

HAA Docents'

Newsletter

September 2008

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NEW EVALUATION CARD

August 8, 2008, email from Betsy Robb

We are starting to use a new online system for evaluations. It is called Survey Monkey.

We have printed small business cards for you. The top of the card says: EVALUATE US! When you give a tour, please fill out the card. You can hand this card to the teacher, or adults in your tour group. This will work for all kinds of tours. The back of the card is blank so you can write art information, your contact info, love notes, etc.

The card directs them to a new page on our website. Here they can click on the appropriate evaluation (adult tour, teacher evaluation, ambassador tour evaluation or student evaluation form). The contact person for scheduled tours will also receive a thank you email with the link to the evaluation page.

EVALUATE US!

We value your opinion!
Please help us better our programs
by completing our online evaluation which can be found at
www.honoluluacademy.org/evaluations

Docent: _____
Tour: _____
Date: _____

Honolulu Academy of Arts 

When they complete the form, the information will be stored for review. This information can be sorted by docent name and sent along to you, or sorted by tour type and used for grants or guidance for future programming.

I hope you like the Survey Monkey system, - I do!

I think having all these little monkeys helping us will be so great. We will also be greener – using less paper – and more efficient since we no longer have to write or print out each evaluation form.

STAFF ASSIGNMENTS IN THE MLC

Excerpt from Betsy Robb's 8/25/08 email

Administrative Assistant, Sabrina, moves upstairs to join the Director of Communication on September 18. In order to help ease budget strains that the Academy is feeling in this uncertain economy, she will not be replaced at this time. The amazing news is that all the MLC staff members have stepped up to assume each part of Sabrina's position. Help for front - dial 3660

Maikai: Family Programs 532-3681

Scheduling tours & phone calls (general education phone calls 532-8726)
Scheduling and confirming school and adult tours
Handle Xerox issues, reports.

Aaron: Exhibition Design, Art Studio, and New Docent Training 532-8721

Docent tour scheduling email to docents @honoluluacademy.org (Betsy also assists here)
Schedule Docents for open tour slots & changes
Tally docent records
Keep track of Docent Vacations
Publish Docent roster, handbook, evaluation cards

Kita: Education Resource Coordinator 532-8728

Website, information, lecture room, routes

Website updates for Docent website
Distribute label information
Tour routes for school tours

Erin: School and Ambassador Programs 532-8792

Specific school programs
Ambassador Program tour and ambassador scheduling
Oversee School programs – AEP, MEP schedule
Provide tour passes at the front (Docents will take them to distribute to teachers)

Ginger: Shangri La Assistant 532-3623

Volunteers and in-house Communication
Schedule Volunteers for Gallery 30, 31, and special public events (lectures, etc)
Office supplies, MLC Function sheets, school tour thank you/evaluation emails
Send tour calendar to front desk, Tally tour records for reports

Carolyn: Shangri La Manager 532-3624

Financial and Clerical
Collect and deposit revenue for programs

HOW DO I SIGN UP FOR TOURS?

Docents communication to sign up or schedule tours with the MLC will now go through the email – docents@honoluluacademy.org - which goes directly to Aaron and Betsy. Non-computer docents phone Aaron or Betsy.

Need help at the front desk?

Dial extension 3660

Sick the morning of a tour?

Dial 532-3660 (leave a message)

Running late but will be there

Dial the front desk 532-8700

LETTER FROM DOCENT COUNCIL CHAIR, CATHY LEVINSON

At our May Luncheon, **Ernestine Tabrah** advised that we needed to update the Bylaws' wording of our Nomination and Election process. Ernestine and the Nominating Committee (**Myra Kent, Carolyn Whitney and James Marsh**) have done a beautiful job thinking through and finding the best wording. As others have discovered, one thing leads to another. When this process is complete we will email the proposed changes to you, post them in the Docent Room, and include a hard copy with the mailed invitation to the Wednesday, December 10' Holiday Lunch at Oahu Country Club. The vote to ratify the proposed revisions to our by laws will begin there.

We are working with the Guild to co-host a Tour and Tea of the *Literati Modern* exhibition in Gallery 28 on Thursday, November 13. Five docents will give tours to the Guild members from 2:30-3:30 pm.

The new school year has begun and is off to a good start. See you at the social time before the Last Monday's Continuing Education presentation!

REMEMBERING TOSHIKO NISHIDA

Sue Tetmeyer learned that **Toh Nishida** died on June 13, 2008. Toh was a very active docent at one time. She became ill in the mid-1990's and has been in poor health ever since. Docents in Sue's class of 1991 and earlier will definitely remember her. Toh's husband, Chad, comes to the Academy quite often and has lunch at the Café.

Sue especially remembers Toh's special iced tea, called Toh's Tea, which she brought to docent council meetings. **Carolyn Whitney**, Sue's co-chair at the time for the Docent Newsletter, found their article with Toh's recipe:

“After we received numerous requests from docents who attended the April council meeting, Toh Nishida agreed to let us publish her recipe for the iced tea, which was so widely acclaimed.

“Place 8-10 tea bags and 2 cups of water in a quart jar. Cover and put the jar out in the sun and allow the tea to brew. (If you don't have a sunny spot to brew your tea, you can use boiling water and allow the tea to brew indoors.)

“Remove tea bags from the jar and add 1/2 cup sugar, 1/2 cup pineapple juice, and 1/2 cup freshly squeezed lime juice. Adjust to taste.

“Crush ice (sufficient for 8 to 10 cups). Place ice in a punch bowl or other serving container. Pour tea mixture over the ice. Add one (1) handful of crushed fresh mint leaves. Stir and enjoy! (Editorial note: It's better than any “club tea!”)

Secretary **Marilyn Smith** sent a card, on behalf of the docents, to Toh's surviving spouse, Mr. Chad Nishida at 1080 S. Beretania Street #501, Honolulu HI 96814

CHRISTMAS SCHOOL TOURS REPLACED

August 25, 2008 Betsy Robb

The Academy has decided to make a shift in programming for this school year that is very exciting and helps us with the workload. Due to the tremendous success of last year's *Creatively Christmas* Program with Elfie, we will offer last year's program as a public program for families this holiday season rather than as a school program. The program will be offered December 3, 6, 7, 14, 20, 21, and 23.. This program will be free with admission.

Although the school groups are a part of the Academy tradition, we believe that offering this program for children and their families/parents is a beautiful gift to the community for this joyous season. We will need docent support to handle these public events as families come to visit the museum over the holiday. We hope that many of you will consider assisting Elfie with the groups, provide support with spotlight tours in the Nativity galleries for the families. I realize that it is a big change from the past, but it fits the best for this year and it is a wonderful opportunity for the community to experience Christmas at the Academy.

NOTES

CLASS OF 2008 DONATES FUNDS

The class of 2008 picked up the slack in a HAA budget shortage. Their donation will cover the cost of bins to be placed at the front entrance for school groups' lunches. **MAHALO!**

LOTUS BLOSSOMS REAPPEAR IN THE CHINESE GARDEN



Seiji and Betsy Sakata are the gracious donors of the beautiful lotus plants recently enriching our Chinese Courtyard tours. Learning of the buzz of excitement among docents as they talk about the sighting of each new bloom, Betsy Sakata understood that joy as she relates that lotus cultivation has become a very rich experience for her husband, Seiji Sakata.

Photo: Chinese Garden, August 26, 2008

NEW ALLERTON LIBRARY HOURS Tuesday – Saturday – 2:30 – 4:00
Ron Chapman is available through email (rchapman@honoluluacademy.org) or 532-8754.

SUGGESTION BOX IN THE DOCENT ROOM

Here's a way of suggesting improvements, asking questions or making a statement. Any docent can use a blank paper or the form, "Docent Request for Information from Academy Staff" found under the Suggestion Box. The Docent committee will check the box often and route the suggestions to the appropriate person(s) or to Betsy if it relates to Academy staff or administration. *Pam Honbo*

GALLERY CLOSINGS /OPENINGS

Gallery 28 <i>One Way or Another</i> closed 8/28	reopens 9/11 <i>Literati Modern</i>
Gallery 27 <i>Shu</i> closed 9/2	reopens 10/2 <i>American Abstraction</i>
Gallery 20 Taisho Kimono closed 10/6	reopens 10/9 <i>Magic of Japan</i>
Gallery 21 <i>Blue and White</i> closes 10/6	reopens 10/9 <i>Lange Conservation Exhibition</i>
Gallery 22 <i>Batik</i> last day 10/12	reopens 10/20 Kapa
Gallery 14 <i>Vogue in Japan</i> last day 10/19	reopens 10/30 <i>Lane Floating World</i>
Gallery 9 and 10 open	Impressionists
Gallery 9 Graphic Cabinet #3	reopens 10/23 <i>Face to Face</i> , photography

DOCENT WEBSITE NOTES

Our docent website at www.haaedu.org has an enormous amount of useful information for us. Once at the website, click on

<i>Announcements</i>	and you find copies of important messages
<i>Current Exhibitions</i>	shows an image from and summary of current exhibitions
<i>Upcoming Exhibitions</i>	gives a preview of new shows to come
<i>Procedures & Protocol</i>	shows docent matters from evaluation forms to by-laws
<i>Tour Information</i>	is followed by details of new tour formats – a must see
<i>Docent Council</i>	posts meeting minutes and other docent business
<i>Education Department</i>	features the staff and their jobs, include new duties
<i>Continuing Education</i>	shows updated calendar of scheduled training sessions
<i>Labels</i>	stores labels, newest exhibitions to old favorites (ie100 Geese)
<i>Tour Schedule</i>	our most important click – explained below

TOUR SCHEDULE IS PASS WORD PROTECTED –how do we get in?

Go to <http://www.haaedu.org/> Click on the words **Tour Schedule** at the bottom of the list
Look for “*Docents*”

To view the current tour schedule [click here](#)” Click on the phrase **click here**.

A box appears that requires you type in a user name and password so:

For User Name, type in the address: **docents@honoluluacademy.org**

For Password, type in the word: **docents** and click on the words **Log In**

NEW TOUR FORMATS

ANIMALS IN ART – Education staff presented a new hour and a half *Animals in Art* tour. The tour is divided into 20 minute segments. There are activities to present in galleries one and five and a request that animal classification be mentioned during the tour. Confused? Me too. Go to the docent web page for the details of docent responsibilities and helpful hints. We can also view what the teachers learn about this tour. Go to www.haaedu.org and click on Tour Information and then under the title *Animals in Art* click on Docent Guide. Hard copies of the materials can also be found in the tours binder in the Docent Room under *Animals in Art*.

COLONIAL AMERICA – Imagine having enough time to include all you wanted in the Colonial tour. Now we have a two hour tour that flows counter clockwise in 40 minute segments. If you start in Gallery 12, after 40 minutes you move to the loom and clothing rooms where the children are split into two groups so half can weave while the other half try on clothing and then switch at a mid point. Finally the tour ends with the last 40 minutes in the fireplace room. If you start in the fireplace room you move to gallery 12 and then back to the loom room for the last 40 minute segment. If you start in the loom room for 40 minutes, you go to the fireplace room for the next 40 minutes and then to Gallery 12. There is an activity for Gallery 12 that is already planned for us. Go to www.haaedu.org and click on Tour Information and then on the various docent guides under the Colonial America heading. The material on the computer is also in the Colonial America binder in the docent room.

TREASURES – This is a combination of our old Treasures and Highlights tours. It is an hour and a half tour that includes Penelope, Monet, a Chinese landscape and a woodblock print. It allows time for other favorite choices to fill our four 22 minute segments. We are asked to discuss a Chinese landscape using a kit of painting tools available in the gallery and compare Chinese landscape with Impressionist painting. There are other activities suggested in the fine materials presented on our docent web page. Follow the web page directions for *Animals* or *Colonial America* Tour Information and scroll to the bottom of the page for the Treasures heading. Also see the Tours Binder in the docent room

DOCENT NEWSLETTER ARTICLE GUIDELINES

The Docent Newsletter is a publication of the Docent Council. The next issue of the Docent Newsletter will be published in December 2008. Docents are invited to submit unformatted articles to the Newsletter Editor, Anna Hoover, by mail or e-mail tahoov@earthlink.net by the end of November. Articles should focus on topics of interest to all docents and should not duplicate material available in Calendar News or on the Docent website.

Articles may be edited for length and content. There is no guarantee that a submitted article will be published. Articles that are not published will be placed in a binder in the docent room for reference.

Adapted from the Summer 2002 Docent Newsletter

DOCENT PHOTOS AND BIOS

We loved the photos and bios of the new docent class so this year let's capture all the other docents. This is the first installment. Docents were photographed as they were attending to docent activities and most bios were found in past newsletters.

Eleanor Jameson, class of 1983, began her interest in art when she was in high school in San Francisco. When she would go to Golden Gate Park for concerts at intermission she would visit the DeYoung Museum and never get back to the concert. Eleanor graduated with a Business Administration degree from the University of Alabama. Her family traveled widely and her choice at each stop was to visit temples, churches, and museums until her father said, "No more." Eleanor lived in Mexico for a year and another time she and her dad visited every Central American country including a 4-month stay in Panama. In 1978 she made her first trip to China - that was before normalization - as a girl guide with the Chinese Friendship Association. She's made a few trips to Europe with a month in Spain and Portugal and five weeks in Turkey. No wonder she asked if she could start a Docent Travel Committee. She says she really, really enjoys working with the children. It's like waking a bird when their curiosity is roused.



David Andrew, class of 2002. "At Williams College '58 I was able to take several art history courses while majoring in history and doing premed requisites. This stimulated my life long interest in art, and after medical school and internship at Johns Hopkins, U.S Army medical Corps at Schofield barracks, residency at the University of Minnesota, I practiced pulmonary medicine for 31 years at Straub Clinic. The first Monday after I retired in Sept 2000, I started the Docent Training course, opening my eyes to the stimulating world of the magnificent collection at HAA. Leading tours, especially to school children, allows me to continue to give something back to our community."



Nelly Baers Bright, class of 1994, a graduate of the New York School of Interior Design, was associated with Knoll International as a contemporary designer before moving to Hawaii. She was born in Lebanon and has traveled extensively. She entered the docent program wanting to learn more about art and at the same time benefit her community



Lois Taylor Clarke, class of 1994, is retired and was a feature writer for the Honolulu Star-Bulletin for many years. She became a docent to join a volunteer project that offers a chance to learn as well as to add information and enjoyment of the arts to museum visitors. She was born in San Francisco, studied journalism at UC Berkeley, and moved to Honolulu after her marriage to Stanley Taylor. She has four grown children.



Cecilia Doo, class of 1999, was born in Honolulu and graduated from Roosevelt High School (Dora Chang was a classmate) and UH College of Education. She was crowned Narcissus Queen and Miss Statehood. She married Gene and they moved to Philadelphia for Gene's medical school. Then they lived in York, Pennsylvania, and then Columbus, Ohio, while he furthered his training and they started their family. They came home in 1970 where she did the buying for children for their family retail business. They both come from large close families and Cecilia loves the time spent with family. They traveled abroad with their children every year and now enjoy tours together. She is an Academy Trustee.



Mary Flynn, class of 1999, was born in Wisconsin and lived there on a farm until she saw Elvis Presley in "Blue Hawaii" and moved to Honolulu in 1967. Instead of marrying a tall dark exotic looking man, her dream husband, Jim Saari, is a blond Finn, also from the Midwest and not as tall as she. Being a science major with no time for art electives, she went into various health care fields, including medical technology, public health administration and pathology. Officially retired, she does some part-time for at the C&C of Honolulu Department of the Medical Examiner. Pathologists study the effects of diseases and injury on the body, so learning about art and giving tours in an environment so steeped in beauty provides a nice balance to life.



Nicki Foster, class of 1999, was in the first class to have two years of docent training. As for life before docenting? She grew up on the mainland, navy towns, art major, Stanford; after graduation, editorial staff, Star-Bulletin, where she had the nerve, she says, to write some rather opinionated art reviews with the confidence and conviction of a 20 something. Looking back, she wonders what the artists thought. Later, after a second career in photography on staff at Sea Life Park and Waimea Falls Park she retired. Her youngest has said she and her husband are "coasters," but, she responds, docents don't coast, do they?



Hannelore Herbig, class of 1996, was born and raised in Germany. She was a schoolteacher there and taught at a teacher college. She came to the United States in 1968 and started a private school in Santa Cruz, California in 1970. She moved to Honolulu in 1987 where she retired and became a full-time volunteer with different organizations. Since becoming a docent she find she reads more than she ever has and wishes she could remember it all.



Charlene Hughes, class of 2002, is a RN with special psych training. She lived on Maui most of her life and has two happily married daughters on Oahu. She began quilting in the 1970's on Maui and founded the Maui Quilt Guild. She actively taught for many quilting organizations. And in the tradition of many quilters who use their medium as message, Charlene has donated quilts to survivors of Hurricane Katrina, domestic and animal abuse shelters, hospitalized veterans of wars, the AIDS Foundation and breast cancer research. She has been honored by the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts with the purchase of two art quilts. Never at a loss for concepts Charlene say, "Ten quilts in my head right now, just bubbling to get out.



Myra Kent, class of 1996, grew up in Los Angeles. When the Coast Guard stationed her husband Ron in Hawaii, they knew they had found their true home. They wanted to raise their children in this beautiful, multi-cultural setting. Myra worked at Kamehameha Schools, administering a program, in partnership with the University of Hawaii College of Education, which trained prospective teachers to work with educationally disadvantaged children. Husband, Ron's work as a wood turner gave them a fascinating look at the art world from the perspective of an artist.



Janice Lau, class of 1994, was chief financial officer of Crazy Shirts, Inc. Born in Honolulu, she is married to Michael Fergus and they are the parents of Alex and Jake. Her close involvement with her boys and their activities has led her to choose the children's tours as her favorite.



Steven McClaran, class of 1994, served in the U.S. Navy from 1946 until 1970 when he began a second career as a manufacturers' representative for interior designer products. His personal specialty is 19th century American silver. A navy Junior, Steve first moved to Hawaii in 1933 while his father was stationed here. His motivation for joining the docent program is his interest in and enthusiasm for the Academy, which he hopes to convey to others. Steve was the curator for the Anna Rice Cooke exhibition and the Whistler print exhibition. He continues as an invaluable volunteer consultant to the western art department.



Anne Miller, class of 1999, always loved museums, in this life and in her past one, so when she entered the HAA for the first time she knew she wanted to spend lots of time here. She just didn't know how much. Anne taught various grades in elementary school for a very long time, revived each summer by trips to interesting spots...usually France. They settle in one spot and soak it in – art, food, and fiends. Her favorite pastime (outside of HAA) is planning her next 'art and eat' trip. Italy and France always beckon. China was great. She's a potter, who has a husband and a cat, no children, loves to garden, cook and read.



Ogden Myers, class of 2002, was born in Manhattan in the spring of 1928. He attended the University of Arizona and the Art Center School in L. A. He designed condominiums for developers in L.A., Honolulu and Papeete. It was in Papeete where he began sketching pictures of local people and their ways of life. In retirement, he now searches through all kinds of media and models to create those magical line and masses that appeal to, he says, "an aging eye that be tired of judging accuracies alone" and thinks he does well with chalk. Recently, Ogden opened **The Way of the Artful Mind Gallery** in Waimanalo on the site of the old Bueno Nalo Restaurant at Kenecke's Corner and welcomes visitors. 259-8363, 722-2512



Silvia Rapoza, class of 1991, spent ten years away from her Hawaiian home in San Francisco spending time employed by United Airlines serving in international reservations. With the advantage of he travel passes, Sylvia seems to have flown every place on earth. On a tour at her favorite museum, the Freer in Washington, D.C., Sylvia was encouraged by the guide, formally an HAA docent, to look into our docent training, and, as they say, "the rest is history."



Allison Roscoe, class of 1994, left Connecticut to enter the University of Hawaii's Bachelor of Fine Arts program. She earned her degree and never went back. In her custom framing business she did all of the work herself, including advising clients on the care of fine art. Allison became a docent because she is knowledgeable in the field and felt it was an opportunity to return a service to the community that has been kind to her.



Carolyn Sherwood, class of 1999, was born in Minnesota, lived in Omaha, Nebraska and migrated to California. She moved with her late husband to Hawaii in 1994. She went to Stanford University and was later employed there. She worked with Professor Paul Ehrlich on population biology research, which was the basis for books such as *The Population Bomb*. One of her jobs was to take students out in the field to track butterflies. Nets in hand, they would catch, mark and release butterflies. Academy work is one of the joys and highlights of her life here in Hawaii. Docent training opened up a whole new intellectual life for her and she has enjoyed sharing this knowledge with others. She says, "Our museum is a jewel in the middle of the Pacific and clearly fulfills Anna Rice Cooke's dream."



Ernestine Tabrah, class of 1995, was born and grew up in New York City and went to school just a few blocks from the Metropolitan Museum with major memories of excursions through endless Egyptian and Greek statuary and field hockey in Central Park. She graduated from The University of Chicago College and moved to Washington State with lawyer husband, Marshall Forrest. Three children, four years as social worker in child welfare, then selling real estate, she found time for much hiking and skiing. She married Dr. Frank Tabrah in 1972, In Honolulu she gained by-laws experience as president of her very large condo association (Marco Polo) for nine years. Then, seeking a new world, she joined docent training.



Darlene Weingand, class of 2002, was born in a suburb of Chicago. She had four daughters and returned to college at age 32. Her BA is from Elmhurst College, her MA in Library Science from Rosary. She moved to Minneapolis and managed three successive branches of the public library while getting her PhD in adult education. She taught for 20 years in the graduate program at the School of Library and Information Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and authored more than a dozen books in the process. Since moving to Hawaii a decade ago, she was an adjunct professor at UH-Manoa, She's always loved painting and art museums and knew that when she retired, she would want to be a docent here.

Hindu Stories Shown in Indian Gallery Pillars
by Manu Chakravartty
See the figure location the last page of this article.

Woodcarving is an ancient tradition, possibly older than stone carving, in India. Unfortunately, between 1500 BC (Aryan conquest) and the 6th Century BC, before the Buddhist era, little or no documentation remains of this tradition but from literary sources it has been established that all arts were practiced. Elaborate palaces of kings and houses of the wealthy are described as being embellished with wall paintings and ornate woodcarvings, suggesting a long woodcarving tradition. The shallow relief techniques used in stone carvings around Buddhist stupas like in Barhut (200 BC), suggest its origins in woodcarving which have been lost to us from that time.

An interesting example of carving is the set of pillars that depict Vaishnavite mythology. Stories depicted in the various registers are suggested below.

Left Set Of Pillars



On the first column the fourth image down shows Vishnu reclining on the many-headed, infinitely coiled Ananta Naga who watches over him. Vishnu's consort, Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and prosperity, sits rubbing his feet. From his navel extends the stalk of a lotus flower on which the Brahma, the God of Creation, sits in readiness. Some images show two goddesses sitting at his feet - the other one being Saraswati, goddess of learning and knowledge. When Vishnu dreams of creation, Brahma creates the world with the help of Saraswati who provides the knowledge of how he should

create, making order out of chaos to create the entire cosmos.

Figure A



Vishnu is shown again but this time sitting on his vehicle, Garuda. The two figures on either side could be the patron/attendants, with their hands clasped together in reverence to Vishnu. **Figure B**



It is possible that these pillars came from a Vaishnavite temple or home - that is, followers of Lord Vishnu. Most of the other carvings are of Vishnu as himself or as an avatar.

However, there are a couple of images, which are not very clear. For example **Figure C**. This could be a depiction of the seated Lord Shiva with his



consort, Uma/Parvati on his lap (like HAA's stone stele of Lord Shiva and his family). The two attendants with folded hands could be the patrons or celestial attendants. The same is repeated in the fifth register. **Figure C**



The second register (**Figure D**) is from the Ramayana epic. It shows the family of Lord Hanuman, the monkey god, holding clubs in a warlike stance. Their faces are blackened, like the apes, but their bodies are human. They were the army that fought alongside Lord Ram (the 7th incarnation of Vishnu) to rescue Rama's wife Sita who had been kidnapped by the demon King Ravana of Lanka. This story is very popular not just in India but also in Indonesia/Bali, Thailand and Cambodia. (Also note the colorful wooden chariot

panels with figures of Ram and Lakshman, Hanuman; Krishna and Garuda, etc), center rear wall of this gallery.

Middle column, left set of pillars

The first register in the middle column (**Figure 1**) shows Skanda or Karttikeya, the multi-headed son of Shiva-Parvati and the God of War. He is supposed to have six heads and is shown sitting on his vehicle, the peacock, with attendants on either side. (Also refer to the stone stele.)



The remainder of the middle pillar takes us back to the stories of



Vishnu as the saviour. One of his royal devotees was cursed by a sage and turned into an elephant. (**Figure 2**) The carving shows him as Gajendra, the King Elephant, being attacked by a huge, strong crocodile demon from whom he cannot get away. He calls on his saviour and Lord Vishnu arrives on Garuda to rescue him. Gajendra is grateful and offers a Lotus to the Vishnu to thank him and Vishnu removes the curse and Gajendra is returned to his human form.

The next three or four registers, in descending order, outline some of the escapades and stories about Lord Krishna, the eighth avatar of Vishnu, who is featured in the longest poem in the world, the great epic Mahabharata. The references are as follows:

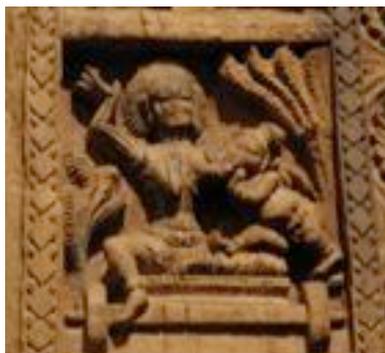


Figure 3. Baby Krishna and Putana, the demoness who tries to poison him, but who is killed instead. She had been sent by the wicked King Kangsa to kill all baby boys born at a particular time, as one of them would be his nemesis according to a prophecy. The demoness takes the form of a beautiful and friendly young woman. She smears her breasts with poison and goes around the village befriending young mothers with newly born baby boys and nurses them to death! She finally gets to Krishna, who being the avatar of Vishnu, neutralizes the poison and sucks her dry to kill her instead.

Register 4. The little boy Krishna is also attacked by a huge stork like creature – another demon sent by Kangsa, but instead Krishna pries his beaks open and tears him apart. **Figure 4**



There are many stories about Lord Krishna who was a naughty child and a prankster, whose mother doted on him, whose companion cow herders loved him, and who amazed the villagers with his feats. (Note the Chola bronze of the dancing child Krishna – supposed to be dancing on the head of Kaliya naga after having being defeated to stop him from poisoning the river where the cattle drank.) All this was prior to his becoming the flute-player who flirted with the milkmaids, or the Lord Krishna of the Mahabhartar war and the Bhagwat Gita.



Figure 5 Once when Lord Indra (Lord of thunder and lightning etc) became angry with the villagers for not worshipping him, he stormed and thundered. It rained and rained, threatening the lives of the villagers and their livestock. Krishna was a cow herder and to protect the animals and the villagers he raised an entire mountain (Govardhan) on his little finger and provided shelter from Indra's wrathful rain to save the village. When Indra saw this he realized that Krishna was no other than Lord Vishnu himself, he stopped the rain and sought forgiveness. This little panel shows Krishna holding the mountain aloft over the people and animals – as protector of the world.



Figure 6 A slightly older Lord Krishna is shown here (possibly) with his arm resting on his staff. He is accompanied by either gopis (milkmaids) or his companions. The next panel I cannot identify.



Figure 7 The last image on the middle pillar may be that of Saraswati (Goddess of learning associated as the second consort of Vishnu, but also as the consort of Brahma), usually shown with a musical instrument, the vina. She would be accompanied by either two trumpeting, water-spouting elephants (see the top panel on the wooden door opposite – Gajalaxmi), or by a swan or goose. Hence, here I am not sure, for she is standing on some animal, like a lion? This image is also repeated in the middle panel of the set of pillars on the right. Could this be a celestial musician?



Figure 8 The third column of this set seems to have musicians, dancers, animals, floral motifs etc. I cannot identify any figures in particular. The first image could possibly be the Vamana (the dwarf) in a sitting posture, the fifth avatar of Vishnu – with attendants/patrons on either side.

Right Set Of Pillars

Figure 9 The first column on the left is difficult to identify. It is possibly the 6th Avatar of Vishnu known also as Parashurama, with an ax to kill all the warrior/ruling caste who were ruining the earth. The rest of the column shows apsaras, celestial musicians etc.*



Figure 10 The middle column seems to start with a Mithuna couple in a loving pose, and below it, it seems one is placing flowers lovingly in the other's hair. OR, could it be a depiction of Rama and Sita happy in the wilderness that he was banished to, but before Ravana kidnapped her, as scenes from the Epic Ramayana.



The third register on the middle column shows Rama or Laxman holding a bow, possibly accompanied by a much smaller Sita, and the next one is Rama with Hanuman. The two together would make a whole picture as Sita, Rama, Laxman and Hanuman, often worshipped together.



Figure 11 Register 5 has Vishnu with his two consorts/attendants.

Register 6 in the middle pillar shows the fight between the two monkey-tribe brothers Sugreeva and Vali, to lead as the King of the monkeys. Rama helped Sugreeva win and thereby gained his support and his army of monkeys to fight Ravana. Hanuman was Sugreeva's general and a devotee of Rama's.



Figure 12



I cannot identify the two figures in the 7th register. **Figure 13**

And the last one is either a celestial musician or possibly Saraswati, as suggested above. **Figure 14**





The right column has five recognizable registers. First is Vishnu with his two consorts or attendants. **Figure E**



The rotund dancing figure in the second register may be dancing Krishna as the figure is in the nude. Only child images are usually shown fully in the nude. **Figure F**



The third register shows Vishnu in his second avatar form, that of a turtle or Kurma. The story of the Churning of the Ocean to get the nectar of immortality notes that as all the gods (devas) and the demons (asuras) were churning the ocean using the mountain (Mandara) as the churning stick and the Naga Vasuki as the rope, the mountain started to sink to the bottom of the ocean. Lord Vishnu realized Mandara had no support so he took the form of a huge tortoise and lifted the mountain on its back and give it support. The churning thus continued till the nectar was found. (**Figure G**) And so the story continues. A small bronze filial from Cambodia in the adjoining gallery depicts this story beautifully.

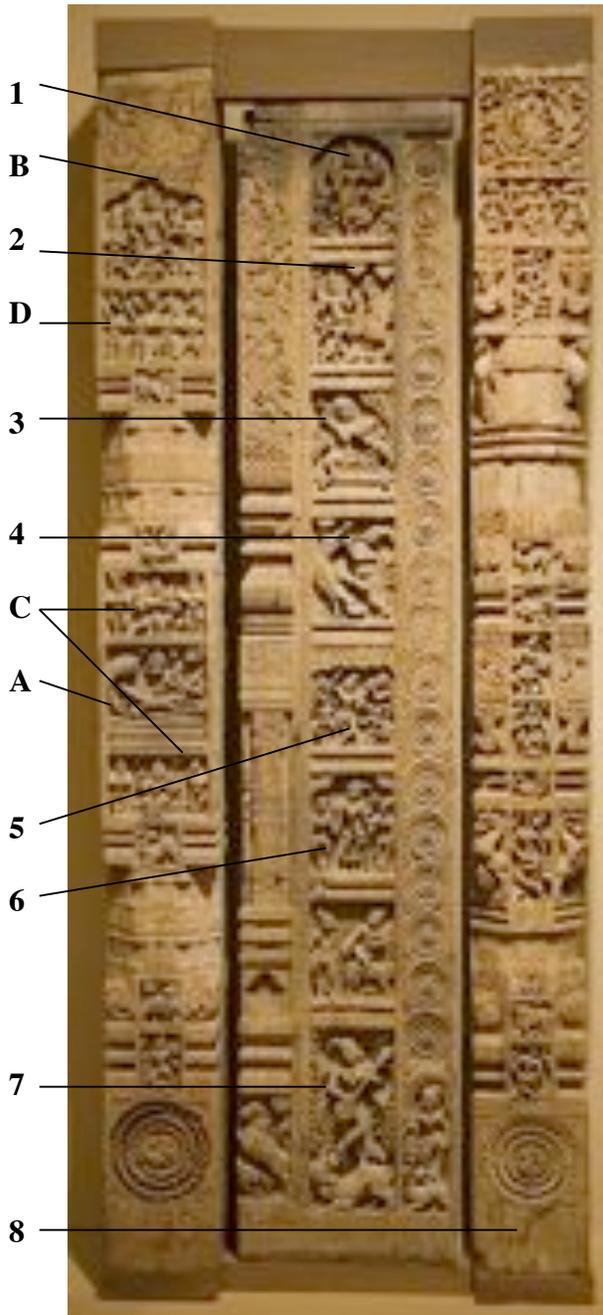


The next register shows Lord Vishnu again, and the last register may be that of the avatar Vamana in a seated posture as in the first register of this column. **Figure H**

There are several more examples of woodcarvings in the Gallery – Nandi Bull, Naga/Nagini, the big door. Woodcarving is still practiced widely all over India. As wooden images and chariot pieces or doors deteriorate, new ones are created to replace them, thus keeping the tradition alive.

* Perhaps the two sets of pillars should be reversed by moving the left one to the right and the right one to the left so that these ‘general’ panels serve as the outside and not inside jambs of the doorway.

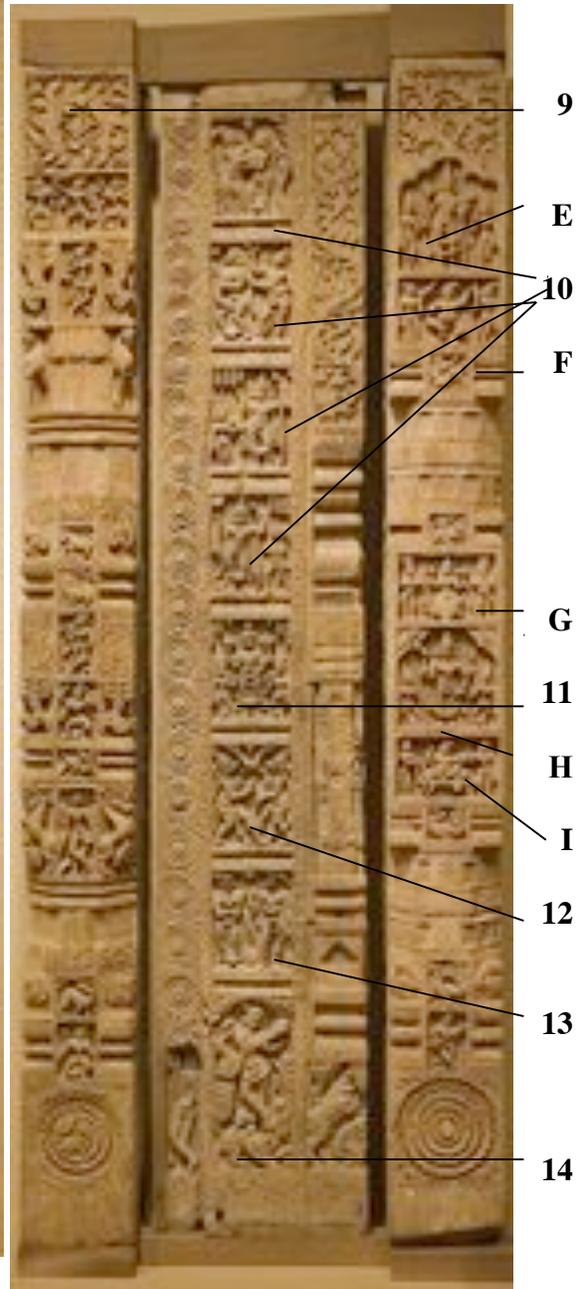
9 August 08
Manu Chakravartty



Gallery Label:

Set of Four Pillars, India, Tanjore, Tamil Nadu, 7th Century, Gift of the Christenson Fund 2001 (10656.1, 10657.1, 10658.1, 10659.1)

These pillars once supported the edge of a dance hall in the palace of a Nagak ruler. The carvings depict various Hindu mythological scenes, dancing girls, musicians and bird and animal motif.



Gallery Label:

Set of Two Temple Wall Panels, India, Tanjore, Tamil, 17th Century, Wood, Gift of the Christenson Fund 2001 (106601.1, 10660.1)

The panels would have been filled between wall beams in a small temple. The scenes show deities and other characters from Vaishnavite mythology.