

Opinion

# COVID-19: An Asian American Perspective

By Guest Contributors (<https://www.dailyprincetonian.com/staff/guest-contributors>) | April 14, 2020

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Senior Airman Rhett Isbell / Washington Headquarters Services

Dear fellow Tigers,

In a momentous speech delivered just six days after the devastating Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, President George W. Bush unequivocally condemned prejudice against the Muslim American community and called for interreligious harmony. He rightly said (<https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010917-11.html>), “Those who feel like they can intimidate our fellow citizens to take out their anger don’t represent the best of America; they represent the worst of humankind.”

The raging COVID-19 pandemic continues to devastate the lives, health, and prosperity of our world, our university family, and our near and dear ones. It has (<https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html>) infected millions of people, killed over 100,000 people around the world, including over 18,000 people in the United States alone as of April 10, and shows no

signs of slowing down in the immediate future. This tragedy has also brought communities together to feed vulnerable families, care for seniors, and secure personal protective equipment and supplies for our emergency responders.

We stand in solidarity with everyone, not just those in our Asian, Pacific Islander, and Desi American (APIDA) community. This crisis has definitely brought out the best of humanity in many people, but sadly, we also continue to witness the worst in others.

The past few months have seen (<https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2020/03/27/822187627/new-site-c%20%20collects-reports-of-anti-asian-american-sentiment-amid-coronavirus-pand>) a massive rise in the number of racist attacks against the Asian community here in the United States due to coronavirus. The website “Stop AAPI Hate” has documented (<http://www.asianpacificpolicyandplanningcouncil.org/stop-aapi-hate/?fbclid=IwAR3JVK%20%20lK6InoJIVAS2brulW7EGgoVTSPsbwZxQ16TyRgD4F5VYXI8gTqDo>) over 1,100 incidents of such racial attacks. Rather than unequivocally condemning those attacks, President Donald J. Trump initially fueled the flames of intolerance by tweeting (<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/trump-tweets-about-coronavirus-using-ter%20%20m-chinese-virus-n1161161>), “The United States will be powerfully supporting those industries... that are particularly affected by the Chinese Virus.”

We strongly condemn such toxic rhetoric and “dog whistle racism” of renaming the coronavirus after a racial group. While the President eventually denounced the racist attacks against Asians, it was too little, too late. His continued (<https://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/newsfeed/2020/03/trump-defends-calling-coronavirus-chinese-virus-200323102618665.html>) use of rhetoric against China without a distinction between the government and the people directly negates his purported denouncement of any attack.

While the 2020 Democratic Presidential candidate Andrew Yang should be commended for his untiring efforts to increase Asian representation and visibility and his service to the Asian American community, we also respectfully disagree with his opinion piece (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/04/01/andrew-yang-coronavirus-discrimination/>) published in the Washington Post on April 1. Specifically, we denounce the notion that Asian Americans must “show our American-ness in ways we never have before.” Our community has faced many challenges assimilating into America because of vast differences of culture and languages, along with adverse stereotype-driven perceptions. Continued perpetuation of the idea that any group that comes to the United States *must* assimilate drives to the “othering” of already marginalized communities.

We, the Princeton University Asian American Students Association Executive Board (AASA E-Board), strongly believe that unity and community is necessary in this hour of crisis. As such, we cannot idly sit by and watch as racist attacks continue to threaten and divide our country. We call on President Trump and his administration to publicly denounce their past use of the term “Chinese Virus.” We also call on the surrounding community and the public to be more aware of how their actions can adversely impact people in marginalized communities. We would like to encourage our community members to contact us with further questions or concerns and to share their personal experiences during this crisis.

With love,

The AASA E-Board

Written and signed by: Kesavan Srivilliputhur '23, Policy Advocate

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**OtherWay** • 11 days ago • edited

You know you are a leftist when a disaster is just another opportunity to assert your false group-victimhood narrative.

People who are not obsessed with their Democrat formulated genetic division group, call on all leftists to lay off their politics of whining and division for just one week during the disaster, and do something marginally beneficial for the country and not just for their DNC approved group. For once.

4 ^ | v • Share

**Dick Stephens** • 10 days ago

Ok, as article title suggests, it's just "a perspective". Fair enough. But it is misguided and completely wrong interpretation of facts. Do bias attacks against Asian Americans take place, spurred by blame for the pandemic? Yes, it correct and it is abhorrent. Period. Full stop. No buts and ifs. Does Trump's insistence on calling this scourge Chinese Virus has anything to do with that and can in any way be attributed as motivation for such attacks with even a shred of evidence (let alone critical thinking?) ABSOLUTELY NOT! SO, why would someone make such a thesis? Stupidity? Agenda? who knows. An Asian American perspective should be, why would Chinese government make massive PR campaign to assign blame to United States. Why did Chinese Communist government was so secretive at the onset of the pandemic, unwilling to share data with the world, eliminating whistle blowers, steering World Health Organization towards completely false and misleading narrative? Why did Xi Jinping deliberately sicken the world? These are the questions Asian Americans, who by the way include people of Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese and other ancestries, should be asking.

2 ^ | v • Share

**CentralJerseyMom** • 9 days ago

How about an African-Chinese perspective? This from today's NY Times:

"A restaurant in northern China put up a banner celebrating the virus's spread in the United States. A widely circulated cartoon showed foreigners being sorted into trash bins. In Beijing and Shanghai, foreigners have been barred from some shops and gyms.

Perhaps nowhere has xenophobia manifested itself more strongly than in the southern city of Guangzhou, a manufacturing hub with a large African population. After five Nigerians there tested positive for the virus, African residents reported being evicted from their homes and hotels.

They have also been ordered to undergo 14-day quarantines at their own expense, even if they have no recent travel history or have already tested negative. Images shared on social media showed black people forced to sleep on a sidewalk, and a sign banning black people from a McDonald's."

1 ^ | v • Share

**CentralJerseyMom** • 10 days ago

German measles, Spanish influenza, West Nile virus, Zika virus, Ebola virus, Lyme disease. And many, many others. Yes, it's critical that we not name any disease after the place where it first originated. And what's up with naming diseases or conditions after the people who first identified them? Parkinson's disease, Huntington's disease, Hodgkin's lymphoma, Alzheimer's disease, Cushing's syndrome, etc. Clearly an attempt to blame the disease on the person who first described it.

^ | v • Share

**Martin Van Nostrand** • 11 days ago

You've missed the point.

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