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A celebration OF FAITH

THE BIRTHDAY OF THE LATE PRINCESS MOTHER IS CELEBRATED
WITH A DEVOTIONAL EXHIBITION AT SIAM DISCOVERY

THE NATION

THE DEVOUT BUDDHIST beliefs of the late Princess Mother, or Somdej Ya as she was better known, are being celebrated in "Royal Faith", an exhibition opening today at Siam Discovery that also commemorates her October 21 birthday.

Organised by Siam Piwat in collaboration with the Mae Fah Luang Foundation and ThaiBev, the 17th edition of the annual "Kittueng Somdej Ya" exhibition is designed around the theme of faith and reflects the late Princess Mother's deep attachment to the Buddhist doctrine of leading a simple life full of wisdom.

This exhibition also aims to congratulate His Holiness Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara the Supreme Patriarch of Thailand on his 100th birthday.

In her promotion of dharma education and practice, the Princess Mother initiated a variety of religious activities. These included occasional dharma teaching, dharma talks through the "mind management programme" on Dusit Palace radio station and the publication of dharma books for government officials and the public.



Above: The Princess Mother's signature adorns the base of a Buddha statue.

Right: A dharma book has been produced under the "Royal Faith" initiative.

The exhibition is divided into three zones that display the Princess Mother's routine and interest in religion and philosophy. The exhibits include replicated handicrafts, letters and a collection of her dharma books. The "Royal Faith" zone exhibits the

dharma books published under her initiative, such as "Dharma Talk", which was transcribed from the radio programme on the Dusit Palace station. The programme was broadcast daily during the ordination of His Majesty the King in 1956.

The zone also displays the "mind management" book, which compiles the dharma talks from the radio programme in 1968.

It was during this time that she invited His Holiness Somdet Phra Nyanasamvara, the Supreme Patriarch who was back then in the rank of Dharma Varaporn, to run the programme. The transcripts were first published on Visakha Puja Day in 1969.

The second zone, dubbed "Arts ... Reasons", features photos and a ceramic replica of a Buddha image made by the Princess Mother. The Buddha image may not look intricate but its serene features reflect her peaceful mind. Visitors can also admire her draw-





Crafting Buddha images was one of the Princess Mother's favourite pastimes.

ings on ceramic plates called "Navire Plastrem", a constellation with each star representing her favourite philosopher or writer. She wrote the initials of these people on the back of the plates, with the word "arts" and "reasons" in French. She also added the wording of "C'est avec ce navire que je vais voyager", which means "With this ship, I will take a journey."

The third zone, "Wisdom + Knowledge Must Be Used in the Right Way", displays the "Dharma" collection of titles published at the initia-

tive of the Princess Mother. It also comprises her letters and materials related to the publication of this book. This dharma collection offers concise explanations in easy-to-understand language. In 1971, recognising the need for an Islamic book to offer guidelines to Muslim, Somdej Ya ordered the publication of the book "What does Islam teach?"

In her journal, the Princess Mother writes that wisdom was crucial for studying and practising dharma and published her "Dharma" collection to

BELIEVING IN GOOD

■ "Royal Faith" runs until next Wednesday at Siam Discovery's grand hall. Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn will preside over an opening ceremony on Monday at 5pm.

help all Thais lead a simple, peaceful and successful life.