



NO FORBIDDEN FOODS. NO REQUIRED FOODS.

Eat your own food.



The Seattle Times Company

NWjobs | NWautos | NWhomes | NWapartments | NWsource | Classifieds | seattletimes.com



Search

47°F Weather | Traffic

Today's news index Low-graphic version RSS feeds

Home Local Nation/World Business/Tech Sports Entertainment Living Travel Opinion Extras Buy ads Jobs Autos Homes Rentals NWsource

Search

Movies | Restaurants | Today's events

Your account | Log in | Contact us

Our network sites seattletimes.com | Advanced

Sunday, August 15, 1999 - Page updated at 12:00 AM

E-mail article Print view

Chinese Say Progress In U.S. Still Tainted By Cultural Stereotypes

By Harry Mok AP

SAN FRANCISCO - Fred Lau always wanted to be a San Francisco cop, so much so that he literally hung upside-down in hopes of getting the job.

In 1970, there was a height requirement to join the police force, and the 5-foot-7 Lau was an inch short. He tried hanging upside down from a bar to stretch his body. It didn't work.

What did work was pressure from civil-rights activists. The city dropped the height requirement in 1971 and Lau became the department's fifth Asian-American officer.

Today, Lau is chief of police. His rise through the ranks is in many ways a reflection of a century of change for Chinese Americans.

These days, Chinese Americans have among the highest median household incomes and education levels of any ethnic group in the United States.

But the anti-Chinese sentiment in America that traces back to the frontier days remains a constant friction, according to many Chinese Americans.

"People always make fun of my accent," said Kenny Su, 49, a Hong Kong native who has lived in America for 10 years. "They don't have a good image of Chinese people."

Recent high-profile scandals haven't helped. Some Chinese Americans fear allegations of Chinese espionage at nuclear-weapons labs and illegal contributions by China in U.S. political campaigns is eroding their progress.

Sen. Richard Shelby, R-Ala., referred to "a crafty people" when talking about the spy scandal. Some editorial cartoons about the issue have featured images of bucktoothed Asians with thick glasses.

"It only shows that to a certain extent, some of this stuff is just below the surface," said Victor Hsi, a vice president of the Organization of Chinese Americans, a Washington, D.C.-based civil-rights group.

Nationally, Asian Americans now number 10.1 million, about 3.8 percent of the U.S. population. But their influence and presence is growing.

More than 40 percent of the students at the University of California are Asian Americans. Over in Silicon Valley, a quarter of the high-tech businesses are run by Asian entrepreneurs. With those numbers, the image of the so-called "model minority" seems true - to a degree.

"It's very rare if you apply for a job with a Chinese surname that someone would toss your application in the garbage can like they did 30 years ago," says Diane Chin, executive director of Chinese for Affirmative Action. "But there are many glass ceilings out there that are still largely ignored."

One impediment, say Chinese Americans, is the perception that they are skilled in technical fields but don't have what it takes to reach top management.

Chief of Police Lau broke through another glass ceiling.

Abolishing the San Francisco department's height restriction gave Lau a chance to fulfill a dream and be a pioneer. He is the only Chinese American to lead a big-city police department.

"The fact that it's a very strong position, it's a very visible position and a very non-Asian position is very

ADVERTISING
Celebrity X Cruises®
Starring You
RESERVE NOW
Celebrity's Caribbean

Marketplace

Post a free online vehicle listing
Sell your vehicle on NWautos. Free listings run for 13 weeks and include up to 5 photos.

Find cheap gas in the Seattle area
Find low gas prices in Seattle, Bellevue, Everett and more at NWautos.

More from NWautos:
Most fuel-efficient cars for 2008
Hybrid car listings
Gas-saving tips



Most read

Most e-mailed

1 Facing foreclosure, Puget Sound families rush to

important," Lau said. "It's very contrary to the stereotype."

Copyright (c) 1999 Seattle Times Company, All Rights Reserved.



1. Facing harassment, 14-year-old girl refuses to hang on to their homes
2. Teen sentenced to juvenile detention for killing man who paid her for sex
3. Man survives a scare in tower's garbage chute
4. ANALYSIS: Say it ain't so Joe, and John McCain
5. Would ballot measure relieve traffic jams or worsen them?
6. Nowhere to hide for UW as Notre Dame comes to town
7. 3 young sisters die in Pierce County fire
8. Climber's rescue after 5 days on Mount Adams "just incredible," his father says
9. No doubt about it, 3G is a letdown | Brier Dudley
10. Tyrone Willingham throws away a young receiver's season | Steve Kelley

ADVERTISING

Equifax ID Patrol™

Protect the power of your credit and your identity.
www.equifax.com

"She has Yellow Teeth"

The Secrets Dentists don't want you to know about Teeth Whitening!
www.best-teeth-whitening.com

Drop 15 Pounds Fast!

Oprah Ranked this Superfood #1 for dieting. Free Trial - Click Here
www.acai-pure.com

[Buy a link here](#)



ADVERTISING

nwsourc
games

Super JIGSAW puzzle

OWN THIS GAME FOR FREE! NO CREDIT CARD REQUIRED!

REGULAR PRICE \$19.99!

Download Now!

RealArcade

Site map

Our network sites seattletimes.com | [Advanced](#)

- The Seattle Times Company
- [About the company](#)
 - [Employment opportunities](#)
 - [Seattle Times store](#)
 - [Advertise with us](#)
 - [Newspapers in Education](#)

- Services
- [Your account / Log in](#)
 - [E-mail newsletters](#)
 - [Contact us](#)
 - [Feedback and questions](#)
 - [Submit listings](#)
 - [Send us news tips](#)

- News
- [Home](#)
 - [Local](#)
 - [Nation/World](#)
 - [Business/Tech](#)
 - [Entertainment](#)
 - [Living](#)
 - [Travel](#)
 - [Real Estate](#)
 - [Sports](#)
 - [Opinion](#)
 - [Extras](#)

- Marketplace
- [Jobs](#)
 - [Autos](#)
 - [Homes](#)
 - [Rentals](#)
 - [Classifieds](#)
 - [Shopping](#)
 - [NWsource](#)
 - [Personals](#)
 - [Post an ad](#)

- Getting Your Newspaper
- [Home delivery](#)
 - [Temporary stops](#)
 - [Subscriber services](#)
- Other editions
- [News by e-mail](#)
 - [Mobile](#)
 - [RSS feeds](#)
 - [e-Edition](#)
 - [Low-graphic](#)

[Privacy statement](#) | [Terms of service](#)
Copyright © 2008 The Seattle Times Company