

STATEMENT ON CLOSURE OF THE MIDNIGHT UNIVERSITY
Sunday, October 1, 2006

Antislavery Literature Project

The Antislavery Literature Project is a public education project that provides scholarly texts and digital materials free to all. We are one of many online projects conceived and operated along principles of accessible, global, and democratic education. Suppression of free speech is inimical to these principles.

The Midnight University in Thailand is an online educational project that provides informal education to working people. In the wake of the military coup of September 19 and government policing of critical comment online, Thai authorities ordered the closing of Midnight University's website.

Attempts to suppress public freedoms and public education are anathema and these violations are our concern. The Antislavery Literature Project, which regards human rights as its central concern, opposes this assault against online education and expresses its solidarity with the Midnight University. We urge you to lend them your support.

The following information was made available over the Nettime list:

Sent: Sat 9/30/2006 9:56 AM
From: nettime-l-request@bbs.thing.net; on behalf of; Keiko Sei [keikosei@gmail.com]
To: nettime-l@bbs.thing.net
Re: <nettime> Important Thai education site closed

Hello,

This mail is sent by Bcc. As you know, there was coup d'etat in Thailand on Sept.19. Despite the attempt by the military council to portrait it as a friendly coup, they are imposing censorship in various fields. Recently they closed the important on-line education site, Midnight University <www.midnightuniv.org>. This on-line education has been created for those people who cannot afford to go to higher education to be informed and empowered. It is one of the most enlightening media in Thailand, and I contribute to them, too, for free and copyleft, as I support their object. In fact this is the second time they are closed down by the authority: the first time because by the Thaksin government, and this time because they are critical towards the coup and the military council. The closure of their site seriously obstructs educational process of millions of people who depend on them, blocking the free flow of information and exchange of

people's ideas, and is a total setback of democratic process of the country, just like the coup d'etat is. I would appreciate if you help their petition campaign by adding your name and circulate their message to your friends. Thank you very much for your constant help for the democratic path of South East Asia.

Keiko

----- Forwarded message -----

From: somkiat tangnamo <midnightuniv@gmail.com>

Date: Sep 30, 2006 2:59 PM

Subject: Closure - The Minightuniv web

To: keikosei@gmail.com

Dear Keiko Sei

The Midnight University Website, the foremost free and critical educational and public intellectual website in Thailand with over freely accessible 1,500 scholarly articles, a lively webboard with ongoing thought-provoking debates, which receives well over 2.5 million visits per month from viewers around the world, has already been shut down by the Thai Information & Communications Ministry last night, acting under the order of the self-styled military Council of Democratic Reform. This is not only a huge loss to academic and intellectual freedom in Thai society, but also a closure of a free forum for the contention of ideas to find a peaceful alternative to violent conflict in Thailand.

We are gathering signatures for a campaign to pressure for the reversion of this unjustifiable violation of the Thai people's right to information and free expression by the Thai authorities. So, please consider adding your and your friends' names to the end of this message and e-mail it back to me so that we could save what little is left of precious freedom and wisdom in Thai society in these dark and difficult times.

Sincerely,

Somkiat Tangnamo