

Indian Cultural Centre

Colombo

Activities – March 2013

8 March 2013 Slide Lecture - "The World Heritage City of Anuradhapura"
by Desamanya - Vidya Jyothi Ashley de Vos

Indian Cultural Centre, Colombo organized a Slide Lecture titled "The World Heritage City of Anuradhapura" by Desamanya- Vidya Jyothi Ashley de Vos on Friday 8 March at its auditorium.

The talk covered an introduction to the evolution of the city from its beginnings in 500 BC to its destruction in 10 C ADE including a re-creation of an important element in the 8 C ADE. His lecture was illustrated by a slide presentation.



Ashley de Vos is a Fellow of the Sri Lanka Institute of Architects and a Member of the Royal Institute of British Architects. He has trained as a Chartered Architect (UK), Landscape Architect (UK.) and in Architectural Conservation and Heritage Management (Rome, Italy).

In 1994, he won First Prize, for a very sensitive Master Plan Proposal for a Selected Area in the World Heritage City of Kandy, Sri Lanka, which led to the design and building of the 'Kandy City Centre' Project. In 2009 the Sri Lanka Institute of Architects conferred a special Life time award of Excellence in appreciation of his "life time Contribution to enhance the Built & Natural Environment of Sri Lanka".

The lecture was followed by question and answer session. Around 75 guests attended the event.





15 March Felicitation of Dr. Vajira Chitrasesa by the High Commission of India

The Indian Cultrual Centre, Colombo supported the High Commission of India to organize an event to felicitate the living legend of Sri Lankan dance, legendary Kandyan danseuse and Sri Lanka's first prima ballerina Deshabandhu Dr. Vajira Chitrasesa was felicitated by the High Commission of India on her 81st birthday on Friday, 15 March 2013 at India House. The felicitation was in recognition of Dr. Vajira Chitrasesa's outstanding and unique contribution to enriching India- Sri Lanka relations through the promotion of dance.



Hon. Dr. Sarath Amanugama, Senior Minister for International Monetary Cooperation and Deputy Minister of Finance and Planning was the Chief Guest and H.E. Chandrika Kumaratunga, former President of Sri Lanka and Padma Shri Pandit Amaradeva were the Guests of Honour at the felicitation event. The other dignitaries who graced the felicitation event included Hon. Vasudeva Nanayakkara, Minister of National Languages and

Social Integration, Hon. Deputy Minister Faizer Mustapha, Hon. Members of Parliament Karu Jayasuriya, Ravi Karunanayake, Dayasiri Jayasekera, Eran Wickramaratne, A.H.M. Azwer and Vijitha Herath; Mrs. Indrani Weeratunga, along with four generations of Vajira family and Dr. Vajira's disciples.



In his address, Chief Guest Hon. Minister Dr. Sarath Amunugama emphasized the role Dr. Vajira played in the making of Sri Lankan national identity. He also recalled the High Commission of India's felicitation of the Sri Lankan musical icon Pt. Amaradeva in 2011 and underlined the significance of the felicitating Dr. Vajira as she is the dance icon of Sri Lanka.

In her address, H.E. Chandrika Kumaratunga, former President of Sri Lanka focused on the stylistic aspects and various features of Dr. Vajira's dance. She also remembered her days of studying Kandyan dance under the tutelage of Dr. Vajira and her involvement in developing the dance for various kinds of expressions.



In his address, H.E. Ashok K. Kantha, High Commissioner of India said that the event was to celebrate Dr. Vajira's remarkable artistic journey spanning over six decades and her achievements. He underlined that Dr. Vajira is credited with creating the female version of Kandyan dancing and that some of the most treasured ballets of Sri Lanka such as Karadiya and Nala-Damayanthi were result of collaboration of Guru Chitrasena and Guru Vajira. He noted that indigenous dance theatre in Sri Lanka is firmly based on the traditions developed through the creative energy of Guru Chitrasena and Guru Vajira. He also acknowledged legendary role of Guru Chitrasena in the revival of Sri Lanka's traditional dance forms and his exposure to India, through learning of Kathakali in Travancore in 1940 and study at Shantiniketan in 1945, which was a key influence in shaping his art form. He also mentioned about numerous tours to India undertaken by Chitrasena and Vajira together with Chitrasena Dance Company from 1959 to 1998. He highlighted that connection established by Chitrasena and Vajira with India has continued to flourish and mentioned a remarkable recent collaboration between the Chitrasena Dance Company and

Nrityagram, an Indian Dance Ensemble in putting together a joint production “ Samhara” which received rave reviews in India, Sri Lanka, USA and elsewhere. High Commissioner Kantha said that day was also a celebration of the shared cultural heritage of Sri Lanka and India and emphasized that based on shared, ancient roots, but nevertheless a living and dynamic cultural space is constantly renewed and revitalized through a process of give-and take and mutual appreciation.



Mrs. Somalatha Subasinghe, eminent writer and theatre personality passionately spoke about life and illustrious career of Dr. Vajira, Chitrasena.

Dr. Vajira Chitrasena was presented a felicitation plaque by H. E. Ashok K Kantha, High Commissioner of India. Mrs. Sharmila Kantha honoured Dr. Vajira Chitrasena by presenting her with a Shawl.



The felicitation concluded with cutting of a cake to celebrate Dr. Vajira Chitrasena's 81st birthday in presence of distinguished invitees, her family members and officials of the High Commission of India.





18 March 2013

One Day Kathak Workshop by Ms. Moksha Samarasooriya



A one day workshop on Kathak dance was conducted by the Centre on 18 March 2013. Ms. Moksha Samarasooriya, well known Kathak dancer and also one of the faculty members of the Indian Cultural Centre conducted the workshop. The workshop included a lecture demonstration replete with extensive clips and video clips of Great Kathak dancers of India, various elements of Kathak dance were explained and demonstrated. Young dancers and laypersons participated in the workshop in large numbers.



