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The Art of Vietnam And Cambodia

In an attempt to strengthen regional cultural alliance in south east Asia, the IGNCA organised a one-day seminar on the "Art of Vietnam and Cambodia" on November 8, 1995. Among the participants and speakers at the seminar were H.E. Voeuk Pheng Ambassador of Cambodia in India and Dr. Vu Van Luu, minister counsellor of Vietnam in India. Distinguished historians, archaeologists, Indologists and diplomats attending the seminar highlighted the need to promote intra-regional cultural studies in this part of the globe.

Setting the tone to the seminar, Dr. M.C. Joshi said South East Asia had been somewhat neglected by the Indian Universities. IGNCA had already done some work in this field. Vietnam and Cambodia are very close to India and are very much part of a wider range of Asian culture, he said. The seminar, Dr. Joshi said was an attempt to probe further into the possibility of better understanding of the art tradition of this region.

In his address H.E. Mr. Voeuk Pheng, expressed his happiness over IGNCA organising this seminar. He acknowledged the great contribution of India to Cambodia in many fields of art, architecture, culture, dance and drama. He mentioned the beauty of the artistic carving of *Apsaras*, episodes of *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata* and *Samundramanthan* on the walls of Angkor Wat.

Dr. Vu Van Luu, also congratulated the centre for organising the Seminar and hoped for better understanding between the people of Vietnam and India. He spoke about the close cultural ties between India with Vietnam, The vestiges of the lies are the Buddhist temples, (about 50 Chams monuments) which have been damaged by time. The war and the weather have harmed these monuments to a great extent. He said there was the need for proper restoration of these monuments. He invited Indian scholars to vietnam, to give it the benefit of their expertise.

Prof. Lokesh Chandra, Chairman, International Academy of Indian Culture, New Delhi, highlighting the aims of the seminar, said that India's relation with South East Asian countries is very old as is evident from the rich similar art traditions of these countries.

The first session was chaired by M.N. Deshpande, former Director General, Archaeological Survey of India. He talked about the traditional art and cultural heritage of Vietnam. Shri J.C. Sharma, former Ambassador of India to Vietnam and presently Joint-Secretary, Ministry of Defence, presented a paper on the "Art of Cham Temples in Vietnam". He presented an overall picture of the architecture of Cham Temples in Vietnam, based on his field study. Presentation by Bachchan Kumar, on the "Dong Duong Art Style" of Central Vietnam, highlighted the basic features of this art style. On the basis of archaeological findings in the Dong Duong area, he opined that Dong Duong was a holy land of Chams, the 10th century being the golden period of the Cham art.

The afternoon session was chaired by Krishna Deva, former Director, Archaeological Survey of India. Dr. K.M. Srivastava, former Director, Arhaeological Survey of India, presented his paper on "Apsaras in Angkor Wat". In his paper, he drew attention towards the marvellous head dress of Apsaras in various postures in the reliefs of Angkor temple of Cambodia. Himanshu Prabha Ray from J.N.U presented her paper on "The Archaeology of Mainland South East Asia and its Implications for Art History". The paper

discussed the various archaeological findings of South East Asia. Based on these evidences, she stressed that around the third to second century B.C. the regional trading system came in contact with the Indian maritime network.

In his concluding remark, Prof. Tan Chung, said the seminar marked the beginning of the IGNCA endeavour in South East Asian Studies. More Seminars will be organised to enrich our knowledge on the rich cultural heritage of the South East Asia.

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