

PRESS RELEASE

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Official Statement from the Supporters and Followers of Wat Phra Dhammakaya

Update on Filings of Plea Letters to Damrongtham Centers, Foreign Embassies and Human Rights Organizations throughout the World, Seeking for Fair Treatment of Phrathepyanmahamuni (Most Venerable Dhammajayo), Abbot of Wat Phra Dhammakaya

With reference to the summons issued by the Department of Special Investigation (DSI) for Phrathepyanmahamuni to appear at its offices to answer charges for being an accomplice in money laundering, for committing the act of money laundering, and for receiving stolen goods, we, the Supporters and Followers of Phrathepyanmahamuni unanimously acquiesce that these charges are groundless, and the action of DSI is unjustified as well as unfair. It is an unwarranted treatment of an ailing monk who has spent forty seven years in the monkhood and is now in the final stage of his life; one who has dedicated his entire life for the practice of good deeds and for helping others. It is our opinion that the charges are based on dubious and biased circumstances.

Here are the bases of our concern:

1. **This is a duplication of a case already trialed.** This very same trial case has already been conducted and concluded, and the trial results had been submitted to the Office of the Prosecutor. The lead prosecutor has already decided to drop the case. Nonetheless, DSI took upon itself to reconstruct the case with new charges: money laundering and receiving stolen goods. Repeating a case already trialed and concluded is unlawful. It is against the principle of good law practice, which states, "The same offense cannot be trialed more than once."

There is one recent fact that should be noted. On May 12, Mr. Prakit Pilangasa, Vice Chairman, Director of Klongchan Credit Union Cooperative, declared to news media the following: "The individuals who publicly accused Phrathepyanmahamuni have no ties with the Credit Union or its members in any way. Their actions are their own and have nothing to do with the Credit Union or any of its members." This is troublesome. It poses the question: "Why did these accusers, the outsiders, who are not linked or related to the Credit Union or its members in any way, want to paint the impression to the public that they represent the Credit Union, and why were they so persistent in demanding DSI to reopen and press on with this case?"

The charges of money laundering and receiving stolen goods against Phrathepyanmahamuni are groundless. They could be with some ground if the Abbot had an ulterior motive to conspire with Mr. Supachai Srisupa-aksorn to defraud the Credit Union and to take the money for his personal gain. But this was not the case. The Abbot accepted the donated money in good faith,

openly, and amidst the presence of tens of thousands of people. the Abbot himself has never seen or touched these checks or money. They were handled by officials of the temple who deposited them directly in the bank and used them to pay for construction expenses. The money was disbursed in accordance with the expressed intentions of the donors. This same information has been provided in the testimony given to DSI previously. The Abbot has never withdrawn any cash from his account. The money in question had all been disbursed to the various companies that provided construction services to build temple facilities. This can be verified by looking at the trail of money on record.

If the charges against the Abbot are allowed to continued, they could become a precedence that leads to an undesirable future for Buddhism, because anyone can now accuse any monk in Thailand of accepting stolen goods!

2. First Summons for Phrathepyanmahamuni. There was something dubious about this: one day before the first summons was issued to the Abbot, some media entities had already received a copy of the summons and broadcast it widely to the public—before it was even served. How did this happen, and why?

3. Request for Postponement, Second Summons. On April 25, DSI summoned the Abbot to show up at its office to face charges. At 10 a.m. that same morning, the Abbot's attorney submitted a formal request to postpone his visit to the office because of illness. A certificate from the Abbot's doctor confirming his illness was presented to the investigative official. At 11:30 a.m., the official advised the attorney that they accepted his request and agreed to postpone the date of the Abbot's visit for May 10, 2016. So the attorney left. But at 1:30 p.m. that same afternoon, the special investigative official at DSI telephoned the attorney and advised him that they have changed their position and refused to allow the postponement. The official further stated that DSI would obtain a court order for the Abbot's arrest. The next day, DSI indeed proceeded to obtain said court order. DSI's decision was made with complete disregard to the Abbot's medical certificate, and without bothering to send a doctor from the Police Hospital or any other health institution to physically examine the condition of the Abbot to confirm his illness.

Why did the investigative officials renege on their words? DSI's conduct and method of operation give us reason to be concerned. They undermine our faith and confidence in the process of justice.

In regards to the conduct and character of the Abbot, one should take a look at what he has done all his life. The Abbot has dedicated his entire life to doing good deeds and helping society. His accomplishments speak for themselves. What he has done in one lifetime in bringing peace and goodness to the world is beyond anyone's imagination. The Supporters and Followers of Phrathepyanmahamuni are appreciative and grateful of his contribution to society and ask that he be treated fairly. They come together peacefully and politely to make these facts known to all concerned by presenting them to Damrongtham Centers throughout Thailand in the

provinces that they live in. Those who live overseas will present their cases to foreign embassies and human right organizations throughout the world. They wish that their voices be heard and their efforts bring truth and justice in the treatment of Phrathepyanmahamuni. They wish for the Thai government and National Council for Peace and Order to put a stop to the mishandling of DSI in dealing with this case, and to look into its method of operation in order that fair and equitable treatment can be expected. We have faith that the justice system in Thailand will prevail.

Although filings of plea letters to the Centers have now been completed, we do not feel that the situation is yet under control. For this reason, we are creating a task force to watch over the matter closely. Should any individuals or units in the justice system insist on pressing forward with this matter unlawfully, we will step up our action and exercise our legal rights by filing court actions against any individuals and/or officials involved under Article 157 for mishandling and failure to perform their duties.

Please be aware of the above facts.

Respectfully yours,
Supporters and Followers of Wat Phra Dhammakaya

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