



INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF
ASIAN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATORS

Elaine Wang

Assistant Town Manager

Town of Barre, VT

JOIN I-NAPA IN CELEBRATING
WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH



"Has being a woman helped develop or influence your leadership perspective or style?"



"Definitely. It wasn't always that way, though. I've always been a bit of a tomboy, and when I started in the workforce, I didn't want to go along with feminine norms, especially when women are so often discriminated against in the workplace. Then, in my last job I made frequent trips to China. I was there to work on climate change issues, and since I was in a culture not my own, I was willing to do whatever it took for the cause, even act more feminine if it would help. But like here, some types of "feminine" can work against you professionally there. Like I said, it wasn't my culture so I asked my cousin who was living there at the time what successful women leaders in China were like. She said, "wise, strict mothers." And not only was that an identity that I value in anyone, I could see myself in it. I'm not a mother but the older I get, the more nurturing I am inclined to be. Since then I've often reflected on the wise, strict mother archetype and use it to shape and evaluate my behavior. If it resonates with you too, I'd invite you to try it on and see what it means for you."



"In your current position, what makes for a really good day at work?"

"Understanding the root cause of a problem is deeply satisfying to me. When I get to understand why a problem came about that's a really good day. And understanding the root cause is usually the key to solving it, which then makes a great day."



"What do you like to do for fun?"

"In my job I'm often in an office. I don't mind that, but being outside is definitely important to me. I can see why people talk about 'nature deficit disorder' – I can feel how much it refreshes me to, say, walk my commute instead of drive it. So related to that, for fun I love foraging for mushrooms, especially in the woods. It gets me outside, to take time to admire the natural world up close, and to breathe in those fresh forest smells. I also love eating mushrooms, and foraging them means you get them for free!"

