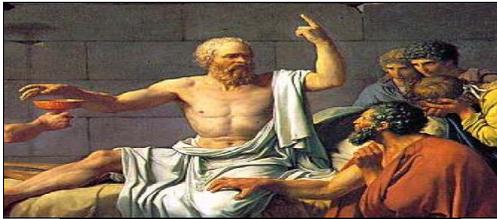


The book is planned to get published in September 2005. It will be printed **black and white**, with full color cover. For more information contact email: dewdrop@shwelumaung.org.

Prologue

The Price of a Voice. Socrates (470-399 BCE) was executed for questioning the Athenian state religion and society's wisdom. Democratic Athenian juries found Socrates guilty of denying the official gods of the state, introducing new gods and corrupting the young. He was sentenced to death by poisoning with a drink of hemlock. His pupil Plato told us that in this prison cell, in the presence of friends and students, he defiantly sipped the poison as he cheerfully kept talking of his philosophy. With irony, he died at the age of 70 and a voice was silent in the democratic Athens. Today, even after some 2,500 years he remains the martyr for the freedom of expression. But, how many of us are ready to die like him?

This was the price of a voice. What will be the price of silence?



The Death of Socrates

The view shown here is a centerpiece of the 1787 famous painting by French artist David, Jacques-Louis (1748-1825). It is a masterpiece of *Homo sapiens* creation in oil on canvas, 129.5 x 196.2 cm, and is proudly displayed by its owner, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA. If you happen to be in New York City, please do not forget to go and see the full canvas in beautiful color.

"I am not an Athenian or Greek, but a citizen of the world".
(Famous words of Socrates¹).

"Crito, I owe a cock to Asclepius. Will you remember to pay the debt?"
(The last words of Socrates²)

Socrates (470?-399? BC), Greek philosopher, who profoundly affected Western philosophy through his influence on Plato.....In the Peloponnesian War with **Sparta** he served as an infantryman with conspicuous bravery at the battles of Potidaea in 432-430 BC, Delium in 424 BC, and Amphipolis in 422 BC.....Socrates's contribution to philosophy was essentially ethical in character. Belief in a purely objective understanding of such concepts as justice, love, and virtue, and the self-knowledge.....Plato's *Apology* gives the substance of the defense made by Socrates at his trial; it was a bold vindication of his whole life. He was condemned to die,.....Socrates' friends planned his escape from prison, but he preferred to comply with the law and die for his cause. His last day was spent with his friends and admirers, and in the evening he calmly fulfilled his sentence by drinking a cup of hemlock according to a customary procedure of execution. Plato described the trial and death of Socrates in the *Apology*, the *Crito*, and the *Phaedo*.
(Excerpt from "Socrates," *Microsoft® Encarta® 97 Encyclopedia CD*.)

Religions and Humans. Today the Muslim-Buddhist War has opened a new chapter as Pan-Islam and Buddhist Fundamentalism confront each other at Bangladesh-Myanmar border.

The Muslim-Buddhist war is not new. It started when the Muslims crushed the Buddhists in Afghanistan and Lahore in the 10th century of Christian Era (CE) which nowadays is referred to as the Common Era (CE). The Buddhists lost Bihar and Bengal in the 12th and 16th centuries respectively. In recent decades, the Renaissance of

Notes.

1. http://www.age-of-the-sage.org/socrates_greek_philosopher.html#Socrates_Greek_philosopher.
2. <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Acropolis/6537/real-q.htm>