

## GREETINGS FOR SYMPOSIUM PARTICIPANTS

Dear participants of the international scientific symposium “Contemporary Buddhist Art”! I am truly pleased that the Ural Federal University, which is located in Ekaterinburg, a city so far away from Ulan-Ude, is playing such an active part in organizing the symposium. Let me say a few words about the Ural Federal University today. The city of Ekaterinburg is situated in the very heart of the Ural Mountains, which form the border between Europe and Asia, but in our particular case this border is strictly symbolic and geographic: for the Ural Mountains sew together, as it were, the two parts of the huge Eurasian continent and ensure intercultural communication and contacts between the peoples inhabiting Europe and Asia. It so happened in the course of history that waves of peoples rolled across the Ural region, where Ekaterinburg would be later founded, from East to West during the Migration period and then later from West to East. Today the city is a metropolis, a large financial, economic, commercial, tourist as well as cultural, scientific, educational center located at the crossroads of the trans-Siberian railroad and the so-called TurkSib, a railroad that passes through Ekaterinburg to Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and into the Central Asia.

Nowadays the Ural Federal University is renowned as a major research center where such sciences as archeology, archeography, linguistics, folklore studies, religion studies are flourishing among other fields of research and of course alongside the Department of Art History and Cultural Studies which carries out a great deal of research in the field of Eastern art and Buddhist art studies.

I would like to thank the “Rinpoche Bagsha” Datsan and personally Venerable Yelo Rinpoche for such a warm welcome given to the participants of our symposium and for the opportunity to work in such a comfortable and modern environment, which will promote an exchange of ideas between the attendees. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to Venerable Yelo Rinpoche for having visited Ekaterinburg and the Ural Federal University in the spring of 2011. It was back then when two large universities — a classical and a technical one, merged in Ekaterinburg. Perhaps this visit helped us to achieve impressive results in these past two years of the Ural Federal University’s existence.

As for me, this is my first visit to Buryatia and to Ulan-Ude. I travel a lot for my job and for personal reasons. I have been to Java, Sri-Lanka, Thailand, Cambodia, China, Mongolia, but for some reason it was last

night, when Venerable Yelo Rinpoche did the honors and showed us around the datsan and we saw these wonderful sights and views of the Buryat taiga and of Ulan-Ude, that I felt truly uplifted. I was a young boy when I read a retelling of the great Buryat “Epic of King Gesar” by Semen Lipkin, and ever since it was my dream to come to the land where King Gesar had accomplished his labors, ridding humanity of monsters and of ignorance.

I am more than certain that this symposium will yield great results, extend and develop existing research cooperation. Let me once again thank everyone present here and note the versatile geography of the symposium: India, the USA, Great Britain, Bulgaria, Mongolia and different cultural centers of the Russian Federation. Let me reassure you again that the Ural Federal University is always ready to keep its doors open to all members of the community and to all those promoting spirituality and studying world culture.

*Dmitry V. Bugrov,  
First Vice-Rector of Ural Federal University,  
Doctor of History,  
Director of Institute of Humanities and Art*