



S a y P e a c e F i r s t

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Nepal's First Peace Event 2013 with Prof. Dr. Johan Galtung

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Although the (re)integration of former combatants of the Maoist Army mostly into the society, but also a few into the Nepal Army, has partially culminated the peace process, Nepal still faces a number of challenges. The Constituent Assembly (CA) had become defunct on May 27, 2012 without promulgating a new constitution even after four years of its normal and extended tenure. And now, Nepal lacks elected bodies from central to grassroots levels. The debates over identity (ethnicity) based federal structure of the state had raised sharp differences among the mainstream political parties on the model and number of federal states. Besides, the informal power tussle between the President and the Prime Minister created doubts whether the transition to a Federal Democratic Republic would indeed be successful.

The political parties remain divided. Many constitutional authorities, namely Commission for Investigation and Abuse of Authority, Election Commission, Public Service Commission, Courts, etc. are functioning either without the head or members or both. The bureaucracy has largely been paralyzed. A blanket amnesty against the perpetrators of human rights during the decade old armed conflict (February 13, 1996 to November 21, 2006) has been widely condemned. The lack of regular budget in time has almost stopped investment and made it difficult for the donors to disburse their funds.

In order to overcome the protracted deadlock of all the stakeholders such as government authorities, political parties, civil society, academia, and the international community, there is an urgent need to share opinions and have common understanding on the current priorities of the nation to have general election as well as local elections putting behind all the differences. It seems that the experiences of national politicians and their pressure tactics are not enough to resolve the present political impasse. Perhaps an internationally acclaimed person of authority on conflict transformation by peaceful means may ignite the political consensus process amongst the concerned stakeholders and actors of Nepal. In the context, it is natural to have great expectations from the Founding Father of Peace Studies in the world, Professor Dr. Johan Galtung, who is visiting Nepal for the first Peace Event in Kathmandu from February 10th to 18th, 2013.

Who is Prof. Dr. Johan Galtung

Johan Galtung, the principal founder of Peace and Conflict Studies, was born in Oslo on October 24, 1930. He had earned a Ph.D. degree in Mathematics in 1956 and yet another Ph.D. in Sociology in 1957, both from the University of Oslo. He remains engaged in mediation and research in conflicts and variously lives in Spain, France, Japan and the USA,

Prof. Galtung is the founder of TRANSCEND: A Network for Peace, Development and Environment (1992), TRANSCEND Peace University, TRANSCEND Media Service, TRANSCEND University Press, TRANSCEND Peace Service, and TRANSCEND Research Institute. With 26 conveners, TRANSCEND is present in 14 regions of the world today, which include Latin America, North America, Euro Latina, Europe Deutsch, Europe Nordic, Eastern Europe, CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) including Russia, Africa, Arab World, Middle East, Southeast Asia, East Asia, Pacific Oceania and South Asia. PCSC in Kathmandu is one of the conveners in South Asia.

Prof. Galtung had founded the world's first academic peace institute, the International Peace Research Institute (PRIO) in Oslo in 1959 after returning from Columbia University in New York, where he had taught mathematical sociology. He had also founded the Journal of Peace Research in 1964 and he helped found International Peace Research Association in 1964. He had served as PRIO's director until 1969 when he was appointed as the world's first chair of Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Oslo where he continued for the next ten years.

He had served as the first president of the World Future Studies Federation from 1973 to 1977, and he also served as the Director General of the International University Center in Dubrovnik, Yugoslavia from 1974 to 1977. As a visiting professor, he has lectured in many universities, viz. Santiago, Chile; Tampere, Finland; Tromsø, Norway; Uppsala, Sweden; Torino, Italy; Alicante, Spain; Soka, Japan; the International Institute for Development Studies in Geneva; Princeton, Hawaii, Columbia and Saybrook; Sichuan; Berlin, Witten-Herdecke, Germany; Puebla, Mexico; and so on.

Prof. Galtung has probably taught more students at universities throughout the world than anyone else in history. He has also coordinated a big international research project on Goals, Processes and Indicators of Development with 16 sub-projects for the United Nations University 1978-81. Prof. Galtung has conducted a great deal of research in many fields and has made highly original contributions to peace studies, peace education, peace journalism, peace mathematics, peaceful conflict transformation, reconciliation, foreign policy, international relations, non-offensive defense, human rights, basic needs, development strategies, peace economics, macro-history, theory of civilizations, federalism, globalization, and global communications, theory of discourse, social pathologies, deep culture, deep structure, peace and religions, social science methodology, epistemology, sociology, ecology, and future studies. His list of publications so far consists of 1843 items comprising 160 books translated into 34 languages, including Nepali.

Prof. Galtung had introduced the concepts of negative and positive peace, and direct, structural and cultural violence. As his parents and ancestors were medical doctors and nurses for many generations, he makes use of the medical terms, viz. diagnosis, prognosis and therapy to tackle not only individual nation patients, but also societies by conducting their pathological tests in order to create violence-free *vasundhara*, the world altogether.

One of his recent books, *The Fall of the US Empire -- And then What?* predicts the end of the US hegemony by 2020. It has already created a big public debate, particularly in the USA. He lists 14 growing contradictions that he expects will lead to the decline and fall of the US Empire, leading

the USA to become a normal country like others, without conducting foreign military interventions and maintaining 850 military bases in 150 countries. Freed from the albatross of the empire, the US Republic may indeed blossom.

Based on a list of five growing and mutually reinforcing contradictions, he had predicted in 1980 that the Soviet empire would collapse within ten years, starting at its weakest point, the Berlin Wall. Few believed him at the time, but it happened -- two months before his predicted deadline.

Dr. Galtung's first book as its coauthor with his mentor Arne Naess, *Gandhi's Political Ethics* was published in 1955. One of the roots of his lifelong commitment to peace was seeing his father arrested by the Nazis as a 12-year old boy. At age 21, he became a conscientious objector, doing a year of civilian instead of military service. He was willing to serve the additional 6 months required of those who opted for civilian instead of military service, but only if he was allowed to work for peace. This was denied by the Norwegian government, and he was imprisoned with murderers and other violent criminals for six months.

Prof. Galtung is widely known as the Father of Peace Studies. In the past six decades, he has introduced peace studies as an academic discipline in many institutions. Today, more than 500 academic programs at various universities all over the world are offered as peace studies courses. Prof. Galtung has devoted his life in promoting peace by strengthening mutually beneficial and equitable cooperation, empathy and harmony, by healing past traumas through reconciliation, and by reducing violence through peaceful conflict transformation.

Prof. Galtung's tireless dedication to peace has been recognized with 13 honorary doctorates and professorships and an alternative Nobel Prize, the Right Livelihood Award, in 1987 besides many other peace awards. The Galtung Institute for Peace Theory and Peace Practice was established in Grenzach-Wyhlen, near Basel in Germany in 2011. Its goal is to continue contributing to further development of peace theory and practice in the interest of desperately needed reduction of human and environmental suffering.

At the Bottom

Prof. Galtung's visit invariably contributes to identify mediation and facilitation models for conflict transformation, conflict resolution, conflict management, and conflict prevention among the concerned parties, civil society and academia. His experiences on mediation and facilitation assist to spread, enhance and reinforce the public debate on peace, raise awareness and create a common understanding on peace and its priorities in order to manage people's expectations and capacities. It is hoped that his understanding will benefit the politicians who may work together in a post-conflict situation to eventually make Nepal's peace and transitional security process a tangible reality.