

ASIAN-AMERICAN PHILANTHROPY: EXPANDING CIRCLES OF PARTICIPATION

By Jessica Chao

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A sian Americans have richly diverse, active and dynamic traditions of sharing wealth, talents and time. Traditions stretch back from the earliest days of Asian immigration to the nineteenth century, continue to evolve today and are likely to expand well into the future.

Within Asian America, the most vibrant, broad-based traditions of giving and volunteering are the informal and indigenous forms practiced in various immigrant communities. American-style philanthropy, with its custom of giving discrete gifts of money to nonprofits in return for tax deductions and recognition beyond the Asian-American community, is a relatively new concept for Asian Americans. (This is not surprising given that much of Asian America is still immigrant America and as such remains dependent on indigenous customs of generosity.) Through family, friends and myriad self-help, mutual aid and other affiliated associations, Asian Americans create community and find the emotional, social and financial support they have not been able to tap into elsewhere in America. Because the rhythm of Asian-American immigration perpetuates the “first-generation” phenomenon, these indigenous forms of volunteerism and philanthropy will continue to serve a vital need. They will, and should be encouraged to, flourish even as more acculturated Asian Americans develop and increase their strategies for using American-style philanthropy as a tool for investing in more formal community structures and social change agendas.

This article is intended to help mainstream and Asian-American institutions understand and engage Asian-American donor communities and to encourage Asian Americans to recognize and celebrate their philanthropic impulses and traditions. To that end, it explores the various practices of Asian-American philanthropy from the point of view of the giver or donor: beginning with an overview of informal philanthropic practices among Asian Americans; followed by the perspective of Asian-American major donors and their experiences with institutional, American-style philanthropy; continuing with a brief discussion of the unique opportunity that Asian-American community funds pose for stimulating institutional giving; and concluding with a summary further implications for increasing institutional philanthropic giving. The progressive focus on institutional philanthropy should in no way be interpreted as devaluing existing, and thriving, informal giving practices. Key findings are as follows:

- **Asian-American philanthropic practices vary widely:**
 - No single form of Asian-American philanthropy exists. Within the Asian-American community, philanthropy is as richly diverse as the population itself, reflecting the specific social adaptation techniques of various ethnic groups, from a variety of economic strata and from various levels of acculturation and Americanization.
 - Each wave of Asian immigrants, whether Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean or South Asian, adapts to its new environment by sharing goods, time and money to survive, to create community and to invest in and adopt a new community of participation.
 - Among Asian Americans, informal giving is related to close family and social circles. These circles of family and friends seem to expand as financial means increase and as the perception of needs transition from survival and emergency issues to broader “quality of community life” issues.
 - The variety of indigenous forms of giving money and volunteering time through mutual aid associations and other essentially immigrant self-help strategies exist simultaneously and in parallel with other forms of giving including Asian-American alumni and professional associations, volunteer language and cultural schools and elite philanthropy to major mainstream institutions.
 - The practice of sending remittances to support family, schools and projects that improve the living, health and community conditions in the “home” country permeates Asian-American immigrant generations. Annual remittances are estimated to be in billions of dollars.
 - The most frequent answer to questions about why Asian Americans have given time or money is that giving is done out of a sense of duty and obligation to one’s family, community and society. All of the donors interviewed cited family influence as a major, if not the only, reason why they feel obligated to give.
 - **Donor characteristics depend on generation and country of origin:**
 - Although Asian-American ethnic groups exhibit more similarities than dissimilarities, a few variations exist among the groups: Japanese Americans have a more focused interest in civil rights, civil liberties and political representation issues—even outside the Japanese-American community. Filipino Americans focus a great deal of their giving to the Philippines. Chinese-American donors are particularly diverse in their interests, but cultural heritage is a strong interest.
 - Second- and third-generation donors are more likely to give to social justice and civil rights causes and to have a stronger sense of philanthropy as a tool for civic and political participation. As a result, pan-Asian and collective, united or federated fundraising efforts are potentially appealing to them.
 - More often than not, the major donor class created its wealth in this country. Entrepreneurial wealth has tended to come from high technology industries and financial services, especially investment banking and venture capital. There is a great
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deal of trade and business with Asia and a few interviewees noted real estate in their family portfolios. Professional affluence is most often from law, medicine and financial services.

- **Many factors determine giving preferences:**

- Preferences for giving to ethnic-specific, pan-Asian or mainstream causes or organizations correlate with the social and business community that the donor participates in most actively. Sequential generation, ethnicity, type of business and where the donor was educated are strong indicators of the likely social circles in which he or she participates. In general, the more Americanized Asian Americans are likely to give to formal nonprofits, to U.S. entities and to pan-Asian charities. In contrast, the more foreign-oriented tend to give more informally to family, friends and mutual aid associations; to charitable causes in their home country and to ethnic-specific causes.
 - Financial contributions in other than nominal amounts almost always follow significant contributions of time through volunteering on boards, advisory councils and gala committees.
 - Passion for a cause or constituency—such as the elderly, youth or victims— respect and confidence in the leadership of the nonprofit, and identification with the social and business peer group represented by the board are all critical in decisions about committing significant time and money to an organization.
 - Education and scholarships, nursing homes and services for the elderly, youth services, immigration services, cultural institutions and cultural heritage programs, and social justice and civil rights causes receive the most frequent, if not the largest, gifts according to the interviews for this article and other studies.
 - In recent years, foreign-born entrepreneurs and wealthy families from Korea, India and the Chinese diaspora have employed donations as a means to invest in U.S. nonprofits. They are often significantly wealthier than their American-born counterparts.
 - Like their mainstream counterparts, most of the donors interviewed prefer supporting immediate needs and direct services rather than endowments or service organizations.
 - The first donation to a formal nonprofit outside the ethnic community is often to the United Way or to an alma mater. As donors became more familiar with nonprofits, however, the United Way and alma maters do not always remain the highest priority for giving.
- **Successful fundraising efforts require a “personal” touch:**
- The most effective fundraising appeal is the personal “ask” from a well-respected friend or business associate or a family member. The prestige of the person asking for funds has direct impact on the likelihood of a positive response.
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- The personal connection to and participation in a particular nonprofit is a strong indicator of the likelihood that a financial contribution will be made, especially when larger gifts are requested.
 - Among Asian-American donors, there is an accepted “tit-for-tat” or “quid pro quo” practice among social and business peers. Requests to favored charities are generally reciprocated with donations to the peers’ favorite causes.
 - Visible acknowledgement of contributions and gifts tailored to different levels of giving is important to most of the Chinese, Japanese and Filipino Americans interviewed.
 - Family gifts are an appealing fundraising tool for universities and museums. Gifts named in memory of a deceased family member also hold appeal.
 - Filipino-American donors tend to enjoy events and social gatherings, particularly dinner dances and entertainment. Many fundraisers and donors mentioned that this is the most effective way to introduce a Filipino American to a charity. Second- and third-generation Japanese Americans, and often Chinese Americans, enjoy golf tournaments and ethnic holiday celebrations. Personal invitations are important for acceptance to these fundraising events.
 - **Appeals for endowments, foundations, community funds and united funds require special thought:**
 - Most million-dollar-plus gifts from Asian Americans are for capital projects—some also endowment maintenance for the capital project.
 - Endowment gifts were almost always given to institutions from which the donor or the donor’s family benefitted—an alma mater or hospital, for example—or an institution that the donor participated in on a regular basis, such as a cultural institution. They were never the first contribution to an institution. The most frequent contribution to an endowment was to the alma mater in response to an ongoing, publicized capital campaign.
 - When asked whether they would consider giving endowment gifts to Asian-American organizations, many of those interviewed mentioned that issues of permanence, track record, history and strength of leadership would be important factors to consider in such a decision.
 - Most of the Asian Americans interviewed preferred not to have a foundation but preferred creating their own foundation to setting up a fund in a community foundation because of a fear of losing control to an unfamiliar entity.
 - Among donors, the appeal of Asian-American federated or community funds, and united fundraising organizations varied. For smaller donors (\$10,000 or less in annual contributions), particularly American-born professionals, pooling funds collectively can be attractive. Such funds offer a way of “paying at the office,” aid in deciphering among many charities and are attractive in their coalescing role. For several major donors with specific passions, the united, collective or federated fund concept was
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not as compelling. They fear potential bureaucracy and losing control, and prefer instead to make their own decisions on charities.

Bearing these findings in mind, the following four basic steps are recommended to promote and stimulate institutional philanthropic activity among Asian Americans:

- Improve the fundraising skills of Asian Americans who serve on executive or development staffs or boards of nonprofits that are connected to the social and business networks of various Asian-American communities.
 - Increase Asian-American participation on the executive staff and boards of mainstream philanthropic institutions so that Asian Americans have the opportunity to gain broader overviews of the superstructure of the U.S. nonprofit sector and the social customs of institutional philanthropy.
 - Engage and collaborate with ethnic-specific and Asian-American nonprofits that already have the trust of Asian-American communities to adapt U.S.-based giving vehicles to the personal and associated giving impulses of their constituencies.
 - Recognize, and inform others of, the generosity among Asian Americans and their patterns of helping, serving and sharing—which have proven to be effective survival and success strategies. Celebrate these traditions as significant contributions to American society.
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ASIAN-AMERICAN PHILANTHROPY: EXPANDING CIRCLES OF PARTICIPATION

Within Asian-American communities, philanthropy includes a wide variety of institutional and informal giving mechanisms that involve donations of money, goods and time. Some of these mechanisms are very insular systems within ethnic-specific enclave communities; others are fully integrated activities undertaken with the assistance of major mainstream institutions. Moreover, philanthropy within this community now includes a rapidly developing, dynamic Asian-American nonprofit sector that provides social, cultural, health, legal, educational and human services to the communities it serves.

The sequential waves of Asian-American immigrants each have distinctive cultural and demographic identities that have been shaped by economic and political forces—both in Asia and this country...

In recent years, the number of Asians who have immigrated to the United States has increased dramatically. As a result, the Asian-American population is still largely foreign-born and immigrant.¹ Still, Asian America has a history that reaches back to the mid-1800s. Thus, in many regions of the United States there exists a small but growing population of more acculturated, third- through fifth-generation Asian Americans. Therefore, indigenous forms of immigrant self-help and mutual aid parallel religion-based and elite institutional philanthropy. Although philanthropy within this community has typically involved sharing home and resources with extended “family,” more formal philanthropic commitments to major establishments such as universities, museums and hospitals are on the rise.

The sequential waves of Asian-American immigrants each have distinctive cultural and demographic identities that have been shaped by economic and political forces—both in Asia and this country—and by the changes in U.S. immigration law.² How each wave and cultural group adapted to the new environment depended on their economic means, level of education and skill, ethnic background and reason for coming to the United States. Immigrants used, and continue to use, the sharing of goods, time and money to survive, create community in the face of a hostile or at least remote social environment and to invest in and adopt a new community of participation³ as they plant permanent roots.

No single model defines Asian-American philanthropy. As richly diverse as the population itself, philanthropy within this community reflects the social adaptation techniques of non-

English-speaking political or economic refugees, educated professionals, farm workers, garment workers, shopkeepers and successful multimillionaire entrepreneurs. Asian Americans are inner-city ethnic enclave dwellers, affluent middle-class suburbanites and “Park Avenue” Chinese.

Understanding the extent of the philanthropic impulse within this community requires an understanding of its economic means. Aggregated data from the Census Bureau and other sources obscure the diversity of economic and occupational status among Asian Americans. On the basis of census data, Asian Pacific Americans are now outpacing white Americans in terms of average total household or family income. When the impact of earnings among Latinos, which are included in statistics on white incomes, and issues of geographical concentration are discounted, however, this picture changes. Paul Ong and Suzanne Hee found that when data were corrected to account for Latinos and geographical issues, median household income for Asian Pacific Americans was \$37,200 and \$40,000 for non-Hispanic whites, and that the poverty rate was 13 percent versus 7 percent, respectively. Ong and Hee also found greater variation among the various Asian ethnicities: Affluence was more concentrated among those of Japanese, Chinese, South Asian, Filipino and Korean descent, and poverty was more concentrated among various Southeast Asian ethnicities.⁴

How did philanthropic activities and practices of Asian Americans begin? What are they and where did they come from? And are they interrelated, sequential or mutually exclusive?

INFORMAL GIVING THROUGH CARE OF EXTENDED FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

Interviewees across three ethnic groups—Chinese, Japanese and Filipino Americans—and authors of various studies of these and other Asian ethnic populations have described informal giving practices among Asian Americans.⁵ Many of these descriptions suggest that the sharing of resources with others is an important value and common practice within these communities. Immigrant-, second- and occasionally third-generation households often include close and extended family as household members. Beneficiaries of this largess tend to be relatives who are less fortunate, newly arrived and in need of “transitional” help, or individuals who are too old to care for themselves. Families often take in and raise the children of relatives and friends. Often help is extended to marginally related acquaintances or referrals from mutual acquaintances from the same village or province “back home.” Frequently, these friends are referred to as cousins, aunts, uncles or siblings to reflect the intimacy of relations, but also because, in the words of one interviewee: “It’s just easier to explain to Americans that way.”

Within the Asian-American community, the informal practice of giving and sharing is rarely referred to as philanthropy or as volunteering. Charitable gifts are viewed as family obligations. And, ironically, these acts of generosity are the reasons Asian Americans often give for not becoming involved in philanthropic activities. As one interviewee stated: “Because we have less means, we don’t have the capacity to give to charity. We have so many family obligations.” The extent and variety of resources exchanged informally ranges from full financial support to isolated expenses such as school tuition, funeral and medical costs; from emergency “loans” to

childcare services; from housing to mere tutoring. The range of people included as part of a “family” varies from the inner sanctum of the familial unit to broader concentric circles of relations, “clan” members and friends. Because of the variety of gifts given and the size of the circles of giving, it is clear that Asian Americans are, in fact, extensively involved in philanthropic activities.

First-generation immigrant families of all economic classes send substantial financial aid—in the form of remittances—to their “home country” to support family, as well as community improvements, schools and hospitals. Several Filipino Americans interviewed for this article estimated that of the \$8 billion in overseas remittances that feed the Philippine economy, as much as 80 percent is sent by Filipino Americans. By other estimates, Vietnamese Americans send as much as \$500 million annually to their homeland, and in the fiscal year that ended June 1997, Bangladeshis sent home more than \$1.6 billion.⁶ Several interviewees for this article also mentioned that remittances are sometimes so significant that they are considered a source of revenue for several Asian nations. Although most of remittances are sent to family, village leaders and foreign institutions directly, Asian Americans sometimes use mutual aid associations and other types of indigenous U.S.-based nonprofits to distribute funds to their homelands.

Although the practice of sharing financial and other resources with close relations reflects the cultural values of loyalty and obligation to family members, community and the larger society that pervade nearly all Asian ethnic groups, it may also say more. Some argue that these practices are the result of immigrant survival strategies, and that for some, they have grown out of a sense of “doing a good deed in turn” as repayment of a similar generosity received in the past. The practice might very well have evolved from Asian cultural sensibilities, albeit it in a highly selective manner. Not all Asian values appear to survive the acculturation process, nor are all of the transplanted practices shared as pervasively in the old country.

MUTUAL AID ASSOCIATIONS

Just as the informal displays of generosity by Asian Americans are all but transparent to most Americans, so too are the roles that more formal indigenous voluntary associations play in Asian-American immigrant communities. Faced with hostility, racial discrimination, violence and isolation, Asian-American immigrants needed—and continue to need—mutual aid and social organizations to help them create community and social structure. To fulfill this need, they created mutual assistance, business, fraternal and trade associations. Today, although most of these organizations are fully incorporated nonprofits, many younger ones are unincorporated volunteer groups with less formal structures.

Although the literature mainly describes associations created by the Chinese-American community, Japanese, Filipino and in more recent publications, Korean and Vietnamese-American associations are also mentioned. Counterparts to these organizations are sometimes found in the country of origin, but their roles in the United States in creating community, and in some cases maintaining social order, is uniquely Asian American. Each immigrant ethnic group has created its own organizational structure and opportunities for social, financial, housing, employ-

ment or other human services. Below is a compilation of observations and interpretations of Asian-American donors and scholars.⁷

“...giving tends to be non-controversial to organizations such as the Chinese Hospital, the United Way and Chinese community schools.”—An interviewee speaking about Chinese associations

Mutual aid associations are supported through membership dues and special contributions by members. Although these associations offer a variety of services, most sponsor social events and parties in celebration of special occasions and ethnic-specific holidays. Many also provide services such as job training and counseling, temporary housing, immigration services, English lessons and business training, and some conduct cultural programs and classes and youth activities. In addition, many—but not all—serve as indigenous financial institutions, providing rotating credit to Asian Americans who wish to establish business enterprises. (This practice is particularly prevalent in the Korean community associations, but it is also practiced among Chinese, Japanese, and to a lesser degree, Filipino and South Asian associations.) A few run credit unions.

Many of these associations also fundraise to support their communities. Special collections of donations from members have been:

- Distributed to help defray funeral and medical costs and as emergency funds for the impoverished or elderly among the association membership;
- Employed to build association meeting houses, cultural centers, nursing homes and childcare centers; and
- Used to maintain scholarship funds and other grant awards.

One interviewee noted that in Chinese associations, “giving tends to be noncontroversial to organizations such as the Chinese Hospital, the United Way and Chinese community schools.”

Mutual aid associations also play a critical role as nonprofit vehicles for sending remittances to home countries. Remitted funds support such activities as agricultural improvements and the construction of transportation and road systems, water and irrigation systems, schools and other educational institutions, hospitals and nutritional centers. Scholarship funds to support students in the home country are also a common use of remittances from these organizations.

Association membership is predominantly first-generation immigrants. Members often view their associations as the second stop for financial or other help—appeals for assistance from immediate and extended family come first. For many, a surname or village association is the center of their social life.

Second- and subsequent-generation Asian Americans are not nearly as active as first generation members. This is most probably due to cultural and social differences that occur as American-born generations interact with both their Asian-American communities and the larger

mainstream community. As second- and third-generation Asian Americans become more economically mobile and move away from their respective ethnic enclaves, they have less in common with the membership of indigenous voluntary associations and have less need for immigrant-related services.

Some of the larger associations augment services provided by member volunteers by employing staff or contracted workers. In most, however, all association operations and programs are conducted by volunteers—most fairly informally with few rules or financial systems of accountability. This mode of operation contributes to the “invisible” quality associations have to the outside world and serves as somewhat of an obstacle to extending the association’s reach beyond the immigrant community.

Within associations, processes for distributing funds, grants, scholarships or other forms of financial aid or awards can also be rather informal. Several of those interviewed for this article ventured to say that selection processes can be very personal and are sometimes controlled by the inner circle of an association’s leadership. The informal, or at times, political nature of these processes may contribute to the lack of participation by second- and third-generation Asian Americans who are accustomed to more open, democratic processes or standard business practices.

Interestingly, although all of the Asian-American donors interviewed for this article remarked that they or their parents had given substantial amounts, relative to means, most did not define the practice of giving money or time to these myriad associations as philanthropy. So ubiquitous is the association of the word “philanthropy” with one select form—elite philanthropy to major institutions, that many do not even recognize the philanthropic impulses within their own traditions.

Types of Mutual Aid Associations within Various Ethnic Groups

Chinese associations include family surname, village, district, dialect and business associations, craft and trade guilds and merged or consolidated associations of community businesses that have national affiliations such as the Consolidated Chinese Benevolent Associations often referred to as the Chinese Six Companies in the San Francisco Bay Area. Lai, Chan and Kwong all refer to the human and social services provided by these associations, the social control the strongest and most active associations have over the immigrants and the status the organizations confer to their leadership.⁸ Many of the associations have a long history rooted in the early days of the West—particularly in California—when Chinese immigrants provided the labor pool required for this nation’s mining, fishing, agricultural and railroad industries. Associations developed both as vehicles for comradeship within these early “bachelor” societies and as defense mechanisms against the extreme discriminatory actions of the larger American society—some of which were legally sanctioned and sometimes led to violence against the immigrants.

More recent Chinese associations, particularly those established on the East Coast, were not motivated by the same needs and are primarily social and economic in nature. As Lai points out, these organizations are still evolving today.⁹ New associations are developing in response to the

needs of newer immigrant dialect and provincial groups, while older, Cantonese language-based associations are losing some of their community control. First-generation members age, their American-born offspring move away and newer immigrant groups move in. For instance, in New York's Chinatown, while a few surname associations such as the Wong Family Association and the Lee Family Association are still vibrant, memberships in many of Cantonese-based associations have dwindled and the newer Fukien Association is growing larger and stronger.

Historically, Chinese associations have been able to exert social control over their community because of their leadership's ability to communicate with the outside world on members' behalf. In addition, during the earlier years of many Chinatowns, associations frequently arbitrated disputes among members and local businesses. The leadership of these associations were, and remain, primarily merchant-class based. Many of the associations also controlled employment opportunities for new, lesser skilled non-English speaking immigrants. Observers such as Peter Kwong, argue that because of this merchant-class leadership, an association's service and loyalty to its members has often been somewhat compromised.¹⁰

Korean Americans, particularly immigrant communities since 1980, are known for their "rotating credit" associations, or kye. Although membership in these types of associations is predominantly female in Korea, in the United States males also participate. Rotating credit associations tend to be informal social groups whose members make periodic financial contributions to a fund, which is then "loaned" to each contributor in rotation. In this country, the primary purpose of these loans is to start small businesses or buy homes.

Although Japanese-American communities had active prefectural associations similar to provincial, district or village associations, their most influential organizations were trade and agricultural associations and the many local chapters of the Japanese-American Associations of America. These organizations did not exert as much social or political control over their members and communities as did the Chinese associations. In the early years, Japanese-American communities were led by immigrants who became financially successful as a result of their entrepreneurial ventures in the farming and produce industries. Many of the agricultural and produce associations helped members start and grow businesses, while also arbitrating pricing and other disputes.

Korean Americans, particularly immigrant communities since 1980, are known for their "rotating credit" associations, or *kye*. Although membership in these types of associations is predominantly female in Korea, in the United States males also participate. Rotating credit associations tend to be informal social groups whose members make periodic financial contributions to a fund, which is then "loaned" to each contributor in rotation. In this country, the primary purpose of these loans is to start small businesses or buy homes. Early Korean Americans also created village councils and organizations such as the Friendship Society, Mutual Assistance Society and the Korean National Association and its many branches.

Early Filipino immigrants—many of whom were sent to the United States for education under the older U.S. colonial structure—formed fraternal organizations, including the Dimas Alang, Legionarios del Trabajo and the Gran Oriente Filipino. Eventually, more politically oriented groups such as the Filipino Federation of America and the Filipino-American Christian Fellowship were established. Filipino Americans also participate in associations based on common locality and, in more recent years, profession. Based on interviews and the literature, it appears that these organizations have never been as cohesive or powerful as their counterparts in the Chinese-, Japanese- or Korean-American communities. Although several provide typical mutual assistance services, such as collecting funds to provide funeral and medical expenses for less fortunate members, most function primarily as social clubs. Many have similar names, but are not part of a network of associations.

Many hypotheses as to why Filipino Americans have not formed as influential or powerful organizations as their Chinese, Japanese or Korean counterparts have been proposed. Some of those interviewed for this article note that family and the Catholic Church are the unifying participatory structures for Filipino Americans. Others believe that because of the past colonial experience, most Filipinos speak English and are familiar with many of the cultural practices of the United States before immigrating. As a result, Filipinos do not necessarily isolate themselves into the ethnic-specific enclaves that are so typical of the Asian-American immigrant experience. Finally, Elena Yu points to the lack of a mercantile class and the migratory nature of the agricultural workers as obstacles to creating strong Filipino community associations.¹¹

Very little is written about other Asian-American ethnic groups and their mutual aid associations. Observers do, however, acknowledge that associations similar to the village associations in Chinese-American communities have evolved in Vietnamese-American communities where they are providing mutual assistance services and serving as vehicles for sending money back to Vietnam. In his book, *Remaking America*, James A. Joseph notes that Asian Indians brought a strong tradition of voluntary associations and organized charity to this country and that a particular indigenous Parsi association known as *punchayet* evolved into a charitable entity that received donations from its constituents to dispense relief among Parsi communities.¹² In *Religions of Immigrants from India and Pakistan*, Williams refers to the many cultural, regional and national associations such as the All-India Cultural Associations, the Pakistan Friendship Associations, the Gujarat Samaj, the Tamil Sangam, the Bengali Association and the Telugu Association that serve these communities.¹³

FUNDRAISING AND GIVING THROUGH CHURCHES AND TEMPLES

Several, but not all, Asian-American ethnic groups give and share resources through religious institutions and organizations.¹⁴ In fact, Asian Americans practice a variety of formal and informal religious traditions. They worship within a variety of sects or subsects of Christianity, Buddhism, Islam and Hinduism. There are individuals who follow the philosophical and spiritual tenets of Taoism, Confucianism and Sikhs. And, there are individuals who are influenced by—but do not practice—various cultural forms of ancestor worship and several animistic-based

faiths practiced by tribal or minority populations in Asia. The Asian American who can point to one pure form of religious influence in his or her life is rare.

Although many ethnic groups maintain their traditional religious practices from the old country, they often develop distinctly hybrid forms of practice adapted to the United States and the needs of the specific immigrant populations. Buddhist churches and organizations serve the Japanese-American community in much the same way that the Hindu temples serve the Asian Indians. In addition to providing religious services and instruction, these institutions play a major role in the preservation of cultural heritage and social cohesion by celebrating ethnic holidays and supporting language and culture schools for children.¹⁵ Unlike their counterparts in the old country, these American religious institutions provide secular as well as sacred activities.

Many Japanese-American Buddhist churches sponsor picnics, ball games, dancing parties and other social events. Prior to World War II, they were the sole social center for many Japanese-American communities, particularly those in rural farming areas. After the war, several acted as temporary resettlement centers. (Church buildings were turned into hostels and provided other services to the many evacuees returning from the internment camps, not just to Buddhists.)

The South Asian population is spread throughout various geographical areas rather than congregated within ethnic enclaves. Because of this diversity, the religious institutions of this population both unify and attract groups that do not generally worship together in India and also serve as social centers for meeting co-ethnics. Many Indians will travel long distances from outlying towns and suburbs to attend their temples.

Many Christian Asian Americans developed their own “brand” or trademark of churches after converting to Christianity—whether the conversion occurred in the United States or in their country of origin. This is particularly noticeable in the Korean-American community, but is characteristic within Chinese- and Japanese-American communities. Although most often practicing within particular Protestant denominations such as Methodist, Baptist, Lutheran, the ministers of these indigenous churches are Asian American and conduct many, if not all, worship services in their respective native Asian languages. Social and charitable activities center on Asian-related holidays (in addition to religious holidays) and interests.

Author Ai Ra Kim describes distinctly Korean United Methodist Churches in northern New Jersey that adhere to Methodist doctrine but also have Confucianist cultural overtones,¹⁶ noting that the church supports community and social cohesion by celebrating Korean holidays and teaching the Korean language in Sunday school. These Korean churches serve the immigrant community by providing financial support, English classes, healthcare programs, human welfare programs, job information exchanges and leadership opportunities, which is similar to the services provided by the surname, village and business associations that serve Chinese Americans. For many Korean Americans, churches are the primary community social infrastructure. Many in this community are attracted to the church because of this social role. Kim notes that of the 70 to 80 percent of Korean Americans who are affiliated with Korean churches, about 40 percent became Christians after immigrating to America—in Korea a mere 20 percent of the population is affiliated with a church.¹⁷

Several interviewees also noted the importance of churches as human service providers in New York's Chinatown. They cited the True Light Lutheran Church, the Chinese First Presbyterian Church, the Transfiguration Roman Catholic Church and the Chinese Methodist Center as important service providers of language schools, daycare centers, afterschool programs and home attendant programs for the homebound elderly.

Filipino Americans are predominately Roman Catholic, but most do not worship in a Filipino-based or Filipino-led parish. The opinion of interviewees for this article who touched on this subject is that although most families give through the church, no indigenous church provides cohesive social or charitable structure for the Filipino-American community. The literature and interviews both suggest that because the church in the Philippines is a missionary church that relies on Vatican and other outside organizations for support, the practice of giving to charitable causes through the church has not fully developed in the Filipino-American community. Estimates are that 85 percent of Filipino Americans are Catholic but that only 17 percent of these individuals attend ethnic churches. Most attend "American" Catholic churches.¹⁸

Although little documentation of the practice and extent of giving to churches and temples by Asian Americans exists, many of those interviewed for this article acknowledge that weekly pledges and grassroots fundraising for special projects is commonplace. Many Buddhist and Christian churches practice tithing—especially Korean churches. Most often, the funds collected support the community church, its staff and the human service or cultural programs of its congregation. For some, however, a portion may also support the poor in the United States, the needy "back home" and other good works in this country and abroad. Numerous reports in Korean-American media describe church-based efforts to raise funds for the homeless or needy neighbors, particularly around holidays such as Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Kashima noted interfaith cooperative fundraising when, in 1975, 11 different Japanese-American Buddhist, Catholic, Protestant and independent churches joined as the Japanese American Religious Federation of San Francisco to sponsor a \$6.1 million housing project for low-income families and the elderly.¹⁹ Interviewees for this article noted that in recent years, informal voluntary groups and church organizations initiated grassroots efforts to raise funds for disaster relief for hurricane victims in the Philippines, flood victims in China and famine victims in Korea. Kashima and Williams also describe the fundraising efforts for the construction of Buddhist and Hindu temples. Many Buddhist women's organizations run food festivals and bazaars, selling Japanese food delicacies to raise funds for these projects. Williams noted that "Asian-Indians are temple builders..." and that by one estimate, Indian immigrants have donated more than \$100 million for such endeavors.²⁰

Although most Asian-American indigenous churches and temples are ethnic-specific, there are instances where the membership of older religious organizations has broadened to a more pan-Asian or even multiracial congregation. For several of the Christian churches that serve Japanese or Chinese Americans on the West Coast, this may be due to the high incidence of interethnic and interracial marriages among American-born members. Some estimate the incidence of "out-marriage" is as high as 46 percent of married American-born Asian women and 33 percent of men. Because of the interest of Americans in eastern religions and the

phenomenon of out-marriage, some Buddhist and Hindu temples have experienced a rise in multiracial membership. The impact this will have on the cultural agent role of religious organizations or their targets for charitable support outside their congregations is not clear.

Although a few of those interviewed for this article hold contradictory views on whether the role of religious institutions diminishes among second-, third- and subsequent-generations of Asian Americans, it is quite clear that many of these individuals choose either to attend mainstream churches or cease church attendance altogether. These individuals tend to live outside ethnic enclaves, speak English and have facility with U.S. social customs. Thus, they have many more choices for social, religious and civic-oriented activities.

The Asian-American church is not necessarily as ubiquitous an organizing force among nonimmigrant Japanese and Chinese Americans. A few interviewees even remarked that, in general, the more Americanized among them are much less focused on religion.

Because interviews for this study focused on Chinese, Japanese and Filipino major donor communities, less information was culled on the particular qualities of giving and volunteering through indigenous Asian-American churches and temples. Also, because the interviews focused more on affluent donors who have the means to give major gifts, little information on grassroots philanthropy through smaller donations to religious and other community institutions was collected.

ASIAN-AMERICAN ALUMNI AND PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

In addition to mutual aid and religious organizations, many of the foreign-born Asian Americans distribute their individual charitable donations through alumni and professional associations. For the purposes of this article, alma maters are most often defined as universities located in the country of origin but are occasionally private secondary or boarding schools. Professional associations include the many groups of ethnic-specific physicians, teachers, scientists, nurses, etc. that are independent of the mainstream—not Asian-American networking subsets of major mainstream professional associations.

In contrast with the practices of more mainstream alumni and professional associations, which concentrate on activities specific to supporting a particular school or profession, Asian Americans look to these indigenous organizations for additional activities. They provide opportunities to socialize with peers of the same ethnic and class background and also serve as vehicles for pooling funds for specific charitable causes. Support is not limited to members' alma maters, but also is provided to other educational and human service projects in the home country, and occasionally for needs in this country. Members raise funds for such efforts as healthcare and nutrition projects, building roads and elementary schools and scholarships and financial aid for higher education—not just scholarships for individuals training for careers in their professions. A Chinese American interviewed for this article mentioned that his alumni association raised money to build elementary schools in China, while a Filipino interviewee described how his local medical professional association raised funds to support a nutrition center in the Philippines.

Many of these organizations serve as informal structures that organize nongeographically determined communities of Asian Americans. They seem to identify and create communities that are defined by interest and experience for primarily—although not exclusively—foreign-born, middle-class Asian Americans, which is in contrast to the focus of mutual aid associations, which create community out of shared human service needs and proximity to ethnic enclave. Unlike many members of mutual aid associations whose English-language skills are limited, most members of these types of associations work for mainstream employers and corporations, and therefore, speak English during the work day. Although many choose to socialize among persons with common cultural and educational backgrounds, some are also active in non-ethnic organizations and groups.

[A] Chinese-American alumnus...spoke of having to raise an additional \$300,000 before he would feel comfortable making his next trip "home." (As current chair of his association, he felt he had to achieve the same level donations as his predecessor.)

It also appears that the events and activities required for successful fundraising serve as ways to strengthen the social connection. Participating in meetings and social activities to further a cause and raise funds fortifies the sense of "obligation" to the social network and the beneficiaries of the collected funds. A Filipino interviewee noted that in any given year, alumni associations can raise as much as \$1 million for an alma mater. A Chinese-American alumnus provided further insight into the fundraising process when he spoke of having to raise an additional \$300,000 before he would feel comfortable making his next trip "home." (As current chair of his association, he felt he had to achieve the same level donations as his predecessor.) Several other interviewees mentioned the issue of "saving face" as the reason for giving. When a friend asks, or when all of one's social peers are enthusiastic about giving, it is hard not to participate. Occasionally, funds are raised for projects in this country—most often when the projects are for services for the economically disadvantaged elderly among their ethnic group and community or cultural centers.

Networking subsets of mainstream professional and alumni associations are a growing trend among Asian-American groups. These groups tend to consist of both American and foreign-born Asian Americans of various ethnic backgrounds. Fundraising and social events are more specific to the "host" alma mater and professional association. Activities generally focus on social and business networking and mutual professional support rather than broader charitable issues.

SATURDAY SCHOOLS

Nearly every Asian-ethnic community runs at least one language and culture school. Although many of these schools are sponsored by churches or other religious organizations, most are run independently by groups of volunteer parents and teachers who donate significant time—if not significant money—coordinating the educational and social activities of the schools. Intended

primarily for the offspring of immigrants, these schools are most often attended by “1.5”²¹ and second-generation children on weekends, hence the nickname “Saturday schools.” Although little has been written about these schools, observers know that:

- Participation in the schools is not nearly as high among third- or fourth-generation children;
- Teachers receive nominal pay—if they are paid at all;
- Because few schools have their own buildings, classes are usually held in rented rooms in churches, temples and public schools;
- Many schools also sponsor annual Asian cultural celebrations around specific holidays or political commemorations, and raise funds from their members and the families of their student bodies to cover the production costs and the fees to bring in special attractions; and
- Some schools have been known to raise funds for victim relief in Asia in response to natural or economic disasters.

While mutual aid associations primarily serve needier communities and alumni and professional associations tend to serve middle-class and more affluent communities, Saturday schools tend to span all classes and ethnic groups. Rarely, however, do different ethnic or social communities exist within the same school community. These schools are both geographically and dialect-based, some focusing on inner-city enclaves and urban dwellers and other focusing on suburbanites and their children. The proliferation of, and participation in, these schools is enormous. One interviewee estimated that there are about 4,000 Taiwanese-based schools alone.

Although these schools are commonplace, again, few of the donors interviewed for this article offered them as examples of philanthropic traditions among Asian Americans. Several interviewees did, however, cite their parents’ involvement in organizing for and fundraising through the schools as “community work,” and referred to their parents’ involvement as models for their own future volunteerism. As important a role that these schools play in the social and cultural lives of participants, interviewees and the literature both report that the effectiveness of these schools in educating the young is rather minimal. Most Japanese, Chinese, Korean and Hindu Saturday schools teach little more than ethnic folk songs, household conversation and basic cultural history. Still, parents view these schools as an important means for their children to maintain a tie with their heritage and to meet and play with other children of the same ethnicity.

The fact that fewer of the more “Americanized” Asians participate in these schools should not be construed as an indicator that acculturation means giving up all ties to Asian culture, community or values. Cultural ties may be more integrated among many other cultural influences and access to participation may change. For instance, many third- and fourth-generation Asian Americans who did not attend Saturday schools as children choose to study Asian languages when they reach the university level of their education.

GIVING AS DUTY AND OBLIGATION BELIES UNDERLYING GENEROSITY

The active, rich traditions of philanthropy that emanate from the customs and values of the cultures of Asian America are often so integrated into survival strategies that they are conducted without celebration or recognition. Some of the activity is either so generous in impulse and so integrated into the fabric that binds peer, family and community relations, that the tax deductibility of donations does not even enter the decision-making process. Much of the informal giving among first-generation immigrants has no tax benefit because giving is conducted through friends, relatives or foreign entities. Moreover, church giving and donations to quasi-institutional organizations such as social or fraternal groups, or the Saturday schools rarely ends up on tax returns.

The obligation to help others is so ingrained in Asian-American cultures that many do not see gifts of money and time as philanthropy or describe their impulses to assist others as “generosity.” Giving is simply a part of life in Asian America. In the words of one interviewee, “We help, because we are asked.”

Because most indigenous Asian-American philanthropy never passes through the normal radar of philanthropic activity in this country, many assume that interest and participation in civic and community welfare does not exist within these communities. Nothing could be further from the truth. Isolated from, or shut out of, the established community structure of the majority culture, Asian Americans create, support and participate in myriad parallel nonprofit structures. They give enormous amounts of time, skills and money to build these organizations. The obligation to help others is so ingrained in Asian-American cultures that many do not see gifts of money and time as philanthropy or describe their impulses to assist others as “generosity.” Giving is simply a part of life in Asian America. In the words of one interviewee, “We help because we are asked.”

Time and again, interviewees used various forms of the term “obligation” to describe both their reason for giving and sharing, and how beneficiaries of those gifts—both individuals and organizations—are selected. The majority of donors interviewed across all three ethnicities and all three generations used the term “obligation” unabashedly and without prompting. Within the Asian-American culture, one is obligated to give to: parent, family and community; and alma mater, organizations or types of organizations that helped the donor or the members of the donor’s family in the past.

Still, interviewees did not express this obligation with negative overtones. Obligation is a matter-of-fact term used to describe close relationships and the expectations that arise from those relationships. Perhaps, being simultaneously accountable to and for others is a more accurate interpretation of the term. Perhaps, giving and sharing with others is considered one of the defining “responsibilities” of close relationships. One nonprofit executive observed that

successful Asian Americans often feel an obligation beyond their immediate circle of peers and family, describing this sentiment as follows: “One must replenish the water from the well so that future generations may also drink.”

THE NONPROFIT LEGACY OF THE 1960s AND 1970s

The civil rights and anti-war movements of the 1960s and early 1970s hit Asian America at a pivotal time. A critical mass of second- and third-generation Asian Americans (primarily those of Japanese and Chinese descent) entered and graduated from elite and public institutions of higher education. Inspired by the spirit of community activism and identity-focused consciousness raising, these newly empowered campus activists and their community activist counterparts questioned the effectiveness of services provided through the older social order of indigenous associations. At the same time, federal and state funding for social welfare programs created by the War on Poverty favored professionally run nonprofit agencies that could navigate government regulations and bureaucracies.²²

The Immigration Act of 1965 lifted restrictive quotas on Asian immigrants. Thus began the tremendous influx of Asian immigrants of greater cultural, ethnic and economic diversity that continues today. In addition to increasing the flow of immigrants from the Philippines and China, great numbers of Koreans and South Asians entered the United States. Moreover, the end of the Vietnam War and the continuing political strife in Southeast Asia caused an influx of Vietnamese, Cambodian and Laotian refugees fleeing persecution. Within a few years, Koreatowns and Little Saigons had developed. The needs and issues of Asian America have become more complex with each new wave of immigrants.

Compounding this confluence of external factors bearing down on the Little Tokyos, Chinatowns and Manillatowns, the Immigration Act of 1965 lifted restrictive quotas on Asian immigrants. Thus began the tremendous influx of Asian immigrants of greater cultural, ethnic and economic diversity that continues today. In addition to increasing the flow of immigrants from the Philippines and China, great numbers of Koreans and South Asians entered the United States. Moreover, the end of the Vietnam War and the continuing political strife in Southeast Asia caused an influx of Vietnamese, Cambodian and Laotian refugees fleeing persecution. Within a few years, Koreatowns and Little Saigons had developed. The needs and issues of Asian America have become more complex with each new wave of immigrants. Existing indigenous association structures have been stretched and taxed to the limit and Asian Americans have responded by creating new associations or calling for new types of organizations that are capable of linking their needs more effectively with the outside majority community and government funding.

Although many of the grassroots organizations and programs started by college students and community activists were short-lived, and many dissipated as government programs

receded during the Reagan years, several organizations remain viable human service providers. Many gave birth to offspring organizations. Some died, but the organizations they influenced and helped launch are their legacy. The most successful were and continue to be led by both immigrant and native-born Asian-American professionals primarily educated in the United States and more familiar with American public and private nonprofit institutional structures and systems. From that period to today, Asian-American communities have added health clinics, daycare centers, legal aid services, housing aid and other formal, incorporated community programs to the mutual assistance groups. As the Asian-American population aged the number and size of nursing homes grew, and as communities became more established and less focused on survival issues, cultural centers also grew.

The myriad examples of such social and human service organizations include San Francisco's Asian American Community Center, the Chinese Progressive Association, Self-Help for the Elderly and the Asian Law Caucus. Organizations such as the Korean Community Center of East Bay in Oakland began somewhat later. Early nonprofits serving New York's Chinatown included the Chinese-American Planning Council and Chinatown Health Clinic, followed a few years later by the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund and many others. Los Angeles' growing Asian Pacific Planning Council was formed in 1976. Today, it is a growing coalition of social service agencies that currently numbers about 40 organizations. Early members of this coalition included the Little Tokyo Service Center and the Asian American Drug Abuse Program. Pushed by the convenience needs of various funding agencies and by the Asian-American identity movement, many pan-ethnic or Asian-American organizations were established.

The activism movement also fostered and supported community scholars and artists who then created numerous history, cultural heritage and Asian-American arts programs. Although one such program—New York's Basement Workshop—did not survive, it launched or influenced numerous cultural organizations like the Museum of the Chinese in the Americas, the Asian American Arts Center, the annual Heritage Festival and Asian Cinevision, which continue today. On the West Coast this movement helped spawn Los Angeles' Japanese American Cultural and Community Center. In Seattle, it resulted in the Filipino community establishing the Filipino American National Historical Society.

Structured and managed after the mainstream model of incorporated nonprofits, many of the social service and healthcare organizations became successful in obtaining government contracts and grants for their support.²³ As poverty programs were reorganized over the past 20 years, however, this dependence on government funding resulted in a fragility in organizational structure that began with the "trickle down" politics of the 1980s and was exacerbated when welfare reform reduced funding in the 1990s. After government funding, these organizations have the most success attracting private mainstream foundation grants to launch new programs and corporate contributions in the form of buying tables at gala events. It is somewhat ironic, that while religious organizations and mutual aid associations rely on the support of grassroots fundraising and donations from members of fairly modest means, many of these newer nonprofits with more developed organizational structures rely on funding sources from

outside their community. Both models have limited growth and effectiveness in the face of economic, political and community changes. It is only in recent years, that these nonprofit agencies have begun to take advantage of the growing numbers of middle-class and affluent members of their communities, and to develop sophisticated appeals to individual Asian-American donors.

Nursing homes for elderly Asian Americans and cultural or community centers seem to be the most successful of Asian-American nonprofits at raising significant support and attracting participation from individual Asian-American donors. These organizations are not service agencies. They are institutions with buildings and tangible and often highly visible programs. Examples of such centers include the Japanese American National Museum and the Japanese American Community and Cultural Center—both in Los Angeles—and smaller centers within other ethnic communities. This observation is supported through interviews with numerous representatives of Asian-American nonprofits as well as numerous donor lists. This trend also became apparent from the descriptions of personal giving provided by donors interviewed for this article. The trend may be an adaptation of the Asian-American tradition of families caring for their elderly personally and the overarching interest among Asian Americans in perpetuating cultural pride, which cuts across all generations and ethnic backgrounds.

In addition to serving broad Asian-American and ethnic-specific communities with healthcare, employment, immigration, legal aid and educational services and cultural programs, on occasion many service organizations raise funds for specific projects that do not directly benefit their ongoing programs and members. Very often the focus is on scholarships for training in professions where Asian-American representation is particularly low—for instance, social work or public interest law. Such scholarship programs have been run by the Asian American Journalists Association, the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund and the Asian American Federation of New York. Occasionally, the Asian American Arts Alliance is able to raise foundation grants that it then “regrants” to other nonprofits.

Since the early 1990s, several federated funds and united fundraising appeals have formed. As subsets of Asian-American nonprofits, these charitable nonprofits raise funds to support the variety of nonprofits that provide direct services to various Asian-American communities. Three such organizations that serve a broad cross section of ethnic and pan-ethnic social service, educational and cultural agencies were identified and studied for this article. Many interviewees also mentioned very young, ethnic-specific united appeals that serve the Korean and Filipino communities. Several charitable funds—such as the Philippine American Foundation—are called “foundations,” but are in fact public charities. A few are referred to as “funds.”

Many of the donors and nonprofit fundraisers interviewed for this article noted the difficulty in explaining the appeal of united fundraising efforts (whether pan-Asian or ethnic-specific). Because of the disparate backgrounds of the Asian-American population, the highly personal aspect of traditional Asian giving practices and interests in immediate impact rather than arms-length distanced support, the challenge of explaining an essentially western construction is enormous. Some believe that ethnic-specific fundraising, even among collective appeals, would be easier.

Nearly all of the 39 donors and others interviewed for this article also mentioned the need for, and potential of, this type of vehicle to focus Asian Americans on their collective ability to gain visibility among the broader mainstream community. Several interviewees noted that collective pooling of funds could be a powerful community unifier for the growing numbers of “westernized” Asian Americans. As successful as some of these educated professionals are, many still feel somewhat shut out of the majority dialogue on civic and social values in mainstream politics, media and public policy arenas. Regardless of their ethnic differences, individuals recognize that because most of the American public views all Asian Americans as one group, there is a need to make “collective” statements about their economic, political and social views. Finally, a growing number of American-born Asians believe they have more in common with other American-born Asian ethnics than with more recent co-ethnic arrivals to this country.

The points of disagreement among those interviewed were not so much on the value of united appeals or community funds, but on implementation and strategy. All interviewees seemed to say, “It’s a great idea, but are we ready for it? How do we do it?” Several argued vehemently that Asian Americans are not ready to give to a cooperative fund, but an equal number—or more—argued emphatically that the timing is right for such appeals. They sense that growing numbers of Asian Americans have the capacity to give and that awareness of how larger strategically focused pooled funds could attract attention and respect is also growing. All of these funds are, however, quite small. The largest and most visible are the Asian-American community funds.

THE GIVING PATTERNS OF ASIAN-AMERICAN MAJOR DONORS

Although informal philanthropy among Asian America spans ethnicity and class, its primary purpose has been to help immigrants transition into successful lives in the United States. Giving is primarily in the form of myriad smaller donations from community members of limited means and the newer middle class. What are the giving patterns among those with more visible dollars who have achieved a certain level of financial comfort? As Asian Americans have become more westernized, how do they participate in western forms of philanthropy? Who are the affluent donors? How are Asian Americans participating in elite philanthropy? When and how do they choose to give?

All of these questions were posed during interviews with the Asian Americans who are considered major donors for the purpose of this article. Such donors are defined as persons who have given, or are believed to have the capacity to give at least \$10,000 per year to charitable endeavors. The interview subjects for this article contribute both time and money to nonprofits and live in the San Francisco, Los Angeles, Seattle and the New York metropolitan areas.

Of the study’s main interviewees, the annual family giving pattern was:

- In the \$100,000-plus range with a few giving substantially higher amounts and reporting major gifts in the seven-figure range for about 25 percent of interviewees;
 - In the \$50,000 to \$100,000 range for about 16.7 percent of interviewees;
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- In the \$10,000 to \$50,000 range for about 45.8 percent of interviewees; and
- Probably less than \$10,000 a year for about 12.5 percent interviewees.

Fifteen interviewees from a related study tended to have smaller annual giving patterns: 20 percent were in the \$10,000 range and 80 percent were probably in the \$2,000 to \$5,000 range.²⁴ (See “Methodology” on page 248 for a more detailed description of the interviewee pool.) Interestingly, most of the smaller donors interviewed are first-generation immigrants.

Although a few of those interviewed had inherited or married into their wealth, most came by their affluence through work. About half are professionals in the legal, medical and financial fields, and the other half are successful entrepreneurs. Of the entrepreneurs, a few are in the high tech industry; several are in financial services, particularly investment banking or venture capital; some are in food-related enterprises; and a few mentioned real estate as part of their family business. In terms of family background, the majority came from middle-class educated families. Only a few mentioned more modest circumstances, relating stories of childhoods in Chinatown or losing family businesses or farms as a result of war or internment. The few with inherited wealth described a history of family affluence both here and in Asia.

All of those interviewed are educated—many with advanced or professional degrees. Moreover, with the exception of several of the Filipino donors, all interviewees were educated in the United States, regardless of birthplace. Relative to the “average” Asian in America, they are quite “westernized.” Only one interviewee mentioned using a financial or legal advisor to help determine charitable giving preferences and directions; several, however, mentioned using their family’s general practice lawyer or accountant to help set up their foundations. All said that they learned about their favorite charities primarily through family, friends and business associates.

Where Do Asian-American Donors Contribute Their Time and Money?

Interviewees spoke enthusiastically—often emotionally—about the projects, organizations and causes to which they give time and money. In frequency order, donations went most often to annual fund campaigns and general support and then to projects of specific interest to the individual donor. The range of recipients of gifts was broad. The larger the gift (relative to other annual contributions), the more likely:

- The support was project specific;
- The donor devoted personal time to the project by serving on the board or leading fundraising efforts; and
- The support was in support of direct services and institutions rather than for service organizations, regrating programs or “pass through” vehicles.

As reported by researchers such as Francie Ostrower²⁵ and Russ Alan Prince and Karen Maru File,²⁶ the giving practices of these donors do not seem to differ greatly from those of the mainstream elite. The social networking to encourage giving can, however, be quite different.

Anecdotal information about various informal, mutual aid associations and other more indigenous ethnic nonprofits indicates that among Asian Americans close family and social peer

circles are the strongest influences on informal giving practices. As financial means increase, perceptions of needs transition from survival and emergency issues to broader “quality of community life” issues and circles of family and friends expand. Concern for immigrant services may extend to cultural and educational programs or more generalized services for the elderly and programs for youth.

Still, those using institutional vehicles or mechanisms of philanthropy, appear to include the greatest range of charitable interests. Although trends occur in the types of recipient organizations supported, the causes targeted for support and the populations selected to receive donations, there is also great diversity in how philanthropy is addressed in different areas. For instance:

- An interest in culture can extend beyond Asian “cultural heritage” programs and centers to such areas as ballet, Asian collections at major museums, American decorative arts, the symphony, opera, contemporary Asian music, etc.;
- An affinity for the plight of immigrants or the experience of internment might develop into a more generalized interest in civil rights, social justice and legal aid;
- Support for nursing homes might broaden to include other services for the elderly; and
- Beneficiary populations might be extended to other Asian ethnicities or other racial categories.

In fact, although donors interviewed for this article differed substantially in their preferences and the proportion of total funds given to specific demographic groups, none mentioned giving solely to projects and organizations specific to their ethnic group. Self-reported philanthropic activity suggests that donors simply give without limiting their generosity—even when they express preferences. Largest gifts, however, tend to support projects with Asian or Asian-American themes, such as particular collections or departments at mainstream institutions.

Favorite Causes and Types of Organizations

When asked to name the types of organizations to which they give, the most frequent answers from interviewees were universities, museums, cultural centers and nursing homes. When asked what types of causes they give to, the most frequent responses were more general health or human services for both the elderly and for young people; educational programs; immigration services; cultural programs—especially cultural heritage; civil rights or social justice issues; family programs; and legal services.

For the most part, these responses matched answers to questions on recent contributions, largest contributions and “favorite” contributions and were consistent with findings from several studies conducted, or observations made by others who had conducted similar interviews.²⁷ Interest in these organizational types and program areas crossed all three of the primary ethnic groups studied and were consistent across all three generations—although they were most concentrated among interviewees who were first- or second-generation Asian Americans. (Third-generation Asian Americans often described even broader charitable interests.) Given Asian cultural values of respect and obligation to the elderly, the care and nurturing of the next

generation and the high regard for education as an intellectual pursuit as well as a vehicle for success, these responses are not surprising.

When you reach a certain level you want to be seen as an American, not as another ethnic group, so your giving interests change—An Asian-American Donor

Interviewees attributed their interest in civil rights and social justice to their identification with, and desire to help, others going through the hardships they once experienced. As a result, although donations to organizations that African Americans, Jews or other ethnic groups was reported, interest in civil rights issues that relate to Japanese-American internment and immigration was particularly strong. Interest in civil rights and social justice was most often expressed by second-generation interviewees of Chinese or Japanese descent. Cultural programs were most often motivated by a pride in Asian heritage and a desire to teach subsequent generations and the broader public about Asian cultural contributions to civilization. Several second- and third-generation Asian-American interviewees were also interested in cultural endeavors quite removed from Asian-specific arts or literature—particularly members of the third generation and individuals who married non-Asians.

The Issue of Race- or Ethnic-Specific Giving

When asked whether they preferred giving to causes or organizations that target their specific ethnic group, to the larger population of Asian Americans or to the the American population as a whole, interviewees offered positive responses for each category. Analysis of actual giving practices among this group seem to indicate that in reality philanthropic choices sometimes differ from expressed preferences. Adding to the confusion of whether Asian Americans give solely “to their own” or to the broader population, are statements interviewees made indicating that they are “different” from their friends of the same ethnic group. The typical interviewee stated that: “I give more broadly than my friends.” Most stated that friends preferred ethnic-specific causes because they lacked the capacity to give to all of the larger concentric circles of the communities in which they participate. For instance, one Japanese American stated that “the tendency is to give to Japanese Americans, then to Asian Americans and then maybe to mainstream organizations.” To that, a successful Filipino-American surgeon added, “With their limited disposable income Filipinos first give to their families here and back there...then to causes in the Philippines...then to Filipino-American causes...then to Pan-Asian issues...and finally to mainstream institutions. Giving is generally in that order of preference.” A Japanese-American businessman reports that he gives more broadly because, he can afford to. Peers within the same ethnic group have less to give, and, therefore, must make choices. As a result, they generally choose to give to what they know best—the closest circle of participation.

Self-reports were somewhat unreliable because stated preferences were not always consistent with actual giving patterns. For example:

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- A prominent West Coast second-generation Chinese-American man expressed strong support for strengthening Asian-American identity, but then listed projects that were mostly Chinese-American related as examples of favorite causes;
 - A politically vocal Japanese-American woman mentioned adamantly that her strongest commitment is to Japanese-American causes and that she believes most Japanese Americans feel this way. She is, however, very active on the board of an Asian-American federated fund and she and her husband give and participate in the New York Philharmonic and other mainstream cultural institutions;
 - A prominent Filipino-American business woman said that she prefers Filipino causes to Asian-American causes, but recently participated as the honorary chair of two Asian-American gala events and listed the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and other social justice causes as recent recipients of her contributions;
 - Two third-generation Japanese-American donors mentioned separately that they are not deeply connected to Asian-American or Japanese-American communities and that their contributions tend to go to broader causes—One even said, “I think philanthropy should be color blind,” however, significant portions of their giving portfolio targeted Asian- or Japanese-American causes;
 - A few donors mentioned that they want to be known as average or mainstream donors—not “Asian-American” donors; and
 - One donor said, “When you reach a certain level you want to be seen as an American, not as another ethnic group, so your giving interests change.”

For all of these statements, and regardless of how preferences were described, significant portions (if not the majority) of the gifts given by those interviewed for this article seem to have gone to Asian-American organizations or Asian-related projects at mainstream institutions. This would not be the case for the “average, mainstream” donor, and is one of the primary reasons why cultivating and growing this donor community is an important goal for Asian-American community funds and other nonprofits.

Giving trends seem to follow a specific pattern. First-generation donors tend to give more exclusively to ethnic-specific causes both here and “back home.” By the third generation, however, the largest portion of their contributions tend to support mainstream organizations—at least among the Asian Americans interviewed for this article. At least four interviewees whose family foundations have already, or are in the process of passing leadership to second- or third-generation offspring, spoke of the process of changing the focus of their foundation’s giving. All noted that, over time, giving to foreign causes and entities generally decreased, and one interviewee stated that, “Unlike our father, we don’t have an obligation to support causes in the home village. We don’t feel we owe them. America is our home. We should support our new community.”

This pattern of giving is not, however, foolproof:

- First-generation immigrants who were educated in the United States and have a business clientele that reaches broadly across ethnic and racial lines tend to give more broadly;
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- Second-generation Asian Americans who grew up in ethnic enclaves or more traditional households and whose businesses focus on an ethnic clientele tend to give more ethnically or racially specific; and
- Inter-racial marriage has a profound influence on the breadth of a donor's generosity. Almost all interviewees who married non-Asians said that the family giving pattern was at least 50 percent to non-Asian related organizations and causes and a few also mentioned they are not as interested in Asian-American causes because of concern for the future interests of their biracial children for whom the "Asian connection" is not as strong.

It appears that the primary predictor of the organizations and causes an Asian-American chooses to support is the social and business network in which he or she participates. Generation and education are not so much predictors as indicators of the likely networks to which Asian Americans might belong. As a prominent Chinese-American donor put it: "If this were 10 years ago, I would have said that we stick to our own and give to our own only, but I see this changing." Moreover, because of social and family obligations, business interests and philosophical or political values, personal preferences are not always the controlling factor in giving. In addition, Asian Americans identify with multiple racial and ethnic categories depending on social, economic and political contextual factors. Michael Omi refers to this phenomenon as "situationally defined" and "strategically determined," but also writes that it is likely that the Asian-American identity will endure.²⁸

Mainstream Institutions and Elite Philanthropy

Nearly all donors interviewed for this article mentioned giving to their alma mater as well as the alma maters of their spouse, their children and other family members. Except in the cases of the several Filipino Americans who were educated abroad, this most often meant giving to major research universities and elite colleges of this country. For many, these gifts were more a question of obligation to support the institution that helped them succeed in life than a sense of community with other alumni and memories of college life. For several, the gifts result from an emotional attachment and the greater the attachment, the deeper the participation and level of giving:

- One highly successful fundraiser for a Japanese-American institution believes that the special relationship her donors have with their alma maters stems from feelings of "gratitude and obligation to an institution that gave them an educational opportunity at a time when many institutions turned them away."
 - One Chinese-American donor sums up his relationship with Columbia University as follows: "You have to remember that [at the time when I was in college] Ivy League schools had no interest in kids from Chinatown." And,
 - Another Chinese American who was sent to this country as a young boy speaks fondly of taking refuge in American schools. "My school was not just a way to succeed in this country," he explains, "we looked at our school as a refuge. There was so much turmoil and civil disturbance where we came from. The school became my home life."
-

Although some interviewees spoke of isolation and loneliness as a part of their college experience, most were very proud to have been among the first nonwhite students to attend their particular institution. One younger donor proudly volunteered the following: “I was not only one of the few nonwhites, I was also among the first class of women students at Yale.” In fact, all 39 donor respondents represent a class of “among the first” Asian Americans to not only enter, but also to achieve highly visible levels of success in their respective businesses and professions.

Although the most frequent answer to questions regarding interests for charitable giving was services for the elderly and the young, most of the largest reported gifts were to mainstream institutions such as universities, cultural institutions and hospitals. Examples of institutions that received gifts include: numerous universities and colleges—generally, but not exclusively the alma mater of the donor or the donor’s family; the Seattle Children’s Hospital; China Institute; the Asia Society; the Asian Art Museum (San Francisco); the Metropolitan Museum of Art; public television stations; and San Francisco Ballet. More often than not, these gifts were made in response to capital campaigns and focused on Asian or Asian-American content—if not institutions, as defined by composition of board and executive staff. For instance:

- The focus of major art museum gifts was the Filipino art collection in one museum and a Chinese collection in another;
- A few of the public television contributions were for documentaries dealing with Asian-American history or contributions to a particular topic; and
- Most of the seven-figure donations to universities were either related to Asian or Asian-American studies departments or libraries, or to departments in fields related to the donor’s business or own education such as engineering, math or technology.

Asian-American nonprofit executives often speculate about why Asian-American donors may give to mainstream causes and elite institutions. Many individuals that fundraise within the Asian-American community sense a need by donors for prestige and visibility. In this regard, a well-known former president of a university noted that, “The anonymous donor is rare among Asians and Asian Americans. They’re rare for everyone, but particularly among Asian-American donors.”

Many donors remarked that when they consider making large—six- or seven-figure— gifts, they take into consideration the capacity of the recipient organization and the strength of its leadership. When they make larger gifts, donors have higher expectations for accountability, want assurances that their money will be used wisely and expect greater impacts with larger amounts of money donated. It is for this reason that Asian-American nonprofits, many of which are still relatively young and less financially stable, are sometimes at a disadvantage when seeking this type of giving from wealthy Asian-and Caucasian-American donors.

Although many of the donors interviewed included programs and services that help the disadvantaged among their lists of those who received gifts, donations to those programs or services were relatively small. As a result, several executives and fundraisers of Asian-American nonprofits have the impression that Asian Americans who fit the profile of members of the

“The very wealthy don’t understand the poor. I finally got [a wealthy Asian-American] to make a donation of a few thousand dollars to my social service agency, but when she met the beneficiaries at our lunch celebration, she complained, ‘They don’t seem poor,’ and never gave again. She expected them to show up in rags.”—A second-generation Japanese-American donor who fundraises for a social service agency

major donor class are not interested in the plight of the poor. As a fundraiser with experience in both mainstream institutions and Asian-American organizations observed, “Most of the affluent in this country tend to be ‘self-made.’ They will contribute to emergencies and disasters or crises, but not provide ongoing support to people who they perceive as dependent on welfare.” And, a second-generation Japanese-American donor who fundraises for a social service agency bemoaned, “The very wealthy don’t understand the poor. I finally got [a wealthy Asian-American] to make a donation of a few thousand dollars to my social service agency, but when she met the beneficiaries at our lunch celebration, she complained, “They don’t seem poor,’ and never gave again. She expected them to show up in rags.” A successful fundraiser among Filipino Americans stated, “They’re terrible [wealthier second-generation Filipino Americas]—they’re more focused on themselves than on the community or helping the poor.” Another mentioned that affluent Asian Americans want to socialize and affiliate with the rich and powerful.

How different is elite philanthropy among Asian Americans and their Caucasian-American counterparts? Francie Ostrower reports that universities, hospitals and cultural institutions garner the most interest and support as targets for elite philanthropy—²⁹ and even among Asian-American nonprofits, the most successful solicitors of major gifts are cultural centers and nursing homes with their own buildings—not poverty programs or human services. And are the rich and well-connected elite class of Asian Americans different from the elite classes of any race with regards to socializing? In most instances, people prefer to affiliate with peers or people of higher social or business standing in their board membership choices.

Still, Ostrower notes that the most common reason mainstream elite philanthropists offer for contributing less to poverty programs and human services than to other favored causes is a perception that providing a “safety net” is the job of government, not private philanthropy. Here, Asian Americans have differing views:

- One female interviewee—a fundraiser with a more affluent background—observed, “Wealthy Asian Americans ask, ‘Why aren’t their kids helping them [poor Asians]? Where are their families? What’s wrong with them?’ I even had trouble with that in the beginning.”
 - A second pointed out that because so many affluent Asian Americans are self-made, they lack sympathy for anyone who is not willing to struggle: “I took demeaning jobs in the beginning. That’s the way it is here.” And,
 - A third believes that “Compared with the poverty they experienced back home, they can’t understand why their fellow Filipinos could not pull themselves up and succeed in this country.”
-

It is probably true that most of the wealthy in Asian America are self-made, but it is also probably true that for the most part, affluent individuals did not rise from the poorer classes. A few academics note that most, although not all, of successful Asian-American entrepreneurs and professionals not from poor ghettos. One observer went so far as to say that current middle-aged second-generation Chinese-American professionals in the Chinese-American community are primarily the offspring of the wave of educated middle-class immigrants who came to the United States during the late 1940s and 1950s—after World War II and the communist takeover. A Chinese-American donor noted that, “The wealthy families of China and Hong Kong have no connection with the poverty of Chinatown. The middle class in the suburbs rarely came from Chinatown.” Finally, it is most interesting to note that the few donors who indicated an intense, personal interest in immigrant services and aid to the poor during the interview process came from more modest means themselves.

Although it is difficult to make conclusive statements based on the anecdotal comments obtained from the interviews, the views of interviewees do suggest that when Asian and other Americans engage in elite philanthropy, they do so in much the same manner. Elite classes use philanthropy to support the social structure of elite values. Interviewees also suggest that as subsequent second- and third-generation Asian Americans of modest family backgrounds move up and out of ethnic enclaves and achieve professional success and financial comfort, increasing giving to the disadvantaged, without regard to ethnic heritage, will become more the rule than the exception. Some Asian Americans still complain about economic class structure, but many interviewees have taken for granted the speed of mobility Asians living in America enjoy and the dynamic quality of those moving in and out of ethnic ghettos and poverty.

Family and Early Influences

When questioned about why or how they became involved in philanthropy and voluntarism, every interviewee had an immediate response. For most, a tradition of giving time and money existed in their families throughout their childhood. All but one pointed to a family role model when asked, “How did you get started?” And, that donor talked sentimentally of a boss’ mother “mentoring” him into the philanthropic life over a several-year period. For most, it was the example of parents volunteering, if not the outright giving of cash donations. But aunts and uncles also served as role models. All donors mentioned the tradition of “obligation” to serve and give of oneself. Some viewed this as an Asian value, others saw it as specific to their family and still others viewed it as a religious value. All admired the role models who instilled in them the sense of an obligation to help.

The few interviewees who grew up in elite wealthy families had an almost “dynastic” view of their family’s tradition of giving. The private foundations established to carry out the traditions of giving of these interviewees’ families also provided opportunities for family members to serve on the foundation board. Many of these donors recall with fondness and pride their fathers’ or grandfathers’ interests in building hospitals and schools in the old country and of sending money to improve the roads or infrastructure of villages.

Interviewees from middle-class backgrounds were filled with anecdotes about parents volunteering in Saturday schools and alumni associations, and raising funds for the schools or public works projects in the villages from which their families originated. Most donors, particularly those from more modest backgrounds, remember parents giving to their family and village associations and sending money back home. One recalled that his first charitable donation occurred at the age of seven when his mother gave him "...a dollar to put into a Red Cross container."

Most donors, particularly those from more modest backgrounds, remember parents giving to their family and village associations and sending money back home. One recalled that his first charitable donation occurred at the age of seven when his mother gave him "...a dollar to put into a Red Cross container."

Three of the Filipino-American donors interviewed for this article attribute their charitable sensibilities to the Catholic Church. One mentioned that he was greatly influenced by the Jesuits who taught him the virtues of giving and caring for others. Another noted that, "We, my husband and I, have always believed in the concept of giving to those who are less fortunate. It is a very Christian attitude."

Among the donors interviewed, similar patterns emerge in reference to the first giving experiences beyond family, mutual aid associations and religious institutions. Although all noted that impersonal direct mail campaigns have no impact on them—particularly when the request is for larger donations—several did respond to these appeals during their initial forays into institutional philanthropy. For instance, numerous pitches and requests from an alma mater resulted in a donation from one interviewee: "They asked enough times—I gave." And "the subliminal effect of the constant bombardment of solicitations and direct mail campaigns over time," caused another to succumb and send in a donation. Other interviewees felt obligated to give to the United Way at work because supervisors asked. Once involved more broadly in philanthropy, however, many of these donors did not view this "introductory" nonprofit as their highest priority for giving. In fact, in the early 1990s, several became skeptical of the organization as a result of the widely publicized scandal involving the misuse of funds by its president William Aramony. Putting the Aramony scandal aside, the broad-based appeals of United Ways and colleges often serve as introductions to institutional charitable giving outside the Asian-American community.

Interviewees listed a number of well-known and well-respected Asian-American nonprofits as the first organizations, beyond mutual aid associations or churches, to which they provided donations. Included in this list were: Self-Help for the Elderly; the Japanese American Citizens League (and its various chapters); the Organization of Chinese Americans (and its various chapters); and the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund. For most, being intro-

duced to an organization by a friend, colleague or family member play a critical role in decisions about making donations. For a very few, however, the serendipitous timing of a simple direct mail solicitation resulted in major commitment. In fact, one donor said his long and deep commitment to the Japanese American National Museum began because several years before it was incorporated, during a year when he did “particularly well financially” and was thinking about end-of-year donations, he received a letter from his “442 vets’ group.”³⁰ The simple letter requested contributions for a project to document the experiences of the 442 Regimental Combat Team. In the words of this donor: “I wrote a check for \$1,000 ... and then the project kept growing.” Kept growing indeed! Because of its many passionate supporters, within 10 years this project had grown into the Japanese American National Museum—one of the largest and most respected Asian-American institutions.

Philanthropy Is a Personal Commitment

Regardless of how they got started or to whom or to what they give, many of the donors interviewed refer to philanthropy as a deeply personal emotional commitment. Donors rarely give significant gifts without first spending personal energy and time with the recipient organization—a finding that is consistent with what many researchers have observed within the larger donor community. The perception that emotional attachment to a cause is the main reason for giving crosses all of the three ethnicities and all three generations of the interviewee pool. As a third-generation Japanese-American donor explained, “Philanthropy is very personal. You have to be emotionally engaged and have given time before you contemplate a major gift of money.” All of the major donors (those who give at least \$20,000 annually) expressed great personal satisfaction, pride and pleasure in their philanthropic activities:

- A second-generation Chinese American said she delights in her philanthropy and feels that it should be fun; and
- A first-generation Filipino-American who became involve in philanthropy after the tragic accidental death of his daughter reflects: “When you yourself suffer, the blinders come off, you feel the suffering of others, and you feel the obligation to help.”

All of the donors who give at least several thousand dollars in contributions annually, said they spend enormous amounts of time volunteering on advisory councils and sitting on the boards of their favorite charities. Many also report spending just as much time raising money on behalf of these organizations and causes. One noted that he “spends at least twice a week in meetings for the museum ... lots of board and committee meetings and fundraising calls. When the executive director of the museum calls, I can’t turn her down.” Another donor was so busy with fundraising trips to Hawaii and Japan that scheduling an interview took months.

Donors often express strong feelings of identification with the beneficiary or personal knowledge of the issues when they describe their reasons for giving to a particular charity or cause. At least three donors mentioned that their interest in civil rights and social justice issues stemmed from personal experiences and observations of the history of Asians in America. For these donors, contributions to civil rights organizations in the African American and Jewish

communities feel natural. One Japanese-American donor suggested second-generation Japanese Americans are interested in social justice and civil rights issues for all races because, "... the internment camp experience hit this generation the hardest." This donor believes that, "If you 'made it,' you should feel obligated to help others and have compassion for their suffering and mistreatment." In many cases, donors support higher education, hospitals or nursing homes because they, or a family member, benefitted directly from the organization at some time. Such support continues even if no one the donor knows personally benefits from the contributions. For example, when asked why he gave to the New York Public Library, one donor reminisced warmly about the number of nights he spent studying there when he was a student.

Philanthropy as Good Business and Communitarian Issues

For at least a few donors mixing personal philanthropic activities with business is natural. For example, one Filipino lawyer who has a personal interest in social justice issues and a clientele that is primarily Filipino and Asian-American, gives within the circles where his clients participate. Another who has an entire insurance brokerage that caters to Chinese Americans, gives primarily to Chinese community centers and other Chinese-American organizations even though he is second generation and might be expected to give in a broader pattern. While reviewing a list of board and committee memberships, a prominent lawyer noted which memberships were for personal reasons and which were motivated for business reasons. The business related boards offered additional access to social and business networks in which many of her clients participate. The personally motivated memberships "are purely from the heart."

Finally, a Japanese-American businessman who owns one of the largest food and housewares retail stores that caters to the Asian-American community says that he gives to all Asian ethnic groups because "It's good business. I couldn't favor one group over another even if I wanted to ... that would be bad business." Because his business is both consumer-based and locally oriented, this donor became very community minded. He believes that a healthy, safe and vibrant community is important to growing a business: "Business depends on a thriving community. Therefore it's good business to be community minded." For this reason, he gives to a broad array of community and economic development programs, not just his favorite Japanese-American organizations. Although few could articulate the relationship between business interests and a communitarian approach to giving, individuals with community-based businesses—banks, retail operations, etc.—seem to have similar feelings of responsibility to help strengthen their community.

Philanthropy and Civic Participation

Although donors rarely equated philanthropy with civic participation, a few interviewees did and others remarked that giving is a form of participation and that increased participation in nonprofits raises civic consciousness, both on personal and community levels. As one donor observed, "Engaging in broader civic participation may lead to philanthropy." Another stated, "I think you're really referring to civic participation when you talk about supporting charities and nonprofits. You're talking about investing in improving your community, your town, your state."

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A few donors saw a continuum of activity among the various types of nonprofit giving, describing philosophical —although not direct—connections between their political and charitable donations. When asked what they give to or how much they tend to give each year, a few donors listed many recipients, segmented by types of giving. A review of these lists seems to indicate that donors consider the following as vehicles for their philanthropy:

- Nonprofits that are aligned with mainstream, ethnic-specific and Asian-American philanthropic institutions;
- Extended family and friends;
- Informal, indigenous, ethnic-specific associations, and
- Political causes—these types of gifts are often associated with giving to more formal nonprofits, including elite mainstream establishments and formal Asian-American human service, civil rights or cultural nonprofits.

When the interviewer pointed out the difference between giving to political campaigns and political action committees from giving to charitable nonprofits, interviewees were often bemused or unconcerned about this distinction. The response of one donor was, "Oh, yes, some of my donations are tax deductible and some are not." Another noted that "all giving is about making improvements to the community's well-being. It's all related."

A few donors did feel that visible contributions make political statements to the community and to audiences in the general population. One donor suggested that as a group, "Asian Americans will have a tremendous impact as our wealth grows and as we contribute to those causes we are committed to." A few interviewees believe that Asian-American donors should be more aware that their giving can make specific statements about who they are and what they believe is important in civic life. "Giving is an investment in the future... it is an investment in the important role Asian Americans can play in America... Asian Americans can be leaders, but only if we know how to participate in all the facets of American life."

Perhaps, the reason why political giving and giving to formal nonprofits are considered related by many of these donors may be because both are statements to themselves and to the world that they are investing in the American system—investing in American societal structures. These investments show the donors' faith in their own future within this system. In fact, interviewees used the term "investment" quite often when describing donations to political causes, institutions and formal nonprofits. In contrast, donations to family, community members and mutual aid associations were most often described as "helping." One donor observed that the reason why many middle-class Asian Americans do not support nonprofit megastructures of education, healthcare, social services may be that they do not understand how they fit into

this structure or benefitted from it: “So few rise high enough in the corporate, government or institutional hierarchies that is difficult to get a clear view of the whole system and see and appreciate how it works.”

By and large, as a result of their successes in business and their prominence on civic and private boards, the donors interviewed for this article have seen the bigger picture. Perhaps, that is why, during their course of their interviews, a few took the opportunity to express their hurt and anger at the recent concentration on alleged illegal foreign donations to political campaigns and the Democratic National Party. These donors feel betrayed by a system to which they have finally become acculturated, identify with and even contribute to. It is almost as though a few dared to think of themselves as Americans, and dared to believe they have been accepted as Americans, only to find that they had been stereotyped as suspicious foreigners. One donor summed up her feelings of anger as follows

The DNC [Democratic National Committee] has begun a witch hunt in which any donor with an Asian sounding name is being questioned. No other group has been targeted in this way. This has given license to the media to make whatever derogatory remarks or publish whatever negative stereotypes they think will get attention. This has put a chill on all Asian-American political activities. I know it has for me. I pause before I give to the DNC now and everyone I know is withdrawing.

Other donors report that incident has made peers reluctant to participate and give to any cause—political or otherwise. But one interviewee conjectured that there might be a silver lining to the scandal:

It’s ironic that although prosperous Asian Americans do not see themselves as a bloc, the mainstream does. The repercussions of the “John Huang” Asian fundraising scandal came as a shock to the entire Asian-American community. Maybe it will cause some money to be freed up for Asian-American causes—at least for a while.

It is apparent that civic life is related to philanthropy in the minds of these donors. Their interest in participating in the larger democratic structure responds to scholar Sucheng Chan’s challenge:³¹

Intrepid Asian immigrants have proven their ability to resist oppression and to survive. Whether or not Asian Americans can now become full participants in American life depends in part on their own willingness to channel some of their energies into public service—activities that improve the larger commonwealth.

Interestingly, it is second- and third-generation donors who most often, and most fervently, see philanthropy’s power as: a means to present Asian Americans to the larger community; and a vehicle for becoming better integrated into the sociopolitical structure of the larger mainstream culture. Perhaps, as the proportion of American-born Asian Americans grows, philanthropy will increasingly be used as an “investment” and as a strategy for creating a civic voice.

Perceptions of and Responses to Fundraising Appeals

When asked whether soliciting funds from Asian-American major donors was different from soliciting among their Anglo-Americans counterparts, most interviewees noted more similarities than dissimilarities, except in one area: Most noted that the best way to get to Asian-American donors is through special circles of friends, family and business associates. One donor quipped:

Fundraising in the Asian-American community is pretty much the same as fundraising among other Americans. It's just a smaller, more specialized pool. I've raised lots of money from the Asian-American community. I use a standard formula. We study the market and assemble a number of good leaders who will write or call on the prospects.

In fact, several major donors who made large gifts to establishment mainstream institutions found this question amusing. Because so few Asian Americans are in their peer group of giving, they had little experience in raising funds from other Asian Americans and could only respond to the question in terms of their own experience. In these cases, it seemed they were more similar than dissimilar to their fellow board members. The subject of newer donors and effective mechanisms for obtaining the first contribution or major gift, elicited much discussion and a fair amount of speculation from interviewees.

When asked which types of fundraising appeals were most effective with Asian Americans, especially newer donors, all donors answered emphatically, and without hesitation, "The personal ask." Professional fundraisers concurred, "Even at lower giving levels, Asian Americans respond best to personal requests." This was sometimes a surprising immediate response, because several of the donors interviewed mentioned that their first (smaller) donations were in response to direct mail from their alma mater or prominent Asian-American nonprofit membership or service organizations. What is clear, however, is that none of those interviewed for this article has made or considered making a major gift in response to a direct mail campaign.

One Filipino donor remarked, "The dull letter that comes in the mail doesn't work. I don't think I ever saw that working." Other donors mention that a personal visit or phone call from a close friend, family member or business associate is important. Most even suggested that prominence within the community and a reputation of respect and accomplishment are important traits for the person asking:

- A former university president noted: "Relational issues are most important...even more than with mainstream American donors. If I ask, many will give with few questions or need for paper and formal things. They give when someone they perceive as prestigious asks."
- A fundraiser said, "They commit to me, because they know me. They give to specific organizations only because of me. They stop giving when I leave."
- One Japanese-American donor stated, "I don't give to strangers;" and another added, "I give to those I know and trust."

Social and personal connections are so strong that unlike what occurs in other social circles, it does not appear to matter whether an executive director, staff or board member or a volun-

teer does the asking, the major issue in whether a solicitation is successful is the relationship between the giver and the asker. Next in level of importance is the prominence of the person within the social network. Although many requests for major donations occur through peer connections on boards, many well-publicized, seven-figure gifts were prompted through relationships with staff. In one case, the ask came from a brother-in-law who happened to be the chair of the Asian curatorial department of the museum making the solicitation. In another, the ask came from a brother who was a faculty member in the engineering department of the institution seeking funds. One donor reported that when asked how he decided to give to a particular nonprofit, “I didn’t know the executive director, but I knew her family.” Another, who donated to a different nonprofit, said, “I gave to the Museum of the Chinese in the Americas even though I’m Japanese, because I knew the executive director’s mother-in-law well, and she’s a very good person.”

A fundraiser with experience in both grassroots and mainstream solicitations, remarked that advertising through Asian-language radio and public events—parades, heritage celebrations, holiday events and the like—worked well in apprising potential donors of special campaigns. Still, she found that the most effective technique for collecting donations and pledges, even for grassroots efforts, is personal visits to sweatshops. In her words, “The letter campaign did not work as well as the ‘street corner talk’ even when the letter was in Chinese.”

For any fundraising to work, the people I ask have to know me. They know me as being very generous. That’s why it’s easy for me to ask my friends...they have a hard time refusing me because they know I’ve given to so many causes.... They all fundraise and I give to their favorite causes too.
—A prominent Japanese-American philanthropist

Within Asian-American circles, the effectiveness of the personal request as a means for fundraising is, perhaps, related to the cultural aspects of obligation and “saving face.” Fundraisers and donors both brought up these issues many times, for instance:

- A Chinese-American fundraiser reminded the interviewer that “saving face is an important factor in the asking and the responding.”
- Several donors mentioned that the major reason it is so difficult to get Asian-American board members to conduct the “asking” is the fear of “losing face” when turned down.
- Ironically, however, the reason why donors say they find it difficult to turn away a friend or colleague, and even more difficult to turn away a prominent, well-respected member of their social or business network is the fear of losing “face.”

This highly personal aspect of requesting and donating is consistent with more traditional forms of Asian and Asian-American giving where the recipient is very familiar and within the same social sphere of the giver. Having the request for funds come from an individual the donor respects, is the first step in creating a relationship, rooted in trust, between the nonprofit and the giver. All interviewees mentioned that building this relationship takes time and pa-

tience—even more so with Asian-American donors than with their mainstream counterparts. As one interviewee put it: “Asians hate to be pushed. You have to go back several times. You don’t ask the first go-round. They have to be willing to participate.” This statement was made in a variety of ways, by many major donors who have been successful at fundraising themselves.

Within the circle of donors there exists a practice of giving to the favorite charities of those who gave to yours. This subtle play on the sense of obligation and responsibility is used, in conjunction with more convivial social expressions. All of the donors interviewed for this article noted the practice of reciprocal giving—individuals who ask for contributions to their causes are usually expected to reciprocate with a gift to the donor’s cause when asked. A major donor to a museum described the situation as follows: “It’s tit-for-tat all the time, you know. If I’ve asked them to give to the museum, they’re sure to come back and ask me to give to something they’re involved with.” Several other interviewees referred to this practice as “quid pro quo.” When listing annual gifts, one donor chimed:

Oh yes, and then there are all the other ones to the favorite causes of friends. There are probably another 20 of those, but they’re only a couple of thousand dollars each.

And a very prominent Japanese-American philanthropist mused,

For any fundraising to work, the people I ask have to know me. They know me as being very generous. That’s why it’s easy for me to ask my friends...they have a hard time refusing me because they know I’ve given to so many causes.... They all fundraise and I give to their favorite causes too.

Each of the donors who give at least \$10,000 annually mentioned this practice during their interview—a few with amusement, others as a simple statement of fact. The practice was particularly commonplace among those donors who give major gifts and annual contributions of \$50,000 or more.

When asked about other fundraising techniques, donors had a variety of responses. Although all donors said direct mail and telemarketing solicitations are ineffective, some donors appear to give nominal amounts to organizations with whom they are familiar in response to a direct mail campaign. This type of giving is more prevalent with the younger and smaller donor—whose first introduction to philanthropy was likely to have been through their alma mater or United Ways. Direct mail and telemarketing solicitations are, however, are seldom effective if a prospective donor is totally unfamiliar with the organization requesting support.

The appeal of events, galas and other social gatherings varies. Donors cited dinners, dances and golf tournaments as the most popular events because they are important vehicles for introducing an organization or cause to friends and colleagues. They do not, however, serve as the most effective methods for soliciting additional donations. Although the “quid pro quo” practice of reciprocating donations of peers seems well understood, the practice of contributing to the beneficiary of a host’s gala invitation seems unfamiliar to many newer donors. For instance, one donor told of inviting friends to attend an event as guests at the benefit tables he purchased. He thought that each invitee would make a contribution to the cause and was quite

frustrated when “they didn’t even make small gestures (nominal donations) during or after the event. My American friends seem to understand this custom.”

In contrast, all of the Filipino donors and fundraisers interviewed embraced events and social gatherings as effective fundraising tools. In responding to questions about his fundraising experiences among Filipino Americans, one donor/fundraiser laughed, “Entertainment—they’re party goers. It is hard to raise funds by just asking for money.” Filipino-American donors need to feel a social connection and that they received something in return. This is why, a few conjectured, events and galas seemed the most effective fundraising vehicle in the Filipino community. In the eyes of a major Filipino fundraiser the epitome of a successful event is:

... an event that focuses on disaster relief in the Philippines and is kicked off with a ceremony where a prominent Filipino—American or foreign—writes and presents a large check in front of the gathered guests.

She adds that giving recognition to accomplished Filipino Americans at an event “that showcases them and shows them off to the mainstream world, acknowledges who has done well in the United States.” When Filipino Americans make major donations to causes in the Philippines, they are honored and acknowledged, especially when they make visible donations on return visits.

Given the focus on, and pride in, family and community, it is not surprising that several of the fundraisers interviewed remarked that encouraging gifts in memory of a departed family member or a well-respected community member is an effective means for soliciting donations. When enumerating his 15 to 20 large gifts to cultural and educational institutions each year, a prominent Chinese-American donor specified that the total was “not counting the little ones I’m obligated to give when someone passes away.” Japanese-American seconded that thought when he stated that “each year I also give numerous smaller contributions in memory of someone who passed away—usually to a nursing home or community center.” And, a highly successful fundraiser among Asian Americans says she is making a concerted effort to encourage family gifts. The pooled efforts of family members can raise the floor of the gift, whether it is her institution’s minimum \$3,000-level for permanent recognition, or for larger gifts. This executive director noted that although the technique serves several purposes, it most importantly helps create a relationship with the entire family, not just the member with the passion. It also introduces the experience of giving institutionally to a nonprofit to other members.

Donor Expectations of Nonprofits

Because most wealthy Asian Americans are self-made, it is no surprise that they focus on accountability and effectiveness—even when it comes to charitable donations. These individuals want “value for the dollar invested.” Most earned their money through keen analysis of options and risks and by investing wisely and they seem to approach their major gifts to charity in a similar way. Before making a major donation, Asian-American donors need to sense that the nonprofit has solid leadership, is managed properly and has a real impact on the community it serves. As one interviewee stated:

In general, Asian Americans are very practical and very skeptical. It takes a long time to prove your worthiness and they want to see tangible results. Accountability is a great deal. They rely on strong leadership they trust.

“Each year I also give numerous smaller contributions in memory of someone who passed away—usually to a nursing home or community center.”—A Japanese-American donor

When asked what her foundation gives to, an interviewee replied, “fundamentally well-run organizations, sure winners.”

In return for contributions, major donors have varied expectations. Although Asian-Americans donors generally shy away from publicity and media attention, after a gift has been given, communications and ongoing recognition within the nonprofit’s community are important to most donors.

Several donors stated that although mainstream organizations have donor recognition and services down to a science, their Asian-American nonprofit counterparts are very naïve about such things. Several donors expressed frustration with regard to relationships with grassroots Asian-American nonprofits. According to one donor, few of these organizations understand that they need to recognize donors with “little gestures of appreciation”—mementos, plaques, awards, etc.—that are visible to their peer, business or social network. Another quipped that Asian-American nonprofits often take the gift “and never contact the donor again, until they want another. They have no interest in cultivating a relationship with you, or maybe they lack sophistication.” Several donors also complained that when they gave to smaller, Asian-American organizations, they did not know “how the money was spent or who was benefitting.” One donor stated that academics are particularly bad at keeping in touch and informing donors about the results of the project supported. He went so far as to attribute these oversights to “elitist, ivory-tower attitudes.”

One donor complained, however, that he did not understand why many Asian Americans give annual general support to major mainstream organizations “that do not serve us and do not need us.” Another noted that mainstream organizations are more than happy to take contributions from Asian Americans, but are not as welcoming when it comes to inviting them to join boards and major committees, “where it counts.” Again, a dual theme of relationship building and seeking impact within that circle and cause emerges here.

Ironically, although many donors and fundraisers assumed a lack of understanding about donor motivations and needs to develop effective fundraising programs, the literature and interviews with academics about successful fundraising techniques give a very different picture of utmost strategy and precision. Author Renqui Yu outlines a fundraising strategy, complete with donor recognition books segmented by level of giving and levels of benefits received including memorial stone tablets and special premiums for large donations.³² One historian

described pre-World War II Japanese-American efforts to raise funds for the building of temples, churches and community centers as follows during an interview:

In general, we would get the individual with the highest prestige to chair an effort. Then he would get the first tier of donors who were the merchants and professionals to be on the committee. The personal calls would go out with a publication of a list of those who gave. We would hang banners with names and amounts at events and from the churches. The recognition was very public.

Neither mainstream nor Asian-American nonprofits appear to offer totally satisfactory experiences for the Asian-American major donor. Both are viewed as mildly manipulative and exploitative when a relationship is not cultivated over time.

HOW VIABLE IS BUILDING ENDOWMENTS IN THE ASIAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY?

No specific references to Asian-American endowments and their donors exist in the published literature. Moreover, interviewees discussed the concept of endowing Asian-American funds very little. Some discussion of the types of endowments to which the major donors interviewed have contributed did, however, occur. Several of the donors interviewed also talked about their decisions to create private family foundations and the relative appeal of Asian-American cooperative giving funds, united appeals or community funds.

Do Asian-American Donors Give to Endowments?

Without exception, all of the interviewed donors prefer to provide support for immediate needs, direct services and existing operational costs rather than the endowments supported by their mainstream counterparts. Still, several interviewees mentioned the value of endowments and the concept of permanence and lasting support. For many, however, this preference to support immediate needs is motivated by the perception that needs are great and available resources are limited. This was particularly true of those who give the major portion of their contributions to Asian-American and ethnic-specific causes. When asked why they preferred supporting immediate needs, a few interviewees even responded: "No particular reason, I just like giving to projects." Finally, a few felt a lack of familiarity with endowments was the major reason why they did not support them. In the words of one donor:

We are not that sophisticated. We are not that experienced with endowment giving. We like direct benefit and endowments are a bit impersonal.

Again, the personal nature of giving and the need for direct impact are at work.

Still, several of these donors have given to endowment campaigns, even though they prefer to support programs and immediate needs. Although these endowment gifts were generally smaller—and often nominal—they were made in response to the major capital campaigns of alma maters or local United Ways. The few larger endowment gifts (gifts in the six- or seven-

figure range) seemed most often to accompany a personally directed major capital gift and went mostly to recipient institutions from which the donor or the donor's family benefitted—an alma mater or hospital—or an institution that the donor participated in regularly, such as a museum. They were never the first contributions made to an institution. The endowed portion was almost always earmarked to support a facility, building, gallery or academic position that was being supported by a very generous major gift, generally at the suggestion of the nonprofit representative. Fundraisers often cited the offering of prestige and visibility as critical to obtaining these gifts. It is, therefore, not surprising that most of the gifts went to institutions with buildings and facilities where recognition can be permanent, and where the impact of the gift is tangible and obvious to all.

Several donors also noted that although they had not given endowment gifts to Asian-American organizations, they had never been asked to do so. When asked if they would consider making such gifts to Asian-American organizations, a few mentioned issues of permanence, impact, stability and leadership would become decision-making factors. The fact that many of these organizations are still very young (it has been 20 years or less since their incorporation) and have small annual operating budgets (less than \$1 million per annum), puts them at a disadvantage when compared with their mainstream counterparts. Because these organizations lack a long track record and cannot offer visibility, the challenge in communicating the vision and strength of its constituency to a broader public is greater for their leadership, even within Asian-American donor classes. For these donors, longevity is a key issue. Prior to making an endowment commitment, they want assurances that the programs and services supported will be needed in the long term. They do not scrutinize older mainstream universities, museums and hospitals quite so closely because these institutions have already passed the test of time.

As a donor who is contemplating a major endowment gift to his favorite Asian-American organization noted:

You gotta be around long enough to have built trust with individuals. Is 10 years enough? Is 50 years enough? Right now I don't worry so much about endowment, but about cash flow.

Nursing homes, museums and cultural centers, are among the few Asian-American organizations that have received endowment support and the support they received was generally for building campaigns. Moreover, as reported by the media, the donations they received were not as large as the multimillion dollar gifts to mainstream institutions.

In summary, it appears that the factors contributing to a donor's decision to endow a nonprofit or one of its programs include:

- 1) A personal interest and commitment to the institution and cause, preferably an emotional attachment or deep identification with the institution's beneficiaries (or audience) and mission;
 - 2) Some history of committing increasing amounts of time and money to the nonprofit;
 - 3) The perception that the services and programs of the institution are having a real impact and will be needed by a valued constituency over the long term; and
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- 4) The perception that the institution is well-managed, with strong integrity and systems of accountability, and is run by a visionary and dynamic leader.

Creating Private Foundations and Funds

Tax deductibility only appears to be a significant benefit and motivator for large major gifts. It is quite ancillary to decisions regarding smaller gifts and in the more informal giving practices. Nonprofit executives have, however, observed that tax deductibility is a strong motivator among third- and fourth-generation Asian Americans. And, tax-benefit issues figure prominently in decisions about creating a private family foundation. All but one donor cited tax benefits as an important, if not the major, initial reason why their families decided to create private foundations. They also surmised that the associated tax benefits were the primary motivator for their Asian-American friends and business colleagues. A few use their foundations purely as a convenient “pass through” and have no intention of building an endowment. These donors view these tax structures as a “holding place” for cash and assets prior to final decisions about charitable distributions. Moreover, they do not intend to have their foundations’ activities continue after their death.

Almost none of these families retained a professional to advise them when they were thinking about setting up a permanent structure for their philanthropic activity. A few mentioned that their family accountant or general practice lawyer helped them complete the paperwork to establish their foundations, but only after the decision to create a foundation had been made.

Apparently, decisions to establish family foundations can take a long time—sometimes a decade. For those who are pulled between obligations to perpetuate stability or wealth for future generations, or to invest in a community they will be leaving, the decision to establish a foundation touches deeply conflicting values. Several of the donors interviewed have seen family wealth, or at least financial stability, wither quite rapidly in the face of war, economic depression and political upheaval. For others, affluence has come so recently that the idea of permanence seems farfetched. One donor intimated that as he has gotten older, he has begun to think about mortality and his legacy to the few causes he holds dear: “Lately I’ve begun to think about creating a foundation. I would like to create one, but my wife wants to take care of the children first.” (This donor notes that he and his wife have had lengthy conversations on this subject for the past several years.) Another donor says that he and his wife contemplated setting up their foundation for at least 15 years before it was finally established in 1995. This couple’s major concern was ensuring continued support for all of the charities and worthwhile causes after their death: “I’m blessed to be in the position to give so much, but the community will continue to require financial support after I pass away. I would like the foundation to continue my giving after I die.” Even in this case, however, the couple considered their responsibility to provide a legacy for their children before establishing a foundation.

In contrast, a few of the donors interviewed—particularly those who had quick successes in high tech industries—created foundations from the proceeds of a merger, takeover or public offering—windfalls that were more or less fortuitous and needed tax protection.³³

Several donors stated that while they were extremely lucky and enjoyed setting up and running their foundations, not many of their Asian-American friends or business associates were in a financial position to do so. Although many are quite successful, the donors felt that most affluent Asian Americans, “are interested in building wealth, not giving it away.” Some made mention of this phenomenon with slight disdain; others were more sympathetic. One Chinese-American donor referred to a particular class of Chinese who came to this country after World War II with some family capital. These individuals used their money to create a business, not for charitable causes. He described the process as follows:

First, you create wealth and establish your business in this country. Then you try to figure out what to do with it. Philanthropy comes after feeling established with the wealth.

Among donors interviewed, perceptions of the stability of the individual’s wealth played a major role in decisions about establishing a foundation. Before contemplating creation of a permanent charitable fund, donors needed to feel that:

- Their lives and those of their families were financially secure—regardless of their level of wealth; and
- They were in a position to devote the time and energy needed to navigate the legal and tax considerations in setting up foundations, trusts or other planned-giving vehicles. (This is especially true for donors in their 40s and early 50s who are still busy building careers and businesses and raising their families.)

Regardless of the actual level of affluence, many sensed that their assets were not of a sufficient level to warrant setting up a foundation, and that they lacked the time needed to look into other types of funds.

Several donors mentioned that they had instead created “permanent” funds at nonprofits—educational institutions, cultural centers and nursing homes—most often as a memorial to a departed spouse or family member. Although these funds are not generally endowed, they provide donors with a vehicle for making annual or other frequently timed contributions. Most often, they are in the form of scholarship funds. When asked whether the fund was endowed, a few of the donors interviewed gave somewhat confused responses because they were not clear of the difference between permanent assets and “permanent” (or ongoing) contributions. A few, however, took the question as a welcomed suggestion.

When asked whether they had ever considered establishing a fund in a community foundation, interviewees almost always responded with a “No.” This response shows just how marginalized this donor pool may still be from mainstream institutional philanthropy, in spite of their success in jumping the hurdles of mainstream education and the business sectors. The lack of familiarity with community foundations was such that several respondents did not even understand the question. These donors rarely sit on the boards and committees of community foundations and know no one who does. One donor summed up his reasons for not establishing a fund in the local community foundation thusly: “I’m not part of the usual Los Angeles social or business circle and I don’t know the folks involved with the community foundation. I suppose if I were friends with those people, I would give to their causes. I don’t have anything against them. I just don’t know them and I don’t give to strangers. That’s just me.”

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In any event, within the Asian-American community, community foundations and community trusts lack the appeal of establishing one's own private foundation. One donor found that with community foundations, the "cycles, waiting, deadlines and process was too cumbersome. Right now, I just give my assistant a list of charities and have her issue the checks." Another preferred to make giving decisions on his own: "I think we should exercise certain judgment about which organization deserves more help and not leave that up to others." Finally, a donor who often works with affluent Asian Americans surmised that many would not like to relinquish control of their assets to an unfamiliar governing body. In addition to lacking peers on community foundation boards, the lack of control over giving and the impersonal approach to philanthropy pose barriers to participating. Currently, community foundations hold very few Asian-American funds and almost all that they do hold are donor advised.

Are Asian-American Collective or Community Charitable Funds Viable?

Numerous informal Asian-American organizations raise funds from people of specific Asian-ethnic backgrounds. These funds have supported (and continue to support) ethnically specific, often foreign-based, charitable and cultural projects, or institutions. Many are village, clan or provincial associations. Many are alumni associations that support schools or other projects in the "home" country. Within these indigenous charitable funds, considerable, successful, strategic fundraising among individuals has occurred. The consistency and frequency of contributions from members of these organizations suggest that cooperative charitable funds are viable, even though little is known about the actual amounts raised or the total potential to give.

Why then do so many representatives of nonprofit Asian-American organizations complain that it is difficult to raise funds from Asian Americans? Why do donors and fundraisers suggest that second- and third-generation Asian Americans lack the impulse for generosity?

First, the current life situation of second- and third-generation Asian Americans may limit giving. Although a growing number of transnational families of wealth have made the United States one of their homes, by and large, the Asian-American immigrant community is not characterized by great affluence. Second, because such a large portion of Asian America is foreign-born, the immigrant generation's charitable interests and impulses will more likely be foreign-focused and informal in style. The offspring of this generation tend to be better educated and employed but are not yet a significant majority within Asian America, nor are most of an age where they perceive stability in their assets and expenses. Although many of the second-generation Asian Americans interviewed for this article are in their 60s and 70s, none of the

interviewees from the third-generation has reached this age range. For the most part, second-and third-generation Asian Americans are still in the career-building stage, if not younger. Yet, the more Americanized of the interviewees are more attracted to and place a higher value on the concept of an “Asian American United Jewish Appeal,” as several referred to the cooperative charitable fund concept.

Without a quantitative survey, it is impossible to fully define giving activities among Asian Americans. Still, observations of the many fundraisers, researchers and other major donors interviewed for this article, seem to pinpoint areas where Asian Americans do not participate significantly. A donor who is involved in a lot of fundraising remarked:

American-born Chinese Americans do not send money back home because they don't even know those people or have any connection to China. They don't give to mutual aid associations, because they don't speak the dialect, they don't participate in the social events and they have no memory of anyone they know benefitting from them. They are no longer dependent on the religious organizations. But mainstream America doesn't invite them in...so they don't participate in there either.

Those who have attempted to raise funds from other Asian-ethnic communities concurred with this sentiment and are stymied by the phenomena.

A key challenge is to transfer the impulse and frequency of informal patterns of immigrant giving to subsequent generations of greater affluence and broader social interests. Certainly most, if not all, had family role models of generous community involvement. Whether formally established Asian-American nonprofits see themselves as bridges between more informal giving traditions and the more formal practices they would like to cultivate among Asian Americans is unclear. As disposable income increases, can these nonprofits successfully transfer the traditional impulse of giving and sharing from immigrant interests of family and home country to Asian-American interests in the United States? Or, will major mainstream institutions with their greater development resources focus on the Asian-American constituency first? Are Asian-American nonprofits more effectively positioned to take advantage of the impulse to give with more culturally specific adaptations of fundraising tools and types of community participation? Would the circles of participation they offer potentially serve as a bridge between the affluent and those in need within Asian America? A well-respected executive director suggests that: “Because the Western notion of a more distanced philanthropy may be a real problem, it should not be taught to the Asian-American community. Adapting the Asian-American model of closeness might be more effective. Dissociated giving will not work with Asians. We need to look at more models of associated giving.”

Donor views on the appeal of united or federated funds vary widely. For smaller donors (\$10,000 or less in annual contributions), particularly if they are younger, American-born professionals, cooperative funds offer a way of “paying at the office” or a means for making choices among many Asian-American charities. Donors felt that these types of funds offer economies-of-scale and efficiencies and that they might serve as a “powerful enabler of smaller, grassroots organizations.”

For major donors with specific passions, and, in many cases their own foundations, however, the collective group fund concept was not so compelling. For them, lack of control over decisions and the impression that more middlemen result in additional overhead is unappealing and an example of disdain for anything that has the taint of bureaucracy. Several also felt that this type of giving is “distancing and cold.” Because these older and higher-level donors spend substantial time on their philanthropic activities, they are looking for personal satisfaction, not the efficiency of choice or economies-of-scale that might be appealing to younger donors. Their philanthropic activities are based on strong personal passions.

As for actual recent giving to federated or united appeals, like their mainstream major donor counterparts, donors interviewed for this article rarely gave donations of more than \$5,000 to one of these types of funds. Only a few of the donors interviewed considers one of these funds among their highest priorities for charitable giving. Many, however, even those not particularly interested in the causes supported, have made some contribution—even if it is only “nominal.” In fact, a donor who said she did not need to use a “regranting” organization because her foundation was positioned to make its own decisions, made a \$5,000 contribution to a local Asian-American fund in recent years.

Another reason for minimal contribution activity might be the lack of aggressive, strategically targeted fundraising appeals. Many donors have not been asked directly by board or committee members of the charitable fund to make a contribution.

Regardless of their reservations, nearly all of the donors interviewed reflected on the value of united fundraising appeals and giving mechanisms. Many believe that this type of organization could offer Asian-American donors opportunities for recognition and leadership not offered when their contributions are buried among myriad mainstream givers with similar, and perhaps even higher, levels of giving. For most, however, to attract significant dollars or time, the appeal to Asian Americans would have to include a unifying cause, a compelling project or a specific agenda. The more general, open-ended appeal and general support grants to myriad organizations chosen by an unrelated or anonymous decision-making body do not have the personal, direct pull needed to convince major donors to identify with the cause. In the absence of this unifying direction, many donors will gravitate to the charities they are familiar with and moved by.

Several donors mentioned that if the fund focussed on specific constituents or beneficiaries—such as the elderly or young people—it would put a face on an abstract concept. Others suggested causes such as immigrant rights and services, education for poor youth or cultural heritage programs might make the cooperative funding idea more tangible and directly related to the issues held dear to Asian-American donors. A few interviewees implied that the campaign would have to benefit causes and constituencies that are of greater reach and impact than existing funds now address. For instance, the scope and number of nonprofits to receive grants would have to be much greater, perhaps national in scope, and the numbers of people to be served by the collective pool would have to increase. One donor believes that, “it might work,” if the fund can vouch for solid management and effective services by the grantee organizations it would represent. Again, if bigger dollar amounts are involved, Asian-American donors will expect a bigger impact and more services.

“Because the Western notion of a more distanced philanthropy may be a real problem, it should not be taught to the Asian-American community. Adapting the Asian-American model of closeness might be more effective. Dissociated giving will not work with Asians. We need to look at more models of associated giving.”—An executive director of a nonprofit

THE UNIQUE POSITION OF ASIAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY FUNDS

Three Asian-American community funds were reviewed to ascertain the challenges in raising funds from Asian-American donors and their viability as vehicles the larger private foundation community can partner to stimulate giving among this population. Located in New York City, Los Angeles and San Francisco, the funds exist within three different nonprofit structures in major Asian-American magnate cities. Their parent organizations are the Asian American Federation of New York, the Asian Pacific Community Fund of Southern California and the Asian Pacific American Community Fund of the San Francisco Bay Area.

The three organizations are very young and relatively small. They do not yet have the pervasive reputation among Asian-American communities that their older colleagues such as the Japanese American Citizens League and the Organization of Chinese Americans, or the many established Asian-American cultural or community centers within their respective geographical locations and ethnic communities, have developed. The oldest among the three was incorporated in 1990. The largest has an annual operating budget that is just shy of \$1 million. All three include developing Asian-American philanthropy as part of their institutional mission. All three represent a broad cross section of their communities through their board members and through their many member or affiliate Asian-American nonprofit agencies. Because increasing resources from and to the Asian-American community are viewed by many Asian-American nonprofits and community leaders as a critical element for community self-determination, these funds could fill a unique need that would benefit their member agencies and the broader Asian-American community.

Because Asian-American communities receive a disproportionately small share of mainstream private and public support, creating support systems within individual communities has become an issue for many.³⁴ By 1990, the number of Asian-Americans grew to 2.9 percent of the American population. A 1992-study published by Asian Americans & Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy found, however, that from 1983 to 1990 only 0.2 percent of this nation’s philanthropic dollars went to organizations in Asian-Pacific-American communities. A second study conducted by the same organization—in collaboration with Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics—reported that of the 799 private foundations surveyed by the Council on Foundations in 1992, Asian-Pacific Americans comprised only 2.2 percent of full-time staff; a mere 0.9 percent of board members; and only 0.5 percent of chief executive officers.³⁵ If philanthropic giving is tied to familiarity, it is no wonder that Asian America receives so little from mainstream foundations, and that many nonprofits do not want to depend on mainstream largesse.

Staff from all three community funds believe that the pool of Asian-American donors—grassroots through major donors—is much greater than their current reach. All point to a lack of visible presence and a lack of capacity as major challenges to reaching the entire Asian-American donor population. And, all are experimenting with mainstream fundraising techniques, tempered by culturally sensitive and appropriate approaches, and are sharing what they are learning about donor behavior and donor interests as they progress.

To accomplish the goal of cultivating and growing an Asian-American philanthropic community, the leadership of each of these funds has made the development and training of staff and board a top priority. Their experience is typical of many Asian-American nonprofits. Although well-grounded in the interests and needs of the various Asian-ethnic populations, board members and staff often lack basic mainstream fundraising skills and basic knowledge about the variety of philanthropic vehicles that appeal to wealthy donors. Until recently, the majority of board members of these funds did not come from donor circles familiar with fundraising practices. They were instead representatives of member or affiliated agencies who comprised the early founding committee of the organization. Even those individuals with great affluence have not sat on the board of a larger mainstream institution, an assignment that would give them opportunities to experience successful campaigns.

Consistent with the experiences of many Asian-American nonprofits, staff of these funds tend to come to fundraising through grassroots organizing, public agency work or even smaller nonprofits. As several interviewees noted, few employees of nonprofits come from the affluent class of Asian America. (Interviewees suggested that the offspring of wealthy Asian Americans tend to go into more lucrative professions.) In addition, few come from the highly developed fundraising offices of major universities or museums. They came to their work to help Asian Americans in need, not to embark on a competitive fundraising career. As a result, these organizations often lack sophisticated development operations, and the pool of highly skilled, talented Asian-American fundraisers is extremely limited.

Many Asian-American nonprofits have experienced some success in raising foundation and corporate dollars on their own and by hiring Caucasian-American development professionals. Still, these community funds and their colleagues feel strongly that developing highly skilled Asian-American fundraisers is a priority for stimulating Asian-American giving. Experienced Caucasian fundraisers may be familiar with planned giving, events and capital campaign strategies, but are often unaware of cultural cues and traditions, lack Asian language skills and know little about Asian-American social and professional networks. For this reason, mainstream fundraising firms and professionals have had limited success in creating successful Asian-American individual donor campaign strategies, even though they have been extremely helpful in teaching skills and campaign concepts to the Asian-American nonprofits that can afford their services.

These funds are also uniquely positioned within the Asian-American communities they serve. Unlike their nonprofit counterparts, whose primary missions are direct delivery of services in specific areas of social welfare, healthcare, legal aid, education, social justice and cultural programs, the community funds' mission is to promote and increase philanthropy to their commu-

nities and nonprofit colleagues. Allocating more time and resources to donor services and cultivation would be consistent with their missions. These community funds support both ethnic-specific and pan-ethnic organizations, thus avoiding the dichotomy of choosing between the two. Because they operate within generally accepted nonprofit standards of financial accountability and openness in fund development and grant disbursements, they are more appealing to both Americanized Asian Americans and mainstream foundations and corporations than are the indigenous informal associations. They may be the ideal structures for cultivating and training intermediaries—lawyers, accountants, financial planners and the like—in collaboration with the ethnic professional and alumni associations, and the boards of their own and other nonprofits.

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Whether these community funds see themselves as effective vehicles for bridging the gap between the impulse for informal giving (in the face of dire need) and the desire to integrate and invest in building permanent community infrastructure remains to be seen. Whether they can personalize and create emotional connections with individuals in a culturally sensitive manner that remains consistent with their legal and funding structures will be a major challenge.

CONCLUSION: ELITE PHILANTHROPY AMONG ASIAN AMERICANS

For Asian Americans, philanthropy, in strictly the formal sense of giving money to legally established, professionally run nonprofits, is a heartfelt activity that has evolved along a continuum of increasing acculturation, adaptation and civic participation in the community beyond the family and ethnic enclave. Institutional philanthropic giving is a milestone somewhere later in this continuum, but is by no means the final stop—just a major indicator on a developing relationship of increasing commitment to an ever-expanding definition of community. The story emerging from interviews with Asian-American donors and those who work closely with them, is a progression from more informal, familial and private forms of philanthropy that are consistent with Asian cultural values to the specifically American form of visible, discrete gifts to specifically defined projects and organizations. In the middle of this story is a transition from helping worthy projects and organizations back “home” to investing in good works in this country.

Some expansion and progression from sharing good fortune with extended family and the village/provincial community to investing in U.S.-based institutions—Asian-American or mainstream—is occurring as Asian Americans begin to identify themselves as individuals with intrinsic connection and value to the social and political fabric of a broader U.S. community. Still, throughout the continuum is a great deal of overlap. The different models for giving are by no

means mutually exclusive, nor is one way of charitable giving preferable. Each practice serves different social needs and different types of charitable impulses.

The entire continuum of increasing community participation is not, however, traveled consistently and progressively by all Asian Americans. Many different individuals enter and stop (or exit) the continuum at different points. Level and type of participation seem influenced by the changing definition of primary community and the various communities with which Asian Americans identify. The level of awareness of the intrinsic value of the nonprofit sector in America and the level of desire to invest in that structure determines how deeply Asian Americans use philanthropy as a strategy for creating or adopting a permanent community in this country. This permanent community, or perception of “home,” continues to evolve. It shifts back and forth between an ethnic-specific or Asian-American identity, and the larger mainstream community, with each individual seeking his or her own idiosyncratic balance.

One thing is clear, however: educated, affluent Asian Americans have an incredible facility for surviving and thriving in many worlds. Their success has often depended on developing cultural fluency. The degree to which they choose to participate in the social and civic structure of these worlds depends on the external political climate of the time, the social and business network they are most involved within and the extent to which the respective nonprofit world invites and welcomes their participation.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Asian Americans will give to family friends, community and their homelands with or without encouragement from the philanthropic community. Giving is quite simply a part of the Asian culture—an activity as natural as breathing. The question, then, is not how to encourage Asian Americans to give, but instead, how to inform Asian Americans about the most effective philanthropic vehicles for their particular desires and needs. Following are recommendations on research, means for encouraging and stimulating philanthropy, and methods for building the capacity of Asian-American nonprofits.

Suggested Future Research

- Future studies on Asian-American major donor practices should include surveys and interviews with Korean and South Asian-American populations, which also fall within the top average household incomes among Asian Americans and are the next largest ethnic populations after Chinese, Japanese and Filipino Americans.
 - The next study of Asian-American philanthropic practices should include a significant quantitative component that captures baseline information on patterns and size of annual giving among various economic strata in addition to preferred types of support, institutions and causes. Further demographic segmentation of ongoing surveys such as those conducted by GivingUSA, Independent Sector and other services would be a cost-effective way of collecting tax-based data. Additional surveys including self-reports
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on informal giving would, however, still be needed to get an accurate picture of magnitude of overall giving.

- If institutional philanthropy is a part of a continuum of civic participation, it would be helpful to get a baseline reading on the participatory activities of Asian Americans and to trace changes in type and frequency over time as larger portions of the population become acculturated. These activities would include participation in mutual aid associations, religious organizations, even less formal voluntary groups, community and educational boards and advisory groups, political organizations and parties, and formal nonprofit boards.
- Because Hawai'i presents a uniquely isolated, but richly diverse population, studying both Asian-American and Pacific Islander philanthropy in that state would be productive. In the Hawai'ian Islands, Asian-Pacific-Americans are not a minority population. Moreover, Pacific Islanders are not immigrants and many in the Asian-American population are members of the fourth- and fifth- generation of their community. As a result, the philanthropic patterns of Hawai'i's Asian-American population may be distinct and further developed than those of their counterparts in the continental United States.

Steps for Encouraging and Stimulating Philanthropy

- Honoring the cultural practices of giving and sharing and the cultural values of maintaining strong family and community relationships needs to be further examined and incorporated into the design of any program whose goal is to increase philanthropic giving to or through U.S.-based charitable interests.
 - Because many Asian-American donors feel isolated, but extremely interested in learning how peers approach their philanthropy, opportunities for them to meet and exchange ideas about charities and philanthropy are important. Ideally, the convener of such a meeting should not be a grantseeker. Perhaps the Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy, in conjunction with Asian-American professional and social associations, could offer this "safe haven."
 - Because role models appear to be strong influences on how Asian Americans give and volunteer, awards to creative and committed Asian-American philanthropists could stimulate participation by others.
 - Public awareness campaigns both for the general and Asian-American public would be helpful in both stimulating philanthropy and offering a variety of options to potential donors. Major Asian-American philanthropists should be invited to join these efforts to serve as role models and points of identification for other affluent Asian Americans. The magnitude and diversity of philanthropic traditions within the Asian-American community should be communicated broadly.
 - Most of the interviewees, donors and persons that work with them, felt that education and training are necessary in cultivating a tradition of giving to nonprofits, and thereby increase philanthropy among their respective ethnic groups. The mentoring of newer
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donors by more experienced donors should be considered a board responsibility of Asian-American nonprofits cultivating new Asian-American donors.

- Because education, mentoring and role modeling all seem to play a role in whether an individual develops a lifelong commitment to philanthropy, programs should be identified, developed and supported to: encourage volunteerism among youth in schools, clubs, agencies that serve youths or churches; and provide internships with philanthropic organizations or nonprofit agencies for college students.
 - Professional associations, employer associations and alumni groups (foreign and domestic) could be targeted with seminars or workshops on volunteerism, philanthropic giving, Asian-American philanthropists, estate planning, tax savings implications of various planned giving tools, and the various needs and evolution of Asian-American communities.
 - Many of the major donors interviewed mentioned that they would like to learn how to select among charities, how to participate in meaningful ways and how to develop their charitable interests on personal and emotional levels. A few suggested that a service that could help them learn how to discern effective nonprofits from ineffective nonprofits would encourage increased giving.
 - Many Asian-American nonprofit staff and executive directors observed that the professionals who work with affluent Asian Americans need technical skills and knowledge about tax issues, methods for transferring assets and planned giving. These professionals include Asian-American general practice and trust lawyers, accountants and financial advisors as well as nonprofit executive directors and fundraisers.
 - Identifying nonprofits that already offer meaningful and direct connections to the interests and values of Asian Americans is an important step for funders to consider in articulating fertile territory or strategic intervention points. Perhaps, foundation associations, service organizations or community foundations could conduct educational and training programs in collaboration with these Asian-American nonprofits. In this manner, those with the technical skills and knowledge would complement those with the familiarity and trust of large portions of the Asian-American community.
 - To build the trust needed to affect successful collaborative relationships and projects, mainstream foundations, funders and major service organizations must first correct their past failure to recognize and address the needs and contributions of the Asian-American community.
 - Asian-American nonprofits, especially federated funds and united fundraising appeals are uniquely positioned to attract Asian Americans who have lost their connection with mutual aid associations, but have not yet been invited into the leadership or elite circles of mainstream America. These organizations may offer a “bridge” from informal to institutional giving, adapting western techniques with culturally sensitive programs and services.
 - Several of those interviewed believe that Asian Americans will increase participation in institutional philanthropic endeavors such as private and community foundations,
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foundation associations and major gifts to endowments when they see themselves or their friends as part of the social, business and political networks that comprise the power set of those fields. If this is true, efforts to increase Asian-American participation in executive staff positions and on boards would be an important step in creating peer groups of identification.

- Professional associations and service organizations such as regional grantmaking associations and the Council on Foundations should increase their outreach efforts to minority family foundations, shaping particular programs and services for them and offering opportunities for these families to network with each other and the larger field.

Means for Building the Capacity of Asian-American Nonprofits

- Because Asian-American nonprofits, particularly federated funds and others that seek to encourage Asian-American philanthropy, are positioned to access and stimulate potential Asian-American donor pools, but lack the capacity to do so, mainstream foundations and other private funders could play a critical role. Temporary capacity-building grants to develop board and staff, create meaningful participatory services and programs for donors and to gain critical fundraising skills are essential next steps.
 - To encourage personal identification with causes and constituent beneficiaries, cooperative funding organizations should offer major donors alternatives to abstract, distanced, open-ended general funds. Funds designated for strong unifying causes—such as social justice, immigrant rights or services for the elderly—would offer compelling messages on how the contributions would be directed. Funds designated for constituencies such as the elderly or the young would offer a sense of personal impact. Opportunities for donor participation on selection panels, mentoring programs or on other ways to create bonds between donor and grantee would help personalize the program.
 - Highly skilled and experienced Asian-American fundraisers are rare. Training programs, internships and professional opportunities are needed to create such a pool. Associations such as the National Society of Fundraising Executives could offer mentoring, internship and training programs to Asian Americans new to fundraising. Foundations interested in stimulating Asian-American philanthropy could offer Asian-American nonprofits scholarship support to take advantage of these and other training programs, and staff support to hire experienced, skilled professionals.
 - For pan-Asian federated funds, service organizations and social justice nonprofits, the slow strategy of cultivating and educating the small, but burgeoning affluent professional and business set that tends to be either second or third generation may prove to be extremely fertile territory. Offering meaningful ways to participate that make direct use of their professional skills and tap into their social and business networks while they are young and uncommitted could be a powerful long-term strategy.
 - To help build professional, philanthropic and leadership capacity within Asian America, major mainstream institutions must invite Asian-American individuals into their circles
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through board memberships, and by employing them in visible and responsible positions in management, programming and fundraising.

- Mainstream and minority institutions have not looked favorably upon the “carrot and stick” approach to offering grants to mainstream institutions to diversify their executive staff and boards. Those major universities and museums that see the value of a potential donor set will and have committed resources to identify and attract them without financial incentives from the outside.

ENDNOTES

1. Paul Ong, ed., “Preface,” *The State of Asian Pacific America: Economic Diversity, Issues & Policies*, Los Angeles: LEAP Asian Pacific American Public Policy Institute and UCLA Asian American Studies Center, 1994, pp. 2-3. Paul Ong estimates that by the year 2020, the Asian-American population will grow to 23 million, which is more than 7 percent of the total U.S. population—an increase from the 3 percent reported in the 1990 Census. Ong also reported that as of 1990, 64 percent of the total Asian-Pacific-American population was foreign born. Bill Hing, Paul Ong and Robert Lee, eds., “Recent Asian Pacific Immigrants: The Demographic Background,” in *The State of Asian Pacific America: Reframing the Immigration Debate*, Los Angeles: LEAP Asian Pacific American Public Policy Institute and UCLA Asian American Studies Center, 1996, pp. 37. Robert M. Jiobu reports that except for Japanese and Pacific Islanders, immigrants comprise more than 50 percent of the population of every Asian-American ethnic group and exceeded 80 percent in some populations. In “The Impact of Immigration on the Demography of Asian Pacific Americans,” of this same volume of public policy essays (p. 61), author Larry Hajime Shinagawa estimates that by the year 2050, Asian-Pacific Americans will comprise 10 percent of the population of the United States.
 2. For in-depth overviews of Asian-American immigrant history, see generally Sucheng Chan, *Asian Americans: An Interpretive History*, Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1991; and Ronald T. Takaki. *Strangers from a Different Shore*, Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1989.
 3. The term “community of participation” is borrowed from Paul Schervish’s theories on donor motivations and social affiliations. See generally Paul Schervish, “Inclination, Obligation and Association: What We Know and What We Need to Know about Donor Motivation,” in Dwight F. Burlingame, ed., *Critical Issues in Fundraising*, New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1997, pp. 110-138.
 4. See generally Paul Ong and Suzanne J. Hee, “Economic Diversity,” in *The State of Asian Pacific America: Economic Diversity, Issues & Policies*, Paul Ong, ed., Los Angeles: LEAP Asian Pacific American Public Policy Institute and UCLA Asian American Studies Center, 1994, pp. 31-56.
 5. For references to informal giving among various Asian-American ethnic groups including Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Korean, Vietnamese and Indian see Bradford Smith, Sylvia Shue, Jennifer Lisa Vest and Joseph Villareal, *Ethnic Philanthropy*. San Francisco: University of San Francisco, Institute for Nonprofit Organization Management, 1994, pp. 135-224;
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- and James A. Joseph, *Remaking America: How the Benevolent Traditions of Many Cultures Are Transforming Our National Life*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1995, pp. 121-170.
6. For more information on the practice of remittances of several Asian-American groups, see Mark Sidel, "Giving Home: Diaspora Giving from the United States as a Funding Source for Indigenous Philanthropic and Nonprofit Institutions," background paper for the Foundation worldwide philanthropy meeting, London, Oct. 14-17, 1997. For a discussion of Chinese-American remittances in support of educational institutions in China, see Renqui Yu, "Chinese American Contributions to the Educational Development of Toisan 1910-1940," *Amerasia* 10:1, 1983, pp. 47-72.
 7. For more in-depth historical information and analysis of mutual aid associations see Chan, 1991, on Chinese-, Japanese-, Filipino- and Korean-American associations particularly Chapter 4: "The Social Organization of Asian Immigrant Communities," pp. 63-78; Joseph, 1995, on Chinese-, Japanese-, Indian-, Korean- and Vietnamese-American associations; Stanley Karnow and Nancy Yoshihara, *Asian Americans in Transition*, New York: The Asia Society, 1992, on various groups, but especially Chinese-American organizations; Nazli Kibria, *Family Tighrope: The Changing Lives of Vietnamese Americans*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993, on Vietnamese American mutual help; Peter Kwong, *The New Chinatown*, New York: Hill & Wang, 1987, pp. 81-106 (Chapter 5: "Chinatown's Informal Political Structure") and pp. 107-123 (Chapter 6: "Tongs, Gangs and the Godfather"), on contemporary Chinese-American organizations; Him Mark Lai, "Chinese Organizations in America based on Locality of Origin and/or Dialect-Group Affiliation, 1940s-1990s," in *Chinese America: History and Perspectives, 1996*, San Francisco: Chinese Historical Society of America, 1987 and 1996, on historical development of Chinese-American village/dialect and Benevolent Associations; Ivan Light, Im Jung Kwuon and Deng Zhong, "Korean Rotating Credit Associations in Los Angeles," *Amerasia*, 16:1, 1990, pp. 35-54, on Korean rotating credit associations; Luis V. Teodoro, ed., *Out of this Struggle: The Filipinos in Hawaii*, Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1981, on Filipino mutual aid associations; Raymond Brady Williams, *Religions of Immigrants from India and Pakistan: New Threads in the American Tapestry*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988, on South Asian cultural and regional associations; and Elena S.H. Yu, "Filipino Migration and Community Organizations in the United States" in *California Sociologist*, 3:2, Summer 1980, pp. 76-102, on Filipino-American organizations.
 8. See Lai, 1987 and 1996; Chan, 1991; and Kwong, 1987.
 9. Lai, 1987 and 1996.
 10. Peter Kwong, *The New Chinatown*, New York: Kill & Wang, 1987, pp. 81-106 ("Chapter 5: Chinatown's Informal Political Structure") and pp. 107-123 ("Chapter 6: Tongs, Gangs and the Godfather").
 11. Elena S.H. Yu, "Filipino Migration and Community Organizations in the United States," *California Sociologist*, 3:2, Summer 1980, pp. 76-102.
 12. Joseph, 1995.
 13. Williams, 1988.
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14. See Smith, Shue, Vest & Villareal, 1994, and Joseph, 1995.
 15. See generally Tetsuden Kashima's *Buddhism in America: The Social Organization of an Ethnic Religious Institution*, 1977 for information on how the Buddhist church functioned in Japanese-American communities, and Raymond Brady Williams' *Religions of Immigrants from India and Pakistan: New Threads in the American Tapestry*, 1988.
 16. Ai Ra Kim, *Women Struggling for a New Life: The Role of Religion in the Cultural Passage from Korea to America*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996.
 17. *Ibid.*, pp. 66-67.
 18. *Ibid.*, p. 67.
 19. Kashima, 1977, p.216.
 20. Williams, 1988, pp. 56-62.
 21. The "1.5" generation is a term of growing usage especially among Korean Americans to describe those Asian Americans who immigrate to the U.S. at a young age. Because they grow up in America and are educated here, they are almost, but not quite, like second generation Asian Americans in the degree of acculturation.
 22. This section is a summary of impressions from a few interviews with Asian Americans who participated in the Asian-American studies, activism and nonprofit movements of the time as well as written accounts in published works. See generally William Wei's *The Asian American Movement*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993, but in particular Chapter 6 "To Serve the People: Reformers and Community-based Organizations," pp. 169-202; and Yen Le Espiratu's *Asian American Panethnicity: Bridging Institutions and Identities*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992, Chapter 4 "The Politics of Social Service Funding," pp. 82-111. See Elaine Kim's "Between Black and White: An Interview with Bong Hwan Kim," in *The State of Asian America: Activism and Resistance in the 1990s*, ed., Karin Aguilar-San Juan, Boston: South End Press, 1994, for a personal account of the consciousness raising college experience of a middle-class Korean American who then devoted his life to community work through social service nonprofits.
 23. Espiratu, Yen Le, 1992, p. 86, and Wei, William, 1993, pp. 196-197.
 24. See "Methodology," pages 62-63, for a further description of the demographics of those interviewed for this article.
 25. Francie Ostrower, *Why the Wealthy Give: The Culture of Elite Philanthropy*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995.
 26. Russ Alan Prince and Karen Maru File, *The Seven Faces of Philanthropy: A New Approach to Cultivating Major Donors*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1994.
 27. See Ko & Howe, 1990 for survey of 371 Asian-American donors in greater Seattle area; Lee, 1990 on interviews of 40 Chinese Americans including 20 affluent donors; Tonai, 1988 for survey of 321 Asian-American donors in the San Francisco Bay Area; and Hsiao, 1997 on experiences with raising funds from Asian Americans for the University of California, Berkeley.
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28. For further discussions on this view see generally, Michael Omi's "Out of the Melting Pot and Into the Fire: Race Relations Policy," in *The State of Asian Pacific America: Policy Issues to the Year 2000*, 1993, pp. 199-214; Juanita Tamayo Lott's *Asian Americans: From Racial Category to Multiple Identities*, 1998; Yen Le Espiritu's "Crossroads and Possibilities" in *Amerasia Journal*, 22:2,1996, pp. vii-xii; and *Asian American Panethnicity*, 1992.
 29. Ostower, generally.
 30. The 442 Regimental Combat Team, the most highly decorated unit of its size in U.S. military history, consisted of Nisei (second-generation Japanese-Americans) soldiers who fought to protect democracy in Europe while their own families were living in internment camps in the United States.
 31. Sucheng Chan, *Asian Americans: An Interpretive History*, Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1991, p. 188.
 32. Renqui Yu, "Chinese American Contributions to the Educational Development of Toisan 1910-1940," *Amerasia* 10:1, 1982, pp. 47-72.
 33. For more information on the growing phenomenon of Asian-American entrepreneurs in the high tech industry, see Edward Jang-Woo Park's "Asian Matter: Asian American Entrepreneurs in the High Technology Industry in Silicon Valley," pp. 155-178 and Melanie Erasmus' "Immigrant Entrepreneurs in the High-Tech Industry," pp. 179-194, both in *The State of Asian Pacific America: Reframing the Immigration Debate*, 1996.
 34. See generally Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy, *Invisible and in Need: Philanthropic Giving to Asian American & Pacific Islanders*, New York, 1992; and Asian Pacific American Community Fund, *Asian Pacific American Non-Profits: Perceptions & Realities*, San Francisco, 1996.
 35. See generally, Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy and Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics, *Making the Invisible Visible: Strategies to Increase the Participation of Asian Pacific Americans in Philanthropy*, New York and Los Angeles, June 1996. Unpublished report to the James Irvine Foundation.

METHODOLOGY

This study of Asian-American philanthropy was begun during the summer of 1997 with the intention of developing new information that would support the efforts of the Council on Foundation and the study's foundation funders to stimulate and increase philanthropy within and from the Asian-American community.

The article is based primarily on formal quasi-structured interviews with 39 Asian-American donors and informal interviews with more than 40 nonprofit professionals and academics. Donor interviews targeted Japanese, Chinese and Filipino Americans. Because the ultimate intent of the study was to gauge the potential for major gifts to support endowed charitable funds, and to examine giving patterns over time, it was necessary to study sizeable populations with some affluence and history in the United States. (Analysis of the 1990 census data revealed that

Chinese, Japanese and Filipino Americans comprise the largest populations within Asian America and are among the top in average household income (*The State of Asian Pacific America: 1994 & 1996*). These three groups also have the longest history in this country. Thus, there is more literature and experienced observations on them. They have the greatest proportion of American-born generations with which to compare various perceptions with increasing acculturation. Future studies should survey Korean and South Asian populations which also fall within the top average household incomes among Asian Americans, and are the next largest ethnic populations.) The study was also informed by a literature review of published works on voluntary organizations, fundraising and charitable giving among various Asian ethnic groups, on Asian-American history and on policy issues—where relevant.

The main focus of this study was the interviews with 24 donors who live in the San Francisco, Los Angeles, Seattle and New York metropolitan areas. Those interviews were augmented by an additional 15 partial interviews that were conducted for a related study of Asian-Americans living in New York that incorporated most of this study's interview protocol into its own. Interviews lasted from 30 minutes to 2.5 hours, with an average of about 1 hour.

Interviewees were identified and recruited through a lengthy networking process that involved more than 40 interviews of related professionals and peers, including fundraisers, academics and executive directors of nonprofits that have successfully cultivated major Asian-American donors. Although many of these interviews lasted for only 15 minutes, several lasted well over an hour and continued throughout the research process. Background information and annual giving patterns were derived from self-reporting during the interviews as well as by observations from peer and professional sources and from published information about the donors, such as annual fund lists and media reports.

Although interviewees were not asked their ages, references to historical events and other stories made it clear that most were from 50 to 70 years old, which is fairly typical for major donors in the general population. This may be one reason for the lack of success in identifying and contacting many third-generation major donors.

Although interview subjects were identified and contacted through the interviewers' social and professional networks, the pool of donors surveyed is quite diverse. The ethnic breakdown of the entire group of 39 included: 19 Chinese Americans, 9 Japanese Americans, 8 Filipino Americans and 3 Indian Americans. Of the 39:

- 24 were male and 15 were female;
- 19 are first-generation immigrants—several of whom came as youths, and the balance as young professionals soon after college; and
- 16 are second-generation Asian-American and 4 are third-generation. All of the third-generation donor respondents are of Japanese descent.

Of the 24 fully interviewed respondents 14 live on the West Coast and 10 in New York. The 15 from the related study all live in the New York area. This subgroup also comprised about half of the first-generation interviewees and about half of the Chinese interviewees.

Because the protocol of the subgroup did not probe into motivations and examples of contributions as deeply, this concentration of ethnicity and generation probably had limited effect on overall observations.

CONTRIBUTORS

The Emerging Funds in Communities of Color Project was led by Joanne Scanlan, senior vice president of the Council on Foundations and her staff, including Bettye Brentley and Donna Ortega. Team consultants included Mindy Berry, Jessica Chao, Diana Newman, Henry A.J. Ramos and Mary-Frances Winters. Dianne Yamashiro-Omi also participated by interviewing 10 of the 39 Asian-American donors included in this article.

Out of respect for their privacy, the 39 donors interviewed for this article are not listed. Still, the most gracious sharing of their deeply personal experiences and dreams for their charitable activities and gifts is acknowledged. Below is a list of individuals who helped identify donors, literature and other philanthropic resources or background information on Asian America:

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Marjorie Fujiki
formerly with Asian Americans/Pacific
Islanders in Philanthropy

Warren T. Furutani
Los Angeles Community College Board

Irene Hirano
Japanese American National Museum

J.D. Hokoyama
Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics

Harumitsu Inouye
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David Kim
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Gail M. Kong
Asian Pacific American Community Fund

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