



THE ROAD TO ACHIEVING DEMOCRACY

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There was a time in the past when democracy had been considered demo-crazy by many in my country. Having had to inherit American-style democracy, my country had no definite perspective on this form of government largely because it was a young republic then. Now, many decades into self-governance later, my country has had generation after generation of leaders who have, in one way or another, attempted to make their mark in a third world nation struggling to achieve self-identity and independence. It's been a long and bumpy ride overall, but my people, resilient as they are, can only hope that there are brighter days ahead for all of us.

Aristotle wrote that democracy had its roots in Athenian democracy, but which was of oligarchic style. In this respect, such Grecian democracy observed empowerment of a minority group, the archons, who were elected into power by virtue of their birth and wealth. It also had societal classes, where the poorer peoples served the rich, tilled, planted and harvested on the lands of the rich and paid rent to the rich. (<http://constitution.org/elec/Democracy.htm>) Apparently, Grecian democracy was not the real thing. Through the centuries, democracy apparently grew in structure and broader in context. With a more enlightened perspective on what democracy truly was, a clearer view of what representative government was supposed to embody was achieved. However, it could not be sufficiently proven that early whether a representative government truly embodied all the wishes of the people it was supposed to represent, and not the wishes of the few that controlled it.

In my youth, I remember there being a lot of action on the streets because of how people generally disagreed with the policies of government. People disappeared just for daring to give voice to the fears of the general populace, and just because they were brave enough to stand for the people's rights. Before Big Brother was even conceived, it had already seemed that walls had ears and words had wings. Saying anything that was not in agreement with any government policy or political decision was like giving oneself a death sentence. Obviously, Grecian democracy was still in power, with influence exercised by the elite few.

Perhaps, what my country has been enjoying now is more or less a more potent form of democracy. Now, we are able to write and speak freely without fear of being branded anarchists, enemies of the state or subscribing to treason. Mass media enjoys a freedom where it can broadcast without fear of being shut down or without its members readily thrown into prison for citing progressive ideas. We have free use of social networking sites to voice even our tiniest disappointments with how our government is being run. The road is still long, but hope springs eternal.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Do you personally subscribe to a democratic form of government? Why or why not?
2. What are the problems of a democratic form of government?
3. Is democracy the final solution to all of the world's governance problems? Why or why not?
4. What are the qualifications that a democratic leader must possess?
5. Why do the notions of freedom and democracy rest on the same foundations?