



9/11 Memorial at the College of Staten Island/CUNY

# Asian Americans: Confronting Racial Hierarchy and Creating an Empathic Society

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THE SURGE OF RACIAL HATRED, PREJUDICE AND VIOLENCE in the United States has been contributing to the downward spiral Americans are going through, namely, from personal struggle to economic crisis and to the tottering of American democracy. In 2022 for example, many New York residents could easily feel that they were in the eye of a perfect storm evolving from multiple calamities. The Covid-19 pandemic, Trumpism, disruption of global production chains, the Russian invasion into Ukraine, and China's ultra-nationalism, and anti-Asian violence may not seem to have been related. Unfortunately, as the French philosopher and mathematician Blaise Pascal mused, "Cleopatra's nose, had it been shorter, the whole face of the world would have been changed." That was then. This is now: Under the "butterfly defect"<sup>1</sup> in a complex world, an invisible virus spreading from Wuhan, China grounded the entire globalization cycle to halt in just a few months; highly probable, a seemingly casual remark in Beijing could start a fierce feud in New York. All the aforementioned events could be tightly connected as in a jigsaw puzzle.

This essay focuses on racism/racial hatred as it affects Asian Americans within the context of the U.S. racial hierarchy and failed neo-liberal society. I raise the following questions:

1. How can we make sense of anti-Asian violence in the U.S.?
2. Should Asian-Americans arm themselves against their own interests?
3. How do we challenge the U.S. racial hierarchy in order to vanquish racial and ethnocentric hatred?
4. Toward an East-West Lodestar?

## Making Better Sense of Anti-Asian Violence

My sensitivity to the current tenuous status of Chinese and Asian Americans is due to my multifaceted identity, as a Chinese and an educator in New York. The incidence of hate crimes against Asian-Americans, at least based upon our reading of traditional newspapers and watching mainstream news and social media, has soared. From March 19, 2020 to March 31, 2022, nearly 11,500 hate incidents against Asian American and Pacific Islanders were reported to Stop AAPI Hate, an organization that tracks reports of racism and discrimination against AAPIs.<sup>2</sup> The Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism revealed that anti-Asian hate crime increased by 339% in 2021 compared to the year before.<sup>3</sup> In New York City, the NYPD reported that the recorded anti-Asian incidents had a sudden jump in 2020, from a single case in 2019 to 27 in 2020, then to 131 in 2021, an increase of 385%.<sup>4</sup> Such an alarming increase of attacks put Asian-American communities on edge. Opinion and community leaders within and without Asian-American communities have tried to figure out why it happened and what to do in response. Being aware of that two-thirds of Asian-Americans are foreign born, that the Chinese account for a quarter of Asian-Americans, and mainland Chinese (more than 5 million after China's opening in 1980) accounts for 60% of Chinese-Americans, this author is speaking from the standpoint of a first-generation mainland Chinese immigrant.

Considering the volatility of anti-Asian hatred, understandably, the cautious line of thought has been restricted to mental health issues, under which most incidents are perceived as isolated clinical cases. This strategy downplays the conflict without touching the high-voltage issues of race and power within and outside of the Chinese-American community. To understand the welter many Asian-Americans have fallen in, we have to go beyond the boundary of either professional technicality or isolated private orbits.



Changing seasons during the pandemic

Covid's onslaught upon New York incited early racial backlashes against the Chinese and Chinese-Americans. As few perpetrators of racial violence could distinguish the Chinese from other East Asians, even from South-eastern/Southern Asians. In mid-2020, New York City was turned into a battleground between Trump supporters and anti-Trump protesters. On Staten Island, "the conservative bastion in a liberal city,"<sup>5</sup> Nicole Malliotakis (NY-11), a believer of conspiracy theory and a denialist of 2020 presidential election, won 53% of the votes in her constituency that year for Congress, presumably the percentage of her supporters could be higher on Staten

Island than the more cosmopolitan small strip from Brooklyn (keeping in mind, Trump won 61.6% over Biden's 37.6% on Staten Island).<sup>6</sup> Also, New York City at large, the second largest area in terms of the Latino and Asian population, and, based upon 1,165 precincts where the combined population of Latinos and residents of Asian descent is at least 65%, an analysis of 2020 elections saw a 78% of increase change in votes cast for Trump from 2016 to 2020.<sup>7</sup>

As Asian-American communities moved further to red, African-American communities nationwide held up their "moral clarity" to reject Trump and stick to the Democratic Party with 90% of votes for Biden. The increasing divergence of political attitudes between African-American communities and the Chinese-American communities in New York City was illustrated by two counter-rallies mainly supported by whites, advertised by Falun Gong entities, but with a sizeable presence from Chinese communities: "Blue Lives Matter"/"Support NYPD" rallies and "Chinese Americans Support/Fight for Trump" parades, respectively against the "Black Lives Matter" and "Defunding the Police" movements.<sup>8</sup> Even after President Biden had already been in the White House for months, some Chinese still mobilized crowds in the open to embrace the "Big Lie" and expect a Trump comeback.

Despite high-profile Trump supporters among the Chinese-American communities, some verging to social Darwinism and racism against Blacks, overall, the majority of Asian-Americans voted for Biden in 2020, with a margin of 2-1. In some crucial battleground states such as Arizona, Georgia, Nevada, and Michigan, the sudden surge of Asian votes might have played an important role in helping Biden's victory.<sup>9</sup> In the eyes of some white supremacists, Asian-Americans should take part of the blame for Trump's loss. As a political scientist in contemplating the multi-causal factors behind the various violence perpetrated by the whites against Asians, in particular those in San Francisco Chinatown and the massive spa shooting in Atlanta (March 2021), I must accept the possibility of scapegoating and political revenge as at least a distal factor.

Unfortunately, the Russian invasion into Ukraine on February 24, 2022 added new fuel to the simmering undercurrent of hatred against Asians. Here people may have to take a twist and turn in mind to figure out the complexity. China and Russia formed a de facto alliance at the Beijing Winter Olympics with their leaders signing a declaration on February 4. Regarding the Russian invasion, Chinese social media such as WeChat and Weibo was inundated with pro-Putin euphoric nonsense and vulgar sexist fantasies about snatching up Ukrainian beauties after the country was wiped out. The draconian



Artist Zheng Liangjie & Ukrainians at rally in Times Square, New York

enforcement of “One Family, One Child” family-planning and its unintended widespread selective abortion and female infanticide caused a structural surplus of at least 30 million so-called *Bare Sticks* (光棍) who have no hope to find a wife. The Chinese libidinal/crotch nationalism heated up toward a suffering nation. Meanwhile, the “chained and padlocked woman” who was kidnapped and sold into a forced marriage as a sex slave to give births to eight children in Feng County (Xuzhou, Jiangsu), was exposed on social media, causing online uproars among the urban middle-class and interrogating the souls of many Chinese. Quickly

Chinese social media, later Twitter and other mainstream news outlets (such as CNN and Reuters) carried or reported on posts that talked about taking in 100,000 Ukrainian women, some even suggesting, to satisfy the sexual hunger of Feng County men in order to spare the Chinese women from exploitation. Concerned of the controversy both at home and abroad, Douyin (TikTok) deleted more than 6,400 posts, suspended 1,620 live broadcasts, and closed related accounts. Weibo on Feb. 25 deleted 542 items of posts, warned or suspended 74 accounts for 30 days.<sup>10</sup> Understandably, the damage had been done.

For me, these transnational occurrences contextualized Steven Zajonc’s attack spree against seven Asian women in Manhattan within a period of two hours on February 28, 2022. I have no objection to taking into consideration of the factor that he might be mentally disturbed, as his mother revealed his violent past at home (Baker Act-ed several times) and possibly having an “episode” in Manhattan.<sup>11</sup> However, other high-profile cases in New York have also raised the red flag of mental health issues, for example, the Michelle Go case, I would argue that even lunatics often take cue from their environment, the milieu of their daily living, in explaining the use of violence against a specific group but without specific individual target. Zajonc’s connections with Staten Island, likely with my college (a valid College of Staten Island email address is still under his name) and his family being within the same ZIP code as my house before moving to Florida, all remind me that Zajonc could be an average young man in my neighborhood.

Less politically partisan than Zajonc, some of my students revealed their perplexity over racial issues by asking me prejudicial questions without being aware. For example, one student wanted me to tell him whether Chinese restaurants cook rat meat instead of chicken to sell (for me, the irrationality of this deep and persistent suspicion among some New York neighborhoods is like that someone sells rat milk instead of cow milk in the grocery store!). On another occasion, a student revealed to me that among his circle, the Chinese women were dubbed the moniker, “Yellow Cab.” More than six decades ago, psychologist Gordon Allport pointed out the essential role of racial rumors in prejudice and racism: “Also the customary run of ethnic rumors takes a spurt, thus reflecting the mounting strain. One of the best barometers of tension is the collection and analysis of ethnic rumors in the community.”<sup>12</sup>

Here, am I blaming the victims by relating their tragedies to the bigger population that tenuously they could be associated with? Or, by highlighting the bigger cultural and political factors, am I absolving criminals of their individual responsibility as agency? Unequivocally, I have a resounding no to each of these two questions. Yet, lacking a clearer understanding of the set of causal factors beyond anti-Asian violence, many people have jumped to half-baked solutions which may be proved worse than the disease they intend to cure.

### **Should Asian-American Communities Arm Themselves (Against Their Own Interests)?**

As a Chinese-American educator, I have paid close attention to two proposals in response to violence on campus and in our community. After the Uvalde school shooting in Texas (May 24, 2022), some

people rehashed the idea that teachers should bear arms in school to protect students from terrorists.<sup>13</sup> Parallel to this self-defense and vigilantism, in Asian-American communities, in response to the surging anti-Asian violence, martial arts training programs have become popular; Asian women in particular were encouraged to learn self-defense skills such as Karate, Kung-Fu, boxing, Judo, etc., beyond pepper sprays. At San Francisco's "Asians Are Strong" demonstration, the "aggressive" aspect of Wing-Chun was emphasized, despite the martial art often focusing on a battle within.<sup>14</sup> In summer 2022, New York "residents in Sheepshead Bay took safety into their own hands by forming an Asian Community Watch group."<sup>15</sup> Understandably, gun ownership has skyrocketed, especially among some Asian families. According to a survey by the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF), Asian Americans bought 42% more firearms and ammunition in the first six months of 2020 than they did in the same timeframe the year before.<sup>16</sup>

Below the surface of arming ourselves, a call for the Asian-American solidarity, or "victim solidarity," has been heard. Unfortunately, this strategy to address racism, if not calibrated with civic culture and open-mindedness, would easily mislead the fight against violence into a cul-de-sac. After an assault by a Black man who viciously pushed down a 91-year-old man in Oakland Chinatown just before the 2021 Lunar Chinese New Year, a debate started when two famous Asian-American actors offered a reward of \$25,000 to capture the culprit. This debate revealed a complicated history of the relations between African-Americans and Asian-Americans, involving both solidarity and interracial conflict. Bianca Mabute-Louie, a researcher and advocate for racial justice, pointed out: Against the BLM movements that "fostering anti-Black sentiment or focusing on interracial conflict in this moment takes away from recognizing that racism is a result of white supremacy." Being aware of the long-term police brutalities against Black and Brown people, some Asian-American community leaders stressed on "interracial solidarity" and condemned "pitting communities of color against each other or increasing the police presence."<sup>17</sup> The perplexity for Asian-Americans arises from not only the old "American dilemma" that the racial conflict between the whites and Blacks has drawn Asian-Americans into an imbroglio, but also that Asian-Americans have occupied an awkward position in the American racial landscape. The ethnic nationalism with Asian solidarity could be falling into the same logical trap of tribalism as advocated by the white supremacist nationalism with the slogan of "blood and soil" at the cost of both individualism and universal values.

Given whites are the hegemonic racial group in American society, Chinese-Americans face both racism of assimilation and racism of exclusion, and to some extent gender playing a role. Few would fail to notice at any Chinatown restaurant that Chinese women are more successfully assimilated into the white crowd than Chinese men in mainstream society (To be precise, from 2008 to 2018, 29% of Asian-Americans married interracially, the highest rate among all major racial groups; the female is two times the male).<sup>18</sup> Unfortunately, as victims of racism, many Chinese-Americans often seek to ally with the white race and practice racism of exclusion toward Blacks. Even among the Chinese-American community, some subtle differences should be observed in the light of the trinity or the troika of sexism-racism-classism (homophobia included).<sup>19</sup>

In comparison to the old Chinese-Americans who have settled in the U.S. since 1850s and before the 1965 Immigration Act, the newly arrived mainland Chinese did not share the experiences/trauma under the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the Japanese Internment Camps during WWII, and the "Separate but Equal" era; neither have they joined the coalition with African-Americans and Latinos to fight for labor rights in California or civil rights in the Sixties. Even among those mainland Chinese immigrants, one group is from the elite class in China who took TOEFL/GRE to pursue success in American graduate schools and finally settled in affluent suburbs; another group is those who brought tremendous wealth to invest and live in the U.S. on Golden Visas (In California and New York, we can find many such families). The third group included many undocumented immigrants from Guangdong, Fujian,

Zhejiang and later Northeast China and other inland provinces, some have succeeded in business and scattered in the country, some are concentrated in old and new Chinatowns (e.g., Flushing and Eighth Avenue in Brooklyn were built more by the new immigrants). Not surprisingly, many mainland Chinese who refuse to accept the concept of “people of color,” tend to despise Blacks and Latinos, and even carry classism toward their own fellow countrymen from the countryside. Differing subtly from Allport’s observation that “prejudice as a generalized attitude,” in their traditional differentiated framework of relationships, some Chinese have identified with the hegemonic racial order and aligned with the whites with positive prejudice against other two minority groups. Allport’s “selective prejudice” makes more sense in this context.<sup>20</sup> This Bandwagoning strategy is clearly illustrated by the vocal opposition to Affirmative Action in education. Among the five major groups of Asian-Americans, “Chinese Americans are the least supportive of Affirmative Action.” In one 2016 survey, 70% opposed it.<sup>21</sup> Chinese families in New York constituted the main force in protesting the AA-EO practice in five key high schools’ admission and nationwide some Chinese-American Republicans led the fight in court and election against the admission policy from Ivy League schools.<sup>22</sup>

In this complex racial order of balance of power and Bandwagoning, Chinese women have played a unique role. Given the fact that China is still a patriarchy in its deep culture, Chinese immigrants have different psychological responses in the new country. For women, to escape the repressive Chinese culture gives them a sense of liberation and more opportunity in the marriage market; for men, the loss of their privilege back home and the harsh reality in maintaining their career and family in a new country have further alienated them, strengthened their in-group mentality or radicalized them.

In addition to deep classism and sexism among Chinese-Americans, the appeal to common ancestry and homeland could be elusive, because some immigrants like myself chose to break away with the home/homeland to escape something alienating, repressive, unsatisfactory and hopeless. I can still vividly recollect that the last op-ed article I wrote for *The World Economy Herald* (世界经济导报) in Shanghai, 1989 was entitled “Intellectuals Have No Country,” obviously a meme of Marx’s famous slogan in *The Communist Manifesto*: “Workers have no country!” Even such a careful camouflage in Marx’s logic did not allow my article to see the light. It was banned with the close-down of the newspaper. The ensuing Tiananmen Massacre prompted me to make up my mind to leave my motherland. In a free country such as the United States, despite the MAGA craze, I can openly embrace Socrates’ declaration as an independent thinker: “I have no country!” This means, on the one hand, as new immigrants, we may have been well aware of the failings and imperfections of our own culture.

On the other hand, we, new immigrants or children of immigrants, may have already demonstrated a stronger volition to cross the ocean, to enter a new world. In response to “Go back to whatever fucking Asian country you belong in!” (a quote from a woman in California, June 2020), similar to what also happened to me on Staten Island and beyond, I think we have the courage to offer an appropriate answer: “This country is the place I proudly belong to! The United States is my home no less than it is yours.” As a matter of fact, on such an occasion I do often receive moral and verbal support from bystanders of different races. Certainly, many of us have successfully acculturated into this new nation, an “imagined community” and are ready to make it better

Within Staten Island folklore, the famed hip-hop group Wu-Tang Clan is located here, and so the island is also called “the Mysterious Land of Shaolin.” People might expect my instinct reaction to be inclined to embrace guns and martial arts in defending my rights. I could tell from my first and only experience with a gun in the college military training back to China, I hated it from the bottom of my heart. Besides the embarrassment of hitting only three bullets on my target, and the other seven flying astray to my neighboring classmate’s, I am adamantly opposed to militarizing our educators, and arming Asian women, and Asian-American communities.

Militarizing our daily life in the U.S. has reached the most dangerous level that is marked by some politicians thinking of turning our school campuses into a boot camp for military recruit training. When a teaching whip/rod (I saw them in China when I was a school boy half a century ago) has long become anachronistic in the U.S., arming school children would soon scandalize American school campuses into a dystopia of *The Hunger Games*. The same would be true to militarize Asian-American communities. From it, I do not merely see a particular threat to Asian-Americans, but a “non-discrimination and equal opportunity” war against ALL Americans, as has already happened in countless school massacres, shattering the cultivating ground of civilization, killing gardeners and the promising flowers under their care in the academy of knowledge.

There are two contrasting strategies for our action: either stick to your kind, or to embrace the kind. Against the big neoliberal canvass with a blot over the place of modern state, the first route, namely the call for internal Asian solidarity as I have already discussed, might be a band-aid solution analogous to another Chinese idiom: “Try to stop water from boiling by scooping it up and pouring it back” (扬汤止沸). Its unintended consequence might be the deepening suspicion and hatred between Asian-Americans and Black/Brown communities without addressing our common need for public safety. However, we need to search for a comprehensive and fundamental remedy to the pervasive disease of militarism. In a Chinese idiom, we need to “take away the firewood from under the caldron” (釜底抽薪). As author Thomas Friedman concluded in *Thank You for Being Late*, “the most important personal, political and philosophical lesson” is that “the more the world demands that we branch out, the more we each need to be anchored in a topsoil of trust that is the foundation of all healthy communities. We must be enriched by that topsoil, and we must enrich it in turn.”<sup>23</sup>

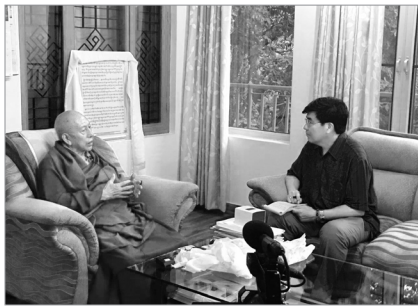
### **Towards an East-West Lodestar?**

Many first-generation Asian-Americans escaped violence, hatred, genocide, and anarchy in some Asian countries. Asian American literature has been littered with “killing field,” tragedy and trauma.<sup>24</sup> On July 12, 2022, at the January 6th Committee hearing, another successful Asian-American, Congresswoman Stephanie Murphy (D-Florida) recalled her two escapes from hate and violence: She fled Vietnam with her family to the United States for sanctuary in 1979 and again on January 6th, 2021, fleeing the U.S. Capitol away from the hunting rioters.<sup>25</sup> Her warning of racial/ethnic hatred struck a chord with many Asian-Americans at a dark moment in the U.S. due to recession, inflation and depression. As sociologist Pitirim Sorokin observed, a society in calamity is often torn apart by two extremes of saints and sinners at the same time, who paved the way for the coming of a new moderation. Following the Greco-Christian ethical and religious tradition, he pinpointed “the moral duty and the transcendental values of the Kingdom of God” in his prescription for the best way out of calamities and crises.<sup>26</sup>

Alternatively, for a non-religious atheist, some wisdom from the East could be enlightening. Mencius, a philosopher who had proposed the Four Principles of Heart two thousand years earlier than Adam Smith who proposed sympathy as the foundation of modern morality, taught the Chinese about the four-fold foundation of humanism: “That feelings of distress is the principle of benevolence; the feeling of shame and dislike is the principle of righteousness; the feeling of modesty and complaisance is the principle of propriety; and the feeling of approving and disapproving is the principle of knowledge.”<sup>27</sup> Mencius also taught, “In poverty, cultivate your own body; in prosperity, benefit the whole world.” (穷则独善其身, 达则兼善天下, translation is mine).

In kindness, no matter from Smith or Mencius, we should park our body and mind as home. To synthesize wisdoms from the West and the East, we can connect mind with heart, intellect with sympathy, reason with humanity. Mind/Heart can be either a “mental sky” for our imagination or a “mental field” for our cultivation, which both offer an internal battleground for us to launch attacks upon our enemy and to vanquish the evil, as Sun Tzu’s *Art of War*, the Indian *Mahabharata* and Islamic doctrine of Jihad have taught. On this strategy, the movie on Chinese-Americans’ struggle, *Everything Everywhere*

*All at Once* (directed by Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert, 2022), offers multidimensional thought experiment to dramatize Asian-Americans' predicament and to formulate a pacifist solution. As all literary and artistic works of utopia, dystopia, sci-fi, and fantasy, this movie offers a multiverse for our mind to transcend the "only one spiritual-cultural universe" we as living subjects live in in order to find "an objective gaze."<sup>28</sup> Through the fantasy of the movie, we can mentally create an Archimedean point to examine our entanglement, especially for Asian-Americans, in the troika of racism-classism-sexism, and successfully we can arrive at a reconciliatory solution with love to each other and detachment from the sensual world, after the various hypothetical pathways are tried but rejected: radical rejection of familial nexuses, violent crushing of the Linga (penis and balls as the symbol of male chauvinism in traditional Asian culture and some pockets of American society) for revenge, conventional surrender to materialism for fame and wealth, or the nihilistic and suicidal fall of stone-hearted androids into the deep abyss of the Grand Canyon. We cannot live as an isolated atom, or our family/ethnic group as a closed fort in a web-like world. We cannot count on that we are always going to be the winner in a rat race to the bottom regarding if we can overpower our competitors by being equipped with lethal weapons. As a well-off community overall, Asian-Americans may achieve the most and at the same time help the larger world by reaching out to all racial groups, working on a cosmopolitan goal with cosmopolitan civics: Sympathetic people, compassionate leadership, peace-loving government, empathetic society and perpetual peace. As confirmed by American experiences in the army during World War II, the coalition between the Jewish community and NAACP in the Civil Rights Movement, the Rainbow Coalition for Obama, and the nationwide BLM demonstrations, when we have a high ideal and strive for a common goal, Americans, without thinking of prefix, are at our best.



Ming Xia Interviewing Samdhong Rinpoche

Cynical readers may jeer at the idealistic nature of my message. Actually, some scientists and social scientists have discovered plenty of empirical and scientific evidences to support optimism and progressivism. In political science, the game theory has proved again and again that trust improves cooperation;<sup>29</sup> nonviolent resistance movements succeed with a better chance than the violent ones;<sup>30</sup> biological and cognitive sciences help us realize that we are fundamentally empathic species;<sup>31</sup> according to evolutionary biology and behavioral genetics, the long arc of human evolutionary history bends toward goodness.<sup>32</sup> Then, the question is: How can we take every personal, small step in tandem with the evolving long arc of progressive history? In April 2014, I had a precious opportunity to seek enlightenment from Samdhong Rinpoche, advisor for the 14th Dalai Lama and one of the most important Buddhist philosophers, at his residence amid the hill of Dharamsala, India. I asked him: How can I act and stay as a good Buddhist on a daily basis. He answered: "Meditating one word—mindful." Indeed, in dealing with interracial relationships, "being mindful" is not aggressive but can be defensive, not naïve but is attentive, not prejudiced but neutral, not paranoid but self-reflexive, not hysterical but empathic, and sympathetic.

### Postscript

Immigrant families must suffer from the misalignment of traditional and legal holidays. For the past three decades I have lived in the U.S., the Chinese New Year (based on lunar calendar) in 2023 was perfect for my working calendar: It is one of the two earliest dates in January and the only one that fell on Sunday. Considering China entered the New Year half a day earlier than the U.S., the Chinese have their family reunion on New Year's Eve, and thankfully, I could have the whole weekend, free of work, to celebrate my festival and to exchange good wishes with family members and relatives, especially those of old age.



This perfect cosmological alignment was shattered by two heinous murders perpetrated by two gunmen of senior age and Chinese ethnic background (one killer is a Chinese citizen). These two profile qualities, any single one of them, would make the occurrence of a mass shooting a low probability event. I was, like all Chinese I have spoken with, shocked into disbelief and numbness for the New Year period. I needed an understanding and interpretation of these tragedies that happened within 48 hours of one another.

In this article that I finished in the summer of 2022, I tried to highlight one important part of our effort to confront anti-Asian violence in America. My key message is that, instead of learning Kung-Fu or arming ourselves with guns, we should turn the knife of wisdom toward the hatred we harbor deeply in our heart and cut off the vicious circle of othering and finger-pointing. Among the Chinese Americans from the mainland whom I am part of and therefore know best, many people are the victims of otherness in the American racial hierarchy, and at the same time, they can be enthusiastic social Darwinists to apply othering to someone else within their own community for any subtle differences (for example, North vs. South, rural vs. urban, legal vs. undocumented, etc.). The sacredness of life and equality of dignity have not registered with some of them. The loneliness, hopelessness and desperation often suffocate new immigrants from China, where although is poorer but family and community often come to help. Unfortunately, for many of them, they have been attracted by the siren of Trumpism to believe that the further destruction of welfare/health/education programs is the prescription for making America great again, or at least making them feel great again. Not to have self-pity, I have to say that Asian-American men have more difficulty than women assimilating into America. From my personal experience, I often feel that as a culturally dislocated new immigrant, we live in a new culture as a rootless transplant, floating in air without being able to find a new mooring. However, as our American-born children grow up, we can learn from them. Our children teach us to re-accurturate into our new land as the aerial root does to a banyan tree. Unfortunately, the two lonely and isolated killers do not have such a benefit to inoculate them from the social ills and to embrace the new values (such as gender diversity and equality, open-mindedness, and adaptability) in this country. Can we build a caring community in the ethnic enclave? Can we abstain from the worship of guns and violence? My original thesis that we should build an empathetic society starting from our own immigrant community still retains its validity. The original poignant style to challenge ourselves—the new Chinese immigrants from the mainland—still applies, although I know the paradox of critiquing your own kind for a higher good, as both Hanna Arendt and Richard Falk have illustrated this point even in a more enlightened Jewish community.

## Notes

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12. Gordon W. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice*, Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1958 [1954], p. 61.
13. Marjorie Taylor Greene says children 'should be trained with firearms' to ward off a 'mad man with a gun' in schools, June 27, 2022. (<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/marjorie-taylor-greene-says-children-should-be-trained-with-firearms-toward-off-a-mad-man-with-a-gun-in-schools/ar-AAAYRj4M?ocid=msdgentp&cvid=953ae9b3857a49fabd9ab895f7404909>)
14. *World Journal* (世界日報) report, April 5, 2021. “买枪、习武、备胡椒喷雾……美国亚裔太难了! June 10, 2021; Henry Lem, “Battle Within: Martial Arts, Asian Food, and Face Masks”, in Russell Leung, ed., *Corona Conversations: A Year of Plague and Protest*, AAARI-CUNY, CUNY FORUM, Vol. 8:1, summer/winter 2020-21, pp. 73-77. (<https://gny.americachineselife.com/%E7%BE%8E%E5%9B%BD%E4%BA%9A%E8%A3%94%E5%A4%AA%E9%9A%BE%E4%BA%86/>)
15. Neighbors in Sheepshead Bay form Asian Community Watch group, July 22, 2022, at *CBS New York*. (<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/neighbors-in-sheepshead-bay-form-asian-community-watch-group/ar-AAZSxFF?ocid=msdgentp&cvid=5afa2c000ec24698aee6a5c9ac721cc2>)
16. 'I've Never Seen This Level of Fear.' Why Asian Americans Are Joining the Rush to Buy Guns; Asian Americans armed themselves during the pandemic in response to racial acts; Tsu-Yin Wu, et al, “Examining racism and firearm-related risks among Asian Americans in the United States during the COVID-19 pandemic,” *Preventive Medicine Reports*, Volume 27, 2022, at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pmedr.2022.101800>.
17. Hate Crimes Against Asian Americans Are on the Rise. Many Say More Policing Isn't the Answer, Feb. 18, 2021. (<https://time.com/5938482/asian-american-attacks/>)
18. 550万在美人数据全公开, at: <http://scholarsupdate.hi2net.com/news.asp?NewsID=27829>.
19. Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, *The Anatomy of Prejudice*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996, pp. 21-22.
20. Allport, p. 66 and p. 72.
21. “Asian Americans' Attitudes toward Affirmative Action: Framing Matters” by Janelle Wong, Jennifer Lee, And Van Tran, at: <http://aapidata.com/blog/aa-attitudes-affirmative-action/>.
22. The heated temperature can be easily felt by looking at a sample of reports: Challengers of Affirmative Action Have a New Target: New York City's Elite High Schools; 4 Myths Fueling the Fight Over NYC's Exclusive High Schools; Asians are being used to make the case against affirmative action. Again; The Uncomfortable Truth About Affirmative Action and Asian-Americans; This survivor of Mao's Cultural Revolution warns of what's to come if Democrats control education.
23. Thomas Friedman, *Thank You for Being Late*, New York, NY: FSG, 2016, p. 452.
24. Examples are too many to list, but the following titles on my shelf give us a sense of the genre: *After the Nightmare* (Liang Heng and Judith Shapiro, 1986), *Life and Death in Shanghai* (Nien Cheng, 1987), *Bitter Winds: A Memoir of My Years in China's Gulag* (Harry Wu and Carolyn Wakeman, 1993), *The Girl from Purple Mountain* (2001), *In Order to Live* (Yeonmi Park, 2015), *The Girl with Seven Names: Escape from North Korea* (Hyeonsoo Lee, 2015), *Bend, Not Break* (Ping Fu, 2012), *Escape from Camp 14* (Blaine Harden with Shin Dong-Hyuk, 2012), and of course those by Ha Jin, Amy Tan, and Min Jin Lee.
25. WATCH: Rep. Murphy draws on personal experience to underscore importance of Jan. 6 hearings.
26. Pitirim Sorokin, *Man and Society in Calamity*, New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2010 [1942], p. 318.
27. Translation from James Legge in Lin Yutang, ed., *The Wisdom of China and India*, New York, NY: Random House, 1942, p. 263.
28. Pierre-André Taguieff, *The Forces of Prejudice: On Racism and Its Doubles*, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2001, p. 273.
29. Robert Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation*, New York, NY: Basic Books, 1984.
30. Steven Pinker, *Enlightenment Now: The Case for Reason, Science, Humanism, and Progress*, New York, NY: Viking, 2018, P. 405.

31. Jeremy Rifkin, *The Empathic Civilization: The Race to Global Consciousness in a World in Crisis*, New York, NY: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Penguin, 2009.
32. Nicholas Christakis, *Blueprint: The Evolutionary Origins of a Good Society*, New York, NY: Little, Brown Spark, 2019.

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