POLITICAL NEEDS FOR LAY PARTICIPATION AROUND THE GLOBE

Trial of Jury provides the citizen the important legal shield from government oppression and unreasonable prosecution. Trial by jury also acts as catalyst in promoting the importance of lay participation in the community and strengthening the perception of trial fairness and verdict legitimacy. Jury proceedings also provide the principles of morality, presumption of innocence, burden of proof and higher evidentiary standard.

Today, it is thus no wonder that many citizens around the world are embracing the introduction of jury or lay judges in democratizing their own jurisprudence and legal systems….. So many countries have rushed to incorporate jury trials in their legal system.

Japan, Korea, china, Taiwan, Hongkong, Mexico, Venezuela, Bolivia, Argentina, Uzbekistan, Kajikistan, Russia and many former Soviet Republic in Central Asia, Spain, Thailand, Pakistan, New Zealand, England, France, Italy, are some of the countries that are under the jury system.

The recent institution and re-introduction of trial by jury in many countries in the world also follows the comparable democratic shift in the balance of political power and order----the collapse of the soviet Union in the late 1980s.

Our survival as conscientious citizens of the world may depend on the establishment of Transcommunal alliance of these emerging grassroots organizations that function as the important popular check on judicial and political power of the government. In the near future, the transcommunal project involving similar grassroots organizations will strengthen the global effort to elevate and transform ordinary citizens into political activists and intellectuals.

By Professor Hiroshi Fukurai, Professor of Sociology, UCLA

We have experienced being under a dictator, we have been ruled by a military man, by a movie actor, and lately by a reputedly the most corrupt President we ever had.
We were not able to fight the abuses of Marcos and Arroyo particularly on unexplained disappearance and killings; corruption and unabated embezzlement of public funds, corruption in the Judiciary, misuse of Pork Barrel Funds, election frauds, military and PNP abuses such as Pabaon funds, direct bribes paid to public officials, diversion of Funds intended for public use, etc.,

But if we have the grand jury and Jury installed, these public officials will think ten times before they attempt to rob us and the country. They are so audacious because our judicial system is kaput, inutele, toothless, antiquated, walang silbi.


Tayo ba ay nasa ibang mundo? Kailan po ba tayo magigising? What will it take to make us realize that it only takes the adoption of the Jury trial system to avoid being called the sick man of Asia.