August Moon Special Issue
Announcements & Event Listings

AUGUST MOON FESTIVALS
Chinatown Main Street presents August Moon Festival
When: Sunday, August 14, 10am-5pm
Where: Chinatown
MFTA Accessible (Orange Line to Chinatown, Green Line to Boylston)
Boston’s Chinatown stages one of its largest events, the August Moon Festival, held around the Chinatown Gateway on Harrison Avenue. The celebration is traditionally a time for people to gather for moon-watching parties, with children carrying brightly colored lanterns.

According to legend, in 1368 the Chinese overthrew the Mongol Yuan dynasty with the help of messengers hidden in mooncakes. These tasty disc-shaped flaky pastries, filled with sweetened bean-paste and marked on top with the symbol of the baker, have thus become the most popular fruit associated with the August Moon, or Mid-Autumn Festival. Free admission.

More information is available on please call 617-350-6303 or email courtbob@gmail.com.

August Moon, or Mid-Autumn Festival. Free admission.

Quincy Asian Resources Inc. presents
24th Annual Quincy August Moon Festival
When: Sunday, August 21st, 11am-5pm
Where: 1400-1600 Hancock Street, Quincy, MA 02169.
MFTA Accessible (Red Line to Quincy Center)
A fun-filled festival with entertainment and activities and over 10,000 in attendance. This year’s event will feature a cultural area with art demos, kite making, and other activities. There will also be traditional and modern Asian music and dance performances, and a children’s area with games and crafts. Local restaurants will serve various types of Asian and American cuisine. More than a hundred vendors with giveaway gifts will participate. The festival is free, MFTA accessible, and free public parking is available, so come join us for a fun day!

More information is available on www.quincyasianresources.org or call at 617-472-2200.

CHINATOWN
Chinese Revolution Historic Photo Exhibition
The Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association of New England (CCBA) is holding a historic photo exhibition to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the 1911 Chinese Revolution. These photos show the struggles of Dr. Sun Yat-Sen, who established the first Chinese Section of the Chinese Nationalists in 1910. Dr. Sun Yat-Sen visited Boston to raise funds and gather support. The photos are available for public viewing on Saturdays and Sundays from 11 am to 2 pm through Sunday, August 14 in the CCBA conference room at 90 Tyler Street Boston during CCBA office hours.

BCNC Annual Oak Street Fair
Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center (BCNC) would like to invite community organizations to participate in the upcoming 26th Annual Oak Street Fair. We are providing a free outreach table to community organizations that want to partner with us for this family-centered event. This year’s theme is “Fun. Family. Memories. 1st. 2nd. 3rd.”

BCNC is looking for a variety of other free energy efficient home improvement options available?

How do I qualify?

For more information, please call 617-350-6303 or email courtbob@gmail.com.

COMIC

Empty Bamboo Girl
by Lillian Chan

LESSONS ON LOVE
#25
So, if your date picks the inside, comfy seat and leaves you with the cramped seat, you might want to reconsider.

He just stuck her with the seat next to the bathroom

for more sh-li-Lieh, become a facebook fan at www.facebook.com/shLiehTheComic

August 12, 2011

SAMPan

A Publication of the ACA
www.sampan.org
87 Tyler Street
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SAMPan is New England’s only bimonthly bilingual English-Chinese newspaper. It is nonprofit and nonpartisan. Founded in 1972, SAMPan is published by the Asian American Civic Association. SAMPan is distributed free in Chinatown and the Greater Boston area. All donations to the publication are tax deductible. Subscription: $30/year (1st class mail); $30/ year (3rd class mail).

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First “Meet the Candidates” Session Attracts Active Community Participation

By Annie Dan Yang-Perez
Sampan Correspondent

An APIAVote-sponsored bilingual (Cantonese and English) session of “Meet the Candidates Speaker Series – U.S. Senate” took place on Thursday, July 28, 2011 at 1 PM on the second floor of China Pearl Restaurant (9 Tyler Street, Boston). Thursday’s session was for Setti Warren, a Democratic candidate for the 2012 U.S. Senate seat. Setti Warren, an Associate Professor and Dean of the Boston College School of Professional Studies in Newton, Massachusetts, and before he took office as Mayor in November 2009, he has had a long history of public service, including experiences as Special Assistant in the White House Office of Cabinet Affairs for President Bill Clinton, as New England Director of FEMA, as Deputy State Director for Senator John Kerry, and as a Navy Intelligence Specialist in Iraq for one year. Thursday’s session opened with Warren’s introduction of himself as a Democratic candidate for the 2012 race for the U.S. Senate seat Scott Brown won in 2010. Warren summarized his focus as “protecting retirement security, investing in education, and creating good American jobs that can’t be outsourced,” as phrased on his campaign brochure handed out to every one present, and promised the audience that meeting that if he is elected, he will create jobs, fight for affordable health care plans, protect Medicare, and invest in the youth with more opportunities and education. “We must invest in what can give people opportunities and cut waste,” the candidate emphasized. In the following Q & A section, the audience actively participated by raising eight major questions about Warren’s specific plans for matters in relation to the Chinese community. Led by Mr. Henry Yu, Co-Chair for Newton Residents Association, Boston, the audience asked questions about funding allocations and improvement plans for the Chinese community’s housing, jobs, education, insurance, health care for seniors, taxes, social benefits, elimination of language barrier impacts, and easier transition for immigrant professionals. Warren reiterated his emphases on jobs, education for the young, and health care. In particular, he talked about his determination in bringing down Medicare costs and in protecting and optimizing the national health care reform. He proposed to reduce the Medicare costs by allowing people to purchase drugs from outside of the United States, as is the current practice in Newton. Warren also noted that now there is a serious disconnection between the top-level decision-makers and the reality in society. He stressed the importance of staying in touch with the people to guarantee the most effective funding for the most needed programs. “I’ll be here early and often. This is not the only time you’ll see me here in Chinatown,” says Warren.

The Rose Kennedy Greenway Conservancy is collaborating with the Chinatown community to fundraise for the purchase of additional tables, chairs and shade umbrellas in Chinatown Park. If you would like to contribute, please contact James Chan (jchan@dglos.com) or Linda Jonash, Director of Planning and Design for the Conservancy (ljonash@rosec Kennedygreenway.org).

Donations of $5,000 or more will be recognized on the permanent Chinatown Park sign at the Beach Street entrance, and on an additional sign in the planter bed. Donations of $100-$4,999 will be recognized on the bulletin board of the Chinatown Park sign for the calendar year. Donations must be paid in full by September 1st to include recognition on the sign.

We welcome your participation to make Chinatown Park an inviting place for all park users.
By Alissa Greenberg
Sampan Correspondent

Glad in a dress shirt and blazer, his hair molded into soft spikes, 24-year-old Kevin Hu told me shyly, “Citizens are so polite here. When we see people give speeches, our teachers always call for a round of applause... So I learned that in America we have to have gratitude. We cannot take for granted.” It was just one of the many valuable lessons that Hu, who is currently studying in Taipei, learned in his first days on an Interna- tional Leadership Foundation-sponsored trip to the United States. He and about 40 Tai- wanese and Chinese peers had already spent three days in New York meeting with busi- ness executives and visiting the New York Stock Exchange. Now they were milling about in freshly-pressed suits or neatly-ironed skirts inside a Harvard Kennedy School event hall, waiting to take into a barbershop-off on a night that represented unique and historic moment in cross-straits relations.

The ILF is a non-profit organization that awards 40-50 scholarships per year to Asian students in order to foster leadership, pub- lic service, and entrepreneurship, and their trip’s itinerary offered many opportunities to learn about American public policy and politics. The organization is establishing a new chapter in association with Harvard, so this year’s trip included a stop in Boston to see the University and use a few sights. Seeking to pack as much as possible into one fortnight (perhaps too much so—one student called the schedule “a bit pushy”), the itinerary called for the students to board a bus to Washington DC the morning after the dinner, where they were to visit the De- partments of Commerce and Transportation, and meet powerful figures such as Senator Nancy Pelosi. In an introductory speech, ILF director Chiling Tong praised Boston’s rich political history, saying, “If we want Asian youth to un- derstand America, we need to have a chapter here.” Ms. Tong went on to compare the ILF Harvard dinner to a state dinner she recently attended for PRC President Hu Jintao. “These people shape history now,” she said, addressing the ILF students. “But I see that another 20 or 30 years from now you will shape the history of US, China. So I ask you to consider: how can we conquer the obstacles and misconceptions in our way?”

It was a theme that carried through the speeches given by the evening’s speakers. Cambridge City Councilor Leland Cheung called for the countries to learn from one an- other, saying, “We can learn how to deal with rapid change from China, and China can learn from US about the importance of questioning the status quo.” Vermont State Representa- tive Mitzi Johnson agreed, adding that the ILF students should think carefully about their priorities and “how to bend the world to [their] ideals.”

The period designated for speeches ended with brief remarks by two students from the ILF program, Shanghai native Yini Qiu and Hu, the spiky-haired student from Taipei. While Hu expressed his awe at being chosen for the program, Qiu wondered at the inten- sity of the friendships she had made in only a few days. “Today only is the fourth day out of two weeks,” she said. “And already I can’t imagine what it will be like to say good- bye to these people. That’s why we spent to- gether will be the gem of my entire life.”

In private interviews, both Hu and Qiu expressed their surprise at the strength of connections they had made with their cross-.strait counterparts—perhaps the most com- monly authentic component of an other- wise carefully-orchestrated evening. “I’m frustrated by the usual lack of inter- action between Chinese and Taiwanese peo- ple,” Hu said. “I want to learn from my Chi- nese friends and to teach them, too. I think Chinese people can teach me to be hard-work- ing; in China, they have almost 10 million uni- versity students... everyone works hard to work for the lives.” In turn, Qiu expressed the desire to teach his new Chinese friends “how democracy works, how we vote for the leg- islature and the president.” He cited the com- ing 2012 dual Taiwanese presidential/ legislatively elections as a watershed moment to prove off, saying, “I want to tell them that we will have this change we want.”

Qiu separately expressed similar senti- ments about her Taiwanese peers. “We come from different places and different societies, but we are the same age, share the same lan- guage, and love the same superstars. There are fewer barriers than I imagined,” she said. “At first we treated each other very carefully because we didn’t know where we stood... The first night at dinner all the Taiwanese and all the Mandarin students sat together.” She gestured around her, to a thronging deep in discussion. “Now look at us—all mixed up. We talk as if we’ve been friends forever.”

Of the things she hoped to learn from her Taiwanese friends, Qiu mentioned one spe- cific cultural difference. “I think the Chinese perspective is less traditional. Many cultural things were removed by the revolution, but these things were preserved here [in Tai- wan].” She wanted to learn from my Taiwanese friends about the traditions we’ve lost,” she said. But Qiu hoped to teach, as well. “People from all over the world don’t know about China. I want to teach them about what and who we are.”

Although great lengths remain to be bridged between the two countries, the eve- ning’s speakers called for the countries to learn from one another, saying, “We can learn how to deal with rapid change from China, and China can learn from US about the importance of questioning the status quo.” Vermont State Representa- tive Mitzi Johnson agreed, adding that the ILF students should think carefully about their priorities and “how to bend the world to [their] ideals.”

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By Michael Tow  
Sampan Contributor

Sure, I know what you’re thinking: I can’t even talk to my teenagers, let alone teach them something. While it may seem like everything is going into one ear and out the other, having your teenagers learn about money and good money habits will give them a huge advantage in life. Here are some ways and ideas to teach your teenagers about money.

Open a savings and checking account

Open a savings and checking account under your teenager’s name or if they’re younger in a joint account with your teenagers. They will also see how interest checks, understand fees and balance accounts. It’s crucial for them to look at you and your spouse as a bank ATM where they can make withdrawals at any of your money. You need to teach them to look at you and your spouse as a bank ATM where they can make withdrawals at any of your savings accounts. They will also see how interest checks, understand fees and balance accounts. This will quickly teach your teenager about the idea of budgeting. If they overspend and need money for non-emergencies, don’t bail them out and let them learn the consequences of poor budgeting.

Help contribute to their college savings accounts

If you’ve followed my advice from my articles, you have already set up a 529 or other type of college savings account for your child. But it doesn’t have to be all your contributions. I have your child contribute a portion of his or her paycheck or allowance into the 529 plan.

Talk about the pitfalls of Debit

While new credit card laws make it more difficult for someone under 21 to obtain a credit card, millions of dollars are still spent each year marketing credit cards to young adults. The giveaways and gimmicks seem like a great deal, especially if they have friends who have credit cards, but teenagers need to understand the potential repercussions. A few conversations with your teenager about the pitfalls of debit can go a long way.

Open an IRA

If your teenager is working he or she can open up and make contributions to an Individual Retirement account like a Roth IRA. They can learn about different types of investments like Mutual Funds, ETF’s and stocks and also tax free growth and the power of compounding. It’s a travesty to me that school curricula don’t teach children about the basics of financial literacy. So it doesn’t surprise me that a recent study showed that the average young adult had about $3,000 of credit card debt when they finished college. So without the help of schools, it’s important parents talk to their teenagers about money. Try some of the suggestions above and let me know your results.

If you have a question or topic that you would like me to discuss in a future article please email me at mtow@newbostonfinancial.com.

CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER – Michael Tow can be reached at 617-734-4400 or newbostonfinancial.com

By Anna Ing  
Sampan Contributor

Cutty’s is an amazing neighborhood gem nestled in Brookline Village (284 Washington Street, Brookline, MA 02445 (617) 505-1844). With their high quality, delicious and local fare thought up by owner Charles Kelsey, a former editor at Cook’s Illustrated Magazine and a Culinary of Art Institute graduate, it is not your run of the mill sandwich lunch spot. They have a simple menu that has something for everyone with daily specials ranging from Broccoli Rabe or Pork Torta sandwiches to the Saturday Only Pork Rabe and Pork Fennel sandwiches. Since last year, sandwich aficionados have been flocking to Cutty’s. From their amazing tomato soup, which my picky sister even inges it to their lovely sandwiches, there is something for everyone. After one sip of the tomato soup, you can never go back to Campbells again. The popular Roast Beef 1000 sandwich is elevated to a foodie’s delight with great attendance to flavor in every bite! First is the lightly toasted black pepper bread, then the thinly sliced roast beef, sharp cheddar, Thousand Island dressing topped with the lovely crunchy shallots to complete this sandwich. The ingredients all harmonize so well together that it is no wonder this sandwich is their top seller! One daily special sandwich is their Broccoli Rabe (vegetable used in Chinese and Italian cooking) sandwich. The slightly bitterness of the sauteed broccoli rabe is mellowed when combined with the mozzarella cheese and topped with the yummy tomato jam in a warm sesame bun, making it a satisfying meal. If you don’t want a sandwich, then try their Wheat Berry Beef over some mesclun (“mixture” of an assortment of young salad leaves) greens. (Wheat berry is the entire wheat kernel and is an excellent source of fiber.) The simplicity of the wheat berry and beans is both delicious and nutritious! Cutty’s boasts delicious and quality food, quick and friendly service with a smile while having consistent attention to details in their flavorful menu offerings with the most expensive item being $8! If you happen to be in the Brookline Village during lunch time, check out Cutty’s!

Our achievements change lives. Our people inspire cures.

At Millennium: The Takeda Oncology Company located in Cambridge, MA, “We Aspire to Cure Cancer” As a leading biopharmaceutical company focused on oncology, Millennium combines the agility, ideals and camaraderie of a start-up with the resources of Japan’s largest pharmaceutical company. The result is an entrepreneurial culture where the priorities are quality science and making a difference in patients’ lives and the communities we serve.

Our people share a commitment to innovation in an environment where individual contributions are not just valued, but rewarded. Here you’ll enjoy outstanding benefits, a friendly and respectful atmosphere and a culture that provides flexibility for both personal and professional life. Join Millennium and improve the lives of others while living yours to the fullest.

To view our current career opportunities and apply online, visit: joinmillennium.com/15
By Sharldine Desire

Sampan Youth Writer

CHAPTER 5: DI

“Do I even care what I’m doing here?” I asked. He could
really clean. He was going to make a great husband for
 whoever would get to have him…” He better get some
sleep,” he said, “We’ve got a big journey ahead of us.”

He sat up to look at me. “Di, you’re what keeps life
worthwhile for me. You’re the only person I knew. He was
giving me a chance to save my sis-
ter and had saved me seven years ago. He was the only
person I always wanted to be around, the only person that
could cheer me up and make me happy. He was the best
thing that ever happened to me. That’s why I love him and
why I sometimes felt like I didn’t deserve him. I looked at
Dami and found him looking at me. We laughed at
each other and got quiet for a while. But I felt like
telling him something.

“Dami,” I said, “Thank you.” He looked at me, confused.

“If you think about it,” Di said, “you’ll want a letter from me
even if you don’t smoke, you may still run into smoky situ-
cations in restaurants, parties, or even at home if one of your
family members smokes. Secondhand smoke is a known asth-
ma trigger, so you’d want to avoid it as much as possible if you
have asthma.

Smoking can undo the effect of any controller medicine
you are taking. It is a race against the effect of rescue
medicines, as smoking can make asthma symptoms more
worse. It can also disturb your sleep by making you cough
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You may have family photo albums full of people smoking
to the beats of every type of music, from birthday parties to company pic-
nic, when everyone was once accepted pretty much everywhere — even in doctors’ offices. But that changed as we learned more about the health problems it causes.

If you smoke, smoking is easily risky because of
the damage it does to the lungs.

There’s not much you can do about other people’s behav-
or, but you should let your friends and family know that what they do can affect you. If you smoke and don’t like it, tell
them not to smoke in your house or car. It’s your air, after all.

Article funded from the Asian Health Initiative of Tufts Medical Center

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Columns

SAMPAN August 12, 2011

Page 6

“Diamond and Damion”

If You Smoke

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You may have family photo albums full of people smoking
to the beats of every type of music, from birthday parties to company pic-
nic, when everyone was once accepted pretty much everywhere — even in doctors’ offices. But that changed as we learned more about the health problems it causes.
Linking Downtown Growth To Community Empowerment

The story of the Chinatown Trust Fund is intertwined with the rise of Chinatown. In the 1950s and 1960s, highway construction, institutional expansion, and urban renewal created great upheaval and displaced one-third of the population. In 1987, visionary community members formed a minority-owned joint venture and set aside $6.2 million to develop a mixed-use, 23-story high-rise that was loosely based on a Hong Kong development. It was sold, on Super Bowl Sunday, as the most expensive parcel to be traded since the 1968 demolition of the Logan Airport.Tan, a mixed-use, 23-story high-rise that was developed by the Asian Community Development Corporation. Other capital grants were made to the Wang YMCA, the Boston Asian Youth Essential Service, and the Boston Police Department. Boston Police Captain Bernard O’Rourke said the lower crime rate can be traced to efforts of both the police and Chinatown Crime Watch.

ESOL, Job Training and Education

The Trust has funded ESOL classes at Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center and American Chinese Christian Educational & Social Services. Additional support was given to job training and education programs at Asian American Civilic Association, Kwong Wong Chinese School and Boston Asian: Youth Essential Service.

Chinatown Adventure

The Chinatown Trust provided annual support from 2004 to 2010 for Chinatown Adventure, an affordable and feature rich summer camp program pro-violent by the Phillips Brooks House Association at Harvard University. Many campers have attended high-ranking colleges and universities, including Harvard, and have returned to Chinatown. Several have gone on to serve as counselors and program directors.

Support to the Community

Additional support for community, family, and the Chinatown business district was given to Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence, Boston Chinatown Resident Association, Asian Community Development Corporation, Chinatown Main Street, Que Shing Music and Opera Group, Josiah Quincy School Association, American Civic Association, Kwong Kow Chinese School and Asian American Civic Association), the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association, and American Chinese Christian Educational & Social Services.

Mount Hope Memorial

Mount Hope Memorial Home for Chinese immigrants has found its resting place at Mount Hope Cemetery since 1930, including the first sojourners who settled in the Boston area. Motivated by the sad state of the burial grounds, in 1989, a group from the Chinatown community led by Davis Woo and David S.Y. Wong set out to clean up and beautify them. Its members and youth volunteers have indexed the burial plots and reset misplaced tombstones to their foundations. After nearly 18 years of effort, the new Chinese Immigrant Memorial Monument unveiled at Mount Hope in March 2007. The Chinatown Trust Fund was a major contributor to this project of The Chinese Historical Society of New England.

Chinatown Crime Watch

The Trust has also supported the highly effective Chinatown Crime Watch through grants to the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association.

The Crime Watch was established in 2004 – 2010 with reprint permission from the Chinatown Trust Fund.
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2011-2012 OPENINGS
By Annie Dan Yang-Perez

When my editor asked me to write about my “hometown Mid-Autumn Festival traditions,” my brain went blank for a minute. Growing up in the cosmopolitan city of Shanghai, I was exposed to various aspects of Chinese culture, including the Mid-Autumn Festival, which is celebrated in my home country every August 15. However, being away from home for the United States three years ago, my big family and friends have continued the tradition of the Mid-Autumn Festival – or any other Chinese holiday celebration – has to be reduced to the core. Year after year, we repeat the same routine of gathering at my grandparents’ place for a warm three-generation family dinner, eating mooncakes, watching the extravagant gala on CCTV (China Central Television), while ritualistically glancing at the moon a few times. Before I left Shanghai for the United States three years ago, my big family and friends would invent all kinds of occasions for a family reunion every three weeks or so, which makes the Mid-Autumn Festival no longer so special as a family-unifying holiday for us. We are close and happy without it.

Three years ago, I moved away from home for the first time and came to the States for my studies. Being so far from home, I developed so much new appreciation for things I have always taken for granted before – my own family, Chinese food, Chinese manners, Chinese traditions, etc., etc. – and Mid-Autumn Festival, being the Chinese Thanksgiving, was one of them. In this article I reached out to many of my Shanghai friends, who were also pursuing their studies outside of China, in an attempt to understand how they celebrate this festival in their new homes. It is their stories that reveal how their celebrating habits have changed abroad. In the thirty-two responses I gratefully received, I made some most interesting findings.

Now as I think of it, the Mid-Autumn Festival is probably the most poetic Chinese holiday. Records of its celebration can be found in as early as the Tang Dynasty (618 – 907 A.D.). The Festival is named thus because according to the Lunar Calendar commonly used in ancient China, August 15 (usually in September) marks the autumnal equinox, when day and night are of equal length, and hence the full moon is at its brightest. Ancestor worship is also for the living to remember those who have passed away. The principal ritual of ancestor worship is to light candles or incense for the ancestors, and supposedly the ancestors will follow through the open doors all the way to the table to watch the family feast. In ancient China, August 15 (usually in September) marks the autumnal equinox, when day and night are of equal length, and hence the full moon is at its brightest. As we light our candles, we savor our mooncakes and enjoy the company of our extended family.

Speaking of food, in the Shanghai traditions, there are a few specialty dishes that may be different from other regions: taro corms, duck, and green soybeans. It is said that the traditions of eating taro corms and duck first appeared at the turn of the Song and Yuan Dynasties. (One of the reasons is the two names’ similar pronunciations in the local dialect to the word “auspiciousness” in Chinese; it is usually boiled within the pod.)

And of course there has to be mooncakes! Traditionally there are two styles commonly seen in Shanghai: Cantonese-style cakes can be round or square in shape, with thick sweet fillings inside a thin crust. The most popular flavor is a lotus seed paste with a whole duck egg yolk representing the full moon embedded in the middle. Other regular flavors include sweet bean, jujube, date, and five kernels. The Suzhou-style mooncakes are quite different. They are almost always round in shape, with a flaky crust, and thick fillings inside, looking like a puff pastry. Sometimes Suzhou-style mooncakes are salty in flavor, and the filling is usually large and thick. This is the filling. Few years have witnessed the rise of creative flavors like ice-cream, chocolate, and many more.

At that time. However, my family didn’t stay very close together and watch TV together. When I was little, I used to hang out with my cousins, and our grandpa bought us rabbit lamp that we could walk with on the street. I was really excited at that time. However, my family didn’t stay very close together after I went to middle school. Things changed and all my adult life started to be filled with identical observations of any traditional Chinese festivals – eating together, and cook Chinese food together. Many new routines are nowhere to be found. In Britain, on the other hand, mooncakes are sold at extremely high prices. Having spent four years in various British cities, Xu Lingfei still remembers sometimes buying one single mooncake with three or four friends and sharing that one small cake among themselves, incredibly, a Chinese friend of mine had the same experience by making the extremely complicated cakes herself!

Making their own mooncakes is hard to achieve for many Chinese overseas students exhausted in dealing with all kinds of difficulties in a foreign country. Many choose not to celebrate in any way in particular, or simply participate in the local festivities to blend in. It is the time of the Shanghai family dinner. For some, what is more important is not the form of celebration, but “your own feelings inside,” as a friend Shao Nan puts it. “The essence of the Mid-Autumn Festival is getting together with family and spending quality time,” writes Liu Yuyun in her response. And I am sure many will nod in agreement. My friend Shi Ying moved me with her comment below:

Maybe I am getting old, or maybe I’ve never celebrated this festival before. But every year, I remember any detail about it. Year after year we did the same thing, eating together and watching TV together. When I was little, I used to hang out with my cousins, and our grandpa bought us rabbit lamp that we could walk with on the street. I was really excited at that time. However, my family didn’t stay very close together after I went to middle school. Things changed and all my adult life started to be filled with identical observations of any traditional Chinese festivals – eating together, and cook Chinese food together. Many new routines are nowhere to be found. In Britain, on the other hand, mooncakes are sold at extremely high prices. Having spent four years in various British cities, Xu Lingfei still remembers sometimes buying one single mooncake with three or four friends and sharing that one small cake among themselves, incredibly, a Chinese friend of mine had the same experience by making the extremely complicated cakes herself!

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中秋快樂
Graphic Developments, Inc. Wishes Sampan Readers A Happy August Moon!

中秋快樂
By Alan Phillips

On my most recent trip to China, my wife and I ended up visiting a lot of religious sites by chance. We saw Taoist and Buddhist temples in remote areas and spent a day visiting the Grand Mosque of Xi’an, among other places. Nearly every one of these sites, I realized, was actually a foreign religious site to China, in one way or another. When one thinks of “foreign” religions in China, usually Christianity or Islam comes to mind; but Buddhism also came to China from another country and was not always welcome.

When I was first in China, back in the early 1990’s, the school I taught at brought us to visit the Buddhist shrine at Dazu near Chongqing. There were many intricate carvings of Buddhist idols in the walls and grottoes of the hillside. But one panel of illustrations was particularly interesting. It showed many scenes of how the Buddha took care of his mother and did good deeds for his parents. They were not historical scenes, however, nor were they any part of traditional Buddhist mythology. They were created to counter criticism from Chinese followers of Confucius, who claimed that the Buddhist practice of celibacy and isolated meditation was undermining the Confucian family-oriented values and philosophies. Buddhism was even abolished for a time in China during the late Tang Dynasty, when the emperor banned all foreign religions and divided up the property and wealth of the Buddhist temples, redistributing them among the native Confucian and Taoist temples.

One of the important figures in the history of Chinese Buddhism is Xuanzang, a Buddhist monk who lived in the seventh century during the Tang Dynasty. In his day, Buddhism had already spread to China from India via the Silk Road. Its transmission, however, was erratic and by the time it had reached China, its adherents were unclear on aspects of Buddhist doctrine and its meanings. So, the monk Xuanzang left Xi’an, the capital of the Tang Empire, and made the thousand-plus mile journey across the Taktakamalan Desert around the barrier of the Himalayan Mountains to India, the land of Buddha’s birth. Here, he collected thousands of scriptures which he brought back to China to translate. Many of these works have been lost in India and now only exist in Chinese translation from the collections of Xuanzang. When Xuanzang returned to Xi’an, the emperor had a huge pagoda built to house the scriptures. Today, 1300 years later, the Big Wild Goose Pagoda still stands outside the main city walls of Xi’an.

I went to visit the pagoda while I was in Xi’an last summer. Finding the pagoda was a simple matter—at over 200 feet tall, it is the tallest building in the neighborhood. It easily holds itself up against the surrounding modern apartments and shopping centers sprouting up around the city. Its height...
is particularly impressive when one realizes that when it was built, it must have been one of the tallest structures in the world.

The plaza around the pagoda is a huge park filled with fountains, shops and modern bronze statues extolling traditional Chinese Confucian values. Inside the walled pavilion that surrounds the pagoda, were courtyards, small temples and exhibition halls that had been restored or rebuilt and filled with golden Buddhas and brightly colored alters. Chinese tour guides were leading groups of foreigners and explaining the sights in Spanish, Russian and several other languages I couldn't identify.

I paid the extra fee to actually go inside the Big Wild Goose Pagoda and climb up the seven levels of the steep winding stairs to the top. The view from the roof windows was spectacular. Despite being 1300 years old, the pagoda is the tallest building in the world. In the past, I've found that official descriptions of Buddhist sites in China would emphasize their historical and scientific importance or the architectural system and continued to build things in this style long after architects in China moved on.

One thing that struck me about the whole presentation of the Big Wild Goose Pagoda was the lack of any official government spin on the significance of the place. In the past, I've found that official descriptions of Buddhist sites in China would emphasize their historical and scientific importance or the architectural splendor of the temples. But here, everything was so unashamedly Buddhist. Videos in the pagoda showed the story of monk Xuanzang talking about his devotion to Buddhism rather than his contributions to geography and linguistics. And the pavilion had a Buddhist library and research center with nary a reference to Communism or nationalism in the entire place.

As my wife and I were leaving, we came across a newly-erected stone mural that had the inscription, “Backbone of the Nation”, carved in human-high characters. We thought we had found some token propaganda at last. But as I found out later, this was not some random Communist slogan, but a quotation from the writer Lü Xun, the father of modern Chinese literature and a scholar of Chinese literature who died in 1936. Like the monk Xuanzang, Lü Xun was also a translator of foreign works into Chinese. His quote was recognition of one scholar-translator to another. Christianity is another foreign religion that came to China. Though most people think its appearance is relatively recent, its roots in China go back a thousand years. One early Christian sect in China was the Nestorian Church. The Nestorian Christians came to China from the west over the Silk Road and actually had a church in the city of Xi’an during the Tang Dynasty. In the Xi’an Stele Museum, we saw a stone pillar from the Tang Dynasty that commemorates the Tang emperor’s granting of permission for the Nestorians to establish a church in the Chinese capital. But the Chinese Nestorian church came to an end after a later Tang Dynasty abolished all foreign religions. (This was the same one who abolished Buddhism as well.)

Christianity returned to China in later centuries as European nations began sending ships out to explore East Asia. The Catholic church sent many priests of the Jesuit Order to China in the seventeenth century at the end of the Ming Dynasty and the beginning of the Qing Dynasty abolished all foreign religions. (This was the same one who abolished Buddhism as well.) Christianity returned to China in later centuries as European nations began sending ships out to explore East Asia. The Catholic church sent many priests of the Jesuit Order to China in the seventeenth century at the end of the Ming Dynasty and the beginning of the Qing Dynasty abolished all foreign religions. (This was the same one who abolished Buddhism as well.)

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CHINA, continued from page 12

a very large church with twin steeples. So, we went to see if we could go inside. Stumbling across Christian churches in Communist China is not really all that unusual. A great many churches were built by foreign missionaries before 1949. Christian churches in China tend to be more conspicuous than Buddhist or Taoist temples since the Christian missionaries usually built churches within towns rather than in remote mountain retreats. And most Christian churches have tall, conspicuous steeples topped with crosses while native Chinese temples tend to blend in with their surroundings.

There are practicing Christians in China, but the churches are run by the government. There are official Protestant and Catholic churches, but they are forbidden to be controlled by any foreign church. So, the Chinese Catholic church answers to the Communist party rather than the Vatican. In the past, many churches had been repurposed and converted to schools or other uses. Today, though, the government has tended to preserve Christian churches as religious buildings. I’ve seen new churches rebuilt in cities on the Yangtze River when the old church was submerged by the rising waters of the Three Gorges Dam.

But unlike Buddhist and Taoist temples, Christian churches in China are usually kept locked and gated except on Sundays even if they are actively used as places of worship. Since my wife and I happened to spot the cathedral on a Sunday, we went to see if we could go inside. The cathedral was the Saint Ignatius Cathedral (or Shanghai Xujiahui Cathedral in Chinese) and was built a century before when this neighborhood was part of the colonial French Concession in Shanghai.

When we arrived at the church gates, there was a mass in session and the gates were locked to visitors until it was over. We waited along with a few other Chinese tourists until the few dozen people filed out of the church and we were allowed in. Within, the church was very large and looked fairly new. Apparently, much of the church was damaged or dismantled between 1949 and the 1970’s. The spires on the steeples were actually replacements since the original ones were torn down. Many of the stained glass windows are new and were donated by foreign governments such as Mexico.

There was little else to see at the cathedral, so we wandered into a nearby park. It turned out that this park was a tomb of a local Ming Dynasty scholar named Xu Guangqi, but the place was a bit unusual. It did have large statues of animals and Chinese figures on the promenade leading up to the tomb, much like the statues of animals seen at the Ming Tombs near Beijing. But at the end of the promenade, in front of a mound that was presumably the grave, was a giant stone crucifix. We could find no explanation for its presence in the park. There were many signs and placards that talked about the accomplishments of Xu Guangqi in the fields of mathematics, astronomy and agriculture, but nothing to give a clue about the giant crucifix, other than the fact that we were next door to a Catholic cathedral.

I thought I remembered something in our Shanghai tourist guidebook mentioning the name Xu Guangqi, so when we got back to the hotel, I looked it up. It turns out that Xu Guangqi was a high-ranking scholar in the imperial civil service and one of the earliest Catholic converts in China who helped translate many Chinese classic works into Latin. He studied a great deal of foreign mathematics and astronomy that the Jesuit missionaries brought to China in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and used these to make improvements to the Chinese
Passing on the Tradition

By Kaili Xu

Chusok – Korean Thanksgiving

Chusok, Korea's annual thanksgiving holiday, is one of the biggest migration events in modern Korea. Over half of the population visits families and ancestral graves during the three-day holiday, which usually falls sometime in September or October. (Chusok falls on August 15 on the lunar calendar)

Families living in big cities like Seoul make a mas- sive exodus by car, express bus, train, airplane, and ferry. There are long lines of cars leaving Seoul on the days preceding Chusok, causing massive traffic jams on the freeways and major rural routes. This year a trip by car from Seoul to Busan, which usually takes about five hours, was reported as taking as long as twenty hours! A trip by car, express bus, train, and ferry. Surprisingly, the competition among mooncake providers turns more severe each year, despite consumers' decreasing attachment to the multi-century-old cakes. Once a delectable treat packed in a modest brown paper bag, these days the mooncake has morphed into an ostentatious show of wealth and become an elaborately packaged gift that can be depicted as a kind of artwork. When too much attention is paid to the luxurious packaging, who still remembers the cultural and artistic connotations of the savory and charming-looking mooncakes? Indeed, the Mid-autumn festival is sometimes referred to as the “Moon Festival” in Korea.

The Mid-autumn festival is sometimes re- ferred to as the “Moon Festival” in Korea. These days, the mooncake has morphed into an ostentatious show of wealth and become an elaborately packaged gift that can be depicted as a kind of artwork. When too much attention is paid to the luxurious packaging, who still remembers the cultural and artistic connotations of the savory and charming-looking mooncakes? Indeed, the Mid-autumn festival is sometimes referred to as the “Moon Festival” in Korea. Making song pyun is one of the most festive activities associated with Chusok. Several generations of women in a big circle over bowls filled with glutinous rice dough and many wonderful fillings. The song pyun are then carefully arranged between piles of freshly washed pine needles in a huge steamer. The pine needles prevent the sticky rice cakes from clinging to each other and moisture from seeping into the whole house with the wonderful smell of pine trees.

Grandmothers speak gently about the days when they were young, making song pyun, and tell their granddaughters, ‘Girls who make pretty song pyun will have pretty daughters!’ Making song pyun brings together generations of women and gives them an opportunity to share their life stories. This took place more often in traditional Korea, when at least three generations lived in the same household. Nowadays, most families are nuclear, and thus Chusok provides an opportunity for different generations to interact and appreciate their extended family. However, fewer and fewer people know how to make song pyun or other traditional foods. Instead, they buy prepared or packaged foods in supermarkets and department stores.

On Chusok morning the family carefully prepares the ancestral table for a memorial ceremony. The house of the eldest son is usually the site of the gathering. Family members gather early in the morning to participate in the ceremony. The eldest male descendant from the line of eldest sons (even if he is not the eldest male in the family) usually presides over the ceremony. There are many round bowls of bowing to the floor from a kneeling position, and ancestors are offered wine and food. After the ceremony all the food is taken out of the room and rearranged for the family to eat. The family sits around the table to eat the wonderful food prepared by the female relatives over the past few days and reminisce about the ancestors. After the meal some of the food that has been set aside is taken to the graves of the ancestors.

Chusok reminds us that Korea’s traditional gender roles and discrimination persist. As noted above, women spend several days cooking and preparing for the Chusok ceremony and family gathering. The men, on the other hand, relax and enjoy the festivities, and do not help much with the chores. Furthermore, since the family celebration is based upon paternal lineage, married women often are not able to celebrate with their original family. This aggravates gender discrimination, prompting some to complain openly or to disregard the tradition of Chusok altogether.

Some Christian denominations have discouraged or opposed the Korean tradition of worshiping ancestors or gods not connected with Christianity. Therefore, some Christian families honor their ancestors with prayers and hymns rather than bowing or offering them elaborate dishes. Nonetheless, Chusok is an important family holiday for Christians as well as non-Christians, as they all celebrate with their families, albeit in different ways.
Tsukimi - The Japanese Moon Festival

Tsukimi is an annual event to view the moon on the night of August 15 on the lunar calendar. The date has changed from the middle of August to the end of September on the solar calendar. We also call this night "The 15th night" or the "Harvest moon", et cetera. Because the event is held under the lunar calendar, the date changes every year. We will hold the event on September 11 this year.

The custom of viewing the moon is originally from China. It is said that this Chinese custom was introduced to Japan around the Heian era, and then it had taken root in Japan as a harvest festival. For whatever reason, in Japan we compare the figure of the moon to that of a rabbit. In China they do the same. In China, they used to eat "Geppei (a traditional Chinese sweet)" on this night, but it changed to "Tsukimi dango (a kind of rice dumpling)", when the custom was brought to Japan. In Japan, there are various regions that hold "Tsukimi" on August 15, and on September 13 of the lunar calendar. However, in China they do not have a custom of holding "Tsukimi" on the night of September 13. This is most likely an original Japanese custom.

By the way, strictly speaking, the moon is not always full on the night of the 15th. In the summer, the weather changes but in autumn it is stable and it brings clear air. Therefore, in autumn it is a suitable season for enjoying the beautiful moon. It is considered the reason why "Tsukimi" has been fixed on August 15.

There is an old tale in Japan, "The Tale of the Bamboo-Cutter (Taketori Monogatari)" and it has something to do with "The night of the 15th." There lived an elderly man who cut bamboo for a living. He went into the hills and fields to gather bamboo, and made various tools with it. One day when he went into the woods as usual, he found a unique piece of bamboo. When he cut the bamboo, a beautiful little girl appeared. The elderly man and his wife named her "Kaguyahime", and looked after her well. Kaguyahime grew up to be a beautiful woman and was asked for her hand in marriage by 5 young noblemen. Since she was a princess who had come from the moon, she went back to the moon on the night of the 15th. The author of the tale is unknown. It is said that the tale was written in the Heian era. Ancient people may have read this sort of tale and learned to enjoy Tsukimi.

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學生們來自唯一的國家級營養科學與政策學院，其學生將到昆士小學教導小學生城市空間的可持續園藝。

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Grilling under the moonlight

By Chieni

Where I come from, summer time is the season for barbeques. And the holiday that is devoted to grilling food is the all-American, patriotic, Independence Day. Nothing to me is more American than searing meat over hot coals on the 4th of July. Here in Taiwan, BBQ season comes much later. The holiday where families gather around a charcoal grill flipping chicken wings, taro cakes, and pork kebabs while wiping off beads of sweat and swatting away mosquitoes is the Moon Festival, also called Mid Autumn Festival. Like all other Chinese holidays, this day involves being with your families and friends and eating lots and lots of food. If eating were an Olympic sport, the Taiwanese would win the gold medal hands down.

When I lived in Taiwan as a child, the foods associated with the Moon Festival were moon cakes and pomelos. At some point in the past 20 years, however, this day became all about barbeques. For people of Chinese descent, however, his triumph was an enormous step for the history of mankind. For people of Chinese descent, however, his triumph dispelled a centuries-old legend about Chang’e living on the moon. Still, my grandparents always said that just because Armstrong didn’t find her doesn’t mean she isn’t there. For the Moon Festival this weekend, if you look closely enough, you can see shadows on the moon, and one of them just might be Chang’e hanging out there, having saved the people of China from an oppressive ruler for an eternity.

When Neil Armstrong walked on the moon, it was an enormous step for the history of mankind. For people of Chinese descent, however, his triumph dispelled a centuries-old legend about Chang’e living on the moon. Still, my grandparents always said that just because Armstrong didn’t find her doesn’t mean she isn’t there. For the Moon Festival this weekend, if you look closely enough at the full moon, you just might see a shadow of a woman. Every year I swear I can almost see her.

Photos: Outdoor barbeques are a popular way to celebrate the Mid-Autumn Festival in Taiwan.

The Cambodian Water Festival

The Cambodian Water Festival (variously spelled in the original Khmer as Bon Om Touk, or Bon Om Thook, or Bon Om Teuk, or Bon Om Tuk) takes place once a year, on the full moon of the Buddhist month of Kadeuk (usually in November). It celebrates a major natural occurrence: the reversing flow between the Tonle Sap and the Mekong River.

For most of the year, the Tonle Sap empties into the Mekong River. However, when the rainy season arrives in June, the Mekong rises, reversing the flow to dump water into the lake, increasing its size ten-fold. When the rainy season ends in November, the Mekong drops once more, allowing the current to reverse again, emptying the excess waters of Tonle Sap back into the Mekong. This natural occurrence is celebrated in Cambodia with three days of festivals, fluvial parades, boat races, fireworks, and general merriment.

An Ancient Thanks to the River

As Bon Om Touk dates back to the 12th century, to the time of the Angkorian King Jayavarman VII. The Water Festival was celebrated by the King’s Navy to kick off the Cambodian fishing season - the fluvial festivities are meant to keep the river divinities happy, ensuring a bountiful harvest of rice and fish for the year to come.

A competing story holds that Bon Om Touk was a way for the King to prepare his navy for battle. At Bayon near Siem Reap, naval battles have been carved into the stonework, depicting boats not that much different from the boats that race on Tonle Sap today.
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