**Chapter 05 Asian Americans and the Criminal Justice System**

**Summary**

This chapter explored several of the most common Asian American groups in the U.S. The Far East consists of Chinese, Japanese and Koreans, while Southeast Asians consist of Cambodians, Vietnamese, Malaysians and Indonesians. There is also the Indian subcontinent, which includes countries such as India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Nepal. Finally, there are Pacific Islanders, who include people from Hawaii, the Philippines, Guam, and Samoa. Many of these groups listed under the general heading of “Asian American” cover a broad spectrum of groups, with different attitudes, values, beliefs, and languages, making the category more of convenience than actual understanding. Additionally, diversity is evident in their experiences and success in assimilating into mainstream American culture. Historically, most of these groups, particularly the Chinese and Japanese, have been initially perceived as beneficial since they provided cheap labor in expanding industries. However, as immigrants demonstrated their willingness to work hard and work for very little money, the group became perceived as threatening to American workers. As a result, legislation was passed to limit their immigration into the U.S.

The willingness to work hard, sacrifice, and persevere has resulted in some success for groups of Asian Americans, particularly in the area of education. In fact, in more recent times, Asian Americans were given the label “model minority” to describe how well they assimilated into American culture. This label is a myth largely because it does not address the wide range of experiences for Asian Americans. While some have achieved a level of societal success, there are other groups who remain mired in poverty and discrimination. Thus, for some groups of Asian Americans, many have been able to successfully integrate themselves into American society, for others however, the problems of poverty and crime are readily self-evident. Thus, while it appears from an examination of the crime statistics as well as victimization surveys that Asian Americans are underrepresented in terms of their involvement in crime, there remains a portion of the population that is actively involved in criminal activity.