

DHARMADEEPA

FINDING PEACE ON
A TROUBLED ISLAND

ONCE ADMIRER AS A LAND OF BALANCE, SRI LANKA HAS BEEN WRACKED BY YEARS OF VIOLENCE, CIVIL UNREST AND POLITICAL UPHEAVAL. IN 'DHARMADEEPA', STEPHEN CHAMPION, BETTER KNOWN FOR HIS IMAGES OF CONFLICT IN 'SRI LANKA WAR STORIES', DEPICTS OASIS OF PEACE IN THIS OFTEN TROUBLED LAND. HE CAPTURES LIFE IN RURAL VILLAGES WHERE, AGAINST ALL THE ODDS, THE ART OF LIVING SIMPLY IN PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE HAS BEEN PRESERVED. THE IMAGES, STEPHEN SAYS, "FOCUS ON THE TIMELESS CYCLE OF NATURE AND AN ALMOST FORGOTTEN WAY OF BEING IN AN EVER SHIFTING AND CHAOTIC MODERN LANDSCAPE."

Koshika Sandrasagra, the daughter of Manik Sandrasagra, Sri Lanka's most celebrated cultural guru and environmental maverick, says "Stephen's work is brave, incandescent and contains that rare subtlety that lends beauty to the most deceptively simple images. The soft light that bathes a paddy field illuminates the face of a grandmother holding her grandchild close. Through mystical landscapes, ancient forests and winding waterways, the pictures gently radiate warmth. The golden twilight, the hectic clouds spread across dawn skies – articulated

in the subtle shading of black and white – are, for me, the essence of Sri Lanka." Manik Sandrasagra died in 2008. He had been a close friend of Stephen Champion for over 20 years. 'Dharmadeepa' is dedicated to him.

Stephen Champion's photos of Sri Lanka are internationally renowned. A collection of images from his latest book, Dharmadeepa', will be exhibited at the RCS from 8th Sep-9th Oct 2009. A Private View will be held on 16th September at 6.30pm. Visit www.stephenchampion.org.