

# A Profile of the Nation's Foreign-Born Population From Asia (2000 Update)\*

Issued February 2002

*Census Brief:  
Current Population Survey*

CENBR/01-3

## One-quarter of the United States' foreign-born population is from Asia.

In 2000, 7.2 million of the nation's foreign-born residents were born in Asia, up from 5.0 million in 1990. The increase represented a continuation of this population's rapid growth since 1970, when it numbered about 800,000. The total more than tripled in the 1970s, then nearly doubled in the 1980s.

Asian-born residents comprised 26 percent of the country's foreign-born population in 2000, not statistically different from 1990.<sup>1</sup> Previously, their share doubled from 9 percent in 1970 to 19 percent in 1980.

## Several Asian nations contribute a sizable number of international migrants.

In 2000, the five largest contributors to the nation's Asian-born population were China, India, Korea, the Philippines and Vietnam.<sup>2</sup> For all but Korea, the number of people hailing from each nation rose significantly from 1990 to 2000. (See Figure 1.)

## The Asian-born population is concentrated in a handful of metropolitan areas.

Close to half (about 45 percent) of the nation's Asian-born population lived in 1 of 3 metropolitan areas: Los Angeles, New York or San Francisco. Within the San Francisco area, the Asian-born population

<sup>1</sup>Categories of ethnicity and race are not interchangeable with geographic region. For example, about 15 percent of the foreign born from Asia are White non-Hispanic.

<sup>2</sup>Owing to sample size, it is not possible to rank these countries exactly by contribution.

made up more than half of the foreign-born population. (See Figure 2.)

## The Asian-born population has one of highest citizenship rates among foreign-born groups.

In 2000, 47 percent of the population from Asia were naturalized U.S. citizens. Only those born in Europe had a higher rate (52 percent).

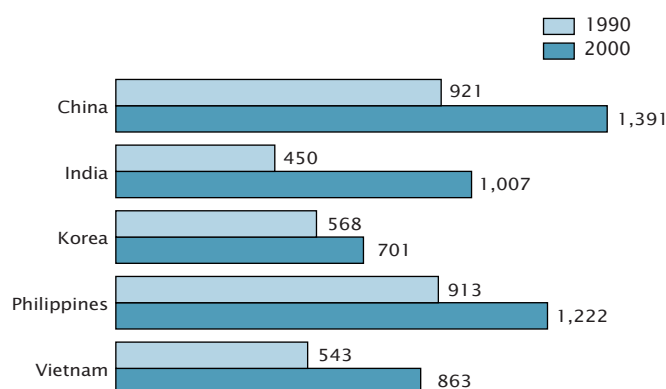
## Asian-born population compares favorably with other foreign-born populations and natives.

Unless otherwise stated, the following indicators are based on March 2000 Current Population Survey data:

- *Household income:* Households with a foreign-born householder from Asia had

Figure 1.  
**Top Countries of Birth of the Foreign-Born Population From Asia: 1990 and 2000**

(Numbers in thousands)



Note: China includes Hong Kong and Taiwan.  
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, P23-206, Figure 3-1.

U S C E N S U S B U R E A U

Helping You Make Informed Decisions

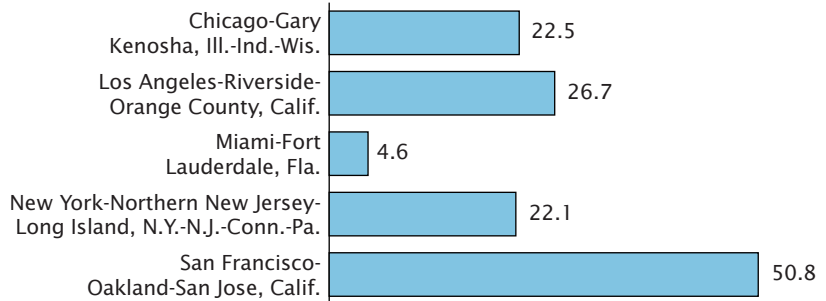
U.S. Department of Commerce  
Economics and Statistics Administration  
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

a median income of \$51,400 in 1999 — the highest income of any foreign-born group and higher than the median for all native households (\$41,400). (The median for all foreign-born households was \$36,000.) The high income levels for those born in Asia may be the result of several factors, including a relatively high proportion of both male and female workers in managerial and professional specialty jobs.

- **Poverty:** Thirteen percent of Asian-born residents were poor in 1999, similar to the 11 percent rate for all natives. The rate for all foreign-born people was 17 percent.
- **Program participation:** Seventeen percent of Asian-born residents participated in 1999 in one or more means-tested, noncash assistance programs such as Medicaid; that was similar to the rate for natives (15 percent) but less than the 21 percent for all foreign-born residents.
- **Occupation:** Thirty-nine percent of Asian-born workers were employed in a managerial or professional specialty job, higher than the proportion for either native (31 percent) or foreign-born workers as a whole (25 percent).
- **Health insurance:** Fifty-three percent of Asian-born workers had employment-based health insurance coverage, similar to the rate for all native workers (55 percent). For foreign-born workers as a whole, the proportion was 45 percent.
- **Education:** The proportion of people 25 years or older who were born in Asia and had a high school education or higher — 84 percent — was slightly less than the proportion for the native population (87 percent). It was considerably higher, however,

Figure 2.

### Percent of the Foreign-Born Population Born in Asia for Selected Metropolitan Areas: 2000



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, PPL-145, Table 5-2D.

than the percentage for the foreign-born population as a whole (67 percent).

- **Household size:** Households with an Asian-born householder had an average of 3.18 people, not different statistically from the average for all households with a foreign-born householder (3.26 people). Both were larger than the average size of households with a native householder: 2.54 people.
- **Homeownership:** Fifty-two percent of Asian-born householders owned the home they lived in, not statistically different from the rate for all foreign-born householders (49 percent) but lower than that for natives (70 percent).

### More Information:

The information in this Census Brief is based on findings from *Profile of the Foreign-Born Population in the United States: 2000*, Current Population Reports, Special Studies, P23-206. The report may be found on the Internet at <<http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/foreign.html>>. Paper copies also may be ordered from the Census Bureau (telephone: 301-457-2422 or e-mail: <[pop@census.gov](mailto:pop@census.gov)>). Funding for the report was provided by the

Immigration and Naturalization Service, U.S. Department of Justice.

### Contacts:

#### Foreign-Born Population:

Lisa Lollock or  
Dianne Schmidley  
301-457-2403  
<[pop@census.gov](mailto:pop@census.gov)>

#### Asian Population:

Claudette Bennett  
301-457-2402  
<[pop@census.gov](mailto:pop@census.gov)>

#### Census Briefs:

Robert Bernstein  
301-457-3030  
<[pio@census.gov](mailto:pio@census.gov)>

*The data in the report are from the March 2000 Current Population Survey. Data from 1990 and earlier censuses are included for comparison. Statistics from sample surveys are subject to sampling and nonsampling error. The Census Bureau's Population Estimates Program uses different methods to estimate population by nativity and may show slightly different estimates of foreign-born and native populations from those presented here. Census 2000 data on nativity are scheduled to be released during 2002.*

\*For a listing of countries that constitute Asia, see PPL-145, Table 3-2.