



DHAMMAKAYA FOUNDATION

PRESS RELEASE

Facts Regarding DSI Bid to Arrest Dhammakaya Abbot

An attempt by Thailand's Department of Special Investigation (DSI) to arrest the Abbot of Wat Phra Dhammakaya, Phrathepyanmahamuni (Most Ven. Dhammajayo) was rejected by the Criminal Court on 26th April. The Court recognized that the 72-year-old Abbot was suffering from several illnesses, including deep vein thrombosis and a chronic leg ulcer, which was confirmed by a panel of doctors.

This was the second attempt by the DSI to press charges of money laundering and receiving stolen property against Ven. Dhammajayo, which the Abbot has repeatedly denied. The DSI seeks to link the embezzlement of funds from the Klongchan Credit Union Cooperative (KCUC), with an unsolicited donation made to the temple by the Acting Chairman of the Credit Union.

Although the source of this donation was not revealed to Wat Phra Dhammakaya, when the circumstances were made known, followers of the temple raised the sum of 684,784,000 Thai baht to assist the victims of the Credit Union. KCUC issued a letter of appreciation, and withdrew all complaints against the temple.

The DSI prosecutor of case number 146/2556 proposed that a lawsuit be filed against Mr Supachai Srisupa-aksorn, the first suspect, and his conspirators, under the charge of theft from his employer. A further case, number 63/2557, was opened to charge Mr Supachai with money laundering and conspiring to commit fraud against the public. An additional order stated that if the first suspect is guilty of money laundering and there is evidence of other conspirators, further actions by law may be taken. Both of these cases are still under consideration.

The DSI then filed special case number 27/2559, which is a duplicate of case numbers 146/2556 and 63/2557. This contravenes the original orders by the DSI prosecutor. Creating a new special case from which partial evidence is drawn from the original case is a violation of the Thai law that states "two principals cannot be accused of the same offense".

In order to accuse Ven. Dhammajayo of both receiving stolen property and of money laundering, there must be evidence beyond reasonable doubt that he had the intention to conspire with Mr Supachai in embezzling KCUC money for personal use. However, the fact is, Ven. Dhammajayo received the donations in front of a large group, and all the handling of cheques and donations are the responsibility of the Wat Phra Dhammakaya financial officers. In addition, he has never withdrawn any amount in cash, leaving a clear money trail. This is uncharacteristic of a money laundering case, in which cash is often withdrawn in order to conceal the money trail.

When receiving the donations from Mr Supachai Srisupa-aksorn, neither Ven. Dhammajayo nor the Wat Phra Dhammakaya officers were aware that they came from any illegal activity. It was assumed that the money came from Mr Supachai's successful and profitable business, as he also donated generously to other temples, schools, universities, public charities and government sectors.

It has never been the temple's policy to question the source of donations, as is the case with many other religious and charitable organisations—it would be considered highly inappropriate to do so. Moreover, Mr Supachai's donation, while substantial, is not the largest donation the temple has received in the past.

To accuse Ven. Dhammajayo of misusing temple funds is a total denial of his dedication to the cause of Buddhism, as the donation to the temple, amounting to Baht 684,784,000, was used to construct buildings and facilities for the benefit of the general public. Since the founding of Wat Phra Dhammakaya in 1970, Ven. Dhammajayo and his supporters have worked tirelessly to create the largest Buddhist temple in Thailand, with more than three million devotees, and over 4,000 monks and novices. He has helped to propagate the message of Buddhism throughout the world, with more than 80 Dhammakaya Meditation Centres in 30 countries, while living a life of great simplicity and purity.

Why the DSI has chosen to ignore the obvious facts in this case brings to question the motives for this unjustified attack on the Buddhist community in Thailand, and one of its leading Buddhist monks—a monk who has devoted the past 47 years to the teachings of Lord Buddha, and the preservation of Buddhism in Thailand and around the world.

For more information please contact:

Ven. Pasura Dantamano
Chief of International Relations Division
pasura@dhammakaya.net