

The Oriental Mystique

The Ray Willis Report

By: Ray E. Willis



Ray E. Willis

This column is not intended to disparage Asian-Americans. They have every right to enjoy the fruits of this country--the same as do all Americans.

Some say they're sneaky. With their slant eyes, small stature and that Oriental mystique which surrounds them. Kung Fu, herbs and incenses, magic, deception and all that stuff. Others herald them as geniuses; hard working, industrious and just plain business minded. Whatever your viewpoint is of them, Asian-Americans have captivated America as the newest group of immigrants to come to this country seeking fame, fortune and continued prosperity.

While African-Americans have seemingly toiled endlessly since the beginning of this country's history, newly-resituated Oriental immigrants have quickly passed us by in dollars and status. They are the elite minority.

They came, they saw, they conquered. While Black Americans are still trying to put it all together at the most basic of levels.

Under such circumstances, it was predictable that the rapid ascent of Orientals into the American mainstream would cause considerable unrest and severely strained relations with Blacks.

That an Asian-American can open a business in a predominantly black community after having just "gotten off the boat" is a fact that's difficult to understand, much less accept, for many African-Americans.

An examination of the conditions under which the

Asian-American operates reveals several advantageous factors which somewhat accounts for their success in such ventures.

For one, Asian-Americans tend to group together under one roof in large numbers. When there are several families living together, they can pool their resources, financial and otherwise, to meet a common goal. All too often that "common goal" is to establish an independent small business which benefits everyone living in the household. This arrangement keeps overhead to a minimum because they don't have to pay family members a salary.

As we all know, this kind of a multi-family arrangement isn't typical for Black families, who tend to live in separate family units with only one or two adult providers. Alone, this does not explain the degree of business success experienced by Asian-Americans.

Another factor to consider is that many Orientals arrive in this country with wealth which they were able to accumulate from abroad. In Japan for example, real estate values are so high that the sale of an acre of land can make someone an overnight millionaire by our standards.

Arizona State Senator To Speak At Nevada African-American Summit

Arizona State Senator Carolyn Walker will be a keynote speaker at Nevada's statewide African-American Summit, May 17, 18, 19 and 20 here in Las Vegas.

Senator Walker's political career began in 1982 when she was elected to the Arizona House of Representatives from District 23. She won re-election to the House in 1984. In 1986 she became the first African-American woman in the state's history to serve in the legislature's upper house.

Senator Walker recently received the National Newspaper Publishers' Association Distinguished Service Award for her leadership in the effort to establish a holiday honoring the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

For information on the Summit, call 646-1018.

Perhaps the most significant factor which explains Oriental business success has to do with the perception that they are good business people. As we all know, perceptions often can easily become reality.

As long as the overall perception of African-Americans is that we are generally lazy and shiftless, that stereotype will be difficult, but not impossible, to override. The opposite perception makes it possible for an Oriental, even one with marginal business ability, to thrive and prosper. Therein lies the difference.

As long as the system prevails in making an arbitrary distinction between Orientals and Blacks, there will be an escalation of racial problems between the two groups.

Ever notice how an Asian-American can be prosperous in business without speaking or fully comprehending English? While a Black person, even one who understands and is fairly proficient in English, is severely taken to task for just having poor grammar?

At a time when several states are pushing to have English declared our national language, many Asian-Americans can barely communicate in English. Nonetheless, they are successful in business. And no one seems concerned that they don't have good English speaking skills. Odd, isn't it?

From what I've described so far, it's easy to see why there is such a sense of utter frustration in the Black community concerning the ease

at which Orientals become upwardly mobile. All over America battle lines are being drawn as Black communities are being invaded by Oriental store keepers catering to a Black clientele.

In New York, an Oriental business is now under a Black boycott because of an incident involving a Black female patron who was allegedly roughed up by the storekeeper.

But don't expect things to improve before they get worse. The influx of Asian immigrants to this country is continuing. In order for them to be integrated into society, they will continue to exploit business opportunities where they can--which

Three Generations — Two Gaps

By Linda Porter
Feature Writer

As usual, we (Blacks, African-Americans, Negroes) decided to hold a forum to discuss issues at large that are affecting our people as a whole — this time "Bridging the Gap Between African-American Generations." The same crowd; about 10 new faces and one radical that went off on a rampage that had nothing to do with the topic of discussion. What was solved? **NOTHING!**

We cannot fault Friends, Inc. for sponsoring this forum, for their intent was to open up the lines of communication, if nothing else.

The first problem is apparent. We don't come out to support one another, so how

usually means in the Black communities.

I don't know about you, but the situation with Orientals taking over businesses in Black neighborhoods makes me think out loud about the past. Remember, before integration, when most Black communities had a corner store owned and operated by Blacks?

can we possibly solve anything? But that's another story...another issue.

Unfortunately, at this forum we found that not only was there a generation gap, but a three generation gap: Teenagers, young adults and the Silver Generation - 35 and up. So, in actuality, there are 2 gaps, but the gaps didn't seem to be the problem. From the discussion, it was the lack of respect, lack of education and misunderstanding that each generation had for the next. So, who's at fault? My observations say all that are involved.

Today's youth do not relate to my generation - my generation being the young adults — and we do not relate to the Silver Generation. Why? Because each generation feels as if they know everything and are not willing to have objective thinking when listening to the others' views. This poses a problem.

It is necessary that each generation take the initiative to understand the other. As a people we have never quite

See GAPS, Page 8

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