

Father's Day (king's Birthday)



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December 5th is [Father's Day](#) in Thailand. This is the day the present King of Thailand was born and as the Thais think of him as the 'Father of the Nation', it's appropriate to celebrate all fathers on this day.

King Bhumibol Adulyadej the Great was born on Monday, December 5th, 1927 in the USA. He is the only monarch ever to have been born in America. King Bhumibol is also the world's longest reigning monarch. This year will be his 80th birthday and, as such, will be a day of enormous celebration for all Thais. Yellow is the King's birth color because yellow is the color of a Monday birth according to traditional Thai beliefs. So every Monday throughout the year most Thais wear a special yellow shirt to honor the King.

Thais also celebrate their own fathers on this day. At schools throughout the country, there will be special festivities. When I was [teaching](#) in Thailand, the school usually had a morning show that all the children's families came to. The little kids would perform songs or nursery rhymes, and the older kids would dance traditional Thai dances in honor of their fathers. At the end of the performance, all the fathers in the audience were asked to come up on stage and were presented with flowers. Male teachers would often be called up to represent a father for a child who didn't have one present. As teachers are highly respected in Thailand, this was always a nice addition to the festivities and you'd often see an otherwise macho teacher wiping away a little tear.

The King's 80th birthday on December 5th, 2007, will be one of the largest celebrations in Thailand for years. His majesty has recently spent almost a month in hospital and the Thai people have been very concerned for his health. He was released from the hospital a few days ago, so now the Thais are very happy to be celebrating his birthday.

It's been a busy couple of days in the village. Monday was a setting up day for the big pre-daddy day festival. Tuesday was the pre-dad day and Wednesday was possibly the hugest day in the Thai calendar...Father's Day.

Pre-Father's Day day was held out at our beautiful local lake. The event even made the news on Tuesday night due to the provincial mayor being in the hood. The security was rather amusing... 2 police escort cars and a security guard car coming up the rear. At least they weren't packing machine guns (which is not unheard of).



Lots of activities and displays were on show and lots of free food which is always a winner with me!

The Department of Environment set up an impressive stall with displays on how to recycle, make compost, make environmentally friendly detergents and explained environmental issues such as global warming and the effects of el nino, etc. It's heartening to know that some sort of environmental education is present in Thailand because often it appears to be nonexistent.



Other activities included the Dharma Wall where people could write their good thoughts and hopes. Then the Release the Demons tree where you write your bad thoughts (3 guesses what I wrote!!) and the monks come to chant and release the negativity to the universe. You may notice the yellow theme.. yellow is the King's [birthday colour](#) and Father's Day is essentially a celebration to the King (and every Monday of the entire year) so everyone, and I mean everyone wears yellow.

Here's some of the sweeties on offer...all free of course!

The best part of the day was when thousands (possibly a million) fish were released into the lake. This lake is part of the temple lands and is protected from fishing so the fish are free to go forth and multiply, hoorah! The government allocates money to a village fund a few times a year and hands out hundreds of thousands of baht to each village for community care activities such as this. People were also free to take bags of fish home to breed for whatever purposes. There were literally hundreds of bags of fish being released...brilliant work that makes me all warm and fuzzy.



Release the fishes