



Indigenous Peoples: *Nurturing Pathways to a Wisdom-Driven Civilization*

The UN *International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples 2021*
“*Leaving No One Behind: Indigenous Peoples and the Call for a New Social Contract.*”

Statement of Solidarity
Asian School of Wisdom (ASW),
<https://asianschoolofwisdom.org>
Chiang Mai, Thailand

There are over 476 million indigenous peoples living in 90 countries across the world. In recognition of these communities, the UN and the global society celebrate the international day of the world's indigenous people on the 9th of August every year.

In recognition of the value and wisdom of indigenous people and their contributions, something significant took place in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The *Asian School of Wisdom (ASW)*, founded on the importance of the wisdom of indigenous peoples around the world, was launched on 30 July 2021. The online event was witnessed by 87 organizations from 12 countries. It unequivocally foregrounded the sapiential treasures of the indigenous peoples as a wisdom-driven civilization. And offering that more inclusive, wisdom pathways to our futures, to the world.

As the world reels from the shock of the pandemic, the beating of the gong at the launch in one corner of the planet re-echoes the call of Pope Francis in 2016 for “a change of era” that requires a strategic but wise transition from anthropocene to the sapientialocene, the age of wisdom. An era of cosmetic change, with unaltered emphasis on a limitless, exponential economic growth is no longer tenable. It also marks the need for us to recognise the ancient wisdom that Thich Nhat Hanh shares: “The earth is you. You are the earth. When you realize there is no separation...you fall completely in love with this beautiful planet”. The indigenous peoples of the world have by their simple living and being nurtured this love and the planet.

The UN theme for the *International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples 2021* is “Leaving no one behind: indigenous peoples and the call for a new social contract.” For many indigenous leaders, “leaving no one behind” only surreptitiously belies the painful truth that science, technology and economic have failed to address the complexities of the multiple crises plaguing our common home. In the asphyxia of this pandemic, traceable to a tyrannical anthropocentrism driven by a throwaway-capitalism, it is the Davos-Elites who are in dire need of a new social contract with humankind and otherkinds. Indigenous elders, on the contrary, have kept successive indigenous generations faithful to the sacred covenant/contract with their creators and ancestors to keep the ancestral wisdom enkindled in the hearts of the young.

For centuries, till as recent as 19 June, 2012, at the Rio De Janeiro UN Summit on Sustainable Development, ancestral wisdom has guided the indigenous leaders at Kari-Oca II +20 to alert the world leaders that culture has to be the most fundamental dimension of sustainable development. Such wisdom has guided generations of life-giving-caring indigenous wo/men elders, healers, mystics, prophets, sages, seers and shamans. They recurrently insist that the ancestral-mystical wisdom, embedded in the corpus of indigenous folklores and myths, is charged with spiritual meaning. They believe indigenous wisdom has creative power. Such creative power is unleashed and harnessed to overcome the communal crises that plagues the livelihood in their ancestral homeland. In confronting the communal crises of drug addiction, tyrannical bondage of the moneylenders, land encroachment, poverty, prostitution, and water shortage, with outside agencies, indigenous leaders harness the sacred power during colearning moments (Rean Rue Roum' Kan in Thai). For a wisdom-driven people, wisdom is never abstract but concrete, imbued with creative power for the struggle of the people against a hegemonic development model that financializes nature for profit.

On the occasion of the UN *International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples 2021*, may ASW offer another wholesome pathway of hope and resilience for a wisdom-driven indigenous civilization in its global struggle for a future with dignity. ASW hopes this is based on intergenerational food and health security, nature-nurturing livelihoods, land sovereignty, and in active solidarity with the struggles for the rights of all indigenous people on Mother Earth today. For in that struggle, we believe all of our well-being and futures are included.

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