

Asian-Nation

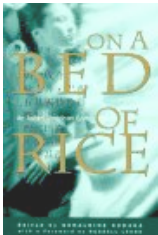
The Landscape of Asian America

Home Culture History Issues Links Viet Nam Contact Forum Jobs

Articles in This Section

Behind the Headlines: APA News Blog
 Socioeconomic Statistics & Demographics
 The Model Minority Image
 Interracial Dating & Marriage
 Affirmative Action
 Anti-Asian Racism & Violence
 Asian Americans, Polls, and the 2004 Elections
 Asian American Gangs
 Asian Small Businesses
 Doctors: The APA Dream Profession
 Employment & Occupational Patterns
 Ethnic Communities & Enclaves
 Health & Wellness
 Immigrant Characteristics & Statistics
 Immigrant Contributions & Impacts
 Immigrants in the Postindustrial Economy
 Participating in Politics
 Population Statistics & Demographics
 Women & Gender Issues

Research Resources Used/ Recommended for Further Reading



Constable, Nicole. 2003.
Romance on a Global Stage: Pen Pals, Virtual Ethnography, and "Mail Order" Marriages.
 Berkeley: University of California Press.

Crohn, Joel. 1995. *Mixed Matches: How to Create*

Interracial Dating & Marriage

One of the most public manifestations of race is the choice of one's partner or spouse. This very individual and personal aspect can sometimes produce a lot of public discussion. Studies consistently show that Asian Americans have some of the highest "intermarriage" (also known as "outmarriage") rates among racial/ethnic minorities -- marrying someone else outside of their own ethnic group. But as always, there's more to the story than just the headline.

THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SIDES OF ETHNICITY

Whether it's dating or marrying someone of a different race, interracial relationships are not a new phenomenon among Asian Americans. When the first Filipino and Chinese workers came to the U.S. in the 1700 and 1800s, they were almost exclusively men. A few of them eventually married women in the U.S. who were not Asian. However, many people soon saw Asian intermarriage with Whites as a threat to American society. Therefore, **anti-miscegenation** laws were passed that prohibited Asians from marrying Whites.

History shows that these anti-miscegenation laws were very common in the U.S. They were first passed in the 1600s to prevent freed Black slaves from marrying Whites. It was not until 1967, during the height of the Civil Rights Movement, that the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that such laws were unconstitutional. At that time, 38 states in the U.S. had formal laws on their books that prohibited non-Whites from marrying Whites. As you can see, it's only been in recent years that interracial marriages are relatively common in American society.

Of course, anti-miscegenation laws were part of a larger anti-Asian movement that eventually led to the Chinese Exclusion Act

All Asian Americans: Percentages of the Six Largest Asian Ethnic Groups who are Married to . . .

		Asian Indians	
Husbands (404,104)	Asian Indians	89.7	
	Other Asians	1.5	
	Whites	6.3	
	Blacks	0.6	
	Hispanics/Latinos	1.4	
Wives (396,434)	Asian Indians	92.0	
	Other Asians	1.2	
	Whites	4.1	
	Blacks	0.7	
	Hispanics/Latinos	0.8	

[Successful Interracial, Interethnic, and Interfaith Relationships.](#) Fawcett Books.

[Kennedy, Randall. 2003. Interracial Intimacies: Sex, Marriage, Identity, and Adoption.](#) New York: Pantheon Books.

[Koshy, Susan. 2005. Sexual Naturalization: Asian Americans And Miscegenation.](#) Palo Alto: Stanford University Press

[Kudaka, Geraldine. 1995. On a Bed of Rice: An Asian American Erotic Feast.](#) New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc.

[Lee, Jennifer and Min Zhou \(Eds.\). 2004. Asian American Youth: Culture, Identity, and Ethnicity.](#) New York: Routledge.

[Romano, Renee C. 2003. Race Mixing: Black-White Marriage in Postwar America.](#) Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

[Root, Maria. 1996. Love's Revolution: Racial Intermarriage.](#) Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

[Wallenstein, Peter. 2002. Tell the Court I Love My Wife: Race, Marriage, and Law -- An American History.](#) Palgrave Macmillan.

[White, David Gordon. 2003. Kiss of the Yogini: "Tantric Sex" in its South Asian Contexts.](#) Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

in 1882 and other restrictive regulations. These laws actually made the situation worse because Asian men were no longer able to bring their wives over to the U.S. So in a way, those who wanted to become married had no other choice but to socialize with non-Asians.

After World War II however, the gender dynamics of this interracial process flipped. U.S. servicemen who fought and were stationed overseas in Asian countries began coming home with Asian "war brides." These Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Korean, and Vietnamese women eventually played a role in developing the Asian American community by sponsoring their family and other relatives to immigrate to the U.S.

These days, Asian Americans in interracial relationships are very common. One of the best research articles on this topic is a study conducted by Shinagawa and Pang entitled "Asian American Panethnicity and Intermarriage," reprinted in the highly recommended [Asian Americans: Experiences and Perspectives](#). Similar in structure to

their study, I have analyzed data from the [Census 2000 5% PUMS](#) (a 1-in-20 national random sample of the entire U.S. population) to construct the following table, which updates the results from 1990 to 2000 and represents data from the entire U.S. and not just California. The table shows the percentage of the six major Asian ethnic groups who are married to either **endogamously (within their ethnic group), to another Asian (outside their ethnic group), or to someone who is White, Black, or Hispanic/Latino**, by husbands and wives. The numbers in parentheses are the total counts for each husband/wife ethnic combination.

Note that this table includes data for all members of each Asian ethnic group who are married -- immigrants and U.S.-born.

		Chinese	
Husbands (533,134)	Chinese		89.5
	Other Asians		4.1
	Whites		5.1
	Blacks		0.1
	Hispanics/Latinos		1.1
Wives (579,816)	Chinese		83.0
	Other Asians		3.3
	Whites		12.0
	Blacks		0.3
	Hispanics/Latinos		1.0

		Filipinos	
Husbands (340,890)	Filipinos		83.1
	Other Asians		2.5
	Whites		10.1
	Blacks		0.2
	Hispanics/Latinos		3.3
Wives (459,472)	Filipinos		62.7
	Other Asians		2.7
	Whites		27.3
	Blacks		2.8
	Hispanics/Latinos		3.9

		Japanese	
Husbands (164,788)	Japanese		69.2
	Other Asians		8.8
	Whites		17.5
	Blacks		0.3
	Hispanics/Latinos		2.7
Wives (228,745)	Japanese		50.9
	Other Asians		5.4
	Whites		37.1
	Blacks		1.7
	Hispanics/Latinos		2.4

		Koreans	
Husbands (203,250)	Koreans		93.1
	Other Asians		1.9
	Whites		3.9
	Blacks		0.0
	Hispanics/Latinos		0.9

Site Tools

Any word
 All words
 Exact phrase
 Sound-alike matching

Change Text Size: Default [+1](#) [+2](#)

Recommend Asian-Nation to a Friend

- [Need Detailed Customized Statistics?](#)
- [Discuss this Article and Other Issues](#)
- [Print This Page](#)
- [Bookmark Asian-Nation](#)
- [Translate This Page Into Another Language](#)

View Photos of Singles Near You

I am a Seeking a

Age to

Ethnicity
 (Hold down CTRL for multiple selections)
 Asian
 Black
 East Indian

Near Zip Code

Most scholars who study intermarriage, rather than including immigrants who came to the U.S. already married, concentrate only on Asians who are "U.S.-raised": either born in the U.S. or who came to the U.S. at age 13 or younger and were therefore primarily raised and socialized in the U.S. (the "1.5 generation") and who presumably got married in the U.S.

The statistics for this U.S.-raised group are on the [next page](#) and you should definitely compare both sets of numbers because they can differ significantly. The numbers in bold **black** represent the group with the highest percentage among their gender, while the group with the bold **red** number has the lowest percentage.

These numbers were updated on **November 3, 2004** -- if you arrived at this page from another link that quoted different statistics, you should note that these are the most valid and up-to-date numbers available. Also keep in mind that although generally accurate and reliable, Census sample data is not completely perfect and that there will always be some sampling errors.

Similarly, the reason why the percentages in the table do not add up to 100% is because they do not include people who are married to groups that are not listed in the table (i.e., married to an Asian group other than the six listed in the table, to American Indians, to multiracial respondents who claim more than one racial identity, and to those who self-identify as "Other," "None," or just "American.")

PATTERNS OF MARRIAGE AMONG ASIAN AMERICANS

These are certainly a lot of numbers to consider. Basically, what these stats tell us is that among the six major Asian American ethnic groups, among both husbands and wives, the groups that are **most likely to have a White spouse** are Japanese. Although the numbers for intermarriage with Blacks and Hispanics/Latinos are low, Asians who are most likely to intermarry with Blacks are Asian Indian husbands and Filipino wives while Filipino and Japanese husbands and Filipino wives are most likely to intermarry with Hispanics/Latinos. Those who are most likely to marry within their own ethnic group are Korean husbands and Asian Indian wives. Finally, Japanese (husbands and wives) are most likely to marry another Asian American (outside their own ethnic group). See the summary below (and represented by the bold numbers in the table):

Husbands -- **Most** / **Least** Likely to Have a(n) Spouse:

Wives (277,096)	Koreans	69.4
	Other Asians	2.8
	Whites	24.3
	Blacks	1.7
	Hispanics/Latinos	1.4
Vietnamese		
Husbands (205,149)	Vietnamese	92.4
	Other Asians	3.7
	Whites	2.7
	Blacks	0.1
	Hispanics/Latinos	1.1
Wives (221,331)	Vietnamese	86.4
	Other Asians	3.3
	Whites	9.0
	Blacks	0.3
	Hispanics/Latinos	1.0

Sample sizes are in parentheses
 Read about the [Methodology](#) used to calculate these statistics

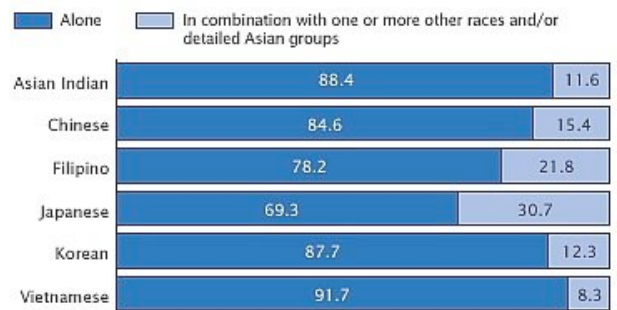
- Endogamous -- **Most:** Koreans / **Least:** Japanese
- Other Asian (Pan-Asian) -- **Most:** Japanese / **Least:** Asian Indians
- White -- **Most:** Japanese / **Least:** Vietnamese
- Black -- **Most:** Asian Indians / **Least:** Koreans
- Hispanic/Latino -- **Most:** Filipinos / **Least:** Koreans

Wives -- **Most** / **Least** Likely to Have a(n) ___ Spouse:

- Endogamous -- **Most:** Asian Indians / **Least:** Japanese
- Other Asian (Pan-Asian) -- **Most:** Japanese / **Least:** Asian Indians
- White -- **Most:** Japanese / **Least:** Asian Indians
- Black -- **Most:** Filipinos / **Least:** Chinese
- Hispanic/Latino -- **Most:** Filipinos / **Least:** Asian Indians

These results can be considered in combination with the Shinagawa and Pang article, which points out that for all Asian ethnic groups and both husbands and wives, the percentage who are intermarrying with Whites has **increased** in recent decades, with the one exception of Japanese American wives. However, their study also finds that all Asian ethnic groups and husbands and wives are also more likely to **marry another Asian** (either within their own ethnic group or some other Asian ethnic group) than before and that despite the increasing popularity of Asian intermarriage with Whites, the data show that these days Asian Americans are much more likely to marry another Asian than to marry a White person.

Nonetheless, intermarriage is making its mark in the Asian American community. The chart from the Census Bureau chart below reports that among the six major Asian American ethnic



groups in 2000, Japanese Americans had the highest proportion of their total population that are in combination with at least one more Asian ethnic group (i.e., Japanese-Chinese) or with at least one other race (i.e., Japanese-White) at over 30%.

Conversely, Vietnamese Americans have the lowest such rates, which makes sense because they are the most recently arrived Asian ethnic group and it is likely to take more time for them to become 'maritally assimilated.' In fact, demographers predict that by the year 2020, almost 20% of all Asian Americans will be multiracial and that figure will climb to 36% by the year 2050.

Now that we have a general picture of what the marriage rates are for all members of each of these six Asian American ethnic groups, on the next page we will take a more specific look at **only those Asian Americans who grew up in the U.S.** and are therefore most likely to have been socialized within the context of American intergroup relations -- the U.S.-born and those who immigrated to the U.S. as children.

CONTINUED

1 | 2 | [Next >>](#)

Related Articles:

- [Asian Cultural Icons -- Hot or Not?](#)
- [Multiracial/Hapa Asian Americans](#)
- [Socioeconomic Statistics & Demographics](#)

Bookmark this Article at:

- [BlinkList](#)
- [Del.icio.us](#)
- [Furl](#)
- [Spurl](#)

Copyright © 2001-2006 by C.N. Le. [All rights reserved.](#)

Suggested reference: Le, C.N. 2006. "Interracial Dating & Marriage" *Asian-Nation: The Landscape of Asian America*. <<http://www.asian-nation.org/interracial.shtml>> (November 12, 2006).

[Jump to Another Page in the Issues Section](#)

[Home](#) | [About & FAQs](#) | [Contact](#) | [Culture](#) | [Forum](#) | [History](#) | [Issues](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Links](#) | [Viet Nam](#) | [Site Map](#)

