



Grußwort von Staatssekretär Stephan Steinlein (in englischer Sprache)

Grußwort von Staatssekretär Stephan Steinlein anlässlich der Eröffnung der Ausstellung "Kultur und Wissenschaft: Schlüssel zur Zukunft - 60 Jahre diplomatische Beziehungen Deutschland-Myanmar" (in englischer Sprache)
Es gilt das gesprochene Wort!
Your Excellency, Foreign Minister Wunna Maung Lwin,
Deputy Minister for cultural affairs U Than Swe,
President of the Goethe Institut Klaus Dieter Lehmann,
Dear Mrs Kron,
Excellencies,
Honoured guests,
In February this year, I had the privilege of joining Federal President Gauck on a visit to Myanmar. I was struck by the rich cultural heritage that this multi-ethnic nation can boast. I am therefore delighted to be able to welcome you, Foreign Minister, to the Federal Foreign Office and to join you in opening this exhibition: "Culture, science, academia: keys to the future - 60 years of diplomatic relations."
Our two countries have close ties these days, but the beginnings weren't easy. In 1756, King Alaungphaya sent a Golden Letter to George the Second, the Hanoverian King of Great Britain and German Elector of Braunschweig-Lüneburg. It was meant as an offer of friendship. The letter contained Alaungphaya's permission to establish a trading post for the East India Company on the Burmese coast. But the letter went unanswered. King George was busy with conflicts in North America and Europe. His lack of response brought on an ice age in diplomatic relations. The Golden Letter vanished into the archives of the Electors library in Hanover.
In contrast, the last 60 years have seen our countries maintain cooperation in spite of a number of differences. Especially in university education and sports, the people of Myanmar and Germany East and West have worked together with success time and again.
Myanmar has been implementing a remarkable reform policy since autumn 2011. We acknowledge the progress your country has achieved. At the same time, we encourage you to keep advancing that reform process and to include all the reform-minded forces in Myanmar. We are glad to offer our continued support to that endeavour.
Ever since Myanmar started opening up, our intercultural exchange has proven immensely dynamic. In 2013, our two countries signed a comprehensive agreement on cultural relations. Just a few weeks ago, Myanmar's Education Minister, Dr Khin San Yee, visited Germany.
Over and above that, there are a growing number of partnerships between our universities. Journalists visit Germany to get to know our media landscape. The Yangon Goethe-Institut will soon be working in a beautiful building in Myanmar's former capital thanks to your governments support.
This exhibition provides yet more evidence of our close cultural and academic ties. You can read about our cooperation on the information panels. There's a photo wall to give us a glimpse of Myanmar's breathtaking landscapes. Many thanks to the Munich Museum of Five Continents - and to its director Dr. Christine Kron - for providing the pictures. In cooperation with the Federal Foreign Office the museum now hosts a curator from Myanmar - Mrs Tinn Tinn, welcome!
Moreover, this exhibition will be animated by researchers, film makers and dancers giving live presentations of their Myanmar-German projects over the coming weeks.
One of the projects breathing new life into our cultural cooperation has been the emergence of the famous Golden Letter from the Leibniz Library archive in Hanover. It has now been digitally preserved using state-of-the-art technological processes and funding from the Federal Foreign Office Cultural Preservation Programme.
A three-dimensional facsimile of the letter can now be examined right down to the smallest detail. Many thanks go to the Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Library and Scanbull Software for making this possible.
I am delighted to be able to present the Republic of the Union of Myanmar with a digital copy of the Golden Letter today. Finally, centuries later, we have a reply - at least symbolically.
At your governments request, the Golden Letter in digital form is to be exhibited in Yangon and at the new National Museum in Nay Pyi Taw. We look forward to it!
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