

**Persecuted Virtues and Amalgamated Asians:**

The Chinese – Immigrant, Ethnic, Searching – in the U.S.

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## Introduction

At 2.7 million people, the Chinese and those of Chinese heritage were the largest single group of those calling themselves Asians on the 2000 U.S. Census, and since 1990, that Asian population has increased at a rate 4-5 times faster than the rest of the U.S. population.<sup>1</sup> Most Asians – 12 million in all, or about 4% of all U.S. residents – live in urban areas, nearly 6 million of them in only three states; more than 70% of the 1.2 million Asians living in the State of New York, for example, live in New York City. California is the state with by far the most Asians (4.2 million), and some cities in the San Francisco area (San Jose at 29%, Fremont at 39%, or Daly City at 54%) contain Asian populations 5 or 10 times the national average. Due to the size of its Chinese population as well as its history, California is the central focus of this essay, which contrasts the earliest era of large-scale Chinese immigration with the most recent, and rather mixed, era of questioned ethnicity.<sup>2</sup>

First-generation immigrants often compare their new lives in the U.S. to their old lives in the country they came from, and typically want to pass on at least some of their heritage, often language or customs, to their children. Yet if one wants to understand the *collective* response, then it is more useful to think in terms of what Chinese have confronted (economic prospects, immigration barriers, reception by the society, laws and politics, racial status) and what they brought (human capital embedded in family or community structures, education and skills, cultural identification mixed with pride in history).<sup>3</sup>

To this one should add the responses Chinese have made. The first arrivals in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century looked to fellow Chinese for support in an often hostile environment, and hunted for economic niches: both responses were typical of other immigrant groups to the U.S. in the era between Civil War and World War I. Far more unusually, early Chinese immigrants made many efforts to defend themselves, particularly through the courts, but also through their own organizations.<sup>4</sup> With the end of World War II, the legal and political environment became far more accommodating, with the result that Chinese-Americans have become torn between individual success, especially through the opportunities education has provided, and collective self-assertion through political mobilization since the late 1960s, as well as about how to respond to new waves of Asian immigrants. One could summarize the contrast presented here as a reversal: hostility outweighed opportunity in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century, but now opportunity outweighs hostility. It may be more interesting, however, to see it as a movement from a kind of defensive assertion of commonalty to an offensive soul-searching.<sup>5</sup>

*1848-1883: Much Discrimination and Few Opportunities on Gold Mountain*

At least 20,000 hopeful Chinese men, many from Toishan or neighboring districts in Guangdong province,<sup>6</sup> passed through San Francisco between 1848 and 1852 on their way to the Sierra Nevada hills to find gold.<sup>7</sup> Such miners not only kept to themselves, but were noted in early reports as resourceful, hard-working, clean, and not given to drunkenness – though they did gamble.<sup>8</sup> Chinese also worked in mining towns as laundrymen, cooks and servants. By the mid-1860s, as placer gold became harder to find, thousands of Chinese were hired for the difficult work of building the first transcontinental railroad over the mountains, and would be praised by the railroad baron Leland Stanford as "quiet, peaceable, patient, industrious and economical . . . (and) as efficient as white laborers."<sup>9</sup>

Mining and railroad work soon dried up as a major source of employment, leaving Chinese workers with the option either to stay in rural areas or move to the rapidly growing cities. In the 1870s and 1880s, nearly all the farm laborers in California were Chinese, and they played a key role in turning the state into a major fruit producer.<sup>10</sup> One particularly valuable contribution was the work Chinese laborers did to reclaim the swampy marshes at the confluence of the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers for agricultural use: "White men refused to work up to their knees in the water, slime and filth," one of their employers put it, as the job of drainage was so unpleasant.<sup>11</sup> Chinese would settle in various rural towns in this delta, the best-known of which now is Locke,<sup>12</sup> but they were found throughout the entire state. To deliver the mail addressed in Chinese, for example, agents of the Wells Fargo Company had the phonetic transliterations of the names of 286 California towns and cities already available to them by 1870.<sup>13</sup> Outside California, several thousand Chinese were also hired (1869-71) in the South to do the work in the cotton fields that the freed black slaves could no longer be forced to do.<sup>14</sup>

The other option was to go to San Francisco, where 12,022 Chinese already lived, according to the 1870 national census, and become part of a self-sufficient yet crowded "town" inside the larger city, as an 1886 Official Map of Chinatown shows.<sup>15</sup> There they might find work in businesses run by fellow Chinese, and make shoes or slippers, sew shirts, manufacture wool, or roll cigars. In several of these sectors, Chinese workers constituted 80-90% of the workforce at the time.<sup>16</sup> While some also found work as house servants, it would be the many Chinese-run laundries, along with the many Chinese restaurants, that became strongly associated with the Chinese in the American popular imagination.<sup>17</sup> In fact, one of the best-known late 19<sup>th</sup> century U.S. Supreme Court cases concerning race (*Yick Wo v.*

*Hopkins*, 1886) struck down a city ordinance designed to put the 240 Chinese laundries then in San Francisco out of business.<sup>18</sup> An estimated 5,000 Chinese businessmen and merchants dominated the street scene and also guided Chinatown's fortunes through the Chinese Six Companies, associations that initially acted as important providers of services to new arrivals and soon as the collective voice of the community.<sup>19</sup>

That voice was badly needed, for the history of this period is of repeated attempts by the California legislature and by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors to pass anti-Chinese laws and ordinances – as well as of various courts, often the California Supreme Court, just as frequently invalidating them or declaring them unconstitutional soon afterwards:<sup>20</sup>

### The Punitive Taxing of Chinese Competitors

In April 1850, the California legislature passed a law that required all non-native miners [the targets here were primarily Chileans, Mexicans, and Australians, with 'Chinean' miners mentioned only as one group of many who worked for them] to pay a monthly \$20 fee for the privilege of working California's mines. Penalties for failure to pay included fines, imprisonment, and expulsion from the mines.

*Though upheld that year in the California Supreme Court (in People v. Naglee), it proved impossible to enforce and was repealed by March 1851.*

In 1852, a new attempt was made by passing the Foreign Miners' License Tax - its interesting subtitle read "An Act to Provide for the Protection of Foreigners, and to define their liabilities and privileges" – that levied a \$3 monthly tax. In 1853, this was raised to \$4, and in October 1855, to \$6 per month, with a provision that every subsequent year it would increase by \$2 per month.

*Under pressure from mining districts,<sup>21</sup> the California legislature reduced it to \$4 per month again in 1856.<sup>22</sup> In 1861, two cases brought by Chinese (Ex parte Ah Pong; Ah Hee v. Crippen) had some local success in challenging the actual collecting of the tax. As it was, the importance of this tax as revenue declined as the mines played out and miners moved on to other work. Still, it would only be once the Civil Rights Act of 1870 was passed in Washington that this tax – under federal government pressure – finally stopped being collected.*

In April 1862, the California legislature passed the 'Chinese Police Tax.' Its formal title was: "An Act to Protect Free White Labor Against Competition with Chinese Coolie Labor,<sup>23</sup> and to Discourage the Immigration of the Chinese into the State of California." It imposed a monthly \$2.50 tax on all Chinese over 18 in the state other than those operating businesses, those working in the mines and already paying license tax, or those who produced or manufactured rice, sugar, tea or coffee. Employers were liable for their Chinese employees, and refusal to pay gave the tax collector the nearly immediate right to seize and sell the available personal property.

*Only a month after it was passed, and to recover the \$5 he had had to pay, the merchant Lin Sing sued San Francisco Tax Collector Washburn. This was in all likelihood a test case,<sup>24</sup> ultimately resolved for reasons having to do with*

*clearly establishing the federal government's power to regulate commerce, or in other words for constitutional reasons not directly related to the Chinese. But in its quickly reached decision (Lin Sing v. Washburn, 20 Cal. 534), the California Supreme Court did not hesitate to describe this tax as "a measure of special and extreme hostility to the Chinese."*

#### Penalizing Those Who Brought Chinese to the U.S.

In 1852, under the California Immigrant Bonding Law (Cal. Stat. 78), shipmasters had to post a \$500 bond for all alien passengers landing in California.

*Declared unconstitutional in 1872 in People v. SS Constitution (42 Cal 578).*

In 1855, shipmasters or owners were charged a Capitation Tax (Cal. Stat. 194) of \$50 for landing each passenger who was ineligible for citizenship (e.g., the Chinese).

*In People v. Downer (7 Cal. 169) in 1857, the California Supreme Court declared this tax unconstitutional on the grounds that the state was interfering in a right explicitly reserved to the national government, namely the power to regulate commerce (e.g., reasons much like in Lin Sing v. Washburn). This tax was only formally repealed in 1955.*

In 1858, the Chinese Exclusion Law (Cal. Stat. 295) forbade Chinese from landing in California except during weather-related emergencies.

*Declared unconstitutional in 1862; repealed in 1955.*

In 1870, the California legislature passed a law imposing a fine of from \$1,000 to \$5,000 for "bringing Chinese into the State without a certificate of good character."

*Declared unconstitutional by the California Supreme Court.*

#### San Francisco Board of Supervisors' Anti-Chinese Measures, 1870-76

In December of 1870, the Board of Supervisors voted to approve the "Sidewalk Ordinance" (called 'An Act Against Chinese Scavengers') making it a misdemeanor to carry baskets suspended from or attached to poles across the shoulders on city sidewalks, as Chinese peddlers (and some laundrymen) were in the habit of doing.<sup>25</sup>

*This was immediately challenged by Ah Wong, one of three Chinese vendors charged with this misdemeanor in Police Court in January, 1871. He argued the Board of Supervisors had not declared the carrying of baskets a nuisance, and the Police Court agreed. On appeal, the County Court overruled, stating that Supervisors had the right to remove nuisances and obstructions from the streets, and poles could be seen as obstructions. Not satisfied, Ah Wong's legal counsel then appealed to the California Supreme Court, and in a hearing held in San Francisco argued this ordinance was discriminatory. The Supreme*

*Court disagreed and upheld the County Court's decision. The vendors had the last laugh: instead of using the sidewalk, they now walked in the streets close to the curb, or if they used the sidewalk, then they carried a single basket slung over a shoulder rather than hanging from a pole...*

In 1870, under pressure from an 'Anti-Coolie Association' incensed at the squalid tenement houses in Chinatown,<sup>26</sup> the Board of Supervisors passed the "Cubic Air" Ordinance (more formally called the Lodging House Ordinance) imposing a fine of \$10 or imprisonment lasting 5 days if the fine was not paid (in theory, the fine could be far higher and imprisonment much longer) for "any person found sleeping in a room containing less than 500 cubic feet of space for each person." Passage seems to have appeased anti-Chinese sentiment for a while, and no arrests under this ordinance seem to have been made for several years.

But in a new push during May and June of 1873, 432 Chinese were arrested for violating the ordinance, and rather than pay the fine, many chose to serve time instead.<sup>27</sup> That not only completely overcrowded the jail, but it also prompted one newspaper journalist to sarcastically point out that the city itself was now violating its own ordinance since the Chinese were housed in cells containing only 20 cubic feet of air... In response to the refusal to pay the fine, the Supervisors then passed the "Queue Ordinance" mandating that every male imprisoned in the county jail was to have his hair "cut or clipped to an uniform length of one inch from the scalp," a ruling deliberately aimed at the Chinese, as the Supervisors knew quite well that for a Chinese man to lose his pigtail in this era was also to disgrace and humiliate him.<sup>28</sup>

*While Mayor Alvord thereupon vetoed the Queue Ordinance as violating not only the city charter but also the Civil Rights Act of 1870, he was undermined when the California legislature passed its own Cubic Air law in April 1876. That it triggered both renewed passage of the Queue Ordinance by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors and a new round of arrests of Chinese in San Francisco for violating what was now a state Cubic Air law. While various local and county legal challenges were soon mounted by Chinese claimants, the key decision vindicating Chinese protests would come in an 1879 case in U.S. Circuit Court (*Ho Ah Kow v. Matthew Nunan*, 12 Fed. Cas. 252). *Ho Ah Kow*, arrested for violating the state's Cubic Air Ordinance, had his queue cut off by jailer Matthew Nunan as soon as he was admitted to jail. He thereupon sued the jail-keeper and the city Supervisors for \$10,000, and in July, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Field completely vindicated *Ho Ah Kow's* claim, ruling that this ordinance exceeded the powers granted the Supervisors.<sup>29</sup> *Ho Ah Kow* settled for a few hundred dollars.*

#### Declarations of Chinese Inferiority – and Preventing Chinese from Becoming Citizens

In *People v. Hall* (4 Cal. 399), a 1854 court case and thus very early in the history of the Chinese in California, a white citizen had been convicted of murder based on the testimony given by Chinese witnesses. On appeal, this Chinese testimony was declared inadmissible, on the grounds, among others, that:

In using the words, "No Black, or Mulatto person, or Indian shall be allowed to give evidence for or against a White person," the Legislature, if any intention can be ascribed to it, adopted the most comprehensive terms to embrace every known class or shade of color, as the apparent design was to protect the White person from the influence of all testimony other than that of persons of the same caste. The use of these terms must, by every sound rule of construction, exclude every one who is not of white blood.

Allowing the Chinese to testify "would admit them to all the equal rights of citizenship, and we might soon see them at the polls, in the jury box, upon the bench, and in our legislative halls," and that was "an actual and present danger." This was explicitly reinforced by the California statutes that by 1863 read: "No . . . Chinese shall be permitted to give evidence in favor of, or against, any white man," and though the California Supreme Court questioned this in 1869 (*People v. George Washington*, 36 Cal. 658), in an 1870 case (*People v. Brady*, 40 Cal. 198) they reconfirmed it, arguing that Chinese might "impede rather than advance justice" because they were incapable of testifying intelligently, might be unreliable or produce false testimony, or have particular prejudices.

*Only once California's civil and penal codes were revised in 1872 was court testimony by Chinese finally permitted – 18 years after People v. Hall.*

Nationally, the first federal naturalization statute (1 Stat.103) had restricted the right to become an American to "any alien, being a free white person" already in 1790. With emancipation, the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in 1868 now granted citizenship to "all persons born or naturalized in the U.S.," and this was echoed by the statutes of 1875 that now defined naturalization as open to "aliens being free white persons . . . and to persons of African descent" (Sec. 2169)

*The Federal Circuit Court of San Francisco ruled in 1878 (In re Ah Yup, 1 F. Cas. 223) that Chinese were not eligible for naturalization. The claim was made that "Congress retained the word 'white' in the naturalization laws for the sole purpose of excluding the Chinese from [that] right."<sup>30</sup>*

The 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act (22 Stat. 58) specifically forbade any court in the country from granting citizenship to any Chinese person, and subsequent cases whose arguments were based on race explicitly found Chinese to be not white.<sup>31</sup> Justice Harlan, dissenting in the U.S. Supreme Court (*Plessy v. Ferguson* 163 U.S. 537) in 1896 wrote: "There is a race so different from our own that we do not permit those belonging to it to become citizens of the United States. . . I allude to the Chinese race."

*Only two years later, In U.S. v. Wong Kim Ark (1898), the Supreme Court stated that a person's birthright could not be taken away, with the result that though China-born immigrants could not become citizens, their America-born children were U.S. citizens. Only after repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1943 could foreign-born Chinese become naturalized American citizens.*

To all this formal discrimination came informal, often violently expressed, prejudice. In 1862, at least 88 Chinese were murdered in the state, and it was not uncommon in the early years to jump Chinese mining claims – driving out or killing those who protested. Chinese settlements in rural communities (as in Yreka, Chico, and Weaverville) were destroyed by fire during the 1870s, and Chinese were driven out of others, including Rocklin, Loomis, Penryn, and Grass Valley. Anti-Chinese hysteria peaked by the early 1880s, one compilation finding Chinese "harassed, attacked, or expelled in 34 towns in California alone."<sup>32</sup>

In San Francisco, the demagoguery of Denis Kearney, who blamed both capitalists and Chinese immigrants for the troubles of the American workingman, led to a rampage in 1877 that killed several Chinese and destroyed Chinese laundries – the rioters also attacked the steamship company that brought Chinese to America – and Kearney's Workingman's Party was subsequently able to push through a revision of the California Constitution in 1879 that had many anti-Chinese provisions, including the right of cities to segregate Chinese or expel them outside the city limits. The virulence, violence, and depth of anti-Chinese sentiment in the West U.S. had its effects. Despite the 1868 Burlingame Treaty between the U.S. and China, Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882 halting further immigration of Chinese workers, and it would remain in force for the next 61 years.<sup>33</sup>

### Taking Stock

One can see this early history as shaped by a population of industrious young men enticed to a new frontier by the prospect of bettering their lot (and sending earnings home), only to find themselves rebuffed as unwelcome economic competitors who worked for less money yet were more efficient, and who stayed among themselves. The undisguised hostility they individually faced was underscored by the open contempt shown toward the Chinese as a whole, sometimes sanctioned even by opinions handed down from the California Supreme Court. Chief Justice Hugh Murray in 1854, for example, characterized the Chinese as

a distinct people, living in our community, recognizing no laws of this State except through necessity, bringing with them their prejudices and national feuds, in which they indulge in open violation of law; whose mendacity is proverbial; a race of people whom nature has marked as inferior, and who are incapable of progress or intellectual development beyond a certain point, as their history has shown; differing in language, opinions, color, and physical conformation; between whom and ourselves nature has placed an impassable difference (from *People v. Hall*, 4 Cal. 399).

Charles McClain, writing in 1994, calls this “some of the most offensive racial rhetoric to be found in the annals of California law.”<sup>34</sup>

On the other hand, one can examine the cases of Lin Sing, Ah Wong, Ho Ah Kow, or others, and show that the courts often played their proper roles by providing a forum in which to seek relief. Even when not all of the most blatantly discriminatory ordinances or laws could be annulled, the legal system served as an important check on the excesses of local and state government. This was apparently even true in rural areas far from San Francisco: dozens, if not hundreds, of cases were filed by Chinese throughout the state during this early era, at least some of which were successful in halting mistreatment, as the outcomes were decided in favor of the Chinese claimants, though far more research into county records would be needed to complete this picture.<sup>35</sup> The 1867 strike against Charles Crocker, a builder of the transcontinental railroad, by his Chinese workers demanding more pay, shorter shifts in the tunnels, and a 10-hour workday rather than from dawn to dusk has also become better known – as has its outcome: Crocker cut off the food delivery, so the strike collapsed after a week. The Chinese hired in the South also proved to be “shrewd and litigious negotiators” over their labor contracts, and refused to be treated like black slaves.<sup>36</sup> A history of the political, economic, and legal role the Chinese Six Companies played in this era remains to be written, but they were clearly willing and ready to act both publicly and behind the scenes to defend Chinese interests.<sup>37</sup> This newer, revised view of the early history, in short, argues that far from being passive recipients of ill-treatment, the Chinese in California mounted many forceful acts of resistance.

One way to nicely summarize, or characterize, this period is to briefly trace the education of Chinese children in San Francisco, for in 1859, the city ruled they were not permitted in the public schools. Instead, public funds were made available to the private Occidental School (founded in 1853 in the Presbyterian Chinese Mission), which thereafter was known as the Chinese School. In 1863, the California legislature passed a law like San Francisco's that excluded Chinese children from public schools. The legislature repealed this law by 1880, deciding that only "children of filthy and vicious habits" or those suffering from contagious diseases could still be excluded.<sup>38</sup>

*Knowing this, the Chinese couple Joseph and Mary Tape<sup>39</sup> tried to enroll their 8-year old daughter Mamie in the Spring Valley Primary School in 1884, but she was denied entrance. The parents then took the principal and the San Francisco Board of Education to court and won: "to deny a child born of Chinese parents in this State entrance to the public schools" would violate state law and the U.S. Constitution (Tape v. Hurley, 66 Cal. 473). Armed with this ruling, Mamie's parents tried again to have her be admitted to Spring Valley Primary, only to see her denied a second time, the school now claiming she lacked a vaccination certificate<sup>40</sup> and that the classes were full. Having lost, the San Francisco School Board appealed, but before the California Supreme Court could act, the California legislature passed a bill "to*

*establish separate schools for children of Mongolian or Chinese descent" that such children had to attend. Mamie Tape and her brother had no choice but to go the Chinese School.*

In order that Korean and Japanese students could be assigned too, in 1906 the Chinese School was renamed the Oriental School, and in 1924 it was renamed – it must be said, with little subtlety – in honor of Commodore Stockton.<sup>41</sup> In the wake of nativist efforts at the time (perhaps also in light of the 1924 Immigration Law passed by the U.S. Congress), students were thereafter forbidden to speak Chinese in school or on the playground. In 1998, Commodore Stockton Elementary School was renamed Gordon J. Lau Elementary School – to honor a well-known advocate for the Chinese community.

### *1960s-1990s: Many Opportunities – and Periodic Backsliding*

Maintaining Manchu dress and hair queues set the Chinese well apart visually in 19<sup>th</sup> century California, making it easy to assume their identification remained with China rather than with the U.S. Given the many blatantly anti-Chinese ordinances as well as the explicit prohibition from becoming American citizens, it seems hardly surprising that certain cultural habits were maintained, or that safety was sought among compatriots, or that enclaves like San Francisco's Chinatown were established. Identifying with the U.S. might come with longer residence (or the kind of socialization that leads a youth born as Chew Diep in China to change into Joseph Tape in California), but that sort of thing is more typically part of the experience of the second generation of immigrants.

That second generation was long missing, however, as this remained a bachelor society for decades. Even in 1900, only 5% of the Chinese in the U.S. were female, and it would take until 1950 for the sex ratio to finally fall below two Chinese men for every Chinese woman in the country.<sup>42</sup> Only after World War II, the 1945 War Brides Act playing its part, did the Chinese population begin to expand, with a much larger, second generation of American-born Chinese (called ABCs) one part of the national baby boom.

The identification of ABCs, as they came of age during the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s, was complicated by race. Though a few during the 19<sup>th</sup> century knew enough to bestow the honorific label 'Celestials' on the Chinese, it was far more common to look down upon these 'Mongolians' (used interchangeably with 'Chinese') as belonging to an inferior race, as already noted.<sup>43</sup> The menial work Chinese found, from laying railroad track to doing laundry work, meant they were compared with, stereotyped, and sometimes even classified, as blacks.<sup>44</sup> Yet on the occasions when they were directly compared to white workers, as the

railroad builders Stanford and Crocker both did, the Chinese were found to be just as good if not better, and whites resented it. As immigrant (and laundryman) Lee Chew very astutely put it in 1903, "the Chinese were persecuted not for their vices, but for their virtues."<sup>45</sup>

The ambiguous race status of the Chinese was particularly stark in the racially segregated South during the 1950s. Adults would serve and be friendly to black customers in their stores, for example, yet see their children off to white-only schools. For ABCs growing up in this environment, identity was confusing. "As a kid," one later reflected,

I remember going to the theatre and not really knowing where to sit. Blacks were segregated then. Colored people had to sit upstairs, and white people sat downstairs. I didn't know where I was supposed to sit, so I sat in the white section, and nobody said anything.<sup>46</sup>

The awareness of race and the public discussion of the treatment of blacks in the South resonated nationally during the 1960s, and led to strikes at San Francisco State University and at the University of California at Berkeley in 1968/69 by "students of color" – as they began to call themselves – who demanded educational programs that would focus on the neglected history of minorities.<sup>47</sup> The term 'Asian American' first began to be used as a self-designation in this context, as a self-conscious alternative to the now despised, European, colonialist term 'Oriental,'<sup>48</sup> and calls for Black Power were echoed by calls for Yellow Power.<sup>49</sup> The beginnings of Asian American Studies as a field during this time took place with "an orientation of protest" about historical misrepresentations, racial oppression, economic injustices, and an overall neglect of Asians in the U.S.<sup>50</sup>

One major analytic complication to this picture, however, has been the extent to which upward socioeconomic mobility and the resulting exodus from the cities into the suburbs – colloquially called "moving up and moving out" – has taken place since the late 1960s, for it makes the Chinese as a distinct group less visible. As it is, matters are internally complicated by a Chinese population today split both by location and date of arrival:

recent immigrants tend to settle on arrival in predominantly immigrant neighborhoods, in both older Chinatowns and new ethnic enclaves such as Monterey Park in Los Angeles . . . (while) the descendents of the earlier Chinese immigration now frequent Chinatowns on weekends mainly to shop for groceries and to dine out<sup>51</sup>

precisely because they live elsewhere and no longer "belong" to, or in, Chinatown.<sup>52</sup>

The link between class and immigrant residential mobility in the U.S. has been well-known ever since the sociological investigations of Chicago (associated with Robert Park) began in the 1920s. Yet the ethnographic and methodological focus of those studies obscured racial aspects, particularly those connected to 'Orientals.'<sup>53</sup> In that era, 'race' characteristics

were ascribed to many who today would be identified as belonging to nationality or ethnic groups. But it was also true that as the Irish or the Jews or the Italians "climbed the socio-economic ladder and mixed residentially with other whites, their perceived distinctiveness from the majority faded" under a paradigm of whiteness: some groups could successfully assimilate in the U.S. by being redefined "as unambiguously white."<sup>54</sup> That remains impossible for the black population, but whether it is possible for Asians remains an open question. As an Asian American, "whether you dance an exotic dance or try to waltz like everyone else, you are still exotic," Henry Yu dispiritedly recently concluded.<sup>55</sup>

Still, class in the American context seems to partly cancel out the negative effects of race, at least in the context of middle-class whites interacting with middle-class blacks, since those with comparable experiences (of home-ownership, in education, employment, etc.) can look to what unites rather than divides them.<sup>56</sup> Whether this is also true for the Chinese population in the U.S. is far more difficult to answer, as it partly depends on which Chinese one means. Two distinct streams of immigrants arrived in the 1980s and 1990s, for example, one largely of unskilled or semiskilled labor (arriving due to the priority given to family reunification in the immigration laws), the other of educated, middle-class professionals (arriving due to the priority given to those with particular skills needed in the U.S.).<sup>57</sup> Though not entirely accurate, one can think of it as the difference between those who live in San Francisco's Chinatown today and work in its garment industry, and those who live in suburban communities nearer to San Jose and work in Silicon Valley computer companies. In Monterey Park, much further south, where "the Chinese show both high education and income and a high level of poverty," both streams clearly moved to the same place.<sup>58</sup>

On the other hand, the category "Chinese" or "Chinese-Americans" mixes together all classes and all immigrants of Chinese heritage, whether they arrived in 1995, 1945, or are descendants of the 19<sup>th</sup> century population. To the wider society in the U.S., that category seems to have three meanings: Chinese as non-whites, Chinese as part of a collective minority, and Chinese as nationality group. As non-whites, they are compared to whites, though this is often put more discretely as a comparison with national averages.<sup>59</sup> As part of the disparate assembly labeled Asian or Asian American (or nowadays, Asian Pacific American), they are compared to similar groupings of minorities such as Hispanics/Latinos or blacks. As a nationality, the Chinese are compared to other immigrants from Asian nations such as the Japanese, Koreans, or Asian Indians.

The first two of these meanings interest U.S. society the most, since non-white Asian Americans leave whites (and everyone else) far behind them when it comes to the kinds of success markers Americans care about – educational level, income, and high status jobs:

Among the five major racial/ethnic groups in the U.S., Asian Americans have the highest college degree attainment rate, rates of having an advanced degree (professional or Ph.D.), median family income, being in the labor force, rate of working in a 'high skill' occupation (executive, professional, technical, or upper management), and . . . median occupational prestige.<sup>60</sup>

Specific comparisons in 2002 showed median household incomes \$10,000 higher among Asian Americans than the national average, "the highest proportion of college graduates of any race or ethnic group in the country" (47% vs. 27% of those 25 and over with a B.A. or higher degree), and at 105,300 doctors, a proportion *four* times higher than the percent of Asians in the population (Asians are 15% of all doctors but only 4% of the population).<sup>61</sup>

That has meant the label of "model minority" has become affixed to Asian Americans, including the Chinese, since 1966.<sup>62</sup> Asians worked hard and were successful, didn't complain and maintained patriarchal family discipline at home, and they understood the value of forcing their children to excel in American school (and forced some of them to learn cultural virtues in Chinese School afterwards, making for very long, double schooldays...). They gave off the image, as Jade Snow Wong pointedly entitled one reminiscence of growing up in San Francisco, of being "Puritans from the Orient."<sup>63</sup>

The success of this model minority was contrasted, sometimes painfully plainly, to the failures of the black minority.<sup>64</sup> Putting it in Foucault's terms, Chinese workers have long served to discipline blacks, starting in the late 1860s when they were hired as farm workers in the South not just because they were judged "more obedient and industrious than the Negro . . . and more cleanly in their habits and persons," but also because they would "punish the Negro for having abandoned control of his master, and . . . regulate the conditions of his employment and the scale of wages to be paid him,"<sup>65</sup> as the Governor of Arkansas at that time put it. Yet today the model minority are is favorably, even humorously, compared to a different, and also long-despised, minority:

Over the last few years, Asian Americans have come to be known as the New Jews. The label is an honorific. It is meant to accentuate the many parallels between these two groups of immigrants-made-good: Jews started out as outsiders; Asians did too. Jews dedicated themselves to schooling; Asians too. Jews climbed faster than any other minority in their time; Asians too. Jews enjoy Chinese food; Asians – well, you get the picture. Somewhere in that half-lit region between stereotype and sociology, the notion has taken hold that Asian Americans are

"out-Jewing the Jews."<sup>66</sup>

But it is the contrasts between the nationality groups that are amalgamated under the label Asian or Asian American that stand out to those so labeled. The model minority image, many are quick to point out, misleads. As Le aptly puts it,

just because many Asian Americans have "made it," does not mean that *all* Asian Americans have made it . . . For every Chinese American or South Asian who has a college degree, the same number are still struggling to adapt to their lives in the U.S.

Those of Southeast Asia heritage (Cambodians, Khmer, Laotians, and to an only somewhat lesser extent, the Vietnamese) have actually been quite *unsuccessful* thus far, and that in nearly every socio-economic measure one looks at, from educational attainment to occupational prestige. They do poorly not just relative to other Asian groups, but even do poorly, ironically enough, relative to blacks.

At the other end of the success scale, particularly when one compares the six largest Asian groups to one another, then it is those of Indian background who are doing the best and not the Chinese.<sup>67</sup> Indeed, the comparison emphasizes how split the Chinese population is, with substantial levels of poor English competence, many who lack even a High School degree, and a higher than average poverty rate at the low, unsuccessful end of the spectrum, combined with the highest percentage of those holding an advanced degree, a very high percentage (second only to those from India) in high skill occupations, and the highest (matching those from India) occupational prestige scores.

There may also be a structural explanation for high levels of attained education. It is a piece of current American folk wisdom that jobs for which a High School diploma was good enough in the 1950s now require at least a B.A., and that a college education is the road to middle-class employment, if not lifestyle. Higher education (even, as is often the case, if it is broken off and does not culminate in a degree) is now seen as necessary job qualification, and the large number of U.S. institutions to choose from has made access easy. Sociological research, however, shows that *all* minorities in the U.S. have lower "returns on education" than whites, which may lead to a felt need, conscious or unconscious, to compensate through more heavily emphasizing educational attainment.<sup>68</sup>

One of the prices of success seems to be hostility and envy, with Asian Americans the targets. Data on crimes manifesting "evidence of prejudice based upon race, ethnicity, religion, or sexual orientation" has only been officially collected since 1990, most such crimes involve threats, harassment, assault or battery, and nearly 2 out of 3 targets are blacks.<sup>69</sup> In

the period from 1995-2001, however, an annual average of around 475 such crimes of prejudice have been directed against Asians, 175 per year in California alone.<sup>70</sup>

By far the most important "hate crime" directed against Chinese was the 1982 murder of Vincent Chin.<sup>71</sup> Chin, a 27-year old American-born Chinese draftsman living in Detroit, was out for his bachelor party with friends at a striptease bar, a week before his wedding. There he scuffled with Ronald Ebens and his stepson Michael Nitz, two laid-off white auto workers upset by Chin's presence: one reportedly said "it's because of [people] like you that we're out of work."<sup>72</sup> After both groups were thrown out of the bar, Ebens and Nitz resolved to "get the Chinese," and after driving around in search of him, grabbed Chin and swung a baseball bat hard into his head several times. Chin died of his injuries four days later. That was horrible enough, but the legal aftermath was almost worse. Ebens and Nitz admitted, in court, that they had beaten Chin to death and that they were guilty, but they were given only three years probation – the judge saying at the time "these aren't the kind of men you send to jail" – and fined \$3,780. A retrial held five years later, charging the two men for committing a racially motivated crime and violating Chin's civil rights, came to a "not guilty" verdict. A civil suit filed afterwards tried to force Ebens and Nitz to pay a large amount in monetary damages, but an unremorseful Ebens soon stopped paying.

This case galvanized the Asian American community into action, both legal and political, and has led Asian Americans to be far more willing to speak out to protest their treatment or call attention to hate crimes than in the past.<sup>73</sup> One immediate political effect was to create an interest group called the American Citizens for Justice (bringing together Japanese, Filipino, Korean and Chinese groups in "the first explicitly Asian American grassroots community advocacy effort with a national scope," according to one of its founders), but the longer-term effect would be to create groups active in legal issues that were of specific concern to Asians, such as the Asian Law Caucus, the National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium (NAPALC), or the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF).<sup>74</sup> While it may be only a coincidence, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of Asian lawyers since 1982 as well – the number obtaining law degrees increased by 400% from 1982 to 2002 – to the point where the percentage of Asians in the category "professionals in legal services" is now higher than that of blacks.<sup>75</sup> According to the American Bar Association, in 2000 there were nearly 20,000 lawyers of Asian background in the U.S. and over 900 judges.<sup>76</sup> "The Chinese American community," as Chang aptly summarized, "had come to expect more from the United States" than what either Vincent Chin suffered or his attackers received, and was collectively willing to reenergize older

organizations (such as Chinese American Citizens Alliance), create new umbrella legal organizations (such as NAPALC or AALDEF), or draft prominent Chinese Americans to serve on the Committee of 100 in 1989.

This latter group commissioned a survey of American attitudes about Chinese Americans in 2001. One of the first results was to be able to show that most Americans did not distinguish between Chinese and Asian Americans, or in other words, held virtually the same stereotypes about both groups.<sup>77</sup> There were some very positive valuations: Chinese were seen as having strong family values (91%), were honest businesspeople (77%), and placed a high value on education (67%), characterizations that even those who disliked them agreed with. Yet about 25% of those asked held strongly negative attitudes, reflected among other things in disliking the thought of voting for an Asian American for President, or disapproving of inter-marriage with an Asian.<sup>78</sup>

Still, that also means 75% of Americans do not object (a rather major change from 19<sup>th</sup> century attitudes), and recent marital behavior seems to reflect it: 1 in 5 Asian Americans today has a non-Asian spouse, and among baby boomer Chinese, around 50% marry non-Chinese.<sup>79</sup> The resentment of success noted earlier can be seen in the fact that about a third of the respondents thought Chinese "always like to be at the head of things" or that they "have too much influence in US high technology." About a third also thought the Chinese were more loyal to China than to the U.S. – unconsciously echoing, though surely in far smaller numbers, sentiments from 150 years ago – and close to a majority (46%) thought it was a problem that the Chinese were passing secret information to the Chinese government. This last may well have reflected the date of the survey, since the accusations against the Chinese physicist Wen Ho Lee were first aired in 1999 and continued through much of 2000.

## **Conclusions**

### Two Strands

Wen Ho Lee epitomizes one strand of the Chinese experience in the U.S., namely that of the educated and successful professional. Born in Taiwan in 1939, he came to the U.S. for his university education in 1965, received his Ph.D. and American citizenship by naturalization, and was regarded highly enough to be entrusted with nuclear secrets at Los Alamos for 20 years. As has been suggested in various ways, displays of virtue by Chinese can have the effect of drawing persecution in its wake, though the collective persecution of

the 19<sup>th</sup> century variety seems to have given way to hounding individuals instead – and a case like Wen Ho Lee's has the effect of tainting other, similar Chinese professionals.

The Chin family epitomizes the experiences at the other end of the class spectrum. David Chin worked in laundries in Detroit until his death in 1981, having arrived as a 17-year old from China in 1922. Service in the U.S. Army during World War II earned him the right to citizenship, and courtesy of the War Brides Act, the possibility to return to China to find a wife, Lily, as well. Lily left China with David in 1948, over the objection of her father, since what he had heard from his father, who had worked building the U.S. transcontinental railroad in the 1860s, made him fear for her treatment at the hands of the Americans. Lily would work in Detroit laundries and restaurants, and together with David, return to China in 1961 to adopt a 6-year old (from the traditional area of emigration to the U.S., Guangdong Province) who would grow up as Vincent. Though not exactly an ABC, Vincent was close enough to fit the image of the second generation, who through the education the sacrifices of his parents made possible, could reach for the American Dream. The end of Vincent's dreams was atypically cruel, and Lily Chin, who lost her husband and son in quick succession, and then her faith in American justice when Ebens was acquitted in the civil rights trial in 1987, returned to her birthplace in China, and died in 2002.

### Virtue and its Rewards

One could argue that Chinese have simply misunderstood what Americans mean by work because they brought with them a complex of understandings that were simply too different. But the opposite argument is more convincing: Chinese demonstrated over and over again in the 19<sup>th</sup> century that they understood very well how to work hard at physical tasks, or to successfully undertake unpleasant or socially shunned work, and the many Asian students attending the best American universities today are evidence that the current generation understands very well how to work hard at mental tasks too.

The difficulty has lain in the unrealized and implied promise that hard work will be rewarded in the terms of the American Dream. As President Clinton put it in 1993, the Dream is that "if you work hard and play by the rules you should be given a chance to go as far as your abilities will take you." The trouble in the earlier era was that both formal and informal rules were anti-Chinese, and even hard work might not save you from being driven off your gold claim, burned out of your laundry, or driven out of town – and if you tried to protest in court, being denied the justice you thought was yours. Yet ability could take you far once you had the chance, and the current generation of Asian American doctors, engineers, artists,

lawyers, and entrepreneurs indicates just how far. Though circumstances have vastly improved, some Americans continue to have difficulties with the presence of Asian Americans, difficulties in deciding about the racial status of Asians (though intermarriage may render this moot, particularly in states like California), and in particular, difficulty accepting that some Asian American abilities may simply surpass those of whites.

That threatened loss of status, analogous to the threatened loss of work to Chinese competitors a century earlier, is tied to a complex of meanings that link success to virtue. Jennifer Hochschild has convincingly argued that in the American imagination, everyone can pursue their dreams regardless of race, class, religion, or gender; that there is a reasonable anticipation of success as measured by an improved living standard; and that the rewards will accrue to talent and accomplishment rather than need, effort, or simple existence.<sup>80</sup> These are articles of faith and not necessarily empirically realized by any particular social group, one should add, but so is the belief that success is equated with virtue. To explain this, one would need to digress into American religious history, the liberal market system, and the strong influence of the idea that success is entirely due to individual effort. Even without doing so, the implication is very clear: success among the Chinese forces whites to think of Chinese as no less virtuous than whites imagine themselves to be, which requires rejecting the stereotypes of Chinese inferiority, and perhaps worse, implies whites are sinning by failing...

It then becomes easier to understand, though not to defend, how the hard work, obvious importance given to family values, and community support among the early Chinese immigrants led to persecution. There was even a perverse shadow aspect to persecuting virtue, inasmuch as early accounts of visiting San Francisco's Chinatown almost praised vice for its colorful, titillating, mysterious aspects.<sup>81</sup>

Much of this virtue/vice contrast has lessened, and as Asian Americans have assimilated and accommodated to American practices, their virtue is praised, though with some discomfort about the implication that whites can't keep up with this model minority. Virtue can still be periodically persecuted, sometimes in response to international contexts (as both Vincent Chin and Wen Ho Lee exemplify). Penalizing vice also takes on less exotic forms, inasmuch as it focuses on more economically-driven problems such as the continued existence of sweatshops in the garment industry in various Chinatowns, or the efforts illegal Chinese immigrants make to get into the U.S..

## Amalgamations

Marcus Hansen's studies of Scandinavian immigrants to the Upper Midwest led him to conclude that 'what the son of the immigrant wants to forget, the grandson wants to remember,'<sup>82</sup> and for certain nationality groups, that can be a useful way to think about the differences between a generation with memories of elsewhere, their children who are fully American, and their children's children who want to research their ethnic heritage. That pattern is one part of the Chinese experience in the U.S., except that the long prohibition on immigration has led not just to a population fragmented by class, language, geographic origin, and place of residence, but also by very different generational experiences. It is not only a matter of gaining the new in the process of losing the old, which is the standard immigrant experience, but also a process of reinventing or defining what the collectivity is.

Doing so is made much more difficult by a wider American culture that insists on lumping all Asians together into a single category. Of course, events in the 1980s and 1990s – including anti-Korean violence during the 1992 Los Angeles riots and the Vincent Chin murder a decade earlier – also convinced many of Asian heritage that despite all their differences, they needed to present a common front if they wanted any political, economic, or legal leverage, let alone protection. That has led to a kind of pan-Asian American space or public sphere and, in a manner probably quite different than they imagined, has brought about some of what 'students of color' demanded in 1968/69. If the Asian population continues to increase as rapidly as it has in the last 20 years, however, this collective response to the wider culture's inability to see among Asians anything other than a collective group, may shift, with individual nationality groups deciding to assert their own agendas. As it is, there is already a vast gulf that yawns between, say, the Vietnamese and the Asian Indian experiences in America, and numerous single-nationality organizations already exist.

At the same time, far more personal and private amalgamations take place, not just in formal choices about citizenship or place of residence, but also in informal choices about what language to speak at home, what to emphasize or de-emphasize of one's heritage, including over marriage choices, or in short, whether one chooses to emphasize the left or the right side of the label Chinese-American more. Or to go farther, as Eric Liu does, and muse with wry American humor that:<sup>83</sup>

I find myself now the bearer of a strange new status: white, by acclamation. . . . Times have changed, and I suppose you could call it progress that a Chinaman, too, may now aspire to whiteness. But precisely because the times have changed, that aspiration – and the *imputation* of the aspiration – now seems astonishingly

outmoded. . . . To be an accused banana [yellow outside, white inside] is to stand at the ill-fated intersection of class and race. And because class is the only thing Americans have more trouble talking about than race, a minority's climb up the social ladder is often willfully misnamed and wrongly portrayed. There is usually, in the portrayal, a strong whiff of betrayal: the assimilationist is a traitor to his kind, to his class, to his own family...

My own assimilation began long before I was born. It began with my parents, who came here with an appetite for Western ways already whetted by films and books and music. . . . My parents, who traded Chinese formality for the more laissez-faire stance of this country. Who made their way by hard work and quiet adaptation. . . . Who, unlike your "typical" Chinese parents, were not pushy, status-obsessed, rigid, disciplined, or prepared. Who were haphazard about passing down ancestral traditions and "lessons" to their children. Who did pass down, however, the sense that their children were entitled to mix and match, as they saw fit, whatever aspects of whatever cultures they encountered.

So to return to the beginning, what Chinese in the U.S. confront is different than a century ago: the immigration barriers are lower, and the prospects of reaching middle class status are better, even though newly immigrated parents may still have to scrimp and save in order to ensure their sons – and daughters – a brighter future. There are still issues about racial status and how American society receives Asians, but law and politics function better (or at least there are far more Asian lawyers one can turn to for help) to protect one's rights. Then again, these are also the rights of citizens, and they are as well, or as poorly, protected as those of other citizens labelled as belonging to a minority group in the American mix.

The human capital parents bring from abroad can be significant, but here class intrudes, since the higher that capital is, the more readily it can be employed in a new setting, and the more readily it can be transmitted to the children. Those at the lower end have less to offer in such terms, and are thus more dependent on what their children can accumulate by way of education and skills through their own efforts, though there may be more long-term benefits to the traditions of rigidity and discipline than Liu seems to think.

The tricky part remains identification. In the last few decades, Chinese-Americans have become very articulate, both personally and collectively, in questioning what the place of Asians now is and what it ought to be in the future. The entire first section, in fact, this "working up of history" as Germans call it, would not be as comprehensive or detailed, were

it not for the rise of interest in the history of the Chinese in the U.S. that the last several decades have brought.

The current tone, with a few exceptions, is not strident but reflective. Helen Zia's book, filled with the stories of a deeply engaged journalist, is calmly subtitled "The Emergence of an American People." Eric Liu's reflections are quietly subtitled "Notes of a Native Speaker." Iris Chang's excellent overview is just called "A Narrative History." The voice is collective, often encompassing not just the Chinese experience but the experiences of others in groups similarly situated. But in keeping with American virtues and individualism, these are specific voices telling stories about overall, collective problems and collective successes, leaving the message behind that each person of Chinese heritage in the U.S. has to work out for themselves how to come to terms with their identity.

## Notes

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Author's Note: all website URLs listed below were accessed on April 27, 2005, and were accurate as of that date. This material was originally prepared for a conference on Asian self-assertion and identity that was held, under the auspices of the Universität Erlangen and Fudan University, in Shanghai during December, 2004. Prof. Michael Lackner not only kindly extended an invitation, but followed through by making all the arrangements; I am indebted to him for having opened a window on China and allowed me to participate.

<sup>1</sup> 'Asian' is defined as those with "origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent," thus includes not only Pakistanis or Malaysians but also those who self-identify as Hmong or Okinawan. By size and in descending order, the largest groups after the Chinese are the Filipinos (also >2 million), then Asian Indians, Japanese, Koreans, and Vietnamese (each >1 million). These six nationalities comprise 87% of all Asians living in the U.S. See Jessica Barnes and Claudette Bennett. 2002. The Asian Population: 2000. Washington: Census Bureau <http://www.census.gov/prod/2002pubs/c2kbr01-16.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> The contrast here is between the very different character of a new immigrant group practicing the politics of defensive community, and the more individualized, if assertive, recent efforts to define a political (or legal) space among a far more diverse Chinese population, in a societal context largely unwilling to distinguish the Chinese from other groups of Asian heritage. Few assertions (*pace* a few key court cases) came in between these eras, a direct consequence of the Chinese Exclusion Act (1882-1943) which kept the community small. The Chinese population in the U.S. remained under 200,000 from 1860-1960, even under 90,000 from 1900 to 1940; see Betty Lee Sung. 1967. Mountain of Gold (New York: Macmillan), p. 112.

<sup>3</sup> From a distinction in Carol Schmid. 2001. "Educational Achievement, Language-Minority Students, and the New Second Generation," Sociology of Education V. 74, pp. 71-87. For a companion piece, see Min Zhou. 1997. "Growing Up American: The Challenge Confronting Immigrant Children and Children of Immigrants," Annual Review of Sociology 23, pp. 63-95.

<sup>4</sup> Chinese immigrants also took advantage of situations. As the heavy 1906 earthquake destroyed birth and citizenship records, many Chinese afterwards claimed to the authorities they had been born in San Francisco. If believed, they could then return home and claim citizenship for their children born in China. A market in fictive kin developed, since the relevant paperwork could be sold to young, prospective – but unrelated – immigrants, creating what became known as the "paper sons" phenomenon. U.S. immigration authorities could not help but notice that the ratio of Chinese sons to daughters reported to be born during visits to the motherland was something like four hundred to one. ...One federal judge noted that 'if the stories told in the courts [are] true, every Chinese woman who was in the U.S. 25 years ago must have had at least 500 children.'

The response was to detain Chinese immigrants at Angel Island (San Francisco's equivalent to New York's Ellis Island) and subject them to long interrogations in an attempt to catch them out in contradictions or lies. "Paper sons" were thus drilled, intensively, on the right answers to give to the authorities. See Iris Chang. 2003. The Chinese in America: A Narrative History (New York: Penguin), p. 146-7.

<sup>5</sup> The dual meaning of 'offensive' is intended. Cultural barriers to assertiveness do exist, and at several levels. To mobilize over "ethnic identity" (as during the 1970s and 1980s) was no less offensive to some of the members of older generations than have been some of the more recent – and seemingly self-indulgent as well as highly personal – accounts of efforts to define what it means to be Chinese in America today.

<sup>6</sup> Sung, Mountain of Gold, pp. 11-17. At least in principle, it was forbidden to emigrate from China until 1860. The "at least" approximation is because the only source for this figure comes from the San Francisco Customs House; the Immigration Commission and the Bureau of Immigration only began to collect figures on Chinese immigration as of 1854. According to these latter sources, a little under 300,000 Chinese arrived in California between 1854 and 1882, with peak years (with an average of 15,000 arriving annually) occurring between 1873 and 1876. See Elmer Sandmeyer. 1991 [orig. 1939] The Anti-Chinese Movement in California (Urbana: University of Illinois Press), p. 16. Because many Chinese moved on from San Francisco, and many returned as well to China, a more accurate picture may come from the national censuses. In 1870, 78% of the 63,199 Chinese in the U.S. were in California (19%, or 12,022 of them, in San Francisco); in 1880, these figures were 71% and 20% of the 105,465 Chinese in the country, respectively. See Sandmeyer, Anti-Chinese, pp. 17, 19.

<sup>7</sup> Some Chinese had worked in the Hawaiian sugar industry already in the 1830s (the first U.S.-China treaty was signed in 1835), but the Gold Rush marked the first large-scale migration: calling California *Gum Shan*, or Gold Mountain, dates from this era. Chinese comprised only about 25% of California's (but 60% of Oregon and Idaho's) miners by 1870, and mined salt, borate, coal and quicksilver in various locations in the Western U.S. as well as gold. See Shih-Shan Henry Tsai. 1986. The Chinese Experience in America (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), and "A History of Chinese Americans in California" in Five Views: An Ethnic Historic Site Survey for California. 1988 (California Department of Parks and Recreation, Office of Historic Preservation, available at [www.cr.nps.gov/history/online\\_books/5views/5views3d.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/5views/5views3d.htm)).

<sup>8</sup> Chang, Chinese in America, p. 39-41.

<sup>9</sup> "Central Pacific Railroad Statement made to the President of the United States, and Secretary of the Interior, on the Progress of the Work" of Oct. 10, 1865 (Sacramento: H.S. Crocker & Co). Contemporary evidence indicates that from 4,000-9,000 Chinese workers were employed in all. <http://cpr.org/Museum/Chinese.html> has numerous details and references. See also Chang, Chinese in America, p. 56. The derogatory "Chink, Chink, Chinaman, sittin' on a fence; tryin' to make a dollar outta fifteen cents" likely dates from this era (it may be one of the few children's rhymes that mentions low wages...); contemporary accounts show that even into the 1880s, few professions Chinese worked in paid more than \$1 a day. Sandmeyer, Anti-Chinese, p. 22. An 1888 account (in Harper's Weekly, Oct. 13) noted that Chinese farm laborers earned \$150 a day, the cost in San Francisco for "trousers and blouse." See <http://immigrants.harpweek.com/ChineseAmericans/Items/Item108.htm>.

<sup>10</sup> Various sources cited in Carey McWilliams. 1971 [1935/39]. Factories in the Fields (Santa Barbara: Peregrine Publishers), pp. 66-7, state Chinese were from 75-90% of the agricultural workforce. In The Chinese in America (p. 419), Chang gives a precise 85.7%. McWilliams is also categorical: "The transition from wheat to fruit acreage would have been delayed for a quarter of a century had it not been for the presence of the Chinese in California" (p. 67). In addition, as late as 1893, the Pacific Rural Press would still write that: "The Chinese are . . . the only supply of labor [the fruit grower] can depend on . . . It is difficult to see how our annual fruit crop could be harvested and prepared for market without the Chinaman" (cited in McWilliams, p. 71).

<sup>11</sup> The landowner C. D. Abbott, cited in Sandy Lyndon. 1985. Chinese Gold: The Chinese in the Monterey Bay Region (Capitola: Capitola Book Company), p. 286. Marginalization was also the fate of Chinese fishermen. See Arthur McEvoy. 1977. "In Places Men Reject: Chinese Fishermen at San Diego, 1870-1893," The Journal of San Diego History Vol. 23: 4, available at <http://www.sandiegohistory.org/journal/77fall/chinese.htm>.

<sup>12</sup> Locke was built entirely by, and for, Chinese – but much later. After fire destroyed the Chinese part of nearby Walnut Grove, Locke (which also burned down, twice) was founded in 1915 and at its peak had 600 residents. See <http://www.locketown.com> or <http://www.walnutgrove.com/locke.htm>, and George Chu. 1970. "Chinatowns in the Delta, 1870-1960," California History Society Quarterly 49:1 (March), 21-37.

<sup>13</sup> See Five Views; the list was added to the back of the company's 1870 "English-Chinese Phrase Book." The 1870 Census found Chinese living in 50 of California's 53 counties. See Sandmeyer, Anti-Chinese, p. 19.

<sup>14</sup> Chang, Chinese in America, pp. 93-99.

<sup>15</sup> The map is available from the Online Archive of California at <http://ark.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/hb8j49n988> or [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/cic:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(brk3065](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/cic:@field(DOCID+@lit(brk3065); it shows the businesses and residences on the first floors of houses in a 12-block area.

<sup>16</sup> Chang, Chinese in America, p. 77. This dominance did not last. An anti-Chinese campaign pushed them out of the cigar industry by the early 1880s, after which that industry collapsed, and union agitation helped push them out of other industries. The more proximate cause was not discrimination per se, however, but the railroad, as it brought cheaply manufactured goods from the East that West Coast production could not compete with (see Five Views for this argument). As for the numbers, an "official investigation" in 1889 reportedly found 45,000 Chinese in San Francisco, one-third of whom [or 14,850] were women and children, "including slaves." 5,000 men [excluding women, children, and "slaves," thus 17% of the workforce] were cooks and domestic servants in white households, 4,000 [13%] were in cigar-making, 5,000 [17%] manufactured men's clothing and women's underwear, and only about 2,000 [7%] worked in laundries. Herbert Asbury. 1933. The Barbary Coast (New York: Knopf), Chapter 7 (no source is cited for this "official investigation.").

<sup>17</sup> This may have to do with how early they were established: Wah Lee, the first Chinese laundryman in San Francisco, was already in business in 1851 (see Chang, Chinese in America, p. 49). By 1870, there were thought to be about 2,600 Chinese laundrymen in California, 1,300 of them in San Francisco. See Sucheng Chan. 1986. This Bittersweet Soil: The Chinese in California Agriculture, 1860-1910 (Berkeley: University of California Press), pp. 62-63 [the suggestion more than 7,500 Chinese worked in San Francisco's laundries in 1880 (Sung, Mountain of Gold, p. 190) is wildly inflated]. The rapid expansion of these Chinese enterprises clearly bred enmity: an "Anti-Chinese and Workingman's Protective Laundry Association" was incorporated already by 1876 in San Jose (see Five Views). Lee Chew's 1903 "The Biography of a Chinaman," Independent 15 (pp. 417-23), provides a poignant laundryman's account ([http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/social\\_history/16chinaman.cfm](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/social_history/16chinaman.cfm)) of this era. According to the Census, 27.5% (or 12,559) of all employed Chinese in the U.S. in 1920 (45,614) worked in laundries (Chang, Chinese in America, p. 168).

<sup>18</sup> Malcolm Feeley and Samuel Krislov. 1985. Constitutional Law (Boston: Little, Brown and Company), p. 638; the figure of 240 is cited in the case itself (<http://www.lectlaw.com/files/case20.htm>). Chang (p. 139) notes the Board of Supervisors passed 14 anti-Chinese laundry ordinances in little more than a decade (1873 to 1884).

<sup>19</sup> The mutual aid or benevolent societies known as *hui-kuan* in China – misleadingly translated as "company" in English – were the model for similar associations formed in the early 1850s in San Francisco. Each of the five Guangdong districts in Canton (that nearly all Chinese had come from) were represented by their own association, while the sixth was for the Hakka. Existing antagonisms between residents of the respective districts were carried across the Pacific, and were reflected at first in strained or hostile relations between these

associations. Yet the overall hostility Chinese faced and the urgent need for a collective response when dealing with the authorities at all levels were so much more urgent problems that the associations began to work together informally early on. By 1862, this cooperation was made permanent with the formal creation of the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association, known afterwards variously as the Six Chinese Companies, the Chinese Six Companies, or simply the Six Companies. This became the political (and legal and economic) voice – one long represented by white lawyers – not just of the Chinese in San Francisco but for Chinese throughout the Western US; wealthier merchants dominated the organization. However, there were numerous other Chinatown organizations, and they made a dense, complex web for what soon became a separate world within the larger world of the city. An effort to portray this web was made in 1971 by the San Francisco Chinatown historian Him Mark Lai in Victor G. and Brett de Bary Nee. 1973. Longtime Californ'! A Documentary Study of an American Chinatown (New York: Pantheon), pp. 272-77. A helpful discussion can also be found in Charles McClain. 1994. In Search of Equality: The Chinese Struggle Against Discrimination in Nineteenth-Century America (Berkeley: University of California Press), pp. 13-16.

<sup>20</sup> The most careful sources for the following section are McClain's In Search of Equality and Sandmeyer's The Anti-Chinese Movement in California; Ian Lopez's 1996. White By Law: The Legal Construction of Race (New York: New York University Press) is also useful. However, while it is beyond dispute that the Chinese were deliberately and baldly discriminated against in numerous ways during this era, the specifics can be quite difficult to establish with certainty, not least because political and legal institutions in California at the time were themselves in their infancy and engaged in their own struggles over their proper spheres of competence – and not necessarily obsessed with keeping meticulously accurate records for future historians. It has not helped that numerous secondary sources on this era are incomplete, tendentious, or mutually contradictory.

<sup>21</sup> This seems to have been a case of not wanting to kill the goose that lays the golden egg. The Chinese “had been faithfully and punctually paying their license fees and, not incidentally, had been enriching the treasuries of both the state and many of its counties.” Excessive taxation might drive these Chinese out, depriving those same counties of “a steady, reliable source of revenue.” Protestant missionaries, most notably Rev. William Speer, also lobbied on behalf of the Chinese. See McClain, In Search of Equality, pp. 18-19.

<sup>22</sup> Legislative attitudes were diametrically opposed, with the Senate report on this matter stating it was beneath the honor of “a proud, powerful, and magnanimous nation to oppress... a class of defenceless strangers,” and that as the Chinese often worked marginal diggings it would be mean-spirited to begrudge them their gains, while the Assembly spoke of the presence of the Chinese as “neither beneficial nor desirable... (and) highly detrimental to the welfare, safety and happiness of the State,” as the Chinese were a “distinct and inferior race” and “verily a nation of liars.” See McClain, In Search of Equality, p. 20.

<sup>23</sup> Though Chinese arriving in California were free laborers, because bonded, unfree, Chinese “coolie” laborers was still being transported to the Caribbean and elsewhere into the 1850s, Chinese workers in California were often incorrectly referred to, and thought of, in these terms – that is, in terms equating them with slaves.

<sup>24</sup> Test cases in American law are efforts to bring suits to challenge the constitutionality of, and if possible overturn, a statute or law. McClain (p. 27) cites a Sacramento newspaper published the day after Lin Sing filed his suit as writing: “The several Chinese organizations in this city and state are making arrangements to test in the Supreme Court the constitutionality of the Police Tax Law,” suggesting this was indeed such an effort.

<sup>25</sup> The following is based on the account in McClain, p. 46-7. There was also a “Laundry Ordinance” passed in 1873 that assessed a tax of \$1 per quarter for those who used horse-drawn vehicles, but \$15 for those who did not – but the approximately 1,300 Chinese laundrymen in the city (organized into the Tung Hing Tong guild) did not own horses. It was yet another punitive and discriminatory tax of the kind already noted.

<sup>26</sup> Sandmeyer, Anti-Chinese Movement, p. 51. The openly expressed fear was over the potential for the spread of contagious diseases, though it is ironic that even the contemporary Municipal Report of 1869-70 concedes that “considering their mode of life, it is indeed wonderful that the [Chinese] have so far escaped every phase of disease.” It is more likely the overt expression hid far more complex prejudices and assumptions about behavior.

<sup>27</sup> McClain (p. 311, ft. 106) cites the San Francisco police officer James Rogers, who had made over 1,100 arrests for violations of the Cubic Air Ordinance, as testifying that he knew of no whites arrested under it. McClain (p. 66) noted that police raids conducted in 1876 under this Ordinance were “invariably... in the dead of night,” and that once the police were “inside the building they took precise measurements of the premises.”

<sup>28</sup> Or if they didn't know, they could read it in the San Francisco Evening Bulletin of May 27 or June 2, 1873. See McClain, In Search of Equality, pp. 48, 304 ft. 29. It is possible that this Ordinance is the origin of the derogatory children's rhyme: “Chink, Chink, Chinaman, sittin' on a rail; Along comes the white man and cuts off his tail.” Queues (called ‘pigtailed’ in the U.S.) were mandated under the Manchus, and cutting them off could be taken as rejecting their rule, hence also be interpreted as punishable treason. Some who adopted other hairstyles evidently kept up appearances by wearing false queues. See Michael Godley. 1994. “The End of the Queue: Hair as a Symbol in Chinese History,” East Asian History 8, pp. 53-72.

<sup>29</sup> McClain (pp. 73-76) has a lengthy discussion of this case, emphasizing just how important it would be “for the future struggle of the Chinese” to have this ruling in their favor.

<sup>30</sup> The California Civil Code of 1880 in fact also prohibited the marriage of whites with non-whites, who were defined as "Mongolians [e.g., Asians], Negroes, mulattoes and persons of mixed blood."

<sup>31</sup> See *In re Hong Yen Chang* (84 Cal. 163) in 1890, and *In re Gee Hop* (71 F. 274) in 1895, as well as the mixed race cases *In re Knight* (171 F. 299) and *In re Fischer* (21 F.2d 1007) listed in Lopez, *White by Law* (1996).

<sup>32</sup> See McWilliams, *Factories*, pp. 68-9 as well as *Five Views*. The issues of Harper's Weekly from this era contain numerous details about the fate of the Chinese in California.

<sup>33</sup> Those who belonged to some other specific categories (such as teachers or students) were still permitted to come. The legislative history here was complex. Congress voted in 1879 to ban Chinese immigration, but President Hayes vetoed it as a violation of the Burlingame Treaty. In 1880, a new treaty was negotiated with China, giving the U.S. the right to regulate, limit, or suspend "but not absolutely prohibit" the entry of Chinese labor, and it was ratified the next year by the Senate. A new bill, suspending Chinese immigration for 20 years, was passed by Congress in 1881, but it was vetoed by President Arthur as violating the 1880 Treaty. The Chinese Exclusion Act was signed into law by President Arthur, but later acts (1888, 1892) violated provisions of the 1880 Treaty. Exclusion was extended in 1894 and 1902 (10 more years each time), and in 1904 was made indefinite. The 1924 Immigration Law excluded all Asians, and it was this law that was rescinded in 1943.

<sup>34</sup> McClain, *In Search of Equality*, p. 21. Attitudes changed little: an 1874 'Darwinist' illustration carried the caption "showing conclusively that John Chinaman has had his origin in a Monkey; from thence to a Chinaman, and eventually into a pig; any further comment would be useless" (in Jennifer Hochschild. 1995. *Facing Up to the American Dream* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), p. 33), and in 1900 the Knights of Labor called Chinese "more slavish and brutish than the beasts that roam the fields. They are grovelling worms" (cited in John Higham. 1963. *Strangers in the Land. Patterns of American Nativism 1860-1925* (New York: Atheneum), p. 25).

<sup>35</sup> In a footnote, McClain (pp. 295-96) points to the records of Nevada County that contain at least two dozen civil cases filed by Chinese against whites between 1860 and 1874, at least three of which were successful.

<sup>36</sup> See Chang, *Chinese in America*, p. 98.

<sup>37</sup> As the first Chinese-American lawyer, Chan Chung Wing, was only admitted to the California Bar in 1927, there was no alternative but to have legal representation by white lawyers – but this shrewdly extended to using white lawyers as community spokesmen as well. Alan Kraut's 1994. *Silent Travelers. Germs, Genes and the "Immigrant Menace"* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press), p. 91 provides a specific example from 1900.

<sup>38</sup> The following is drawn from Daniella Thompson's 2004 history of the Tape family (as part of the Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association's work), at [http://www.berkeleyheritage.com/essays/tape\\_family.html](http://www.berkeleyheritage.com/essays/tape_family.html).

<sup>39</sup> Born Chew Diep in 1852, he came to California at age 17 and probably first worked as a houseboy and drayman; Mary came in 1868 as an 11-year old orphan from Shanghai and was taken in by the Ladies' Protection and Relief Society. Both had thus been living in the U.S. for 15 years at the time of the case.

<sup>40</sup> Evidently following the loophole provided in the 1880 repeal - but the spirit of the 1863 prohibition. The fear immigrants were infectious disease carriers is well addressed in Kraut's *Silent Travelers*; he narrates the case of Chick Gin and the 1900 bubonic plague outbreak in San Francisco (pp. 76-97). See also Susan Craddock. 1999. "Embodying Place: Pathologizing Chinese and Chinatown in Nineteenth-Century San Francisco," *Antipode* 31:4, pp. 351-71.

<sup>41</sup> Stockton (1764-1828), a naval officer who served in the War of 1812 and would later become a U.S. Senator from New Jersey, was made Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Squadron in 1845, and by early 1847 had defeated the Mexican forces then controlling the territory of California. He set up a government and served briefly as governor (California's first constitution dates from 1847), and by 1850, California was admitted to the United States as the 31<sup>st</sup> state. Stockton's historic role therefore can be seen as having 'americanized' California - so the choice of this particular name for the Oriental School carries an obvious message.

<sup>42</sup> Ron Takaki. 1993. *A Different Mirror. A History of Multicultural America* (Boston: Little, Brown), p. 209. Both Chinese traditions and American law limited women's entry, though before 1882, a few men could bring Chinese wives to the U.S. Strenuous efforts to keep *certain* women out were made (see *ex Parte Ah Fook* (49 Cal. 402) of 1874); more than 2,000 of the 3,536 Chinese women in California in 1870 listed their occupation as "prostitute," though by 1880, that had fallen to about 750 of 3,171 (Takaki, p. 211-3). Sung (*Mountain*, pp. 117, 320) notes that difficult as the 19:1 male-to-female sex ratio was in 1900, the 27:1 ratio in 1890 was even worse.

<sup>43</sup> An 1880 description of the "Chinese quarter" of San Francisco, for example, states that it "might be a strip of a most populous Asiatic city inserted in the midst of a characteristically American town. The street peculiarities of the "quarter" are most typical of its Mongolian character." Later, the article (with some sympathy) states: "These unfortunate Asiatics are accused of being an injury to the best interests of our country and our people because they cheapen labor, and because they are an inferior race." See "The Chinese in San Francisco," *Harper's Weekly* (March 20, 1880), p. 182 at <http://immigrants.harperweek.com/ChineseAmericans/Items/Item049L.htm>.

<sup>44</sup> Asbury quotes *The Annals of San Francisco* from 1854 as stating: "Of different language, blood, religion, and character, inferior in most mental and bodily qualities, the Chinaman is looked upon by some as only a little

superior to the Negro, and by others as somewhat inferior." There were few blacks in California at the time, and even in 1990, the black population in the state (7%) remained below the national average (12%).

<sup>45</sup> His account can be found at [http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/social\\_history/16chinaman.cfm](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/social_history/16chinaman.cfm), one of series of first person accounts published around 1900 in the magazine Independent.

<sup>46</sup> Chang, Chinese in America, p. 277-80; the quote is from Sam Sue, now a New York city lawyer, and son of an immigrant Chinese grocer in Clarksdale, Mississippi.

<sup>47</sup> For an updated, sophisticated, statistics-based version of this kind of demand, see the report by the Campus Advisory Committee for Asian American Affairs at the University of California, Berkeley, in 2001, entitled "Asian Pacific Americans at Berkeley: Visibility and Marginality" (at: [asianamaffairs.chance.berkeley.edu](http://asianamaffairs.chance.berkeley.edu)).

<sup>48</sup> See Helen Zia. 2000. Asian American Dreams. The Emergence of an American People (New York: Farrar, Strauss, Giroux), p. 47-8.

<sup>49</sup> Frank Wu. 2002. Yellow. Race in America Beyond Black and White (New York: Basic Books), p. 310.

<sup>50</sup> For a good overview of the relevant literature and some of this early history, see L. Ling-Chi Wang. 1981. "Asian American Studies," American Quarterly 33:3, pp. 339-54.

<sup>51</sup> Richard Alba and Victor Nee. 2003. Remaking the American Mainstream. Assimilation and Contemporary Immigration. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), p. 86. For an ethnography and political analysis of Monterey Park, see John Horton. 1995. The Politics of Diversity: Immigration, Resistance, and Change in Monterey Park, California (Philadelphia: Temple University Press). That Chinatowns have become tourist attractions acts to "suppress visible manifestations of social unrest and pathology in order to attract customers." (Ivan Light and Charles Choy. 1975. "Protest or Work: Dilemmas of the Tourist Industry in American Chinatowns," American Journal of Sociology (May), pp. 1342-68), though given how luridly Chinatown was sometimes portrayed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there has evidently been a sharp change in tourist tastes. For outsiders to begin to have a sense of such issues, one needs sensitive, in-depth ethnographies like Longtime Californ'.

<sup>52</sup> This vastly oversimplifies recent history. There have been several waves of migration, including Taiwanese students and professionals (from the 1950s-1970s) and professionals from Mainland China (during the 1980s and 1990s, and typically Mandarin rather than Cantonese-speakers), both of whom increasingly have tended to migrate to suburban areas – to which one should add the stream of undocumented aliens (many from Fujian province, many speaking Min dialect) who can be found doing manual work in U.S. cities. Chinatowns, esp. on the East Coast, today not only reflect these streams but increasingly serve as a pan-Asian way-station for other recent immigrant groups (Vietnamese, Thai, Burmese, etc.). Such mixes of origin, language, and class are far harder to make out in suburban areas, other than in locations like Monterey Park.

<sup>53</sup> Which Henry Yu's 2001 Thinking Orientals: Migration, Contact, and Exoticism in Modern America (Oxford University Press) has done a good deal to correct.

<sup>54</sup> Alba and Nee, p. 132-33. For a similar argument about 'whiteness,' see Andrew Hacker. 1995. Two Nations: Black and White, Separate, Hostile, Unequal (New York: Ballantine Books), pp. 8-11.

<sup>55</sup> Yu, Thinking Orientals, p. 203.

<sup>56</sup> Or so the sociologist William Julius Wilson has long argued. The suburbanization of the growing (but still relatively small) black middle class lends some support to this argument, as does increased professionalization and rising educational attainment levels, especially among young black women.

<sup>57</sup> Just to confuse matters, separate immigration quotas exist for Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Mainland China, and though many Southeast Asian migrants are of Chinese background, they not only come speaking other languages and with different traditions than those from farther north, they may not even identify ethnically. "Ethnic Chinese Vietnamese-Americans," for example, often self-identify as Vietnamese.

<sup>58</sup> Horton, Politics of Diversity, p. 25, 14.

<sup>59</sup> In a country about 85% white, national averages will be heavily dominated by the accomplishments of the white majority, though the discourse on race is not about the white majority but about the non-white minorities – not unlike German discussions that focus on *Ausländer* as a minority rather than *Inländer* as the majority.

<sup>60</sup> Le, C.N. 2004. "The Model Minority Image," in: Asian-Nation: The Landscape of Asian America (<http://www.asian-nation.org/model-minority.shtml>).

<sup>61</sup> At [www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/facts\\_for\\_features\\_special\\_editions/001738.html](http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/001738.html).

<sup>62</sup> The term was originally coined by William Peterson, a sociologist describing Japanese-Americans in 1966, but was quickly picked up by the media and applied generically to other populations of Asian origin. Chang, p. 328; Zia, p. 46; Takaki, pp. 415-17.

<sup>63</sup> In Thomas Wheeler, ed. 1971. The Immigrant Experience: The Anguish of Becoming American (New York: Penguin), pp. 107-31.

<sup>64</sup> Takaki cites a 1984 editorial by the conservative (and black) columnist William Raspberry telling blacks they should stop blaming racism and instead imitate Asian Americans (p. 414-16), but for a thorough treatment, see Chapter 2 (subtitled: "Asian American Success as a Race Relations Failure") in Frank Wu's Yellow; Wu lists more than 75 empirical studies of the model minority notion. The black vs. Oriental contrast was drawn already in An American Dilemma, the classic study of American race issues published 60 years ago, which noted that

despite comparable degrees of residential segregation (p. 620), Chinese and Japanese-operated stores and restaurants were more successful than those operated by blacks (p. 310-11). The explanation suggested was rooted in history and culture:

The Negroes do not, like the Japanese and the Chinese, have politically organized nation and an accepted culture of own outside of America to fall back upon. Unlike the Oriental, there attaches to the Negro an historical memory of slavery and inferiority. It is more difficult for them to answer prejudice with prejudice and, as the Orientals may do, to consider themselves and their history superior to the white Americans and their recent cultural achievements. The Negroes do not have these fortifications for self-respect. They are more helplessly imprisoned as a subordinate caste in America, a caste of people deemed to be lacking a cultural past and assumed to be incapable of a cultural future (p. 54).

See Gunnar Myrdal. 1944. An American Dilemma. The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy, Vol. 1. (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers).

<sup>65</sup> Cited in Wu, Yellow, p. 60.

<sup>66</sup> Eric Liu. 1998. The Accidental Asian: Notes of a Native Speaker. (New York: Vintage), p. 145.

<sup>67</sup> Based on Le's (2004) analysis of recent Census data that show Asian Indians outperforming all other major American racial groups (blacks, Hispanics, whites, etc.) in terms of educational attainment, median family income, being in a high skill occupation, and in median occupational prestige. If one calculates the mean values just for the six largest Asian groups (cf. ft. 1), there are very few categories (one is home-ownership) where Indians are not above even the average among Asians in America.

<sup>68</sup> There are very real differences: Census figures from 2001 show that on average, adults 18 and over with a high school diploma earned \$26,795 per year, those with a 4-year B.A. degree earned \$50,623, and those with an M.A. or Ph.D. earned \$72,869. A more popular presentation points out this means 67%, 59%, and 71%, of these respective groups will earn in these ranges, or put differently, while a few Ph.D.s will earn only as much as those with a high school diploma, most Ph.D.s will earn three times more. See Andrew Hacker. 1997. Money: Who Has How Much and Why (New York: Scribner), p. 218.

<sup>69</sup> Of the 7,967 hate crimes reported to the FBI in 1996, 62% were against African-Americans, 25% were against whites, and 7% were against Asians.

<sup>70</sup> For details, see the Tenth Annual "Audit of Violence Against Asian Pacific Americans" produced by the National Asian American Pacific Legal Consortium (available at <http://www.napalc.org>; see ft. 74) – though it notes that "hate crimes in general are not fully reported to, or well documented by, the FBI or other law enforcement agencies," so such data are uncertain.

<sup>71</sup> The following is based on Zia, Asian American Dreams, pp. 62-81.

<sup>72</sup> At the time, the American auto industry was suffering from not being competitive with the Japanese, so one has here again an example of the inability of Americans to clearly distinguish between Asian nationalities.

<sup>73</sup> As one example, the website <http://www.geocities.com/tarorg/hatecrimes.html> provides a martyr's gallery (including some photos) of other hate crime victims of Asian heritage. Details of some of the cases on this website, as well as other serious incidents not ending in murder, can be found in the annual NAPALC audits.

<sup>74</sup> NAPALC is a non-profit organization created in 1991 "to advance the human and civil rights of Asian Americans through advocacy, public policy, public education, and litigation;" AALDEF was founded in 1974 as "the first legal rights organization on the East Coast serving Asian Americans. We were founded by a group of lawyers, law students and community activists who believed that the law should be used as a tool to achieve social and economic justice for Asian Americans and all Americans." Descriptions, respectively, found at <http://www.napalc.org> and <http://www.aaldef.org>. Both groups exemplify typical American interest group mobilization, though are noteworthy for their reliance on the law as a means of recourse and redress.

<sup>75</sup> See "Diversity in Law Firms," a 2002 report by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (at: <http://www.eeoc.gov/stats/reports/diversitylaw/index.html>). The model minority label might be used here too...

<sup>76</sup> See <http://www.abanet.org/minorities/links/2000census.html>.

<sup>77</sup> From the summary released on April 25, 2001 at [www.adl.org/misc/survey\\_chinese\\_americans.asp](http://www.adl.org/misc/survey_chinese_americans.asp).

<sup>78</sup> At 23%, substantially more uncomfortable than voting for a black (15%) or Jew (11%) as President, though at 24%, less uncomfortable about marrying an Asian than a black (34%) but more uncomfortable than marrying a Jew (16%).

<sup>79</sup> Inter-marriage rates are major sociological indicators of the degree of assimilation into U.S. culture and society. Data from Alba and Nee, Remaking, pp. 92-3. The 1 in 5 figure is from 1997; the figure for the Chinese is from 1990 and applies to those born between 1956 and 1965 – for the cohort born 1916-25, only about 10% married out. Among U.S.-born Japanese-Americans of the baby boom generation, the inter-marriage rate is close to 70%.

<sup>80</sup> Hochschild, Facing Up to the American Dream, pp. 18-21.

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<sup>81</sup> An early example (published in 1873) is Albert Evans's *A la California. Sketch of Life in the Golden State* (San Francisco: Bancroft), esp. Chapter 12 ("A Cruise on the Barbary Coast"), which can also be found at <http://www.sfmuseum.org/hist6/evans.html>. Herbert Asbury's much later *The Barbary Coast*, first published in 1933, a parallel work to his *The Gangs of New York*, was likely the most influential example of this kind of perspective – and its subtitle "An Informal History of the San Francisco Underground" suggests lurid tales.

<sup>82</sup> See Roger Daniels. 1990. *Coming to America. A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life* (New York: HarperCollins), p. 407, and for a longer treatment, Peter Kivisto and Dag Blanck. 1990. *American Immigrants and Their Generations: Studies and Commentaries on the Hansen Thesis after Fifty Years* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press).

<sup>83</sup> Liu, *Accidental Asian*, pp. 34-7.