



THE BLUE LECTURE

13 December 2020 at 23:00 UTC

Comrade Citizens,

Our country was founded on a sincere and fundamental belief that all people in life suffer. In 2020, we have seen more suffering than I believe any one of us can tolerate: we have perceived the immense human suffering in this moment brought about because of present illnesses and governmental and societal failures; we have heard of the disproportionate suffering experienced by working classes around the world, and the suffering of people of colour and of queer peoples; we have felt our own suffering and that of those we love because of this unending human tragedy.

In the Dhammacakkavappattana Sutta, the Buddha taught the Four Noble Truths to five ascetics, whom he had left before becoming enlightened at the Bodhi tree in Bodh Gaya. Like a doctor he diagnosed our human condition at Sarnath when he said, “Now this, monks, is the noble truth of suffering: Birth is suffering, aging is suffering, sickness is suffering, death is suffering; sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, and despair are suffering; association with the disdained is suffering, disassociation with the beloved is suffering, not getting what one wants is suffering. In short, the five *skandhas* (form, sensation, perception, mental constructs, and consciousness) are suffering.” In the year of COVID-19, we have all had our fair share of suffering. I would like to offer

a few seconds of quiet respite in order to reflect, meditate, or to pray on this fact and for those who have suffered.

We hope that all people will have peace and happiness, as well as their causes.

The events of the last year since I have last addressed you have demonstrated the unmovable tenacity of the Sandum people who continued to work, teach, and study under great duress.

January, when I gave my first Blue Lecture, was a time of calm before the storm, though concerns were already on the horizon. January and February were both months of much joy and celebration in Sandus: we celebrated and held our very first *Ludi Pacales*, our Games of Peace, that will be celebrated again in 2022. Perhaps inauspiciously, we came together to play the boardgame *Pandemic*: a game I can tell you we will never sport over again. With the *ludi* done, we also celebrated the momentous occasion of the investiture of my heir, Gaius Flavius Ithacus, the Homard of the State of Sandus and Baron of the Maumee. His investiture set the tone for all future investitures, fulfilling both a needed time of instruction on our constitution as well as an important national celebration. This year, too, my heir also completed his doctorate, and I believe it is fitting at this venue that we congratulate him once more.

His election and investiture call to mind that Sandum citizens are already voting this year in our Winter Solstice election, deciding whether or not I as sôgmô have the appropriate legitimacy to continue to govern the State of Sandus. As you know, I attend the results with rapt attention.

After the world shut down and our lives were abruptly changed, I admit that I felt a renewed urgency and hope that humanity would combat this crisis with solidarity and loving-kindness for one another. For a while, Sandus was sharing information and art meant to encourage

this kind of communitarianism. This was a time of turning-inward and reminding ourselves of our philosophy, and of realising what really matters. While my idealism eventually fractured under the duress of partisan politics that came at the suffering of many peoples, Sandus did not disappoint me. Beginning in May, our lives slowly took on a new pace as the world cautiously opened up once again. In small groups or pods, we celebrated Remembrance Day, the Day of Creation, and others.

In the summer, while our lives were still in flux, we had hoped to have the opportunities that the season normally furnishes for us. The Sanóba and I had planned to visit our friends, the Slabovians, for Canada Day across the border. With restrictions still in place and in compliance with scientific recommendations, however, we decided to put our plans off and to wait for another year. We learned to adapt as a country, especially as we missed our communities: we decided to hold Klatsches, our discussion groups that have been years in planning, thinking, and hoping. These Klatsches have brought us so much good. Sandum citizens today can now gather every two weeks (just as we are now) to discuss and to talk on a subject important to our micronation, and these conversations have led to momentous new perspectives in the history of our state. But I want to emphasise just how important these chats are for our community: now, more than ever, while we all sense the pain of alienation, we can gather every so often for a calming, friendly talk without fear of infection.

With the Klatsches, too, came our own Discord server, a place that now shapes who we are and where we talk with one another. This new element of our national infrastructure allows Sandum citizens to talk about what they can do for their community, as well as a place for them to connect with the larger micronational world. Our server offers many spaces for specialised

conversations as well as just general discussion. Taken together, our Klatsches and the Discord server have done their part in making Sandus more and more into a holistic community.

In October and November, Sandus celebrated the Armilustrium and held the Citizens' Party of Sandus Party Congress and a conference for intermicronational participants, as well. For the Armilustrium, I was welcomed by the people of Überstadt who selflessly brought me into their own home. Once again, as a country, we celebrated the Armilustrium together by washing our books, by sharing food and merriment, and by turning inward and cherishing the things that truly matter. I was glad not just to be with my friends in Überstadt but also that Sandum citizens around our country could carefully be with one another. Thanks to my heir and my friends within our country and without, my fiancé the Sanôba also joined in the celebrations for his first time.

For the Party Congress, Party members joined together on the National Day of Socialism to talk about the Party, its affairs, and the economy and policies of our country. The event was held at a time that was early for some in our country, while in the evening for others. As a country spread across a difference of eight time zones, I was surprised by just how many citizens took part in the Congress and in the Conference, and we gladly welcomed micronationalists from across the world to the National Day of Socialism with an intermicronational conference that took months of planning. We have much to work on thanks to these two events, and I know in the new year we will tackle the issues raised by the Party Congress with care and haste.

This holiday season, we now turn to two different challenges: first, how to celebrate the holidays safely and cautiously and, second, how to create normalcy when we may not be able to see family or to keep our traditions. In a few days, I will do my part as head of the *Collegium Sacerdotum*,

the College of Priests, to hold a Saturnalia Storytime event that will meet every evening (at different times) so that we can come together, celebrate the holidays, and share stories from our cultural and religious traditions that are appropriate to this season's message. In other ways, Sandum citizens are planning to hold holiday dinners with our pods in order to celebrate the season safely. Several of us are already planning some dinners at *l'Appartement* for the Saturnalia, Christmas, and Gregorian New Years.

Like many of you, I will not be travelling to see family this year, and I trust that we are all adjusting to this fact in the most Sandum way I know: by filling our lives with meaning, by forming new traditions, and by thinking seriously about how or why we ought to celebrate. I know that we are busy making do with the situation that we have. I plan to have a few dinners with close friends over the course of the Saturnalia and for New Year's, while the Sanôba and I will enjoy a small private Christmas hovered over Chinese food. Like all of us, this extraordinarily new experience is causing us to reimagine our futures and our traditions, and this season may be clearest time to focus on our futures ahead.

The next year will of course be a time to celebrate the end of this pandemic, but also one to confirm our commitment to our country and its philosophy. As we imagine a Sandum future, we must keep this fact in mind.

These past few minutes cannot wholly capture all that has happened in the last year, but they are a good summary of how things are and have been since we last spoke. In the time that remains, I will now address what policies the Central People's Government will pursue in the New Gregorian and Administrative Year.

2021 marks the tenth anniversary since the Foundation of the State of Sandus, when I took on the title of “sôgmô” and applied myself to the reigns of power under this constitution. 13 April 2011 was a date that shaped more than just our government: it changed how we Sandum citizens think about the very thing we do in our country that, as the saying goes, “we built by our minds and by our hands.” I am thinking of *Realism*, but also about *Libera* and *Philia*—two well-worn concepts that we have used in our country since 2012 and 2013. To mark this momentous occasion, as I have previously announced, the year between the tenth anniversary of our secession from the St.Charlian Commonwealth, February 2021, and the tenth anniversary of the first *Realist* treatise, February 2022, will be the Year of Realism in Sandus. During this year, I will edit, preface, and compile all existing treatises on Sandum *Realism*. I will hold symposia on *Realism* for our biweekly Klatsches and also for micronationalists outside of Sandus to take part in.

This is not the only momentous tenth anniversary I will be celebrating this year. In March, the Sanôba and I will have known one another for ten years and, rather auspiciously in September, we will be married here in Ann Arbour, in the province of Quercus Candida.

When it comes to our cultural and social policies in Sandus, we will continue along the steady road that we have already begun to tread. Our Klatsches have already been immensely successful, and I hope that the new year will allow us to consider larger and more diverse topics. To date, I have hosted these meetings on my professional Zoom account but in the new year the venue will change to our Discord server. As I continue to run the Klatsch groups, I will also plan ahead, just as we already have done to some extent in the past few months, and will suggest meeting topics for months in the future. As part of this institutionalisation of the Klatsch format, too, I will more widely share the topic that will be discussed on our Facebook page and on our Discord server, as

well as a variety of other servers. Finally, I will ask one participant to keep a summary of the group's discussion or to write up their impression of the Klatsch so that this information can be shared with those who could not make it.

À même égard, tant que secrétaire-général adjoint de la Culture et du développement de la MicroFrancophonie, j'organise un nouveau projet pour l'Organisation de la MicroFrancophonie qui s'appelle « Direction MicroFrancophone ». Ce projet média aura un thème chaque mois dont les membres de l'OMF pourront partager dans leurs médias et les partager avec la communauté francophone. « Direction MicroFrancophone » commence avec le thème des fêtes d'hiver, et le prochain but sera sur l'avenir microfrancophone en janvier 2021.

For national holidays, we will continue to hold both in-person events, especially smaller events with our pods until we are all vaccinated, but also online celebrations. In the new year, my office will organize events for the Day of Secession, the Day of Foundation, Labour Day, Remembrance Day, the Day of Creation, LGBT Pride Week, Lammas, and of course the Armilustrum. One such other event will be my wedding with the Sanôba in September 2021, which will be livestreamed for all Sandum citizens and to which we have invited a select number of citizens—including my heir and the Party Secretary. Suffice to say, in 2021, my government will continue to provide opportunities besides Klatsches alone for Sandum citizens to become engaged and active in our micronation.

One further cultural and social priority for my government in the upcoming year is to encourage the growth of language knowledge and linguistic diversity in our country. Sandus is a wholly Anglophone country by ascription: yet we have adopted French and Latin as official

languages both because of the historic prominence of each in our country but also because they are languages that a sizeable portion of our citizens speak or know. In 2021, I will encourage more citizens to learn another language besides English, especially our official languages—but not limited to them alone. Of importance, too, is encouraging the growth and longevity of endangered languages, such as local indigenous languages. During this Winter Solstice election, too, we are also asking for people to reply to a national census that asks about language knowledge: we are interested in all languages in our country since, while a cliché, we do believe that our world view is expanded by knowing others' languages and cultures.

In terms of the economy, my government in the new year will continue to make moderate yet firm progress on the Common Economy by returning to our plans for treaties discussed in 2019 and that were put on hold after the advent of COVID-19. As one of two members of the Common Economy, as well, the Central People's Government of the State of Sandus will explore limited economic and technological coöperation with other micronations together, I hope, with our partners in Überstadt, especially giving preference to those in the Borean Community. One Common Economy treaty is to deal with regularising the coöperative system in our two countries. The Citizens' Party of Sandus has recently pointed us toward a solution, whereby in the new year we may see a new economic system divided between coöperatives run by worker's democracies and state enterprises run by the state for a public service. With census data in hand and with new democratic communities in Sandus, coöperative reform will be in the hands of the Sandum people.

Chief of these coöperative reforms is that of the Collegium Sacerdotum, the College of Priests, where I will have served as high priest for ten years. In the new year, I will provide the college with a new charter, one that represents its role in Sandus today and what it can and should

become. The Collegium Sacerdotum has long been a religious, philosophical, and cultural organ in our country, one responsible for the *Sancta* element of our philosophy. Under the new charter, Sandum citizens will be able to spur activity in the college as it comes into its own not only as an association for the faithful in Sandus—but also as a palace of culture in our country. Under the new charter, people in and outside of Sandus can join as members without necessarily holding a rank as a *sacerdos*, or a priest. They can instead become members. *Sacerdotes*, literally “doers of sacred things,” will be able to represent their particular religious, philosophical, and cultural communities and traditions in the State of Sandus. *Flamines*, a higher rank of priests, will run the college’s sodalities, or working groups, of which two currently exist: the Sandum Church and the Sandum Sangha. Under my auspices, these two sodalities will restart their activities under a renewed spirit of ecumenicalism and interfaith dialogue. I already suspect they will not be alone: I have heard others hope to start even more sodalities, including one for polytheists and humanists in Sandus as well as one for Japanese culture. These reforms will ensure that the Collegium Sacerdotum can and will remain an engaging part of our country’s cultural and social mission for years to come. I have already spoken with Hatsu Ryuuhou about beginning a reading group of the *Suttavibhanga*, a text in the *Vinaya pitaka* on rules for monks and monastic communities; this group will serve two purposes, one to read a significant text in the Pali Canon, or *Tripitaka*, and another to provide information and spirit for a future plan on a system of litigation. More about that soon.

With regard to the running of the Central People’s Government in the new year, I will make myself available to encourage and support the Party’s recent decisions to professionalise Party membership and to make Party members a more active part of Sandus—as well as to further clarify the Party’s organisation with a new constitution. As a lifelong member of the Party, I consider it my

duty as much as anyone else to ensure the vitality and well-being of this important organ in the running of our government and of our republic. I will foster in 2021 the Party's work in Sandus at large and I will involve it and its members at many levels of government: I intend to make sure that all members of my cabinet are and remain Party members, just as they are now.

In the new year, I will work with the facilitator to continue to run the Council and to better clarify the Facilitator's and Sôgmô's divisions of powers, as well as to ensure that the facilitator can and does meet their goals.

With regard to our ministries, I will work with the Minister of Diplomatic Affairs to address a diplomatic back log of treaty requests from micronations that we consider our friends and allies, as well as to identify new processes and a chain of command in that ministry. With the Minister of Human & Environmental Health, I will ensure that Tellus Horticultural Coöperative is successfully made independent and wholly running as a worker's democracy in the new year and, inspired by the Aerican Emperor's talk at MicroCon 2019, I will request the ministry to address, draft a report, and lay the groundwork for a possible Sandum health and environmental vision. With rising climate uncertainty, it is necessary that we address environmental and human challenges, as well as other public health concerns now and in the future—and Sandus can perform a part, if even a small part, in ensuring the welfare of our citizens. In addition, I will ask Adam Camillus von Friedeck, the director of the Bureau of the Treasury, to draft a memo that can be the basis of future work on the currency and budgetary questions in Sandus and in the Common Economy. This will be helpful, I feel, for both parties when we come to the negotiating table.

In the government as a whole, in the new year I will take four basic and pragmatic steps to improve the Central People's Government all the more. First, I will hold a Klatsch on provincial reforms, since some Sandum citizens now make up provinces that can and perhaps should be operated independently of the central government. I will not specify the nature of these reforms—this should be left up to the Klatsch—but I will emphasise that I believe provincial governments can help with the organising of local cultural events and the local working of coöperatives. Second, I will reform and update the KremlumSandus email account and will make new email accounts for all ministers, the Party Secretary, and the Facilitator of the Council—as well as for me as the Sôgmô. Though we all communicate in ways that are largely informal, email has the potentiality of increasing the professionalism of our government. Third, I will codify through a sagamorial decree the existence of the cabinet—the so-called “Three Grand Officers of State and the Junior Officers of State”—and define its role in our constitution. I will add a role for an “adjunct” position so that the cabinet can and may call upon former Sandum leaders and Sandum citizens as we see fit. Fourth, I will seek out and hire one or two *chargé-e(s) d'affaires* who will author a monthly newsletter and/or make a monthly podcast.

In terms of diplomatic affairs and Sandus's relations with the wider world, 2021 will be a momentous year for Sandus's new foreign policy, one that does not leave our isolation but that works with key partners in the micronational world at large. Sandus will be the president of the Borean Community until October 2021, and we have already decided on a list of agenda topics: Indigenous rights and sovereignty, anti-Fascism, food security, climate change, and rural-urban reconciliation. I would like to extend my congratulations once again to Jacob Barnet Pharmacologus **Σαρκαστικός** for having been selected as the organisation's first president. As one of the most

senior diplomats in the State of Sandus, he continues to make his country proud with the work that he does at home, in the Borean Community, and abroad. I would also like to thank Adam Camillus von Friedeck, who has already helped with the running of the community and who was one of the original drafters of its charter. These two Sandum citizens have done our state proud.

Dans l'Organisation de la MicroFrancophonie, le Sandus continue à être membre fidèle aux valeurs de l'organisation et à nos amis francophones. Je me présenterai à nouveau aux élections du secrétariat général en tant que secrétaire général adjoint de la Culture et du développement de la MicroFrancophonie.

Cette année m'a démontré qu'il nous faut rester debout pour construire une communauté où les micronations concernées par les droits de l'homme et caractérisées par une même approche professionnelle du micronationalisme pourraient réunir leurs racines communes. Le Sandus est un pays minoritairement francophone, mais reste depuis 2015 aux côtes de ses amis et ses alliés, qu'unit le grand esprit d'une force rassemblée.

En 2021, je proposerai une rencontre officielle de l'OMF pour les membres situés en Amérique du Nord, car tous les membres nord-américains se trouvent dans la même région des Grands Lacs. Comme on le sait, les membres européens ont eu de nombreuses rencontres dans de multiples villes d'Europe : il est temps, je pense, que nous, membres nord-américains, en ayons aussi. Ensuite, l'an prochain, le Sandus encouragera les admissions de membres francophiles et d'observateurs autours du monde. L'Organisation de la MicroFrancophonie a le pouvoir de se donner une place de choix dans le monde intermicronational par la coopération et la cooptation des micronations de la sphère anglophone, tout en restant une organisation motivée par les cultures et

les politiques des francophones. Enfin, je poursuivrai les efforts de l'OMF pour intégrer nos amis sur la base des points communs que nous partageons.

L'OMF ne sera jamais vaincue. L'intégrité et l'unité de l'OMF est toujours notre première préoccupation diplomatique.

Finally, in terms of the long-discussed plans to have a justice system of litigation in Sandus, in the new year I will draft a plan that will address (1) what the system should ideally do, (2) what it can do, and (3) how and why it will work. I have already mentioned the reading group of the *Suttavibhanga*, but I hope to include readings from other religions' monastic and religious communities as well as treatises on courts of law and of equity. Sandus, which is in some ways not unlike a monastic community of sorts on scale and in its relationships to one another, can draw inspiration from a wide range of different historical and cultural exempla. This plan will lay the groundwork for how such a system will work in the future, if ever we will need to use it.

But what remains to be done right now? An election is ongoing, and we are both collecting charity taxes *and* holding our first official census in some time. I draw your attention to those and hope that you take part in them, no matter how busy you may be right now. These are important. After that, all that remains is to celebrate the season in the ways that are befitting of your tradition, and I pray and hope that we all do so with common attention to our safety and health, and to those of others around us.

That is all. We have a long list of things to do in the new year, all while compounded by an ongoing international crisis that is out of our control and what is really an addition to our everyday lives. This extra labour we do in and on behalf of Sandus is an even greater burden still, but one that

I hope fills your life with more meaning as it does mine. Your tenacity and brilliance continue to inspire me, and your sincere compassion makes wielding the awful burden of my office's power bearable. Few micronations reach the age we have so well. We are a country where our government works by common deference to one another, where we do not doubt the good faith and character of our comrades. We are a country so integral and close that, in some ways, we are like a family, and our kinship will continue to have meaning and importance so long as the Sandum people are in charge, in one way or another, of our Republic.

À la prochaine,



Sôgmô