

Abstract:

In the seventh century AD, the Chinese monk Xuanzang earlier spelt as Hiuen Tsang or Hsuan Tsang set off on an epic journey to India to study Buddhist Philosophy from the Indian masters. Travelling along the Silk Road, through the desolate wastes of the Gobi desert and the icy passes of Central Asia, braving brigands and blizzards, Xuanzang family reached India, where his spiritual quest took him to Buddhist holy places and monasteries throughout the subcontinent. By the time he returned to China eighteen years later, carrying with him nearly 600 scriptures which he translated from Sanskrit into Chinese, Xuanzang had covered an astonishing 10,000 miles. He also left a detailed record of his journey, which remains a valuable source of historical information on the regions he traversed. Fourteen hundred years later, Mishi Saran followed in Xuanzang's footsteps to the fabled oasis cities of China and Central Asia, and the Buddhist sites and now-vanished kingdoms in India, Pakistan and Afghanistan that Xuanzang wrote about. Travelling seamlessly back and forth in time between the seventh century and the twenty-first, Saran uncovers the past with consummate skill even as she brings alive the present through her vivid and engaging descriptions of people and places. Her gripping chronicle includes an extraordinary eyewitness account of Kabul under the Taliban regime, just one month before 9/11. Running parallel to the account of her travels is the moving story of the author's inner journey towards a new understanding of her roots and her identity.

About the speaker:

Ms. Mishi Saran was born in India and spent the first ten years of her life in New Delhi. Since then, she has lived in Switzerland, Indonesia, the United States, China, Hong Kong and Korea. She moved to Shanghai in 2006. She is the author of the travel book-cum-memoir *Chasing the Monk's Shadow: A Journey in the Footsteps of Xuanzang*. (Penguin, 2005). To research the book, she spent a year tracing the footsteps of Xuanzang, a 7th Century Chinese Buddhist monk who travelled along the Silk Road from China to India, passing through Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan and Afghanistan. She has since completed a novel, *The Other Side of Light*, which will be published in 2012. She is currently working on her third book, also a novel, set in Shanghai in the 1930s. Ms. Saran writes in English and is also fluent in Mandarin, French and Hindi. Following an undergraduate degree in Chinese Studies from Wellesley College (USA), she worked in Hong Kong as a news reporter and as a freelance writer. Her articles have appeared in a variety of domestic and international publications including *the Financial Times*, *the International Herald Tribune*, *the South China Morning Post*, *the Asian Wall Street Journal*, and *the Far Eastern Economic Review*. Her short stories have won awards and been broadcast on the BBC. Her illustrated lecture will introduce Xuanzang's great journey along the Silk Road to India as well as relate some of her own experiences along that route. She will read a few selected passages from the book.

**Kala Nidhi Lecture Series and Outreach Programme**

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cordially invites you to the

5th Kala Nidhi Lecture Series and
Outreach Programme

Topic

Chasing the Monk's shadow
A Journey in the Footsteps of Xuanzang

Speaker

Ms. Mishi Saran

Writer

Date

On the Friday, August 12th, 2011 at 3.00 PM

Venue

Auditorium

Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts

C.V. Mess, Janpath, New Delhi-110001

Chairperson

Prof. Priyadarshi Mukherjee

Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

RSVP:

Dr. Ramesh C. Gaur,
Librarian & Head of the Division- Kalanidhi
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आपका हार्दिक स्वागत करता है।

विषय

चेसिंग द मॉन्क्स शैडो
ए जर्नी इन द फुटस्टेप्स ऑफ ग्जुआंजंग

वक्ता

सुश्री मिशी सरन

लेखिका

दिनांक

12 अगस्त, 2011 शुक्रवार सायं 3. 00 बजे

स्थान

सभागार, इन्दिरा गाँधी राष्ट्रीय कला केन्द्र
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अध्यक्षता

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