

# May love overcome all the dictators

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**How did you lose your love? To death? To prison? Or to a mysterious disappearance? For Thalufah activist “Mint” or “Mintermint,” the love of her life was taken away when the authorities stripped him of his freedom, locked him up behind bars at the Bangkok Remand Prison, and denied him bail.**

**This is a letter from her to him, a bittersweet memoir reminiscing on her love and her struggle, one she hopes will one day reach him.**

By Mintermint Thalufa

Many political activists have been arrested and detained. They are being treated as if they were not human, although they were just exercising their rights as citizens. They demand democracy as is guaranteed in the constitution. However, government officials have been using their power illegitimately, abusing it to round up political activists and those who take a stand against injustice.

If you ask me who these people are, I would say that they are members of a family, a friend, a brother or sister, or the love of someone, such as myself. My love was taken away from me by the Thai government.

He is “Pao Thalufah,” or [Pawarit Yamying](#). He is a political science student at Ramkhamhaeng

University who was able to discern the people's suffering, who turned himself into an activist, and who's now become a political prisoner. He has been detained at the Bangkok Remand Prison, Wing 2, for 25 days (as of 25 Oct.) after he was accused of having thrown paint at the Thung Song Hong police station in August. They said he violated his bail condition in a case from October last year, although the court has yet to give a ruling.

He was imprisoned along with my two other friends - "Dino Thalufah" and "Peek Thalufah." Before them, there was Pai, Penguin, and several other of my friends who have been thrown into jail.

For me, it's painful not only because my boyfriend has been taken away, but also because there is no justice in the justice system at all!

I see my friends and ordinary people being arrested by officers on a daily basis. They use violence to break up the people's rallies. It keeps reminding me that the government doesn't serve the people but instead serves the elites who suppress and trample on the people.



**Pao (left) and Peek walking in the action, "Walk Beyond the Sky," at which activists walked 247.5 km. from Korat to Bangkok in March earlier this year.**

Battling for democracy, during which I've learned to love and to fight at the same time, it's been an agony I have had to keep to myself. But I have to power through as one day everyone may all triumph.

I can't call myself or the other activists a martyr, but this is the way I see it: Once we learned of the injustice in the country that we love, we cannot keep standing still, and we hope other people would also not give in.

My boyfriend and I have taken our stand with the "Thalufah" [Beyond the Sky] group, led by Pai Jatupat. He has spearheaded the group's bid to oust Prayut Chan-ocha, draft a new constitution, and

reform the monarchy. We started out with the three main demands, but today, we need to add one more – reform the justice system, restore access to bail – to press for what’s right for the people and the political activists who’ve been denied bail.

We advocate as a group. We’ve been through so many ups and downs together. It’s true, learning of the people’s suffering together was what led us to falling in love. We met. We learned about each other. Finally, we chose to work together. After the movement of the Isaan Ratsadon group began, one pivotal moment happened at the Democracy Monument. On Oct. 13, 2020, the police dispersed the rally violently and arrested protesters for violations of the public cleanliness law.

That was the first time my boyfriend was arrested. I saw these officers brutally take my friends away. They kicked them, punched them. They were robbed of their freedom for six days. It was clearly illegitimate, until everyone finally was granted bail.

And that was also the first time I learned what it’s like to have my love taken away from me. I must insist that demanding democracy is within our rights, and the officers don’t have the authority to violate our rights and freedom. However, we are now in a period of an authoritarian government that abuses its power and completely disregards the people’s rights.

Though he was returned to me that time, it didn’t mean that we could continue our lives as an ordinary couple. We still have to continue our fight in the democracy movement, as our goal has yet to be reached.



**Mint and Pao at a rally at the Victory Monument in 2020.**

My boyfriend and I work together. We do our different parts. We take our own responsibilities. All roles equally matter. We can’t do without a single one of us.

We barely have time to go on a date, to take a trip to another province, like how other young couples normally do. Our dates are at protests, in the fieldwork where we help locals who’ve been caught up in land disputes. We don’t live separate lives as a couple. We live and commune with all of our fellow activists. Our love is not special. I try to treat all my friends the same way I treat my boyfriend. It’s always been like that.



While we learn to love and protest together, we also get to learn about the lives of many of our friends. All of us take care of one another like a family. We listen to their troubles and we exchange.

Sometimes, I get upset because my boyfriend doesn't have a lot of time for me. However, he, with his strong mind, always comforts me by saying, "Although we don't have time to spend our lives together, at least we're still on the same battlefield."

Yes, I can confirm that my boyfriend loves the people and his friends in the movement even more that he loves me, and it doesn't cause me any dismay. I see him work with such conviction, such determination to complete this mission. Work always comes first for him. I can say he's a workaholic.

But it's work without a salary that would allow him to give something back to his family. Instead, his family has been supporting, at the age of 25. This is his job, and his family always understands and feels proud of him for that.

We might call it the "job of revolution." Although he has sacrificed so many things in life, to be away from his family and home, he has chosen this path with a passion to change society for the better.

As a couple, we continue to give each other moral support. I still have to keep working. Even though he's not here, he still fights from behind bars. I still fight out here, waiting with hope, even if we don't get to keep up the fight together outside the prison.

I still remember a quote from Seni Saowapong's book, *The Love of Wallaya*, that my boyfriend read while in the Bangkok Remand Prison last October and which he recommended that I read.

"Love that is just about happiness or the desire of a person, or at most two people, is a small love. People should have a big love that extends to other lives, to all of the people."

Pao had said, "When I read it, it reminded me of you." It was romantic, but when I think about it now, it's quite painful.

We should have been able to read it together, without bars or walls separating us!

I don't think of myself as Wallaya but this book has been an inspiration. It inspires me to read it again when I'm feeling exhausted and weary. It encourages me to continue the fight, and push the wheel of these historical changes forward.

On Oct. 1, my boyfriend was detained for a second time, and again I had to learn to live while my love was taken away. It's been days since I heard his voice, seen his face, hugged him like I used to. I've only received messages from a lawyer who visits him. When I read the messages of support to people on the outside, sometimes I break into tears. I can only imagine...

What book is he reading now?

Has he been missing me?

Is he counting the days until he can come out and hug me?

I haven't had any chance to hear his voice. Although I want to visit and talk to him, the correctional department won't allow any family visits, using COVID-19 outbreaks as a cover.

It's hurtful that the justice system is using these excuses to keep us apart. He hasn't even been convicted. He's still innocent but instead they've imprisoned him, putting him at risk of the

[Covid-19] epidemic. The ones who should be put in jail are in fact the state officials who abuse their power, not seeing the people.



**Thalufah staging a march in Khon Kaen on June 21, calling for Prayuth Chan-ocha to step down as prime minister.**

To have the bail request denied like this makes me wonder: The people who you are slapping with injustice, you really can't see them? They are members of a family, or the love of someone waiting to spend their lives with. You must have a family or someone you love as well, don't you?

While thinking about him, I've also thought about what "Yajai Thalufah" said. He's a friend I see as a poetry enthusiast, and another person thrown into jail. He once said, "Today's feeling is filled with disappointment, hatred has built up for all things as they are. I hate the f\*\*\*\*d-up justice system that is so merciless to those who mean well for society."

Although our fight has been a struggle. We've been beaten down over and over again – we still have faith in the people, the people who would come out to fight alongside us to change our country this time. I still hope, and I still count the days.

I keep telling my love, "I know that you are strong, but if you are in pain, or feel disappointed in the justice system, please share it with me. Share your sorrow and your joy with me. Let us share half and half."

We won't give up, and we will keep up the fight together.

That's probably the only way I can take care of my love for now, waiting for the day he and all of my

friends are freed, for all of them to again together take a stand out here.

Though I can't pin my hope on the justice system, I still hope. I hope that we and the people will prevail.

May love overcome all the dictators.

With all the love between the two of us, who love all the people as well.

Read Thai version [here](#)