

01 Sep 2017 (<http://www2.ichcap.org/2017/09/01/>)

## Angam: A Sinhalese Martial Art in Need of Wider Transmission

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Angam Performance © Buddika Mahesh Kodikara

*Angam* (also known as *angampora*) is a top-level Sinhalese martial art. Included in the Sri Lankan national ICH list, the techniques of this indigenous combat performance rely on the strength of human body incorporating shots, punches, locks, jumps, and wrestling elements. Yoga, meditation, and magic are also fundamental parts of *angam*. *Angam* fighters require elevated physical strength and flexibility as well as mental strength to channel spiritual power. It improves practitioners' personality, endurance, patience, and mental strength.

Legends would tell that Sinhalese kings mastered *angam* and intensified their support to promote it. After the Kandyan monarchy, the last kingdom of Sri Lanka, *angam* was transmitted under two main generations, *sudaliya* and *murawalliya*.

Older than Sri Lanka's written history, *angam* is highly endangered of disappearing as there are few practitioners left to transmit the art to future generations. Mr. Vageesha Bandara Wicramawansa is one such *angam* master. He and his team of roughly seventy *angam* masters performed at the Janakala Kendraya Premises, Battaramulla, Sri Lanka on 26 August 2017. The cultural show was organized by the ICH panel of the Art Council of Sri Lanka as a part of its monthly ICH performance program.

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