

Buddhist Relationship between Sri Lanka and Thailand: A Case Study of Exhibition Design of Phra Upali Maha Thero Museum, Wat Dhammaram, Ayutthaya, Thailand

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Introduction

“It can be clearly ascertained that the Siamese deputation of monks tasked with performing the *Upasampada* (higher ordination) in the island of Lanka, made a huge sacrifice to the point of endangering their lives on an arduous journey in the cause of the Buddhist Dhamma (Law, or Truth).’ Their achievement, lauded for its subsequent record of vitality, was seen in the firm regrounding of Buddhist Religion on this earth. Of the 18 monks making up the Upali deputation, only 7 monks returned to the homeland.”

(His highness Prince Damrong Rajanybhab, on the Establishment of the *Siam Nikaya Sangha* on Lanka, 1914, Upali Maha Thero Museum, Wat Dhammaram,)

The above quotation refers to the event of Wat Dhammaram dispatching Phra Upali Maha Thera to Sri Lanka along with 16 other monks. Never to return to Ayutthaya, he established Sri Lanka’s largest Buddhist order (Piyaporn Wongruang, Bangkok Post, May, 2015).

Phra Upali Maha Thero had a very important role in maintaining an everlasting relationship between Thailand and Sri Lanka. By the royal decree of King Paramakosa, Phra Upali Maha Thero led a group of Thai monks to Sri Lanka. Their mission was to restore Buddhism which was in a sharp decline owing to many problems. During his mission in Sri Lanka, he ordained several thousand monks and novice monks which helped to strengthen Buddhism in the country. He also founded *Siam Nikaya* in Sri Lanka which has continued until the present day. As the commemoration for the 260th anniversary of the establishment of *Siam Nikaya* in Sri Lanka by Phra Upali Maha Thero, the Thai Government donated 10 million baht to build Phra Upali Maha Thero’s museum and renovated Dhammaram Temple. The government of Sri Lanka also donated the wooden statue of Phra Upali Maha Thero which is 180 centimeters high to the museum. (Division of South Asia Affairs, Department of South Asia, Middle East and African Affairs, May, 2015)

Background of Wat Thammaram, Ayutthaya and an Upali monk’s mission in the reign of King Borommak

Wat Thammaram is located off the city island in the western area of Ayutthaya, along the west bank of the Chao Phraya River. Ban Pom sub – district, Phra Nakorn Sri Ayutthaya,

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The name of this temple appeared for the first time during the reign of King Mahinthrathirat, when the King of Hongsawadi, Bhureng Nong launched an attachment to seize Ayutthaya in 1569, part of the stockade to defend the Burmese was set up here at Wat Thammaram. This demonstrates that the temple was built during Middle Ayutthaya Period. Moreover, this temple has some significance relating to the history of Buddhism. This temple was the place where Phra Ubalee (Upali) and Phra Ariya Muni who were Buddhist prelates stayed. According to King Boromakot's order, Phra Buddha Kosajan of Wat Buddhai Sawan appointed the two monks as preceptors to travel to Lanka Island (Sri Lanka) to ordain people and to promote Buddhism on the island in 1753. At that time, Buddhism in Lanka Island was in recession. As a result, it led to the restoration of Buddhism in that area. Thus Buddhism there has been called "Phra Siam Wong" (Lankavamsa / Siamvamsa or Siam Nikaya) till today.

At present, Wat Thammaram has monks residing in its monastery. The temple area is divided into two main areas; the area where the religious ceremonies are performed and the area where the monks reside. The first area includes the main Bell-shaped Chedi, Sermon Hall or Vihara, and the Ordination Hall or Ubosot. The area is surrounded by walls. The latter area includes Hor Trai (a repository for the Buddhist scriptures), Bell Tower, Monastery, Sermon hall in a monastery, and Waterfront pavilion. (Phra Upali Maha Thero Museum, Wat Thammaram)



fig.1 WatDhammaram Ayutthaya

700 years ago, Phra Upali Maha Thera of Dhammaram Temple in Ayutthaya led 23 other Thai Buddhist Missionaries to go to restore Buddhism in Sri Lanka. They were invited by King Kirti Sri Raja Singha who ruled Sri Lanka at that time. The king wanted to restore Buddhism because there were no monks who could be the preceptors.

Upali Thera was a Thai Theravada monk and founder of the *Siam Nikaya* order of Buddhism in Sri Lanka. He visited Kandy in 1753 and there performed *upasampada* (higher ordination, as distinct from *samanera* or novice ordination) for a group of Sinhala monks. The *upasampada* was not observed in Sri Lanka for centuries until this time. Upali Thera believed the Buddhist *Sangha* in Kandy was suffering from a state of corruption, and his efforts were aimed at "purifying" the practices - which included astrology - of the monastic order there. To this end he founded the new monastic order (*Siam_Nikaya*).

It was also through the efforts of Upali Thera that the "procession of the tooth" came into being. Annually in Kandy there is a celebration which includes a parade in which the focus is a

relic believed to be a tooth of the Buddha. This procession was originally focused on honor to Hindu deities, particularly those incorporated into Mahayana Buddhism. Upali Thera believed this to be inappropriate in a Buddhist nation, and his influence led to the king declaring that "Henceforth Gods and men are to follow the Buddha" (*Siam_Nikaya*).

Because of the long history and past glory of Wat Dhammaram, there is a strong interest in preserving this monastery to remain in good condition for future generations to study and to serve as a memorial to Phra Ubali Maha Thera and Phra Ariyamuni Maha Thera who devoted themselves to spreading Buddhism in Sri Lanka. Nowadays Buddhist visitors from Sri Lanka often come to see this place when they visit Thailand. (Tourist in Attraction in Ayutthaya).

Buddhist Connection between Ceylon and Siam in the Eighteenth Century

By the mid-18th century, *upasampada* (higher ordination, as distinct from *samanera* or novice ordination) had become extinct in Sri Lanka again. The Buddhist order had become extinct thrice during the preceding five hundred years and was re-established in the reigns of Vimala Dharma Suriya I (1591–1604) and Vimala Dharma Suriya II (1687–1707) as well. These re-establishments were short lived. On the initiative of Weliwita Sri Saranankara Thero (1698–1778) the Thai monk Upali Thera visited Kandy during the reign of King Kirti Sri Rajasinghe (1747–1782) and once again reestablished the Buddhist order in Sri Lanka in 1753. It was called the *Siam Nikaya* after the "Kingdom of Siam" (*Siam_Nikaya*).

However in 1764, merely a decade after the re-establishment of the Buddhist order in Sri Lanka by reverend Upali, a group within the newly created *Siam Nikaya* conspired and succeeded in restricting the *Nikaya's* higher ordination only to the *Radal* and *Goigama* caste, Sitinamaluwe Dhammajoti (Durawa) being the last *non-govigama* monk to receive its *upasampada*. This was a period when Buddhist *Vinaya* rules had been virtually abandoned and some members of the Buddhist *Sangha* in the Kandyan Kingdom privately held land, had wives and children, resided in the private homes and were called *Ganinnanses* (Anne M. Blackburn, 2001) It was a period when the traditional nobility of the Kandyan Kingdom was decimated by continuous wars with the Dutch rulers of the Maritime Provinces. In the Maritime Provinces a new order was replacing the old. *Mandarampura Puvata*, a text from the Kandyan period, narrates the above radical changes to the monastic order and shows that it was not a unanimous decision by the body of the *sangha*. It says that thirty two 'senior' members of the *sangha* who opposed this change were banished to Jaffna by the leaders of the reform.

The *Govigama* exclusivity of the *Sangha* thus secured in 1764 was almost immediately challenged by other castes who without the patronage of the King of Kandy or of the British, held their own *upasampada* ceremony at Totagamuwa Vihara in 1772. Another was held at Tangalle in 1798. Neither of these ceremonies were approved by the *Siam Nikaya* which claimed that these were not in accordance with the *Vinaya* rules. (*Siam_Nikaya*)

The principal places of Buddhist worship in Sri Lanka including the *Temple of the Tooth Relic*, *Adam's Peak*, *Kelaniya* and over 6,000 other temples are now under the administration of the *Siam Nikaya*. From time immemorial the sacred Tooth Relic of Gautama Buddha has been

considered the symbol of the rulers of Sri Lanka. As time went on, the seat of the kingdom was moved from Anuradhapura to Polonnaruwa, then to Dambadeniya and other cities. Upon each change of the capital, a new palace was built to enshrine the relic. Finally, it was brought to Kandy where it is at present, in the *Temple of the Tooth*. The oldest Buddhist sect in Sri Lanka, the *Siam Nikaya* (19 July 1753) is the custodian of the *Tooth Relic*, since its establishment during the Kandyan Kingdom. The *Siam Nikaya* traditionally grants Higher ordination only to the *Radala* and *Govigama* castes, Sitanamaluwe Dhammajoti (Durawa) being the last non-*govigama* monk to receive *upasampada*. This conspiracy festered within the *Siam Nikaya* itself and Moratota Dhammakandha, *Mahanayaka* of Kandy, with the help of the last two Kandyan Telugu Kings victimized the low country Mahanayaka Karatota Dhammaranma by confiscating the *Sri Pada* shrine and the retinue villages from the low country fraternity and appointing a rival *Mahanayaka* (Kitsiri Malalgoda, 1976) (Presently, an exception is the *Rangiri Dambula* sect which welcomes all communities while being a *Siam Nikaya* sub-sect).

The caste based discrimination made many *Karava*, *Salagama*, *Durava*, *Bathgama*, *Deva* & other castes people considered as ‘low’ by the *Govi* to become Catholics and Anglicans. The *Siam Nikaya* as custodians of the *Tooth Relic* have always received the full support and patronage of the *Govigama* dominated Sri Lankan State and its Ministers and Ministries of Buddha Sasana, Cultural Affairs and others, the monopolisation of the ‘Tooth’ relic by the *Radala* and *Govi* combination on caste based lines have brought shame and a bad reputation to Buddhism in Sri Lanka, which resembles the white apartheid rule in South Africa, where only the whites were able to enjoy certain privileges. In many of his discourses the Lord Buddha had specifically mentioned against caste based discrimination. It is often overlooked that the largest Buddhist converts today are the Indian Dalit community, a practice that had also been common in the history of Buddhism. During the late 19th century when Buddhism was at the brink of extinction, due to Christian missionaries and the British government, it was a *Salagama* caste *Amarapuraniyaka* Buddhist monk, Migettuwatte Gunananda Thera, with his oratical skills and sharp logical arguments soundly defeated the Christians at *Panadura Vivadaya*, with the assistance of other minorities. Subsequently the American, Col. Henry Steel Olcott after reading the book on *Panadura* debate, decided to visit Sri Lanka and helped Buddhism including the establishment of the earliest Buddhist schools such as Ananda College, Dharmaraja College and Mahinda College. These minority communities are also responsible for establishing the earliest Buddhist Girls schools in the island nation. The *Amarapura* Chapter was established in 1802. A number of monks of this Chapter had participated in foreign missionary work throughout the world. Monks such as Narada Thera, Piyadassi Thera and Most Ven. Balangoda Ananda Maitreya Thero were some of the erudite monks, from the *Amarapuraniyaka* & Ven. Madihe Pannasiha from *Ramannaniyaka* also had done immense service to Buddhism in Sri Lanka and the wider world (*Siam_Nikaya*).

An Exhibitions and design of Phra Upali Maha Thera Museum, Dhammaram Temple, Ayutthaya, Thailand

The museum of Phra Upali Maha Thero at Dhammaram Temple in Ayutthaya was divided into 7 zones. They present the history of the establishment of *Lanka Nikaya* in Thailand since the time of the Kingdom of Sukhothai and the journey of Phra Upali Maha Thero’s mission to restore Buddhism in Sri Lanka which has continued till the present day.

First voyage:

The vessel carrying the monastic mission led by Phra Upali Maha Thera was bombarded by enormous tidal waves, suffering leaks, with two masts torn down. It finally ran aground offshore in the bay of Nakhon Si Thammarat. The contingent had to return to Ayutthaya.



fig.2 The museum of Phra Upali Maha Thero at Dhammaram Temple in Ayutthaya

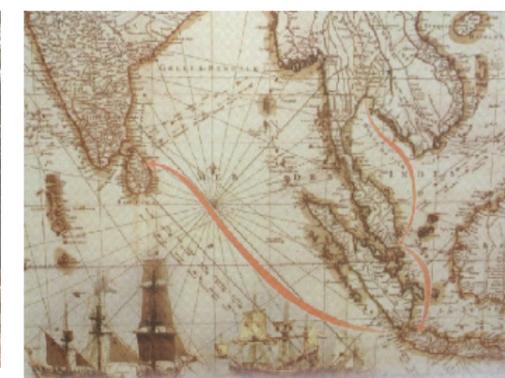


fig.3 Sea Route Taken by Phra Upali Maha Thera

Second voyage:



fig.4 Establishment of *Siam Nikaya* in Lanka

The Siamese monastic mission and envoys once again took off on board the Dutch sea-going ship *Cecilia*. The mission consisted of 2 royal-appointed ranking monks, Phra Upali Maha Thera and Phra Aryamuni; 5 Pali-schooled monks as act-announcing teachers, 11 non-ranking monks, and 5 envoys, not to mention attendants of various departments, e.g. interpreters, note takers, cooks, medicine men, masseurs, oboe-players, horn-players, and drummers (Phra Upali Maha Thero Museum, Wat Thammaram). Thailand and Sri Lanka which profess Buddhism as their state religion have cordial relationship, especially in religion, arts and culture that extend over a span of 7 centuries, characterized by brotherly support shown by the beneficent give-and-take at crucial moments in the history of the two nations.

Lanka was first the originator for she brought *Lankavamsa* to old Siam (presently

Thailand). Sometime later Siam reciprocated with the organizing of *Siam Nikaya* in Lanka. Over 700 years ago the wheel of law, *Dhamma Chakra*, known later as *Lankavamsa* (*Lanka Nikaya*) rolled into the land of Siam during the kingdom of Sukhothai, the Kingdom of Lanna and onto



fig.5 Crisis in Buddhism Looming over Lanka

Ayutthaya both territorially and chronologically. The religion reached its zenith in the reign of King Borommakot who, in return for past favours, sent a priest mission to revive the Buddhist monastic community in Lanka (Phra Upali Maha Thero Museum, Wat Thammaram).

Lanka, the Island of *Dhamma*, is the originator and preserver of the Theravada sect of Buddhism, otherwise known as *Lankavamsa*, which is known for its strict conformity with the literal preaching and *Vinaya* code prescribed by *Guatama* Buddha. The island boasted of a concentration of elder monks (with long years in monkhood) who were experts in *Tripitaka*. During its early years of proselytization, monks from Siam, Mon, Lanna, and Cambodia made it their mission to travel to the island to be ordained by the elder monks of *Lankavamsa* before returning home to establish the tradition and order in their own country.

Buddhism spread from India to Lanka during the Anuradhapura Kingdom in the 2nd Century BCE. Its vibrancy stemmed from the solid patronage of the state monarchy. For several centuries the growth of Buddhism had been by leaps and bounds ever since the introduction before beginning its descent during the Kandy Kingdom in the 16th century. The *nadir* of the decline came in the 18th century when the entire island was left with a few *samaneras* (novices), and not a single legitimate monk could be found (Phra Upali Maha Thero Museum, Wat Thammaram).

Cause of the Decline

Several reasons combined to speed up the decline of Buddhism on Lanka Island until near extermination.

- Tamils; Hailing from southern India, these people, who are Hindus by religion, invaded Lanka Island on numerous occasions.

- Western colonialists; European westerners began to set up trading stations from the 16th century onwards. Claiming trading as their primary goal at first, they soon began to mount violent, religious persecution against native population, including burning the Buddhist scripture *Tripitaka*, enforced conversion of Buddhists, or relentlessly disrobed monks.

- Court intrigues; Fighting to gain control over the throne is a matter of course in all

countries, and Lanka is no exception. In Lanka certain factions lobbied westerners for support towards persecuting their enemy.

- *Ganinnanses*; The word refers to while-robed laypeople who, professing ten precepts, usurped Buddhist monks by performing sacred rituals and reaping materials returns from monastery grants. The questionable, lucrative service provided the men with income to pay for the keep of their wives and children.

These negative factors were decisive enough over a long haul to ruin Buddhism, which previously enjoyed widespread popularity for almost two millennia, to the brink of extermination.

By the 18th century, Lanka was deprived of any *Sangha* viable enough to perform higher ordination to add new recruits needed to keep the *Sangha* going uninterrupted (Phra Upali Maha Thero Museum, Wat Thammaram).

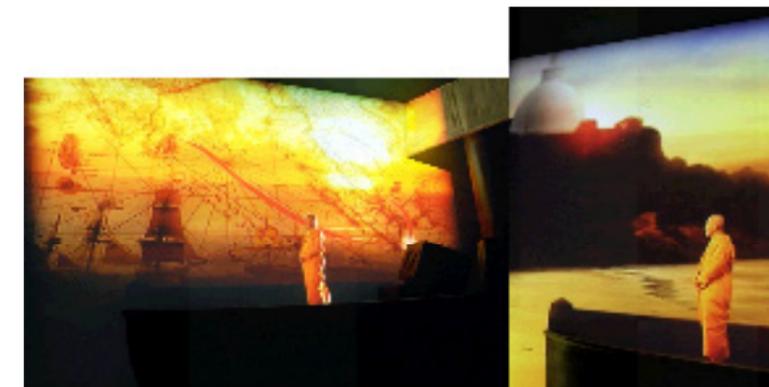


fig.6 Mission to Rescue Buddhist Religion (Exhibited by Multimedia Ling and Sound)



fig.7 Feats and Accomplishments by Phra Upali Maha Thera and the Siamese Monastic Mission

Phra Upali Maha Thera and his monastic mission accomplished a great many deeds of resuscitation of Buddhism. Among the important accomplishments are: (Phra Upali Maha Thero Museum, Wat Thammaram)

Upasampada: The higher ordination was performed for over 700 monks and 3,000 *samaneras* for Lankan faithful.

Laying of boundary (Sima) stones: Previously the *upasampada* ordination in Lanka was

performed on a watercourse, using watery surface as the boundary, or so-called *Nadi-sima* or *Udaka-Khepa-sima*.

Restoring rites and rituals: Examples included such rites as long disappeared in Lanka, which were *Vassavasa* (Rains Retreat), *pavarana-kamma* (voicing of one's supposed offences at the end of the *Vassa*), and *Kathina* robes ceremony.

Advice on the Tooth Relic Procession: The big change was made from the deities leading the procession to the Tooth Relic, a most precious symbol of the Buddha, leading both gods and men instead.

Reviving *Paritra* prayer recitation: The prayer Theravada-style, which had long disappeared, was reintroduced, worthy of the land which was the prime mover of the tradition in the first place.

Mastering the Khmer scripts: Because all Siamese sacred scriptures were written in Khmer letters, and in order to accurately translate from Khmer to Sinhalese there is the necessity to learn the Khmer scripts first.

Developing Buddhist education system: The development was geared towards all *bhikkhus* (monks) of Lanka.

Introducing the *vipassanadhura*: Siam's Phra Visuddhacariya Thera and Phra Varananamuni Thera, experts in *vipassanadhura* (burden of insight meditation), taught the responsibility and techniques.

Introducing Sangha administrative system: The administrative hierarchy from the *Sangharaja* as head of the Buddhist trinity. Phra Saranankara was honoured as the first *Sangharaja* of *Siam Nikaya* in Lanka.

In 1755 a second monastic mission led by Phra Visuddhacariya Thera and Phra Varananamuni Thera, was sent to Lanka as a replacement for the first mission. King Borommakot also sent another 97 set of scriptures with the mission to make sure that Buddhist scholarship remained the pillar of Buddhism.



fig.8 The Thailand – Sri Lanka religious relations in the service of Buddhism has had a long – standing record, going back more than 7 centuries

In 1277, King Ramkhamhaeng the Great sent an invitation to the Elder One and Supreme Patrirach of Nakhon Si Thammarat to take up residence in Sukhothai, as shown in Stone

Inscription No.1:

“King Ramkhamhaeng presented alms to the Elder One and Supreme Patrirach who is a brilliant scholar in the *Tripitaka* for more than any other monks or teachers in town, who hails from Nakhon Si Thammarat”.

From the fall of Ayutthaya Kingdom in 1767 to the reign of King Rama I of Rattanakosin, contact with Sri Lanka was suspended, due to the time and exertions needed at nation building.

In 1818, during the reign of King Phra Phutthaloetla Naphalai (Rama II), a monastic mission went to Lanka to reaffirm religious ties. Replicas of the Great tooth and Great Footprints, and a sapling of Phra Si Mahabodhi at Anuradhapura, a descendant of the original *bodhi* tree under which Gautama Buddha gained enlightenment, were brought back.

In 1842 and 1845, King Phra Nangklao (Rama III), sent Siamese monastic missions to Lanka in response to the initiative of Phra Vajirayana Maha Thera (Prince Mongkut). The preventatives came back with handwritten copies of discourses and sections of the *Tripitaka* that were still incomplete.

In 1852, King Mongkut (Rama IV), sent a monastic mission to Lanka, headed by Phra Anomasirimuni (Si) of Wat Pathum Khongkha, later appointed as Somdet Phra Buddhachan.

In 1897 and 1908, King Chulalongkorn (Rama V) paid a visit to Sri Lanka. In this reign, his Highness Prince Prisdang (M.C. Prisdang Chumsai), was ordained in 1896 in Lanka; he was given the monastic name – Phra Jinavarawansa. He became the abbot of Dipaduttamarama Purana Thai Raja Maha Viharaya, Colombo between 1905 and 1910. This temple, fondly regarded as a Thai temple in Sri Lanka, has been graced by visits from Thai kings and members of the Royal Family.

In 2003, on the 250th anniversary of Sri Lanka's *Siam Nikaya* Buddhism, the Lankan government helped funding the renovation of the Ho Trai (repository for scriptures) of Wat Dhammaram, presented a sapling of Phra Si Mahabodhi and a bell to the temple (Phra Upali Maha Thero Museum, Wat Thammaram).

Moreover, Thailand's embracing of Buddhism-related patterns and conventions from Lanka such as;

- Bell shape *chedis* and elephant-circled *chedis*
- Belief about the Great Footprints
- *Chedi* architecture as Great Relics Shrines
- Worship of Phra Si Mahabodhi
- Belief about Phra Si Arayamettrai
- *Paritra* Recitation

Recently, at the 60th Anniversary of the establishment of the diplomatic relations between Thailand and Sri Lanka in 2015, the President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka brought the Buddha Statue to the Royal Thai Government, as a gift for this special occasion, at Dhammaram temple in Ayutthaya which was the residence temple of Phra Upali Maha Thero



fig.9 Following the tracks of Lankavamsain PhraNakhon Si Ayutthaya before he went to Sri Lanka in 1755. The Government of Sri Lanka also donated the wooden statue of Phra Upali Maha Thero which is 180 centimeters high to the museum.



Interpretation and designing from exhibition in Phra Upali Maha Thera museum: Buddhist Relationship between Sri Lanka and Thailand

Thailand and Sri Lanka, Siam and Ceylon, Ayutthaya and Kandy. The ties between these two-sister nations go back 260 years.

“Beyond commemorating the 260th anniversary of the establishment of *Siam Nikaya* [*Siam-Lanka Wongse*] in Sri Lanka, the exhibition reveals the history between two nations that have aided each other and created a long-lasting relationship through a common religion,” (Prime Minister’s Office Minister Santi Prompat, Bangkok Post, 2013)

As Thailand still mourns the passing of the Supreme Patriarch and the state of Buddhism is reflected on by the public, the story of Phra Upali’s epic voyage across the Indian Ocean reminds us of the social and spiritual turbulence experienced by the religion at a crucial point in history.

In the mid-18th century, Buddhism in Ceylon faced the threat of extinction due to influences of Western powers and religion. Despite having been the source of *Lanka Wongse* Buddhism, which had spread all over Southeast Asia, Ceylon had lost all its ordained monks. In an effort to revive the philosophy that had been and continues to be the backbone of society, King

Sri Vijaya Rajasinha, and his successor, King Kirti Sri Rajasinha, with the persistent urging by novice *Saranankara*, requested *sangha* from Siam to ordain those in Ceylon. Thus began Phra Upali’s epic journey as the saviour of Buddhism in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) (Bangkok Post, 2013)

The exhibition elucidates this historic expedition, recounting Phra Upali’s perilous five months journey across the Indian Ocean. Phra Upali Maha Thero Museum, Wat Thammaram displays the history of the establishment of *Lanka Nikaya* in Thailand since the time of the Kingdom of Sukhothai and the journey of Phra Upali Maha Thero’s mission to restore Buddhism in Sri Lanka which has continued until the present day at Phra Upali Maha Thera Musuem.

The Phra Upali Maha Thera museum building was improved from the second floor hall of the temple; the room exhibits a great hall on the upper floor equipped with air conditioning. The permanent exhibition is a series of circular walks right by order of the topics. The central altar statue replica Upali Maha Thera carved from mahogany, has a height of 180 cm beside the pulpit of the ancient temple. Siam enshrined in Lanka Offering influenced Lanka Buddhism in Thailand with key architectural models. Buddhism on the land of Lanka’s crisis is presented by multimedia presentation on religious grounds to cease from Sri Lanka and travel stories come from Ayutthaya’s High Commissioner to Sri Lanka.

Zone 4 is exhibited by Multimedia Ling and Sound within the exhibition is dedicated to the dramatization of the death-defying voyage, lit only by projections of the stormy sea, drowned in the soundtrack of crashing waves. Visitors stand on a slanted makeshift deck, reliving the monk’s unyielding will despite the tempestuous storm. The sea was treacherous, but the reason for travel much fiercer and staunch. The first diplomatic envoy from Siam had run aground in Nakhon Si Thammarat, the vessel wrecked. But abandoning the mission was not an option. Phra Upali was armed with Buddhist scriptures, tributary gifts and indestructible faith. He was to lead the Buddhist renaissance in Ceylon.

Within his three years in Ceylon, Phra Upali settled in Kandy and established the *Siam Nikaya*, or *Siam Wongse*, denomination of *Theravada* Buddhism, performing *upasampada* (higher ordinations) for as many as 700 monks and 3,000 novices. The first ritual of ordinations was done during the full moon in July 1753. Phra Upali and his convoy also instructed the monks in the elements involved in performing an ordination knowing that growing the *sangha* would lead to stability for Buddhism as exhibited in Zone 5.

Phra Upali reintroduced the study of the *Pali* language as well as many other monastic practices such as Buddhist lent, or *Khao Phansa*. The Buddhist revival thus contributed to a literary resurgence and a dissemination of Buddha’s teachings (Bangkok Post, 2013).

The main exhibition presented historical architecture and religious figures and practices, many mirroring Buddhism in Thailand. A picture of a robe-offering ceremony at the *Great Stupa* of Nakhon Si Thammarat on Makha Bucha day is slipped in next to a robe-offering ceremony in Sri Lanka. The differences are only distinguishable if one looks at the plaque beneath each photograph as exhibited in Zone 6.

Conclusion

The exhibition presents the restoration of a faith 260 years ago and serves as a visual counterpoint to the rich and information-heavy part of the exhibition.

The exhibition of Phra Upali Maha Thero Museum, Wat Thammaram demonstrates that Thailand and Sri Lanka have been maintaining cordial religious ties for over 700 years from the Sukhothai period to the present day. As fate would have it, while the *Theravada* Buddhism as practiced in Thailand has been known as “*Lankavamsa*” since the ancient times, the *Theravada* Buddhism as dominantly practiced in Sri Lanka today is referred to as “*Siamvamsa*” or “*Siam Nikaya*”. The wondrous interlock of sect names in two sister lands goes beyond a mere quid pro quo but is rooted in shared sentiments and piety, as shown by countless resplendent temples and the respect accorded to the *Sangha* order on both sides. The reciprocal association represents the unbroken tie and sympathy the two countries have felt for each other.

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