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Editor THEERA NUCHPIAM

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Subscription orders, renewals, claims and all other correspondence should be addressed to Research and Development Institute, Silpakorn University, Sanam Chandra Palace, Nakhon Pathom 73000, Thailand.

Tel 034- 255 808 and 034-219 013

FAX 034-219 013

E-mail research-inst@su.ac.th

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Silpakorn University

International Journal is published in January and June by Silpakorn University. The journal features articles and research notes/articles in the fields Art and Design, Science and Technology, and the Social Sciences and Humanities. Its aim is to encourage and disseminate scholarly contributions by the University's faculty members and researchers. Well researched, innovative works by other scholars are welcome. A review committee consisting of academic experts in the relevant fields will screen all manuscripts, and the editorial board reserves the right to recommend revision/alteration, if necessary, before their final acceptance for publication.

Editor's Column

This inaugural issue of *Silpakorn University International Journal* presents articles and research reports that together cover a broad range of the University's present academic and research interests. The first two articles, one on the founder of the University and the other on one of its (and Thailand's) most distinguished scholars, in a way trace both its historical and intellectual development; the other contributions by and large span its growing academic horizon.

Like all other universities in the world, Silpakorn is presently at a crucial crossroads. It is facing both internal and external challenges that necessitate a restructuring of its overall system. This new imperative has come at the time when higher education worldwide is under new demands and expectations.

The recognition of education as an engine of growth, coupled with the need for life-long education and the growing demand for mass participation in higher education, has meant immense investment in education at all levels to develop human potential. Higher education has rapidly expanded worldwide, along with attempts at university reform. The focus is on the quality of teaching and learning as well as efficiency of financial and other aspects of administration. In Thailand, reform has assumed an air of urgency with the move towards corporatisation of state universities.

No one would deny that the trend is a positive one. For one thing, the widening of the stake of higher learning beyond its former elitist confine should be generally welcome. In the Thai case, moreover, reform of many aspects of the university's system has in fact been long overdue. This must in any case be accomplished if Thai universities hope to compete more effectively in the academic world today.

At the same time the question relating to *the university's role in fostering scholarship and ideas* must also be more extensively debated. This year Silpakorn University is initiating a series of activities, including organisation of seminars and conferences and publication of this international journal, not simply to mark its entry into the new millennium but, more significantly, to further explore this question. In trying to project the University's image and academic potential onto the wider world of higher learning, this journal thus aims to show its concern and vision for the future direction of higher education, especially for *the university as a place of intellectual cultivation*.

We most sincerely hope to participate in, and meaningfully contribute to, the current search for an appropriate role for the university in the new century. As a non-specialised publication, this international journal strongly hopes to maintain well researched contributions which will keep that proper role for the university in perspective.