

# The Asian Reporter

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**MY TURN**

■ **Wayne Chan**



## Grandpa – The matchmaker in heaven

So, I've been thinking about dating apps ... Let's back that up a bit. I've been happily married for 30 years. I've never been on a dating app. I've never downloaded one to my cell-phone. I don't even know which apps are popular.

Let me just re-emphasize this (in case my wife happens to read this column). I don't have a dating app on my phone. Don't need one and have never even considered using one. If there was a "This is NOT a dating app" app, I probably WOULD use that one. Are we clear?

OK, I think we can get back on track now.

I've been thinking about dating apps lately because my son Tyler (who does happen to use them) mentioned an interesting factoid.

He told me that studies have shown that Asian men have the least amount of success setting up dates on dating apps.

Since it piqued my interest, I did a quick online search about the topic and discovered a number of articles detailing some of the reasons for this particular occurrence. It turns out (as I am sure many of you have already ascertained) that this is primarily due to various stereotypes associated with Asian men.

Before we go any further, let's first define a stereotype:

**stere•o•type, noun:** a widely held, but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing.

In my way of thinking, a stereotype is an opinion or perception of someone based on nothing more than a preconceived notion of the nature of that person.

So what are these stereotypes of Asian men?

Well, apparently Asian men are all engineers or accountants. Except for their innate abilities as master martial arts specialists, they don't exercise at all. They are undesirable as suitable partners because they seem completely desexualized.

Speaking as a father of three kids, that last one was hard to take.

In fact, my whole life is the antithesis of the Asian male stereotype. I'm not an engineer. My math skills still require the use of fingers for even the simplest calculations. As far as my martial arts abilities, the last time I broke a wood beam in two was when I accidentally fell on one.

I didn't really even need to look up these stereotypes. I've known about them all my life.

My dad was my hero. He took care of the family and he lived his life as an honorable, decent, hardworking man. But back when I was young, at least on the surface, he seemed to encapsulate all the Asian stereotypes that existed.

Yes, he was an engineer. He also owned and operated a laundry. And somewhere in between, he opened a Chinese restaurant.

When he told me the name he came up with for the restaurant, I was aghast. He named the restaurant "Charlie Chan's Kitchen."

"Dad!" I exclaimed. "Please don't name it that!" I pleaded.

"You're going to own a Chinese restaurant AND a laundry???" Please, no!" I said.

But as I got older, and particularly when I had to take care of a family all on my own, I realized that I fell prey to the convenience of the same stereotypes I despised.

Yes, my dad was an engineer, but it wasn't as simple as that. My father was the son of a general of the Nationalist party in China, fighting against the communists. The general sent his son to the United States to become an engineer in the hopes that if the communists were eliminated, his son could return to China and help rebuild the country. In fact, dad said he never wanted to be an engineer. His real passion was to be a businessman.

And even though he was pushed into becoming an engineer, he wasn't just an average engineer. He made the best of it by becoming the chair of the electrical engineering department at San Diego State University and also the acting dean of the university for a while. He also authored a textbook that was widely used across the country as part of the electrical engineering curriculum of many universities.

When it became clear he wouldn't be going back to China to rebuild, he decided to live his passion and become a businessman.

That laundry? Yes, he owned a laundry, but it was the largest commercial laundry in town at the time.

Charlie Chan's Kitchen — no, I never did like the name — was successful and for a time was a fixture in the neighborhood while employing college students and some family members who had moved into town.

My father created jobs. Looking at the definition of stereotype, I think the operative term is "oversimplified."

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