

UNIT 8

Asian Americans

Unit Selections

34. **To Be Asian in America**, Angela Johnson Meadows
35. **Lands of Opportunity**, Gady A. Epstein and Stephanie Desmon
36. **Incarceration, Redress, Reconsiderations**, Roger Daniels
37. **Thirty Years Later: Reviewing the Vietnamese-American Experience**, Hien Duc Do
38. **Our Lady of LaVang Parish Turns 25**, Meghan Walton

Key Points to Consider

- Examine the origin and sources of misinformation about Asian Americans.
- Does public attention to the activities of Asian Americans associated with Islamic countries seem to be increasing?
- The public passions generated during World War II have subsided, and anti-Japanese sentiment is no longer heard. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why? Is this phenomenon related to current perceptions of Arab Americans? Can current detainments be analogized to the Japanese internment camps?

Student Web Site

www.mhcls.com/online

Internet References

Further information regarding these Web sites may be found in this book's preface or online.

Asian American Studies Center

www.aasc.ucla.edu/default.asp

Asian Americans for Equality

www.aafe.org

Asian-Nation

www.asian-nation.org/index.shtml



The Asian American context discussed in this unit provides perspectives on immigrants' adjustment and their reception in various regimes and cultures. Asian Americans are engaged in the ongoing issue of cultural formation, the recovery of tradition, and the incorporation of new ethnicities from Asian into mainstream cultural entertainment. The political and economic forces that frame relationships at the personal and cultural levels pose dilemmas.

The following collection of articles on Asian Americans invites us to reflect on the fact that the United States is related to Asia in ways that would seem utterly amazing to the worldview of the American founders. The expansion of the American regime across the continent, the importation of Asian workers, and the subsequent exclusion of Asians from the American polity are signs of the tarnished image and broken promise of refugees that America extended and then revoked. The Asian world is a composite of ethnicities and traditions ranging from the Indian subcontinent northeastward to China and Japan.

The growth of the Asian American population since the immigration reform of 1965, the emergence of Japan and other Asian nations as international fiscal players, and the image of Asian American intellectual and financial success have heightened interest in this ethnic group in the United States. The variety of religious traditions that Asian immigrants bring to America is another dimension of cultural and moral importance. In what respect are non-Judeo-Christian/Islamic faith traditions issues of consequence? The details of familial and cultural development within Asian American communities compose worlds of meaning that are a rich source of material from which both insights and troubling questions of personal and group identity emerge. Pivotal periods of conflict in the drama of the American experience provide an occasion for learning as much about ourselves as about one of the newest clusters of ethnicities—the Asian Americans.