

Asian American Experience

Introduction

This book provides views of contemporary Asian American life. With the partial exception of Chapter Nine, the contents were originally developed for an introductory course in Asian American Studies and all but two of the first hand accounts are the products of students in the course. The book is built around these first hand accounts because the experiences of ordinary people, whether mundane or dramatic, are the true basis of knowledge regarding Asian American experience. The sample presented here is not balanced. Chinese American and Southeast Asian (including ethnic Chinese) accounts dominate the selections and other Asian American groups are not as well represented. This imbalance is a product of the enrollment pattern of the course from which papers were drawn. As the students are largely from the San Francisco Bay Area, the experiences presented here are reflective of life in a region with large numbers of Asian Americans that is not necessarily representative of Asian American experiences in other regions. In editing papers for publication an attempt has been made to retain the style of the originals while correcting for grammar and clarity. Romanization of Asian language terms and names have generally been left in the form presented by the individual authors. With minor exceptions, no changes have been made in narrative structure or informational content, although several papers have been reduced in length. The wishes of the original authors have been followed with regard to names of persons and identification of the authors. All introductions and essays not attributed to a particular author were written by the editor, Malcolm Collier, and serve to provide context, additional information, and to provoke thought on topics associated with Asian American experience.

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