

## **Press Release: Devotees of Phrathepyanmahamuni**

Besides the fact that Phrathepyanmahamuni (Most Venerable Dhammajayo) is severely ill, his devotees also unanimously agree that Ven. Dhammajayo should turn himself in and enter the judicial process, but only when the nation has returned to normal conditions—that is, when full democracy has returned. This is solely because the lack of a democracy in a nation inevitably leads to an absence of civil liberties in the judicial process. This can be illustrated by the following: threats to, and the erosion of Buddhism by unconventional monks as well as certain groups; the delay in the establishment of the Supreme Patriarch; and DSI's handling of this lawsuit against Ven. Dhammajayo in a hasty manner, while failing to uphold their side of the agreement with the Governing Sangha and the representative of the National Office of Buddhism, and so forth.

An example is the case of Phra Suvit Thirathammo of Wat O-noi, who is involved in a more severe case in which he led community members in shutting down Bangkok by taking over governmental agencies, including DSI, for multiple months. An arrest warrant was also issued for him. Although he turned himself in, it has been two years since this incident, and to this day, there has been no progress into the case—the accused has *still* not been brought to court to undergo the judicial process.

The charges brought against Phrathepyanmahamuni by DSI carry a life of 15 years to be resolved. Thus, waiting for the political situation in Thailand to return to democracy before proceeding with the case is not an attempt to delay or jeopardize the case, especially since the Thai government has promised that democracy will soon return.

Devotees of Phrathepyanmahamuni

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