

Transcript of the extemporaneous speech titled *Ahimsa and Karma – Principles for Peace Struggle* given by Perfecto `Boyet` Caparas<sup>i</sup> during the commemoration of the UN-declared *International Day of Peace*,<sup>ii</sup> held at the City Market West Plaza, Indianapolis, Indiana, USA, on Saturday, 21 September 2013

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Atma Namaste, everyone. To our Muslim brothers, Assalamu alaikum. Fellow human rights advocates, fellow peace advocates....

It is said, according to a Great Spiritual Teacher, that war happens because people are gullible. They are "easily manipulated by dubious religious, military and political leaders."

The key to stopping war is peace education. The masses need to be able to think for themselves independently and critically.

I came here to speak about *ahimsa* and *karma* as principles for our peace struggle.

What is *ahimsa*? It's quite popular, popularized by the great teacher Mahatma Gandhi. *Ahimsa* or non-violence. According to Master Choa Kok Sui, *ahimsa* simply means non-injury or lack of cruelty or ill-will. We should practice *ahimsa* in the level of thought or consciousness... physically, mentally, as well as verbally.

Now, *karma*, as you know, is an ancient law. We cannot harvest what we did not sow. If we want peace, we should sow the seeds of peace. If we want our human rights to be respected by others, we need to respect the human rights of other people. If we want to be treated with dignity and respect, we should also treat other people in the same breadth. As it is said, what comes around... what goes around comes around. You sow the wind, you reap a whirlwind. That is a fundamental law.

Now, as a human rights advocate, we should realize that the law of *karma* and the principle of *ahimsa* are actually interconnected.

What we want is peace, both internally as well as externally. We can develop internal qualities that will help create a world that's founded on healing, human rights and spirituality.

We cannot pursue peace without recognizing that divinity exists in each and every one of us. We should stress our own common humanity. In each and every person, at the core, lies the Divine Spark – the divinity underlying each person’s own humanity.

And this is the foundation of a new era of peace.

Thank you very much.

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With his background as an awarded investigative journalist and as an international human rights lawyer, he personally trains, supervises and directs IU McKinney Law’s J.D. and LL.M. students on how to prepare, write, and present human rights reports to UN human rights treaty bodies during their formal sessions in New York and Geneva.

He earned a Master of Laws (LL.M.) degree in American Law for Foreign Lawyers from McKinney Law in 2005 and an LL.M. Human Rights degree, with the highest honors, from the University of Hong Kong in 2001. He was conferred the Anna Wu Prize in Human Rights, the highest award for academic excellence given by the Faculty of Law, Centre for Comparative and Public Law, University of Hong Kong.

He examined peace issues in his master’s thesis titled *Enforcement and Implementation of The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict*, which was individually and independently critiqued and given the highest mark by three law faculty experts from the University of Hong Kong, where Mr. Caparas obtained his LL.M. Human Rights degree, with highest honors. His thesis is available at <https://scholarworks.iupui.edu/handle/1805/3409>

A licensed attorney in the Philippines, Mr. Caparas serves as the president of *Stairway Foundation, Inc.* and as the founder-convener of the *Coalition to Stop Child Detention through Restorative Justice*. He was the former executive director of the *Humanitarian Legal Assistance Foundation, Inc.* and the *Albert Schweitzer Association Philippines, Inc.*, which he had co-founded.

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