

## **Indian Cultural Centre Colombo**

### **Activities - April, 2013**

#### **4 April      Exhibition of Photographs - Commentaries on Living IV by Angelo De Mel**



The Indian Cultural Centre Colombo in association with the Tagore Society of Sri Lanka organized a photographic exhibition by Angelo De Mel, eminent Sri Lankan Photographer at the Indian Cultural Centre from 4 to 7 April 2013. The inauguration was held on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2013 and the exhibition remained open from 5 to 7 April 2013. Madam Nana Kashimoto, Resident Japanese Photographer, graced the occasion as Chief Guest.



The title of this whole series of photographs is taken from the series of books of the same title Commentaries on Living IV by the great Indian philosopher J. Krishna Moorthy. Mr. Angelo displayed around 80 photographs.

### **6 April Kendriya Hindi Sansthan Agra, Examinations**

The Centre conducted KHS, Agra examinations on Saturday 6 & Sunday 7 April 2013 at the Faculty of Law, University of Colombo, Reid Avenue., Colombo 07. 220 students sat for the examinations and 2 examiners from KHS, Agra came to conduct the examinations.







**23 April    Book Launch The Moonmalle Inheritance by Prof Rajiva Wijesinha**

On Tuesday April 23<sup>rd</sup> at 6.00 pm. the Indian Cultural Centre hosted the launch of 'The Moonemalle Inheritance' by Rajiva Wijesinha. Published in honour of Ena de Silva for her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, the book consists of memoirs and also fiction based on characters and situations recorded from a different perspective in the memoirs.





Ms. Yasmine Gooneratne, whose 'Relative Merits' provided inspiration for the idea of presenting social change through the history of a family. Graced the occasion as Chief Guest.

Channa Daswatte, of Geoffrey Bawa Associates, also spoke, in appreciation of Ena de Silva's seminal contribution to Sri Lankan design. Her latest mural, an imaginative excursus on the Taj Mahal and its never completed black twin, adorns the entrance of the Indian Cultural Centre.

The book was accompanied by an exhibition of photographs representing the writer's personal odyssey over the last few years. It covers much travel in Sri Lanka and abroad but is organized in terms, not of places, but of subject areas. These comprise Sun and Sky, Water, Earth, Rocks and Trees, the Arts and People and Animals.



The first section of the book describes the progeny of John Marcellus Lewis Moonmalle, great grand father of Ena de Silva, and great great grandfather of the writer. It deals largely with those who grew up in 'The Old Place' the house in Kurunegala of John Marcellus' daughter Ada and her husband Edward Goonewardene. Their grand-daughter Lakshmi lived on alone in the house for nearly two decades before the place was finally sold.

The second section describes 'Travels with Ena', explorations of different parts of Sri Lanka, with ventures too in India and in China. The fiction in the last section includes chapters from 'Servants', which won the Gratiaen Award for 1995, and from 'Acts of Faith' and 'Days of Despair', which deal with ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka in the eighties.



## **24 & 25 April - Scholarships for studying Hindi in India**

The Indian Cultural Centre, Colombo called in applicants for Sri Lankan nationals to study Hindi at the Kendriya Hindi Sansthan (Central Institute of Hindi), Agra, for the academic session 2013-2014 by putting press release in the local news papers and by sending letters to local institutions propagating Hindi and to the Universities. Around 30 candidates applied and faced the interview conducted by the Centre's Long Term Hindi Chair. From those who applied 18 candidates were selected and their applications were forwarded to KHS, Agra in April 2013.



**30 April**

**Launch of Sinhala Translations of books on the ideals  
of Swami Vivekananda**

Hon. Dinesh Gunawardena, Minister of Water Supply and Drainage and Chief Government Whip, in the presence of H.E. Ashok K. Kantha, High Commissioner of India, launched the Sinhala translations of the books titled 'Fables and Other Stories by Paramahansa Ramakrishna', 'Education', by Swami Vivekananda and 'The Biography of Shri Ramakrishna' in an event organized by the Indian Cultural Centre in association with the Ramakrishna Mission, Colombo, at BMICH on 30 April 2013, to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, the great Indian philosopher and philanthropist. The first copies of the books were received from the Hon. Minister by A.A. Kingsley, the Principal of Waisakha Vidyalaya, the oldest school in south Colombo.







In his address, Hon. Minister remarked that India and Sri Lanka were close to each other not only geographically but culturally as well for centuries, and perhaps this was the reason for Swami Vivekananda's visit to Sri Lanka. He recalled the famous speech of Swami Vivekananda delivered at the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago which made a tremendous impact individually and collectively. He said Sri Lanka was proud to have been part of his spiritual journey and ascendance to fame. He noted that Dhamma was eternal and urged for re-introducing and re-integrating into the society the preaching of Swami Vivekananda, who through his valiant efforts had tried to purify the society through his wisdom based on theology. Referring to the teachings of many eminent religious scholars and philosophers from India, the Hon. Minister emphasized that religion was a means of racial amity, a unifying force among the people and not meant to antagonize each other in the society. He also referred to several seminal books written by Swami

Vivekananda including a book written by him after his visit to Sri Lanka in 1897 titled “Colombo to Almora” and thanked the Ramakrishna Mission for publishing the books in Sinhala language, which he said would be a valuable treasure for the younger generation in Sri Lanka.



In his remarks, H.E. Ashok K. Kantha, High Commissioner of India, highlighted the decision taken by the Governments of India and Sri Lanka at the 8<sup>th</sup> Joint Commission meeting to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversaries of Swami Vivekananda and Anagarika Dharmapala in 2013 and 2014 respectively. High Commissioner Kantha recalled the great role played by the two contemporary visionaries, Swami Vivekananda and Anagarika Dharmapala, who had together participated in the World Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893 representing South Asia, and helped rejuvenate interest in Vedanta philosophy and Buddhism. He recalled the



special links of Swami Vivekananda with Sri Lanka, which he had visited thrice and travelled extensively across the island during his main visit in 1897. High Commissioner Kantha also highlighted the core ideals of Swami Vivekananda such as religious universalism and ideas of service to the people, rejection of ritualism, sectarianism, bigotry and fanaticism. He further stated that Vivekananda was one of India's earliest cultural Ambassadors who propagated Indian philosophy, thought and culture to the outside world. On this special occasion, the High Commissioner announced that the Government of India, as part of the activities to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, would provide assistance to Ramakrishna Mission in setting up of a Swami Vivekananda Welfare Centre at Killinochchi.



In his introduction of the books, Swami Sarvarupananda from the Ramakrishna Mission said that great spiritual leaders had transformed the

lives of many people and their teachings were a beacon of light benefitting others spiritually and morally. He said that Swami Vivekananda gave his message to all, in terms of the healing touch of love, compassion and service. He noted that the books published in Sinhala by the Mission had enough food for thought for the humblest beginner in religion all the way to the loftiest philosopher.

The programme commenced with lighting of the oil lamp, followed by Vedic chanting by the Ramakrishna Mission religious School children.