

## **Messages to Father Thomas Kocherry from around the world mourning the loss and celebrating the life of Harekrishna Debnath**

### **1, From Helen Garland USA**

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

From: Helen Garland <hglosta@comcast.net>  
Date: Wed, Dec 30, 2009 at 7:55 PM  
Subject: Words cannot what we want to send to you....  
To: thomask\_sa kocherry <thomaska@gmail.com>

So just know we ARE with you in thought, deed, joy that YOU have recovered to carry on and support all those who loved and supported Harekrishna.

We have his little silver gift statue here near my desk and will never be able to forget him.

He would want us to support you now more than ever - you and he will be in our thoughts ever more.

Love from us both, Helen

### **2. National Alliance of Peoples Movements (NAPM)**

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

From: napm india <napmindia@gmail.com>  
Date: Wed, Dec 30, 2009 at 5:55 PM  
Subject: NAPM Remembers Harekrishna Debnath Ji  
To: napm-india <napm-india@googlegroups.com>

NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF PEOPLE'S MOVEMENTS

A - Wing First Floor, Haji Habib Building, Naigaon Cross Road

Dadar (E), Mumbai-400 014 Ph. No – 022-2415 0529 E-mail: [napmindia@gmail.com](mailto:napmindia@gmail.com)

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NAPM Remembers Harekrishna Debnath Ji

*“I know that my days are numbered but we still have a long way to go, and it's time not for mourning but to think of ways of taking the struggle for securing rights of the traditional fishing community in coming years.”* Harekrishna Ji said these words before the executive Committee meeting in Kolkata in June and then in December 2009.

Harekrishnaji, born into a fishing community in the then East Pakistan, came to West Bengal in 1964 after a major riot there. Having seen the hard life and marginalisation faced by the members of his community, it was natural that he chose the path of struggle. He was part of the National Fishworkers Forum since its inception and then later became

its Chairperson in 2000. He played a crucial role in the fishworkers movement and helped forge newer alliances and steered NFF to newer paths of struggle.

Harekrishnaji played an active role in the struggles against the Umargaon port in Gujarat and Haripur Nuclear Power Plant, West Bengal among many other struggles. Most recently he led the Macchimar Adhikar Rashtriya Abhiyan in 2008, a two-month yatra that traversed the entire coast of India from Kutch to Kolkata, mobilizing support for better implementation of the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notification and for scrapping the controversial draft Coastal Management Zone (CMZ) Notification. These efforts led to the withdrawal of the CMZ Notification, a major victory for fishing communities.

Known for his grasp of issues as well as humility and soft spoken ways, he was sensitive not only to the struggles and issues but to every one near to him. Many of us would remember him as someone who saw those in the struggle as his family and chose to live with them. He took great pains to actively promote younger leadership in struggles and always motivated youth.

He was detected of lung cancer sometime in 2008. Despite the pain and agony of the treatment, he continued to be in touch with the struggles around and has been active till his end. He passed away on December 30 at his residence in Kolkata. He was 60 and but for his health would have continued to lead.

NAPM salutes his numerous contributions and will miss his presence and humane ways in struggles. We strive to carry forward the continuing task of securing justice, dignity and commons.

In Solidarity,

Medha Patkar, Sandeep Pandey, P Chennaiah, Rajendra Ravi, Anand Mazgaonkar, Gabriel Dietrich, Shaktiman Ghosh, Debjit, Madhuresh and other members of NAPM family...

**3, Ramesh Fonseca, London.**

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

From: Ramesh Fonseca <rameshfonseca@hotmail.com>

Date: Wed, Dec 30, 2009 at 5:44 PM

Subject: Harekrishna

To: thomask\_sa kocherry <thomasksa@gmail.com>

Cc: Denise Ray <trangmar@hotmail.com>

Dear Tom,

This is sad news. Both Denise and I were very fond of Harekrishna and I know you have lost a dear friend and colleague. Please pass on our condolences to his family.

Unfortunately we weren't able to meet them when we were in Kolkata in February 2006 and met Harekrishna there. His niece had made a special handbag which she send for Denise through Hare. I also remember fondly the time you, Santiago and he spent with us in London. I will cherish those memories.

When I last spoke to him, he seemed resigned and at peace. I hope he did not suffer too much. I know you and Santiago and all all his friends and colleagues will carry on the great work of which you should all be proud.

Love,

Ramesh & Denise

#### **4, From Brian, Brussls**

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

From: Brian O'Riordan <briano@scarlet.be>

Date: Wed, Dec 30, 2009 at 3:24 PM

Subject: Harekrishna has passed away; Harekrishna est mort

To: thomaska@gmail.com

Dear Friends, Chers Amis

I received the sad news this morning that Harekrishna Debnath passed away. Ce matin j'ai reçu les tristes nouvelles que Harekrishna Debnath est mort.

Sebastian Mathew wrote: "Harekrishna passed away today morning at 11hrs Indian time. He was sixty years old. While sitting outside his homeafter breakfast he collapsed and died before the ambulance could fetch him to a hospital. He was diagnosed with lung cancer March this year. Harekrishna is survived by his siblings in Bangladesh. He was living with his niece Reena, her husband and child in Ashok Nagar, two hours from Calcutta".

Sebastian Mathew a écrit: Harekrishna est mort ce main à 11 heures heure indien. Il a soixante ans. Il est assis dehors en train de manger sa petite déjeuner quand il s'a effondré et il est mort avant que l'arrivée de l'ambulance pour l'emmener à l'hôpital. Il est diagnostiqué avec cancer des pulmonés en mars de cette année. Harekrishna es survécu par ses frères et sours de Bangladesh. Il a habité avec sa nièce, et sa famille en Ashok Nagar, deux heures de Calcutta.

Attached is a press release from the NFF. Ci jointe je vous envoie une communication de NFF.

Best wishes, Amicalement

Brian

**5. Sherry Pictou, WFFP Co-Cordinator, Canada**

My Dear Friends,

Though expected, I am very saddened by this news. The mixed emotions I have are one of sadness and gratefulness. I learned so much from Harekrishna... a true comrade in the fight for justice for all fishing people and a true friend. But most of all... an inspiration to those of us who so many times feel like giving up... Thanks for keeping us all informed... our prayers are with him and his family... and may his spirit always live within us.

. Sherry

**6. Gerry Corpuz, Philippines.**

December 31, 2009

Dear colleagues and friends,

The 100,000 members and national leadership of Pamalakaya (national federation of small fisherfolk organizations in the Philippines) were shocked to hear that our comrade and friend Harekrishna Debnath had just passed away.

Pamalakaya leaders like Fernando Hicap, Servillano Luna Jr and Gerry Albert Corpuz who got the chance to work, talk and discuss with our great colleague from India salute him for his painstaking work and advocacy for the cause of the exploited global fisher people. Harekrishna is an epitome of every great leader of the working people of the world. He lives by example and indeed a great example for all of us.

He devoted his life serving the cause of the poor fisherfolk of India and the world. He will serve as an eternal inspiration for all of us in the World Forum of Fisher People (WFFP) and we will continue what Harekrishna had started and advocated.

To the family of Harekrishna, please accept our sincere offer of prayers and moments of solidarity to our very dear friend and colleague. To the WFFP, our colleague is a great loss to us, but we should strive and struggle hard in the name of Harekrishna and the working people of the world.

Sincerely yours,

GERRY CORPUZ  
International Liaison Officer  
PAMALAKAYA- Philippines

## **7. Thomas Kallivayalil, Kerala**

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

From: Thomas Kallivayalil <thomaskallivayalil@gmail.com>

Date: Thu, Dec 31, 2009 at 12:51 PM

Subject: The passing away of Haresh Krishna

To: Thomas Kocherry <thomaska@gmail.com>, tanu thomas <tanu\_thomas@hotmail.com>

Dear Tom,

I am sure this must have been a shock for you as well as a terrible personal loss. I was not fortunate enough to have met Harekrishna in person, but had heard much about him and his involvement in the NFF. In a sense he is relieved of his personal pain that the cancer was causing him; I am sure there will be many who will be inspired by his dedication and will carry on the work.

Our sincere condolences,

affectionately,

Thomas and Thresiamma.

--

Thomas Abraham Kallivayalil

Mob.+91-9447778068

Mob.+91-9846908586

## **8. Xabier, Spain**

Xabier\_Ezeizabarrena@donostia.org to NFF", me, WFFPGA4-9Dao, WFFPGA4-6Pakis., "WFFPGA-1Harek., WFFPGA4-3WDF.S., WFFPGA4-4PFF show details Dec 30 (1 day ago)

God save Harekrishna.. He was indeed such an amazing person!!! We'll miss him worldwide...

Best regards from Basque Country.

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Xabier Ezeizabarrena

Zinegotzia/Concejal/Town Councillor/Conseiller Mpal.

Portavoz Grupo EAJ/PNVko Bozeramailea

Ayto. de Donostia-San Sebastián

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<http://www.donostia.org>  
<http://www.sansebastian2016.eu>  
<http://www.eaj-pnv.eu>

## **9. Clement Joseph, Tamilnadu**

CLEMENTJOSEPH VINCENT to me  
show details 1:01 AM (14 hours ago)

My dear Tom,

I am sad and feel with you very much at the demise of a very good partner in your work and a good friend of mine.

We have been praying much for his health in these past months, ever since we came to know of what was ailing him.

While it is a loss for all who know him and have worked with him, perhaps God was benevolent to remove his pain and absorb him into Godself of eternal peace and everlasting victory.

Giving voice to the voiceless, joining hands for social justice and loving all people of good will strike me as very special characteristics of our dear Hare Krishna Debnath. This Holy Season of the Word made Human, when the hosts of heaven sing Glory to God on High and Peace to people of good will on earth, I am certain that Hare Krishna Debnath is counted among those deserving of Peace.

Hare Krishna Debnath was a national and an international star. May he continue to sparkle with courage and hope from the skies of eternity to all of us still struggling in this valley of tears and sighs.

May he Rest in Peace. And let Perpetual Light Shine upon him.

My condolences and heartfelt sympathies to all who mourn his demise.

V. Clement Joseph  
Rector, Redemptorist Community,  
Arulham, Anjal Nagar, Madurai-625 018. Tamil Nadu  
+91 0542 266 1232 / 266 0297

[clement\\_muhil@yahoo.com](mailto:clement_muhil@yahoo.com)

Executive Secretary, MUHIL Health Centre,  
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Kerala. INDIA.

There is always a way to make the ordinary extraordinary

**10. Herman Kumara, General Secretary, WFFP, Sri Lanka.**

Dear Friends,

The new year 2010 is at our door step.

But, I am sending you a news which is not a good news indeed.

Our beloved friend, Harekrishna Debnath, Chair Person of National Fish Workers Forum, India,[NFF] and First General Secretary of World Forum of Fisher Peoples'[WFFP] has passed away.

Please read the attachments of press release of NFF for more information.

The dates of the final respects are yet to announce by the organizers at Kolkotta, India. We share this sorrowful message for your information and urge to send your condolence message to Rambahu Patil, the general secretary of NFF and copy to Thomas Kocherry, both the email IDs are shown in the CC list.

Herman Kumara

**11. Ashok Choudhary, UP**

ashok.chowdhury@gmail.com to me, Delhi, Delhi, Vijayan, Ashok, Jibin, Clara, Alvino, arun, Baby, Bosco, Santiago, CLEMENTJOSEPH, xavier, Ernest, John, K, mathen, kerala  
show details 12:25 PM (2 hours ago)

Dear Comrades and Friends of NFF,

We are shocked to know about the untimely demise of our beloved comrade Harekrishna Debnath. We have lost a vibrant leader of the most marginalized people who are struggling to assert their rights in the political domain, controlled by the neo-liberal elites. I fondly remember his calm, sober and

informal way in dealing serious problems since we came together in the early ninties to build up a collective movement of unorganized workers through N.C.L.

We need to carry forward the struggle of the marginalized workers to pay our sincere tribute to our great leader. At this critical hour we stand in solidarity with the comrades of NFF to continue the struggle.

In solidarity,

Ashok Choudhary  
NFFPFW

## **12. Tanu Thomas . Australia.**

tanu to me  
show details 3:55 AM (11 hours ago)

This is very sad news. He will be remembered fondly by us. I remember I met him for the first time in Delhi.

Our condolences to his family.

Warm regards  
Tanu  
Tanu Thomas  
Features Editor, Indus Age (Australia)  
Mob: 0432 922 675  
Phone: (03) 8742 2945  
Email: [tanu@indusage.com.au](mailto:tanu@indusage.com.au)

## **13. Melani Pereira, Sri Lanka.**

Dear Father Tom, Herman Kumara and Rambhau,

Very sad to hear about the sad news about Mr. Harekrishna .... !

Please accept my sympathy and sincere offer of prayers to the soul of Mr. Harekrishna.  
Thanks,

Melani Manel Perera  
AsiaNews.

## **14. Reza, Indonesia**

serikat nelayan indonesia to Herman, Alexis, Antonio, Dr. Soosai, Aksel, IPC, IPC, Maarten, Arthur, Biju, Chenoa, Francis, CODDEFFAGOLF, Cornelia, Winston, Denial, Wanigasuriya, Nicolas, Saranapala, dharam, Geetha, Freddy, Francis, George, Nimalka,

Sarath

show details 8:50 AM (9 hours ago)

Dear Friends of NFF and WFFP,

This is the most sad news that come to us in this end of the Year.

Harekrishna Debnath is more like a father to me, even we only meet in a short period. I met him in Negombo, Srilanka for the 4TH GA of WFFP, We even argue a lot in that first meeting, I saw him as a strong man with simple reaction...our next few meeting were the most fruitful and inspiring moment for me, he taught me the lesson of life and way of struggle..I believe that a lot of young men like me in India will miss him. We pray to the Almighty for his peaceful journey. Hope his spirit in live will always inspiring our struggle.

REZA  
General Secretary  
Indonesia Fisherfolk Union

#### **15. Maarten Bavibck, Armesterdam**

Bavinck, J.M. to patil.rambhau, me  
show details 2:30 PM (4 hours ago)

Dear friends and colleagues,

We at the Centre for Maritime Research (MARE) in Amsterdam are sad to hear of the demise of the NFF's beloved chairman, Harekrishna Debnath. He will be direly missed. Please accept our heartfelt condolences.

Best wishes,  
Maarten Bavinck

#### **16. AGAMAR, Fisher Women's Organization, Spain**

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

From: Lupe Oroña <agamar.ugt@gmail.com>

Date: Wed, Dec 30, 2009 at 8:06 AM

Subject: from Agamar

To: thomask\_sa kocherry <thomasksa@gmail.com>, Herman Kumara <hermankumara@gmail.com>, Sherry <sherry.pictou@ns.sympatico.ca>, naseegh@masifundise.org.za

Dear all:

From Agamar we are very sad about the decease of Harekhrisna. The General Secretary, The President, the rest of Executive and all of workers of Agamar wants to express one's condolences to his family, friends and all people that loved Harekrishma.

With our best wishes

Lupe

### **17. Cornelia Quist, Netherland**

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

From: Cornelia Quist <cornelia.quist@gmail.com>

Date: Thu, Dec 31, 2009 at 8:27 AM

Subject: Harekrishna

To: patil.rambhau@gmail.com

Cc: matanhysaldanha@gmail.com, thomask\_sa kocherry <thomaska@gmail.com>, Herman Kumara <hermankumara@gmail.com>

Dear friends,

The news about Harekrishna death fills us with great sadness. He always has been a very dear friend and brother and will remain so in our hearts. His commitment to justice and a sustainable future for the fishworkers not only in India, but all over the globe, is unforgettable and I hope will continue to inspire us.

We will light a lamp for Hare.

Warm regards,

Cornelia Quist (member of ICSF)

The Netherlands

### **18. Jorge Varela, Honduras, South America**

2009/12/31 CODDEFFAGOLF <cgolf@coddeffagolf.org>

ENGLISH VERSION BELOW

Queridos amigos

Desde Honduras, hoy 31 de Diciembre de 2009, precisamente cuando nos preparábamos para enviar un saludo de reflexion y esperanza en el porvenir, nos hemos encontrado con la infausta noticia de la partida sin retorno de nuestro querido amigo, Harekhrisna Debnat (Diciembre 30)...Nuestro querido Padre y amigo Thomask Kosherry ha hecho un resumen del recorrido de Hare por este Mundo y de la huella profunda que ha dejado, y esperamos que sobre ella crezcan las semillas de amor, heroísmo, trabajo y entrega a la lucha de los pescadores del Mundo y la humanidad.

Expresamos con congoja nuestras muestras de pesar a sus familiares y amigos...  
Descansa en Paz querido amigo.

Dear friends

From Honduras, now December 31, 2009, just when we were preparing to send a greeting of reflection and hope for the future, we met with the sad news of the departure without return of our dear friend, Father Harekrishna Debnath (December 30)...Our dear Father and friend Thomask Kosherry have made a summary of Hare's journey through this world and the profound impact he has left on it and we hope to grow the seeds of love, heroism, dedication to work and struggle for the fishermen of the World and the humanity..

We express our feeling of regret to their family and friends ...

Rest in Peace dear friend Mr. Harekhrisna Debnath.

Jorge Varela  
CODDEFFAGOLF-HONDURAS

### **19. From Vijayan M.J. Delhi**

On Fri, Jan 1, 2010 at 2:49 AM, Vijayan M.J. <vijayan@delhiforum.net> wrote:  
Friends,

As you know, Harekrishna Debnath is no more. After a year long struggle against cancer, he gave up his physical fight with his killer on the 30th Dec 2009. For the National Fishworkers Forum, his is an irreparable loss and for the fisherpeople across the globe, it is the loss of a very dear comrade...

He has left behind some beautiful memories of his life, rigorous activities, committed activism, and a few sparks from his cultural self. Here is a snippet of what he presented at the Delhi Forum / PSA annual get together of activists at Kulashekharam, held in September 2008.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hMEGWt6gcVc>

Also, find below a poem written in his memory by our friend Himanshu Upadhyay:

they kept sitting on the chair in verandah  
in some home in a city called Kolkata  
pretending not to listen the doorbell

fisherfolk from Jambudweep came  
asking them to recognise  
the traditionally established access rights  
to this island to dray their fish catch

during those few months in a year  
when they camped [not encroached] on the island

those fisherfolks, friends of Harekrishna da,  
also remembered how Anthropological Survey of India  
documented their lives and livelihood practices  
in a book, which they presumed Bhadrakol manush  
of Kolkata ought to have read.

alas! those who violently evicted Jambudweep fisherfolks  
reminding some of Morichhapi  
were seen in intellectual circles in Delhi academia  
claiming that they campaigned hard to see that  
adivasis and forest dwellers get their land rights to Forestland recognised

Harekrishna, you are gone now  
rest in peace Harekrishna  
but come back to disturb those Bhadrakol manush  
sitting on the chair in verandah  
in some home in a city called Kolkata  
pretending not to listen the doorbell

--

Regards,

Vijayan MJ

"We must not confuse dissent with disloyalty. We must remember always that accusation is not proof and that conviction depends upon evidence and due process of law. We will not walk in fear, of one another. We will not be driven by fear into an age of unreason..."  
(Legendary broadcast newsman Edward R Murrow) - from Amit Sengupta's brilliant compilation titled: 'Colour of Gratitude is Green'.. A must read!!!

## **20 .Naseegh WFFP Co-Cordinator, South Africa**

On Fri, Jan 1, 2010 at 2:51 AM, Naseegh Jaffer <naseegh@masifundise.org.za> wrote:

Dear Friends

I have been out of reach for the last few days. So the news of Hare's passing leaves me shocked and with a deep sense of loss.

I got to know him some years ago and have developed a great admiration and respect for his devotion, dedication and commitment to improve the plight of fishers, in particular, but broader humanity at large. Hare was a person of the people. He had the biggest heart

and compassion for fisherfolk the world over.

In South Africa we hosted him, at the time of the WSSD, where he stood out as a true global leader of the worlds poor fisherfolk. He showed the greatest leadership skills and insight into the causes of oppression and exploitation of ordinary people. To many of us his clear, rational yet compassionate grasp of the forces that causes global explotation was insightful and thought provoking. To him it was always 'people first'.

The fisher people of the world are indeed poorer at his passing.

But we will remember the values that he stood for. We will remember his commitment, his courage and the indefatigable energy that he showed in the struggle to illeminate poverty and exploitation in the world's fishing communities. According to Andy Johnston from the Artisanal Fishers Association of South Africa, he contributed in no small way: "his stature, thoughts and outreach was meaningful and had great global impact".

Hare, you leave us with memories of the many struggles that you have fought for us and with us - with teargas and police baton charges in the mix. You will forever stand tall in the history books of the future.

He was a leader, a follower, a fighter, a thinker, a democratic and a true comrade...

As we say in our traditional lanuage: Hamba Kahle Harekrishna, hamba kahle. Go well Harekrishna, go well.

His spear may have fallen - but let us pick it up and carry it forward.

Naseegh Jaffer  
Co-cordinator World Forum of Fisher People

and  
Masifundise, Coastal Links and AFASA  
Cape Town - South Africa

## **21. Mohamed Ali Shah, PFF, Pakistan**

2010/1/1 PFF <pakistanfisherfolk@hotmail.com>

Dear friends and comrades

When I heard the bad and sadness news that our beloved comrade has been passed away and left us. This news very much shocked to fisher people of Pakistan. Harekrishna has been a great leader and supporter of fishing communities of all over the world and he give us the strong voice to protect the life and livelihood of fishing communities of the

world. His contribution to the struggle of fisher people in India and worldwide will be always remembered in our memory and heart.

He is my beloved friend and he is no more, now he remains in my memory and my heart. I learned too much from him and he always encouraged me and he was the great supporter of Pakistan Fisherfolk.

If we want to remember him always and fulfill his dreams then we have to continue our struggle against globalization, WTO , injustice and struggle for the rights of fishing communities. Apart from this, we have to strengthen and unite the WFFP.

Long live Hare and his struggle, Long live WFFP

Mohammad Ali Shah  
Chairperson

PAKISTAN FISHERFOLK FORUM [PFF]  
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[fisherfolkpk@yahoo.com](mailto:fisherfolkpk@yahoo.com)  
Website: [www.pff.org.pk](http://www.pff.org.pk)

## **22. Saeed PFF, Pakistan**

2010/1/1 saeed baloch [saeed.baloch@gmail.com](mailto:saeed.baloch@gmail.com)

Dear Thomas and friends, its very shocking News for fisherfolk of Pakistan we hear said demise of comrade Harekrishna, He was a great fighter of fisherfolk and indigenous peoples... we are feeling great lost.

with said feeling

saeed

## **23. Arthur Bogason, WFF Co-Chair, Iceland.**

2010/1/1 AB <[arthur@smabatar.is](mailto:arthur@smabatar.is)>

To all of you,

Harekrishna Debnath and I where on the first Coordinating committee of the WFF from 1997 until the split in 2000 in France.

Though we disagreed on some issues, I realized that he was sincere in fighting for the small-scale fishers and fish workers. That is the spirit the fishers and fishing communities of the world needs.

I send my deepest condolences to all of you.

Arthur Bogason  
Co-chair WFF

**24. From Namadou, France**

On Wed, Dec 30, 2009 at 3:11 AM, mamadou niasse <mamalaniasse@gmail.com> wrote:

C'est avec une grande tristesse que j'apprends le deces de harekrisna: ce grand combattant du mouvement pecheurs dans le monde hier je lisais ses interventions sur la commercialisation de la crevette et l'evulution du marché en inde et je n'imaginai pas revevoir cette triste nouvelle que nos prieres l'accompagnent et paix à son ame amen  
lamine

**25. From Alexis Fossi, France**

On Fri, Jan 1, 2010 at 9:45 AM, Alexis Fossi <alexosfossi@gmail.com> wrote:  
Toutes mes plus sincères condoléances.

Nous venons de perdre un défenseur des droits des communautés de pêcheurs.

Il nous a cependant montré que nous devons toujours croire avec détermination à nos engagements.

Alexis Fossi

**26. From Brian, Brussels.**

On Wed, Dec 30, 2009 at 2:45 AM, Brian O'Riordan <briano@scarlet.be> wrote:  
Dear Thomas

How are you? I hope your health is better, and that you are both feeling and getting stronger.

Its very sad news about Harekrishna. He leaves a big gap that is impossible to fill, yet must be filled somehow. I have so many positive and fond memories of him. And although latterly we had our differences, I will remember him as a friend, an activist, a tireless worker for the cause of the small fishers and their communities, his tremendous courage and energy, his commitment, his knowledge, his abilities and great capacity.

Here's wishing you all the best for 2010 Thomas, for your work, for the NFF and the WFFP.

Brian

**27. From John Kurien, Indonesia**

2010/1/1 John Kurien <kurien.john@gmail.com>

Dear Tom,

Harekrishna's was a great life. Well lived. Always a fighter for the cause of the fishworkers. Till his last breath. The history of small scale fishworkers will need to devote a big page to his endeavours and their impact on the movement. I was greatly blessed to have known and interacted with a person like him. His vision and mission will continue to inspire us all.

John Kurien

**28. From Chandrika Sharma, ICSF, Chennai**

On Fri, Jan 1, 2010 at 8:47 PM, Chandrika Sharma <chandmegh@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Thomas,

Thank you so much for sending us this compilation, which tells us about how many lives Harekrishna has touched, and the difference he has made. His was a life that has made a difference in very substantial ways to the fishworker movement in India. He has made a tremendous contribution and it is for those who remain to take forward his struggle, and the ideals he stood for.

We will also forward you some of the other comments that have been received.

In solidarity,

Chandrika

**29. From Dr. Scaria Joseph, Mascot.**

On Fri, Jan 1, 2010 at 8:54 PM, scaria joseph <[scariajosephh@gmail.com](mailto:scariajosephh@gmail.com)> wrote:

Sorry to hear about the demise of Hare Krishna

I know how deep the relationship yourself had with him , a big personal loss for yourself and of course for NFF and the movement . May I express my heartfelt condolences. May his soul rest in peace

Dr joseph scaria

**30.Name : Irene Novaczek, ICSF**

Username : inovaczek

Email : [inovaczek@upei.ca](mailto:inovaczek@upei.ca)

Date :30-12-2009

News ID : 42791

Message : I am very sad to hear of the loss of Harekrishna Debnath. I remember him well from the time when he came to Canada to help us prepare for negotiations at the UN around the Law of the Sea convention on migratory fish stocks. Harekrishna was a most dedicated and inspirational warrior for peace and justice and I am sure we all will miss him deeply. Condolences

Irene

**31.Name : David Eli, International Collective in Support of Fishworkers**

Username : david eli

Email : [tescod2@yahoo.com](mailto:tescod2@yahoo.com)

Date :30-12-2009

News ID : 42791

Message : It is a sad day for us all for the loss of such a huge pillar in the land of fishers. May his soul rest in perfect peace. Those of us left behind will take consolation in the fact that he helped flattened the mountains in the way of fishers and brought a level of equity in the playing field. May his family remain resolute as we urge them to share our sympathy

David

**32. [GreenYouth] In Memory of Harekrishna Debnath**

Sukla Sen

Thu, 31 Dec 2009 21:37:36 -0800

The new year brings in the sad news of a death, death of a friend, death of a truly indomitable, and yet unassuming, fighter.

He was a major figure behind the struggle against the proposed nuclear power plant in Haripur (West Bengal), and of course a moving spirit behind the fishworkers' movements and struggles in India.

Sharing the news with deepest sadness in honour of the departed fighter.

Sukla

**33. From: Santanu Chacraverti <s.chacrave...@gmail.com>**

IN MEMORY OF HAREKRISHNA DEBNATH

Harekrishna Debnath, veteran social activist, Chairperson of National Fishworkers' Forum (NFF) and Executive Member of World Forum for Fisher Peoples (WFFP), passed away on 30.12.2008 at 11:15 AM, at his residence in Ashoknagar, North 24 Parganas, West Bengal. On his demise the coastal fishers' and fishworkers' movement and the struggle for environment and social justice suffers a great loss.

In 2008, Debnath led, what was to become one of the key milestones of the fishers' movement in India, the national coastal campaign along the coast of India, which led to the final withdrawal of the proposed Coastal Management Zone Notification. Debnath played a crucial role in leading the protests against the eviction of fishworkers' in Jambudwip. He also played a leading role in organizing the struggle in 2006-07 against the proposed nuclear cluster at Haripur. Most recently, he had been active on the issue of protesting the multi-SEZ proposal of a PCPIR at Nayachar in West Bengal. He was the founder Convener of National Campaign for the Protection of Coast (NCPC). Debnath's concern with coastal environmental issues led him to be associated as a Governing Body member with the Kolkata based environmental group, Society for Direct Initiative for Social and Health Action (DISHA).

Harekrishna Debnath was born in East Pakistan, now Bangladesh, on the 16th of October 1949. A brilliant student, he was studying Physics at the University of Dhaka, when he became active in student politics and became the President of the Chhatra League (the students' body attached to the Awami League). Debnath was active in the independence movement of Bangladesh. Close to Sheikh Mujibar Rahman, he was the Editor of Padakshep, the mouthpiece of Awami League. After Sheikh Mujib's death in 1975, Debnath moved into India on a permanent basis. Thereafter he lived a life of hardship, but continued to be active in social movements in this country, including the movement for the rights of the Bangladeshi refugees, who had fled to India from Pakistani repression.

Sometime in the early 1980s Debnath joined the NFF. He rose to become its General Secretary in 1985. Thereafter Debnath's name became intimately associated with fishworkers' movements all over India. A charismatic speaker who could successfully address and electrify the masses, he could also charm academic audiences with his profound knowledge of coastal environmental and livelihood issues and an amazing ability to infuse life and

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Peace Is Doable  
Santanu

34. Niaz Dorry USA

On Sat, Jan 2, 2010 at 8:30 AM, Niaz Dorry <niaz@namanet.org> wrote:  
Dear Father Kocherry,

I was so saddened to read your note about the passing of Harekrishna Debnath. I've been staring at a little statue he gave me while visiting a few years ago and reliving the times I spent with both of you. My thoughts and prayers are with you and everyone whose life was touched by him and his work.

I did find a bunch of pictures from the speaking tour of the US back in 99.

Harekrishna's work, life and spirit endures in all of us.

With peace,

Niaz

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"Lord take my soul, but the struggle continues."  
-- Ken Saro-Wiwa, The gallows, Nigeria  
November 10, 1995

35. Manu Vimalasserry USA

On Sat, Jan 2, 2010 at 9:46 AM, manu vimalassery <mvimalassery@gmail.com> wrote:  
Dear Thommachen Uncle,

I was talking yesterday with Priya about how fortunate we felt to meet Harekrishna when he came to New York for the UN forum. 2009 was a year of loss, in a decade of so many setbacks. Our brief memories of Harekrishna, and those of other departed, can hopefully give us younger folks strength and inspiration, as we stand up to build a better world in this new decade.