Announcer ([00:03](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/IEMwyVS5zQw9AAlU_9xKHG6sLYeQsAlfgqRUr9v1okl6t4xki2RWqcyaD5emOwEVxIjmCBCzBy1zal40YmxXgGi7PRo?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=3.37)):

The Missouri State Journal, a weekly program, keeping you in touch with Missouri State University.

Emily Yeap ([00:10](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/IEMwyVS5zQw9AAlU_9xKHG6sLYeQsAlfgqRUr9v1okl6t4xki2RWqcyaD5emOwEVxIjmCBCzBy1zal40YmxXgGi7PRo?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=10.16)):

Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month recognizes and honors the contributions, achievements and influence of a AAPI Americans, who have shaped the culture and history of the U.S.

This celebration is even more significant this year with a recent increase of violence and discrimination against AAPI people around the country. I'm Emily Yeap.

Two Missouri State University students of Asian background – Spencer Vreeland, a sophomore majoring in philosophy and intercultural communication, and Jin Tang, a project management graduate student, are my guests today. They join me to share their thoughts and experiences about being Asian in America today.

Vreeland is a Korean American. His mom is from Korea and his dad is Caucasian.

Spencer Vreeland ([00:56](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/IEMwyVS5zQw9AAlU_9xKHG6sLYeQsAlfgqRUr9v1okl6t4xki2RWqcyaD5emOwEVxIjmCBCzBy1zal40YmxXgGi7PRo?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=56.98)):

Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month it means quite a lot to me. Many people do not know my background. However, the stereotypes kind of associate with that. People assume that I'm from some sort of exotic location, or maybe even have some pre-assumptions before they even meet me.

To me, this month is supposed to represent every single student who includes in that category. And I think it's important to kind of represent them and being able to show more of a light and kind of become better acknowledged about what it means to be Asian American or Pacific Islander.

Emily Yeap ([01:24](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/IEMwyVS5zQw9AAlU_9xKHG6sLYeQsAlfgqRUr9v1okl6t4xki2RWqcyaD5emOwEVxIjmCBCzBy1zal40YmxXgGi7PRo?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=84.51)):

He shares some positives and challenges of being an Asian American.

Speaker 3 ([01:28](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/IEMwyVS5zQw9AAlU_9xKHG6sLYeQsAlfgqRUr9v1okl6t4xki2RWqcyaD5emOwEVxIjmCBCzBy1zal40YmxXgGi7PRo?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=88.37)):

I'm able to speak on behalf at least a small portion of Missouri State's campus. Being involved in Student Government Association has given me the opportunity to share my experiences, to be able to help students and even faculty and admin understand like where we are coming from, cuz it is very crucial that we do have a voice. I firmly believe that any person of any ethnic background deserves to have their voice shared and heard. I think that's what inspires change. That's what inspires different perspectives because I don't believe the one size fits all model at all. I believe that different perspectives and different backgrounds yield different results.

COVID -9 has been one of the most challenging aspects for me and especially my entire mom's side of the family. During the beginning of COVID, there was a term passed around called the Chinese virus. And this was very big, at least on my mom's side of the family for others, they might not have not acknowledged it, or they may not have understood it, but to go into a Walmart with my mom and people physically walking away from us because they don't wanna be even close to us.

And we easily saw it through multiple weeks during that time. That was extremely detrimental to my mental health and especially my mom’s. And that was one of my biggest worries with coming into college, especially hearing about all the racial discrimination on the news. I did not know what to expect. Luckily for me, the challenges that I have heard have not happened to me. And that is one of the most thankful things that I would be able to say coming to Missouri State.

Emily Yeap ([02:49](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/IEMwyVS5zQw9AAlU_9xKHG6sLYeQsAlfgqRUr9v1okl6t4xki2RWqcyaD5emOwEVxIjmCBCzBy1zal40YmxXgGi7PRo?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=169.35)):

Tang, an international student from China, who has lived in Springfield for several years, has also experienced discrimination because of COVID-19.

Jin Tang ([02:58](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/IEMwyVS5zQw9AAlU_9xKHG6sLYeQsAlfgqRUr9v1okl6t4xki2RWqcyaD5emOwEVxIjmCBCzBy1zal40YmxXgGi7PRo?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=178.07)):

I wouldn’t say it's very direct or aggressive discrimination towards me, but it's like a subtle way to do it. It was around May 2020 when COVID just getting serious here in the U.S. and there's not a mask mandate yet. So, a lot of people are very skeptical about like wearing masks and they're not used to that kind of thing, but I wanna be cautious cuz it's like new type of virus. I wanna protect myself and the people around me.

There's one day, me and my boyfriend went out to get some flowers for his mom. So in the flower shop, we're just wearing mask, but nobody else was because it was not a mandate yet. I would say he was in his 50s, 60s. It’s a guy and then he saw us like, “Oh, look at those two people wearing masks,” trying to do a very sarcastic way, but he didn't say any racial slurs or didn't say anything, “bad” towards us, but it's kind of like passive aggressive way to do it. We just ignore it. We don't wanna start a fight and we don't wanna make a scene there and make it hard for the shopkeeper. So we just bought the flowers and we went out. That's the thing I encounter, but I know for a fact, that's nothing compared to a lot of people have experienced, especially in the bigger cities, just because they're Asians.

Emily Yeap ([04:06](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/IEMwyVS5zQw9AAlU_9xKHG6sLYeQsAlfgqRUr9v1okl6t4xki2RWqcyaD5emOwEVxIjmCBCzBy1zal40YmxXgGi7PRo?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=246.27)):

To clear up misinformation and misunderstandings, Tang believes it's important for her to respectfully share with others about her culture and background.

Jin Tang ([04:15](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/IEMwyVS5zQw9AAlU_9xKHG6sLYeQsAlfgqRUr9v1okl6t4xki2RWqcyaD5emOwEVxIjmCBCzBy1zal40YmxXgGi7PRo?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=255.01)):

I would just get any opportunities I can to try to clarify anything from my own friends and from the people I met on campus. I know there are a lot of things that they still get confused about. So, I feel like that's really good just be brave to talk to them. They were like, “Oh, so that's how it goes in your country, in your culture.”

Not only you expect other people to be more open minded, you yourself have to be more open minded and just stand up for yourself more and don't be afraid to talk or argue, but in a friendly way to present your own points and get yourself heard. I really enjoy doing that since I've been living here.

Emily Yeap ([04:51](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/IEMwyVS5zQw9AAlU_9xKHG6sLYeQsAlfgqRUr9v1okl6t4xki2RWqcyaD5emOwEVxIjmCBCzBy1zal40YmxXgGi7PRo?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=291.4)):

Those were Missouri State students Spencer Vreeland and Jin Tang. I'm Emily Yeap for the Missouri State Journal.

Announcer ([04:58](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/IEMwyVS5zQw9AAlU_9xKHG6sLYeQsAlfgqRUr9v1okl6t4xki2RWqcyaD5emOwEVxIjmCBCzBy1zal40YmxXgGi7PRo?loadFrom=SharedLink&ts=298.93)):

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