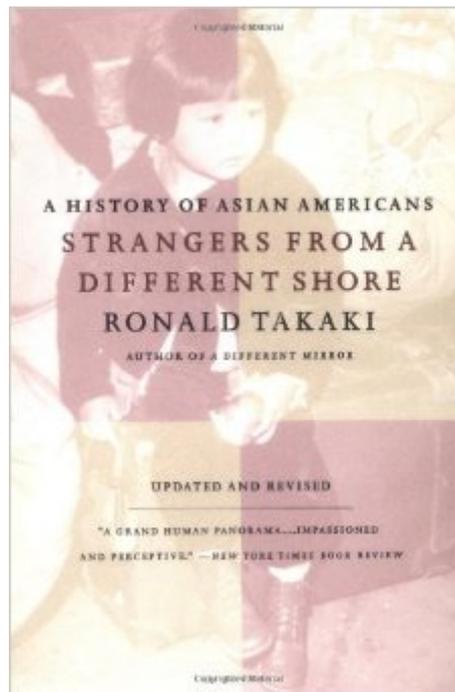


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Strangers From A Different Shore: A History Of Asian Americans, Updated And Revised Edition



Synopsis

In an extraordinary blend of narrative history, personal recollection, & oral testimony, the author presents a sweeping history of Asian Americans. He writes of the Chinese who laid tracks for the transcontinental railroad, of plantation laborers in the canefields of Hawaii, of "picture brides" marrying strangers in the hope of becoming part of the American dream. He tells stories of Japanese Americans behind the barbed wire of U.S. internment camps during World War II, Hmong refugees tragically unable to adjust to Wisconsin's alien climate & culture, & Asian American students stigmatized by the stereotype of the "model minority." This is a powerful & moving work that will resonate for all Americans, who together make up a nation of immigrants from other shores.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A common struggle exists for citizens of America, specifically Asian-Americans; the question ironically is: are we Americans at all? Hawaii, where Asians are the majority, sets the background for immigration in the early 1900's. Ronald Takaki does an excellent job of giving accurate details of the start of early 1st generation Asians. Surprisingly unprejudiced, Takaki uses superb quotes to give opinions and feeling of the Asian-Americans. Along with emotional impact, *Strangers From a Different Shore* contains many stories, statistics, and laws providing the sense of what rights and true freedom Asian-Americans really had in the land of equals. A well researched book, with almost every paragraph containing reference to many other articles and books, Takaki provides specific sections for major Asian ethnicities, and general details for the many other countries out there. With details of competition of Asian races among each other, leaving nothing out. Takaki does not side to

Japanese as the most neglected or accepted, and gives information of the faults of Japanese among the ethnicities as well. *Strangers From a Different Shore* also gives the dramatic accounts of WWII, a strong turning point from the involvement of Japan and its victims. Retelling the involvement of many Asians serving America's army, it also includes the story of the 442/100 and the internment/relocation (not concentration) of the Japanese. Jumping to current day society, Asians are still struggling to become part of America. Asians currently battling many stereotypes still, which are viewed as factual information, brings Takaki to dissect some of the newer passive racial markings. I find this book dead accurate, and backed up very well (just look at the bibliography).

From the outset, I want to say that I like this book very much. It is one of the classics of Asian American history and it is certainly one of the best "one-stop shops" for a detailed, accurate historical account of the Asian American experience. Takaki makes some very useful contributions to our understanding of the major historical currents at work during the different periods of Asian migration and offers cogent reasons for why various Asian American communities look the way that they do. Finally, he does a great job of highlighting the differences between each of the groups that are lumped together under the term "Asian". That being said, I also feel that Takaki compromises some of his historical mission through his constant need to include the voices of individual Asian Americans and their persecutors as a chorus in his work. While it is no doubt important to have people "testify" as to their experiences, I find myself wondering what other things they said that do not simply support the wonderfully direct narrative that he constructs. Moreover, there is so much in the way of anecdote and detail and so little in the way of deep analysis that in the end I wished that Takaki had applied his undoubted talents over a slightly smaller focus, the better to get at the underlying complexities. This is perhaps where ethnic studies and anthropology part company. Please don't get me wrong, I think this book is a great improvement over Lynn Pan's trite journalism or some of the other so-called histories of our peoples.

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