OF the communities documented in this book, Asian and Pacific Islander (API) women began organizing for reproductive freedom the most recently, and their efforts are the least visible. While individual API women have been active in struggles for their rights for a long time, it was in the 1960s that API women began organizing on a larger scale to address issues of particular concern to women in their communities, such as trafficking, reproductive rights, gay and lesbian rights, and domestic violence. API women have also participated and held leadership positions in coalitions working on civil and labor rights, environmental justice, and a host of other social justice campaigns. According to professor and activist Shamita Das Dasgupta, Western conceptions of API women hide their history of resistance and activism. Retrieving that history is important for contemporary activists.1 Dasgupta states that “All cultures contain elements that disenfranchise women as well as ones that empower them…. As activists, we need to salvage those parts of our culture that uplift women as a group.”2 As part of that effort, this chapter places API women’s activism in the context of discrimination, oppression, and ongoing reproductive abuses, while highlighting both the multitude of issues that make up the API reproductive justice agenda and the organizing achievements of the API community.

Over 60 ethnic and national groups comprise the Asian and Pacific Islander population in the US, with each having different immigration histories, needs, and resources.3 However, government studies and popular stereotypes do not differentiate among groups within this enormously diverse body of people. Instead, they have provided a composite picture that masks great differences in acculturation,
language, education, culture, and reasons for migration to the United States. While appreciating that the API categorization does not designate a single, monolithic culture, this book uses API to refer to women and men from all of these groups, including both immigrant and American-born.

This diversity itself has presented special challenges for API activists. In their analysis of Asian women’s health organizing, Sia Nowrojee and Jael Silliman suggest the simultaneous need for community-specific as well as pan-Asian organizing. The vast language and cultural differences among API women necessitate strategies tailored to particular communities, while the small number of people in each community requires that API women work together to make gains in health services access, to secure culturally appropriate services, and to obtain welfare benefits. Nowrojee and Silliman also encourage API groups to be honest about acknowledging their differences, and to recognize that working together is only possible when people are given the time and opportunity to learn about each other’s cultures. As activist Milyoung Cho points out, there is also strength in this diversity: “If we could just break through the many differences we have, we could capitalize on how we are so [accustomed] to dealing with so many facets of reality within our lives.” In the history of API activism chronicled in this chapter, we explore aspects of both diversity and unity while trying not to lose sensitivity to the nuances of either. In the case studies presented in the following two chapters, we see how the groups profiled—Asian Pacific Islanders for Reproductive Health (APIRH) and the National Asian Women’s Health Organization (NAWHO)—put this approach to work.

**Controlling API Women Through Restrictions on Immigration**

The experiences of Asians and Pacific Islanders in the US have been shaped by a long history of restrictive anti-immigration policies. Though the policies have varied in strictness and degree of enforcement, all were ultimately aimed at controlling the number of API people allowed into the US. As a form of population control, US immigration policy had short- and long-term consequences for API women’s reproductive freedom, rights, and lives.

Other effects of the policies were also gender specific, with API men and women having profoundly different immigration experiences. Asian immigration to the US began with thousands of Chinese men coming to California when gold was discovered in the Sierra Nevada foothills in 1848. However, upon arrival, they found that gold was hard to get, and many of the Chinese immigrants became railroad
workers.\textsuperscript{5} Low wages, unstable living conditions on the frontier, and tight controls on immigration prevented many of the men from bringing their families. In the 1870s, after the transcontinental railroad was completed and the Gold Rush fizzled, economic depression set in. Jobs were scarce, and white workers coming to California from the East saw Chinese workers as competitors. Anti-Chinese sentiments were virulent, and beatings and lynchings of Chinese men were not uncommon. This wave of hostility to Chinese immigrants culminated in the banning of Chinese labor through the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882—the first federal law directed at a specific nationality.\textsuperscript{6} With the Chinese excluded, other API workers came from Japan, India, the Philippines, and Korea, most settling in the Western part of the country, the majority in California. Like the Chinese men, they were used as sources of cheap labor to work on farms in Hawaii, on the railroads in California, and in the lumber and mining industries throughout the rest of the West.\textsuperscript{10}

From the mid-1800s until the mid-1960s, API women’s entry to the US was even more strictly controlled than that of their male counterparts. For example, by 1870 there were 56,625 Chinese men in the US, compared with 4,574 Chinese women.\textsuperscript{11} Asian American feminist writer Sonia Shah remarks that “the first Asian women to come to the US in the mid-1800s were disadvantaged Chinese women, who were tricked, kidnapped, or smuggled into the country to serve the predominantly male Chinese community as prostitutes.”\textsuperscript{12} But for the most part, the women were just kept out. Even wives were prohibited from joining their husbands.\textsuperscript{13} For example, in 1914, of 5,000 Indian workers in California, only 12 were women, even though one-half to one-third of the men were married.\textsuperscript{14}

As racism against the Chinese increased, Chinese women were characterized as prostitutes and singled out for moral condemnation and control by legislators and the police:

The impressions that all Asian women were prostitutes, born at that time, “colored the public perception of attitude toward, and action against all Chinese women for almost a century.” ... Police and legislators singled out Chinese women for special restrictions and opprobriums, “not so much because they were prostitutes as such (since there were also many white prostitutes around plying their trade) but because—as Chinese—they allegedly brought in especially virulent strains of venereal diseases, introduced opium addiction, and enticed white boys to a life of sin.”\textsuperscript{15}
Additional research by Connie Yung Yu found that US Senate hearings on Chinese immigration "resounded with harangues about prostitutes and slave girls corrupting the morals of young white boys."16 One lawyer argued in support of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882 by claiming the immorality of Chinese women as evidence of the overall debauched nature of Chinese people: "They bring no decent women with them."17

Other API women—Japanese, Korean, Filipino, and Indian—have had exclusionary experiences similar to those of Chinese women. At one time or another, each group was denied entry to the US, and if they did succeed in emigrating, they faced discrimination, stigmatization, and exploitation. Additionally, coming to the US later than their husbands meant that API women encountered a world that was familiar to their husbands, but not to them. They were severely disadvantaged by language, law, and custom and were economically dependent on their husbands. Entering the US as wives has also meant that their legal status is contingent on their husband’s sponsorship, further increasing their vulnerability in the home as well as in the larger society.18

Immigration restrictions eased somewhat after World War II, and by the early 1960s “approximately 500,000 Asians lived in the United States.”19 When the Immigration Act was passed in 1965, it abolished quotas based on national origin and replaced them with ones based on professional status. At that time, the picture of API immigrants in the US became more complex. Over the past four decades, the educational and economic resources of API immigrants have varied drastically, even among people coming from similar locations. On the one hand, there were refugees from the wars and conflicts the US was waging in Asia, including large numbers of Cambodians, Laotians, and Vietnamese. On the other, there were professionals from South Asia, especially India and Pakistan, who were not able to find suitable jobs in their home countries. Overall, this second group of immigrants was educated and had greater economic resources than those who came before and after them.20 Furthermore, immigration after the Immigration Act included many women and children. Between 1970 and 1990, 4.5 million Asians immigrated to the US.21 In the following decade, the Asian American population increased 52 percent, from 6.6 million to 10 million.

Many Asians who emigrated in the 1980s and 90s lacked educational and economic resources. And similar to their predecessors, they were seen as a source of cheap labor for garment and high-tech sweatshops, domestic services, and restaurants. For example, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Filipina women, together withLatinas, were among the lowest paid workers in the high-tech industries of Silicon
Valley. Activists and the Immigration and Naturalization Service estimate that 25 percent of domestic workers in New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut are API women, primarily from the Philippines, Tibet, Nepal, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, and Malaysia. With the exception of Tibetans, most of these women are undocumented, which makes them especially vulnerable to exploitation—experiencing low wages, isolation, lack of health care, and sexual harassment.

Asian immigrants of the last two decades were greeted with overt anti-immigrant sentiment and activism. The not-so-new nativism sounded the same racist themes that have historically characterized anti-immigrant politics. These prejudices were used to legitimate a new round of anti-immigrant policies and rhetoric that focused on immigrant women and their children. New immigrants—primarily Asian Pacific Islanders and Latinos—were seen as depleting economic and natural resources. This was especially the case in California, home to 36 percent of all Asian Pacific Islanders. “Overtuse” of the welfare system by immigrants, especially those who were undocumented/“illegal,” was characterized as a threat to the access for “Americans.”

While much of the media attention during the 1980s and 90s focused on Mexican immigrants, API and other immigrant women also bore the brunt of anti-immigrant policies, which fell into two categories: restricting spousal immigration and limiting access to social services by both documented and undocumented immigrants. The Immigration Marriage Fraud Amendment of 1986 was designed to curb phony marriages, even though this was not a significant problem. However, the amendment did make it more difficult for legal immigrants to sponsor their legitimate spouses and in 1998, critical provisions of the Immigration and Nationality Act, which made it possible for spouses to stay in the US while approval of their residency status was pending, were allowed to expire. As a result, family members applying for residency had to return home while they waited for approval, which could take up to ten years. At the same time, the income level required to sponsor family members was raised to 125 percent of the poverty line—$24,675 for a family of four—a standard that many immigrant families could not meet. These provisions fall more heavily on immigrant women, since most who gain legal residency do so through their spouse or other family members and thus tend to be the primary beneficiaries of marriages to legal immigrants.

Federal and state policies also limited immigrants’ access to social services, which led to increased hardships specifically for women. For example, in 1994, California passed Proposition 187, which sought to prohibit local and state agencies from providing publicly
funded social services, education, welfare, and non-emergency health care to anyone who was not verified as a US citizen or documented immigrant. It also stressed a ban on public support for prenatal care for undocumented women. Though passed by the voters, it was declared unconstitutional. Regardless of the final decision, Proposition 187 increased anti-immigrant sentiment and made immigrants afraid to use social services.

Two years later, the federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) — also known as “the welfare reform act,” dramatically changed the nation’s welfare system. The law ended, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), a 60 year old federal entitlement program, and replaced it with Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), a decentralized, state-run, block-grant program. The bill had several provisions targeting legal immigrants who were not citizens, thus elevating the importance of formal citizenship in a way that it had not been before. As originally passed, it made most legal immigrants ineligible for all federal means-tested programs during their first five years of residency in the US. Included in the prohibition were Food Stamps, Supplemental Social Security Income (SSI), Medicaid and State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), and TANF. Immigrants coming to the US after the bill was passed were also to be ineligible to receive benefits for five years. Immigrants who are undocumented cannot receive benefits unless their legal status changes. Under this legislation, states retained the discretionary power to decide whether or not to use state funds to provide certain TANF benefits and Medicaid to immigrants.

While subsequent federal and state legislation restored some benefits for immigrants who were in the US prior to 1996, the overall framework and exclusions remain substantially the same. Not only did this bill restrict eligibility, it imposed new proof of citizenship requirements for receiving federal benefits. Overall, it created confusion and a good deal of fear so that many immigrants who are eligible do not access services. For example, immigrants whose children are eligible often are not aware of this. Thus, many immigrants are afraid to access assistance for their children or have been incorrectly denied.

In addition to legal restrictions, API women face other obstacles to basic health care access. Many Asian immigrants are concentrated in low-wage jobs that do not provide health insurance, and approximately 36 percent of Asian American women under the age of 65 have no health insurance at all. Furthermore, language barriers constitute another impediment to health care. Over 60 percent of the Asian immigrant population is limited English proficient, and though activists
have worked to establish language standards for health care providers, full access remains a long way off. Additionally, some Asian American women are likely to use traditional, non-Western health practices and herbal medicines, which are not covered by most insurance plans. In these and other ways, health care services tend not to be culturally appropriate. Culturally competent care would integrate systems of care and would make what is currently available linguistically accessible without fear of arrest or other legal reprisals, such as deportation.

Overcoming Stereotypes

Persistent racist and sexist stereotypes about API women, emanating from within and outside API communities, continue to have negative consequences for their overall sexual and reproductive health. One of the most pervasive, externally imposed stereotypes that activists have exposed is the myth of the “model minority.” Among other pitfalls, the myth presumes that all Asians are economically successful, obscuring the inequalities and differences among Asian American communities. It leads health policy-makers to underestimate or ignore problems and risk factors and to invest fewer resources than are needed by API communities. It also perpetuates the view that, insofar as API women have health problems, they also have the necessary economic and medical resources to address them. These false assumptions translate “into little funding for services earmarked for Asian communities. Asian women’s health needs, in particular, have not been identified as research priorities in any advocacy or policy arena.”

The myth has psychological and sociological implications, as many Asians who have been socially and economically successful have internalized it. This often results in a lack of sympathy for those who have not. Asian American activist Anannya Bhattacharjee observes that the model minority myth can blind successful Asian groups to racism. She has noted this tendency specifically among immigrants from India: “Not infrequently intoxicated by its success as a model minority, [the Indian community] fails to perceive racism towards itself...The Indian immigrant bourgeoisie disregards an analysis of power and ideology which is crucial to its understanding of its own history.”

Other external stereotypes also inflict harm. The sexualized stereotypes of API women promulgated over a century ago are reflected in the demographics of the global traffick in women. When promoting international sex tourism to Americans, specialized marketing identifies API women as exotic and willing to please. This translates
domestically to API women being viewed and treated as commodi-
ties.

At the same time, API women are oppressed by messages from
within their own communities that good Asian women are asexual.
The predominant view within many Asian American cultures is that
sex is a duty of wives that should occur only in heterosexual mar-
rriage, solely for the purpose of reproduction. Such cultural messages
prevent discussion of and attention to women’s sexual health issues. These efforts are made to socialize API women to be “obedient daughters,”
“faithful wives,” and “caring mothers.” These social norms require
women’s conformity to certain behavioral standards: subservience,
propriety, and self-sacrifice. The stereotype of the selfless Asian
woman, whose role is to take care of others and be the primary care-
giver in her family and community, leads Asian women to give their
own health lower priority.

At the first national Asian women’s health conference in 1995,
Sia Nowrojee spoke about devaluing API women’s sexual health as
a consequence of these behavioral expectations. She chided the com-
munity for its silence regarding the heavy toll these attitudes had
taken on women’s lives and well-being. She found the assumptions
about proper sexual behavior especially restrictive in immigrant
communities, where “women’s sexual purity and loyalty are seen as
instruments of community control and strength.” These stereotypes
do not capture the reality of API women’s lives, in which a spectrum
of sexual behaviors exists. Left out of this picture are “the good, that
is consensual, responsible and pleasurable sex between partners,
both heterosexual and homosexual—and the bad, that is violence and
sexual abuse, infection, unwanted pregnancy, unsafe abortion, and
poor-quality services.” As Dasgupta states, “Our lives go beyond
images of the proverbial ‘good’ daughter, the asexual, all-enduring
mother who walks three steps behind her man. Passive and insulated
womanhood is not our reality.” By challenging these myths and
stereotypes, API women have resisted racism and challenged sexism
within their own communities.

Roots of Contemporary Reproductive Rights Activism

As mentioned earlier, advocacy and organizing specifically around
women’s issues came later in API communities than in the others
examined in this book and built on earlier activism in other areas. From
the time of their arrival in the United States, Asian American women
activists have been involved in a variety of political causes, including
resisting the appropriation of land in Hawaii by the US in 1893 and
participating in the labor movement during the 1930s and 40s. In the
1960s and 70s, Asian women engaged in struggles for peace, civil rights, and immigrant rights. API women also participated in radical efforts to combat racism and promote racial unity.\textsuperscript{46} Unfortunately, they also faced gender inequalities within these movements. Sonia Shah reveals that "Leftist Asian women in Yellow Power and other Asian American groups often found themselves left out of the decision-making process and their ideas and concerns relegated to 'women's auxiliary' groups that were marginal to the larger projects at hand."\textsuperscript{47}

In the late 1970s, primarily middle-class East Asian women organized church groups, social service centers, and professional societies that initially focused on educational and service projects but sometimes evolved into social justice advocacy organizations.\textsuperscript{48} For example, in 1976, Asian Women United (AWU) started in New York City as a social club and grew into a major clearinghouse and support agency for API women. AWU continues to create and distribute materials that expose the racist and sexist views advanced about API women. Other groups formed at that time included the Organization of Chinese American Women, a business group, and the Organization of pan-Asian American Women, the oldest public policy organization devoted to concerns of API women. The National Network of Asian and Pacific Women, founded in 1982, has helped Asian women obtain and keep better socioeconomic status via better paying jobs. These groups were important for enabling women to develop leadership skills and political experience and to evolve organizing models for the Asian American community.

In August 1980, more than 500 Asian women met in Washington, DC, for the first National Asian Pacific American Women's Conference, sponsored by the National Education Association. Speaking to the importance of the conference, participant Juanita Tamayo Lott writes, "We met other pan-Asian women, older women, younger women, women who did not grow up in the US in the 1960s but who shared similar hopes and dreams. We all realized the overwhelming magnitude of tasks we had chosen to tackle whether health, education, employment, sex roles, or international relations."\textsuperscript{49} Although conference delegates were predominantly middle-class professionals, sessions were focused on economic disparities and the needs of new immigrants. In the words of one advocate, "The most serious problems are not with the professionals. They are with the recent immigrants, the garment workers, the dim sum girls in Chinatown who often do not even make the minimum wage."\textsuperscript{50}

Along with Latinas, API women make up the majority of the sweatshop labor force. They comprise one-third of sweatshop workers in California and about half of the sweatshop labor force in New
York.\textsuperscript{51} Their jobs often require them to work ten to twelve hour days, six to seven days a week in dangerous conditions while receiving low wages and no overtime compensation. For these reasons, opposing sweatshops was an important women’s issue, and some API women became leaders in the anti-sweatshop movement. For example, the Asian Immigrant Women Advocates (AIWA), an Oakland-based organization, worked with Chinese garment workers to improve conditions in their shop. They began a campaign against the designer Jessica McClintock in 1992, bringing national attention to the sweatshop issue. In New York, the Chinese Staff and Workers Association led a similar campaign against Donna Karan in 1999.\textsuperscript{52} These campaigns were successful not only in securing settlements and rights for workers but also in politicizing hundreds of young API women.\textsuperscript{53}

South Asian women began organizing in the 1980s, focusing on the problems of immigrant women. Between 1980 and 1985, more than a dozen South Asian women’s groups were founded in the US and Canada, by women from India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh. Professor Jyotsna Vaid categorizes the organizations according to the different factors leading to their formation.\textsuperscript{54}

First, there were those organizations that addressed specific problems faced by South Asian women immigrants, including domestic violence, unequal social and economic opportunity, and discrimination. Groups such as Samaanta in Vancouver and Sakhi in New York City offered information and referrals, crisis intervention and counseling, direct services, and advocacy. Second, there were those organizations that focused on building a visible progressive identity for South Asian women. Included in this category are groups like Manavi in New Jersey and the New York–based Asian Indian Women’s Network. One of the members of the group describes their impetus for organizing: “We felt there were many Indian groups that organized cultural events and family oriented activities. We knew there was a tremendous need for a group to be dedicated to women’s issues. Our goal is to work towards social change and create a visible ethnic identity for Asian Indian women.”\textsuperscript{55} Finally, there were those organizations that worked on legal advocacy and combating oppressive traditional practices on the Indian subcontinent, such as dowry-related deaths and the impact of Islamic fundamentalism on women’s legal rights. The Committee on South Asian Women in Texas and Wisconsin were examples of the latter.

By combating the submissive and model minority stereotypes of their communities, these groups allowed South Asian women to express a range of identities and exercise various cultural options. For example, Anamika, a lesbian group, started a publication by the same name because the members felt “the isolation and the reality
of our lives, which was never acknowledged either by groups 'back home' or by South Asian groups here, have propelled us to start the newsletter.” Asian American lesbians began organizing in 1980, initially forming groups with Asian American gay men such as the Asian/Pacific Lesbians and Gays (A/PLG). However, because women were so outnumbered in these organizations, they did not provide the community lesbians needed, so women engaged in their own activities and ultimately created their own organizations, such as Asian/Pacific Lesbians and Friends and Asian Lesbians of the East Coast, which began in 1983 in New York City as a strictly lesbian group.

Since the majority of victims of trafficking are from Southeast Asia, Southeast Asian women have taken the lead is in raising awareness of and organizing against all forms of trafficking—including the trading of women for both sexual and economic exploitation. The Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (CAST), formed in 1998 in Los Angeles, was the first organization to provide direct services, technical assistance, and training for victims of trafficking. Though not an API organization, CAST has many Asian staff, and the majority of its clients are from Southeast Asia.

Organizing for Reproductive Health

Many of the South Asian activists who came to reproductive rights organizing in the late 1980s had worked in other progressive social justice movements either in their countries of origin or in the US. Many brought more radical politics to bear on their work. During the 1990s, the rapid increase of second-generation South Asians living and studying in the US drew many of them to activism. Young API women, as well as those from other ethnicities, were inspired by the feminist writings of South Asian activist scholars like Gayatri Spivak, Chandra Mohanty, Shamita Das Dasgupta, and Uma Narayan, and by women's movement organizing in South Asia, much of which came out of Left movements on the subcontinent. Thus, both South Asian immigrants and first-generation women incorporated radical politics into their organizing around sexual and reproductive rights.

For Asian and Pacific Islander women activists, the intensification of anti-abortion activities in the late 1980s (described in Chapter 2) was a catalyst to their reproductive rights organizing. Reflecting on the time, Juanita Tamayo Lott, who grew up in San Francisco's Japantown and worked for decades on policy issues, writes,

As individuals, many women—including young Asian American women—rejoiced in [Roe v. Wade]. We celebrated this freedom, perhaps overindulged. Then we watched the generation of young women after us assume reproductive
choice, and later held their hands as they rebounded from harsh legislative, judicial, and civilian attempts to restrict abortion and other contraceptive options.\textsuperscript{60}

In 1989, API women from various cultures who attended the “In Defense of Roe”\textsuperscript{61} conference wrote the first ever statement on the reproductive health of API women:

This is a historic moment for us. Recognizing the tradition of family and community, including alternative lifestyles, we, as Asian Pacific American Women, underscore the importance of a reproductive health agenda for our communities.

One definition of reproductive health includes issues of access to health care, abortion, sterilization, pre- and post-natal care, AIDS, forced abortions, teen pregnancy, and sex education.

The particular needs of our community can only be met through bilingual and generation-sensitive information and sex education. It is also necessary for us to confront the sexual objectification of our people. For example, military prostitution, sex tourism, mail order brides, geishas, and other exotica.\textsuperscript{62}

Soon after this gathering, the first API reproductive rights organization, Asians and Pacific Islanders for Choice (APIC), was formed. APIC was the mother of both AIPRH and NAWHO. While abortion politics catalyzed their organizing, as with the other groups in this book, reproductive freedom for API women goes well beyond abortion to include their right to establish families and communities.

In addition to the racist population control efforts discussed earlier in the chapter, API women have faced and resisted other attempts to control their reproduction. For example, cultural pressure to bear male children can urge API women to have more children than they want or push them to abort female fetuses.\textsuperscript{63} This has been documented in some of the Asian countries from which API women emigrate, including China and India.\textsuperscript{64} In Canada, South Asian women activists successfully shut down private prenatal testing clinics which were used to determine the gender of a fetus so that women could abort females.\textsuperscript{65} API immigrant women have also lost power in the birthing process. Traditional practices used by some API women such as squattting during birth, not “cutting” (episiotomy), and burying the placenta, which give more control to women, are denied because they conflict with Western medical practices.\textsuperscript{66}
Activist Cheng Imm Tan summarizes how the specific history and experiences of API women and girls have shaped their definition of the issues, posed particular problems, and provided unique opportunities for organizing:

As an Asian woman, culture and history also inform my activism and my spirituality. I am connected to and affected by the history and experiences of my ancestors and my people. It has been a history affected by oppression, war, colonialism, and modern-day economic and cultural imperialism. The hopes, aspirations, struggles, and fears of my people, passed down from generation to generation, still live within my veins and haunt my subconscious dreams. 67

In the following two case studies of APIRH and NAWHO, we see organizations that are creating new meanings of reproductive rights that more aptly reflect the complex and overlapping realities of API life in the US. In the words of Professor Karin Aguilar-San Juan’s analysis, API feminists are creating their own paradigm that acts as neither “an ‘addendum’ to Asian American politics or as a ‘variant’ of white feminism, because those terms force Asian American feminism into the margins of other political frameworks.”68 APIRH and NAWHO are redefining reproductive freedom in order to confront the realities of API America, firmly situating themselves in the context of, and in partnership with, other women of color in the US.
NOTES

1 Shamita Das Dasgupta talks about the importance of "becoming re-
acquainted with our own heroines" as a key aspect of activist history in
her introduction to *A Patchwork Shawl: Chronicles of South Asian Women
Echoing the same idea, Yuri Kochiyama tells about Queen Liliuokalani,
a native Hawaiian who called her people to action after she was
dethroned by US military action in 1893 in the preface to *Dragon Ladies; Asian American Feminists Breath Fire*, ed. Sonia Shah (Boston: South End
Press, 1997).


3 API includes people from many countries in the East Asia, Southeast
Asia, South Asia, and the Pacific Islands.

4 Both women were early board members of the National Asian Women’s
Health Organization.

5 Sia Nowrojee and Jael Silliman, “Asian Women’s Health: Organizing a
Movement,” in *Dragon Ladies*, 84.

6 Pamela Chiang et al., “On Asian America, Feminism, and Agenda-
Making: A Roundtable Discussion,” in *Dragon Ladies*, 58.

7 In addition to the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, other restrictions
included the Act to Prevent the Kidnapping and Importation of Mongolian, Chinese, and Japanese Females for Criminal and
Demoralizing Purposes (1879); the Gentleman’s Agreement capped
Japanese and Korean immigration (1907); The Immigration Act of 1917
curbed Asian Indian immigration; the Oriental Exclusion Act of 1924
stopped labor immigration from mainland Asia; and the Tydings-
McDuffie Act restricted Filipino immigration (1934). Citizenship
through naturalization was denied to all Asians between 1924 and
1943. The pattern here was to welcome Asians when their labor was
needed and to exclude them when the economy stagnated. Sucheta
Mazumdar discusses this in “General Introduction: A Woman-
Centered Perspective on Asian American History,” in *Making Waves: An Anthology of Writings by and about Asian American Women*, ed. Asian


9 The law suspended Chinese labor immigration and excluded all
Chinese, other than merchants, students, diplomats, and visitors,
from immigrating to the United States. Other restrictive legislation
followed.

10 Lora Jo Foo, *Asian American Women: Issues, Concerns, and Responsive
Human and Civil Rights Advocacy*, Ford Foundation Report (New York:


Mexican Americans* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992),
chapter 2.


Ibid.


Ibid., 86–87.

Ibid.


Ibid., 181.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.


Exceptions to the prohibition included refugees, asylees, Amerasians, persons granted withholding of deportation or removal, Cuban/Haitian entrants, legal permanent residents with forty quarters of work (for Food Stamps and SSI only), or people who physically entered the US before August 22, 1996 (for TANF and Medicaid), and those in the military.


Nowrojee and Silliman, "Asian Women's Health," 73.


Nowrojee and Silliman, "Asian Women's Health," 77.


Ibid.

Sia Nowrojee, "Coming Together," 36.

Ibid.

Dasgupta, A Patchwork Shawl, 1–2.


Shah, Dragon Ladies, xvi.

William Wei, quoted in Shah, Dragon Ladies, xvi.


Foo, Asian American Women, 63.

Ibid., 76.

Ibid., Dragon Ladies, xviii.


Ibid., 400.

Ibid.


Foo, Asian American Women, 56–57.

Dasgupta, A Patchwork Shawl, 11–12.

Juanita Tamayo Lott, "Growing Up" in Making Waves, 356.

The statement was written at the "In Defense of Roe" conference. For more information on the conference see Chapter 2, 37–38.


Foo, Asian American Women, 118.

It is worth noting that in India feminists succeeded in making abortion for reasons of sex selection illegal.

Foo, Asian American Women, 118.

Ibid., 120.

San Juan sees “API women activists as caught between not wanting to alienate API men by embracing feminism, and not wanting to identify with a feminism that carries with it the insensitivity and racism of white European feminists,” quoted in Shah in Dragon Ladies, x.