



Smithsonian APA Program Newsletter

Smithsonian Asian Pacific
American Program

September 2008

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"Exit Saigon, Enter Little Saigon" Houston Opening

The Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Program's latest traveling exhibit, "Exit Saigon, Enter Little Saigon," recently opened at Houston Community College. The first night celebration - packed with well-wishers - featured speakers from Houston's large Vietnamese American population.

Our very own Francey Lim Youngberg, Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Program's development consultant, was there to laud the many successes of the Houston Vietnamese American community.

This latest opening was another memorable success and we look forward to taking the exhibit to new cities across the country!

SALTAF™ Author Spotlight: Manil Suri

[Manil Suri](#)'s newest novel, *The Age of Shiva* (W.W. Norton, 2008), is a powerful account of a young woman's experiences with marriage and motherhood after the end of British colonialism in India. Meera, the novel's protagonist, faces the struggles of living in the newly postcolonial India, in which day-to-day life is marked with the presence of radical politics and the wounds created by the Partition of the subcontinent. *Shiva*, which follows Suri's acclaimed debut, *The Death of Vishnu* (W.W. Norton, 2001), is the second in Suri's planned trilogy about modern India.

In addition to his writing, Suri also teaches mathematics at the University of Maryland-Baltimore County. Manil Suri will be reading from *The Age of Shiva* and signing books at the eighth annual South Asian Literary and Theater Arts Festival [SALTAF™] on November 15th in Baird Auditorium at the National Museum of Natural History. Suri will be joined by fellow authors Tahmima Anam (*A Golden Age*) and Naeem Murr (*The Perfect Man*), as well as filmmaker Richie Mehta who will introduce his award-winning film, *AMAL*.



SALTAF, an annual showcase of diasporic South Asian literary and film talents, is one of the Smithsonian APA Program's most popular events. The program is a partnership with the [DC chapter of the Network of South Asian Professionals \(NetSAP-DC\)](#). Previous SALTAFs at the Smithsonian have featured such impressive participants as Booker Prize-winner Kiran Desai and renowned filmmaker Deepa Mehta who U.S.-premiered her latest film, *Water*, to overflowing crowds.

Keep checking www.apa.si.edu/programs_upcoming.html or www.saltaf.org for updates on this much anticipated event.



The 9th annual DC Asian Pacific American (APA) Film Festival runs September 25 through October 4, 2008 at locations throughout the DC area, including Landmark's E Street Cinema, Navy Memorial Theater, Goethe-Institut, and Freer Gallery of Art. The festival will showcase 14 features and over 45 short films.

For a complete schedule of films and descriptions, check out <http://www.apafilm.org>.

Website Designer Needed

The Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Program is seeking a website designer/developer to create a website for "HomeSpun: Made in America," a project focusing on South Asian American (Indian) history and culture. The web designer/developer will also maintain all other existing Smithsonian APA Program websites and guide the APA Program in information technology initiatives. This position is full-time and subject to renewal after two years. It is located at the APA Program office in Washington, DC.

The APA Program is responsible for increasing the representation of Asian Pacific American history and cultures in Smithsonian collections, research, exhibitions, public programs, and staffing.

For additional information and application instructions, please refer to the Smithsonian website at <http://www.sih.si.edu>. The vacancy announcement number is 08A-LR-294353A-TRF-APAP and the closing date is September 10, 2008.

The Smithsonian Institution is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Save the Date: Filipino American Culture and Cuisine

Thursday, October 30, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
Ring Auditorium
Hirshorn Museum and Sculpture Garden
Independence Avenue at 7th Street, SW
Metro Stop: Smithsonian or L'Enfant Plaza

In celebration of Filipino American Heritage Month, come join us to learn more about Filipino American culture and cuisine.

Our delicious featured speakers include ... Martin Manalansan, associate professor of Anthropology at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; Amy Besa, chef, co-owner of Cendrillon, a chic Filipino pan-fusion restaurant in New York City's Soho neighborhood, and author of *Memories of Philippine Kitchens*; and Jennifer Aranas, chef, teacher, and former owner of the nationally-acclaimed Rambutan Restaurant in Chicago who now spends her time as a food writer (*The Filipino-American Kitchen*) and cooking instructor.

And don't forget to stay for the book signing afterwards. You, too, can make some of these fabulous recipes at home!

This event is free and open to the public. No reservations are required. Doors open at 6:15 p.m.

Collections: Korean Adoptees

A new exhibit, "Barriers to Bridges," opens at the National Museum of American History on November 21, 2008 - when the American History Museum itself reopens after an extensive renovation. This artifact case presents Asian immigration to the United States from the 19th century to the present.

Asians were tolerated, along with other immigrants, in the first half of the 19th century, but resentment and racial fears soon led to a series of exclusionary laws that prohibited most Asians from immigrating and applying for citizenship. These race-based laws would remain in place until the Immigration Act of 1965.

In the second half of the 20th century, growing numbers of Asian children arrived in the U.S. as adoptees. Included among the new exhibit's dozen artifacts will be objects that help capture some of the stories of Korean adoptees.

In 1955, Harry Holt, an Oregon farmer, was so moved by the dilemma of orphans from the Korean War that he and his wife adopted eight children from South Korea. The arrival of these children to their new home in the United States received national press coverage and generated interest among Americans from all over the country. In response, Harry and Bertha Holt formed the largest agency in the U.S. specializing in adopting Korean children. They eventually placed over 60,000 Korean children into U.S. homes.

Included in "Barriers to Bridges" is a traditional Korean costume, called a *hanbok*, which was worn by eight-month-old Betty Rhee Holt who arrived from Korea in 1955. She entered the United States as one of the first children in an international, transracial adoption program. Also included is a pair of American cowboy boots which helped young Korean immigrant, Nathaniel Chae Holt, adapt to the ways of his new country.



Spotlight on Smithsonian Affiliations:

The Wing Luke Asian Museum

Seattle, Washington

The [Wing Luke Asian Museum](#) was founded in 1966 and was named after Wing Luke, the first Asian Pacific American to hold public office in the Pacific Northwest. In 1962, Wing Luke was elected to serve on Seattle's City Council. Throughout his tenure, Luke fought for civil rights, urban renewal, and historic preservation. A tragic plane crash in 1965 ended Luke's life, and Luke's supporters contributed funds to search for the wreckage of the small plane in which Luke had been riding. The search continued without success until 1968.

Luke's supporters diverted remaining search funds to create the Wing Luke Asian Museum in Luke's honor. Luke believed in the preservation of the culture and traditions of Asian immigrants and APA communities, and the Wing Luke Asian Museum was founded to fulfill Luke's vision of a place to present Asian Pacific American history and culture.

As the first Smithsonian affiliate in the Pacific Northwest, the Wing Luke Asian Museum features exhibits and programs related to Asian Pacific American culture, art, and history. The museum is also committed to the economic development of its local neighborhood in the Chinatown-International District of Seattle, Washington. In the early 1990s, Executive Director Ron Chew asked Seattle's Japanese community to create its own exhibit on Japanese internment during World War II. The vision and content of the WLAM has since been shaped by the surrounding International District, with the vibrant community essentially serving as the museum's curator.

Earlier this year, the WLAM opened its permanent home in the East Kong Yick Building after a large facility expansion campaign. The new museum's first special exhibit opens in October and will feature the native Hawaiian community in the Northwest.

Contact the Wing Luke Asian Museum at 206.623.5124 or via fax at 206.623.4559, or visit their website at www.wingluke.org. WLAM is located at 719 South King Street, Seattle, WA 98104.

This Month in History

The Cable Act of 1922

On September 22, 1922, Congress passed the Married Women's Act, or the Cable Act. The first part of this law stated that an alien who married a United States citizen would no longer become a citizen simply by marriage. The second, more controversial part of the law, was that an American woman who wished to marry an alien would no longer lose her citizenship, unless she married an immigrant alien who was ineligible for citizenship. By definition, such ineligible aliens only included Asian or Pacific Islander immigrants.

Political leaders were worried about the changing face of America. If more Pacific Islander and Asian immigrants married citizens, more births of American citizens of Pacific Islander and Asian descent would naturally occur. This change was undesirable for many white Americans. Such fears also led to penalizing those second-generation, U.S.-born, Japanese and Chinese Americans who lost citizenship if they married immigrants from their ancestral homelands.

The Cable Act remained in effect until 1936.

Sources:

Odo, Franklin, *The Columbia Documentary History of the Asian American Experience*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2002.

"An Act Relative to the Naturalization and Citizenship of Married Women," *Columbia Law Review*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (Feb. 1923) p. 180-182.

For more information about what's going on in our office, visit us at www.apa.si.edu.

Signing off until next month ...

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* Title photograph of Shiva statue in Freer-Sackler Galleries by Becky Esman

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