

Hello, my name is Apinan Issarakura Na Ayutthaya, now I am 17 years old. As the 18-year-old's birthday approached, I became aware of the path I was about to take to stand against injustice in this country or continue to consent and remain silent.

Conscientious objection first came into my mind when I was 16. At that time, I first met Netiwit Chotiphathaisal, my colleague at Santi Pracha Dhamma Library, and Thailand's declared conscientious objector. So, I would like to appreciate him, even though we don't work together anymore.

Nowadays, conscription is outdated. In this world at this century, countries in the world are competing with their economies and technologies, not military personnel. The fact that amount of the soldiers in the army are no longer the primary factor in defeating war rivals, but a scientific advancement and technological! Today, our country is no danger to the risk of war. I think we should turn to an all-volunteer military system. We will have better military quality, better preparedness, and efficiency. The people who want to be the soldiers will serve the country in their way as proud. If we continue to draft, we will have the quantity and the lack of quality soldiers as they do not want to be. In my opinion, the military in this situation is not a national service at all, but the destruction of the nation. For the new generation just graduated, instead of having their opportunity to bring the knowledge they have learned to develop our beloved country to be a prosperous and developed country. Moreover, not only they had to sacrifice their precious time for two years in the barracks. But also, in fact, some people still have to take care of their family or be the only child to take care of their parents. It is like destroying one's life. National service should not be limited to military service but should be acceptable to many. Just like we do not force anyone into a doctor or engineer, everyone should have the right to choose the way to benefit this country.

Military institutions deeply rooted in Thai society for a long time. We have many coup governments over a government that comes from the people. Since the Siamese revolution of 1932, we have had 13 successful coups, and more than 20 wasted constitutions like a toilet paper. Every constitution that the military uses will write that the country is governed by democracy. However, in practice, it is not so. For me, it is just an ingenious military dictator facing the word "Democracy." I am one of the new generation, so I want to get up, but not to get up and take a revolution like in the past. It is a peaceful way of using nonviolent methods and encouraging young people to think or fearlessly standing up for what they believe in. I believe that this approach will lead this country to sustainable democracy.

Where is freedom of speech? Imagine a situation that you just said something publicly in the way that you disagreed with the junta. Then, shortly after,

someone knocked at your door and sent you to the military re-education camp. Many activists who are my friend had a direct experience of this, but I haven't. However, no one can guarantee me that I will be safe in the future.

The military culture in this country is violent and brutal. Nevertheless, military institutions have been trying to convince us since childhood. We are often taught that the military is a sacrificial and praiseworthy profession. There is also military training in the school; the lessons are controlled according to the military needs. They want to control the mind of the people not to rise against them, to have abuses of human rights, to diminish human dignity and unfair practices. Many conscripts are enlisted. They have no life insurance. Some of them have been tortured to death, and so are the news of the country, as seen every year. The shocking thing is that in the last few months, even military students who have not yet reached military maturity have been subjected to such cruelty. However, no one or any organization is willing to condone the military. I cannot stand the injustice in a country where even the right to live is no longer certain

I am a Buddhist and killing others is a sin. With my belief, I cannot affiliate with the military and the war. The Thai people know this as well because it is one of the five precepts that we hold together. We say that we are a Buddhist country and love peace. But in practice, we reverse. When it comes to the military, the authorities in the country coerce us to commit crimes against the principal, claiming in the name of the law almost a hundred years before that never thought to revise it. Why don't we have the right to stay true to the faith that we believe ?

I declare here that I am a conscientious objector.

I will never ever be a soldier. I will not participate in all other military activities related to violence in all forms.

My stance on this, although in the future, I may have to go to court or go to jail. These decisions include the consequences. I am willing to receive it in all respects.