

AMERICA'S ETHNIC DIVERSITY

# ASIAN AMERICANS

by Keng Xiong



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# AT A GLANCE

- Asian Americans are one of the fastest-growing racial minority groups in the United States.
- In 1763, Filipinos were the first Asians to arrive and settle in what is now the United States.
- In the 1850s, many Chinese immigrants came to California in search of gold and jobs. Asian immigrants often faced discrimination and laws that limited their opportunities.
- Asian Americans fought for their rights through boycotts and strikes alongside other people of color.
- Asian Americans have many different cultures and traditions, as well as religions and religious celebrations. Some may follow Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, or no religion.

# MANY CULTURES AND TRADITIONS

**T**he term *Asian American* groups different ethnicities. People may trace their Asian heritage to multiple countries. Cultures and traditions may overlap. Some people follow them. Others may not.

## EAST ASIAN AMERICANS

East Asia includes China, Japan, North Korea, and South Korea. Chinese Americans are the largest Asian American

**Chinese Americans may celebrate Chinese New Year. This is a major Lunar New Year celebration. Others include Seollal in Korea and Tết in Vietnam.**









**Dragon dances are a major part of many Chinese New Year celebrations.**

ethnic group. There are more than 5 million Chinese Americans in the United States. They may celebrate traditions from Chinese heritage. One of these is the Spring Festival, also called Chinese New Year. It lasts for about 15 days and welcomes the spring. Families often gather to celebrate together. Children receive red paper envelopes. Money is inside. The envelopes are a symbol of good fortune for the year. There are also performances such as lion dances.

Justin Le belongs to the New York Chinese Freemasons Athletic Club. He is part of the lion dance troupe. He says, "I value my culture and tradition, being Chinese or Asian American. I have a lot of pride in that. . . . I want to contribute and give back to the community."<sup>2</sup>

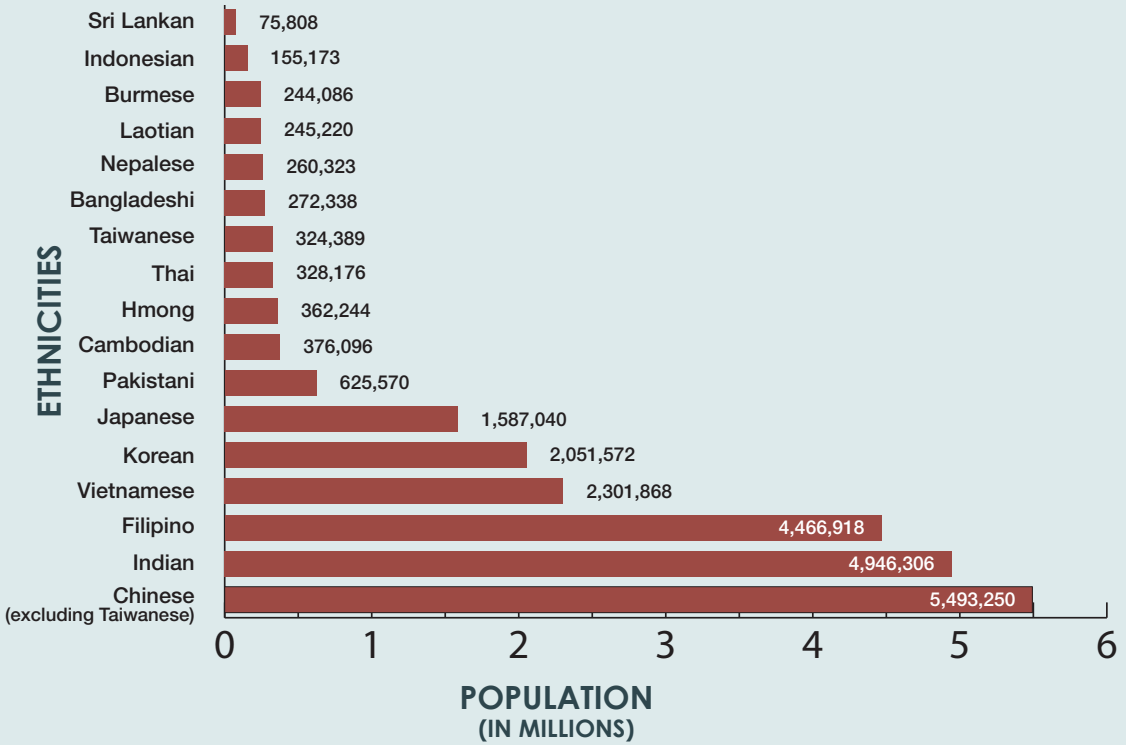


More than 1 million Japanese Americans live in the United States. Japanese cultural traditions may center around family, education, and work. One Japanese festival is Sakura Matsuri. It is also called the Cherry Blossom Festival. Washington, DC, has a celebration every year. It happens when the cherry

## Doljabi

Doljabi is a Korean fortune-telling tradition. It happens on a baby's first birthday. The baby is given different objects. These may include a pencil, a piece of thread, and money. They represent knowledge, a long life, and wealth. The baby chooses one. The choice is said to be a sign of their future.

# ASIAN AMERICANS IN THE UNITED STATES



Source: US Census Bureau, "Selected Population Profile in the United States," American Community Survey, 2022, <http://data.census.gov>.

**The US Census Bureau estimates the populations of ethnic groups with more than 65,000 members. Because some people belong to more than one ethnic group, the numbers add up to more than the total Asian American population.**

their homes to welcome the new year.

Communities may also host events and performances. Some people wear ao dai.

# GLOSSARY

**boycott**

the refusal to buy or participate in something until demands are met

**confinement camps**

places where prisoners or people who have been deemed dangerous are poorly housed and carefully watched

**discrimination**

treating a person or group worse than others due to differences

**hate crime**

crime or violence against individuals based on their identity

**immigrated**

moved from one country to another

**prejudice**

unfair bias or unfriendly feelings toward individuals or groups

**racist**

relating to racism, which is the systemic oppression of a racial group that creates an advantage for another racial group

**stereotypes**

oversimplified generalizations of people in a specific group

# SOURCE NOTES

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