

Press Release from Devotees of Wat Phra Dhammakaya

Media outlets have reported on preparations by Department of Special Investigation (DSI) to request a search warrant to infiltrate Wat Phra Dhammakaya. The devotees of Wat Phra Dhammakaya would like to make the following statements:

1. Phrathepyanmahamuni received donations openly and with transparency; the donations are then allocated for the construction of religious facilities according to the wishes of the donors. Not a single baht from the donations was used for personal benefit, and there is a clear money trail because Phrathepyanmahamuni has never withdrawn any money from his account. The Anti-Money Laundering Office (AMLO) has investigated and concluded that the money trail is obvious. Its findings have been submitted to DSI.
And even more so, once it became a lawsuit and the source of the donations became suspect, Wat Phra Dhammakaya's devotees created an emergency relief fund for the Klongchan Credit Union Cooperative in the full amount. The credit union, the true injured party, presented a letter of appreciation and demonstrated their intention to not pursue either the civil or the criminal case. Why is DSI determined to move forward with a case that serves no benefit to the credit union?
2. DSI had issued order 531/2559 on 2 June 2016 requesting the cooperation of Most Venerable Phratheprattanasuthi, Ecclesiastical Governor of Pathum Thani; National Office of Buddhism; and Dr. Somsak Lokrasa, legal advisor to the Ecclesiastical Head, to form a committee to coordinate this lawsuit. They were given the authority to determine the course and method, and to coordinate the parties involved.
3. This committee had convened twice at Wat Kien Khet in Pathum Thani, and progress was made in the negotiations. The next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, 14 June 2016.
However, on Monday, 13 June 2016, DSI went ahead and submitted its charges and evidence to the Office of the Attorney General without waiting for the meeting on 14 June. Why was DSI hastened to proceed in an abnormal manner--both the arrest warrant and the lawsuit? Why hasn't DSI fulfilled a single action they agreed to during negotiations?
4. Mr. Kajornsak Puttanuparb, consulting prosecutor for this case, appeared on a Spring News show called *Face Time* and openly revealed the true agenda of DSI in this case.
When the host asked: Pol. Lt. Col. Somboon Sarasith, deputy chief of DSI and chairmen of the coordinating committee, had made a public statement that the negotiations had gone well. There was a written joint agreement. Physicians from a government hospital will be sent to examine the health condition of Phrathepyanmahamuni at Wat Phra Dhammakaya. If his ailing health is confirmed, DSI will announce the charges at the temple and allow bail. So, why did DSI abruptly submit its charges and evidence to the Office of the Attorney General?
Mr. Kajornsak answered: "The assembling of the committee was just an administrative measure. Any results from the meetings have no pertinence to DSI."
5. The outcome of the meeting which was signed by three DSI representatives, including the DSI Deputy Director-General as the chairman; Most Venerable Phratheprattanasuthi, Ecclesiastical Governor of Pathum Thani province; and a representative from the National Office of Buddhism

was worthless. The results were not binding, and DSI can break all agreements at any time. Using layman's terms - Did DSI form this committee to deceive, to use the governing sangha and National Office of Buddhism as their tool?

6. If the agreements were in writing and signed by DSI representatives, the governing sangha, and representative from the National Office of Buddhism. Then DSI is still evading, refusing to follow through.

From this point forward, how can Wat Phra Dhammakaya and the people trust the words of DSI's managing officials?

7. DSI has officially requested from the National Police 4 troops, or 600 fully armed officials, and a helicopter, and it will assume financial responsibility for these requests. When you include this with the addition of DSI's armored tank that is ready for deployment and reinforcements, it appears as if DSI is waging war in the middle of the city by deploying over a thousand armed officials, an armored tank, and a helicopter, in order to arrest an ailing, 72-year-old Buddhist monk, who is only a suspect in the case—not even a defendant.

This matter has caused distress for Buddhist monks nationally, for devotees of Phrathepyanmahamuni and for Buddhists worldwide. Many Buddhist organizations from around the world have submitted official requests to look into the actions of DSI and the prime minister, which has been broadcasted to an international audience. This has been so prominent to the point that Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha has had to issue a public statement to ask that DSI pursue the case in a non-violent manner.

8. Over 50,000 Buddhist monks from all over Thailand travelled here to give their moral encouragement to Most Ven. Dhammajayo and Wat Phra Dhammakaya because they are concerned as to why DSI is so abnormally driven in this case against a respected Buddhist monk. The Sangha of Thailand are carefully watching the actions of DSI as they fear DSI's actions may possibly cause the deterioration of Buddhism.
9. In regards to DSI's official request to the National Police for 600 officials and a helicopter in order to seize the temple—a matter that has garnered international attention—is this beyond necessary measure or not? Devotees of Wat Phra Dhammakaya have gathered here at the temple solely due to concern. If a third party is to step in and cause injury and death, how does DSI plan to take responsibility?
10. At this point in time, the case is under the the jurisdiction of the Office of the Attorney General. The devotees of Wat Phra Dhammakaya urge all parties to remain calm and await the decision of the Office of the Attorney General, to not interfere with the work of the Office, and to not 'use a sledgehammer to crack a nut', thus provoking unnecessary chaos in the community.

Mr. Ong-art Thamnitta

Spokesperson for the Devotees of Wat Phra Dhammakaya

15 June 2016