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Asian population swells in Bay Area, state, nation

U.S. CENSUS

By **Kevin Fagan** Published 4:00 am, Thursday, March 22, 2012

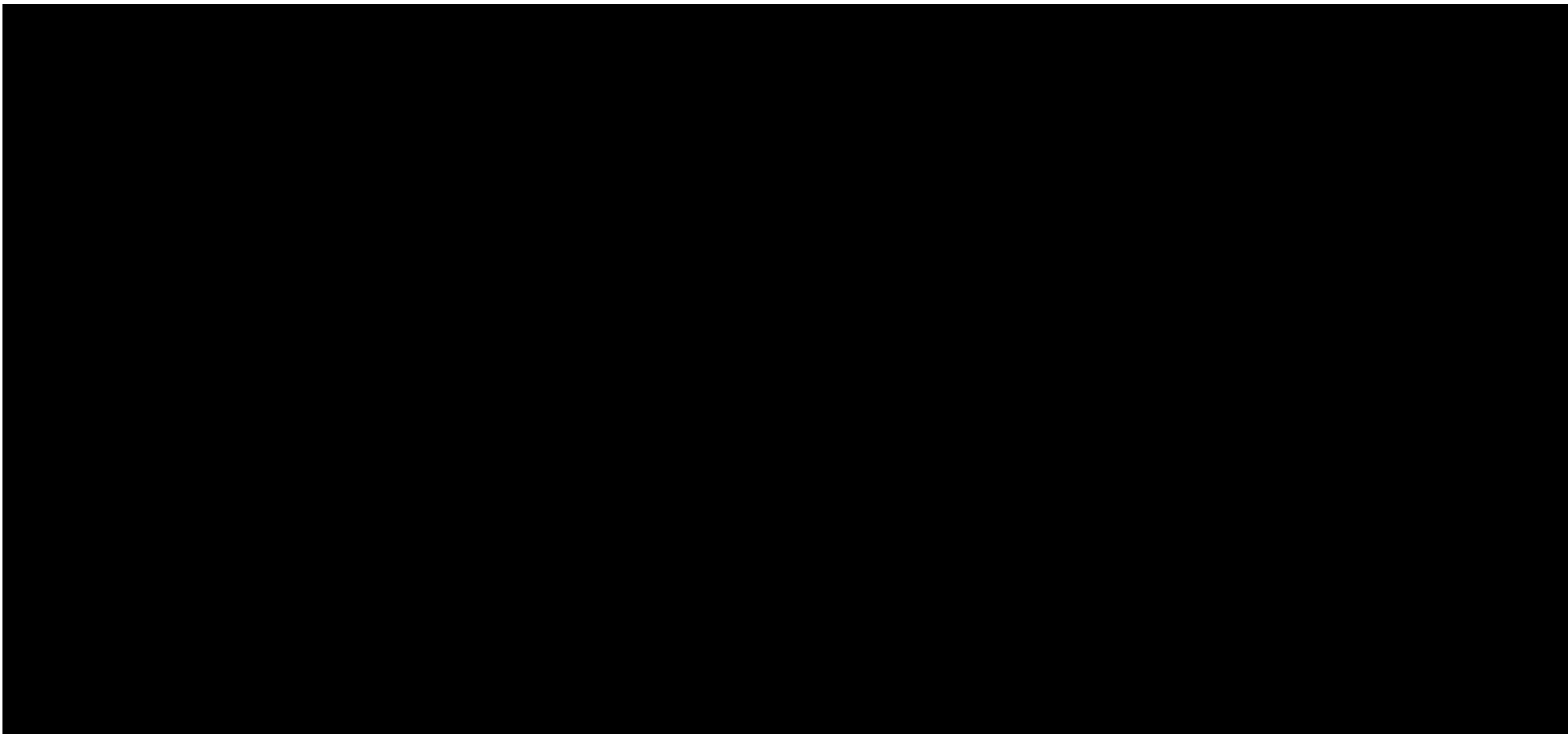




Photo: Carlos Avila Gonzalez, The Chronicle

IMAGE 1 OF 2

Albert Yee reads to his daughter, Alyssa Yee, 2, in the Serramonte Library in Daly City, Calif., on Wednesday, March 21, 2012. Census figures show that Daly City, Calif., has the highest percentage of Asians, and specifically Filipinos. Asian American population grew faster than any other ethnic group over the past decade, and in few places can that explosion be seen more vividly than in San Francisco's nearest neighbor - Daly City.

Francisco's nearest neighbor - Daly City.

The hilly enclave of 101,123 people has a population that is 58.4 percent of Asian descent, according to U.S. census figures released Wednesday. That gives it the highest Asian concentration of any large U.S. city outside of Hawaii.

This comes as little surprise to anyone who has strolled downtown, where the savory scent of lumpia and chicken adobo fills the air. Daly City was also the most Asian mainland city in the 2000 census at 54 percent - and then, as now, the main reason is the Filipino populace.

People of Filipino descent constitute 33.3 percent of Daly City's population, up from 31.6 percent in the 2000 census.

"The joke around here for a long time has been that the fog in Daly City is really from rice cookers," said City Councilman **Michael Guingona**, one of two city councilmen with Filipino roots. "I mean, just take a walk through the Serramonte shopping center. I actually hear Filipino dialects that even I can't understand."

Nationwide growth

Nationwide, people who reported they were of Asian ethnicity grew by 46 percent, from 11.9 million in 2000 to 17.3 million in 2010. That means Asians now constitute 5.6 percent of the U.S. population.

Of that total, 46 percent live in the Western United States, with California claiming the biggest Asian population.

The biggest ethnic population in America is white, at 72.4 percent, followed by Latinos at 16.3 percent and African Americans at 13.6 percent. (Figures may add up to more than 100 percent because of multiracial people and because Hispanics can list their race in a separate category.)

In the Golden State, the Asian American population grew 33.7 percent from 2000, faster than any other ethnic group. Asians now constitute 14.9 percent of the state's populace, at 5.6 million people, according to the new census numbers.

Whites make up the largest racial group in California, at 57.6 percent. Latinos are the second-biggest group, at 37.6 percent.

The biggest Asian ethnic group in the nation is Chinese, at 4 million people. Filipinos log in at second with 3.4 million people, and Asian Indians follow with 3.2 million people.

San Francisco's population of 805,235 consists of 35.8 percent Asian Americans, up from 32.6 percent 10 years ago. The largest subgroup by far is of Chinese descent, at 21.4 percent.

The city's white population is 48.5 percent; Latinos are at 15.1 percent; and African Americans constitute 7.2 percent.

Attracting immigrants

David Lee of San Francisco, chairman of the [U.S. Census Bureau Information Center Steering Committee](#), said the Bay Area attracts Asian immigrants with high-tech jobs.

"There is a constant need for highly skilled workers here, and you have excellent universities with high-tech concentrations in India and China that feed that," said Lee, who also is executive director of the Chinese American Voters [Education](#) Committee. "There are also needs in the pharmaceutical, biotech and health industries that fuel Asian immigration, much in the same way the agricultural industry fuels Latino immigration."

[Sarah Burd-Sharps](#), co-author of the "A Portrait of California" study published in 2011 by the American Human Development Project in New York, said of the 5.4 million new Asians in the United States over the past decade, 1.4 million live in this state.

"The opportunities for Asian Americans are high in San Francisco, and in California overall," she said. "They live longer, have more education, and have a high level of overall well-being here."

Her study shows that Asian Americans in the Bay Area have a life expectancy of 87.4 years, higher than any other ethnic group or area of the state. Also, 51.5 percent of Asian Americans in the Bay Area have at least a bachelor's degree, higher than any other ethnicity.

"There definitely is a connection Asian people have to education and raising your children well - just as all Americans strive for," Lee said. "And we are making great contributions to society and our communities. Just look at (San Francisco Mayor) [Ed Lee](#) and (Oakland Mayor) [Jean Quan](#)."

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