

“Teacher Glenn: how a political scientist educated a peace researcher”

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Abstract

This paper argues that the nonkilling political scientist Glenn D. Paige could be seen as an extraordinary peace educator. It will be organized through 3 words-reading, writing and talisman. It begins with a brief discussion of the method used in understanding political scientist Glenn D. Paige’s life as a teacher. Then the author’s “reading” and “writing” experiences, from taking courses with him, and writing a Ph.D. dissertation under him, will be examined. The way in which political science education could perhaps be considered a form of peace education will be discussed. The concluding section on “talisman” advances Paige’s central idea of politics in terms of making decisions, especially to choose alternatives which could mitigate the killing effects and enhance nonkilling possibilities.

Introduction

In 2007, the former head of nuclear weapons research and development at Los Alamos National Laboratory, Stephen Younger published a book that seeks to design ways to reduce the probability of future mass violence. In so doing he turned to the idea found in the book *Nonkilling Global Political Science*, written by Glenn D. Paige, a retired professor of political science from the University of Hawai’i. Paige’s book raised the question why precious little has been done to advance the problem of reducing large scale violence despite numerous programs to end poverty, reduce illiteracy, and eliminate preventable disease. Then Younger wrote a cryptic phrase about Paige’s book: “the publication of which is a story in itself” (Younger 2007, 51).

The publication of Paige’s *Nonkilling Global Political Science* is indeed quite a story. The manuscript was roundly rejected by prestigious publishers, including Princeton University Press-his alma mater, and the Free Press-publishers of his previous works. Then after Paige finally self-published the book with Xlibris in 2002, the idea of “nonkilling” has surprisingly received global attention. The term “nonkilling” now appears in *The Oxford International Encyclopedia of Peace*, Unesco’s *Encyclopedia of Life Support System*, and *Encyclopedia of Violence, Peace and Conflict*. It is also found in the 2007 “Charter for a World Without Violence” adopted by the Nobel Peace Laureates at their world summit in Rome calling on “all to work together towards a just, killing-free world in which everyone has a right not to be killed and the responsibility not to kill other.[1]

Paige’s book has since been translated into 30 languages, including Thai, among others. The Center for Global Nonkilling that Paige founded now has 11 research committees ranging from Anthropology to Law Studies to Neuroscience working on different aspects of nonkilling. CGNK has since published some 22 volumes on various issues related to

nonkilling which include *Nonkilling Media*, *Nonkilling Balkans*, and *Nonkilling Futures*, among others (<https://nonkilling.org/center/publications-media/books-cgmk-publications/>).

This paper is about the man behind the concept, the book(s), and the non-profit organization working to promote the idea of nonkilling he created. It is a portrait of the man as a political science teacher seen from the eyes of one of his students whom he had continued to share his new found life project which has fostered a shift in the student's research to move closer to the teacher's idea of nonkilling in recent years. I would argue that by touching on some aspects of his life as a political science teacher, Paige emerges as an extraordinary peace educator who not only taught his student the content of peace and nonviolence with the vision of a nonkilling society, but also how to live both as a nonviolence educator-peace researcher with a critical belief in the human propensity for nonkilling.

Drawn from my experiences in taking courses with him and writing a Ph.D. dissertation under him, this paper will be organized through 3 words, two of these are conventional from the three R's in education: reading and writing. But for arithmetic, the third "R" will be replaced with the word "talisman". This paper begins with a brief discussion of the method I will use in understanding the life of the political scientist Glenn D. Paige as my teacher. Then my experiences in "reading" and "writing" with him will be examined. The way in which my political science education could perhaps be considered a form of peace education will be discussed. The concluding section on "talisman" advances Paige's central idea of politics in terms of making decisions to mitigate killing and its effects, as well as to enhance nonkilling possibilities for the world.

Telling story of a life as biography

It goes without saying that there are numerous ways to tell a life story. For an academic, one obvious way is to look at his/her works. Though Paige has written so many important works for students in the fields of decision making (Paige 1968), and political leadership (Paige 1977), judging from the number of copies available and the numerous translations into popular languages of the world, his most influential book is undoubtedly *Nonkilling Global Political Science* (2002, 2007).

Since I have dealt with the academic content of Paige's *Nonkilling Global Political Science* elsewhere (Satha-Anand 2012, 221-227), in telling the life of my teacher here, I wish to deal with the most personal part of an academic book-the acknowledgement. Unlike a book's introduction which usually serves as its architecture, a book's acknowledgement, and oftentimes together with its preface, can be seen as its biography.

The book *Nonkilling Global Political Science* has only 3 pages of Acknowledgement (Paige 2007, xv-xvii). But in these three pages, there are 140 names of people Paige felt grateful for in the process of writing this extraordinary book. These names were carefully placed into 13 categories: doctoral students (3), teachers and Gandhi (3), spiritual leaders (9), natural-biological-social scientists (20), humanities scholars (7), librarians (2), political

leaders (18), educators (5), trainers (3), physicians of body and spirit (6), champions of innovation (23), manuscript readers/commentators (40) and his beloved wife-Glenda Paige.[1] Certainly some of the names appear in more than one categories but if the acknowledgement is a part of the book's biography, in listing so many neatly arranged into separate categories, what does it say about the author's character? It is arguably reflective of Paige's character as a thorough and highly systematic scholar, a social scientist who would find patterns of the world, categorize them and arrange the data accordingly. While the number of categories and people indicate his thoroughness, the types of category and people's backgrounds point to the systemic ways his mind worked, and the interdisciplinary reach evident in all his studies. Most importantly, perhaps, is his attempt to honor people no matter how large or small their roles are in by being so inclusive in his gratitude. This however is but a glimpse of the life of a man, certainly not his biography.

In *Understanding Biographies*, the Danish historian Possing defines biography as “a story about and interpretation of a life” (2017, 22). Since the story is written by someone else, it necessarily reflects the subjectivity of its author. The writer needs to ask difficult questions which in this case include, why does one need to write about this person: Glenn D. Paige? Who would find this writing significant? And why? What kind of sources would be used to construct a narrative so that the subject's life could be told? Possing argues that biographies can take different shapes depending on the person being portrayed, the material used to tell their story, the questions the biographer poses of these materials, and the theories applied to the task (2017, 8-9).

In this paper, I am trying to tell a story of how a visionary American political scientist taught a young graduate student from Thailand to become a peace researcher. It is a story worth sharing with those interested in how peace education engenders peace research, using materials based on my own experiences as his life-long student who has become a peace researcher conducting research on violence and nonviolence in Asia during the last thirty some years.

The way this story will be told is based on the method suggested by Plutarch (46-119 CE), perhaps the world's best known and yet oftentimes forgotten biographer. I believe Paige deeply appreciated Plutarch's writings (Paige 1983, 183-186). His *Parallel Lives* examines the deeds and characters of Greek and Roman soldiers and statesmen, among others. In the beginning of the chapter on Alexander, he writes that his intention was not to write histories but lives. In writing lives, it is sometimes not “the most glorious exploits” that could characterize the person but “a matter of lesser moment, an expression or a jest,” that could help readers construe the character of a person better (Plutarch. 1960, 184). Following Plutarch's approach to study the eminent lives at a distance, my treatment of Paige as a teacher will bring up experiences in “lesser moments” as a way to look at his life. But how does one choose these “lesser moments” to portray the life of a man?

These “lesser moments” were captured in every student's ordinary life with his/her teacher. Here I would go to the basic rule common to most since childhood: the three R's—reading, writing and arithmetic. I will explore these “lesser moments” through my experiences in “reading” and “writing” with Glenn. But the third “R”—arithmetic is replaced by the word “talisman”. It was a gift Glenn gave me when I completed my formal education under him.

Readings

“Don’t call me Dr. Paige. You can either call me Professor Paige or simply Glenn.” Those were the first words I remembered from my first encounter with Glenn in the “Nonviolent Political Alternatives” graduate class I took with him in early 1978. Coming from Thailand where calling one’s teacher by his/her first name without the respectable title “Ajarn” (teacher) was unthinkable. But a semester at the Department of Political Science, University of Hawai’i at Manoa had softened my reluctance about this. So I addressed him since as “Glenn” while in my head it was and will always be “Teacher Glenn”.

Glenn’s course on “nonviolent political alternatives” which I took forty years ago needs to be seen in the context of where I came from. In August 1977, I was only 22 years old when I left Thailand to pursue my graduate study with the East-West Center scholarship at the Department of Political Science, University of Hawai’i at Manoa. A year earlier my university in Bangkok was the site of perhaps the most brutal attack against peaceful protesters ever occurred in Thai society. In October 1976 protesters, mostly students, gathered peacefully at Thammasat University in Bangkok to protest against the return of a military dictator ousted in another peaceful protest three years earlier. At dawn of October 6, 1976 the university was viciously attacked by paramilitary groups and government forces. Many were burned alive. Some were hung from tamarind trees right outside the university, their dead bodies mutilated while bystanders watched as though they were watching a play, not the gruesome killing of human beings. Thousands of protesters were arrested. A coup d’état followed and a most right-wing government with extremely authoritarian control was installed. All this led to the exodus of some 3,000 students to join the Communist Party of Thailand to violently fight the government (Satha-Anand 2007, 185).

With the bloody episode still in the back of my mind, Glenn introduced me to literature I had never known before. They included Galtung’s classic essay “Violence, Peace and Peace Research” (1969), Sivard’s wonderfully informative *World Military and Social Expenditures* (1978), Sharp’s magnum opus *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* (1973), Cooney and Michalowski’s colorful *The Power of the People* (1977), and Dhawan’s profound *The Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi* (1957). Together these readings suggested that peace is not merely an absence of war, but also for people to live free of injustice or structural violence such as poverty; that global resources wasted on military expenditures robbed the world of opportunities to peacefully better human lives through social expenditures, that Gandhi’s thought was much more sophisticated upon philosophical reflection; that Gandhi was not the only example of nonviolent actions, but there have been so many examples of people from various cultures who chose nonviolent action grounded in a radical understanding of a consent theory of power to fight against different forms of oppression. Many of these examples were stories of successful nonviolent struggles, not unlike the Indian story.

The nonviolent political alternatives class did not stop there. Questions were raised about the notions of violence itself. What about the differences between violence and aggression? And then is human nature violent or peaceful? In my mind, this question is in fact most fundamental for the possibility of nonviolent action because though we could have wonderful theories of nonviolence as well as noble religious teachings paving the ways towards peace, but if “human nature” is cursed to drown in the ocean of violence, then all this

would be pointless. In thinking through such questions, Glenn then brought his students to read works such as Lorenz's *On Aggression* to explore the more psychological aspects of the problem. For the cultural aspects, I was introduced to Chagnon's *Yanomamo: the Fierce People* (1968) and *Semai: the nonviolent people of Malaya*. The class also had to read a strange little experiment in Ethology that showed the students that even natural and mortal enemies like cats and rats could be taught to make peace and cooperate instead of killing one another (Tsai 1963). If even animals that are natural enemies could turn into comrades in pursuit of a common goal, the obvious question would be: what about humans?

Glenn's teaching was clearly influenced by his two Princeton teachers: Profs. Richard C. Snyder and H. Hubert Wilson. His eyes sparkled with fond memories as he told me about Snyder's classroom when we spoke about it a few years before he passed away. Snyder taught him to respect science, yet appreciate that it was values that illuminate things, to help us see things that we would otherwise neglect. In Snyder's seminar at Princeton on decision making, scholars from numerous disciplines were invited to share their research. As a result, Glenn's political science has always been to utilize interdisciplinary approach to examine the ways in which people, leaders and their followers, make decision among alternatives. Wilson, on the other hand, influenced him about the courage to speak truths to power, "even if it sometimes means to stand alone" (Paige 2007, xv).

I still remembered the feeling which resulted from taking Glenn's nonviolent political alternatives course. It was a mixture of amazement and joy to learn that there were indeed nonviolent alternatives; and that they were not ideal but had been put into practices by real people in history; that great though they are, Gandhi and King are not the only ones, there have been many others. Some of these leaders are lesser known names to me such as Danilo Dolci, Cesar Chavez, Dom Helder Camara, or Kenneth David Kaunda (Hope and Young 1979). But the most important aspect is that most who took part in nonviolent movements have been nameless heroes. Moreover, these alternatives could be understood from solid theories while the possibilities of getting rid of/getting out of violence for humans are supported by ground-breaking empirical and scientific knowledge. Glenn's "Nonviolent political alternatives" course gave me a knowledge-based hope necessary to free myself from the heavy chain of violence that had earlier trapped me in despair.

Writings

The papers that I submitted to Glenn always came back with lots of his remarks in black ink-his preferred pen. Many of his remarks were not about my thoughts on the subjects but my language proficiency. Since English is not my first language, I was not surprised to have my papers corrected grammatically by my teachers, since he was not alone in doing this. But while some of my teachers might feel hopeless and chose to hope that my English would be better with times, Glenn offered me a remarkable solution. He told me that the only way to improve my English was for me to practice more. He suggested that I practiced it with him by writing extra papers every week on my preferred subjects, turned it to him and he would correct them, and we could discuss my mistakes later every week. He set the time for our weekly meeting in his Department Political Science office overlooking the blue Pacific Ocean on the 6th floor of Porteus Hall [3] every Friday afternoon. Weeks after weeks, we met in his office and he patiently went through my terrible writings. Friday afternoon became the weekly moment I really look forward to a special time with my teacher because during those hours it was not only my English writing we spoke about, but other issues including world

affairs, American politics and my life. Slowly my writings must have improved for he then told me to prepare my doctoral proposal. That was in Spring 1979.

I began to write the first draft of my proposal for a Ph.D. research on an unusual topic and in a peculiar way. I proposed to study nonviolence politics with the intention of strengthening the success and effectiveness of nonviolent actions by wisdom drawn from Machiavelli's *The Prince*. I wrote it in the form of a dialogue between two persons: Chai and Wat and defended the dialogical form by quoting Hermann Hesse's novel-*Steppenwolf*. Hesse writes in his novel that there is no person who is not the sum of two or three principal elements. Every life oscillates not between the saint and the sinner but among many more. The novel's protagonist, Harry Haller, consists of a hundred or a thousand selves, not of two (Hesse 1963). I could not imagine any other advisor who would allow his/her student to take such a risk. But Glenn did.

When my Ph.D. research proposal was accepted and later passed the required comprehensive examination in October 1979, I began to conduct my research on nonviolence and political leadership with a strong emphasis on political philosophy. By drawing from Machiavelli's political philosophy, I planned to design a most efficient and practical political treatise for a nonviolent leader. The premise was that while most literature and research on nonviolent actions at the time chose to focus on strengthening the people in their fight against governments and oppressors, and that the movements were primarily nonviolent, violence still resulted and nonviolent protesters were killed because oppressors often times chose to use their state killing machines.

Glenn always said that he was not a political philosopher. My research was in a different field, but if I decided to work with him as my chair/advisor, he would try his best to help me with the research project. I was so happy and began my readings, burying myself in finding knowledge that tried to combine political philosophy with empirical social science studies of violence and nonviolence. When I disappeared for some time, he called and asked what I had been doing. I told him I was reading and the more I read, the more I felt I had to read more. He listened to my report on what I had read at that point. Then he said: "Stop reading. You have to stop somewhere. It is time you begin to write because your dissertation won't write itself. If you do not, I will lock you into a rented room somewhere on the island to do nothing but to write your chapters." And thus I began my writing.

In the process of writing a political philosophy Ph.D. thesis, Glenn and I thought that it would be good if I could go to be somewhere else and/or with someone who represented the kind of "efficient nonviolent leader" I was imagining. In 1980, he sent me to spend some time with Mr. Ariyaratne, the leader of the Sarvodaya Movement in Sri Lanka, and then to learn from the Gandhians led by Dr. N. Radhakrishnan at Gandhigram in Kerala, South India. These respected people were so kind to me during my fieldwork, part of the reasons must be because they knew I was Glenn's doctoral student.

When I finished my dissertation, he suggested that I deleted all the unnecessary words I wrote in the title and settled for only three words: *The Nonviolent Prince*. [3] Curiously, this Political Science dissertation on nonviolence is classified as a doctoral dissertation in philosophy specialized in military affairs under the section "Studies of War and the Military" (Christman and Showalter 1983, 36). In a review of the unpublished dissertation many years

later, a scholar from Kings College, London closely examined the text and entitled his article: “Machiavelli or Gandhi?” (Kersten 2009).

There are at least three important things I have learned from working directly with Glenn as my chair/advisor. First, he was extremely disciplined. Apart from carefully checking my English, he would not let any argument go unexamined, both in terms of its logic and the evidence used to substantiate it. Second, because of his interdisciplinary approach and the fact that he spoke 6 languages, there were vast amount of information, literature, and profound questions that he put me to tasks. His questions could come from unexpected directions. The experience of having my chapters examined by Glenn Paige was both frighteningly exhaustive and exhilarating at the same time. Third, and most important, was the fact that on one hand, he would demand that my logic and evidence were adequate and in the right places. On the other, he would encourage me to be creative, to explore new world, to take a risk to go where I thought no one had gone before. It was Glenn, the teacher as a source of his student’s confidence, necessary to help me undertake and complete such a research project.

I have always thought of myself as a peace researcher/political scientist trained by Glenn D. Paige. But was Paige a peace educator?

It has been suggested that among different types of peace education, only conflict resolution education has its focuses on the individual and interpersonal levels to develop their peace-related skills and qualities. Peace education that focuses on broader levels, national and international, normally deals with theories, systems, institutions and conflicts. There are also peace educators who work to alleviate the psychological wounds engendering rage in their students (Harris 2004). Some peace educators maintain that peaceful attitudes and behaviors among students could be fostered if peace projects move beyond rationality in an effort to reach them at the emotional level (Sommerfelt and Vambheim 2008).

It goes without saying that doctoral study in social science is oftentimes a lonely journey. In such a situation, the teacher-student interpersonal relationship is crucial. In my training as described above, it was my research skill on the subjects of violence/nonviolence that has been developed. Reading the right literature, updating one’s knowledge of the field, and knowing when to stop reading, these are parts of the research skills trained. The content was definitely theoretical with special emphasis on conflicts, especially deadly ones, as well as on peace systems and institutions as well as nonviolent actions that could mitigate the destructions caused by killing systems and institutions. In addition, the teacher-student’s emotional connection could be reflected in our relationships, personally and professionally, all through these years until his passing and beyond.

Could my political science training with Glenn Paige be counted as peace education?

I would argue that there is a difference between the two subjects. Political Science is a discipline while peace education is a field. While the subject of peace research requires a field of study, the focus on research requires that it is done with research discipline. The training I have received from Glenn Paige was grounded in the discipline of political science

using interdisciplinary approach to critically engage the phenomenon of violent conflict, especially killing, as a problem that needs to be dealt with nonviolently. It was the kind of education that provides me with a strong commitment to nonkilling/nonviolence based on academic knowledge that one has to take a risk in exploring alternatives precisely because nonviolent alternatives do exist. If these educational qualities qualifies as some form of peace education, and that my research career could be considered peace research, then it follows that “Teacher Glenn”, the political scientist, was a peace educator who did educate me to be a peace researcher.

But if one returns to one of Paige’s most significant thesis –certainly Snyder’s legacy- that the essence of politics resides in the human capacity to choose among alternatives (Paige 2007, xv), then the obvious question is how should one choose? Where should one find the light guiding one’s choice?

Talisman

I finished my dissertation in late 1981 and it was time to go home. Before returning home, I told Glenn that we should attend the commencement so that I could formally receive the diploma, and have a photo or two of me in my doctoral academic gown taken. Glenn refused. He said he never went to such a ceremony. But he did something extraordinary for this student. He organized a small event at his old apartment. There were only the three of us: teacher Glenn, Glenda Paige- his wife, and myself. He took pictures of me in my Ph.D. gown as evident that I had indeed completed my Ph.D. education.

He then gave me a talisman. It was in the form of a card laminated in plastic. It was Gandhiji’s Talisman with Gandhi’s following words:

"I will give you a talisman. Whenever you are in doubt, or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test.

Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man whom you may have seen, and ask yourself, if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain anything by it? Will it restore him to a control over his own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to swaraj [freedom] for the hungry and spiritually starving millions?

Then you will find your doubts and your self melt away."

Paige once argued that there are 5 elements of nonviolent legacy that the world has inherited from Gandhi. First, it was Gandhi’s insistence that nonviolence is profoundly spiritual. Second, Gandhi’s experimental attitude reflected his respect for science. Third, both individual and mass actions are extremely important. Fourth, recognizing that it required a lot of creativity to be violent, Gandhi insisted that creative courage is necessary for nonviolent struggle. Gandhi’s talisman serves as the fifth component of his legacy [4]. Paige explains that the message of the talisman constitutes compassionate constructiveness (2006, 354-357).

All these years I have kept the talisman Glenn gave me in the left drawer of my working desk in my study at home. Every time I have to face a difficult political choice in

life, I picked up this talisman and read Gandhi's words. It has been invaluable in helping me making decisions on public issues related to political conflicts that I have been involved. The talisman reminds me that the purpose of politics is for the common good of societies. But a society is an abstract category. Imagining the "face of the poorest and weakest" and then ask oneself in what ways one's decision contributes to his/her better life is a powerful guiding light.

Glenn's reading of Gandhi's talisman as an embodiment of compassionate constructiveness calls for a new kind of politics. This "politics of compassion" could be imagined as the opposite of dominating, pathological, fear driven, xenophobic politics based on the monopoly of force, coercion, killing and the threats to kill. Apart from being radical because it hinges on making the social criteria the major foci of political decision, the politics of compassion also has the capacity to foster a new paradigm for an interdependent world that is badly needed at present (Clements 2018, xviii-xix). The talisman Glenn gave me is a guiding reminder that the world needs an alternative kind of political science-nonkilling political science- that seeks to engage the problems of deadly conflict with this "compassionate constructiveness".

NOTES

1. http://www.nobelpeacesummit.com/wp-content/uploads/Nobel_Final_Statements_LIGHT.pdf See especially principle no. 13.
2. The name of the building came from the cross cultural psychologist Stanley Porteus (1883-1972). In 2001 the name Porteus Hall was changed to Saunders Hall after UH students protested against Stanley Porteus for being sexist and racist.
3. The other committee members of my Ph.D. dissertation include Profs. Manfred S. Henningsen, Michael J. Shapiro, the late Robert B. Stauffer and the late Robert Bobilin. *The Nonviolent Prince* went on to be nominated by the Department of Political Science, University of Hawaii for consideration for the 1982 Council of Graduate Schools/University Microfilms, International Dissertation Award.
4. Here the order of these elements has been slightly altered for this paper's discussion. In Paige's writing, the compassionate constructiveness from Gandhi's talisman is the fourth element of Gandhian legacy, while the fifth is creative courage (2006, 356-357).

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