



The Representative of the Buddhist Supreme Patriarch in Thailand

The Most Venerable Professor **DR. PHRA BRAHMAPUNDIT** is currently a member of the Supreme Sangha Council of Thailand, Ecclesiastical Governor of Region II, Chief Abbot of Wat Prayurawongsawas in Bangkok, and the president of the International Council for The Day of Vesak (ICDV) and the President of the International Association of Buddhist Universities (IABU).

He was born in Suphan Buri Province, and entered the monastic life as a novice at the age of 12. While still a novice, he completed the highest degree of traditional Pali Studies in Thailand, Pali Grade IX. In the same year, His Majesty, the King of Thailand, sponsored his higher ordination in the temple of the Emerald Buddha.

Two years later, he received his Bachelor's degree in Philosophy, with first-class honors, from Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University (MCU). He then entered the University of Delhi, India, where he obtained the Diploma in French, an M.A., M.Phil. and a Doctorate. His Ph.D. thesis, written in English and published as: *Selflessness in Sartre's Existentialism and Early Buddhism*, has been very popular and reprinted many times.

After receiving his Doctorate, he lectured for a time at MCU. In 1986, the Thai Supreme Sangha Council posted him to the Thai Buddhist Temple in Chicago, U.S.A. as a Dhammaduta (missionary monk). He

returned to MCU to serve as Director of the Academic Division and later served as the first Dean of the Graduate school, Deputy Rector for Research and Planning, and Deputy Rector for Academic Affairs. His Holiness, the Supreme Patriarch of Thailand, made him Rector of MCU in 1997, and a year later appointed him Ecclesiastical Governor of Region II covering the provinces of Ayutthaya, Saraburi, and Ang Thong. He served as Rector of MCU for 5 terms (20 years).

Apart from Sangha administrative work, he is one of Thailand's scholar monks, and the author of more than 100 books on Buddhism and philosophy. His published works in English include, among others, *A Buddhist Approach to Peace*; *Buddhist Morality*; *Buddhist Worldview*; and *International Recognition of the Day of Vesak*. He is the chief editor of *Common Buddhist Texts*.

He has been invited to give Dhamma talks on Thai radio and television and has, for the past thirty years, annually delivered lectures not only throughout Thailand but also around the world, including a series of Dhamma lectures in the United States. In 1994 alone, he presented papers at the Symposium of the General Conference of the World Fellowship of Buddhists, held in Bangkok, and at the Religious Leaders Seminar, held in connection with the United Nations International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, Egypt.

In August 2000, he was invited to give a lecture, entitled *A Buddhist View on Conflict Resolution*, to the Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders at the United Nations in New York. Three

months later, he delivered the distinguished lecture, Buddhist Propagation for Word Peace, at the Second World Buddhist Propagation Conference (Buddhist Summit) at Buddhamonthon, Nakhon Pathom, Thailand.

In recognition of his academic work and dedication to society as a whole, His Majesty the King of Thailand, on December 16, 2003, graciously appointed him to the position of Professor of Philosophy at MCU.

He was Chairman of the Organizing Committee of the Second Buddhist Summit held at Buddhamonthon, Thailand, in 2000 in order to build friendships among world Buddhist leaders and to celebrate the 72nd Anniversary of the Birth of His Majesty the King of Thailand.

In addition, he acted as Chairman of the Organizing Committee launching the Founding Meeting of the World Council of Religious Leaders (WCRL) held at Buddhamonthon and at UNESCAP in 2002.

Two years later, he acted similarly as Chairman of the Organizing Committee of the Board Meeting of the WCRL held, in conjunction with the World Youth Peace Summit (WYPS), at Buddhamonthon in 2004. He once again acted as Chairman of the Organizing Committee of the First International Buddhist Conference (IBC) Working as One: Buddhist Unity and Cooperation, held at Buddhamonthon and at UNESCAP, Bangkok, in July 2004, and has, since then, been the main architect and Chairman of the United Nations Day of Vesak celebrations held in Thailand. He has

continued to act as Chairman of the Organizing Committee of the United Nations Day of Vesak up to the present year.

He is currently the president of the International Council for The Day of Vesak (ICDV) which has been granted a special consultative status by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations since 2013.

Previously known as Phra Maha Prayoon Mererk, Phra Methithammaphon, Phra Rajavaramuni, Phra Thepsophon, and Phra Dharmakosajarn, he was given the new title of Phra Brahmapundit by His Majesty, the King of Thailand, on December 5, 2012 in recognition of his continuing contributions to the Sangha and the broader society.