil concession and led to dominant British influence over Persia for much of the 20th century. A new Shah, Reza Pahlavi, ousted the Qajar Dynasty in 1925 and tried through strong measures to modernize the country. In 1935 the Pahlavi government officially changed the name of the country from "Persia" to "Iran." In 1941, Reza Shah was forced to abdicate the Peacock Throne by the British in favor of his son Muhammad Reza Shah Pahlavi.

In 1951, the popular Iranian politician Muhammad Mussadegh became prime minister. He sought to nationalize the oil industry and curb British power in Iran. Popular uprisings in favor of Mussadegh and against the Shah led the monarch to flee Iran. Fearful for its strategic oil interests in Iran and the Gulf, the United States led a covert operation in 1953 that ousted Mussadegh and returned the young Shah to power.

Oil brought wealth and opportunities to Iran. However, many Iranians disagreed with the way their country was governed. Lack of political reforms, misuse of oil revenues, and increasing economic and military reliance on the U.S. government fueled a growing opposition movement. The Shah and his government, however, suppressed the opposition. In 1979, conservative Islamic elements of the opposition overthrew the Shah and the Pahlavi monarchy and established a theocratic Islamic republic of Shiite clerics led by Ayatollah Khomeini. The new regime's domestic and foreign policies led to several political crises. During this time, many middle and upper-class Iranians escaped into exile in the United States and Europe.

An 8-year war (1980-1988) between the two oil-rich countries, Iraq and its non-Arab neighbor Iran, sapped the human and material resources of both countries. In 1990, Iraq's invasion of Kuwait resulted in a U.S.-led attack on Iraq and its ouster from Kuwait. The 1991 Gulf War re-established an independent Kuwait under the Sabah monarchy and ended in a disaster for Iraq and its people. Intensive bombing and the continued embargo have resulted in the destruction of Iraq's civilian infrastructure and the death of over one million Iraqis.

At present, all nation-states of West Asia are faced with formidable challenges. The Palestinian-Israeli issue remains unsettled. Kurdish goals for independence remain elusive since the 25 million Kurds of West Asia—the largest ethnic group without a homeland—live primarily within the borders of Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria. Other daunting tasks facing the region include demands for socio-economic stability, equitable water resources, and democratization compounded by conflicts between secularists and religious extremists. The election in 1993 of Turkey's first female prime minister, Tansu Çiller, illustrates the evolving role of women in these traditional societies. Women presently serve as engineers, physicians, university professors, ambassadors, cabinet ministers, judges, pharmacists, artists, bank tellers, factory workers, and business women in many countries of West Asia. As elsewhere in the world, women activists in West Asia continue to advocate social and legislative reforms to promote the rights and welfare of women in the region.

WEST ASIANS IN THE UNITED STATES

Accurate statistics about the number of Americans of West Asian origin are difficult to obtain. Before 1899, the immigration authorities listed their country of origin as “Turkey in Asia,” referring to the lands of the Ottoman Turkish Empire. Nevertheless, a fair estimate puts the number of immigrants from West Asia at close to 6 million.

Arabic-speaking “Syrians” were the first to arrive in North America and were soon followed by Armenians. Both these early ethnic groups entered the United States through Ellis Island, surviving deplorable conditions on a hazardous 12-day boat ride across the Atlantic.

Another controversial terminology to be noted is that present official U.S. government immigration statistics for emigrants from West Asia (the “Middle East”) include them under “Asia.” Once admitted into the United States, however, West Asians are classified as “White,” not “Asian.” This has led some organizations to consider a separate classification for persons of West Asian and North African ancestry.

ARAB-AMERICANS: Although the term “Arab-Americans” usually includes those who emigrated from both Asia and North Africa, this essay is restricted to emigrants from the Asian regions of the Arab World. Today there are approximately 2.5 million Americans of Arab descent in the United States with over 250,000 residing in metropolitan Detroit, the largest Arab-American community in the country.

Significant waves of emigration from Arab lands did not start until the middle of the 19th century. The first wave began in the 1870s and ended in 1924, when the quota system was established in the United States. By 1924, the number of Arabic-speaking immigrants who had entered the United States exceeded 250,000. The second wave started in the late 1940s and continues today.

The early immigrants of the first wave were mostly Christians from “Greater Syria” (present-day Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Israel/Palestine). They also included a small number of Muslims, Druze (an independent religion that developed from Islam in the 11th century) and Jews. Like many immigrants, they came to escape poverty,

military conscription or periodic discrimination by Ottoman Turkish rulers during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Most settled in New York City, Boston and other cities of the East coast. Many of the “Syrian” newcomers started as peddlers and later opened small businesses. Others worked in the textile and steel mills of Birmingham and Pittsburgh. Arab-American neighborhoods soon sprouted in Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, and Detroit.

As is the case with other immigrant groups, a number of “Syrian” immigrants came to the United States primarily for economic, political and religious freedom. They founded literary societies, established Arabic newspapers and wrote literature in both Arabic and English. The most famous of their literati was Kahlil Gibran, author of *The Prophet* and other masterpieces. The early “Syrian” immigrants brought with them their “Old Country” institutions. They built churches that became the focal point of their social and civic activities. The first American mosque—in Highland Park, Michigan—was built in 1919. Many religious groups sponsored Arabic language classes for children. Larger communities founded secular cultural clubs such as the Syrian-American and the Ramallah Clubs to help newcomers financially adjust to the new way of life and to celebrate their cultural heritage and social traditions.

The second immigration wave began in the late 1930s and 1940s. Many came as students but remained after completing their higher education at American universities. Included among this second wave of immigrants from the Arab countries were the Assyrians, a Syriac-speaking ethnic community of Nestorian Christians. Displaced from Turkey during World War I, many fought under the British in Iraq before immigrating to the United States in the 1930s and 1940s. After the creation of Israel in 1948 and, more recently, after the Arab-Israeli war of 1967, thousands of stateless Palestinian refugees immigrated to the United States. Other recent immigrants came from Yemen. Many settled in the Detroit area where over 10,000 worked in the automobile assembly lines. Others went to California’s San Joaquin Valley where they found employment as migrant farm workers.

Arab immigrants continue to arrive in the United States and include engineers, professors, physicians, scientists and businessmen who come to escape unfavorable political and economic conditions in their countries. Many Lebanese and Palestinians

arrived during the years of the civil war in Lebanon, particularly during the 1980s. The most recent arrivals are political refugees—both Arab and Kurd—from Iraq. The new immigrants from Arab countries have settled primarily in California as well as in Texas, New York, Florida and Michigan.

Whereas most of the early Arabic-speaking immigrants were Christians, the majority of recent immigrants are Muslim. Many have joined the established neighborhoods of the early immigrants. Together they established secular national organizations such as the Arab American University Graduates (AAUG), the National Association of Arab-Americans (NAAA) and the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC). These and other Arab-American organizations seek to counter the myths, stereotypes, and hate-crimes that increased in the wake of the 1967 Arab-Israeli War and continue to the present time.

Arab-Americans have attained leading positions in government, business, education, technology, sports and the arts. Both James Abourezk of South Dakota (D-SD, 1973-1979) and James Abdnor (R-SD, 1981-1987) served in the U. S. Senate. Current Arab-Americans serving in Congress are Republican Senator Spencer Abraham of Michigan (1994—) and Democratic Congressman Nick Rahall of West Virginia. Former state governors Victor Atiyeh of Oregon and John Sununu of New Hampshire are Arab-Americans. John Sununu served as White House Chief of Staff during the Bush administration. The list of Arab-Americans in all fields of endeavor is long and impressive. It includes persons such as Donna Shalala, Secretary of Health and Human Services in the Clinton cabinet; consumer advocate Ralph Nader; pioneer heart surgeon Michael DeBakey; scientist Elias J. Corey, recipient of the 1990 Nobel Prize in Chemistry; activist/author Edward Said, professor at Columbia University; acclaimed poet Naomi Shihab Nye; men's clothing manufacturers W. Farah and J. M. Haggard; entertainers Marlo Thomas and her late father Danny Thomas; radio superstar Casey Kasem; actors Jaime Farr, F. Murray Abraham and Kathy Najimy; singers Paula Abdul and Paul Anka; dean of the White House press corps Helen Thomas; founder of Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) Candy Lightner; teacher-crew member Christa McAuliffe, who perished aboard the *Challenger* space shuttle; and fashion designers Norma Kamali and Joseph Abboud.

ARMENIAN-AMERICANS: The first significant migration did not begin until the late 19th century. The number of Armenians who lived in the United States before 1890 did not exceed 2,000. By 1924 the number had risen to 100,000. Today, the Armenian population in the United States is estimated to be between 800,000 and 1,000,000.

The Armenian immigration to the United States is unique. The primary motivation was not a search for economic opportunities but rather a need for survival. Most Armenians lived on the Armenian plateau of West Asia (now known as Anatolia in central Turkey). Subjects of the Ottoman Empire, the Armenian people between 1894 and 1897 became victims of increasing tensions between the European powers and Ottoman Turkish governments. That, together with growing Armenian nationalist activities to gain political reforms, led the Ottoman Turkish authorities to launch a series of campaigns against the Armenians.

During World War I, Ottoman Turkey was an ally of the Central Powers, Germany and Austro-Hungary. The Turkish government led by nationalist “Young Turks” accused the Armenians of collaboration with the Allies—France, Britain, and especially Tsarist Russia. In June 1915, the Turkish government ordered the deportation of Armenians. Forced marches escalated into mass killings. Hundreds of thousands died of starvation. About one million Armenians died, and another million were driven into exile, virtually ending the Armenians’ 3,000-year presence in Asia Minor. These series of events are known as the Armenian Genocide. Hundreds of thousands of surviving refugees moved into Syria, Lebanon, Greece, Iraq, and Iran.

About 100,000 Armenian refugees entered the United States between 1880 and 1924 until the quota system brought the flow of refugees to a halt in 1924. Only when the quota system ended with passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act in 1965, did significant Armenian immigration to the United States resume.

Some of the early immigrants settled in the factory and mill towns of the Northeast and Midwest. Many, nostalgic for the fertile farmlands of their old homeland, moved west to California’s San Joaquin Valley. There, they made important contributions to agriculture, growing grapes (for raisins and wine), figs, melons and other fruit. Soon Fresno, California had a concentration of Armenians second only to

New York's. Although some Armenians pursued careers in international commerce such as the importing of Persian rugs, the majority went into small businesses such as tailoring, shoemaking, carpentry, photography and groceries. Women who worked found jobs in the garment industry and textile mills of the Northeast or on the farms of California. A large percentage of children attended colleges and went into business and the professions.

As with many immigrant groups, Armenians opted to live in close proximity to one another. The most important institution that promoted their unity and culture was the Armenian Apostolic Church (also called the Armenian Orthodox Church), an inseparable part of Armenian history for almost 1,700 years. Armenians proudly point out that their ancient kingdom was the first in history to accept Christianity as its state religion in CE 306. Important too are the small minority of Catholic and Protestant churches, civic organizations like the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU), and the United Armenian Fund (UAF), which sponsor cultural and charitable projects, including substantial aid to the Republic of Armenia after the massive earthquake of 1988.

Throughout the 1980s, new immigrants continued to arrive in the United States in response to international crises such as the Lebanese civil war and the radical policies of the Islamic regime in Iran, as well as from areas affected by the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991. Their largest concentrations are in New England, the middle Atlantic states, and California, the state where nearly 40 percent of Armenian Americans now live.

Numerous Armenians are recognized for their contributions to American life. Philanthropists Alex Manoogian, manufacturer of the Delta faucet, and Kirk Krikorian of Hollywood's film industry, have donated millions of dollars to support Armenian cultural causes in the United States and overseas. In the arts, playwright William Saroyan won the Pulitzer Prize for his play *The Time of Your Life* in 1939. Novelist Michael J. Arlen won the National Book Award for *Passage to Ararat* in 1975. Author and illustrator of several children's books, Nonny Hogrogian has won several Caldecott Medal awards from the American Library Association. Contributions to medicine include the work of Varaztad Kazanjian, the "father of plastic surgery," and Raymond Damadian, inventor of

Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI). The classical musical compositions of Alan Hovhannes and the work of soprano Lili Chookasian of New York City's Metropolitan Opera are well known. Other prominent Armenian-Americans include George Deukmejian, who became governor of California in 1983; Vartan Gregorian, president of Brown University from 1989 to 1997; and Ben Bagdikian, Pulitzer-award winning journalist and former editor of the *Washington Post*. Peter Halajian and the Kazanjian family are makers of the York Peppermint Patty and the Mounds and Almond Joy candy bars. Prominent sports figures are Ara Parseghian and Garo Yepremian of the National Football League, Jerry Tarkanian in basketball, and Andre Agassi in tennis. Armenian-Americans are outstanding citizens in many areas of American society.

TURKISH-AMERICANS: Immigration of Turks into the United States is relatively recent. Before 1970, 54,534 persons were listed as foreign-born and American-born Turkish-Americans. Of these, 24,000 considered Turkish as their mother tongue. However, it is estimated that a few thousand of these immigrants came from the Hatay region in Turkey, once part of Syria before 1938. Most were Christians who spoke Arabic at home and considered themselves Syrian. The majority of them settled in Connecticut and became part of the Arab-American community there.

Before 1940, early Turkish immigration to the United States was primarily motivated by economic opportunities and the rate of return migration was very high. Most of the early Turkish immigrants worked in wire factories and the leather industry. They settled in New England and in the large cities of New York, Chicago and Detroit.

In contrast, the majority of Turkish immigrants who have arrived since 1950 are highly educated professionals. Among the Turkish-American community are thousands of distinguished professors, physicians, engineers, and other professionals. Whereas the average number of Turkish immigrants, including Kurds from eastern Turkey, was under 100 per year for the period of 1931-1950, the new average jumped to over 1,000 per year in the 1970s. It has continued to rise due to economic and political conditions. The average reached 3,000 per year during the 1990s. There was also a large number of immigrants, almost 4,000 engineers and physicians, who eventually returned to Turkey. Estimates of the Turkish community in the United States vary between 100,000 and 400,000.

Turkish-Americans have organized numerous cultural and social clubs and associations. Many of them are members of the Federation of Turkish-American Societies, which was founded in 1956. They also have several soccer clubs. The majority of new Turkish immigrants are Muslim.

Like any other immigrant group, young American-born Turkish-Americans are less likely to speak Turkish and tend to assimilate rapidly into the mainstream of the American culture. Nonetheless, they are knowledgeable about Turkish culture and proud of their rich heritage.

Many individuals from the Turkish community in the United States have made significant contributions to this society. Prominent Turkish-Americans include Feza Gursoy, Professor Emeritus of Physics at Yale and winner of the prestigious Oppenheimer Prize and the Wigner Medal; Tunc Yalman, artistic director of the Milwaukee Repertory Theater; Esin Atil, curator at the Freer Gallery at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.; Osman Karakas, winner of a 1991 National Press Award; and Ahmet Ertegun, CEO of Atlantic Records and an influential force in the American music business.

IRANIAN-AMERICANS: The immigration of Iranians to the United States has become significant only in the past 25 years. About 31,000 came from Iran between 1820 and 1970. Nearly half of them were from Iran's religious minorities—Armenians, Jews, Assyrians and Baha'is. They joined their ethnic or religious groups who had arrived in the United States earlier from other countries. Among the majority community in Iran (93 percent of whom are Shiite Muslim) significant emigration began in the late 1960s. The average number coming to the United States during the 1970s rose to over 4,000 per year. Many came as students and eventually changed their status to permanent legal residents.

The Islamist revolution of 1979 accelerated emigration from Iran to the United States, Canada and Europe. It is estimated that 4.5 million Iranians of all faiths have fled Iran since the 1979 revolution. Iranian community leaders estimate a figure of 3 million Iranians living in the United States, with approximately one million Iranians in

California alone. The vast majority who have been entering in the past few years are admitted under the immigration categories of “relative preference,” “occupational preference,” “refugees” or “asylees.” Over 90 percent of those who were admitted in 1992 fall into one of these categories.

Among the new immigrants who have sought asylum is a large number of Iranians who adhere to the Baha’i faith. The Baha’i faith is a unitarian religion that has several common denominators with Islam, Christianity and Judaism. Its followers emphasize world peace and humanitarian service. The Baha’i faith has its origins in 19th-century Iran as an offshoot of Shiite Islam and has since emerged as an independent universal religion. Baha’is often faced periodic discrimination in Iran, with the current government there particularly antagonistic to them.

Over one million Iranian-Americans are concentrated in California, with Los Angeles containing the largest Iranian population outside Iran. Other states with significant Iranian communities are Texas, New York, Michigan, Ohio, Florida, Illinois, Virginia and the District of Columbia. The majority are of educated middle-class background and adjust fairly easily to life in the United States. At the same time, they exhibit a great devotion to their Persian heritage and culture. In spite of their recent arrival in the United States, Iranian-Americans and Iranian residents are recognized for their substantial contributions to American culture.

Iranian-Americans have a high percentage of professionals in medicine and engineering and a large number of academic faculty at American universities. One of the most distinguished is retired University of California at Berkeley computer scientist Lotfi Zadah. A recipient of several national and international awards, including membership of the prestigious National Academy of Engineering, he is currently director of the University of California-Berkeley Initiative on Soft Computing.

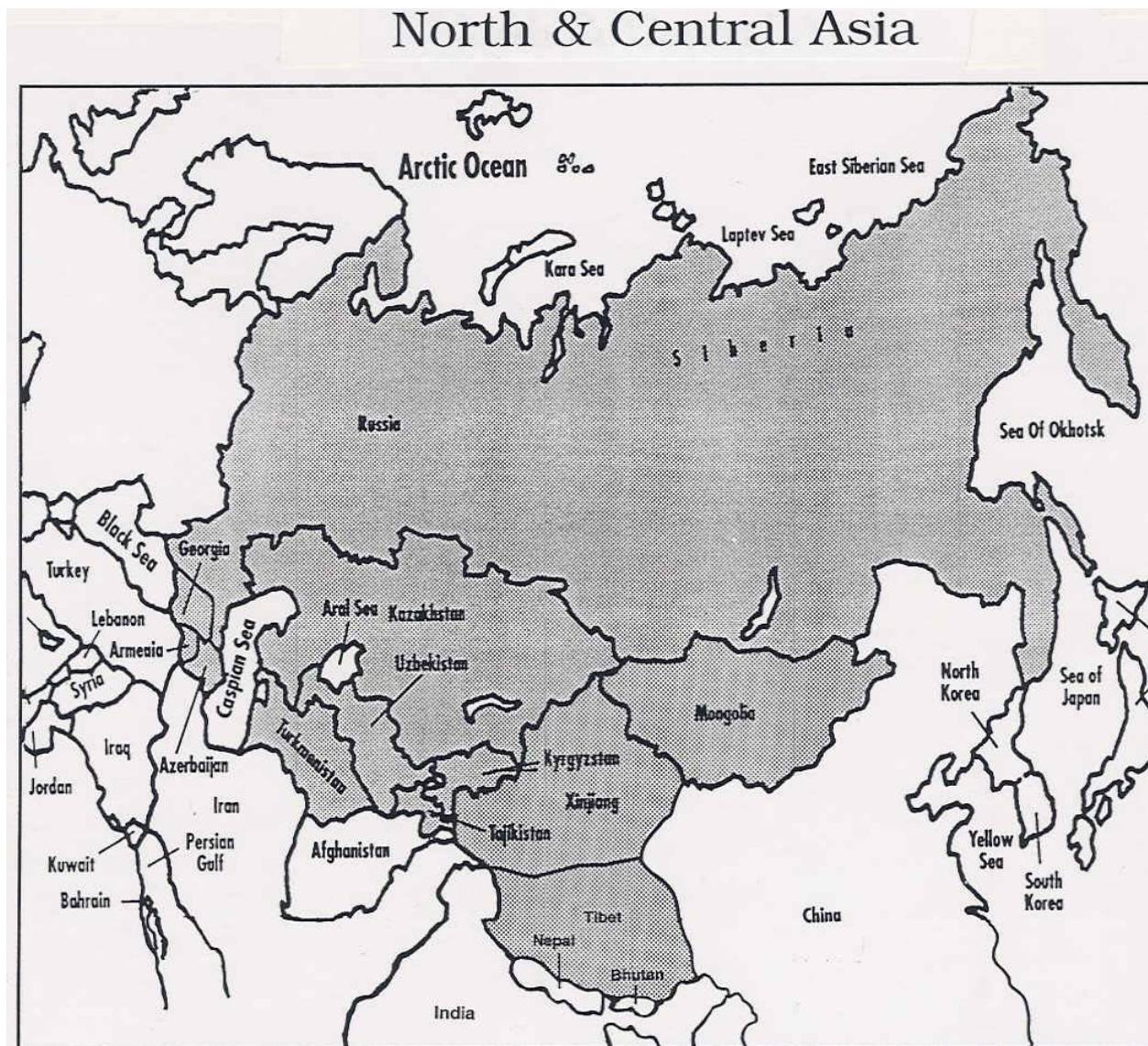
Other significant members of this community include Columbia University professor Ehsan Yarshater, editor of the *Encyclopedia Iranica*; women’s rights activist Mahnaz Afkhami, executive director of Sisterhood is Global Institute; Lotfi Mansuri, director of the San Francisco Opera Company; Shahdad Rouhani, pianist and conductor for Yani, New Age composer and musician; Reza Badeyi, TV producer of

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Mission Impossible; actor Hamid Zargar of *Star Trek* fame; CNN reporters Christiane Amanpour and Asiyeh Namdar; 1996 Olympic silver medalist in wrestling Matt Ghaffari; and fashion designers Bijan and Amir, the latter chosen to design President Clinton's inauguration suit. One of the most influential industrial designers in the United States is Sohrab Vossoughi whose award-winning designs include the HP Laser Printer and the Microsoft Natural Keyboard. Certainly one of the youngest Iranian-American achievers is Masoud Karkehabadi who at age twelve had an IQ of 200 and is currently enrolled in medical school in California.

During the U.S.-Iran hostage crisis in the 1980s, many Iranian-Americans suffered from hostilities and discrimination, more so than any other newly-arrived ethnic community. Uninformed Americans insulted and sometimes attacked them out of bitterness and animosity toward the policies of Iran's radical Islamic regime. Many of these Iranian-Americans had themselves suffered from that same regime and had found asylum in the United States.



NORTHERN AND CENTRAL ASIA

The vast area of Northern and Central Asia is about twice the area of the United States. It includes the present-day nations of Mongolia, Xinjiang, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan as well as the Transcaucasian nations of Azerbaijan and Georgia. Tibet was an independent nation in this region of Asia until Chinese occupation and annexation in 1959.

The climate is severely cold in most of Northern Asia, and therefore the area is sparsely populated. Historically, nomadic people roamed the habitable parts south of the Polar region. Most of the indigenous inhabitants before the 20th century were Turks and Mongols. During this century, thousands of Russians moved east to settle in the small communities established to exploit some of the rich mineral and natural gas resources in Siberia or to maintain and operate the Trans-Siberian railroad, the longest railway in the world.

With some notable exceptions, the indigenous ethnic groups of the entire area of Northern and Central Asia fall into two categories: the Mongols and the Turks. They both speak one of the Altaic languages, a family of languages consisting of three main groups: Turkic, Mongolian, and Tungusic. Yet in the ancient past, the Northern and Central region of Asia between the Caucasus and Ural mountains gave us a linguistic heritage—the family of Indo-European languages, the most widely spoken family of languages in the world. Spoken as a mother tongue by over half (1.6 billion) the world's population, these languages include the following subfamilies: Armenian, Baltic, Celtic, Germanic (which includes English), Greek, Indo-Iranian, Italic (which includes the Romance languages), and Slavic. Archaeologists have located a prehistoric Stone Age culture dating between 5000 and 3000 BCE in ancient Turkistan they believe is the probable home of the proto-Indo-European parent language.

THE MONGOLS OF NORTHERN AND CENTRAL ASIA

Traditionally, the Mongols were a pastoral society divided into families, clans and tribes. Each tribe was headed by a chief called *khan*. Tribes went through occasional periods of conflicts and consolidations. Population pressure, droughts or frosts prompted the Mongols to invade agricultural societies in the East, South or West, giving rise to great migrations. In the early 13th century, the loose confederation of Mongol tribes were united by the Mongolian leader Temujin (1162-1227) into a powerful nation. Temujin then assumed the name of Genghis Khan (Jenghiz Khan) meaning 'universal ruler.' From the ancient Mongolian capital at Karakorum, he led the Mongols and their allied Turkish troops in a series of campaigns that created the largest continental empire the world has ever known. The Mongols raced over Asia, conquering the weak and fragmented Chinese empire, sacking the Central Asian cities of Bukhara, Samarkand and Tashkent, and much of the Islamic domains of Western and Southern Asia. The Mongol empire stretched from Russia in the west to China in the east and from Siberia in the north to Burma in the south. Mongol influence penetrated Europe as far west as Austria, Hungary and Germany.

In spite of the ruthlessness of Genghis Khan's conquests, he was known to be a brilliant military leader and ruler. His army was characterized by its discipline, superb horsemanship and mobility. The *Yasa*, or Imperial Code, formulated by Genghis Khan laid down the administrative, criminal, commercial, and civil codes of law that governed his empire. Improved communications and security over the Central Asian trade routes encouraged contacts between people in Asia and Europe, especially traders. It is claimed that Genghis Khan provided the only nomadic peace that ever existed in his far-flung empire.

After Genghis Khan's death in 1227, his vast domains were divided between his sons and grandson into four khanates (a kingdom ruled by a khan). The most famous was the Great Khanate that included all of China and Korea. One of Genghis Khan's grandsons, Kublai Khan (1216-1294) transferred the Mongol capital to Beijing, which he called Khanbalik. There he ruled both as the Great Khan of the Mongols and as emperor of the Yuan dynasty of China. The Venetian traveler Marco Polo (c1254-1324)

worked for Kublai Khan and described his glorious court in *The Travels of Marco Polo*. The other three khanates were the Jagatai Khanate in Turkistan; the Kipchack Khanate, known also as the Empire of the Golden Horde in Russia; and the Il-Khanate in Persia. Although these khanates came under the nominal authority of the Great Khanate in China, they were in practice independent entities.

Their religious beliefs were influenced by Buddhism and even by Nestorian Christianity which they blended with their original shamanist belief in natural spirits. By the 14th century, the Mongol khanate in China formally adopted Buddhism; the other three khanates adopted Islam, and their population became closely associated with Turkic groups.

The Mongol Khans did not interfere in local customs and traditions, allowing local bureaucrats to administer their territories. Nevertheless, the Mongol domain receded from Russia in the west and Persia in the east. By the end of the 14th century, the Mongols were expelled from China and replaced by the native Chinese Ming dynasty. By the 1500s, all that was left were scattered Mongol khanates in Northern and Central Asia.

At present there is only one independent Mongol state in the world, the Republic of Mongolia (formerly Outer Mongolia) located between Russia and China. Ruled by the Manchu dynasty in China since the 17th century, much of Outer Mongolia proclaimed itself independent of China during the Chinese Revolution of 1911. Its area is 604,250 square miles, slightly larger than Alaska, with a population of under three million people. The overwhelming majority (90 percent) of the people are ethnic Mongols with small communities of Kazakhs, Chinese, Tuvins, Uzbeks, Uigurs, and other ethnic groups. Most of the population belong to the Yellow Sect of Tibetan Buddhism (also called Lamaism), a combination of Buddhism introduced into Mongolia in the 16th century, and traditional shamanism. Rolling plains (steppes) or desert, including the world's second largest desert, the Gobi, cover 90 percent of the country.

Inner Mongolia, located between the Gobi Desert and the Great Wall of China, was heavily settled by ethnic Chinese and became an integral part of China. With the

establishment of Communism in China in 1949, it became known as the Inner Mongolia (Nei Mongol) Autonomous Region.

TURKISH PEOPLES OF NORTHERN AND CENTRAL ASIA

This region is known historically as Turkistan—the land of the Turks. In area it exceeds 1.5 million square miles—half the size of the continental United States—with a population of 60 million people. The majority of people live in a wide belt stretching from China in the east to the Caspian Sea in the west. The Kazakhs, Kirgiz, Turkmen, Uzbeks and smaller groups are all Turkic-speaking inhabitants of this land. They also include the Azeris who live in the Transcaucasus and northwestern Iran. Their Altaic languages are similar to each other and not very different from the Turkish that is spoken in Turkey. The Tajiks—one of the oldest peoples of Central Asia—alone speak Persian (Farsi), referred to as Tajik-Farsi.

As early as the 8th century BCE, powerful empires—Persian, Greek, Turk, Arab and Mongol—sought to control the lucrative trade routes of Central Asia. Merchant caravans traveled along a series of roads known as the “Silk Route.” At its zenith, this artery stretched 8,000 miles across Asia, transporting silk, spices, gold, gems, porcelain, furs, horses, carpets and other luxuries between China and the eastern Mediterranean world.

In the 6th century, Central Asia was settled by Turkic peoples who had migrated from their original homelands in the Altai mountains of Mongolia. By the middle of the 6th century, they had established the world’s first Turkic empire which extended from the Volga in Russia to the Yellow river in China. Within 200 years, however, the Turks of Central Asia were defeated by the Arabs and their Muslim armies. Many Turks intermarried with Mongols and Persians and, by the 11th and 12th centuries, most of the Turkic peoples had converted to Islam. The region maintained its strategic importance, while the ancient Central Asian cities of Samarqand, Bukhara, Tashkent, and Ferghana astride the great Silk Roads flourished as great centers of Muslim learning under the Persian Samanid and Mongol rulers.

Within the Islamic realm, the Turks often established their own independent or autonomous domains. From the 9th through the 14th centuries, Turkic tribes fanned out across the steppes into Afghanistan, Persia, and Anatolia (central Turkey). The most famous among them were the Seljuk Turks who defeated the Byzantine armies in 1071 and controlled central and eastern Asia Minor. Another group were the Tatars whose leader, Tamerlane (also known as Timur), claimed descent from Genghis Khan. From his capital at Samarkand, Tamerlane waged many wars of conquest in the 14th century, capturing many famous cities of Asia such as Baghdad, Aleppo and Delhi. In the 15th century, China's closure of her northwest borders, together with the European discovery of the sea route to India, brought to an end the 2000-year-old Silk Roads across Central Asia.

It is noteworthy that the Mongol forces who conquered Russia and parts of Europe in the 13th century were mostly Turkic-speaking peoples who became known collectively in Europe as Tatars. There was considerable Tatar influence on many Russian social customs and organizational structures. In the 16th century, Russia conquered the Muslim Tatar khanates. In 1783, Crimea, the last Tatar state, was annexed by Russia.

In the 18th century, Russia had begun its expansion into the homelands of the Mongols and the Turks of Northern and Central Asia, as well as into the homelands of the Circassians, Chechens and Daghestanis of the Caucasus mountains. By the middle of the 19th century, most of this area had become part of Tsarist Russia's empire. After the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, it fell under the control of the Communists. In 1924 the Soviet Union organized this area into six Soviet republics and autonomous regions. With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the Turkish republics of Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kirgizistan (also spelled Kyrgyzstan) and Turkmenistan as well as the non-Turkish republic of Tajikistan declared their independence. Later these republics joined the Commonwealth of Independent States.

XINJIANG: Formerly known as Sinkiang Uigur Autonomous Region, Xinjiang is in the far northwest of China. It is sometimes called Chinese Turkistan or Eastern Turkistan. It covers one sixth of China's land surface and is larger than Britain, France, Germany and Italy combined. The majority (75 percent) are Turkic-speaking Uigurs who

number over 15 million and are mainly Muslim. Xinjiang became a province of China in 1881 and in 1955 was reconstituted as an autonomous region of China. In the next two decades, the Chinese central government sent massive numbers of Chinese to settle and develop the rich water and mineral resources of the area. This has altered traditional demographics with the Chinese population now approaching numerical parity with the Turkic-speaking Uigurs.

There are hardly any indigenous Mongols or Turks from Northern or Central Asia who emigrated to the United States. The few who might have made the journey would most likely identify with the Turkish-Americans who emigrated from Turkey.

TIBET

There is a small community of Tibetans from Central Asia who emigrated to the United States in the 1960s. Tibet, known as “the roof of the world,” is located on the highest and largest plateau in the world, averaging 14,000 feet high. The plateau is rimmed by the world’s highest mountain ranges, the Himalayas, the Qunlun and the Karakoram. Many of the great rivers of Asia begin on the Plateau of Tibet—the Indus, Ganges, Yangzi (also Yangtze), Yellow, Salween and Mekong rivers.

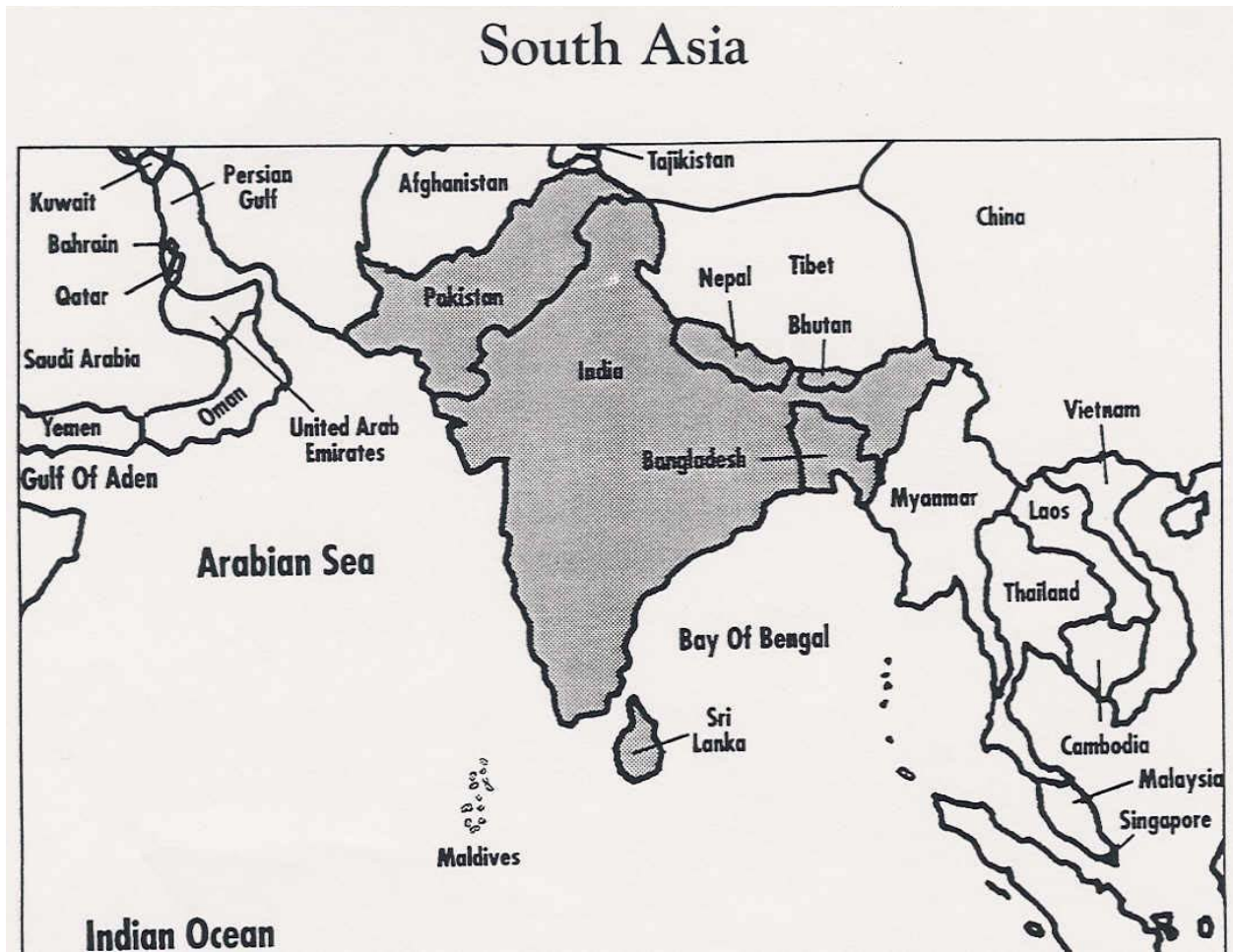
The most significant figure of early Tibetan history was the warrior king Songtsen Gampo. He united the Tibetan tribes and established the Tibetan written language in the 7th century. The principal religion of Tibetans is Lamaist Buddhism, so-called because its leaders are mostly *lamas* or monks. Though Buddhism arrived in Tibet in the 7th century, it is superimposed onto an earlier folk religion called *Bon*.

The Tibet Autonomous Region, once an independent state of 6 million people, is now part of China. Soon after China’s occupation of Tibet (1959), the spiritual and temporal leader of Tibet, the 14th Dalai Lama, whose name means “Ocean of Wisdom,” led into exile. Thousands of Tibetans followed him into exile into Dharamsala, India. After 1969, 1,000 Tibetan refugees were granted asylum in the United States. They were settled in sixteen sites around the country, including Oregon and Washington.

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Tibetans in the United States have cultural organizations to preserve Tibet's rich cultural heritage for younger generations. They also assist in resettling and reuniting new Tibetan immigrants. Tibetans throughout the world recognize the Dalai Lama as their supreme and temporal authority. The U.S. Congress also recognizes the Tibetan government in exile as the legitimate government of Tibet and the Dalai Lama as its leader. The Dalai Lama continues peacefully to guide and bring about freedom for his people. In 1989 he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts.



SOUTH ASIA

The nations in this region of Asia, often called the Indian subcontinent, include India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon) and the Maldives. Covering three-fourths of the region, India is the seventh largest nation of the world and ranks second in population after China; the two nations have almost 40 percent of the world's population.

THE SPIRITUAL HERITAGE OF SOUTH ASIA

Hindus form the largest religious community in South Asia. Muslims form the next largest community, followed by Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, Parsis, and Christians, half of whom are Catholics.

HINDUISM: Hinduism is one of the oldest living religions in the world; it is referred to as *sanatana dharma*, or the ageless religion, the indigenous name for Hinduism. There is no single founder for this religion, which grew over a period of 4,000 years. Instead, it is composed of the practices and writings of many individuals over the years. Hinduism evolved as a synthesis of the religion of the Aryans, who entered India about 1500 BCE, with the religion of India's indigenous Dravidian inhabitants. Comprised of innumerable sects, it has no defined religious hierarchy. Its adherents today number about 787 million and comprise the largest religious group in Asia and the third largest in the world.

Hindus believe that the source of all life is a universal spirit called *Nirguna Brahman*, the absolute reality. From that source come the souls of gods, humans and animals. *Karma*, the transmigration of the soul or recurring reincarnations, is a common belief in Hinduism. When the individual soul (*atman*) is incarnated in a human or an animal, it loses some of its purity. It may take many lives for the soul to regain its purity. A person's ultimate goal in life becomes *moksha*, the spiritual release from the cycle of suffering and rebirth. This liberation or enlightenment can be attained through

meditation and virtue. Then the pure soul is finally free again to join the universal spirit and achieve oneness with the universe. *Dharma*, the right conduct in life, is essential for the achievement of this freedom. The right conduct is to do one's duties in life and to live according to the dictates of one's station.

Hindus believe that the three main characteristics of the Supreme Being, *Nirguna Brahman*, are represented by the trinity of *Brahma* (the creator), *Vishnu* (the preserver), and *Shiva* (the destroyer). Other attributes of Brahman are represented by a large pantheon of gods and goddesses who are regarded as different forms of the one Supreme Being. The most popular gods include Vishnu and his incarnations, Rama and Krishna, Shiva, Ganesha, and the mother goddess Devi. Different aspects of Devi include the terrible Kali, but she is also the goddess of music and culture, Sarasvati, and the goddess of wealth, Lakshmi.

Hindu scriptures consist of three sets of works. The writing of the first set began about 1000 BCE and continued for several generations. These first sacred scriptures of Hinduism are the four *Vedas* (Books of Knowledge). Written in Sanskrit, they include poems, hymns, legends, and rituals. They depict the life, the society and the culture of the early Aryans.

The next set, comprising the mystical and speculative *Upanishads*, were written between 800 and 400 BCE. Its authors wrote extensively about the doctrine of *Brahman*. Their writings emphasized self-discipline and meditation. Through such practices as yoga and meditation, one may search into one's *atman* (soul) and reach for the universal spirit.

The third set represents the values, principles and practices of Hinduism. It consists of two renowned epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. The first epic is the *Ramayana*. It is shorter (24,000) verses than the *Mahabharata* but just as popular. It is the story of Lord Rama and his beloved wife Sita who is kidnapped by the demonic Ravana. After much anguish and many heroic adventures, Rama is reunited with Sita. The happy ending is usually dramatized in folk plays.

Like the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata* includes a wealth of traditional Indian wisdom and religious principles. The *Mahabharata* is the longer of the two. Written by several authors, it is 100,000 verses in length. Itinerant actors today travel across India each year to perform parts of the epic in towns and villages. Sometimes they perform the whole epic over several evenings while the villagers enjoy the entertainer's presence and provide a festive atmosphere. Nearly every adult and school-age child in the country knows stories from this epic. Pearls of wisdom and philosophical views are woven into heroic acts and adventures.

One aspect of Hinduism is its social system that divided the society into rigid classes called *varna*, sometimes translated as castes. According to this system, there are four *varna*. A person may be born into one of them or outside them. The highest *varna* is the *Brahman* (the priests). The second is the *Kshatriya* (rulers and warriors). The third is the *Vaisyas* (farmers, merchants, artisans). The fourth and lowest of the four *varna* is the *Sudra* (servants and unskilled laborers). A person who is born outside these *varna* is considered a *pariah* or untouchables. (Gandhi and the Indian authorities and media afterwards referred to them as Harijans, meaning the children of God.)

The Hindu idea of transmigration of the soul was applied to the *varna*. A person who adheres to what is expected of him/her would be reincarnated into a higher *varna*. This system left a deep impact on the societies of the Indian subcontinent throughout history. It treated the pariahs as untouchables. Their lives were full of hardship and degradation. However, most contemporary Hindu scholars reject this system and attribute it to the tradition of the early Aryans. While the practice still exists, India's constitution outlaws the caste system and provides the former *pariahs* with assistance similar to our affirmative action and equal opportunity legislation.

BUDDHISM: Founded by Siddharta Gautama in the 6th century BCE, Buddhism evolved within the folds of Hinduism in South Asia and then spread eastwards to East and Southeast Asia.

Siddharta Gautama (c563-480 BCE) was born a Hindu Kshatriya (warrior caste) prince and reared in the luxurious atmosphere of a princely palace in the Himalayan foothills of northern India. He was married and had a young son when he realized the

extreme poverty, sickness and suffering that lay beyond the walls of his comfortable palace. Deeply aroused by the misery endured by most of the common people, Gautama left his family and renounced his former way of life to seek answers to the problem of suffering.

He spent the next six years wandering, fasting and meditating. In a moment of insight or enlightenment, Gautama found the meaning of life and set out to share the answers he found with all people. His followers called him “Buddha,” meaning “the enlightened one.”

The basic doctrines of Buddhism include the “Four Noble Truths”: existence is suffering; suffering experienced by people lies in their drive to satisfy their desires and dooms them to a continual cycle of birth and death; there is a cessation to suffering which is *Nirvana*; and there is a path to the cessation of suffering, the “Eightfold Path.” These are: know the truth, resist evil, say nothing to hurt others, respect life, work for the good of others, free one’s mind of evil, control one’s thoughts, and practice meditation. By following the “Eightfold Path,” people would achieve *Nirvana* (Ultimate Reality) in a state of oneness with the universe. Gautama rejected the rigid *varna* system and taught that anyone is capable of escaping the cycle of reincarnation by following the “Eightfold Path.”

After the Buddha’s death in approximately 480 BCE, his teachings were orally transmitted until they were committed to writing in the 1st century BCE. The Buddha had taught not in the sacred Vedic Sanskrit language but in his own northeastern Indian vernacular dialect, which was understood by the people. There are three main divisions called *pitakas* (baskets). They comprise *Vinaya* or monastic rules, the *Sutra* or the discourses of the Buddha, and the *Abhidharma* or metaphysics.

In the 3rd century BCE, the Indian emperor Ashoka supported Buddhist missionary efforts. Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) converted to Buddhism in the 3rd century BCE, and Buddhism remains Sri Lanka’s national religion. Buddhism reached China in the 1st century BCE, almost 500 years after it started in India. From the 1st to the 6th centuries CE, Buddhism entered the Korean peninsula, Japan, and the lands of Southeast Asia, and in the 7th century it spread to Tibet and Bhutan. Buddhism has

disappeared from India, its country of origin, with the exception of Tibetan refugees living in India. At present, there are over 350 million Buddhists worldwide with the overwhelming majority residing in East and Southeast Asia.

ISLAM: Arab conquerors introduced Islam to the Indians of the lower Indus Delta (Sind) in the early 8th century. The major Islamic conquests of Indian subcontinent, however, took place from the 11th through the 14th century by Persians, Afghans and Central Asian Turks. That, together with peaceful conversion by Sufi (Muslim mystic) merchants and preachers, increased the number of Indian Muslims to nearly 30 percent of the total population by the 19th century.

Religious strife between many Muslims and Hindus on the eve of independence from British colonial rule led to civil war and eventual partition in 1947. Until the civil war, the world's largest Muslim population was located in colonial India. Although the division of the country was planned to create separate states for the Muslims (Pakistan) and the Hindus (India), many Muslims continued to live in India. At present, roughly 80 percent of India's population is Hindu and 14 percent is Muslim. Both Pakistan and Bangladesh are predominantly Muslim countries.

The impact of Islam is evident throughout the Indian subcontinent. Muslims introduced the Arabic alphabet and thousands of Arabic and Persian loan words into the spoken and written language of many Indians. Urdu, a new language, emerged from the synthesis of the Hindi, Arabic, Persian, and Turkish languages. It is now the official language of Pakistan and used by some Indian Muslims of India.

SIKHISM: Guru Nanak (1469-1538) founded Sikhism in the late 15th century. Sikhism's followers never exceeded 2 or 3 percent of India's population. Nevertheless, the impact of the Sikhs on India's history has been great. Guru Nanak was born a Hindu and lived during a Muslim reign of power in India. He studied Islamic and Hindu holy scriptures and reached conclusions that accepted some of the teachings of both religions but rejected others. His synthesis combined the monotheistic belief in God from Islam and the transmigration of souls and reincarnation from Hinduism while rejecting the Hindu caste system. Guru Nanak taught that salvation is the freedom from the cycle of reincarnation and the ultimate union with God. Sikh doctrine states that

since God exists in the soul of each human being, it is possible to experience the Divine through religious exercises and meditation. The Sikh sacred scripture is the *Adigranth*, a compilation of devotional poetry.

By the late 18th century the Sikhs conquered the Punjab region of India where they established a Sikh kingdom. But British subjugation of the Punjab led to frequent conflicts. The Sikhs revolted against British rule and attempted unsuccessfully to establish an independent state of their own in the 1840s. After India's independence and partition into India and Pakistan in 1947, the Sikhs pressed again for a state of their own. Currently many Sikhs in India continue to demand a fully independent state. The religious center of Sikhism is the holy city of Amritsar with its beautiful Golden Temple built over 400 years ago. The followers of Sikhism number about 16 million worldwide, the majority concentrated in the Indian state of Punjab.

There are other religious groups in South Asia. Most notable are the Christians, the Jains and the Parsis. The Syriac-rite Indian Christians of Malabar (Orthodox and Catholic Christians) trace their religious heritage to the preaching of St. Thomas in the early years of Christianity, several centuries before Christianity was to reach Western Europe. The majority of South Asia's Christians, however, became converts to Catholicism and, to a much lesser extent, Protestantism during the European colonial period beginning in the 17th century.

Jainism, preached by Mahavira in the 6th century BCE, holds many views similar to those of Hinduism. However, the gentle Jains (as exemplified by Mahatma Gandhi who came from a Jain family) emphasize non-violence to the point of prohibiting the killing of any creature, including insects.

Parsis (or Parsees) are followers of the Persian prophet Zarathushtra (Zoroaster in Greek). After the Muslim conquests of Persia in the 7th century, some Zoroastrians left Persia. In the early 10th century, a group sailed to the western coast of India (Gujarat). There they became known as Parsis, meaning Persians. The majority of Parsis worldwide live in India, primarily in Bombay and the Gujarat, where they number over 130,000 people.

HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS OF SOUTH ASIA

EARLY INDIAN CIVILIZATIONS: As in West Asia, the early civilizations in South Asia grew along its fertile river valleys. Often called the Indus River Valley civilization (2,500 BCE), it lasted for 4,000 years. Centered in much of present-day Pakistan and parts of India, the Indus River Valley civilization stretched over 1,000 miles (1,600 kilometers).

The first of these civilizations is called the Harappan. Archaeologists found evidence of urban planning in the ancient cities of Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro dating back to about 2500 BCE. The ancient Indians planned their cities in grid patterns of straight streets crossing at right angles. They built granaries, public baths and great halls inside their citadels. Archaeologists found children's toys and artisans' tools at the ancient sites. The ancient Indians also used bronze and copper for some of their tools, as well as devising a system of standard weights and measures.

Some of the Harappan culture's achievements are still unknown because archaeologists have only recently (1994) begun to decipher the symbols and pictograms found in the two cities. This civilization lasted for 1,000 years and then disappeared around 1500 BCE. Scholars puzzle over the reasons for this collapse—whether they were natural disasters or economic decline. Whatever the cause, the final blow delivered from the northwest was the invasion of India around 1500 BCE by the Aryans.

As cities along the Indus River were declining, groups of nomadic Indo-European Aryans entering from Persia spread throughout the Indus and Ganges river valleys. By the 6th century BCE, the Aryans had established states in the plains of the Ganges River. The Aryans, an early Indo-European people, traced their roots to the Caucasus region of southern Russia and Turkistan. They affected the future of the Indian subcontinent and left a lasting impression on the culture of the whole region.

Their influence was most evident on language and religion. The Sanskrit-speaking Aryans laid the linguistic foundation for Hindustani, Punjabi, Bengali, Gujarati, Urdu, Sindhi and the other languages of India. Moreover, the mingling of religious ideas

between the Sanskrit-speaking Aryans and the Dravidian-speaking indigenous inhabitants of the Indian subcontinent led to the development of Hinduism.

Numerous foreign empires and small princely states ruled all or parts of the Indian subcontinent from the fall of the Harappan civilization to the recent past. In the 6th century, the Persians controlled northwest India. Then for a brief period of three years, the Greeks ruled parts of India. After Alexander the Great's conquest of the Persian Empire in 330 BCE, he led his troops through the mountainous passes of present-day Afghanistan and across the Indus River. Yet Greek rule of India did not survive Alexander's death in 323 BCE. He died in Babylon while returning from a military campaign in India.

Several indigenous rulers made a lasting impact on India. The first of the great Indian empires was the Mauryan Empire founded by Chandragupta Maurya. Its kings ruled all but the southern region of India, and their reign lasted from 322-185 BCE. The greatest ruler of ancient India was Ashoka (or Asoka) Chandragupta, Maurya's grandson, who came to the throne in 269 BCE. In the early days of his rule, he was a warrior who defeated his enemies in brutal battles. After touring a particularly bloody scene of a battle and horrified by the sight of the suffering, he vowed to renounce violence and commit his rule to peaceful pursuits. He then established free hospitals and veterinary clinics, built an extensive road network with rest houses for weary travelers and, in general, initiated a particularly enlightened rule. Ashoka converted to Buddhism and established it as the dominant religion in his realm. However, he stressed tolerance and permitted non-Buddhists to practice their faith freely.

GUPTA AGE: The end of Mauryan rule (184 BCE) resulted in a division of India into warring kingdoms and principalities. This lasted for about 500 years until the rise of India's second great empire—that of the Guptas. The Gupta dynasty emerged in the Ganges river valley and succeeded in unifying most of northern India. During the Gupta period (CE 310-550), particularly during the first 150 years, India experienced a golden age in arts and sciences.

Under the Guptas, Hinduism displaced Buddhism as the major religion of the empire. Gupta rulers commissioned many Hindu temples decorated with exquisite

sculptures. They encouraged playwrights, poets, philosophers, and scientists. One of India's great Sanskrit poets, Kalidasa, lived during this period. Folktales based on religion also became popular at this time. Animal fables from a collection called the *Panchatantra* circulated widely and eventually reached West Asia. Translated from Sanskrit into Syriac, then Persian, and later into Arabic, these stories were called the *Fables of Bidpai* or *Kalila wa Dimna*. By 1400 the tales from the *Panchatantra* had been translated into Hebrew, Turkish, German, Spanish, Latin and several other European languages. Stories such as "The Monkey and the Crocodile" were the basis of many European fables. The animal fables of the 17th century French writer La Fontaine, for example, were based on stories from the *Panchatantra*.

Indian mathematicians made major advances in their field: they explained the concepts of infinity and zero and developed numerals and the decimal system. Adopted by Muslim mathematicians in West Asia, Indian numerals reached Europe via the Arabs. Hence, they became known as Arabic numerals and replaced Roman numerals. We now increasingly refer to this mathematical system as Hindu-Arabic numerals. At the turn of the 6th century (599), Indian astronomers wrote that the earth was a sphere that spun on its axis, and they calculated the length of a year as 365.3586 days. Also, Indian physicians invented hundreds of medical instruments and performed skilled medical operations such as skin-grafting and plastic surgery of the nose.

For hundreds of years, early traders, pilgrims and scholars traveled to India to partake of its economic and cultural wealth. Overland and sea routes—the latter helped by the seasonal monsoon winds—increased between India and East and West Asia. Trade flourished and brought prosperity to India. One of the most important industries was the silk, cotton, muslin and linen textile-making industry. Other exports were pearls, ivory, spices and precious stones.

The decline of the Gupta Empire encouraged Muslim invaders from Afghanistan to attack India from the northwest. Led by the Turk Mahmud of Ghaznah in the beginning of the 11th century, the invaders not only looted the wealth of India's Hindu temples but learned much about the riches of India's intellectual treasures. In the 12th

century, another group of Turks from Central Asia conquered northern India and established the Delhi Sultanate, the greatest power in northern India until the 16th century.

MOGUL CIVILIZATION: About 1,000 years after the decline of the great Gupta Empire, another empire came to power that unified much of India. This was the Muslim empire of the Moguls (also spelled Mughals and Moghuls) who ruled from the 16th to the 19th centuries. The first Mogul emperor was the Turk Babur, ruler of Kabul in Afghanistan. Babur claimed descent from Genghis Khan, the Mongol ruler, thus giving the dynasty its name. With an army of elephants, Babur defeated the last Delhi sultan. Many Indians became Muslim during this period, though the majority of India's population retained their Hindu faith.

The Moguls established one of the most powerful and opulent empires in India that they ruled from the cities of Delhi, Agra and Lahore. Mogul emperors imported skilled Persian artisans and craftsmen to their empire, thus accounting for the prominent Persian influence upon Mogul literature, music, and the art of miniature painting. Palaces, mosques, forts, and monuments combining Persian, Central Asian, and ancient Indian styles filled the landscape of present-day India and Pakistan. Exquisite monuments were built, such as the magnificent Taj Mahal and Red Fort in Agra, the Red Fort in Delhi, and the Shalimar Gardens of Kashmir and Badi Shah Mosque of Lahore.

The greatest Mogul emperor was Akbar the Great (1542-1605), Babur's grandson. During Akbar's reign, scholars from within and from outside India were welcome at his court. A religious eclectic, he was tolerant of all religions, whose representatives debated with him freely. Akbar encouraged learning and was known to employ more than 100 artists to illustrate the books in his massive library.

Under the conservative Aurangzeb (1618-1707), the Mogul Empire expanded to its greatest size, but it was also weakened by his intolerant rule. Major Hindu and Sikh revolts erupted, the most serious being the Maratha Uprising. Mogul political and military power continued to decline, weakened by dynastic struggles and invasions by Persian and Afghan rulers. Aurangzeb was the last of the emperors of India known as

the “Great Mogul.” Indian Hindu and Muslim princes assumed autonomy and, at times, independence. India, once one of the great civilizations of history, was too fragmented and weak to challenge British power standing at its gates.

COLONIAL RULE: European exploration was driven by mercantile interests to find a sea route to the wealthy lands in the East. In 1498 the Portuguese navigator Vasco da Gama, assisted by an Arab Omani sailor he met in East Africa, crossed the Indian Ocean and became the first European to land in India. Soon the Portuguese established trading posts such as the important settlement of Goa. By the early 17th century, the Portuguese, Dutch, British and French were all contending for power to control the lucrative trade with India and surrounding areas.

By the 1760s, the British gained the upper hand and came to dominate India for almost 200 years. The mercantile British East India Company established fortified trading posts at Madras, Calcutta and Bombay. It played one native prince (called *rajah*) against another, exacted taxes and contributions, and confiscated entire provinces that could not pay. Gradually the entire country was subdued and conquered, governed by the monopoly of the British East India Company.

Anti-British sentiment was widespread. The Sepoy Rebellion, started by Indian soldiers in the British army (*sepoys*) in 1857 spread across northern India. Regarded by Indians as their first war of independence, it was a major challenge to British colonialism. British troops took one year to suppress the uprising, after which the British government assumed direct control of the Indian sub-continent (1858) from the British East India Company. That same year, the British exiled the last Mogul ruler of Delhi. India was divided into provinces with a British governor-general, known as a viceroy, to represent the British monarch. Thus, India fell into British control, becoming the brightest jewel in the British imperial crown.

The Indians resisted colonialism and frequently rebelled against the British. Led by Mohandas K. Gandhi (1869-1948) the Indian National Congress in 1915 organized boycotts, marches and sit-ins for a free, united India. Gandhi's stature as an Indian political and spiritual leader earned him the prestigious title of *Mahatma* (“Great Soul”). Gandhi's revolution was not only against British rule, but just as strongly for tolerance

and against violence, racism and discrimination. At times, he resorted to hunger strikes to marshall the country against certain British measures, while at other times he aimed to dissuade his followers from the use of violence in their struggle for independence.

Mahatma Ghandi succeeded in achieving India's independence (1947) by civil disobedience expressed through nonviolent resistance. Gandhi's philosophy inspired many protest movements throughout the world, including that of civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr., and gained the admiration of much of the world. India's independence from Britain in 1947 was the first major act of decolonization in Asia by a European power. Tragically, however, the road to independence led to civil war.

THE ROAD TO INDEPENDENCE: Sectarian tension and clashes between Hindus and Muslims had occurred sporadically since the Islamic conquest of the 11th century into India. However, as the date of independence approached, the intensity and the frequency of sectarian clashes increased. With nearly one-third of India's population before independence being Muslim, the Muslim League, led by Muhammad Ali Jinnah, demanded a separate state for the Muslims to be called Pakistan. An agreement was reached to create two countries, India and Pakistan.

Since many Indian states were never officially part of British India, the prince of each of these states had to determine which country to join—Hindu India or Muslim Pakistan. The Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir had a Hindu prince and a Muslim majority. The prince decided to join India while his Muslim subjects wanted to join Pakistan. The ceasefire lines between the warring Indian and Pakistani forces left Jammu and Kashmir under mostly Indian control.

Thus, on the eve of independence in 1947, colonial India was partitioned. Both Mahatma Gandhi and Muhammad Ali Jinnah were appalled at the level of communal violence and bloodshed. It came at a cost of over 500,000 lives and the relocation of close to 20 million refugees. Approximately 8 million Muslims fled to Pakistan, and about 10 million Hindus left Pakistan for the new India. The new country of Pakistan was divided into two regions separated by about 1,000 miles of Indian territory.

Subsequently in 1971, the two regions of Pakistan formally separated after a bloody civil war over linguistic and economic grievances. East Pakistan, whose people are predominantly Bengalis, took the name of Bangladesh while West Pakistan retained the name of Pakistan. As for the issue of Kashmir, it continues to be a source of conflict in the region resulting in two wars between India and Pakistan, in 1947 and 1965. Currently, a persistent secessionist uprising in Jammu and Kashmir threatens relations between India and Pakistan.

Many countries in South Asia today are challenged by growing populations, democratization, religious extremism, and changing gender roles. The position of women in South Asian society, however, is very complex. As in many other regions of Asia, women in rural agricultural areas tend to live in a traditionally patriarchal society. However, in the professions, women compete equally with men. It is noteworthy that several countries in South Asia have had women as prime ministers. In fact, a female politician from South Asia, Sirimavo Bandaranaike of Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon), became the world's first female prime minister when she assumed the leadership of Sri Lanka in 1960. India's late Indira Gandhi served as prime minister from 1966 to 1977 and again from 1980 until her assassination in 1984. Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan, the world's seventh most populous nation, became the first female prime minister of a modern Islamic state. She served as prime minister from 1988 to 1990 and won election again in 1993 until her ouster from power in 1996. Begum Khaleda Zia was prime minister of Bangladesh from 1991 until her defeat in the 1996 elections. Since the 1994 elections in Sri Lanka, women hold the two highest political offices there—President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga and Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike.

SOUTH ASIANS IN THE UNITED STATES

Americans of South Asian heritage play a significant role in U.S. society. Most have come from India with fewer numbers from Pakistan and Bangladesh. Before the census of 1960, less than 17,000 immigrants had entered the country. They were often referred to as "East Indian." However, as the term perpetuates misidentification by the West, the terminology currently preferred by some is "Asian Indian." However, groups originally from South Asia—India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan and

the Maldives— also use the term “South Asian”. All, however, have no objections to being categorized as “Asian-American,” a term many of their national organizations lobbied for. The 1990 U.S. Census estimates there are about 815,000 immigrants from India, 81,000 from Pakistan, 12,000 from Bangladesh, and 11,000 from Sri Lanka.

BEFORE 1965: The first recorded arrival of an Asian Indian to the United States was in 1790. At the turn of the century, the first significant wave of early immigrants from South Asia arrived on the western shores of Canada and the United States. They were all termed “Hindus” although most were Sikh and only two percent were Hindus. Nine out of every ten were Sikhs from the Punjab, an agricultural state in the north of India. The majority were younger sons of Sikh families who left British-ruled India seeking better economic conditions in British-ruled Canada, while others were initially recruited by Canadian-Pacific railroad companies. Their trek took them by train to Calcutta, an Indian port city on the Indian Ocean. From there, they boarded ships to Hong Kong that took them across the Pacific Ocean to the Canadian port city of Vancouver, British Columbia.

As Canada began to turn away thousands of immigrants from South Asia, many moved south to the United States where they found work in Washington and California. Workers were needed to develop the booming economy of the American West. West Coast industrialists actively recruited Asian Indians and employed them at low wages. To survive they worked long grueling hours in Washington’s lumber mills or on the Western Pacific Railroad. Like other Asian immigrants, they suffered from insults by resentful local workers for accepting work at lower wages. By 1907, nearly 1,000 Asian Indians were expelled from their jobs in the lumbering areas of Everett and Bellingham, Washington by local unions who feared the competition of foreign workers. Many left for California where they worked on the Western Pacific Railroad until unionized white workers barred them from work in the railroad industry. Because of the severe shortage of farm laborers in California, they moved there and found jobs as migrant workers.

Most of the early immigrants from India were men. As with many early sojourners to the United States, they shared expenses and sent money to their families. Gradually they pooled their resources to lease or buy their own farmland in California’s Imperial and Sacramento valleys. However, the Immigration Act of 1917 prohibited the

immigration of Asian laborers from the “Pacific Barred Zone” which included India. That same year, Congress passed a law banning married men from many parts of Asia, including India, from bringing their families to the United States. Earlier anti-miscegenation laws also banned many single Asian men from marrying white women in over a dozen states, including California. However, many of the early Asian Indian immigrants married Mexican-American women and assimilated into the Mexican-American community.

Another group of early Asian Indian immigrants left India in the early 1900s because of repressive political conditions under British rule. Most came from northern India to urban areas in Washington and California. As students at the University of Washington in Seattle and at the University of California at Berkeley, many Indians faced discrimination. They were denied membership in student, professional or social organizations. Restaurants, hotels and rooming houses also refused to serve or admit Indian students.

The discrimination against both the laborers and the intellectuals from India created solidarity between them despite differences in their socio-economic backgrounds. One of their leaders, Taranakh Das, a student at the University of Washington, published a periodical from 1908 to 1910. He named it *Free Hindustan*. It was distributed among Asian Indians along the West Coast. Other organizations and periodicals followed. In 1913, nationalist Asian Indian immigrants on the West Coast founded the Gadar Party. By now Asian Indians had reached the East Coast and congregated in several communities, mostly in New York.

Adding to the burden of society’s discrimination against Asian Indians, Congress and the Supreme Court passed various legislation that barred them from becoming American citizens. In 1923, for example, in the case of the United States v. Bhagat Singh Thind, the Supreme Court ruled that Asian Indians were not “White” and thus could not become naturalized U.S. citizens. Previously, Asian Indians had been designated as “Caucasian” and some seventy persons had obtained U.S. citizenship. After the 1923 ruling, the United States government annulled their citizenship. In dismay, small numbers of Asian Indians left the United States, but others persevered. Sikhs, Hindus, and Muslims founded welfare organizations and fought against legal and

social discrimination. It was not until 1946 that Congress enacted Public Law 483 that removed legal discriminatory measures and granted Asian Indians the right to become American citizens through the naturalization process.

One activist who worked to repeal the restrictive laws was Dalip Singh Saund. This Punjabi leader with three advanced degrees, two in math (including a doctoral degree from the University of California at Berkeley) and one in agriculture, became a rancher in California's Imperial Valley. In 1956 Saund was elected to Congress, the first Asian-American to take a seat in Congress. He served three terms in Congress (1957-1963) representing California's 29th District.

RECENT ARRIVALS: Before 1965, immigration from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka (Ceylon) was limited to a small quota. The 1965 immigration law passed by Congress eliminated the national quota and opened the gate for a wave of newcomers from the subcontinent. In the next five years about 30,000 immigrants from South Asia entered the country. The number escalated to more than 170,000 immigrants between 1970 and 1980. In the next ten years (1980-1990) close to 300,000 entered the United States. From 1991 through 1993 the average annual number exceeded 40,000. Today almost one million Asian Indian and other communities from South Asia live in the United States.

The 1965 law gave preference to skilled professionals and their families as well as to relatives of those who had already been naturalized. Within ten years from passage of the law, more than 50,000 physicians, engineers, professors, scientists and teachers entered the country. They were accompanied by about as many spouses and children. They came predominantly from India but also from Pakistan and Bangladesh. Included in this group are South Asians from Uganda (who had been expelled by Idi Amin in the 1980s) together with other South Asian refugees from Guyana, Trinidad, Tobago and Fiji.

Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis and other immigrants from South Asia are a well-educated community and place much emphasis on education. Most men and women are high school graduates and more than 67 percent have college degrees. According to the Washington, D.C.-based Center for Immigration Studies, 20 percent

are physicians, 26 percent are engineers, and 12 percent are academics. The percentage who are professionals, managers, and entrepreneurs is the highest of any ethnic group in U.S. society. They have the highest income among recent immigrants to the United States. Another segment of South Asian immigrants works in service industries such as hotels, motels and taxi-driving. Adjustment to their new environment is by far less difficult than that of earlier immigrants from South Asia.

The largest concentrations of Asian Indian-Americans are in California, New York, New Jersey, Illinois, and Texas. However, they live in nearly every state and are represented in every metropolitan area of the country. While the Sikhs make up about 2 percent of the population in India, one out of every four Asian Indians in the United States is a Sikh. The majority of the others are Hindus, but there are also Muslims and members of other religious groups—Jains, Parsis and Christians. The Asian Indian community is ethnically diverse—Gujaratis, Punjabis, Bengalis, Marathis, and Tamils are well represented. Because they come from diverse linguistic backgrounds in their homeland, the new immigrants from South Asia use English extensively within their communities.

The educated newcomers are eager to maintain their heritage and to pass it on to their children. They have numerous cultural centers that publish several mostly English-language periodicals and maintain numerous on-line communication services. National and local associations organized by regional, religious, and professional groups have been established. There are, for example, over eighty Hindu, Sikh, Muslim, Jain, and non-religious Asian Indian organizations in the United States. The oldest of the pan-Indian national organizations is the Association of Asian Indians in America. This organization's major achievement was to have their community identified by the U.S. Census Bureau in 1980 as a separate demographic category—"Asian-Indian".

There has always been an interest among this country's thinkers for traditional Indian philosophy. Indeed, in the 19th century, New England Transcendentalists such as Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau were influenced by Indian philosophical thought. Vedantic philosophy was an important influence on Mary Baker Eddy, founder of the Christian Science Movement in the 1860s. However, Asian Indian influence on life in the United States has risen during the past thirty years. Eastern

philosophy, the pacifist doctrine of *Ahimsa*, yoga, the art of transcendental meditation, and vegetarianism has attracted many non-Indian Americans. As mentioned earlier, the U.S. civil rights movement was profoundly influenced by Mahatma Gandhi's methods of civil disobedience and non-violence.

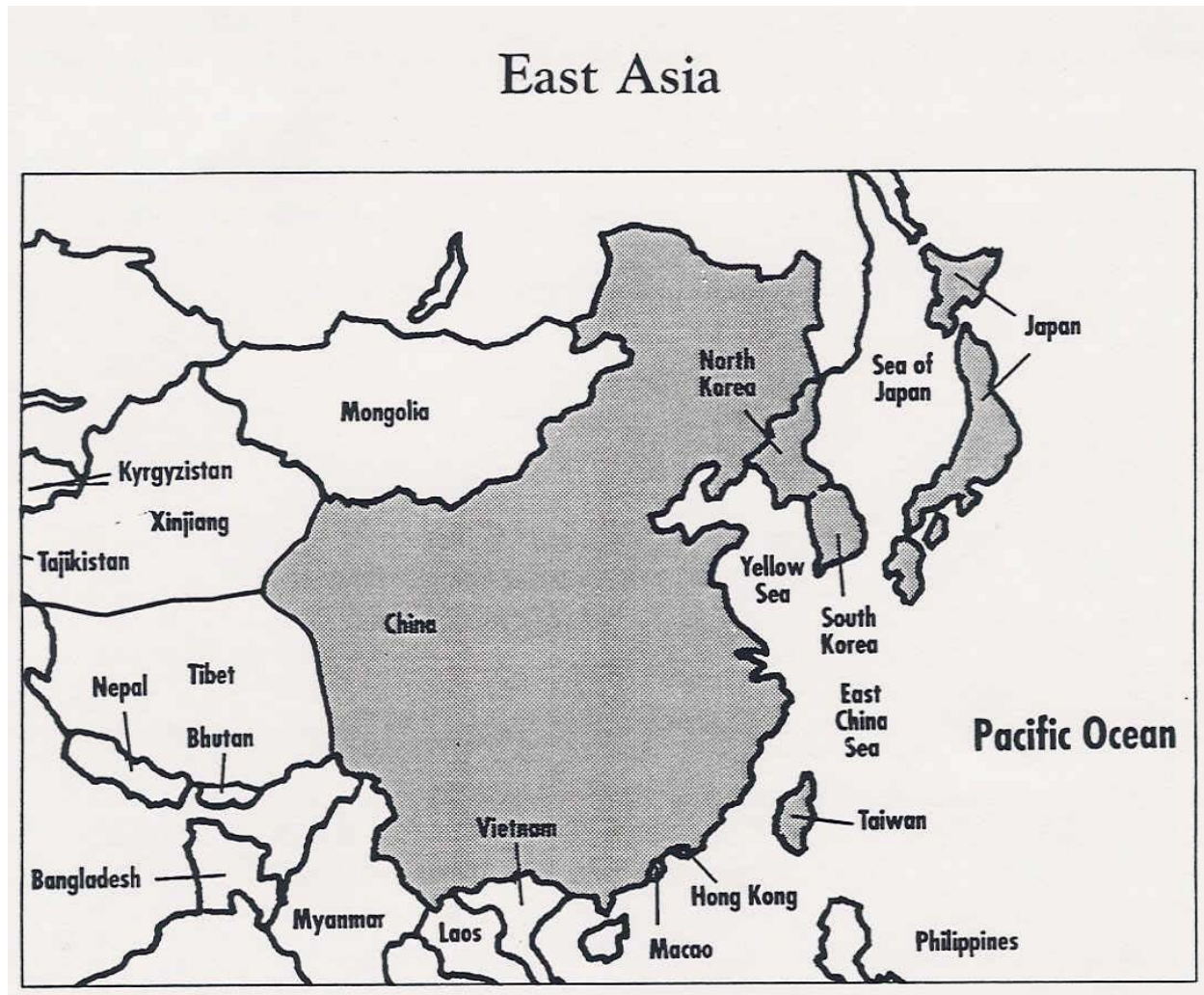
Indian music was popularized by Indian artists, the most influential being the sitar artist Ravi Shankar whose records have sold millions of copies, and Ali Akbar Khan, renowned director of a school of traditional Indian music in California. Zubin Mehta, one of the world's great conductors of classical music, was appointed conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic in 1961, and later became conductor of the New York Philharmonic from 1978 until 1989.

In our time, individuals from South Asia have made considerable contributions to U.S. society. Two distinguished Americans originally from India are Nobel laureates. The Nobel Prize in Physiology/Medicine was awarded to Har Gobind Khorana in 1968 for his work in investigating the structure of the genetic code; and Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar, a theoretical astrophysicist renowned for his theory of black holes (and mentor of scientists like Carl Sagan), won the 1983 Nobel Prize in Physics. Other prominent scientists include geophysicist Mohammad Asad, a visiting scientist at numerous institutes including NASA's Goddard Space Center; Sayed Kamal Abdali, director of numeric symbolic computing at the National Science Foundation; and Jayadev Misra, professor of computer science at the University of Texas at Austin, and recipient of several national awards in software and hardware design. In 1993, physicist Arati Prabhakar was appointed by President Clinton to head the National Institute of Standards and Technology. She is the first Asian-American to hold the post. Usha Varanasi, another Asian-American female scientist, is director of science and research at the National Marine Fisheries Service.

In engineering, a leading American citizen of Bangladeshi origin is Fazlur Rahman Khan. Khan designed the tubular frame that makes possible the construction of extremely high yet strong structures. This invention led Khan and a coworker, Bruce Graham, to design the 110-story Sears Tower in Chicago, the world's tallest office building.

Americans of Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin have made substantial contributions in the medical profession. Among them are Ayub Khan Ommaya, formerly Chief of Applied Neuroscience Research at the National Institute of Health and currently director of the Center for Interdisciplinary Brain Research; Mohammad Akhter who serves as Washington, D.C. Commissioner of Health, the highest medical position in the District of Columbia; Vijay Prabhakarand, public health physician and recipient of several awards for his innovative health care methods; entomologist Mohammad Sayeed Quraishi of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, who received a Special Recognition Award by the National Institutes of Health in 1988; and best-selling author Deepak Chopra, an endocrinologist turned ayurvedic practitioner, who uses the ancient Hindu art of mind/body relationships to influence Western approaches to medicine.

Other prominent Americans of Asian Indian or South Asian descent include community activist Irshad Haque, 1997 recipient of the U.S. Congressional Award; Samina Quraeshi, director of design at the National Endowment for the Arts in Washington, D.C.; Joy Cherian, Equal Employment Opportunities Commissioner in the U.S. Government from 1990 to 1994; Nimi McConigley, who won election to Wyoming's state legislature; Prema Mathai-Davis, the first foreign-born woman to lead the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA); Ajai Singh "Sonny" Mehta, head of the publishing firm of Alfred A. Knopf; Madhur Jaffrey, television personality and the author of several popular cookbooks on Indian cuisine; and director Mira Nair, whose films have garnered her several awards at the Cannes Film Festival. Acclaimed South Asian-American writers include Ved Mehta of the *New Yorker*; novelist Bharati Mukherjee, winner of the 1988 National Book Critic Circle Award for Fiction (*The Middleman*); and poet and novelist Meena Alexander, whose writings confront the stereotypes and challenges facing postcolonial immigrants in America.



EAST ASIA

East Asia consists of China, Japan, North Korea, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macao. It is the home of three major national groups—the Chinese, the Japanese, and the Koreans—along with countless smaller ethnic groups. These three nationalities make up more than one-fifth of the world's population. Though they have much in common, they are distinctly different cultures extending over thousands of years. The peoples of East Asia have enriched world civilization with lasting contributions in arts, literature, science, mathematics, and philosophy. In the latter half of the 20th century, spectacular industrialization has occurred in several countries of this region: Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong.

THE SPIRITUAL HERITAGE OF EAST ASIA

CONFUCIANISM: Confucianism is a way of life that was preached and advocated by the Chinese sage Confucius (known in China as Kongfu-tzi or Kongzi) over 25 centuries ago. No other person influenced Chinese thought and tradition from 200 BCE to CE 1900 as had Confucius. His ideas were transmitted to the rest of East Asia by disciples, traders and invaders. East Asians, Chinese in particular, carried elements of Confucian thought with them everywhere they went in the world.

Confucius lived during the second half of the 6th century BCE and the first two decades of the 5th century BCE. This was an era of political violence and social instability in China. This must have had a great impact on Confucius for he continually stressed the importance of order and harmony in society. His thoughts were propagated by many disciples and followers. The Han dynasty (206 BCE-CE 220) made Confucianism the official state philosophy.

Confucianism has no teachings regarding the creation or the mysteries of life and death. Its basic tenets are ethical and deal with society and human relations. Its overriding objective is to promote order and harmony among people. Order and

harmony, according to Confucianism, begin first with the individual. They then extend to the family, the nation and, finally, the whole world. The five relationships (parent-child, older-younger, husband-wife, teacher-student, ruler-subject) divide society into leaders and followers. The younger is subordinate to the older, and all obeyed the law.

Nevertheless, the same Confucian principles of order and obedience placed grave responsibilities on a ruler, especially one at the highest level. A ruler's responsibilities included providing his subjects with material conditions for livelihood as well as moral and educational guidance. If a ruler were to neglect his subjects and abuse their trust, heaven would then withdraw the mandate it gave him to rule. Until the 20th century, this Confucian concept, known as the *Mandate of Heaven*, was often used by rebels who rose against the imperial authority of China.

From the 14th to the middle of the 17th centuries, Confucian social and political philosophy was dominant. Although Buddhism became popular and Daoism remained strong, Confucianism provided the structure for government and society from the imperial household to the peasant families. Confucianism also became the basis for the famed Chinese civil service examination. It introduced the idea of the merit system in recruitment and promotion to provide for an enlightened and learned bureaucracy.

DAOISM (TAOISM): Daoism is both a philosophy and one of the four major religions of China (with Confucianism, Buddhism and popular folk religions). It comes from the word "*Dao*" meaning "the Path," referring to the path of natural events. Its founder Laozi (Lao-tzu) lived during the 6th century BCE. He was the greatest of the pre-Confucian philosophers and an older contemporary of Confucius.

The key notion of Daoism is nothingness as the ultimate reality. The ideal state is for people to live effortlessly, not interfering with the natural course of things. This is attainable by living in balance and harmony, in simplicity and the quiet contemplation of nature.

Daoism accepted a Chinese view about *yin-yang*, two forces that move and shape nature. Yin is earth, female, passive, cold and dark. Yang is heaven, male, active, warm and light. Neither is viewed in a negative sense. They exist everywhere

and in everything, animate and inanimate. However, there has to be a balance between the two. If the presence of one force exceeds the other, nature's reaction would restore this balance, at times through violent upheavals. Daoists strive to achieve *yin-yang* balance within themselves through quietude and wisdom.

Daoism developed a large pantheon, monastic orders and priests who conduct rituals and prayers on behalf of worshippers. For more than 2,000 years, Daoism affected the attitude of the Chinese toward life and nature. It had great influence on Chinese literature, painting and calligraphy. Daoist political ideals that called for a minimum of government further reflected this quietist philosophy. Many of those who adhered to other religions accepted some of the philosophical views of Daoism. Its influence spread to other parts of East Asia as did the influence of Confucianism.

BUDDHISM: Buddhism reached China along the trade routes some 500 years after the death of Buddha in India (c480 BCE). Throughout the period of the Zhou (Chou) dynasty, China was plagued by continual warfare. Many of those suffering the ravages of war welcomed the opportunity that Buddhism offered for personal salvation in *nirvana*. Buddhism gradually spread to Southeast Asia between the 1st and 6th centuries CE, and to Tibet and Bhutan in the 7th century.

Buddhism entered Japan from China and Korea in the 6th century. Buddhist monks brought Chinese and Korean cultural influences to Japan and won converts first among the nobles, then among the common people. China had forged great changes in Buddhism, such as the development of *Zen* (called *Chan* in China). Originating in China, Zen Buddhism emphasized the search for inner peace through meditation and discipline and spread rapidly to Japan.

Buddhism is divided into two main schools. The Mahayana school (including Zen and Soka-gakkai) accounts for almost 56 percent of Buddhists. This school places importance on a spiritual teacher (or *lama*) and is found predominantly in China, Mongolia, Korea, Japan, Vietnam, Tibet and Bhutan. The Theravada or Hinayana branch is the earlier of the two great schools of Buddhism; this school emphasizes the importance of personal salvation through one's own efforts and good deeds. It comprises about 38 percent of Buddhists worldwide and is still prevalent in Sri Lanka,

Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia and other areas of Southeast Asia. A third school, the Vajrayana, is found also in Tibet and Japan. There are approximately 350 million Buddhists worldwide, the majority living in East and Southeast Asia.

Buddhism did not compete with but rather complemented Confucianism and Daoism. Confucianism provided a social structure for organizing human relations with mutual responsibilities and reciprocities. Daoism, on the other hand, was an escape from society. It dealt mostly with human relations concerning natural phenomena. And Buddhism added a spiritual dimension by treating the subject of human existence in this world and the fate after reincarnation. Thus, it was not uncommon to see many people accepting all three views simultaneously.

SHINTO: Like the Chinese, the Japanese developed their way of life and governance under the influence of Confucianism and Buddhism. In addition, the Japanese were influenced by Japan's ancient indigenous religion of Shinto, which emphasized traditional social ceremonies and rituals rather than religious doctrine. At the heart of Shinto is the belief in a pantheon of sacred spirits or powers called *kami*, a word meaning "superior." People give offerings to shrines representing these spirits. The oldest known record of Shinto beliefs dates to CE 712 although it originated in much earlier oral traditions. Although the majority of Japanese believe in Buddhism, they continue to practice Shinto rituals, which are deeply rooted in Japanese history and tradition. At present, there are about 3.5 million followers of Shinto primarily in Japan.

HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS OF EAST ASIA

CHINA

Slightly larger in size than the United States, China is the third largest country in the world—only Russia and Canada are larger. Moreover, China's population is the world's largest. One out of five persons in the world is from China. The total population of China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macao is estimated to be 1.2 billion. Although

China's population is still increasing, the official one-child policy will bring a decline in its population sometime in the 21st century. This will elevate India as the nation with the world's largest population.

The Han Chinese form about 92 percent of China's population, and the Mandarin language is the national language of China. Nevertheless, Cantonese, Wu, and Hakka are spoken in south China, and are only a few of the hundreds of dialects spoken in China. The 55 officially recognized non-Chinese ethnic groups who form 8 percent of the population—the Thai-speaking Zhuang, Hui, Koreans, Uigurs, Yi, Tibetans, Miao, Mongols, Manchus, and other groups—live in over half the territory of China.

EARLY AND MEDIEVAL CIVILIZATION IN CHINA: The earliest known roots of China's civilization extend back into the third millennium BCE. As with the ancient Egyptian and West Asian civilizations, China's early settlements developed in fertile river valleys. However, the first documented dynasty, the Shang, ruled China between approximately 1500 and 1000 BCE. Their domain extended over most of the Huang River Valley in the north of China. The earliest written records date from about 1400 BCE. By that time, the Chinese had developed a script based on characters written in vertical columns, made utensils of bronze, and developed metal-casting skills.

For the next 800 years (1000-221 BCE) China was ruled by the Zhou (Chou) dynasty, the longest ruling dynasty in Chinese history. Confucius lived under this turbulent dynasty, and much of the classical literature of Chinese education was written during this period. During this period the Chinese developed elaborate irrigation systems, used iron tools and improved road-building. Centuries of warfare among the petty states into which the empire was divided brought political disorder. By the 3rd century BCE, one of these powerful leaders overthrew the Zhou emperor and founded the Qin (Ch'in) dynasty in 221 BCE.

The reign of the Qin (Ch'in) dynasty lasted for only eleven years. Nevertheless, the achievements of China during this brief era were impressive. The Chinese devised a system of weights and measures, standardized coins, and codified the laws. The Great Wall of China was begun in this period. About 300,000 Chinese laborers were conscripted from all over China, and many died in the Wall's construction. By the end of

the Qin (Chin) dynasty's rule, the length of the Wall had reached 1,400 miles (2,254 kilometers). Originally, the wall (over 25 feet in height and 15-30 feet at its base) was erected along the southern boundary of the Mongolian plains to protect China from northern invaders. In this respect, the Great Wall had little military value, for it only served to delay future invasions from the north.

For some 400 years (c202 BCE-CE 220) the country enjoyed stability under the new Han dynasty. Buddhism was introduced from India, and Confucianism was made the basis for the bureaucratic state. Many Indian advances in mathematics, science and medicine were adopted by the Chinese. Historians call this period *Pax Sinica* or "Chinese Peace" in the East, which coincided with the period of the *Pax Romana* or "Roman Peace" in the West.

During *Pax Sinica*, scholars in China became the most respected members of society. Called *mandarins*, they filled top government positions. The Chinese had accomplished great advances in technology, astronomy, mathematics, and arts. Astronomers calculated the length of the solar year as 365-1/4 days. Doctors relieved pain with acupuncture, believing that the treatment restored the *yin-yang* balance in the body. The Chinese had also invented porcelain, paper, silk, the compass, gunpowder, the wheelbarrow, and printing. China's advances placed it well ahead of Europe in many aspects of civilization. It remained ahead until the rise of modern Europe in the 15th century.

The next important dynasty was the Tang who ruled China for almost 300 years (618-907). China produced its Golden Age in arts and learning under this dynasty. Buddhist monks improved block printing, and whole pages of books could be printed. Skilled artisans produced beautiful sculpture and translucent pottery, and poets created great classics. Trade caravans carried Chinese silk along with other luxury goods to West Asia and Europe along the great Silk Road. Tang strength declined in the later years of the dynasty and led to frequent revolts, disruption of trade and the final collapse of the Tang dynasty.

Under the Sung dynasty (960-1279) Chinese humanism reached its height. Scholars compiled dictionaries and encyclopedias; the novel and landscape painting

were well developed. Printing using moveable wooden blocks was developed by Pi Sheng in 1040. The Sung also made advances in navigation, especially in ship-building, and in the development of the magnetic compass.

The Mongols under Genghis Khan (Chingis Khan) swept into China in the early 13th century (1211). Their state reached the peak of its glory under his grandson Kublai Khan (1260-1294), founder of the Yuan dynasty. The extensive network of trade routes along the Silk Road connecting China with other Mongol domains in Turkistan, Persia and other areas of Asia were safe again. Growing contact with Europeans through these overland routes led, among other things, to the introduction of the compass, gunpowder, and printing from China to Europe via West Asia. One well-known European traveler during this period was the Venetian Marco Polo who worked for the Khan and traveled throughout China. He later described the magnificent court of Kublai Khan at Khanbalik (Cambuluc), now Beijing (Peking), in his travel diaries.

In the 14th century (1368), the Ming dynasty ousted the Mongols and ruled the country until the middle of the 17th century. Under their stable rule Confucianism and the civil service exams were reinstated, the literary drama and novel flourished, and there was increased contact between Portuguese traders and missionaries. Later Ming emperors neglected public affairs and allowed corruption to weaken their rule.

In 1644, the Manchus invaded China and captured Beijing. The Manchus were a Tungusic people of North Asian origin—ethnically distinct from the Mongols and the Chinese—and had lived in Manchuria for many centuries. The Manchus established the Chi'ng dynasty (1644-1911) and were the last emperors to rule China.

WESTERN INTRUSION AND CHINA'S DRIVE FOR MODERNIZATION: China's contacts with Europe are traced to ancient times. Travelers and trade caravans carried goods, technological techniques and ideas between China and the Mediterranean lands of West Asia. In more recent history, China's earliest contacts with European traders were with the Portuguese, who built a trading post in Macao in 1557. Jesuit missionaries followed in the early 17th century but were expelled in the late 18th century by a Chinese emperor who feared their growing influence.

The serious European challenge to China's independence, however, came in the 19th century. From China, British merchants bought silk, porcelain and tea (which had become a popular beverage in England). In exchange, the British sold the Chinese opium grown on British opium plantations in India. In 1838 the Chinese government tried to stop the opium trade, but the British persisted. As a result, a war known as the Opium War broke out between China and Britain (1839-1842). The British won and forced a reluctant China to sign a treaty giving unfair commercial advantages to the British. The British forced four Chinese ports (including Shanghai) to open to foreign trade, and Hong Kong was forcibly ceded to British control. China was later forced to sign similar treaties with Russia, Germany, France, and Japan. These Chinese cities were ruled by foreign powers with their own law courts, police and armies.

A decade of uprisings against imperial rule and foreign imperialism were crushed. Millions of Chinese had lost their lives, and the Chinese economy was shattered. Learning of the gold strike in California from Western merchants, some Chinese migrated to the United States during this period. This marked the beginning of Chinese immigration to the American continent. A second Opium War (1856-1860) led to more Western (including United States) control of China's economy and to increased Christian missionary activity in China. The Burlingame Treaty of 1868 reversed China's policy of forbidding emigration and allowed Chinese workers to enter the United States in larger numbers.

The humiliating treaties and the exploitation of the Chinese by these foreign powers generated a deep sense of resentment among the Chinese. In 1900, angry Chinese rebels attacked several hundred foreigners in Beijing (Peking). Known as the Boxer Rebellion, it was initiated by members of the Society of Righteous and Harmonious Fists who practiced a Chinese form of boxing. A combined European army hastily marched into the Chinese capital and crushed the rebellion.

Dissatisfaction mounted that Chinese imperial rule was unable to defend China against European and U.S. imperialism. Many Chinese believed that the modernization of China required a republican form of government. They were led by Sun Yat-sen who had formed a party called the Nationalist or Guomintang (Kuomintang). In 1911, this

opposition was able to overthrow the Manchu imperial government and establish a republic. Sun Yat-sen was elected president of the first Republic of China. Sun Yat-sen died in 1925 and was succeeded by a young officer named Chiang Kai-shek.

The Chinese Communist Party, founded in 1921 by Chen Tu-hsiu and Li Ta-chao of Peking University, soon entered into a struggle with the forces of Chiang Kai-shek for control of the country, beginning the long conflict between the Communist Party and the Guomindang. A Red Army under the leadership of Mao Zedong (Mao Tse-tung) was recruited from among the peasantry. Approximately 100,000 Communists trekked on the “Long March,” a year-long ordeal in 1934 that only 20,000 survived.

During World War II when Japan occupied a large area of China, the Communists and Nationalists temporarily joined forces to fight the Japanese occupation of their country. After the defeat of Japan, fighting resumed between the Nationalists and the Communists. In October of 1949 as sweeping inflation and famine racked the country, the Communists gained control of mainland China. The Nationalist government led by Chiang Kai-shek and 2 million supporters withdrew to the island of Taiwan, declaring themselves the legitimate government of China. From their capital at Beijing (Peking) the Communists under their leader Mao Zedong (Mao Tse-tung) proclaimed the new Communist government—The People’s Republic of China. The United States refused recognition of the People’s Republic of China as part of U.S. policy of containing Communist countries during the Cold War. Instead, for three decades, it maintained close ties with Taiwan as the only official Chinese government.

China’s new leaders initiated widespread educational and social reforms, and large-scale industrialization of China’s largely rural economy. The Communists also made great efforts to standardize the pronunciation of Mandarin to facilitate mass literacy. Since 1949, the vernacular Mandarin language, spoken by at least 70 percent of China’s population, has been used as the official written language of China.

The ensuing years brought about domestic power struggles such as during the Cultural Revolution of 1966-1976 when millions of Chinese died. China has also emerged as a nuclear power. A dramatic breakthrough in hostile relations between the U.S. government and Communist China occurred with the visit of President Richard

Nixon to Beijing in 1972. After three decades of non-recognition, the United States established formal diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China in 1979.

Taiwan, ruled by martial law for almost 40 years by the Nationalist Party, developed its economy into one of the world's strongest. Correspondingly, China's phenomenal double-digit growth, the fastest-growing economy in the world, is of vital interest to the United States. Both China and Taiwan face increasing challenges for democratization and re-unification. In the next few years, European colonial control of former Chinese territories will revert to China. The former British colony of Hong Kong was returned to China in 1997—after 156 years of British rule. Likewise, Macao, controlled by the Portuguese since 1557, is due to be returned to China in 1999.

JAPAN

A chain of thousands of islands located about 100 miles off the coast of the Asian mainland comprise the country of Japan. Four of the largest islands are home to most of the Japanese people: Honshu, Hokkaido, Shikoku, and Kyushu. Japan's area is about the size of California. However, it has almost 125 million people, four times as many as California's population. Japan's capital of Tokyo, with a greater metropolitan population of 27 million people, is the world's most populous city. With 70 percent of Japan covered by rugged mountains and only 20 percent of their land suitable for farming, the Japanese learned to rely on the sea as an important source of food.

HISTORY AND TRADITION: Early Japan was divided into regions each controlled by a clan. In the 5th century, the chief of the powerful Yamato clan settled near modern Kyoto and assumed the role of emperor. Imperial rule has lasted ever since. However, the authority and the power that the emperor had or was able to exercise has varied greatly from one period to another in Japanese history.

Early Japanese emperors greatly admired China's culture as well as Confucian ideas about government and society. They welcomed Buddhist monks, who wrote books, set up libraries, and promoted learning. In the 3rd and 4th centuries, the Japanese adopted Chinese characters for writing and were strongly influenced by

Chinese medicine, philosophy, art, and literature. The capital city of Kyoto blossomed as a center of learning. Japanese women contributed to the wealth of Japanese literature during this period. Lady Murasaki Shikibu wrote *The Tale of Genji*, depicting Japanese court life. Written in the early 11th century, it is believed to be the world's oldest novel and is considered to be the single greatest work of Japanese literature.

A period of turmoil prevailed during the 15th and 16th centuries. Warlords fought each other while weak emperors performed ceremonial and religious functions. The last three decades of the 16th century witnessed a consolidation of power by three successive military leaders. The third leader, Tokugawa Ieyasu, completed the conquest of all the opposing warlords and was made *shogun*, or military commander, by the emperor in 1600. The shogunate remained in the Tokugawa family for about 250 years (1603-1867). The *shoguns* built their castle and headquarters at Edo (today's Tokyo) and exercised the real power in Japan, unifying the country politically and economically.

As early as the middle of the 16th century, Portuguese sailors had made contacts with the Japanese. They were followed by Jesuit missionaries, including St. Francis Xavier, who introduced Christianity to Japan. However, Tokugawa Ieyasu mistrusted the Christians, eventually massacred them, and forced the missionaries to leave Japan. Consequently, and for nearly 200 years, the *shogun* imposed a policy of strict isolation from the West, except for limited trade contacts with the Dutch.

Despite isolation, Japanese society during the Tokugawa period grew richer. Agriculture became more intensive and efficient. The population increased and urban centers expanded. By the 1800s, the merchant class had acquired great wealth. In large cities such as Kyoto, Osaka and Tokyo, the strict social order began to break down. Playwrights, artists, and poets flourished and left a legacy of unique cultural accomplishments.

MODERNIZATION: In 1854 an American naval officer, Commodore Matthew Perry, ordered four American ships to enter the Bay of Tokyo. This U.S.- forced intervention obliged the *shogun* to admit foreign merchants to Japan and to sign humiliating treaties. Japanese resistance was met with naval bombardment of their

cities. After having witnessed China's defeat in the Opium Wars, the Japanese realized the futility of expelling the well-armed foreigners. Japan was later forced to sign similar treaties with France, Britain, the Netherlands and Russia. However, Japanese anti-foreign sentiment was strong enough to overthrow the weak *shogun* in 1868. The new boy emperor Mutsuhito was "restored" to power, an event known as the Meiji Restoration. The imperial capital of Japan was transferred from Kyoto to Tokyo.

The new leadership under Mutsuhito abolished feudalism in 1871, established universal education, limited representative government, and moved the country toward industrialization. Japan was developing into a modern industrial power and was able to support a strong military force. By 1905, Japan had defeated China and Russia in two separate wars. These victories encouraged Japanese leaders to embark upon an expansionist policy, annexing Korea in 1910, and later invading the Chinese province of Manchuria in the 1930s. Finally, Japan's military leaders allied themselves with the Axis powers (Germany and Italy) during World War II. On December 7, 1941, Japanese aircraft attacked Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, which resulted in the entrance of the United States into World War II.

World War II ended in a disaster for Japan. The only atomic bombs ever to have been used on humans were dropped in 1945 on Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the United States with devastating results and much suffering. Nonetheless, after the war, the Japanese rebuilt their economy, reformed their political institutions, and focused on non-military development.

By the 1970s, Japan had become Asia's most industrialized country. Today, Japan is a giant economic superpower second only to the United States. The spread of Japanese high technology from automobiles to electronics has revolutionized how people throughout the world live. Giant Japanese transnational corporations' emphasis on teamwork and management styles have also influenced the research and business practices of many U.S. companies.

KOREA

The Koreans are a distinct cultural group thought to be descendents of northern Asian tribes who settled in the Korean peninsula some 5,000 years ago. Throughout much of Korean history, there were extensive cultural influences between the people of the Korean peninsula and their two East Asian neighbors, China and Japan.

EARLY HISTORY: The earliest Korean state dates from the 2nd century BCE. Called Old Choson, it extended from northwestern Korea to southern Manchuria. It co-existed with the native Korean state of Koguryo that developed in the same area. Meanwhile, the two southern Korean states of Silla and Paekche emerged in the 3rd and 4th centuries CE. By 668, Silla defeated Koguryo and Paekche. Silla united the three kingdoms of the Korean peninsula under one ruler, establishing the first unified Korean state.

The Korean peninsula had earlier come under Chinese political and cultural influence. Buddhism and Confucianism, for example, had entered the Korean peninsula from China during this early period of Korean history. Buddhism was a significant force in Korea by the 6th century. In fact, Korea sent its own Buddhist missionaries to Japan at this time and converted the Japanese to Buddhism. In later years, Korea continued to influence Japan through its music and other cultural art forms.

The Silla-dominated kingdom gradually declined until its breakup in the 9th century. This time, a unified Korean state was achieved under the aegis of the northern state of Koryo—a name derived from Koguryo and reflected in the modern Western name of Korea. During the Koryo period (918-1392), scholarship and the arts flourished. Koreans produced magnificent ceramics with a distinctive gray-green glaze prized throughout East Asia, delicate lacquerware inlaid with mother-of-pearl, and gold and gilt-bronze artifacts. Korean scholars wrote volumes of Buddhist literature and produced movable copper type as early as 1230—some 200 years before the German printer Gutenberg developed his press in 1436. This stable period ended when Mongol forces invaded Korea in the middle of the 13th century.

A new kingdom, the Choson Kingdom came to power in 1392 and ruled until 1910, one of the longest reigns by a single dynasty (Yi) in world history. During the early Choson period, its kings favored Confucianism over Buddhism, encouraging it as the official ideology and social structure for Korean society. Nonetheless, Buddhism and Confucianism continued to coexist in Korean society, as they did in China.

China exerted a strong cultural influence on Korean society through its writing, religion, music, architecture, medicine and various Chinese institutions. Korea, nonetheless, retained its sovereignty throughout much of its history and developed a distinctive cultural identity. Under the Choson ruler King Sejong, a unique Korean alphabet called Hangul was invented in the 15th century (1446), replacing the difficult Chinese characters in use since the 2nd or 3rd century. The logical and phonetic Hangul alphabet was widely adopted by the Korean people because it was closer to their spoken language. Traditional Chinese script however remained in use as an art form.

In 1592, the Japanese conqueror Hideyoshi invaded the Korean peninsula but was driven back by the Korean naval hero, Yi Sunsin. During this six-year war, the Korean invention of armored warships succeeded in defeating an invasion of Japanese warships. In 1627 and 1636, the Manchus invaded Korea and briefly brought it under their hegemony. Thereafter, Korean rulers succeeded in keeping Korea so relatively isolated from the rest of the world that it was called the “Hermit Kingdom.” Military attempts by several European countries as well as the United States to enter Korea were driven back by Korean forces. This isolation remained until 1876 when the Japanese forced a commercial treaty upon Korea.

A significant change in Korean society occurred after 1881 when Korea was opened to Western countries. Although Roman Catholic Christianity was introduced into the Korean peninsula at the end of the 18th century, it was not until Protestant missionaries—mostly American—entered Korea in the 1880s that large-scale conversions to Christianity took place. Establishing schools, universities, hospitals and orphanages, Protestant missionaries played a significant role in the modernization of Korea.

OCCUPATION, WAR, AND PARTITION: At the turn of the century, Japan became more dominant in Korea. After Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), Japan declared a protectorate over Korea. It assumed control of Korea's foreign relations and many vital governmental functions. Finally in 1910, Japan formally annexed Korea (Choson) and occupied it until the end of World War II in 1945.

After Japan's defeat in World War II, the developing Cold War atmosphere led the United States to occupy the southern part of Korea while Soviet troops occupied the north. This division of Korea at the 38th parallel formed the boundary between the two republics. Soon after North Korean troops invaded South Korea in June of 1950, American-led United Nations forces came to the aid of South Korea. After some three years of fighting, the war ended with over three million casualties. As a result, Korea has remained divided into a communist North Korea and a nationalist South Korea. Since then, South Korea has enjoyed long periods of sustained economic growth. Its dynamic economy has become one of the more developed in the world. Today, South Korea is one of the largest producers of automobiles and electronics. Korean shipyards also produce most of the world's supertankers and freighters.

After the end of the Cold War, the two governments of Korea began talks aimed at peaceful reunification of the country. However, tensions created by the North-South division remain a source of instability in the Korean peninsula, while many families continue to experience the hardships of separation.

EAST ASIANS IN THE UNITED STATES

The history of the East Asian-Americans in the United States is one of persistent struggles and accomplishments despite a long period of social and governmental discrimination. Approximately 4 million Americans in 1990 traced their ancestry to China, Japan or Korea. It is estimated that there are almost 2 million Americans of Chinese ancestry, one million of Japanese ancestry, and 900,000 of Korean ancestry. Until the early 1960s, the Japanese-American population had been the most numerous East Asian community in the United States. Since then, Chinese and Korean immigrants have outnumbered the Japanese by far. About 900,000 Chinese, 700,000

Koreans, and 150,000 Japanese have been admitted since 1960. The largest concentrations of East Asian-Americans are found in Hawaii, the West Coast, and in New York.

It is noteworthy that since many members of different ethnic groups live in East Asia, nationality is not identical to an ethnic group. Thus, among the East Asian-Americans who immigrated to the United States from China, there are members of the Han, Manchu, Zhuang, Miao, Korean or one of fifty other smaller ethnic groups within China. Similarly, an immigrant from Japan may be of Japanese, Ainu, Korean, or Chinese origin. This is also true for most other groups from the continent of Asia, especially from Southeast Asia.

CHINESE-AMERICANS: The Chinese were the first Asians to immigrate in significant numbers to the United States. Although some Chinese immigrants arrived earlier, significant migration began in the middle of the 19th century. Migration from East Asia to the United States went through three phases. The first phase started with the United States' acquisition of California in 1848 when the gold strike at Sutter's Mill attracted many Chinese men to work in the gold mines. When the Gold Rush ended in the 1860s, many Chinese found work in the railroad industry and as farm workers.

Beginning in the 1850s, young Chinese men were recruited from southern China to work as laborers in the United States. During the 1860s, these early Chinese immigrants became an important element in the building of the western lines of the first transcontinental railroad—the Central Pacific Railroad. The Chinese laborers worked tirelessly to gouge out fourteen tunnels through the Sierra Nevada mountains, a heroic feat that took three years to perform at a cost of 1,200 Chinese lives. They then laid tracks through the parched deserts and prairies of Nevada and Utah. About 14,000 Chinese men worked on these lines between 1858 and 1869. Chinese workers also helped build the Southern Pacific Railroad, which connected Los Angeles with New Orleans, and the Northern Pacific Railroad, which linked Portland, Oregon to Lake Superior in Minnesota. When the various links of the transcontinental railroad were completed, many Chinese settled in railroad towns and others worked as farm laborers or share croppers.

Chinese immigrants were the first Asians to work in the pineapple and sugar plantations of Hawaii as well as the fruit orchards of the West Coast. They helped build irrigation canals and drain the swamplands for farming. A few leased land and experimented with new crops and farm techniques. Some Chinese-American agricultural accomplishments include the initial development of Hawaii's rice-growing industry, the first use of artificial heat to hatch eggs, and the development of the Bing cherry by a Chinese farm foreman in Milwaukie, Oregon. In 1911, Lue Gim Gong developed a hardy variety of orange that enabled Florida to compete against California's monopoly of the citrus industry. In addition, Chinese fishermen worked in the salmon canneries in Oregon and Alaska and pioneered the commercial fishing industry along the California coast.

Chinese immigration increased after the U.S. and Chinese governments signed the Burlingame Treaty of 1868, which guaranteed the right of Chinese workers to unlimited immigration to the United States. This same treaty, however, excluded them from the right of American citizenship through the process of naturalization. By 1882, over 100,000 Chinese had entered the United States. However, Chinese born outside the United States, together with virtually all persons of Asian descent, were considered ineligible for American citizenship. The basis for this restriction was a bill passed earlier in 1790 by the U.S. Congress specifying that only "free whites" were eligible for citizenship and the right to vote. White supremacist thought permeated into laws such as the 1854 law depriving Chinese residents of legal protection and forbidding any Chinese to testify in court against a white person.

During the 1870s depression, first-generation European immigrants stirred anti-Chinese feeling, especially in California. After the transcontinental railroad was completed in 1869, many of the unemployed Chinese railroad workers competed for the small pool of available jobs. Resentment led to violent racist acts against the Chinese community. In 1871, thousands of whites attacked a Los Angeles Chinatown and for three days looted and burned stores and killed many Chinese. Tragically, such massacres and lynchings were common occurrences on the West Coast during the 19th century.

Anti-Chinese feeling escalated. In 1875, the Page Law restricted the arrival of Chinese women to the United States. Then in 1882 Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, reaffirming that foreign-born Chinese residents of the United States could not acquire American citizenship through naturalization. This law also barred all Chinese with the exception of a privileged few—mostly businessmen, scholars and students—from entering the United States. Angel Island, a small island in San Francisco Bay, was the infamous immigration detention center during the Asian exclusion years between 1910 and 1940. Chinese immigration came to a halt, some Chinese left, and the number of Chinese-Americans began to decline. The exclusion continued until the U.S. immigration law of 1924 virtually excluded all Asians. By 1940 only 78,000 Chinese remained in the United States.

Unable to bring their wives or “picture brides” from China, single men in California—even if they had one Chinese grandparent—were also banned from marrying white women. In 1922, the Cable Act ruled that any female U.S. citizen who married an “alien ineligible for citizenship” would lose her U.S. citizenship. Due to restrictions as to where they could live and work, Chinese immigrants—overwhelmingly men—grouped together in little “Chinatowns.” Outside these “Chinatowns,” Chinese had to carry identification cards and were barred from barber shops, theaters, hotels and restaurants. They gradually established their own businesses. Clan associations and trade guilds supported the financial, social and spiritual life of the Chinese community.

The exclusion extended even to the children of Chinese immigrants who since 1859 were excluded from public schools in San Francisco. In 1906, the San Francisco school board established a segregated elementary school for American-born Chinese children in Chinatown. The only American institution to help the new Chinese immigrants was the Presbyterian Church, which had a long association of missionary work in China. Organizations such as the YMCA and the YWCA provided recreation and English-language instruction to the few children of the Chinese-American community.

Today 10-20 percent of Chinese-Americans are Christian, two-thirds of whom are Protestant. However, the majority continue to practice their traditional faiths—a blend of Buddhism, Confucianism and Daoism. Early immigrants brought with them the

Confucian tradition of hierarchical social relations. The foreign-born and first generation adhered to this tradition. However, adherence to Confucian principles tended to diminish progressively as time passed, and newer generations have adopted American norms and values.

During World War II, China was a wartime ally of the United States against Japan. In response to pressure from the Chinese government which opposed the discriminatory treatment of its subjects in the United States, President Franklin D. Roosevelt finally repealed the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. Known as the Magnuson Act of 1943, it set a quota of 105 Chinese immigrants per year, an inconsequential number that caused much hardship for separated families. Most importantly, the 1943 legislation granted the right to citizenship through naturalization to all Chinese residents. This allowed Chinese-Americans to find work in technical and professional areas previously denied them and to begin to attain middle-class status. Moreover, at the end of World War II in 1945, Congress passed the War Brides Act, allowing 6,000 Chinese women to enter the United States to join their Chinese-American soldier-husbands.

Since the sweeping immigration reforms of 1965, more Chinese arrived in the United States. U.S. diplomatic recognition of the People's Republic of China in 1979 admitted Chinese immigrants from mainland China, in addition to those from Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore and Southeast Asia. The majority of the United States' Chinese-American community are new immigrants. The majority settled among large Chinese communities in California (where 43 percent of Chinese-Americans live), Hawaii and New York, but they are also found in the Midwest and the South and on the East Coast.

The Immigration reforms of 1965 and the Civil Rights era also introduced a new self-awareness. No longer viewing themselves as "sojourner Chinese," they chose to call themselves Chinese-Americans and now prefer the term "Asian-American" to "Oriental."

Chinese-American organizations such as the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association and newer organizations such as the Organization of Chinese Americans have replaced the traditional clan and trade associations. No longer burdened by the legal restrictions of the past, new generations of Chinese-Americans now tackle

community problems. One such problem is the striking economic contrasts between affluent Chinese-Americans and the more than 25 percent of households who live below the poverty level in New York's Chinatown—a reality that belies the image of all Asian-Americans as the “model minority.”

Chinese-Americans nevertheless take pride in the many achievements of their community. They presently occupy prominent positions in business, politics, media, and other professions. In politics, Chinese-Americans have held many elected offices, especially in the Western states. March Fong Eu served as Secretary of State for California and in 1994 was appointed U.S. ambassador to Micronesia by President Clinton. Harry Low was appointed judge both to the Superior Court and the California Appellate Court, and Shin Biau Woo was elected Lieutenant Governor of Delaware in 1984. Hiram Fong (R-HI) was the first Chinese-American—indeed, the first Asian-American—to serve in the U.S. Senate (1959-1977). In 1992, Clayton Fong was appointed Deputy Assistant to President George Bush. In 1996, Gary Locke won election as Governor of Washington state, the first Chinese-American governor in the continental United States. Thomas Tang currently serves as a judge of the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals and contrasts his position to an earlier time when Chinese immigrants could not even be witnesses in a U.S. court of law.

Almost 20 percent of Chinese-Americans hold professional positions, particularly in science, engineering and mathematics. There are many examples of distinguished Chinese-American scientists and educators. Three Chinese-American scientists have received the Nobel Prize in Physics: Chen-Ning Yang and Tsung-Dao Lee who shared the award in 1957 and Samuel Ting in 1976; and Chinese-American Yuan-Tse Lee received the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1986. World-famous mathematicians (for whom there is no Nobel mathematics category) include Shiing-shen Chern, Sing-tung Yao and Wu-I Hsiang. A recent Nobel Laureate is astrophysicist Steven Chu, professor of physics at Stanford and member of the National Academy of Sciences, who shared the 1997 Nobel prize in Physics for research on methods to cool and trap atoms with laser light.

Chinese-American women in science include Columbia University physicist Chien-shuing Wu, who won the 1974 Scientist of the Year for Industrial Research

Award; physicist Hsiung Wu; and aeronautical engineer Ying-zhu Lin, who was awarded the Achievement Award for Women Engineers in 1985.

Electronics engineer An Wang left China after World War II to study in the United States and received a Ph.D. in physics from Harvard University. Later he invented the magnetic-core computer memory, which he sold to IBM. With the proceeds from this sale, he established Wang Laboratories. In 1986 during the celebration for the 100th anniversary of the Statue of Liberty, he was awarded the Medal of Liberty by then President Ronald Reagan. This award honors naturalized citizens who have made significant contributions to American society.

Prominent Chinese-Americans include world-renowned violinist Sarah Chang, cellist Yo-Yo Ma, cinematographer James Wong Howe, news anchor Connie Chung, tennis champion Michael Chang, and award-winning writers Maxine Hong Kingston, Laurence Yep, David Henry Hwang and Amy Tang. One of the most illustrious American architects is the renowned I.M. Pei. He designed the John F. Kennedy Library at Harvard University, the Boston Museum, the modern addition to the Louvre Museum in Paris and other remarkable structures. In 1981, 21-year-old Maya Ying Lin, the Ohio-born daughter of Chinese immigrants from Taiwan, created the stunning Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. while she was still an architecture student at Yale. She also designed the Southern Poverty Law Center memorial in Montgomery, Alabama to honor all those killed in the civil rights struggle.

JAPANESE-AMERICANS: Japanese immigration started later than the Chinese. This was due in part to the isolationist policy of the Japanese government before the Meiji Restoration of 1868. The first immigrants did not come to North America initially but emigrated to the independent Hawaiian islands. During the 19th century, sugar cane had emerged as one of the principal crops of the Hawaiian islands. When the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 prohibited further Chinese laborers from coming to the United States and its territories, Japanese (and later Korean) workers were actively recruited to do the grueling work on the sugar plantations. By the last decade of the 19th century when the Hawaiian islands were annexed to the United States, the Japanese made up two-thirds of the work force on the sugar plantations.

The first decade of the 20th century saw growing anti-Japanese and, in general, anti-Asian sentiment. Fueled by labor leaders and politicians, the Asiatic Exclusion League was founded in San Francisco in 1905. In 1907, President Theodore Roosevelt issued an executive order barring Japanese immigration to the continental United States from Hawaii, Mexico or Canada—legislation that was later removed by President Truman in 1948. Then in 1907-1908, the Japanese government volunteered to halt Japanese and Korean laborers from coming to the United States. This was known as the “Gentlemen’s Agreement.” Only students and direct family members of U.S. residents could immigrate.

By 1920, the number of Japanese immigrants in Hawaii had reached almost 110,000, or 43 percent of the total population of the islands. California was the second most-favored destination for the Japanese. In the early 1900s, the refrigerated railroad car allowed the fertile fields of California to transport a wide variety of produce across the United States. With farm labor in high demand, nearly 30,000 Japanese had settled in California by the end of the first decade of the 20th century.

Most of the Japanese immigrants worked first as farm laborers and later started purchasing their own lots for farming. Although Japanese immigrants owned only 4 percent of California’s farmlands, by 1921 they produced more than 12 percent of the state’s crops, especially rice and potatoes. By 1915, they provided 75 percent of the produce consumed in Los Angeles. Japanese-American farmers converted unusable land such as swamps into productive farms and introduced new commercial crops such as celery and strawberries.

Japanese-Americans also worked on the sugar beet farms of Utah and Nevada, on the Great Northern and Northern Pacific railroads in Washington state, on the railroads in Nevada and Wyoming, and in the coal mines in Wyoming. On the West Coast, Japanese-American fishermen became major suppliers of tuna and abalone.

Racial discrimination against them mounted. In 1913, California passed the Webb-Heney Bill, a law that prohibited all foreign-born or first-generation immigrants from Asia from buying land or leasing it for longer than three years. It was followed by the more restrictive “Alien Land Law” of 1920. Fifteen other western states also adopted

a similar alien land law—a law primarily focused against Japanese-Americans who were labeled “The Yellow Peril.” These laws were not repealed by California voters until 1956. By 1924, all Japanese, Chinese and Korean immigration virtually ended with the passage of anti-Asian legislation by the U.S. Congress.

Barred from living or working in white American neighborhoods, Japanese-Americans lived in “Little Tokyos” in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Sacramento, Seattle and other cities with large Japanese communities. Living in social isolation, they established their own Buddhist temples, churches, schools, and formed their own organizations.

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December, 1941, intensified racial prejudice against Japanese-Americans. On March 18, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 ordering the internment of all Japanese-Americans living on the West Coast. Anyone who was one-sixteenth Japanese was imprisoned. They were given from two days to two weeks to dispose of their property and belongings. In that time more than 120,000 were stripped of their political and civil rights, reclassified as “enemy aliens,” and driven out of their homes, businesses or farms. From 1942 to 1946, they were then relocated and interned in ten concentration camps, called relocation centers, on Indian reservations or swamp and desert wastelands: Manzanar, California; Tule Lake, California; Poston, Arizona; Gila, Arizona; Minidoka, Idaho; Heart Mountain, Wyoming; Granada, Colorado; Topaz, Utah; Rohwer, Arkansas; and Jerome, Arkansas. They included both *Issei* (foreign-born first generation) and *Nisei* (American-born second generation who were U.S. citizens). About 70 percent of those interned were *Nisei*, and many internees included young children and the elderly. Needless to say, the incarceration of the Japanese-American community has had a profound impact on Japanese-Americans.

Ironically, while many of their families were interned in the camps, 33,000 Japanese-American soldiers were fighting for the United States and distinguishing themselves in combat in Europe and the Pacific. They served in the all-Nisei 442nd Regimental Combat Team, the Military Intelligence Service, the 100th Infantry Battalion, the 552nd Field Artillery Battalion, and the Women’s Army Corps. Their segregated fighting force, the famed 442nd Regimental Combat Team, was the most decorated in

the history of the American military. This force suffered more than 9,000 casualties, the highest casualty rate of any American combat unit in Europe. Some of the Japanese-American soldiers' memorable feats included helping liberate the Nazi concentration camp at Dachau and rescuing a U.S. Army battalion in France. U.S. Senators Daniel Inouye and Spark Matsunaga as well as Japanese civil rights leader Mike Masaoka are all veterans of the all-Nisei 442nd Regimental Combat Team; former governor of Hawaii George Ariyoshi served with the Nisei 100th Battalion.

In the postwar years, the Japanese American Citizens League, dedicated to protecting the civil and human rights of Japanese-Americans, helped gain passage of an important piece of legislation. The McCarran-Walter Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1952 granted citizenship to Japanese residents of the United States. This legislation finally freed the Japanese community from the racist legislation of 1790 whereby Congress stipulated that only "free white" persons could become citizens of the United States.

Japanese-American activists continued to campaign for redress of their community's constitutional rights. In 1980, President Jimmy Carter set up a committee of officials to study the internment issue—the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians. After sustained pressure from Japanese-American civic organizations, President Ronald Reagan signed into law the American Civil Liberties Act of 1988 which implements the recommendations of the commission. In the following year (1989) the reparations bill was signed by President Bush. With these bills, the U.S. government formally apologized to Japanese-Americans, admitted that the injustice was committed "without adequate security reasons and without any acts of espionage and sabotage." Furthermore, the government agreed to pay \$20,000 monetary compensation to the 60,000 surviving victims, as most internees had lost all of their property. In 1992, Congress approved a memorial dedicated to the Japanese-Americans who were interned in the camps and to those who served in World War II.

In the period after 1965 when immigration quotas were removed, few Japanese immigrated into the United States. This is primarily related to the excellent economic and social conditions in Japan that encouraged most Japanese to remain at home. A

total of only 100,000 persons representing one-eighth of the total Japanese-American populations have immigrated to the United States from 1965 until the present.

Four generations of Japanese-Americans have made notable contributions to American society. Increasingly, Japanese-Americans are well represented in many professions as physicians, dentists, college professors, schoolteachers, and engineers. One of their greatest successes has been in politics. In the mid-1970s, about half of Hawaii's state senators and representatives, as well as the governor and the lieutenant governor, were Japanese-Americans. The first Japanese-American to win office as a state governor was George Ariyoshi of Hawaii (1974-1986). Three Japanese-Americans were elected to the U.S. Senate: the current Democratic Senator Daniel Inouye (1962—), the late Democratic Senator Spark Matsunaga from Hawaii (1977-1990) and the late Republican Senator Samuel Hayakawa (1977-1983) from California. Patsy Mink (D-HI), the first Japanese-American woman lawyer in Hawaii, served in Congress as a U.S. representative from Hawaii from 1964 to 1976 and again since 1990. She also served as Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (1977-1978). Other Japanese-Americans elected to the U.S. House of Representatives include Robert Takeo Matsui (D-CA), serving since 1978; Patricia Fukuda Saiki, who represented Hawaii (1987-1991); and Norman Mineta (D-CA) who served from 1974 to 1995. Congressman Mineta was formerly mayor (1971-1974) of San Jose, California—the first Japanese-American mayor of a major city in the continental United States.

One of the pioneers of the ethnic studies movement of the 1960s is the scholar Ronald Takaki, a 3rd generation American of Japanese ancestry, currently professor of ethnic studies and history at the University of California, Berkeley. Other examples of distinguished Japanese-Americans include award-winning architect Minoru Norman Yamasaki (1912-1986), whose over 300 designs include the world's second tallest building, the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York City; civil rights activists Mike Masaoka and Tsuyako "Sox" Kitashima who are credited with persuading Congress to grant Asian residents equal immigration and naturalization rights; actors Noriyuki "Pat" Morita and George Takei; ABC News correspondent Ken Kashawahara,

one of the first Asian-American journalists in network television; and Doris Matsui, who was appointed to President Clinton's cabinet as Deputy Director of Public Liaison for the President.

In the sciences, other notable Japanese-Americans include Susumu Tonegawa who won the 1987 Nobel Prize in Physiology/Medicine for his work in molecular biology and genetics; NASA manned spacecraft scientist John Kiyoshi Hirasaki; astronaut Ellison Onizuka, who died aboard the space shuttle *Challenger* tragedy in 1986; and optometrist Newton Uyesugi Wesley, whose work played a major part in perfecting plastic contact lenses. Prominent Japanese-Americans also include conductor Seiji Ozawa, musical director of the Boston Symphony Orchestra; Midori Goto, one of the world's most celebrated young violinist; and Allen Say, award-winning author of children's books that often explore the immigrant experience in the United States. One of the youngest Japanese-Americans is Olympic Gold medalist figure skater Kristi Yamaguchi, a fourth-generation Japanese-American or *Yonsei* born in Hayward, California. She was only 20 years old when she won the gold medal in figure skating at the 1992 Winter Olympics and has since won her second world championship.

KOREAN-AMERICANS: The first significant wave of Koreans to emigrate arrived in the Hawaiian Islands as early as 1903. Many sought to escape famine, economic hardships and the turmoil of war in their Korean homeland. Though many Koreans were reluctant to make the long voyage across the Pacific, American missionaries in Korea encouraged their new converts to immigrate to Hawaii. The Hawaiian Sugar Planter's Association actively recruited these early Korean emigrants—70 percent of whom could read and write—and provided for their ship passage to Hawaii. The Korean recruits later repaid the fare from their paltry plantation wages.

Like other Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino workers on Hawaii's extensive sugar and pineapple plantations, the Koreans (numbering some 7,000) worked in ethnically separate work gangs. The plantation owners used a system of "divide and rule" to keep the workers from joining forces during the frequent strikes for better working conditions and wages. The farm laborers worked over ten hours a day, six days a week and endured squalid living conditions. In 1905, the Japanese government (in control of Korea's foreign relations as a result of the Russo-Japanese war) barred all Korean

emigration to Hawaii and Mexico. This ban continued throughout Japan's annexation of Korea in 1910 until Japan's defeat at the end of World War II.

By 1930, very few Koreans continued to work on the plantations. Many had moved to either Honolulu or Hilo. Others returned to Korea. Many Korean immigrants were educated, a factor that helped them find work in the cities. Still others moved to the West Coast to work in the fish canneries of Alaska or in the copper and coal mines of Montana, Wyoming, Utah or Colorado. The majority moved to California where they worked as migrant farmworkers or cannery workers. A few were able to buy or lease small farms.

Although their numbers were smaller (5,000) than either the Japanese or the Chinese who settled on the West Coast, Koreans faced much discrimination during the first half of the 20th century. Their children were subjected to the San Francisco school segregation rule of 1906 against persons of Asian ancestry. Koreans were barred from many restaurants, hotels, parks, public swimming pools and beaches and, like other Asian communities, were not allowed to become naturalized American citizens. During World War II after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, Korean-Americans suffered further discrimination by being mistaken as Japanese. Because Korea was occupied by Japan, Koreans in Hawaii were classified by the U.S. Government as "enemy aliens," which was deeply offensive to the Korean community. In 1943, the U.S. Military Order 45 exempted the Koreans in the United States from enemy alien status.

Koreans gravitated around their churches, nearly all of them Protestant. Although Korean Christians comprised an estimated 30 percent of Korea, the majority of Korean immigrants to the United States were Christian. Korean churches were, and continue to be, a vital institution in the Korean-American community. They maintained Korean cultural traditions and provided fellowship and substantial social and educational services to their congregations.

Koreans also established numerous social and political organizations, one of the largest being the Korean National Association, which worked actively for Korea's independence from Japan. From 1919 until 1941, one of the leading Korean activists was Syngman Rhee, who was later elected South Korea's first president (1948-1960).

Educated at George Washington, Harvard, and Princeton universities, he served as head of Korea's government in exile in Hawaii. Ironically, the pro-Japanese U.S. government refused to recognize his provisional government-in-exile until war broke out between the United States and Japan in 1941.

As South Korea was allied with the United States, discriminatory U.S. legislation against Koreans was removed in 1952. Immigration to the United States resumed on a modest scale from South Korea after the end of the 3-year Korean War in 1953. Most were Korean war brides of U.S. servicemen, college students, and orphans. An Oregon resident, Harry Holt, returned from Korea at this time with eight Korean orphans, whom he later adopted. Later he established the Holt Adoption Agency, which brought thousands of Korean orphans to the United States. With passage of the U.S. Immigration Act of 1965 removing racial and ethnic quotas, many South Koreans left their homeland for better prospects in the United States.

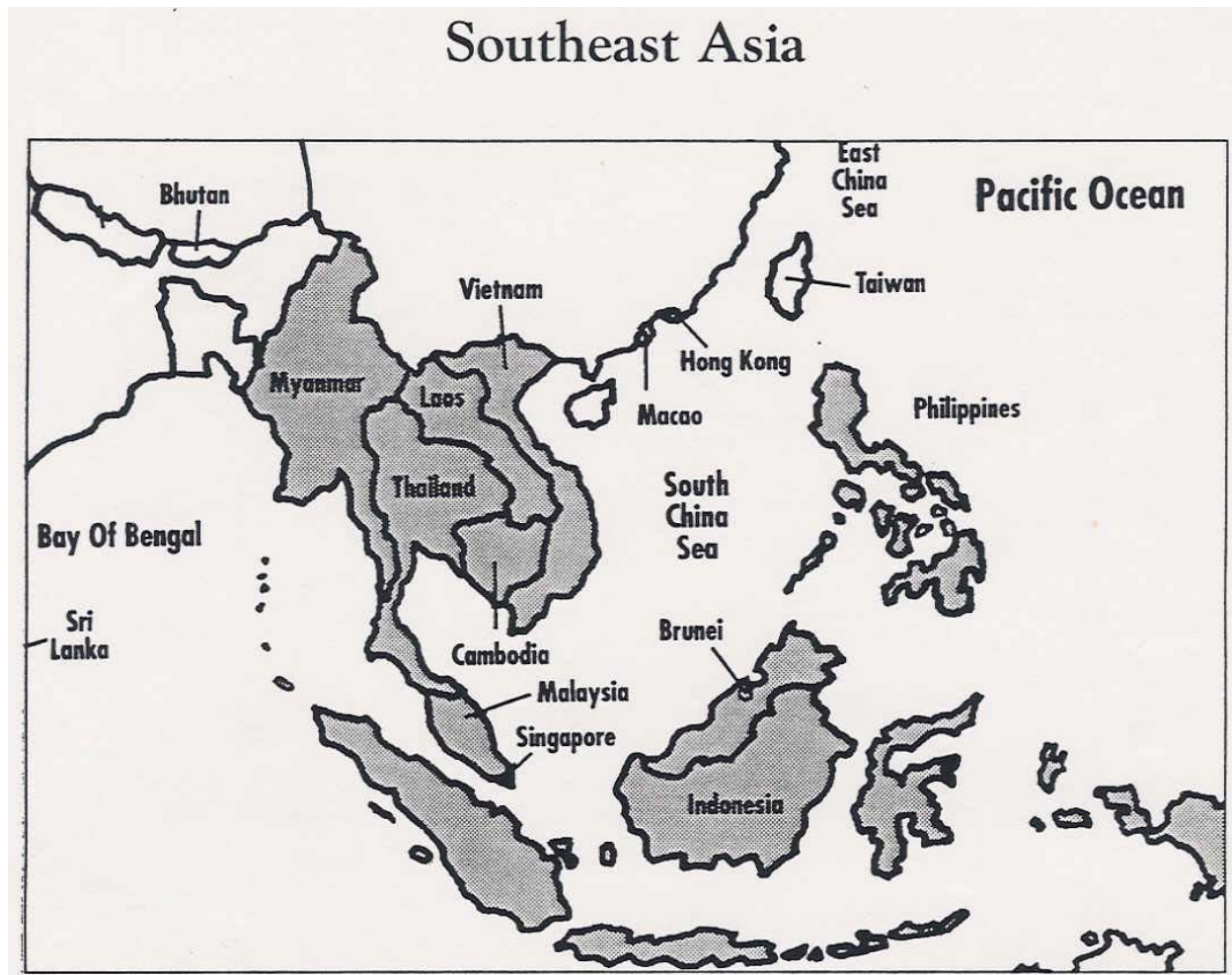
By 1970, there were almost 70,000 Koreans in the United States. The number of Koreans entering the United States reached an annual average of 26,700 during the 1970s and exceeded 33,000 per year during the 1980s. Almost all of the Korean immigrants since 1965 have come from South Korea. At present there are between 800,000 to one million Korean-Americans. The majority (45 percent) live on the West Coast with the Los Angeles-Long Beach and Anaheim-Santa Ana metropolitan areas containing the largest concentration of Korean-Americans. Large communities of Korean-Americans also live in New York City, Washington, D.C. and Chicago.

Korean-Americans have made impressive progress in U.S. society considering their recent arrival in the United States. Hardworking and productive, Korean-Americans are found in all professions—business, science, medicine, music, literature, engineering and education. Almost 40 percent of Korean-Americans are enrolled in college compared to less than 20 percent for Americans as a whole. Many college-educated Korean-Americans unable to find work in their professions own thriving small businesses, often in minority urban areas. At times tensions between Koreans and other urban communities have triggered resentment and conflict. As a result of the rage after

the Rodney King trial verdict, angry crowds poured into the streets. Over half of the businesses damaged or destroyed in the Los Angeles riots of 1992 were 2,000 Korean-owned stores.

Contributions by Korean-Americans are many. As early as 1921, two Korean brothers named Kim formed a large-scale farming business and developed a new type of fruit, the nectarine. Several Korean-American sports figures include Sammy Lee, Olympic diver and physician, winner of the Gold Medal for platform diving at both the 1948 and 1952 Olympics; pitcher Chan Ho Park, the first Korean-American to play major league baseball; Jim Paek, professional ice hockey player; and Jhoon Rhee, the father of U.S. Tae Kwon Do. Other prominent Korean-Americans include physician Ki Ho Kim, one of this country's most widely respected specialists in the field of spinal cord and brain injuries; Dae Hyun Chung, a geophysicist with the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory; and author and Guggenheim Fellow Younghill Kang. In 1965, Korean-American judge Herbert Choy was appointed by President Nixon to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, the first Asian-American to serve in a federal court. More recently, civil engineer Jay Kim (R-CA) was elected to Congress in 1992 to represent California's newly created 41st District, the Korean-American community's first congressman.

Outstanding Korean-American women include Angela Oh, lawyer and community activist on the problems of urban conflict; Elaine Kim, professor of Asian-American studies at the University of California at Berkeley; *Los Angeles Times* reporter K. Connie Kang, author of *Home was the Land of Morning Calm: A Saga of a Korean-American Family*. In the arts, prominent Korean-Americans include composer and pianist Myung Whun Chung; avant-garde video artist Nam June Paik; pianist Jennifer Koh, winner of the 1994 International Tchaikovsky Competition; award-winning children's author Kim Young Ik; and comedian Margaret Cho, star of *All-American Girl*, a popular sitcom about a Korean-American family.



SOUTHEAST ASIA

The region of Southeast Asia includes six mainland and four island nations. Its area is more than half the size of the mainland United States. Myanmar (or Burma) is the largest mainland country. The other countries are Thailand (formerly Siam), Malaysia, Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia (also called Kampuchea). The island countries are Singapore, Brunei, Indonesia, and the Philippines. These tropical and subtropical countries are endowed with fertile soils, warm climate and abundant rainfall. The region may be divided into mainland and archipelagos of more than 17,000 islands. Although the cultures of this region reflect many attributes and characteristics of South and East Asia, Southeast Asia developed its own distinctive culture. Among the many languages spoken are the Tibeto-Burman, Mon-Khmer, and Malayo-Polynesian families. Ethnic and linguistic diversity and varieties of folklore and art forms make the region a haven for researchers and admirers of world cultures.

THE SPIRITUAL HERITAGE OF SOUTHEAST ASIA

Southeast Asia is a region of almost infinite diversity. Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Confucianism, Daoism (Taoism), and animistic thoughts and practices all have significant representation in the area.

The Hindu religion initially made headway into the Indonesian islands nearly 2000 years ago through Indian traders and Hindu monks. Considerable trade and travel between Southeast Asia and the Indian subcontinent had begun during the 1st century CE. The Sanskrit and Pali languages and elements of Hinduism and Buddhism were adopted by some of the Southeast Asians, particularly in ancient Thailand, Cambodia, and the western islands of Sumatra and Java in Indonesia.

Buddhism later entered Southeast Asia from China between the 1st and 6th centuries—as did Confucianism and Daoism. By the 7th and 8th centuries, Buddhist kingdoms closely connected with India were established in Sumatra and Java. Indeed, some of the most impressive Buddhist monuments in the world are the splendid temples of Borobudur in Java dating from the 9th century. Buddhism is currently the principal

religion of Myanmar or Burma (89 percent), Thailand (95 percent), Vietnam (80 percent), Laos (85 percent), Cambodia (95 percent) and Singapore (30 percent). Most Buddhists in Southeast Asia belong to the Theravada school of Buddhism with the exception of the Vietnamese, 80 percent of whom are Mahayana Buddhists. Confucianism also entered Southeast Asia from China. As was the case in imperial China, Confucianism's ideals of order and harmony were exploited by kings and emperors to buttress their authority and thereby quell revolts. To the majority of the population, however, Confucianism was understood in terms of personal and social virtues, especially filial piety and the veneration of ancestors.

During the 14th and 15th centuries, Islam gradually was introduced into Malaya and the Indonesian islands by Arab, Persian, and Indian merchants along the maritime trade routes. By the end of the 16th century, Islam replaced Buddhism and Hinduism and became the majority religion in the Malay peninsula, on the Indonesian islands (with the exception of Java) and on the southern Philippine islands of Mindanao and Palawan. Approximately 87 percent of Indonesia's population of over 200 million is now Muslim—making it the world's largest Muslim country.

Christianity, primarily Roman Catholicism, was introduced into Southeast Asia by French, Portuguese and Spanish missionaries between the 16th and 17th centuries. The only Southeast Asian country with a Christian majority is the Philippines (93 percent), which is predominantly Roman Catholic. A large Roman Catholic minority comprises about 18 percent of the Vietnamese community.

HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS OF SOUTHEAST ASIA

China was the dominant power in Southeast Asia, and its culture influenced the traditional cultures of the area, especially that of Vietnam. China dominated Vietnam for more than a thousand years (200 BCE-CE 939). For many years afterwards, the Vietnamese maintained their independence but continued to pay tribute to the Chinese emperors. The Buddhist religion, the Chinese form of writing, and the use of the civil-service exams for government officials were among China's most important contributions to Vietnam.

Over several centuries, millions of ethnic Chinese known as “overseas Chinese” or “sojourner Chinese” migrated to many parts of Southeast Asia. The largest Chinese settlements in Southeast Asia were in Vietnam. Other “sojourner Chinese” settled in Singapore, Malaysia and other parts of Southeast Asia. As is the case with many emigrants elsewhere, their original intention was to earn enough money to return to their original homes. The majority, however, settled in various Southeast Asian cities, ran successful businesses, and contributed to the economic well-being of their new homes. However, the rising tide of nationalism, anti-foreigner sentiment and oftentimes war led them to emigrate.

EARLY CIVILIZATIONS OF SOUTHEAST ASIA: West of China the Khmer people of ancient Cambodia established Champa, a Hindu-Buddhist empire. During much of the period between 802 to about 1430 CE, it was the most powerful empire in Southeast Asia. At its height in the 12th century, Champa encompassed much of present-day Cambodia, Thailand and parts of Laos and Vietnam. They built a most impressive complex of buildings in the city of Angkor, capital of the Khmer empire for over 500 years. Extending 15 miles by 8 miles, the complex contained buildings, reservoirs, canals and a massive moat and was a symbol of Cambodian greatness. The most famous building in the complex was Angkor Wat, the largest religious structure in the world.

In 1177 Angkor Wat was destroyed by the Cham people of ancient Cambodia and Vietnam. Its priceless Hindu art later was replaced with Buddhist art, and it has remained an important Buddhist shrine. A few decades later, another Khmer ruler built the new capital of Angkor Thom dedicated to Buddhism. Excessive spending and ineffective rulers weakened the once-powerful kingdom until Siamese (Thai) armies invaded Angkor in 1431 and ended Khmer rule. Thereafter, and until the 19th century when French colonial interests in Southeast Asia peaked, Cambodia was under Siamese (Thai) and Vietnamese control.

On the Malay and Philippine archipelagos, the islands maintained their independence and trade among themselves and with other parts of Asia. From the late 13th to the 15th centuries, the famous Hindu kingdom of Majapahit ruled over the

Indonesian islands and large areas of the Malay peninsula. The gradual collapse of Majapahit and other large kingdoms into smaller, often feuding, states increased their vulnerability to European imperialism.

COLONIALISM: Beginning in the 16th century with the European discovery of the sea routes across the Indian Ocean, rival European powers clashed for control of Southeast Asia. Throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, the Portuguese, the Dutch, the French and the British competed for trading rights and colonial possessions. By 1900, the entire region (with the exception of Thailand) came under the imperialist rule of Western powers. Spain, Portugal, Great Britain, France, the Netherlands, Germany and the United States had each established control over some area of Southeast Asia.

As early as 1521, the Spanish explorer Magellan claimed the Philippine islands for Spain. Spain occupied the Philippines, a string of over 7,000 islands stretching for over 1,000 miles (1,770 kilometers) for 350 years. During this period, the Roman Catholic Church converted the Filipinos to Christianity.

Similarly, the Indonesian islands were occupied by the Netherlands at the beginning of the 17th century (1610). Taking over from previous Portuguese rule, the Dutch ruled over Indonesia for about 350 years. The largest island group in the world, the more than 17,000 islands of Indonesia—about four times the state of Texas—occupy most of the Malay Archipelago.

The three countries of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, which Europeans called “Indochina,” were gradually occupied by France beginning in the late 18th century. By the late 19th century, all had become part of France’s colonial empire.

In 1898, the United States joined the Filipinos’ fight for independence and declared war on Spain. Following the Spanish-American War, the Filipinos declared their independence and established a republic under the first democratic constitution in Asia. However, Spain had ceded the country to the United States for \$20 million. The United States took over from the Spanish as the Philippines’ new colonial rulers. Many American intellectuals including Mark Twain, William James and Jane Addams opposed the U.S. conquest of the Philippines. A three-year Filipino rebellion against American

colonial rule was crushed and for the next 45 years (1901-1946), the Philippines remained a U.S. colony.

During World War II (1939-1945), Japan invaded and occupied a large area of Southeast Asia including Burma, Singapore, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Thailand—the latter having never been colonized by any Western power. But within a few years, the Japanese forces were forced out by the Allies prior to Japan's surrender in 1945.

After World War II, national liberation movements swept across Southeast Asia, demanding independence for their countries. In 1946 the Philippines gained its independence from the United States and a republic was declared. However, the presence of U.S. military bases and U.S. rights to exploit the Philippines' natural resources without restrictions was regarded by many Filipinos as less than full independence. In the Indonesian islands after World War II, Indonesian nationalists fought a four-year battle for independence, which the Netherlands granted in 1949. Malaysia, also colonized by the Portuguese, the Dutch and later the British, gained its independence in 1957. By the middle of the 20th century, most countries of Southeast Asia had become independent.

At times the struggle for independence and communist attempts to seize power and leadership of the movements were concurrent. After battling Communist and Nationalist forces for eight years (1946-1954), France's Indochina War ended in 1954. Vietnam was partitioned into North and South Vietnam while Laos and Cambodia became independent. Of all the countries, only Vietnam eventually came under communist rule after a bloody civil war. United States military intervention from the 1960s to 1975—the Vietnam War—attempted to control the outcome of the civil war.

In other parts of Southeast Asia, Burma had been ruled as part of British India until 1937. Burma fought the British throughout most of the 19th century until gaining its independence in 1948. The country's name was changed to Myanmar in 1989. Currently ruled by a military government, Myanmar has captured world attention by holding pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi under house arrest for six years. In 1991 she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

Small colonial outposts remained. The Portuguese colony of East Timor, located midway between the Indonesian island of Java and Australia, was granted its independence in 1975. The following year it was annexed by Indonesia during a raging civil war in which over 200,000 East Timorese died. In 1996, the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to two East Timorese separatist leaders Bishop Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo and Jose Ramos Horta “for their work toward a just and peaceful solution to the conflict in East Timor.” The last Southeast Asian country to be free of colonial rule was the small country of Brunei, which gained its independence from Britain in 1984.

Today, many countries in Southeast and East Asia are of strategic importance to the United States and to the world because of their geography and dynamic global economies. United States trade with Asian countries across the Pacific has surpassed by far trade with Europe. In 1989, an association of Pacific Rim countries formed the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation to promote economic development. Its Asian members include Brunei, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand as well as the United States, Canada, Mexico, Australia, New Zealand, and Papua New Guinea. Together APEC members account for more than one-third of the world’s trade.

SOUTHEAST ASIANS IN THE UNITED STATES

The overwhelming majority of the Southeast Asian population in the United States is from the Philippines and Vietnam. In this essay, the term “Southeast Asian refugees” refers to persons originally from Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. It is preferred over the term “Indochinese,” which is found to be offensive by many Southeast Asians because of its colonialist origin. The use of the term “refugee” used here serves to distinguish the Vietnamese, Cambodians and Laotians from most other Southeast Asian-Americans who generally came to this country as immigrants, such as the Filipinos.

FILIPINO-AMERICANS: The first Filipino settlement in the United States dates to 1761 when the “Manilamen”—Filipino crewmen on board ships of the Spanish galleon trade between Manila and Acapulco—settled in Louisiana. Seeking to avoid a life of

hardship, they jumped ship in New Orleans and fled into the bayous. However, the first major settlement of Filipinos occurred between the 1900s and the 1930s.

There were two types of early immigrants—“*pensionados*,” or college students, and “*pinoy*,” or laborers. The U.S. authorities in the Philippines encouraged Filipino students to study in the United States and then return to their country. By 1938, some 14,000 students had enrolled in U.S. colleges and universities. The second type of immigrants were laborers. Since the Philippines were a U.S. colony, immigration of Filipino laborers into the United States was not legally excluded by U.S. immigration laws. During the 1920s, with other Asians excluded from Hawaii and the West Coast, thousands of young Filipinos went to Hawaii to work on the expanding sugar and pineapple plantations. More than 110,000 Filipinos entered Hawaii before 1931. During the agricultural slump of the 1930s, about half of the Filipino workers remained in Hawaii, while 18,600 moved to the West Coast. Other Filipinos worked as seasonal workers in the Alaskan salmon canneries. The rest returned to the Philippines. Unfortunately, those who settled on the West Coast faced discrimination similar to that imposed on other Asian immigrants at the time.

Though the Philippines had become a U.S. colony in 1899—and remained such until independence in 1946—Filipinos were regarded as nationals but not citizens of the United States. While the provisions of the federal Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934 provided for the eventual independence of the Philippines, it considered Filipino immigrants “aliens and ineligible for American citizenship” and set an annual immigration quota of 50 on Filipinos. Nevertheless, when Japan invaded the Philippines in 1941, some one-third of Filipino men in the United States joined the 1st Filipino Infantry Regiment to fight alongside the U.S. military.

After the end of World War II in 1945, a small number of Filipinos emigrated to the United States. They consisted mostly of Filipinos who served with the American military in the Philippines during World War II. The following year (1946), U.S. citizenship was offered to Filipinos residing in the United States. However, it was not until 1991 that the first of over 50,000 eligible Filipino veterans of World War II were granted the right to become U.S. citizens.

The number of Filipino immigrants grew rapidly after the landmark immigration law of 1965 abolished the racial-based quota system. Whereas the entry quota of Filipino immigrants after 1946 was set at only 100 per year, it increased dramatically to an average of 35,000 per year during the 1970s. The number escalated to an average of 55,000 per year during the 1980s and 65,000 per year in the 1990s. Most of the new immigrants from the Philippines were physicians, nurses, engineers, lawyers, and business owners. At present, there are close to 2 million U.S. citizens and residents of Filipino origin, more than 75 percent of whom were born in the Philippines.

Most of the new immigrants settled in big metropolitan areas, especially Los Angeles, New York, Chicago and Honolulu. As with other immigrant groups, language identification has been the basis of communal association among Filipino-Americans. The major languages spoken are Ilocano, Visayan, and Tagalog. Tagalog (also called Filipino) is the official language in the Philippines, as is English. Moreover, since most Filipino-Americans are Roman Catholics, the church and fraternal organizations were a primary form of organization for early Filipinos. With recent Filipino immigrants, one-third of whom are college graduates, professional and alumni associations have flourished. Filipino young adults enroll in colleges in high percentages, and many have joined the ranks of professionals.

Filipinos derive pride from the accomplishments of their community. One of this century's most prolific literary figures was the late Filipino-American poet and author Carlos Bulosan. A major contribution of Filipinos in the United States has been their active involvement in the U.S. labor movement. The Filipino Federation of Labor was founded in 1911 by Pablo Manlapit, and a Filipino union, the Federated Agricultural Laborers Association, was chartered by the American Federation of Labor in 1940. In 1966, Filipino leaders, including Philip Vera Cruz and Larry Itliong, joined their union with Mexican-American Cesar Chavez's National Farm Workers Union. The two unions merged as the United Farm Workers Union. The U.F.W. is best known for securing better wages and working conditions of farm growers in the California grape industry. Filipino-American Philip Vera Cruz also served as vice-president of the United Farm Workers Union. In 1989, he was honored by the Government of the Philippines with the first Ninoy Aquino award for lifelong service to the Filipino community in the United States.

It is estimated that thousands of Filipino immigrants currently work as doctors and nurses in hospitals and other medical facilities in this country. In 1992, Filipina-American physician Lillian Gonzalez-Pardo became the first Asian-American to be elected national president of the American Medical Women's Association. A number of Filipino-Americans are also prominent in public office. Thelma Garcia Buchholdt served in Alaska's House of Representatives from 1974 to 1983, while David Valerrama currently serves in the Maryland State Assembly. The current Governor of Hawaii Benjamin Cayetano (1995—), the son of a Filipino immigrant, is the first Filipino-American to win a gubernatorial election anywhere in the United States. Other prominent Filipino-Americans include social scientist and statistician Juanita Tamayo Lott; journalist Emil Guillermo, former weekend anchor of National Public Radio's "All Things Considered;" poet Vince Gotera; political activist Irene Natividad, who currently chairs the National Commission on Working Women and was the first Asian-American woman to head the National Women's Political Caucus in 1985; and community activist Tess Manalo-Ventresca, whose longtime projects in San Francisco's Tenderloin district have enriched the lives of disadvantaged teenage youths.

THE VIETNAM WAR AND REFUGEES: It is estimated that almost 60,000 Americans and at least 4 million Vietnamese died during the Vietnam War (1965-1975). As a result of this tragedy, waves of Southeast Asians from Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia (Kampuchea) found refuge in the United States. Distinct from most other Asian-American groups, they came to the United States as refugees rather than immigrants—a consequence of U.S. military action in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War.

Between March and April 1975, one month before the collapse of South Vietnam, the first wave of Vietnamese refugees numbering about 125,000 were air-lifted to the United States. Most had close ties with the South Vietnamese government, the C.I.A. and the U.S. military establishment in Vietnam. On April 30, 1975, the city of Saigon and the government of South Vietnam fell to the Communist forces in the last stages of the Vietnam War. Turmoil was sweeping Laos and Cambodia at about the same time. When the Communist Khmer Rouge gained control of Cambodia in 1975, a campaign of mass killings resulted in the death of over 2 million Cambodians. Thousands escaped to

Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines. Another 142,000 Vietnamese with fewer Laotians and Cambodians were admitted into the United States during the next five years.

From 1978 to 1988, a huge wave of Vietnamese took to the sea in flimsy fishing boats. In this second wave of refugees, only half the people survived the perilous trip. Hundreds of thousands perished at sea. Known as the “boat people,” the survivors sought refuge in Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Japan and the Philippines. They consisted of people who had failed to escape Vietnam in 1975 and included officers of the previous South Vietnamese military, intellectuals, artists, and small business owners. Many were educated people who were sent to labor camps and re-education centers in rural Vietnam. The United States under the Humanitarian Order program resettled almost 185,000 of these refugees. About 150,000 of the refugees were Vietnamese; the rest were from Cambodia and Laos. Most were living in refugee camps in Southeast Asia for years before coming to the United States.

The refugees from Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia arrived as recipients of U.S. governmental assistance known as the Indochina Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1975. With the sudden large influx of refugees, the United States government organized reception centers and refugee camps to process the new immigrants upon their arrival. Federal and state welfare programs helped meet some of the initial needs of these immigrants. Charitable organizations assisted, particularly those that were connected with Christian churches. Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Laotian voluntary associations assisted needy persons and offered job assistance for the unemployed. They also published newsletters, some of which were bilingual.

Roughly one million Vietnamese, Cambodians, and Laotians have entered the United States between 1975 and 1990. The majority, or 700,000, are from Vietnam. Those remaining refugees who have not been accepted by American, European or Asian countries have either been forcibly repatriated to Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, or live in refugee camps in Thailand or other Southeast Asian countries.

A more recent group from Southeast Asia were several thousand Amerasian children (born of Vietnamese mothers and American servicemen fathers) and their

families. Viewed as outcasts by Vietnamese society, they faced a life of harshness and poverty. The Amerasian Homecoming Act of 1987 enacted by Congress created the Amerasian Program that has settled more than 56,000 Amerasians in the United States since 1988. Many, however, still remain in Vietnam.

VIETNAMESE-AMERICANS: The geographic distribution of refugees from Vietnam and from Southeast Asia in general is uneven due to the location of the various voluntary organizations that helped them. Over 50 percent of Vietnamese-Americans live in California with large concentrations of Vietnamese-Americans in Westminster, Anaheim, Garden Grove, Santa Ana and San Jose. A smaller percentage (11 percent) live in Texas. Many have since migrated from isolated sites to join family members.

There are some 700,000 Vietnamese in America. Although less than 10 percent of the population of Vietnam is Catholic, 30 percent of the Vietnamese population in the United States is Roman Catholic. The remainder are Mahayana Buddhists, the religion of 80 percent of Vietnam's population.

Most Vietnamese in the United States have a well-deserved reputation for being hard-working and diligent. Soon after their arrival in the United States, one-fourth of all Vietnamese refugees had incomes below the poverty level since most had lost their assets. However, according to the 1990 U.S. census, Vietnamese-Americans over the age of 26 have an unemployment rate of only 5.3 percent. Moreover, over 25 percent of Vietnamese-Americans own their homes. Those attending high school have a higher graduation rate than that for any other Americans. Young Vietnamese students have been cited as class valedictorians across the nation and seek higher education in growing numbers. Almost 50 percent of Vietnamese-American high school graduates go to college compared with a much lower percentage for American high schoolers in general. An important source of support is the strong Vietnamese family. In spite of the stress and strain of exile, only 10 percent of Vietnamese marriages end in divorce or separation.

Still, the new immigrants faced many obstacles including incidents of intolerance and hate crimes. For a time, the Ku Klux Klan harassed Vietnamese fishermen in the Gulf Coast states and discriminatory legislation targeted Vietnamese fishermen in

California's Monterey Bay, while in Stockton, California, the 1989 schoolyard shootings of Vietnamese and Cambodian children left five dead and 29 wounded.

Nevertheless, the Vietnamese-American community has attained educational and entrepreneurial success. "Little Saigons" flourish in many revitalized downtown cities such as Westminster and San Jose in California, where nearly 40 percent of the retail business is Vietnamese. In Westminster, for example, over 1500 business establishments are owned by Vietnamese-Americans. On the Gulf Coast from Texas to Florida, many Vietnamese-Americans are shrimpers and fishermen. Vietnamese-American men and women are found in almost all professions but are predominant in electrical engineering jobs. Many work blue-collar jobs in the assembly lines of California and Oregon's microcomputer industry.

Increasingly, Vietnamese-Americans are making a valuable impression on American Society. The 1996 *Who's Who in California and in the West* lists dozens of distinguished doctors, lawyers, educators, engineers and other professionals of Vietnamese heritage. Distinguished Vietnamese-Americans include Tue Nguyen, a former "boat people" refugee, who received seven advanced degrees from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT); Eugene Trinh, who earned a Ph.D. in physics from Yale and is currently an astronaut with NASA; and Le Xuan Khoa, a former professor and vice-president of the University of Saigon who is currently an authority on refugee issues at the Washington, D.C.-based Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC). Other well-known Vietnamese-Americans include Ngoc Bich Nguyen, deputy director of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Program at the U.S. Department of Education; Xuan Vinh Nguyen, a professor of aerospace engineering; physician Nguyen Chi Huu, AIDS researcher; photojournalist Huynh Cong Ut, whose 1972 photograph of a young girl fleeing bombing during the Vietnam War, earned him almost every photojournalism award, including the Pulitzer Prize. Award-winning poet Tuoc Xuan, author of *Thank You, America* and *Paradise*; swimmer Catherine Cox, member of the 1996 U.S. Olympic team; painter Suzie Vuong; and computer manufacturer Sean Nguyen, named by President Clinton as 1994 Young Entrepreneur of the Year are all examples of the different contributions Vietnamese-Americans have made to American society.

LAOTIAN-AMERICANS: Laotian refugees represent a diverse community of two major groups, the ethnic Lao from the lowlands and the Hmong (pronounced *mong*) from the highlands. There are also several smaller ethnic groups. The largest group of Laotian refugees are the Hmong, an isolated mountain tribe. Over 30,000 Hmong men, recruited and financed by the C.I.A., fought for the United States against the Vietnamese and Lao Communists during the Vietnam War. After the end of the war, the Hmong, facing political persecution by the Communists, fled across the Mekong River into Thailand.

Laotians began to arrive in the United States in 1975. Many spent as much as 20 years inside refugee camps in Thailand before their admission to the United States. Laotian refugees currently number over 150,000 people. In addition, over 100,000 Hmong and their families were settled in various large cities in the United States. The majority of the Laotian-American community settled in California—in Fresno, Sacramento, San Diego and Oakland. Other large U.S. cities such as Minneapolis and Seattle also have Laotian communities. Those who settled in urban areas suffered difficult adjustment problems and preferred to move to smaller communities. Many of the Hmong refugees from Laos have since settled in rural areas of California, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Montana, Oregon and North Carolina.

Several Laotian individuals are contributing to the development of our society. Public Health physician Bruce (Thow Pao) Bliatout is an authority on Sudden Death Syndrome; physician Xoua Thao is currently president of Hmong National Development; Laotian-American educator Banlang Phommavanh is the founder of the Lao Parent and Teacher Association; and Lee Pao Xiong served as an intern in the U.S. Senate in 1988 and is currently executive director of the Hmong American Partnership in St. Paul, Minnesota.

CAMBODIAN-AMERICANS: The majority (90 percent) of ethnic Cambodians are known as “Khmers,” a term also used for their language. Other ethnic groups from Cambodia include Mi Khmer, Krom, Vietnamese, Malay, Cham, Thai and Chinese. The overwhelming majority of Cambodians (95 percent) are followers of Theravada Buddhism.

One of the smaller Southeast Asian—if not the smallest Asian—groups are the Cham from Cambodia and Vietnam, a minority Hindu and Muslim community of Malay origin. During the Vietnam War, most Cham were allied with the U.S.-supported governments in Cambodia and Vietnam. When these regimes collapsed, the Communist Khmer Rouge executed two-thirds of the Cham community of Cambodia. Though most Cham found refuge in Malaysia, 3,500 mainly Muslim Cham settled in the United States and now reside in California and Texas.

The majority of Cambodian immigrants arrived in the United States after 1979 and, at present, number over 165,000 people. Today the Cambodian-American population is concentrated in Long Beach, Los Angeles and Stockton in California, as well as in Lowell, Massachusetts; Houston, Texas; Washington, D.C.; and Tacoma, Washington. One of the most prominent Cambodian-Americans is physician Haing Ngor who played the role of Dith Pran in the film *The Killing Fields*—that earned him an Oscar in 1985 for best supporting actor.

In the last 20 years, more than one million Vietnamese, Laotian, and Cambodian people from Southeast Asia have migrated to the United States. Uprooted from their homes by war, massacres and political upheaval, they have often spent years in overcrowded refugee camps before arriving in the United States. Many among the Southeast Asian communities are still going through the difficult process of adjustment to their new environment. Slowly and steadily they are entering the mainstream of American society with all its challenges and promises. As with many other refugees who have come to the United States, the new immigrants bring with them their rich culture, traditions, skills, courage and hopes for a brighter future.

CONCLUSION

The large influx of Asian immigration began in the second half of the 19th century. In many areas of the United States, we are able to meet 5th or 6th generation Americans of Asian heritage. However, the majority of Asian-Americans are recent immigrants. Asian-Americans share many of the experiences that immigrants from other parts of the world have had in the process of immigration and adjustment. Some left their homes seeking better economic opportunities. Others sought refuge from political or religious discrimination and persecution. Hundreds of thousands were forced out of their countries because of wars and revolutions, while many came to join relatives and friends. Like other immigrant groups, they worked long hours for little pay, experienced discrimination and alienation, found solace in their tight-knit and family-oriented communities, and continued to dream of better opportunities for themselves and their families.

Like successive waves of immigrants before them, Asian-Americans brought their food, music, and distinct cultural values and traditions. As with other immigrant groups, they experienced intergenerational differences concerning cultural values as well as changing gender roles within the family. In addition, political and social conflicts within each community were at times divisive. Nonetheless, the various communities continue to share and to instill pride in their rich cultural heritage. This is matched by the pride they feel as their children enter into step with the rest of American society.

Unlike immigrants from Europe, however, many of the early Asian immigrants were predominantly male. Most came as sojourners, intending to return to their home country with their savings, though only a minority returned home in later years. More significantly, immigrants from Asia—being physically different and often practicing different religions and cultural traditions—faced a series of racist legislation passed by Congress and state legislatures. At times these harsh laws kept them out of the country or denied them their basic rights of marriage, family re-unification, land ownership, U.S. citizenship, and voting rights or limited their right to employment, housing, and education.

Early in the United States' history, Congress passed the Naturalization Act of 1790, a law stipulating that only "free white" persons could become citizens of the United States. Virtually all immigrants of Asian descent (but not Armenians or Arabs who were classified as "White") were therefore considered "aliens ineligible to citizenship." Though U.S. business interests actively recruited Asian laborers to work on the farmlands, mines and railroads of America, they were denied rights to citizenship. Indeed, even when the United States and Chinese governments signed the Burlingame Treaty in 1868 guaranteeing the entrance of Chinese laborers to the United States, citizenship rights were withheld.

The new Asian immigrants were few in number compared to European immigrants, but labor and anti-Asian groups such as the Asiatic Exclusion League pressured the U.S. government for restrictions. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 ended virtually all future immigration of Chinese laborers. This was the first U.S. law to restrict immigration based on country of origin.

In 1913, California and nine other Western states passed the Alien Land Law (Webb-Heney Bill) prohibiting "aliens ineligible for citizenship"—i.e., Japanese, Chinese, Indians, Koreans, and Filipinos—from buying land or leasing it for more than three years. This was followed by the Alien Land Law of 1920, a more restrictive law that was enacted by the state of California and later adopted by fifteen other states: Arizona, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Utah, New Mexico, Idaho, Kansas, Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, Nebraska, Minnesota and Missouri. Denial of citizenship with its inherent right to vote and other privileges resulted in the creation of communities of second-class citizens.

Fear of Asians and, to a far lesser extent, fear of South and East Europeans led Congress to pass yet further legislation. The Immigration Act of 1924, which became known as the Asian Exclusion Act and the National Origins Act, established a quota system whereby 82 percent of the 150,000 new immigrants permitted annually would come from Northern and Western Europe and 16 percent from Southern and Eastern Europe with only the remaining 2 percent from Asia and Africa. This was legislated to ensure that the majority of Americans would remain of ethnic Western European

heritage. In addition, the 1924 Act prohibited persons who originated from countries within what was called the Asia Pacific Triangle from entering the United States. These countries included China, Japan, Korea, India, the Philippines, Arabia, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Siam (Thailand), Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Burma (Myanmar), the Malay States, Singapore, and Asiatic Russia.

The United States entry into World War II changed American attitudes toward other countries and peoples. The Immigration Act of 1924 was modified to provide small immigration quotas for persons from China and the Philippines, which were allied with the United States against Japan. Gradually, Asian civil rights groups asserted their rights and pressured the U. S. government for equal treatment. Whereas African-Americans became U.S. citizens in 1870—albeit without civil and political rights—most Asian-Americans had to wait until the 1940s and 1950s for the right to become American citizens. Some federal restrictions were eased and repealed by Congress—the 1943 Magnuson Act for Chinese residents, the 1948 Displaced Persons Act, and the 1952 McCarran-Walter Act for Japanese and Korean residents of the United States.

Congress also enacted a new law, the 1945 War Brides Act, to allow U.S. servicemen to bring home their “war brides.” The anti-miscegenation laws prohibiting legal marriage between most Asians and Whites in several states, including California, were also finally repealed beginning in 1948. The new Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, known as the McCarran-Walter Act, repealed earlier racist laws that denied U.S. citizenship to immigrants of Asian origin. Though it eliminated race as a consideration in both naturalization and immigration, only minimal quotas were assigned for them.

Many people decried the discriminatory legislation applying to much of Asia. Four post-war U.S. presidents—Presidents Roosevelt, Truman, Eisenhower, and Kennedy—urged Congress to pass new immigration laws that did not discriminate against people because of race, religion, or ethnic origin. The Vietnam War and the civil rights movement with its emphasis on social justice further eroded policies of racial segregation. Moreover, the United States desired to improve its international image as the new postwar superpower. That, together with growing trade and economic development in the Third World, led to a re-appraisal of U.S. immigration policy. Since

the 1960s, the Asian-American movement also has emerged to unite the diverse Asian-American community and to work toward racial equality and social justice for all.

Finally in 1965, President Johnson signed the landmark 1965 Immigration Act that did away with discriminatory racial and ethnic quotas. It is this act that has contributed to the explosive growth in the size of the Asian-American population. Its main points are that no person can be denied entry to the United States on the basis of race, national origin or religion; and that minor children and parents of legal immigrants, together with political and religious refugees, do not count against the immigration quotas. The law also allows Congress to set the annual total of all immigrants based on "preference categories." The cap has increased from 150,000 set in 1924 to 700,000 set in 1990. The figures, of course, tend to fluctuate in response to world events and U.S. domestic policy. In addition, President Carter in 1980 signed the Refugee Act, which allowed many more refugees, primarily from Southeast Asia, to enter the United States. The subsequent Refugee Act of 1983 limits welfare benefits to refugees to their first eighteen months in the United States. In addition, the Amerasian Homecoming Act of 1987 legalized the immigration of Amerasian teenagers and their families to the United States.

The Immigration Act of 1990 signed into law by President Bush further changed the number of immigrants who could come in under the "preference categories." Its goal was to attract immigrants with professional skills such as scientists, engineers and doctors. In 1995 over 56 percent of these immigrants were born in Asia. It also established the unprecedented practice of admitting 40,000 immigrants each year for three years based on a lottery system. Furthermore, it gave preference to those who could invest at least one million dollars to ensure the continued growth and competitiveness of the United States economy.

In retrospect, immigration patterns throughout the 19th century and until World War II reveal that people of European ancestry comprised about 80 percent of the immigrants to the United States. At present over 40 percent of new immigrants are from Asia, another 40 percent are from Latin America, and almost 15 percent are from Europe, mostly from Russia, Romania and Poland.

Percent of Immigrants Admitted by Region and Period: Fiscal Years 1955-92							
Region	1955-92	1955-64	1965-74	1975-84	1985-90	1991	1992
All regions	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Europe	20.1	50.2	29.8	13.4	8.9	7.4	14.9
North and West	9.0	28.6	11.0	5.2	4.0	1.8	5.3
South and East	11.1	21.6	18.7	8.1	4.9	5.6	9.6
Asia	29.2	7.7	22.4	43.3	33.8	19.6	36.6
Africa	2.0	.7	1.5	2.4	2.6	2.0	2.8
Oceania6	.4	.7	.8	.5	.3	.5
North America	42.1	35.9	39.6	33.6	48.0	66.3	39.4
Caribbean	12.7	7.0	18.0	15.1	12.0	7.7	10.0
Central America	4.5	2.4	2.5	3.7	7.2	6.1	5.9
Other N. America	24.8	26.4	19.0	14.8	28.8	52.5	23.5
South America	5.9	5.1	6.0	6.6	6.2	4.4	5.7

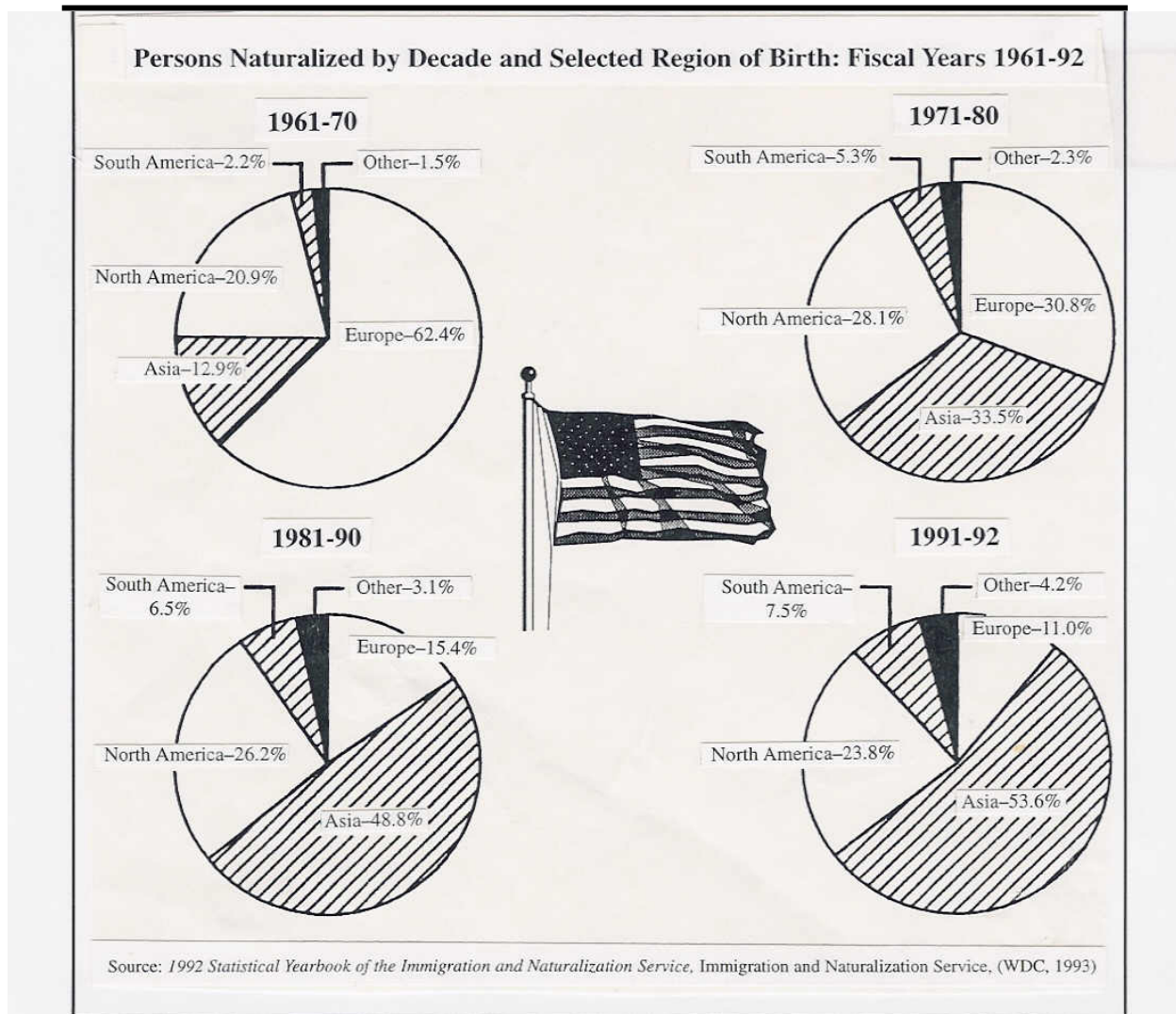
Source: 1992 Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, Immigration and Naturalization Service, (WDC, 1993)

According to the findings of the 1990 U.S. census, there are nearly 20 million foreign-born residents of the United States who form 8 percent of the nation's population. Asian-Americans, still relatively a small minority, form 3 percent of the U.S. total population. As we approach the end of the 20th century, those Asian nations sending the largest number of immigrants to the United States are the Philippines, Vietnam, China, India, Korea, Pakistan, Taiwan, Iran and Hong Kong. The largest number of "refugee status" immigrants admitted into the United States also have come from Asia with the majority from Vietnam and with fewer numbers from Laos, Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan. At present the largest Asian communities in the United States are the Chinese, followed by the Arab, Iranian, Armenian, Filipino, Japanese, Asian Indian, Korean and Vietnamese communities.

Further findings from the 1990 census reveal that the Asian population of the United States has more than doubled in the last ten years. Moreover, U.S. Immigration and Naturalization data confirm that from 1991 to 1992, over half (53.6 percent) of all naturalized U.S. citizens were from Asia. Asian countries also send the largest number of international students studying in the United States, many of whom remain here after finishing their studies.

There are striking economic contrasts in the diverse Asian-American community, many of whom came to the United States under widely varying circumstances. Many Asian-Americans, for example, share the image of a “model minority,” i.e., a highly educated and successful community. Many of the new immigrants from Asia are indeed well educated. Most have high school degrees and technical skills. Many have college degrees in science, mathematics, engineering and computer science. In addition, Asian-Americans as a group have the lowest divorce rate (3 percent), lowest rate of teen-age pregnancy (6 percent), the highest median family income (\$35,900), and the lowest rate of unemployment (3.5 percent) of any group in the United States. However, they form a complex and diverse community with serious pockets of poverty, especially among some refugee communities.

Overall, the Asian-American community has emerged as an important segment of American society. Yet, though institutional discrimination in the form of state and federal legislation is now illegal, discrimination still continues to affect different Asian-American communities. Blatant racist harassment (such as the “dot-buster” gangs who attack various Asian Indian Hindus in New Jersey) is on the rise and has heightened fears among many Asian-American communities. More subtle job discrimination exists in employment, wages and promotions. The “glass ceiling” that employers use to deny promotions because of cultural barriers is a common occurrence in such fields as medicine and engineering.



Another form of discrimination is caused by the perpetuation of negative stereotypes of various Asian groups. While media portrayal of Asian-Americans generally has improved in the last decade, old stereotypes linger on. Distorted images in films, television, newspapers, magazines and books serve to fuel hate crimes. Often, negative stereotypes lead some people to incorrectly link events in Asia to Asian-

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American communities—that then become victims of harassment. In addition, the media itself can be reproached for attributing guilt, without substantial evidence, against certain Asian groups. Irresponsible reports in the media linking the tragic April 1995 bombing of the Alfred Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City to Muslim, Middle Eastern or Arab groups instigated a rash of hate crimes.

The history of Asian immigrants is replete with stories of persistent struggles, hardships and accomplishments. The process of adjustment has not always been easy. However, a consistent theme in the lives of most immigrants has been the appreciation for the opportunities offered them in the United States, the overwhelming pride of becoming Americans, and their devotion to the ideals of freedom and democratic government. The individual and collective contributions of Asian-Americans to the quality of life and to the prosperity and well-being of the United States cannot be overemphasized. They range from the valuable input of laborers in the farmlands, railroads and factories of America to the productive men and women in business to the impressive achievements in the most sophisticated scientific, technological, and cultural endeavors. The fabric of American society is strengthened and enriched by their energy, talent, discipline, family solidarity and rich cultural diversity.

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e-mail: southasia@maxwell.syr.edu
<http://www.maxwell.syr.edu/gai/south-asia-center>

South Asia Outreach Center
University of Washington
303 Thomson Hall, Box 353650
Seattle, Washington 98195
(206) 543-4800
e-mail: sascuw@u.washington.edu
<http://weber.u.washington.edu/~souasia>

Southeast Asia Outreach Center
University of Washington
303 Thomson Hall, Box 353650
Seattle, Washington 98195
(206) 543-9606
e-mail: maureenj@u.washington.edu
<http://weber.u.washington.edu/~jsis>

Southeast Asia Resource Action Center
(SEARAC)
1628 16th Street, NW, 3rd Floor
Washington, DC 20009
e-mail: searacdc@aol.com
<http://www.searac.org>

SPICE (Stanford Program on International
and Cross-Cultural Education)
Stanford University
Littlefield Center, Room 14C
Stanford, California 94305-5013
(415) 723-1114. Toll-free 800-578-1114
e-mail: spice.sales@forsythe.stanford.edu
<http://www-iis.stanford.edu/SPICE/index.html>

AUTHORS: Farah & Dyck**SUBJECT: Social Science**

United Cambodian Council (UCC)
2338 East Anaheim, Suite 200
Long Beach, California 90804
(562) 433-2490

U.S. Bureau of the Census
Washington, DC 20233
(301) 457-2794
<http://www.census.gov/>

U.S. Coordinator for Refugee Affairs
Department of State
Washington, DC 20520
(202) 647-4000

U. S. Immigration and Naturalization Service
425 Eye Street NW
Washington, DC 20536
(202) 514-1900
<http://gopher.usdoj.gov/offices/ins.html>

Vietnamese Community of Orange County,
Inc.
1618 West First Street
Santa Ana, California 92703
(714) 558-6009

The Zarathushtrian Assembly
1814 Bayless Street
Anaheim, CA 92802
(714) 520-9577
Fax: (714) 5209620
e-mail: assembly@zoroastrian.org
Zassembly@aol.com
<http://www.zoroastrian.org>

Zoroastrian Education And Research Society
Z.E.R.S.'s
253 South 4th St
Womelsdorf, PA 19567.
610-589-5419,
Fax 610-589-5495
e-mail: Contact@Zers.org

LISTING OF NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND RESOURCE CENTERS

General

American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)
Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF)
Asian American Media Portrayal Project (AAMPP)
Asian American Online Network (AAON)
Asian Community Online Network (ACON)
Asian Immigrant Women Advocates (AIWA)
Asian Law Caucus (ALC)
Asian Pacific American Heritage Council (APAHC)
Asian Pacific American Legal Center (APALC)
Center for Immigrant Rights (CIR)
Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights and Services (CIRRS)
Federation for American Immigration Reform
Immigration History Research Center, University of Minnesota
Interaction Amerasian Resettlement Program (IARP)
Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics, Inc. (LEAP)
National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium (NAPALC)
National Institute for Women of Color (NIWC)
National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (NNIRR)
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)

United States Governmental Agencies

U.S. Bureau of the Census
U.S. Coordinator for Refugee Affairs
U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service

Educational Outreach Centers

The Asia Society/Ask Asia, Education Department
Asian American Curriculum Project, Inc. (AACP)
Asian American Studies Center, University of California, Los Angeles
Asian American Studies, University of California, Berkeley
Asian Educational Media Service, Center for East Asian and Pacific Studies
Association for Asian Studies, Committee on Teaching About Asia
Bay Area Global Education Program (BAGEP)
Center for Educational Media (CEM)
Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley
Center for South Asian Studies, University of Hawaii
Center for Southeast Asian Studies, University of Hawaii
East Asia Resource Center, University of Washington, Seattle
East Asian Curriculum Project, Columbia University
East Asian Studies Center, Indiana University
Massachusetts Asian American Educators Association

Media Action Network for Asian Americans
Middle East Outreach Center, University of Washington, Seattle
National Association for Asian and Pacific American Education (NAAPAE)
National Association for Ethnic Studies (NAES)
Outreach Asia, Center for Asian Studies, University of Texas at Austin
South Asia Center, Syracuse University
South Asia Outreach Center, University of Washington, Seattle
Southeast Asia Outreach Center
SPICE (Stanford Program on International and Cross-Cultural Education)

Religious Organizations

American Druze Foundation
American Friends Service Committee
American Jewish Historical Society
Buddhist Council for Refugee Rescue and Resettlement (BCRRR)
Church World Service Immigration and Refugee Program
Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)
Federation of Zoroastrian Association
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society
North American Council for Muslim Women
The Zarathushtrian Assembly

Arab-American

American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC)
Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS)
Arab World and Islamic Resources and School Services (AWAIR)
Association of Arab American University Graduates (AAUG)
Middle East Center, University of Washington
National Association of Arab Americans (NAAA)

Armenian-American

Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU)
Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA)
Mekhitarian Educational Foundation
National Association for Armenian Studies (NAAS)

Asian Indian-American

Association of Indians in America
Sakhi for South Asian Women

Cambodian-American

Cambodian Network Council (CNC)
National Association for the Education and Advancement of Cambodian, Laotian
and Vietnamese Americans
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
United Cambodian Council

Chinese-American

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Chinese American Citizens Alliance
Chinese Historical Society of America
Chinese Staff and Workers' Association, Inc.
National Association of Chinese Americans
Organization of Chinese Americans (OCA)

Filipino-American

Filipino American Women's Network
Filipinos for Affirmative Action
National Federation of Filipino American Associations
Philippine American Heritage Foundation
Philipino American Network and Advocacy

Hmong-American

Hmong Homepage
National Association for the Education and Advancement of Cambodian,
Laotian, and Vietnamese Americans

Iranian-American

Center for Iranian Studies, Columbia University
Foundation for Iranian Studies
Iranian Information Cultural Center

Japanese-American

The Japan Society
Japanese American Citizens League (JACL)
Japanese American National Museum
National Japanese American Historical Society

Jewish-American

American Jewish Historical Society
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society

Korean-American

The Korea Society
Korean American Alliance (KAA)
Korean Cultural Center

Laotian-American

Lao Coalition
National Association for the Education and Advancement of Cambodian,
Laotian, and Vietnamese Americans
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)

Pakistani-American

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Pakistan American Association
Pakistan Link
Pakistani-American Association
Sakhi for South Asian Women

Vietnamese-American

National Association for the Education and Advancement of Cambodian, Laotian,
and Vietnamese Americans
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
Vietnamese Community of Orange County, Inc.
Institute of Texan Cultures

Zoroastrian-American

Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America
The Zarathushtrian Assembly
Zoroastrian Education And Research Society (Z.E.R.S.)

LOCAL AND REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES

NOTE: Federally-funded Outreach Centers of the University of Washington's Jackson School of International Studies in Seattle, Washington contain print and audio-visual resources available free of charge for the use of K-12 educators in the Pacific Northwest.

American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee
(ADC)
P.O. Box 8175
Portland, Oregon 97207
(503) 202-8239
sdyck@hevanet.com

American Burmese Association of Oregon
1152 NE 78th Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97213

American Friends Service Committee
Latin America/Asia Pacific Youth Program
2249 East Burnside Street
Portland, Oregon 97214
(503) 230-9427
paz@afscpdx.org

ANC of Oregon
(Armenian National Committee of Oregon)
7716 SW 45th Ave. #75
Portland, OR 97219
(503) 452-1361

Armenian Community of Oregon
P.O. Box 888
Beaverton, Oregon 97005

Asian Family Center [SE Asian]
4424 NE Glisan
Portland, Oregon 97213
(503) 235-9396

Asian/Pacific American Alliance for Oregon
P.O. Box 15171
Portland, Oregon 97215

The Asian Reporter
922 North Killingsworth Street
Suite 1A
Portland, Oregon 97217
(503) 283-4440

Association for Communal Harmony in Asia
(503) 393-8305

Cambodian American Community of Oregon
4102 SE Powell Boulevard
Portland, Oregon 97202

Cambodian Buddhist Society, Inc.
19940 SW Stafford Road
West Linn, Oregon 97068
(503) 638-3700

Center for Asian and Pacific Studies
University of Oregon
Eugene, Oregon 97403
(541) 346-5087
e-mail: jkirby@oregon.uoregon.edu
<http://www.darkwing.uoregon.edu/~capas>

Chinese-American Citizen's Alliance
4628 SE 31st Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97202
(503) 731-4075 ext. 436

Chinese Consolidated Benevolent
Association of Portland
315 NW Davis
Portland, Oregon 97209
(503) 223-9070

Chinese Social Service Center
4937 SE Woodstock Boulevard
Portland, Oregon 97206
(503) 771-7977

East Asia Resource Center
University of Washington
302C Thomson Hall
P.O. Box 353650
Seattle, Washington 98195
(206) 543-1921
e-mail: bernson@u.washington.edu

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Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO)
245 SW Bancroft
Portland, Oregon 97201
(503) 221-1054

Filipino American Center
8917 SE Stark
Portland, Oregon 97216
(503) 253-7636

Hmong Family Association of Oregon, Inc
10931 NE Russell
Portland, Oregon 97220

Hmong American Association of Oregon, Inc.
6732 SE 114th Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97266
or
15803 SE Brooklyn Street
Portland, Oregon 97233

India Association of Western Washington
(206) 543-4800

Indian Cultural Association (ICA)
(503) 524-3964

Indochinese Socialization Center
1032 SE 35th Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97214
(503) 239-0132

International Refugee Center of Oregon
1336 East Burnside
Portland, Oregon 97214
(503) 234-1541

Interreligious Committee for Peace in the
Middle East
(503) 485-7218

Iranian Professional Society of Oregon
P.O. Box 852
Lake Oswego, Oregon 97034
(503) 244-2450

Iranian Women's Association
P.O. Box 717
Lake Oswego, Oregon 97035
(503) 697-4943
Islamic Society of Greater Portland
(503) 620-6169

Israel Program Center
Mittleman Jewish Community Center
6651 SW Capital Highway
Portland, Oregon 97219
(503) 244-0111

Japan-America Society of Oregon
221 NW 2nd Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97209
(503) 228-9411

Japanese American Citizens League (JACL)
Pacific Northwest District Council
671 South Jackson, No. 206
Seattle, Washington 98104
(206) 623-5088

Jewish Federation
6651 SW Capital Highway
Portland, Oregon 97219
(503) 245-6219
jfedptld1@vr-net.com

Kalakendra, Performing Arts
(503) 246-3864

Korean Society
495 SW 169th Place
Beaverton, Oregon 97006

Korean Society of Oregon
7650 SW 81st Ave
Portland, Oregon 97223
(503) 977-2617

Lao Association of Oregon (LAO)
5090 NW 173rd Place
Portland, Oregon 97229
(503) 645-9867

Lao Women Mutual Aid, Inc.
809 NE 116th Court
Portland, Oregon 97220
(503) 255-3426

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Metropolitan Instructional Support Laboratory
School of Education
Portland State University
P.O. Box 751
Portland, Oregon 97207
(503) 725-4607

Middle East Outreach Center
University of Washington
225 Thomson Hall, Box 353650
Seattle, Washington 98195
(206) 543-4227
fhecker@u.washington.edu
<http://weber.u.washington.edu/~jsis/MEC/>

Middle East Studies Center
Portland State University
P.O. Box 751
Portland, Oregon 97207
(503) 725-4074
<http://www-adm.pdx.edu/user/mesc>

Mien Association of Oregon
1860 NE 66th Ave, #72
Portland, Oregon 97213

Muslim Educational Trust (MET)
P.O. Box 283
Portland, Oregon 97207
(503) 245-9551
metpdx@teleport.com
www.teleport.com/~metpdx

Northwest Regional China Council
P.O. Box 751
Portland, Oregon 97207

Northwest Regional Consortium
or Southeast Asian Studies
110 Gerlinger Hall
Eugene, Oregon 97403
(541) 346-5084
e-mail: jkirby@oregon.uoregon.edu

Northwest Tibetan Cultural Association
Oregon International Council
999 Locust Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97303
(503) 378-4960

Office of International Education
Superintendent of Public Instruction
Old Capitol Building, M/S FG11
P.O. Box 47200
Olympia, Washington 98504
(360) 753-6747

Oregon Friends of Thailand
P.O. Box 1708
Lake Oswego, Oregon 97124
(503) 635-9393

Oregon Historical Society
1200 SW Park Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97205
(503) 222-1741

Oregon State University
Ethnic Studies Department
230 Strand
Corvallis, Oregon 97331
(541) 737-0709
e-mail: ethnic@orst.edu

Pacific University Museum
Pacific University
Forest Grove, Oregon 97116
(503) 359-2915

Persia House
P.O. Box 42033
Portland, Oregon 97242
(503) 892-9329

Portland Chinese Women's Club
3606 SE Caruthers
Portland, Oregon 97214

Portland Public Schools
Attn: Dr. Mariam Baradar
Asian-American Resource Specialist
501 North Dixon Street
Portland, Oregon 97227
(503) 916-3389
mbaradar@pps.k12.or.us

Refugee/Immigrant Consortium of Oregon
and Southwest Washington
5404 NE Alameda Drive
Portland, Oregon 97213
(503) 249-5892

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Russian Oregon Social Service
(503) 777-3437

Santepheap Khmer of Oregon
11280 SW Cresmoor Drive
Beaverton, Oregon 97005

South Asia Outreach Center
University of Washington
303 Thomson Hall, Box 353650
Seattle, Washington 98195
(206) 543-4800
e-mail: sascuw@u.washington.edu
<http://weber.u.washington.edu/~souasia>

Southeast Asia Outreach Center
University of Washington
303 Thomson Hall, Box 353650
Seattle, Washington 98195
(206) 543-9606
e-mail: maureenj@u.washington.edu
<http://weber.u.washington.edu/~jsis>

Southeast Asian Vicariate-Portland
5404 NE Alameda Drive
Portland, Oregon 97213
(503) 249-5892

Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of Portland
P.O. Box 4245
Portland, Oregon 97208

Sponsors Organized to Assist Refugees
(SOAR)
5404 SE Alameda
Portland, Oregon 97213
(503) 284-3002

Syrian Lebanese American Club
11610 SE Holgate Boulevard
Portland, Oregon 97236
(503) 760-4848

Taiwan Friendship Association
2085 Ridgepoint Drive
Lake Oswego, Oregon 97034

Tibetan Foundation of Oregon and
Southwest Washington
3212 SE 23rd Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97202

Turkish American Student Cultural
Association
(503) 725-8568

Vietnamese American Foundation
8425 Cason Lane
Gladstone, Oregon 97027
(503) 306-5635

Vietnamese Parents Association
432 NW 170th Drive
Beaverton, Oregon 97006
(503) 531-8908

World Affairs Council
Education Program Director
One World Trade Center
121 SW Salmon, Suite 320
Portland, Oregon 97204
(503) 274-7488

Yiu -Mien Association of Oregon, Inc.
16790 SW Springwater Lane
Beaverton, Oregon 97006
(503) 531-8827

LISTING OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND RESOURCE CENTERS

GENERAL

American Friends Service Committee, Asia/Pacific Youth Program, Portland
The Asian Reporter, Portland
Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO), Portland
International Refugee Center of Oregon, Portland
Oregon Historical Society, Portland
Pacific University Museum, Forest Grove
Refugee/Immigrant Consortium of Oregon and Southwest Washington,
Portland
Sponsors Organized to Assist Refugees (SOAR), Portland
World Affairs Council, Portland

Educational Outreach Centers

Center for Asian and Pacific Studies, University of Oregon, Eugene
East Asia Resource Center, University of Washington, Seattle
Ethnic Studies Department, Oregon State University, Corvallis
Jewish Federation, Portland
Metropolitan Instructional Support Laboratory, Portland State University
Middle East Outreach Center, University of Washington, Seattle
Middle East Studies Center, Portland State University
Muslim Educational Trust, Portland
Office of International Education, State of Washington
Portland Public Schools
South Asia Outreach Center, University of Washington, Seattle
Southeast Asia Outreach Center, University of Washington, Seattle
World Affairs Council, Portland

Religious Organizations

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO), Portland
Islamic Society of Greater Portland
Jewish Federation, Portland
Mittleman Jewish Community Center, Portland
Muslim Educational Trust, Portland
Southeast Asian Vicariate-Portland
Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of Portland

Arab-American

American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC), Portland
Syrian Lebanese American Club, Portland

Armenian-American

Armenian Community of Oregon, Portland
ANC of Oregon (Armenian National Committee of Oregon)

Asian Indian-American

Association for Communal Harmony in Asia (ACHA)
India Association of Western Washington
Indian Cultural Association
Kalakendra Performing Arts

Burmese-American

American Burmese Association of Oregon, Portland

Cambodian-American

Cambodian American Community of Oregon, Portland
Santepheap Khmer of Oregon, Beaverton

Chinese-American

Chinese-American Citizens Alliance, Portland
Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association of Portland
Chinese Social Service Center, Portland
Northwest Regional China Council, Portland
Taiwan Friendship Association, Lake Oswego

Filipino-American

Filipino American Center, Portland

Hmong-American

Hmong American Association of Oregon, Inc., Portland
Hmong Family Association of Oregon, Inc., Portland

Iranian-American

Iranian Professional Society of Oregon, Lake Oswego
Iranian Women's Association, Lake Oswego
Persia House, Portland

Japanese-American

Japan-America Society of Oregon, Portland
Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), Portland

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Jewish-American

Interreligious Committee for Peace in the Middle East
Jewish Federation, Portland
Mittleman Jewish Center, Israel Program Center, Portland

Korean-American

Korean Society, Beaverton
Korean Society of Oregon, Portland

Laotian-American

Lao Association of Oregon (LAO), Portland
Lao Women Mutual Aid, Inc., Portland
Southeast Asian Vicariate-Portland

Mien-American

Mien Association of Oregon
Yiu -Mien Association of Oregon, Inc.

Pakistani-American

Islamic Society of Greater Portland

Russian-American

Russian Oregon Social Service, Portland

Thai-American

Oregon Friends of Thailand, Lake Oswego

Tibetan-American

Northwest Tibetan Cultural Association, Salem
Tibetan Foundation of Oregon and Southwest Washington, Portland

Turkish-American

Turkish American Student Cultural Association, Portland

Vietnamese-American

Asian Family Center, Portland
Southeast Asian Vicariate-Portland
Vietnamese American Foundation, Gladstone
Vietnamese Parents Association, Beaverton

CHRONOLOGY

c5000 BCE	Rise of early city-states along Tigris-Euphrates rivers in Mesopotamia (Iraq)
c3500 BCE	Arrival of the Sumerians in southern Mesopotamia
c3000 BCE	Sumerians develop cuneiform writing
2850-2450 BCE	1st dynasty of Ur in Sumer
c2500 BCE	Rise of Indus civilization: Harappa & Mohenjo-Daro in Indian subcontinent
c2350-2295 BCE	Reign of Sargon the Great, King of Akkad, ruler of 1st great empire in history
c2000-1500 BCE	The Aryans invade Persia (Iran)
c1950 BCE	Abraham migrates from Ur (southern Mesopotamia or Iraq)
c1800 BCE	Hammurabi, King of Babylon issues the 1st comprehensive legal code
c1700 BCE	Indus civilization in decline
c1700 BCE	Rise of Hittite kings in Asia Minor (Turkey)
c1500 BCE	Indus civilization disappears & Aryans invade India
c1500-1000 BCE	Shang Dynasty, 1st documented Chinese dynasty
c1500 BCE	Use of iron begins in ancient Turkey
c1400 BCE	Earliest Chinese writings found
c1390-1350 BCE	Reign of Shubbilului, King of the Hittites
c1200 BCE	Hebrews invade Canaan (Israel/Palestine); Jewish religion emerges
c1030 BCE	Saul becomes king of Israel
c1013-974 BCE	Reign of David, King of Judah; conquest of Jerusalem
c1000 BCE	Hindu Veda scriptures
c1000-221 BCE	Zhou (Chou) Dynasty in China
c900-800 BCE	Assyrian Empire ruled from Nineveh
c800-400 BCE	Hindu Upanishads written
c626-538 BCE	Chaldaeian (Neo-Babylonian) Empire
c586 BCE	Jerusalem captured by King Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylon and the Babylonian Captivity of Jews
c563-480 BCE	Life of Siddharta Gautama, the "Buddha"
550-530 BCE	Reign of Cyrus the Great, founder of the Persian Empire
6th century BCE	Life of Laozi (Lao-tzu), founder of Daoism (Taoism) in China
550-478 BCE	Life of Confucius
334-331 BCE	Alexander the Great conquers the Babylonian & Persian empires
323 BCE	Death of Alexander the Great in Babylon
269-232 BCE	Rule of Ashoka, greatest ruler of ancient India
221-207 BCE	Qin (Ch'in) Dynasty in China; Great Wall of China begun under Qin Dynasty
202 BCE-CE 220	Han Dynasty in China; Buddhism introduced into China from India
64 BCE-CE 395	Roman rule in Palestine, Syria, and Asia Minor
c8-4 BCE	Jesus of Nazareth is born
CE 30	Death of Jesus; spread of Christianity in West Asia
135	Roman destruction of Jerusalem & Second Temple; Jewish Diaspora
301	Armenia declares Christianity its state religion
265-317	Rule of the Tsin (Chin) Dynasty in China
310-550	Gupta Dynasty, India's 2nd great empire; Golden Age of Hinduism
570-632	Life of Muhammad, prophet of Islam

622	Migration from <i>Makkah</i> (Mecca) to <i>Madinah</i> (Medina) = beginning of Islamic calendar
618-907	Tang Dynasty in China; China's Golden Age
650	Buddhism arrives in Tibet
661-749	Umayyad Dynasty rules from Damascus
750-1258	Abbasid Caliphate rules from Baghdad; the Arabic-Islamic Golden Age
802-1430	Buddhist-Hindu Champa Empire in ancient Cambodia, Thailand, Laos
960-1279	Sung Dynasty in China
1040	Printing using moveable wooden blocks developed by Pi Sheng in China
1096-1291	European Crusaders occupy parts of Syria, Lebanon and Palestine
1206	Delhi Sultanate established in northern India
1211	Mongols under Genghis Khan sweep into China from North & Central Asia
1216-1294	Kublai Khan, grandson of Genghis Khan, becomes emperor of China
1230	Koreans invent a metal printing press made of moveable copper type
1368	Ming Dynasty oust Mongols from power
1392	Choson Kingdom rules Korea until 1910
1436	German printer Gutenberg develops European printing press
1453	Ottoman Turks conquer Constantinople & defeat Byzantine Empire
1498	Portuguese Vasco da Gama, led by an Arab sailor from Oman, reaches India
1502	Shah Ismail founds Safavid Dynasty in Persia (Iran) & establishes Shiite Islam as its official state religion
1521	Spaniard Magellan claims Philippines for Spain which it rules for 350 years
1526	Founding of Mogul Empire in India
1542-1605	Reign of Akbar the Great, greatest Mogul emperor in India
1592	Japanese conqueror Hideyoshi invades the Korean peninsula but is defeated
1600	Japanese leader, Tokugawa Ieyasu, becomes <i>shogun</i>
1618-1707	Aurangzeb, last of the Great Moguls of India
1644-1911	Manchus invade China & establish Ching Dynasty, the last emperors of China
1610-1949	Netherlands colonize Indonesian islands for 350 years
1760-1857	British East India Company dominates India
1763	1st recorded settlement of Filipinos in America
1784	The India Act: political control of India
1790	1st recorded arrival of an Asian Indian to the United States
1790	U.S. Congress passes Naturalization Act that only "free whites" are eligible for U.S. citizenship
1794-1925	Qajar Dynasty in Persia
1839-1842	1st Opium War between Britain & China; Hong Kong forcibly ceded to Britain
1848-1860	Gold Rush in California draws Chinese immigrant workers
1854	U.S. forced intervention oblige Japanese to admit foreign merchants
1856-1860	2nd Opium War between Britain & China
1857	Sepoy Rebellion (also called the Indian Mutiny) against British rule in India
1858	British Government assumes direct control of India from East India Company
1858-1869	Chinese laborers work on various lines of the transcontinental railroad
1859	Exclusion of Chinese from public schools in San Francisco
	Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos become a French colony

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1868	Burlingame Treaty allows Chinese immigration into the U.S. in larger numbers
1868	Meiji Restoration in Japan
1870s	1st wave of Arab immigrants arrive in the U.S.
1875	Page Law restricts entrance of Chinese women into the U.S.
1876	Queen Victoria proclaimed empress of India
1878	U.S. Supreme Court denies right of Chinese to become naturalized U.S. citizens
1882	U.S. Congress passes Chinese Exclusion Act barring Chinese laborers
1880s	1st wave of Japanese immigrants
1898	Hawaii is annexed by the United States
1899	Philippine islands become a U.S. colony until 1946
1899	1st wave of Asian Indians arrive in the U.S.
1900	Boxer Rebellion in China against foreign domination
1900	1st wave of Filipino immigrants arrive in Hawaii
1903-1904	1st wave of Korean immigrants arrive in Hawaii
1904-1905	Russo-Japanese War; Japan controls Korea
1905	Japan bans Korean immigration to Hawaii
1905	Asiatic Exclusion League founded in San Francisco
1906	San Francisco school board decrees that children of Asian ancestry must attend segregated schools in Chinatown
1908	1st oil field in West Asia discovered in Southern Persia (Iran)
1907	President Theodore Roosevelt bans Japanese immigration to U.S. from Hawaii
1907-1908	Gentlemen's Agreement: Japan volunteers to halt immigration to U.S.
1910	Japan annexes Korea and occupies it until the end of W.W.II
1911	Imperial Manchu Dynasty overthrown in China & replaced by a republic
1911-1925	Sun Yat-sen serves as president of Republic of China
1913	California passes Webb-Heney Bill restricting property rights by Asians
1915	Genocide of Armenians during W.W.I in Turkey
1915-	Mahatma Gandhi leads Indian resistance against British colonialism
1917	Russian Revolution
1917	Balfour Declaration issued by British Govt. to Zionist National Movement
1918	Armenia becomes an independent republic - full suffrage for women
1920	Alien Land Law adopted by California and 15 other states against Asians
1920	Mahatma Gandhi launches his campaign of civil disobedience
1920	Treaty of Sèvres (not enforced): provisions for an independent Kurdistan
1921	Chinese Communist Party founded
1921	Armenia joins the Soviet Union as its smallest republic
1922	Cable Act rules that a female U.S. citizen will lose her U.S. citizenship for marrying an "alien ineligible for citizenship" directed at Chinese community.
1923	Ottoman Empire dissolved & a Turkish republic declared under Ataturk
1923	U.S. v. Bhagat Singh Thind rules that Asian Indians cannot become U.S. citizens
1924	Asian Exclusion Act & National Origins Act establishes racist quota system
1925	Qajar Dynasty ousted & establishment of Pahlavi Dynasty under Reza Shah
1934	100,000 Chinese trek on "Long March"
1934	Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934 denies Filipinos rights to U.S. citizenship
1936	1922 Cable Act is repealed
1937	Japan invades China
1939-1945	World War II

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1941	Japan attacks U.S. forces at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii
1941	Japan invades the Philippines
1942	Executive Order 9066: President Franklin Roosevelt orders the internment of 120,000 Japanese-Americans in 10 internment camps across the U.S.
1943	Magnuson Act: President Franklin Roosevelt repeals the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882
1945	U.S. drops atomic bombs on Hiroshima & Nagasaki, ushering in nuclear age
1945	Japan surrenders
1945	U.S. internment camps for Japanese-Americans are closed
1945	Congress passes War Brides Act, removing racial restriction for Asian brides
1946	Public Law 483 removes legal discrimination against Asian-Indians in the U.S.
1946	Philippines gains its independence from the U.S.
1947	End of British colonial rule in India; partition of India into India & Pakistan
1948	Creation of Israel and 1st Arab-Israeli war
1948	Assassination of Mahatma Gandhi
1948	West Coast anti-miscegenation laws prohibiting interracial marriage repealed
1949	People's Republic of China proclaimed under Mao Zedong in Beijing; Nationalists led by Chiang Kai-shek withdraw to Taiwan as Republic of China
1950-1953	Korean War
1952	U.S. legislation grants Korean-Americans rights to U.S. citizenship
1952	McCarran-Walter Act grants the right to obtain U.S. citizenship to Japanese-Americans and Korean-Americans
1953	Iranian Premier Mussadegh ousted from power by C.I.A.
1953	Refugee Relief Act allows Chinese refugees to enter the U.S.
1954	End of Indochina War; independence of North and South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia
1956	California repeals racist Webb-Heney & Alien Land Law of 1913 & 1920
1957-1963	Indian-born Dalip Singh Saund, 1st Asian-American elected to U.S. House of Representatives
1959	China occupies and annexes Tibet
1959	Hawaii becomes 50th state of the Union
1960	Sirimavo Bandaranaike of Sri Lanka (Ceylon), world's 1st female prime minister
1965	President Lyndon B. Johnson signs landmark Immigration Act removing ethnic, religious & racial quotas as basis for admission to the U.S.
1966	Indira Gandhi becomes India's 1st female prime minister
1965-1973	U.S. military involvement in Vietnam War
1966-1976	Cultural Revolution in China
1967	3rd Arab-Israeli war between Israel, Egypt, Syria & Jordan Israel occupies West Bank & Gaza, annexes Jerusalem & Golan Heights U.S. Supreme Court prohibits states from forming bans on interracial marriage
1971	2 regions of Pakistan separate into Pakistan & Bangladesh
1975	Collapse of South Vietnam to Communist forces & withdrawal of U.S. forces
1975	1st wave of Southeast Asian refugees enter the U.S.

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1978-1988	Exodus of Vietnamese "boat people"
1979	U.S. establishes formal diplomatic relations with Communist China
1979	Iran's Pahlavi Dynasty overthrown; Islamic Republic established under Khomeini
1980	President Jimmy Carter signs Refugee Act allowing more refugees to enter U.S.
1986	Immigration Reform & Control Act increases emigration quota from Hong Kong
1987	Amerasian Homecoming Act settles Amerasians in the U.S.
1988	Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan, 1st female prime minister of a Muslim nation
1988	President Ronald Reagan signs American Civil Liberties Act, a formal apology & compensation to Japanese-Americans as redress for their internment
1989	Dalai Lama of Tibet awarded 1989 Nobel Peace Prize
1990	President George Bush signs Immigration Act, increasing immigration under "preference categories"
1991	President Bush approves H.J. Resolution 173 designating May as Asian Pacific American heritage months
1991	Disintegration of the Soviet Union into separate republics
1991-1996	Begum Khaleda Zia serves as 1st female prime minister of Bangladesh
1991	Aung San Suu Kyi of Myanmar (Burma) awarded 1991 Nobel Peace Prize
1993	Election of Tansu Çiller, 1st female prime minister of Turkey
1994	Election of Chandrika Kumaratunga as 1st female president of Sri Lanka
1994	Sirimavo Bandaranaike appointed as prime minister of Sri Lanka
1996	Bishop Carlos Filipe Ximenes Belo and Jose Ramos Horta of East Timor are awarded the Nobel Peace Prize
1997	Hong Kong is returned to China after 156 years of British colonial rule
1999	Macao, a Portuguese Territory since 1557, is due to be returned to China