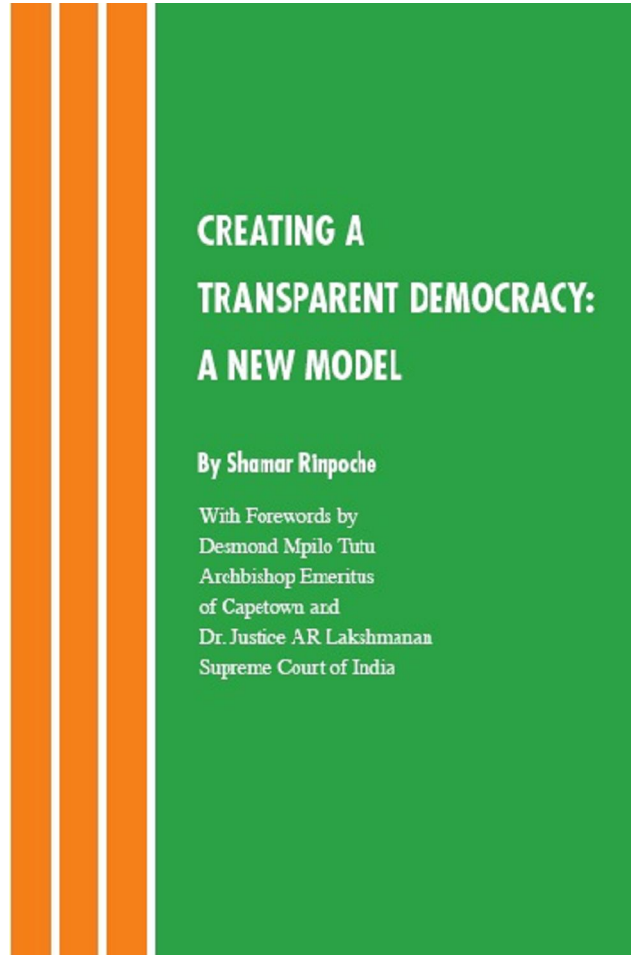


Creating a Transparent Democracy:

A new Model



Letter to Readers

Throughout history, wise thinkers have set out to achieve the peace and welfare of society through supremely practical and common-sense methods of governance. Present generations must strive to fulfil the ideals of their illustrious forefathers. It is the responsibility of each individual to maintain high standards and carry great cultures forward to meet today's challenges.

Unfortunately, throughout world governments, small political minds have wrecked havoc on the average citizen. The once-powerful ideals of democracy and self-rule have given way in many instances to inequity and corruption. The legitimate development needs of villagers and urban slum dwellers go unmet. The levers of power are far from the people most in need.

For this reason, I humbly suggest that contemporary thinkers and decision-makers consider the ideas I have set out in the accompanying booklet, which describes in some detail a pattern for a transparent and democratic governance structure. In large part, my ideas have been inspired by the reasoning of the great men of India, from Buddha to Gandhi.

The booklet's central concept is decentralised democracy, with villagers empowered to directly influence how government funds are spent near their homes. The emphasis is on bringing political representation to citizens that is genuinely accountable at the local level. The system builds from the village level up. It includes many levels of transparency and considerable oversight to address the corruption that often diverts public money from its rightful purpose.

This approach could help solve many of the troubles occurring in existing systems. For instance, the ideas on how to conduct elections without malicious and expensive campaigns could remedy the frightfully expensive presidential campaigns of the United States. It could also help to correct the unproductive involvement of innumerable parties in an Indian election, which inevitably results in a weak government.

Many existing democracies already have had considerable experience in decentralising government functions—experience that will be helpful in applying the more thorough reorganisation I have suggested in my booklet.

Of course, my ideas can be improved in many ways. This booklet suggests a working basis for reform, but a basis that will evolve greatly as people ponder it and attempt to put it into action. It is my most sincere wish to see democracy flourish throughout the world, and it is for that reason that I ask you to consider my proposal for the benefit of all living beings in the world.

I am highly honoured that Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Mpilo Tutu has graced my book with a Foreword. As one of today's great men of peace, his actions and beliefs reflect many of the principles I espouse in this book. I am most grateful to him.

In humility and hope,

Shamar Rinpoche

If you cannot find the booklet in your local bookstore, try purchasing it from: Bodhi Path - Buddhistisches Zentrum e. V. - D77871 Renchen-Ulm - Kaierstrasse 18.

Tel.: +(49) 784 372 32 - www.bodhipath-renchen-ulm.de