

## **Message from the Rector of Thammasat University**

The Lord Buddha's Enlightenment 2,600 years ago proclaimed the greatest Teachings that provide mankind with the roadmap to achieve wisdom and happiness. HE outlined practical means to purify the mind through the understanding of nature, realisation of the wheel of existence, and insightful appreciation of the Fourfold Noble Truths, all of which will lead one to the achievement of the ultimate happiness of Nirvana – the cessation of sufferings.

In a world composed of unpleasant conditions and filled with strife, the Buddha's Enlightenment is truly a force for the well-being of Humanity as one can practice Dhamma to promote benign relationships between individuals, thereby creating desirable societies based on harmony.

The quest for peace and sustainability is globally recognised. Distinguished scholars and professionals gathered at conferences enthusiastically discuss strategies and tangible initiatives to be developed to foster a culture of peace and non-violence as well as to propose sustainable models of development, particularly for strengthening human solidarity.

My deepest and sincerest appreciation of the Lord Buddha is for His exposition of the greatest Teachings to guide and protect Humanity. I am especially delighted that these Teachings, timeless and always practicable, will be discussed and praised at the 9th United Nations Day of Vesak organised in 2012, in auspicious commemoration of the Buddhajayanti – the 2600th year of the Buddha's Enlightenment.

I would like to congratulate the International Association of Buddhist Universities (IABU), with special appreciation to Maha Chulalongkorn Rajavidyalaya University (MCU), for your every single and best efforts in making this auspicious conference not only a reality but also of true relevance to the world. In particular, the conference will show to the world that Buddhism is not merely a religion; rather, the Truths attained and the Teachings preached by the Lord Buddha 2,600 years ago are truly universal and prove greatly beneficial to our society, regardless of time and space.

I sincerely hope that the conference will prove to be most fruitful for all who are present here as well as for those others who shall read and study the publications and who will benefit from the outcomes of this conference in the future. I hope that this conference will provide a platform for Buddhists and non-Buddhists to be able to realise and utilise the Lord Buddha's Teachings toward the cultivation of own characteristics and the creation of desirable values for the establishment of a society of peace and happiness.

I wish you all the greatest success, a fruitful conference, and a deeply spiritual journey while you are gathered here in Suvarnabhumi – part of the golden land where Buddhism has been long-established and enriched since the Edicts of Ashoka the Great. I also hope that your values and thought shared at this conference will contribute to the everlasting continuation of Buddhism.

Let us express our gratitude to the Lord Buddha with deepest respects.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Somkit Lertpaithoon". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Prof. Somkit Lertpaithoon, Ph.D.  
Rector, Thammasat University