Asian Americans as the Yellow Peril: From Coolie Competition to Covid-19

Dr. Faye Caronan, Associate Professor Ethnic Studies
Asian Americans report over 650 racist acts over last week, new data says

“The deliberate use of terms like ‘Chinese virus’ has definitely fanned the flames of racism toward Asian Americans in this country,” one nonprofit leader said.

Source: NBC News, March 28, 2020
Learning Outcomes

By the end of this webinar, you will be able to

• Define the Yellow Peril stereotypes of Asian Americans

• Explain how these stereotypes result in discriminatory laws and treatment targeting Asian Americans
Yellow Peril Stereotype: Asians as a threat to American Civilization
Threat to White Working Men

The American Gulliver and Chinese Lilliputians.

SHALL THE LAST SPIKE BE DRIVEN?

(From the Philadelphia North American.)
Threat to American Morality

Threat to American Hygiene

• Source: New York Public Library
Threat to American Health

Source: The Wasp. May 26, 1882
Threat to White Nations

Source: MIT Visualizing Cultures: Yellow Promise, Yellow Peril
CONSEQUENCES OF YELLOW PERIL STEREOTYPE
1880 Denver Race Riot

Source: Wikimedia Commons
Asian Immigration Exclusion

- Chinese Exclusion Act
- Gentleman’s Agreement
- 1917 Immigration Act
- 1924 Immigration Act
- 1934 Tydings-McDuffie Act/Philippines Independence Act
Extensive Immigrant Screenings

• Source: National Archives
Bubonic Plague Outbreak Responses, 1899 & 1902

Source: Hawaii State Archives Digital Collection
Impact on Asian American Businesses

Chinese American fruit peddler
Source: El Pueblo Monument Photo Collection

Japanese American family farmers
Source: Densho Digital Repository
Aliens Ineligible for Citizenship

Asian immigrants as forever foreigners
Internment of Japanese Americans

Evacuation of Japanese of the West Coast
March 24 - August 11, 1942

Assembly Centers
Relocation Centers
U.S. Army Camps
Relocation Cities
Murder of Vincent Chin

Source: Detroit Free Press, July 1, 1982
RECENT YELLOW PERIL EXAMPLES & COVID-19 YELLOW PERIL RESURGENCE
turning their back on the principles
New NYC Chinese Restaurant Draws Swift Backlash to Racist Language [Updated]

Newly opened Lucky Lee’s is facing backlash to racist language, like an Instagram post that claimed dishes like lo mein at Chinese-American restaurants leave diners “bloated and icky.”

Source: ny.eater.com
What’s in a name?: WHO Infectious Disease Naming Best Practices

Avoid using
- geographic locations
- people's names
- animal species or food
- cultural, population, industry, and occupational references
- terms that incite fear
Scientists find no direct evidence new coronavirus was spread by humans eating bat soup

Bats are one of many animals known to host many coronavirus and they are on sale at the open air market in Wuhan, China, leading to speculation.
7:16pm on a wednesday
never seen Big Wong so empty except in the AM

cc: @rung555 @dimsumnyc

Source: Instagram @inmyrunningshoes
Airbnb Host Cancelled This Taiwanese Student’s Booking Over Coronavirus Fears

Louise Hsin-Yuan Peng, who had been nowhere near virus danger-zones, said she received a "xenophobic" message after arriving in the UK.

By Kate Forrester
Learning Outcomes Review

In this webinar, we have learned

• What the Yellow Peril stereotype of Asian Americans is
• How the yellow peril stereotype has resulted in discriminatory laws and treatment targeting Asian Americans
Allyship and AAPI Resistance

WE COMMIT TO RESISTING RACISM & BIGOTRY BY INTERROGATING OUR OWN HISTORIES, LISTENING & TAKING ACTION
"I am not a virus": France's Asian community pushes back over xenophobia

Asians in France created a Twitter hashtag #jenesuispasunvirus to push back against racist incidents as a result of coronavirus.

#RacismIsVirus
is a campaign to RISE UP against the violence and xenophobia directed at ASIANS AND ASIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES in the wake of the coronavirus so that all citizens of our country can LIVE IN DIGNITY AND PEACE.
Official Statements Matter

Source: Denver Public Library
In Denver, we value equity and inclusivity- and we will not tolerate discrimination of any kind.

It’s disheartening to learn that at a time like this - when we should all be coming together to fight a common enemy, COVID-19... that we are hearing increasing reports of people in our Asian community being harassed and targeted for this epidemic.

As Mayor of the City and County Denver, I can assure you we will continue to stand up against racism, fear-mongering, and misinformation... See More

Local Statements Against Hate

COVID-19 Update:
Discrimination and Harassment Incidents
March 27, 2020

Dear CU Denver community,

I am writing today about a recent increase in discrimination and harassment directed toward those perceived to be of Chinese or, more generally, Asian descent. I am very sorry to report that we are seeing examples of this directed at some of our students, faculty, and staff.

We are hearing reports of epithets being shouted at them as they walk down the street and some are even being physically assaulted.

When faced with this type of constant, heightened discrimination, many of our friends and colleagues of Asian descent are feeling uncomfortable and unsafe. This may put their mental health at risk.

It is important for all of us to reject anti-Asian discrimination and harassment, even as represented in the guise of people expressing fear of COVID-19.

In my time here, I’ve heard from you that our diversity -- our respect for differing ideas, opinions, and cultures -- is overwhelmingly what makes you most proud of CU Denver. Our shared responsibility is to put that diversity into action by ensuring that every single member of our community feels welcome, safe, and included.
Individual Allyship

Stand with our Asian, AAPI communities

Aim for compassion and unity

Interrupting bias—calling out or in

Refusing to share misinformation and rumors

Donate to a reputable aid organization
CU Denver & Anschutz Medica Campus Office of Equity
www.equity.ucdenver.edu

Campus Police Departments

Auraria Campus PD - 303-556-5000

CU Anschutz PD - 303-724-2000

Denver Police Department Bias Motivated Incident Report Call 720-913-6458
or biascrimesinfo@denvergov.org

Boulder County DA Bias Incident Hotline 303-441-1595

National AAPI Hate Crime Report
www.standagainstthatred.org
Upstander Training Organizations

- Anti-Defamation League
- Asian American Advancing Justice
- Hollarback
- Southern Poverty Law Center - Teaching Tolerance
Thank you! Any Questions?