



Notes about a Sri Lankan Drum Artist

My name is Piyasara Shilpadhipathi. I was born at 19th of march 1945 in Polgahawela near Kegalle in a _____ of dancers and drummers, who have in earlier times performed for the court of the Kandyan _____ and for the sacred bo-tree-ceremonies in Anuradhapura. I have 4 brothers and 2 sisters. The name of my mother is Sawwathi and of my father Saranga. My uncle Salimon had a _____ and my uncle Shilpa was a great teacher. I started to learn in the age of 5. My grandfather Sowranga has been my first teacher in dancing and drumming. He took me to the _____, where I could watch the players and I liked it very much. 8 years old I had to pass a practical ritual, called ves bodeema. After this complex ceremony you are a _____ drummer or dancer. About 1960 the dance school of my uncle got a _____ status with a small fond. At the same time the governmental schools also started to teach _____ dancing and drumming. The result was, that a lot of teachers must be educated, but mainly they learned to dance and to drum, because they wanted to get a job. 1967 I joined the Chitrasena-dance-group, who visited the People's Republic of _____. 1968 I participated in the governmental college of dance in _____ and completed my knowledge about Kandyan dance and drumming with studies about low-country-dance and drumming. 1971 I met my _____ Kanthi and since this time we work together. We went on tour with the state dance ensemble to Russia (1974) and the EXPO at Japan (1975). 1976 I started my own dance group with my brothers and one of my sister and we visited a lot of countries. Then I became a dance- and drum-teacher at the Chitrasena-dance-school, where I have been student before. With Kanthi I was invited from the British Council to go to _____ in 1984, to teach in the Royal College of Music and to give lecture demonstrations and workshops. I got the chance to record exercises and pieces for _____ and for the archives. 1979 my daughter Madhavi was born. Whenever possible she accompanied us on our concert-journeys to other countries. 1991 we got the chance to visit the USA and to join a big multicultural festival in _____. There I gave some lecture-demonstrations in the University of Santa Barbara at the California Institute of Arts and a lot of museums. After that I used to go to the States every year. I like to distribute my knowledge about our special Sri Lankan culture and to inform interested people all over the world and I use to go abroad about 4/5 times a year. My wife and my daughter are also specialists for dancing, drumming and _____. Now we conduct a private school with about 500 students. I am member of several cultural communities and senior lecturer at the Institute of Aesthetic Studies at the University of Kelaniya. (transcription of an interview by M. Claus-Bachmann with Piyasara Shilpadhipathi in August 1999)

BBC ceremonies China Colombo dance school family governmental kings London Los Angeles professional singing traditional wife

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