

Unofficial translated transcript. Distributed by UNDP Rangoon  
Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's public address  
NLD Headquarters, 14 November 2010

I have to begin by thanking you for your support. We haven't seen each other for a long time but I am happy to see that our mutual faith remains strong, it fortifies me. In order to do our work, we must know what the people want – you do know what you want, don't you? Well it's fine to know what you want but you must also know how you are going to achieve what you want. I believe that politics must be learned. I have often said, in my talks with the youth, I don't believe there is such a thing as good people or bad people, or smart or stupid people, I only believe that there are people who can learn and people who can't (Applause). I believe that we, the people, can learn very well. It's not enough to know what you want but also to know how to achieve it with integrity. I say this not to patronize, I say from experience that no matter what the goal, if the path is without integrity, it will lose its way and be destroyed. This is why we must achieve what we want with integrity.

I know you have lots of questions to ask me and I want to hear the voices of the people but I can't hear through the cacophony. I believe that I will now have the chance to listen to the voices of the people. While under restriction, I listened to foreign radio broadcasts to hear what the people are saying. It's very tiresome to listen to the radio for five to six hours a day but I do this out of regard for the people (Applause). So I believe that I am, to a degree, aware of the wishes of the people. I don't believe I know everything. This is not possible. So the people must make their voices heard by us. This will help us help the people. I believe that the people now realize that nothing can be accomplished without the participation of the people (Cheers and applause). Because nothing can be accomplished without the people's participation, we would like to create a democracy network across the world, of the people and by the people. It is only when we strive with this mentality, can we serenely achieve our democratic goals. In short, it means we have a lot of work to do. You will not get anything without working for it.

We Burmese blame it all on luck. But do you know what luck means? Luck means you reap what you sow. So if there is anything you want, you have to work to achieve it. We cannot simply bribe the people and promise them the impossible (Cheers and applause). We will try hard and pave the road that the people want. We will pave it together and we will take that road together. It's not right that one person paves the road while the other stands idly by. Speaking of paving roads, maybe I picked an inappropriate analogy (laughter and cheers). It was a slip of the tongue. What I mean is that we will walk the road that leads to the democratic goals. We will walk on it together, we will pave it together. It is only this way, can we reach our goals. Don't wait for others to do it for you. We will not "force" you to do it (alluding to forced labour). If you do not put your mind and soul into achieving it, otherwise, who knows whether it will end up with the tar being stolen (alluding to the shoddy quality of the roads being built because of corruption – loud cheers and applause follow).

I know that your show of support is not without expectation. The burden of these expectations is great and the responsibilities are immense. But I am not one to shy away from responsibility. But I am afraid of not being able to live up to my responsibilities (Applause). I will do my utmost to live up to these responsibilities and call on the people to help us, to advise us, to point out our shortcomings. Pointing out shortcomings, if done in sincere goodwill, is very helpful. It will help us help the people achieve their aspirations.

I would like to ask the people to please communicate with us openly and courageously. Please don't have any qualms about talking to us. We won't do anything to you (cheers and applause). If we are not in agreement, we will let you know. This is the basis of democracy – that of freedom of speech. But freedom to speak is not the same as freedom to be abusive (cheers). Well, there may be a bit of admonition (she laughs). It is very important to be able to achieve mutual understanding. To be able to exchange views. We have to practice this and improve on this.

Upon my release, the main change that I have seen is that there is a proliferation of camera –phones. I see camera–phones all over the place. This shows the development of communication. This development must be used for the good of the majority. Communication brings understanding. Please use communication to foster mutual understanding and unity. Show me your phones; let's see how many there are (cheers). My, there are so many. I used a phone like this for the first time yesterday. Six years ago these did not exist here. I did not even know where to talk into – the phone was so.. (she laughs) (sound drowned out by cheers and laughter). I will have to put up a sign for those who cannot hear me (cheers and applause. Sign that DASSK displayed not seen. DEBBIE'S NOTE: Phoebe Kennedy from the Independent reported "she held up a sign, in blue felt-tip, reading: "I love the Burmese people" with a tick beside it and her name beneath.") Loud chants of Amay Suu or Mother Suu).

But it is not enough just to say you love me, you have to work. So I thought what love means. Love means the desire for mutual happiness and the implementation of that desire. It is not enough to keep repeating "I love you" (cheers). If you want to give me that bouquet, pass it on. Why are you holding on to it? (Cheers when DASSK receives the bouquet).

I want to ask the people, to tell us what's on your mind. You can deliver the letter here, if you don't trust the postal service (laughter). I want to know what's on your mind. What has been in your mind over the past six years, what has changed. I can't know all of this at once. I have to study it. It's not feasible to speak to all of you individually. If possible, I'd like to hand over the mike to you and listen to what each of you has to say. It's not going to end. But I like that. It's so boring to be the only one to speak. If there is an exchange of dialogue, it creates harmony and is more beneficial. I feel that it is not democratic if one person does all the talking. Let's try it out. I will simply point to one of you in the crowd and ask you say a few words.

Persons from the crowd: 1. Together with Amay (Mother) Suu, we want to have a free democracy (cheers). Unintelligible screaming ending with “ I love Amay Suu. We love Amay Suu.

DASSK returns to mike: It looks like we will need a “Speakers corner”. To be able to hear the voices of the people.

(Addressing a commotion in the crowd:) “What is the problem over there? Can I help?” Is it because people at the back are pushing? (Crowd chants loudly) “Please have discipline,” referring to DASSK’s first historic speech at the Shwedagon in 1988. Don’t be so impatient. There will be other opportunities for us to talk. This will not be the only occasion. There will be many others. That is why. Let’s be patient.

I thank you for your patience. As I said just now, there is so much to do so you must save your strength. Well, it’s been twenty years of having a hard life, so you must be used to it. I don’t want you to continue to have a hard life. Having a hard life isn’t the point. The point is that the hard life must be worthwhile, and then one can have endurance. So you must save your strength to make it all worthwhile.

I want to tell you not to be dejected. Sometimes there may be some things in our country that will make you feel dejected. Surely you must feel that we have not gotten anywhere or that there has been no development (applause). But there is no reason to feel dejected. We must strive hard.

Perseverance is important. We must continue to persevere from the start to the finish. The work is never done. Even if something is finished, there will be something else. Building a nation is like this, one thing after the other has to be done. There will never be full satisfaction of the people but we must strive to achieve a measure of satisfaction. I cannot promise this, but with the trust, dependence and support of the people, I will be fortified because I cannot do it alone. I don’t want to do it alone. Doing it alone is not democracy (cheers). I have no intention to do it alone. I will do it with the majority, with the people of this country, and with the global community that have shown us goodwill and support. We will do it with everybody. We have to keep this firmly in mind.

Courage means is not what some people think, to be up in arms and being a hero. Courage means the resolve to achieve ones goals. We must have this kind of courage. Go to the movies if you want a hero. Courage is a daily task. Don’t we people have to muster the courage to face each day? We have to use this courage beneficially and effectively for our country.

It’s not enough to think only of oneself or one’s own family. I want to reiterate this. Please don’t have the attitude that politics do not concern you. My father has said that before, that you may not be concerned with politics but politics will be concerned with you, you can’t avoid this (applause). Everything is politics. Politics is not just coming here and supporting us. The housewife, who is cooking at home, also has something to do

with politics because she is struggling to feed her family with the money she has (cheers). Struggling to send children to school is politics. Everything is politics. No one is free of politics. So saying that politics does not concern you and that you do not wish to be involved in politics is a lack of awareness of politics. So I ask the people to try and understand politics and to teach us. We must teach one another. Unless the people teach us what democracy is, we will not make mistakes.

What is important in a democracy is that the people at the back must be able to keep those who are working in the front, under control. This is democracy (applause). The people, who are the majority, must have the right to keep the rulers, who are the minority, under control. This is democracy (applause). So I will accept it if the people keep me under control. But of course, I do not like it if those, who are not of the people, keep me in control (cheers and applause). But then, I only say this in passing. During the time of my detention I had a lot of interaction with the people who were in charge of my security. They have been good to me. I have to say what the truth is. Since one must show appreciation to those who are deserving, I say with sincerity that I am grateful to those who were in charge of my security. I want the people to be able to have mutual understanding and gratitude. A revered monk once said when I was young, that those who were worthy of gratitude and those who showed gratitude were hard to find. I found the latter hard to accept. I thought that human beings were capable of showing gratitude. But that is not true. There are some who show ingratitude (applause). What does showing gratitude mean? It means just to have mutual recognition.

(To commotion in the crowd): Well, you have to have a little forbearance. There is no question why you have to be angry just because someone stood up. As I said in front of my compound (yesterday) those in front must have forbearance and understanding of those at the back and likewise, those at the back must have forbearance and understanding of those in the front (applause).

So now I want to know how the people are going to embark on a journey of politics. So if we have to depend on the people, we must have an exchange of views. I will continue to work for national reconciliation among the people, among all of us. There is no one that I cannot work or talk with. If there is a will to work together, it can be done. If there is a will to talk to one another, it can be done. I will take this path. On taking this path, I declare that we need the might of the people. I ask you to support us with the might of the people. Whatever we decide, we will let the people know.

I haven't finished consulting with the NLD, but I will not only work with the NLD. I will work with all democratic entities and I would like the people to encompass us. We will tell the people, explain to them what our decisions are. There may be things that we decide which the people may not like. But this is natural. Not everyone can be of the same opinion. Accepting that there can be a difference of opinion is a democratic principle. Why do we do this? We must gain the trust of the people not the votes of the people (applause and cheers). We will gain the understanding and support of the people. I apologize that I cannot clarify this further at this stage but it would be reckless of me if I

were to start announcing one activity after the other, just after my release.

In the meantime, we would like to hear the voices of the people. We will decide how to proceed after listening to the voices of the people. But as I have said, we will use the might of the people and work with all the democratic forces and we will work for national reconciliation. In doing so, we will do it in a way that would bring the least damage to the people. I can't guarantee that there will be no damage at all. If I were to do so, it's another form of bribery to say that by following us, there will be no sacrifice. But we will find the least damaging way. There may be some sacrifice, we have suffered, our colleagues have suffered, so I ask you for a little forbearance if you have to sacrifice anything. You can't simply want something without sacrifice.

(Responding to someone in the crowd): If you say you had forbearance for too long, what was it that you had to forbear? It is important to differentiate between right and wrong and to have the courage to stand by what is right, but what is right can be relative to the occasion. My father used to say that he was not afraid to stand before the court of his conscience (cheers). Since I have stood before the court, I am not afraid to stand before the court of my conscience every day. I ask the people to stand before the court of their conscience to find the answer as to whether one is undertaking what should be done. If you can do this, your might will increase immensely. Remember if might is not used rightly, it is a menace. Might that is used rightly cannot be overcome by anyone (applause).

Let us now have a little test of your empathy, understanding and forbearance of one another. The people over there are complaining that they cannot hear. I am about to finish speaking. So can I suggest that the people in front make way for the people on the other side? (Chants of "Daw Suu" during crowd movement) ... So now you can hear can't you? So if one group of people were to always remain in one place - that's not good. (Crowd bursts into laughter as they catch the double meaning of the remark and the exercise). Now that's fair isn't it? (After crowd has managed to re-arrange themselves) (Further comments on crowd jostling removed.)

So now I would like to thank all of you who took the trouble to come here and to show your support. We have repeatedly said that we depend on the might of the people and we cannot succeed without the might of the people. This might of the people must be used systematically. When the people in front stand up for too long the people in the back get annoyed. The people in the front shouldn't be standing up for too long. The people in the back should also have a little forbearance if they are standing up for just a while. Well, so what, but it's different if they are standing up too long of course (crowd catches double meaning of the remark and laughs).

I would like to repeat what I said that we have to work together to achieve success. You will not succeed just by wishing and hoping. You must be able to know how to achieve your aspirations and have the courage and ability to do so. We will find the best way. That is to find a way that avoids bringing suffering to the people as much as possible to

achieve these goals. I am a fervent believer in national reconciliation. I believe that this is the path we should take. Let me openly tell the people here that I have no grudge against the people who kept me under restriction (cheers). I believe in human rights and the rule of law. I will always strive for this. I don't harbor hatred of anyone. I have no time for this. I have too much to do to harbor any hatred. The people in charge of keeping me under restriction were good to me. This is the truth and I value this and I am grateful.

Likewise in every aspect I would like everyone to have good interaction with one another. How wonderful would it be if the people were also treated as nicely as I was (cheers and applause)? But of course I don't mean that the people should be put under house arrest. So I would like to plead, "Please don't put the people under house arrest like I was, but please be nice to the people just as you were nice to me." (Cheers).

We must value the good things and be grateful things that are worthy of gratitude. Just because one doesn't like it, it does not mean that everything is bad. There are good things and there are bad things. So don't be angry if people say you are doing bad things. If you don't want the people to say this, then just don't do anything bad (cheers and applause). Just as I value what is good and am grateful, I am not hesitant to say so. It's so rewarding to be able to be able to give recognition to someone worthy of gratitude. I want to do this. I want to be so grateful so just do things that are worthy of gratitude and I will sing your praises all day. So I want to thank each and every one of the people. Of course, I would end up with a sore throat.

So let me say thank you. Keep up your strong resolve. People say that the courage of the Burmese is like straw fire. I don't like this. This shouldn't be so. A human being must have all its manifestations and live in human dignity. Do you want human rights? The Universal Declaration of Human Rights begins by saying that everyone is born with inherent dignity. This dignity must be upheld (applause). The dignity commensurate with these rights must be upheld. I don't wish to make a one-sided statement by repeating what should be done for the people. There are also things that the people must do. Everyone must know his or her responsibility and be able to fulfill them. Only then will our country develop. So it goes without saying that whether or not our country has developed, is something that the people will know more than I do (cheers). But rather than blaming who is at fault for this lack of development, I would only like to ask for the opportunities for us to work together hand in hand (applause).

I don't like the people having to hold out their hands to beg. I shall not hold out my hands to beg and I believe that my people do not wish to hold out their hands to beg (applause). I believe that people want the right to development so we must work to give the people the right to development. (Inaudible remark). There must be opportunities for people to be able to feed themselves to the full (applause).

We shall proceed in consultation with democratic entities and the NLD shall not go it alone but hand in hand with majority. Furthermore, the majority must be encompassed by the people. We cannot do it without the people and we ask for their assistance. I ask for

your faith and support (cheering). So keep up your strength. I feel bad to ask you to eat up (to keep up your strength) since I hear that you do not have enough to eat (laughter). I ask you to keep up your physical and mental strength. It is with this strength we shall work together to reach our goal. I would have to say that there are some of us who have lost sight of that goal. But to have to walk the path to reach this proper goal is priceless. Man is mortal. One day it will all be over, but before it is over, how one has led one's life is the most important.

So I take this opportunity to honour those of our colleagues and comrades who have given their lives to the cause for democracy; to honour our colleagues and comrades who are still in prison. Let us pray that they will be released as soon as possible (cheering).

End of public address.