

Buddhist Council of Canada  
PRESS RELEASE  
Oct 10, 2013

## **Buddhism Heritage Day at the Ontario Legislature, Oct. 10 2013**

History was made today when nearly 150 Buddhists of Ontario attended a Buddhism Heritage Day at the Ontario Legislature building on Oct. 10. Kindly hosted by the Ontario Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP) Dipika Damerla, Mississauga East-Cooksville, she was helped by Bhante Dr. Saranapala of the West End Buddhist Vihara.

Among those attending the event were the members of the Respectable Sangha of a variety of temples in the Greater Toronto Area, Parliamentarians, Professors and other Professionals. Witnessing the unfolding of history was also a batch of York University students, of varied ethnocultural and religious backgrounds, enrolled in the course, "Religion, Media, Culture" taught by Prof. Veronique Tomaszewski.

Representing BCC were the President, Prof. Suwanda H J Sugunasiri, and Secretary, Bryan Levman. Attending as well by invitation of BCC were the following: Prof. Mavis Fenn, Mr. W Suren Fernando, Prof. Franklin Tall, Mr. Nalaka Hewamadduma, Mrs. Inoka Hewamadduma, Dr. Vansen Lee, Mr. Nanda Lwin, Prof. Janet McLellan, Mr. Greg Mount, Mr. Michael Skaljin, Mr. Tai Tan, Prof. Veronique Tomaszewski and Ms. Yamuna Ramyalatha Weligodapola.

Speaking at the event were MPP Damerla, Bhante Dr. Saranapala and Prof. Sugunasiri whose speech ended with a poem, "Watering A Soil", in honour of MPP Damerla. Bhante Saranapala's gift to her was Ven. Walpola Rahula's *What the Buddha Taught*. A gift of BCC to all was a small booklet titled, *Mettà Bhàvanà* 'Friendliness Meditation'. When handing it to a politician, a quip that it would help prepare for the Question Period was received with an interested smile.

*May I be from enmity,  
May I be from anger,  
May I be from distress  
May I keep myself happy!*

If the meditation begins with oneself, it comes to be extended to that 'thorn in the flesh', following 'someone who has been meaningful in one's life' (Teacher, Bhikkhu(ni), Rabbi, Swami, Mullah, etc.), a 'dear friend', a 'neutral' person unknown to you personally (dog walker, postie, milkman), and ending up with 'all human beings'.

Presented at the event was a short DVD presentation of the life of the Buddha.

The participants also came to be given a collective blessing by the Sangha members present, all chanting in Pali, a first, beginning with *namo tassa bhagavato arahato samma sambuddhassa* 'Homage to Him the Fortunate One, the Worthy One, the Perfectly Enlightened One'.

The event ended with refreshments as participants mingled and chatted, met old friends and made new friends even as they browsed through the displays presented by the temples and the standing banners displayed by the Buddhist Council of Canada.