Students to distribute safety alarms for Asian American elderly

By Shira Laucharoen

Police sergeant Stephen Moy said that the fear of crime is more debilitating than the crime itself. In light of attacks against Asian American elderly that have been happening across the country, a group of students are taking matters into their own hands. The youth will be partnering with the Boston Police Department and three senior houses around Chinatown to distribute alarm devices to Asian American seniors. Cindy Ho, her sons Ryan and Kyle Ho, as well as friends Justin Mok, Alexander McKay, and Brendan Szeto held a fundraiser and ordered approximately 700 devices, which will be handed out at the Chinatown Gate.

“Seeing all the Asian hate crimes across America, and knowing that I have my own 88-year-old grandmother, I wanted to find a way to help elderly in the Asian American community in Boston, so that none of these hate crimes could occur, to combat them,” said Ryan. “After brainstorming ideas, I saw that a family friend in New York actually had done this already. I gathered a few of my friends here, and we decided to make it and adapt it to Boston. We really wanted to find a way to provide a sense of safety and security for the elderly Asian American community.”

The team launched a GoFundMe page in April and were able to raise $4,000 in one weekend. They met mostly virtually to coordinate, communicating over Zoom and also texting about their ideas. According to Ryan, the alarm is a battery powered device, and when you hit a button on it, it sets off a loud sound that will startle an attacker and alert others around if the user is being harassed. The alarms will also be handed out at senior housing sites, Quincy Tower, and buildings on Stuart Street and Tremont Street. The friends said that they have encountered casual instances of racism before and do have some anxieties about the kinds of hate crimes that could happen in Boston. See page 4, Safety Alarms.

Immigrants’ Day speakers say no recovery without immigrants

By Shira Laucharoen

On May 4, the Massachusetts Immigration and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA) held its 25th annual Immigrants’ Day at the State House, as a virtual speaking program, followed by regional roundtables.

Present at the talk were Mayor Kim Janey, Senate President Pro Tempore William Brownsberger, Representative Ruth Balse, and two leaders of MIRA member organizations, Dalida Rocha, political director of Service Employees International Union Local 615, and Gabriel Camacho, political director of United Food and Commercial Workers Union Local 1445. The unifying theme at the presentation was the idea that no recovery can happen without immigrants.

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Boston
Our Tables Are Set
EAT UP AT ALLINCLUSIVEBOS.COM
Pew Research: the changing demographics of Asian Americans

By Jun Li

On Thursday, April 29, the Pew Research Center held an online panel discussing recent changes in Asian American demographics.

The panel, which was moderated by Janelle Wong — a professor of American studies at the University of Maryland — began with two presentations covering newly-discovered data about Asian Americans.

Neil Ruiz, the associate director of race and ethnicity research at the Pew Research Center, primarily discussed how the COVID-19 pandemic impacted Asian Americans.

According to Ruiz, eight in 10 Asian Americans say violence against them in the U.S. is increasing. Additionally, nearly half of Asian Americans say they experienced an incident tied to their racial or ethnic background since the pandemic began.

“About a third feared someone might threaten or physically attack them, over a quarter [said] people acted as if they were uncomfortable around them, and also about a quarter have been subject to racial slurs or jokes,” Ruiz said.

Something Ruiz noted, however, is that racism against Asian Americans didn’t start because of the pandemic — even before COVID-19 became widespread, Asian Americans still faced discrimination.

“We see the same results as when we asked back in 2019, last June 2020 right in the beginning of the pandemic and now,” Ruiz said. “It’s virtually been the same.”

Additionally, Ruiz said Asian Americans are the largest growing ethnic group within America.

A report published after the panel went further into detail on the changing demographics of Asian Americans.

“Six origin groups – Chinese, Indian, Filipino, Vietnamese, Korean and Japanese – accounted for 85% of all Asian Americans as of 2019,” the report wrote.

Furthermore, Ruiz said there were large disparities between each different ethnic group, differences that most Americans tend to ignore, thanks to the model minority myth.

“When you look at Asian Americans as a whole, you see that the median household income of all Asian Americans is about $88,000,” Ruiz said. “People think, ‘Oh, that’s great, they’re doing well,’ but actually, when you disaggregate [the data], you see that Indian Americans may have a high household income of $199,000, but Burmese Americans have a much lower income [$44,000].”

Russell Jeung, a professor of Asian American studies at San Francisco State University, added on to Ruiz’s data with his own findings on racism against Asian Americans.

Jeung found that the most common form of discrimination was verbal harassment or name calling, which about 68% of respondents reported experiencing.

Jeung said the reason why Asian Americans have faced increased discrimination since the start of the pandemic is thanks to the yellow peril stereotype.

“This all harks back to the yellow peril, the perpetual foreigner stereotype that Asian are a threat and an outside threat,” Jeung said. “I think this perpetual foreigner stereotype is really operative, much more than the model minority stereotype.”

“People aren’t hitting our grandparents because they think they’re so smart,” Jeung said. “They’re attacking us because they think we don’t belong.”

All the racism Asian Americans have had to endure has brought drastic consequences to their mental health, Jeung said. There has been a 155% increase in depression, 94% increase in stress and 93% increase in anxiety among Asian Americans during the pandemic.

Additionally, Asian Americans report that their number one concern during the pandemic has not been the disease itself but rather something else: racism.

“Asian Americans are more concerned about racism than they are about a pandemic that has killed half a million people,” Jeung said.

And because of the pandemic, Jeung said over 233,000 Asian-owned businesses have been forced to close, and Asian Americans currently have the second highest unemployment rate in the U.S.

Finally, Jeung said the recent trend in anti-immigrant policies specifically targeting Asians points to anti-Asian hate becoming larger than just personal conflicts.

“It’s clear that the racism goes beyond interpersonal violence but has become institutionalized in our policies,” Jeung said.

While the data both Ruiz and Jeung have discovered about Asian Americans is helpful in painting a better picture on how demographics have shifted and how Asian Americans have faced an uptick in hate, the panelists acknowledged limitations in their methods.

Ruiz said that although Pew’s surveys were sent out in English, the hope is to do them in different languages in the future to gather a better variety of responses.

In a discussion with other panelists, Wong asked how the data on Asian Americans can be used and interpreted in other fields.

Naomi Underwood, executive director of the Asian American Journalists Association, commented on how the data covered in the panel was vital in aiding reporters on synthesizing and framing their data.

Lorna Randlett, the founder of Leaders Forum, also pointed out the importance of data in not just journalism but business as well.

“When you talk about important data, leaders want to be transformative,” Randlett said. “They want to make sure that they can make a difference, and that has to be grounded in empathy. The type of data that Pew [and Jeung are] providing that shows how these leaders can be empathetic is critical.”

Patricia Eng, the president and CEO of Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy, said she noticed specifically that a news outlet writing about increases in poverty and unemployment omitted data on Asian Americans, despite that data being included in the original set.

“When there is data, we are also invisibilized and marginalized,” Eng said. “It makes me think that it’s the model minority kicking in.”

The panel concluded with an audience question and answer session.

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For me, I feel safe when I am around Chinatown. But my dad works around restaurants as a repairman. A lot of those restaurants have been getting threatened, said Szeto. He added, “When my dad went to pick up dinner once, someone threatened him, while he was picking up the food. They said, ‘You caused this. You’re why we have to wear masks.”

According to Stephen Moy, sergeant of Boston Police Department’s District One Oversight Unit, “Throughout Chinatown, there is some crime in Chinatown, but the fear of crime is a more persistent and debilitating problem. He fears that the fear of crime itself will cause the alarms to help reduce anxieties. Moy said that he has not seen a serious hate crime against Asians in Boston yet, but he has seen, “the other thing – people in a store might bump into each other by accident and then someone throws a distasteful comment. I’ve seen a lot of that, but that doesn’t fall into hate crimes.” In the daytime, said Moy, things are “fairly fine,” with some people occasionally drinking in public. At nighttime, officer Steven Chen is positioned by the Chinatown Gate and Mary Soo Hoo Park, walking through Chinatown, beginning around Essex Street. Additionally, officer ZI Cao is stationed in a vehicle and takes many 911 calls. Moy said that he is hopeful about the distribution of the alarms.

“Anything positive wouldn’t hurt,” said Moy. “The extra layer of security wouldn’t hurt. What I don’t want happening is for elderly folks that have the alarm to have a false sense of security. That’s my fear. If you have any elderly Asian person who is walking, and they don’t have the capacity to yell or scream when they need help, and they have the alarm, it’s like a whistle. I think the extra layer is definitely a positive thing – anything extra we can do is great – but my biggest concern is that I don’t want folks to think that the moment they hit the button, they’re going to have a police officer right in front of them. That’s not the case. They have to do other things too, and that’s why we’re handing out cards to go with it. On the card, in Chinese and English, it will say, ‘make sure you know where you’re going at night. Make sure you’re aware of your surroundings. Make sure if you can travel in pairs, that you do that.’” Executive director of the Greater Boston Golden Age Center Ruthie Moy said that for now, many seniors are choosing to stay at home. While they may have been doing this because of the pandemic anyway, they are tuned into what has been happening across the country and are becoming more seriously cautious.

“We have not had any reports of seniors being attacked in any way. Some seniors just don’t go out,” said Moy. “They stay home. But they are aware of what’s happening. [...] Even going to the park, they’re very careful, because they’re afraid that something might happen. So they don’t stay out long.”
On April 25, the 93rd Academy Awards (Oscars) made history as having the “most diverse acting slate ever” according to Variety. For the first time ever, several Asian artists were nominated and won awards, in the categories Best Actor, Best Supporting Actor, Best Actress, and Best Director.

The Oscars have made claims and promises of being more diverse by 2025 as part of its Academy Aperture 2025 initiative. Some critics say that their efforts towards including more AAPI faces and diversity is driven by American audiences looking for more diversity and the need to satisfy and draw in international investors. Regardless of the reason, there is a need and market for authentic stories that encompass a larger audience. However, there is still a long way to go before proper representation is achieved on the big screen.

The list of Asian nominees in major categories for the 2021 Oscars are the following:

- Best Director Award - Chloe Zhao (Nomadland)
- Best Supporting Actor Award - Youn Yuh-Jung
- Best Supporting Actress Award - Younsik, the grandmother, in “Minari.”
- Best Actor Nominee - Lee Isaac Chung (Minari)
- Best Actress Nominee - Hye-jean Yeo (Minari)
- Best Original Song Award - “Fight for You” (Judas and the Black Messiah)
- Best Feature Film Nominee - Derek Tsang (Better Days)

For this reason, “Minari” has received widespread praise for its depiction of a Korean American family who moved to an Arkansas farm in search of their American Dream. The immigrant story is based on “Minari” director Lee Isaac Chung’s own story. Last year’s Best Director Award recipient, Bong Joon-ho also praised the film. Bong said in an interview with Variety, “I think it takes a lot of courage to shoot a film about yourself or your family, since it’s autobiographical.”

While the film has been nominated for several categories, this year’s Best Supporting Actress Award was given to Youn Yuh-Jung for her role as Soonja, the grandmother, in “Minari.” At 73-years old, she is the first Asian woman to win an Oscar since 1957. This is also the first time for a Korean actor to win in the acting categories. While “Parasite” won Best Picture and Best Director last year, none of its actors were nominated for the acting categories.

The Oscars have made claims and promises of being more diverse by 2025 as part of its Academy Aperture 2025 initiative. Some critics say that their efforts towards including more AAPI faces and diversity is driven by American audiences looking for more diversity and the need to satisfy and draw in international investors.

Regardless of the reason, there is a need and market for authentic stories.
Massachusetts Advisory Committee speakers give testimonies on racism and hate crimes

By Shira Laucharoen

On May 6, the Massachusetts Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights held a web conference on hate crimes against Asian American and Pacific Islander individuals. Speakers shared personal experiences of racism and addressed the rise in attacks on API people, with the intention of confronting xenophobia and anti-Asian sentiment in Massachusetts.

“As you can see, violence against Asian Americans, racism, and xenophobia are not new phenomena,” said Bora Chiemruom, executive director of the Massachusetts Asian American Commission. “They have been part of American history for centuries, and we have seen them manifest against different Asian American and Pacific Islanders communities in many ways, over the years. As the coronavirus escalated, we have seen more harassment, discrimination, and even violence directed at these communities. For me, I was lucky, but for other women, luck is not enough.”

Lissette Le, executive director of the Vietnamese American Initiative for Development, spoke to the plight of Asian nail salon workers, who are in the same industry as the spa workers who were targeted in the Atlanta, Georgia attack. This population experiences a number of vulnerabilities, she said.

“To be a nail salon worker, you work at the intersection of race, gender and class. You work in the service industry, often an invisible one. For our community, the nail salon industry is one where it’s easy to access a job, because you’re hiring your own. You don’t really need that much English,” said Le. “On the flip side, many workers have experienced racial slurs, had customers threaten to talk to their bosses – which is code for, if a customer gets mad at you, you will lose your job. If you’re not a citizen in this country or you’re here on a green card, or you’re undocumented, [and] about 30% of the immigrant community in MA are undocumented Asians, you’re not going to risk that. So you will make yourself invisible. You will simply just work every day.”

Alvina Yeh, executive director of the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, outlined ways of responding to incidents of anti-Asian violence.

“What our communities really need is to invest in long term solutions that address the root causes of violence and hatred against Asian communities,” said Yeh. “Short term solutions to address violent incidents can include funds to make sure that incidents can be reported anonymously and in language, to provide support for survivors and families and friends of victims of violence, to create bystander and ally trainings to empower the community to respond safely when possible, to fund and support restorative justice programs, instead of focusing on punitive measures that do nothing to help the immediate victims of incidents... Long term structural investments we can make include...”
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After careful consideration and an abundance of caution, the City of Boston has decided to cancel the in-person application distribution period. If you cannot complete the application online, please call us at 617-209-5445 to request that we mail you one and to ask for any support or guidance you might need to complete the application.

We will be holding two virtual informational meetings on: May 27, 2021 at 12 PM and June 10, 2021 @ 5 PM through the following link: https://bit.ly/cotevillageTH

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New volunteer program may bring security to Chinatown seniors

By Carey Lin

While the Greater Boston area has not yet seen many reported violent incidents, the increased frequency of vicious anti-Asian crimes in cities and towns across the United States has left Asian residents around Chinatown Boston in a state of unease. For some, this growing threat unfortunately extends to their visit to the hospital for needed appointments and regular check-ups,” said Michael Tanoff, MD, Interim President and CEO of Tufts Medical Center. “We are grateful to the AACA for launching this simple, yet innovative program to help our valued patients and friends in the community ensure that they can attend appointments safely, while building new relationships.”

To help senior and other at-risk Asian residents around Chinatown Boston unite against fear caused by anti-Asian racism, the Asian American Civic Association (AACA) is bringing together organizations and individuals across Chinatown to launch a new community service program - AACA’s Bayara program, Buddy Guards for Chinatown.

Volunteers from the program accompany seniors from their homes to the store, to medical appointments, or other stops around Chinatown, giving seniors the comfort of having strength in numbers.

“AACA is committed to supporting our community. There are many organizations that have stepped up to help Asians around Greater Boston during these difficult times. The reality though is an individual by themselves, even with tools or training, is still very vulnerable. There is the old Chinese proverb – You cannot clap with just one hand. (孤掌難鳴) We need to come together as a community,” said Edward Hsieh, Chief Operating Officer of AACA.

AACA has volunteer support from the Eastern Kung Fu Federation of New England, a historical association founded in 1977 by local schools like Gin Soon Tai Chi Chuan Federation and Wah Lum Kung Fu Athletic Association, and from student clubs at Boston University and Boston College. AACA will also be granting work release time to its own employees to encourage them to give back directly to the community.

“I believe this volunteer program is a great opportunity for organizations to get together and give back to the community. We need to come together in support for our elders. I’m really looking forward to seeing more massive events across schools and Chinatown organizations come together to show solidarity and promote safety and well-being together,” says Sifu Jing Wu on behalf of the Eastern Kung Fu Federation. An AACA coordinator will schedule volunteers into time slots. Residents of the Golden Age Center and patients from the South Cove Community Health Center will contact the AACA coordinator to make reservations for volunteers to meet with the resident or patient. Other appreciative residents around Chinatown will be able to access the program by calling in to the coordinator or by filling out an appointment form on the AACA website.

“By matching seniors with volunteers, the seniors can feel safer taking a walk outside in Chinatown, whether that’s down to a grocery or over to Tufts for a vital medical appointment. Even more than the feeling of strength in numbers though, it is important that after this rough year, after this hiatus of banquets and shared activities, to bring people together in Chinatown,” said Mary Chin, Chief Executive Officer at AACA.

Press Release
South Cove x QARI: Fighting against AAPI Hate

May is Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, as we commemorate and celebrate, there is a much more urgent and pressing issue at hand that needs addressed: the hate against AAPIs.

As the premier Asian community health center of Massachusetts, QARI has a role in looking out for our community members and taking a stance. SCCHC condemns all the recent attacks and harassments against AAPIs stemmed from the pandemic and/or any other reasons or beliefs that have no place in this community or country.

Many organizations have stepped up to fight anti-AAPI racism, to do

See page 12, Fight Against AAPI Hate
What’s A Chop Suey Sundae?

The most popular item in the ear-
est Chinese restaurants in the U.S.
was chop suey, a mixture of meat and
vegetables in a brown sauce. The
origins of chop suey are murky but the
dish certainly had a strong impact. It was such
a popular term that it was even co-opted by others,
to apply to non-Chinese foods, such as the Chop
Suey Sundae.

A Chop Suey Sundae? Meat, vegetables and
a brown sauce over ice cream? No, this sundae
merely takes the name of that dish and none of the
usual ingredients are present. There are actually two different versions of the Chop Suey Sundae, one which is more of a drink and the other which is more of a dessert to eat.

The drink version was invented first, in 1903, but by 1904, the second version had also appeared, and both versions could be found all across the country. At this time, chop suey joints were hugely popular, so it was inev-
table others would try to capitalize on its popularity.

Although there were multiple newspaper references to the Chop Suey Sundae in the first half of 1903, a description wasn’t provided until the Plain Dealer (OH), July 26, 1903. The article stated, “Chop suey sundae is a great favorite, […] it has absolutely none of the ingredients in the Chinese preparation from which it takes its name nor is it eaten with a chopstick. It is a combination of dates, figs and nuts all flavored with a special mix-
ture of syrups and ices.” It was es-
sentially a soda fountain drink, and a new fad that quickly spread across the entire country.

More details were given in the Indianapolis Journal (IN), August 2, 1903, noting, “The ingredi-
ents of the real chop suey of Chinatown are not used in the chop suey sundae. The drink gets its name because it resembles chop suey in hue. It is, in fact, black—black as midnight. It might be called a nocturne.”

The writer watched as his server “…mixed together dates, figs, chocolate and soda water” and then com-
mented that “The drink, when it was finished, looked like some sort of ef-
fervescent ink.”

As a gimmick, the Daily Chroni-
cle, August 6, 1903, published an ad for Brown’s Drug Store, noting that “every lady” who bought a Chop Suey Sundae would receive a free pair of “genuine Chinese chopsticks,” al-
though you obviously couldn’t use the chopsticks for the fountain drink.

A different version, something to eat rather than drink, was first men-
tioned in The Cleveland Leader (OH), August 7, 1904. It stated, “Chop suey sundae are perhaps enjoying thewid-
est popularity of all of the new aspi-
rants for public favor in the ice cream line. One of these sundae is made by filling a glass with ice cream, pouring over the cream a syrup made of dates, figs, and maple syrup, and topping the whole with a sprinkling of chopped nuts.”

Over the years, both versions would continue to co-exist, although the sundae style would eventually be more dominant. The Detroit Times (MI), January 20, 1910, printed an
ad for a fancier version of the Chop Suey drink, using 8 different kinds of crushed fruit, with walnuts, almonds, pecans and filberts, all diluted with pure maple syrup.

The National Soda Fountain Guide (1913), by William S. Adkins, pro-
vided more information on the Chop Suey Sundae. It stated, “As the name indicates, these constitute various mixtures. Chopped dates, figs, and raisins make a good Chop Suey com-
bination. Place a scoop of ice cream in a cup and sprinkle it with the chopped fruit. Or mix the chopped fruits with a heavy syrup and pour over the ice

cream.” It then continued, “Chopped fruits are apt to get sticky and will work better with the addition of syrup. Chopped nuts of all sorts may be added to the Chop Suey mixtures; also sliced pineapple, candied fruits, shred-
ded coconut, preserved ginger, and almost any confection of this sort you care to use.”

The book also gave instructions on how to make a Chop Suey Double Sundae, “Take raisins, dates and figs, in equal quantities, chop them and mix with enough simple syrup of a heavy grade to permit the mixture to pour easily. This is the chop suey mixture.” After making this mixture, “Now place any two desired kinds of ice cream in the usual mounds on the serving dish. Pour a small ladle of the chop suey mixture in the space between the two mounds of ice cream. Top with a whole cherry or with a whole berry in season. Prepared co-
conut may also be introduced into the chop suey mixture, and a little candied ginger is added by some dis-
pensers.”

In addition, the book provided variations, including the Nut Chop Suey Double Sundae which added nuts instead of raisins. Plus, there were recipes for a Chop Suey Mousse and a Chop Suey Parfait. At some un-
known point, a few places started add-
ing chow mein noodles to their Chop Suey Sundae, although that was very rare during the first half of the 20th century.

If you want other Chop Suey Sun-
dae recipes, a quick search online will find plenty. And now that you know what it is, I suspect you’d like to eat one.
Documentary reveals Chinese immigrant history in segregated South

By Carey Lin

On May 4, the documentary “Far East Deep South” made its premiere on World Channel, kicking off Asian American Heritage Month. Unfortunately, on the same day, for Asian women - 63 years old and 85 years old - were stabbed at the bus stop in San Francisco.

This year’s Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) heritage month came after a year of increased and public Asian hate in the United States. More than ever, voices of the AAPI community as well as stories about immigrant experiences have been spotlighted as violence against Asians have spiked since the Atlanta Spa Shootings and other instances, calling to question the history of such hate and sentiment.

“Far East Deep South” is a documentary that follows Producer Baldwin Chin’s father Charles Chin in a journey that uncovers their lost family history and the racially complex experience of Chinese immigrants in the segregated South. Director and Producer Larissa Lam’s directorial debut, this insightful documentary unveils the impact of race-based immigration policies on their family and the sympathetic relationship they held with the black community during the Jim Crow era.

Lam and Chin spoke to Sampan about how the project began five years ago, the process, and how it prepared them for this time of increased anti-Asian hate crimes. Lam said, “I really felt like there was an absence of the history of Asians in American being one, documented and two, actually taught in classrooms and discussed in the public arena.”

The documentary includes a message, or postal mail SEB Housing, LLC, 257 Hillside Ave, Needham MA 02494. Free translation available Traducción gratuita disponible

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The lack of diverse representation of Asian and immigrant stories in the media has informed the way people of color have been treated. Lam identified that, “We still are not quite past the stereotypes and boxes of our people, or even creating new ones, like ‘Crazy Rich Asians’.”

Hence, their goal is to change that. “We’re really wanting to make sure that history, moving forward, is more inclusive of the Asian American experience,” said Lam. “We all learn about segregation, we all learn about the American South, but we want to make sure that we are now included in those stories when we’ve been kind of erased in the past and even beyond.”

The discrimination against Asians extends beyond the national borders of the U.S. In an interview with a Danish radio program, Lam and Chiu countered the global implications and interest in non-publicly discussing anti-Asian sentiment.

Lam said, “Ours isn’t the only story, so we hope there are other stories that are told, and people will make them and or seek them out because there have been a lot of stories that have been told in the past; they just didn’t get the widespread exposure. We really hope that this is a movement that continues to keep going.”
UMass Boston students honor deceased at Chinese burial ground

By Shira Laucharoen

On May 12, students from the University of Massachusetts Boston’s class, Boston’s Asian American Communities, met in person for the first time on a trip to visit the Chinese burial grounds at Mt. Hope Cemetery. Led by Professor Peter Kiang, the class visited the site in part to remember the lost lives of Asian American workers in the Atlanta shootings, while they also discussed the issues of injustice represented by the condition of the tombstones. In more ways than one, the cemetery is a symbol.

“This was such a year of loss,” said Kiang. “…It is a beautiful space. It is supposed to be a rest in peace space. But honestly, compared with the rest of the cemetery, [when it comes to] inequality [because of], race, language, culture, immigrant status, and money — there’s less status and recognition in this corner of the cemetery. No one can come here and not see it with their own eyes.” He added, “We are seeing inequality, historically, in the public cemetery in Boston, in relation to Asian American communities, in death, not just in life.”

According to Kiang, the Chinese immigrant burial grounds are a demon-stration of racialized segregation of Boston’s Chinese immigrants after their passing. The gravestones are notably smaller and simpler than those in the rest of the cemetery, and many are crumbling or deteriorating, gathering weeds. In an essay written by Kiang, he describes how the upkeep of the Chinese burial grounds are in many ways a reflection of the City’s historic attitudes towards Asian American immigrants.

“More importantly, though, the City’s obvious neglect of the public cemetery’s Chinese section mirrored the unequal levels of quality, care, and attention throughout the City’s racially segregated streets, schools, and neighborhoods. By the 1980’s, hundreds of the Chinese gravestones had eroded or been broken and displaced, due to vandalism and institutional disregard as well as the cumulative effects of harsh winter weather in Boston and the low-cost, poor quality of materials originally used for the stones,” writes Kiang.

In the past, Asian American Studies students, faculty, and alumni have participated in cleanup actions and documentation projects. Student Jaely Pereira spoke to the importance of honoring the memory of Chinese immigrants, many of whom have been “othered” through the segregation of the tombstones, and she said that she wondered whether the deceased have family members nearby to hold them in their thoughts and visit the site.

Tiani Feng, a teaching assistant in Kiang’s Introduction to Asian American Studies class, said that it is important to have the graves respected. “Maybe the people who are resting in peace here don’t even have families anymore in the US. Maybe they moved out of the US — we never know,” said Feng. “They have to be remembered. That is the reason why I come here, because I don’t want them to be forgotten.”

The students were excited to be convening in person for the first time.

Students paid their respects at Mt. Hope Cemetery.

Tran Do, who is not in the class but was visiting a friend, said that the pandemic and virtual learning have posed challenges for students, being unable to meet classmates or professors in person. Kira Mathiesen, who is a student in Kiang’s course, said that meeting up with the class was an uplifting chance for everyone to come together.

“We’re still able, as students, to connect and just pick it up, even though there was no starting point — there was a virtual one. Naturally, we were kind of all here for each other,” said Mathiesen. “[…]It’s refreshing.”

Pereira remarked on the tragic events that the country has born witness to and emphasized that people must continue to honor the lives of people of color, not only as a response to hate crimes or acts of discrimination.

“Especially with everything that’s happened this past year, it’s really important to recognize and uplift multiracial and interracial solidarity,” said Pereira. “[…] It’s important to not just honor after something happens or for a certain month but to uplift Asian American lives and experiences, as well as people of color’s lives and experiences, throughout the whole year, and it is important for communities of color to come together and honor each other’s lives and stories,” said Pereira.

Kiang said that many of the deceased at the burial ground were working class immigrants who died from tuberculosis, a disease that is similar in transmission to the coronavirus. Having a public cemetery where individuals can find a peaceful resting place is important, though the burial ground is linguistically, culturally, and racially segregated and suffers from a lack of attention.

“Many of the men who were here died of tuberculosis,” said Kiang, “without the family members, the support to have their bones returned to their home villages, where the proper recognition and accounting for their life and their generational representations and their linkage across generations would be taken care of. It’s not taken care of here, in general. And so we do our part.”

fight against aapi hate

continued from page 9

“Whistle Against AAPI Hate”

our part, we have teamed up with QARI and identified a group of particular vulnerability: the elders. The “Whistle Against AAPI Hate” campaign hopes to offer them protection and a peace of mind should they find themselves in a hostile situation.

The aim for this campaign is two-fold: first of all, to protect the elders and secondly — equally important, to encourage every single member of the community to be proactive in the fight against racism by stepping in when help is needed.

The whistle would be included in a clear bag with a silver whistle and a yellow lanyard. We encourage everyone to wear it but certainly hope that one would never have to use it.

This campaign would not have been possible without the creative input from QARI, we thank QARI and Philip Chong for spearheading the project and seeing it fruition. SCCHC has whistles available for distribution to all our elderly community members at all clinics and we pledge to have as many as it is needed.

Art, like travel, is a two-way lens. You look through it to see, to learn something new outside yourself, something about the world. And, like travel, art allows one to see something new within oneself.

The extraordinary Wang-go H. C. Weng exhibition currently at the MFA provides a refracted view of a privileged and productive life of its collector. This is a further reflection of the art of China particularly during the Ming and Qing dynasties. “Travel and Home” is beautifully curated, inviting you through the moon door into a serene exploration of the Weng’s impressive collection. It is a most intriguing time to experience this particular exhibition.

“Travel and Home” represents the product of six generations of scholars and artists, advisors to China’s highest courts, which may end with the recent passing of Wan-go H.C. Weng in December of 2020. One granddaughter enjoys the study of calligraphy, one of “the three perfections.” We can hope the brushstrokes she practices will trace a path luring her back through the generations’ of her family legacy and inspire her to carry grandfather’s work forward. Luckily, we need not wait to see how that story unfolds because we can enjoy an immersive experience at the MFA now.

In contemplating this exhibition, several themes emerge. Of course, the title of the exhibition itself, “Travel and Home,” is so relevant to us in this era of pandemic solitude. But this exhibition survived the Japanese invasion of China is no small miracle. Museum curator Kojiro Tomita, began corresponding with Weng in 1949, building a relationship which enabled Weng to feel the MFA was his museum and the perfect home for his collection. This relationship between a Japanese curator and a Chinese collector is, in itself, inspiring especially given the time in which it took shape.

Turning back to our exhibition, I spoke with Nancy Berliner, Wu Tung, Curatorial Research Associate, and Feier Ying, Curatorial Research Associate of Chinese Art. Their deep knowledge of and love for this collection was readily apparent. I asked each to tell me about a favorite item of theirs in from this exhibition.

Nancy mentioned “Boating under Autumn Moon.” She explained the handscroll was intimate by design, to be carried, unrolled to view or share. The moon leaps out over still waters and we can imagine ourselves on a river bank watching the moon rise or on the boat, on calm waters viewing that same moon.

Feier mentioned “Entering the City Gate,” where four panels, like an album, depict different regions – travel itself had become something of a regional competition, and visiting famous sites and collecting those experiences was highly valued then, as it is now. At home we long for travel, while traveling we have nostalgia for home.

The Literati followed the pursuit of the three perfections: calligraphy, painting, poetry; a person who could master these three was held in the highest esteem. Weng represents a bridge from the past to the current times, a published poet, an award-winning author, art scholar, a self-taught filmmaker, and a man who designed his own home including a classic moon door. Weng followed the generations of art scholars in his family, documenting with modern technology Asian art through film and photography.

In ancient Chinese art, paintings became evolving living documents, added to by subsequent generations. While the added embellishments or notations on these pieces have ended, we each have a chance to have something inscribed on our hearts as we contemplate these pieces. Like a calligrapher’s water brush strokes, a trace of that brush stroke lingers; can you feel it?

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Coronavirus and Travel: What You Should Know

At the Airport
U.S. airports sanitize public interfaces multiple times a day and provide hand sanitizer throughout airline ticket and boarding areas.
Major airlines require passengers to wear masks onboard and throughout the airports. Non-compliance may result in a ban from future flights.
Enhanced precautions during airport screening required by the TSA:
• putting personal items into carry-on bags
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On the Plane
Airlines augmented disinfection procedures, including rear-plane boarding to reduce close contact. Passengers and crew must wear masks while boarding and disembarking and during the flight.
Passengers are advised to wipe down the sitting area: seats, armrests and tray table. Wipe down touch screen and controls before and after use.
If anybody around you is sick, get off the airplane.

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Providers are offering steep discounts on travel packages.
Temporary reissues on change or cancellation penalties to allay travel concerns have been introduced— including allowing no fee changes and cancellations on new bookings.

The CDC’s No Sail order for cruise lines has been lifted, replaced with a Conditional Sailing Order.
Hotel chains have also loosened cancellation policies, waiving change and cancellation fees normally applied to nonrefundable rates.

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May 21, 2021
SAMPAN

Exploring our world and selves: MFA Travel and Home exhibition

By Jacqueline Church

The Weng Family Collection of Chinese Painting: Travel and Home exhibition currently at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, is beautifully curated, inviting you through the moon door into a serene exploration of the Weng’s impressive collection. It is a most provocative exhibition, the second from The Weng Family Collection of Chinese Painting: Travel and Home exhibit, the third from The Weng Family exhibition currently at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. May 21, 2021

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