

We are not silent, but are you *listening*?

By: Evelyn Yip

Collaborative Editor: Dr. Travis Heath

Anti-Asian hate crimes are resurging, have you heard? Most likely not because we, the Asian community, are constantly swept under the rug. Mainstream media is silent about these crimes.

I find myself constantly having to argue and prove that I, as an Asian American, am oppressed. Asian Americans are stereotyped to be the “*Model Minority*” and viewed as polite enough, smart enough, and/or capable enough to be white. We are forced to blend in to be safe or “accepted.” But Asians are not white, and we do not experience white privilege. We are still the *other*. The COVID-19 pandemic was a stark reminder of that, and as news spread around the world about the “Chinese Virus,” any semblance of safety or acceptance was lost; we have been, and always will be an “*other*” in our white supremacist society. This form of othering has long been used in anti-immigrant rhetoric, and it has catalyzed a new wave of hate towards the Asian community. I mean, they accepted us, right? Since they labeled us as the Model Minority. Wrong. They label us as they please. One minute we are the model minorities and then the next we are a disease.

But it is important to note that this is not the first or only time Anti-Asian hate has permeated our society. Asians and Asian Americans have been discriminated against since colonization. When Asians immigrated to the U.S., we were labeled as “*Yellow Peril*,” describing our inherent danger to the Western world. However, as Asians worked hard to blend in, we were labeled the “*Model Minority*.” They pitted us against other minoritized folks and communities. Comparing us to them. They held us up high because we were close enough-- *like them*. But we are not. And they make it very clear to draw that distinction as soon as it fits. Even our personal experiences of constantly battling between our dual identities/cultures is hard enough. But also, people are forcing us to live up to their model minority myth or face yellow peril danger.

[“I quickly decided the safest option for me is to blend in. Blending in is what we Asians excel at.”](#) -

Sophia Li

I do not want to “blend in” anymore. I want to **stand out**. I want people to finally acknowledge the Asian experience of oppression. We are being oppressed. We are being attacked and killed. Innocent people in our communities are being targeted and assaulted for no reason. Bawi Cung. Vicha Ratanapakdee. Noel Quintana. Yong Zheng. Vandalizing, stabbing, acid attacks, shoving, robbing, and so many other violent crimes are targeted towards our community. The system is killing us, too. Our community’s stigma towards mental health does not mean that we are not suffering from mental health issues. Angelo Quinto. Christian Hall. These two individuals were in need of help but instead were killed.

Amidst our biggest celebration of health, happiness, and family -- the Lunar New Year, these Anti-Asian hate crimes surge. Innocent Asian elders are being assaulted. Innocent Asian individuals are being assaulted. I am in constant fear for my family members, my friends, my community, and myself. Since the surge started at the end of January, I would hear about a new attack almost every day. Yet, it seems no one is talking about it. I post this news on my social media, reach out to family members around the areas with the most attacks (San Francisco and New York), and constantly fear who will be next. On top of all this, I am suffering from the effects of the global pandemic like everyone else along with interning and being a full-time graduate student. Everyone’s mental health is deeply affected by this pandemic, however, the health of minoritized individuals is affected even more. It often feels like

no one acknowledges the added anxiety, frustration, sadness, etc. that we experience. As a graduate student I am expected to work hard, and I feel like I am forced to keep my head down and get it done even despite all that is happening. Minoritized individuals are affected by multiple adversities that go unacknowledged by the white majority. Every day we are fearing that we will be attacked, or worse, lose our lives, because of white supremacist systems. Professors, faculty, colleagues, friends: please acknowledge our experiences. Empathize and understand that we are experiencing so much right now.

I am determined to raise awareness of this issue. I want to bring my community into the light and be heard. I am not passive or submissive, I am standing up and fighting for change. I am tired of being scapegoated, 我們不是你的棋子 (we are not your chess piece).

Being Anti-Racists means acknowledging and highlighting the Asian American experience.

Please consider visiting the following websites:

Report hate crimes at Stop AAPI Hate: <https://stopaapihate.org/>

Protect our elders, love our elders, learn about them:

<https://www.npr.org/2021/02/12/966940217/anger-and-fear-as-asian-american-seniors-targeted-in-bay-area-attacks>

https://www.npr.org/sections/pictureshow/2021/03/05/968344903/chinatown-pretty-celebrates-asian-american-elders-and-their-sartorial-flair?utm_campaign=npr&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_term=nprnews&utm_medium=social&fbclid=IwAR0_oZKhWsnT1un2-3Nz8UVB9zQFGhdcMZjk5RxHqKa7XxsmwZeJX-ybCEc

Articles by other Asian Americans and their experience:

<https://www.vogue.co.uk/arts-and-lifestyle/article/sophia-li-racism-viewpoint>

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/reflecting-my-identity-asian-american-recent-anti-asian-jenny-park/>

<https://www.yesmagazine.org/social-justice/2020/01/15/asian-americans-people-of-color/>

Articles for more on hate-crimes:

<https://seureservercdn.net/104.238.69.231/a1w.90d.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Press-Statement-re-Bay-Area-Elderly-Incidents-2.9.2021-1.pdf>

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/03/04/us/asian-american-racism-violence-response-trnd/index.html>