

Embassy of People's Republic of Bangladesh

Bangkok

Embassy in Thailand celebrates 40th anniversary, commemorates Bangladesh-Thai

BouddhaMaitri

Press Release: Bangkok, 10 December 2015: In celebration of its 40th anniversary in Thailand Bangladesh Embassy in Bangkok organised a commemorative event that paid a tribute to the Thai King on his 88th birthday by reaffirming the Buddhism Maitri or friendship between the two nations.

In an event titled: *“Celebration of Bangladesh-Thailand Shree Buddha Maitri: A Tribute to His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej on his 88th Birthday”* organised at Thailand's National Buddhism Council auditorium yesterday, the Embassy organised a seminar on **“Bangladesh-Thai Shree Buddha Maitri: Enhancing Cultural Connectivity”** in joint collaboration with the ASEAN Buddhists Federation followed by a Buddhist prayer chanting ceremony by Bangladesh Buddhist Bhikkhus, for the Thai King HM Bhumibol on his 88th birthday.

At the invitation of the Embassy His Holiness Sanghanayaka Shuddhananda Mahathero, the Supreme Patriarch of Bangladesh Bouddha Bhikkhu Mahasabha and Vice President, World Fellowship of Buddhists joined both the programmes as special guest with an 10-member delegation of Buddhist Bhikkhus and scholars from Bangladesh including senior Vice Presidents of Bangladesh Bouddha Krishti Prochar Shongho, Dr. Deepankar Barua, Chairman, Department of Pali Studies of Chittagong University and Mr. Karunangsho Barua, Buddhist Publicist were in the delegation among others and presented Key note papers on ‘Past and Present of Buddhism in Bangladesh’ and ‘Origins of Pali Language and Pali Studies in Bangladesh’.

Culture Minister of Royal Thai Government H.E. Mr. Khun Vira Rojpojchanarat, who visited Bangladesh on the Bengali New Year in April 2015 speaking as Chief Guest at the seminar said “Thailand's ancient Buddhist linkages with Bangladesh needs to be revived through greater exchanges of Buddhism scholars and research between the two countries”. The Minister expressed hope that the proposed Cultural cooperation agreement being considered would include cooperation on Buddhism studies and preservation of shared heritage.

The seminar was followed by Ceremonial Buddhist Prayer Chanting dedicated to Thai King His Majesty Bhumibol Adulyadej by nearly 300 Bangladeshi Buddhist Bhikkhus studying in Thailand followed by devotional song offerings by Bangladeshi Expatriate Community living in Thailand. This exceptional prayer was led by His Holiness Most Venerable Somdet Phra Maharatchamongkhalachan, the Supreme Patriarch of Thailand and joined by Venarabale Sanghanayaka Shuddhananda Mahathero. Thailand's Minister for Prime Minister's

Office His Excellency M. L. Panadda Diskul, inaugurated the prayer chanting ceremony dedicated to the good health, happiness and long life of the Thai King and strengthening of Bangladesh-Thailand Shree Buddha Maitri (friendship). The Thai Minister said, "The people and government of Thailand is grateful to the Bangladesh Embassy and Bangladesh government for arranging this exceptional gesture of goodwill to our King who has been an active patron of Buddhism in Bangladesh since many decades". The Minister expressed hope that in the coming days the Buddhism friendship will grow strength to strength between the two countries and more people from Thailand would go for Buddhist pilgrimage to Bangladesh .

Bangladesh Ambassador and Venerable Mahathero Shudhhanondo jointly received a gift of a large and rare Buddha Image from Thailand's Highest Buddhist Patriarch Som Det Phra on the occasion of Buddha Maitri between the two countries.

Bangladesh Ambassador Saida Muna Tasneem in her welcome remarks underlined that "We are proud to be a Muslim majority but secular State that was liberated on this victorious month of December to reaffirm progressive aspirations such as religious freedom, tolerance and peaceful coexistence. This commemorative celebration on our Embassy's 40th Anniversary reaffirms the friendship and exchange of visits and Buddhism relics that the Buddhist communities of our two countries have enjoyed over many decades and recognises the Royal patronage of HM King Bhumibalin promoting this friendship". But this also explores how Bangladesh's Buddhist heritage can attract more Thai Buddhist devotees in the future through Buddhist pilgrimage tourism. The Ambassador further underlined that spontaneous participation of nearly 300 Bangladeshi Bouddha Bhikkhu students in Thailand as well as more than a 100 Bhikkhus from Thailand, Myanmar, Cambodia, Japan and even China in this prayer chanting and seminar reaffirms the fundamental message we wanted to convey, -"The Thai-ASEAN Buddhist Sanghas need to take a fresh look at Bangladesh's ancient and contemporary Buddhist heritage under the secular patronage of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and create greater 'maitri' with Bangladesh".