

SAS4011Topic for Autumn 2011: Buddhist political culture

The idea that Buddhism and politics are mutually exclusive categories, the one oriented in an other-worldly direction and the other concerned with social organization has become commonplace. This separation is often assumed not only by Western observers, but often also by Buddhists themselves, claiming that the mixing of the Buddha's Teaching, the *dharma*, with politics is a corruption of the Buddha's original message. However, history shows a close relationship between Buddhism and state power, indicating certain Buddhist ideas of the 'political'. These ideas and practices have been subject to change, and particularly modernity and modern party politics have posed challenges to the Buddhist monastic order. An interesting case in point is the historic entry of the All Monks Party to the Sri Lankan Parliament in 2004. Did their entry represent a radical change from tradition and how did other sections of the Buddhist community respond? To explore the relationship between Buddhism and politics, we will read several historical and ethnographic studies on Sri Lanka, but relevant questions regarding other Buddhist polities will also be addressed.

Detailed teaching plan:

Date	Lecturer	Place	Topic	Resources
04.10.2011	Iselin Frydenlund		Historical background	Lecture
05.10.2011	Iselin Frydenlund		Anti-colonialism and Buddhist revivalism	Lecture
12.10.2011	Iselin Frydenlund		Anti-colonialism and Buddhist revivalism	Lecture
18.10.2011	Iselin Frydenlund		Student presentation	Seminar
19.10.2011	Fronter	Draft submission, essay 5-7 p.		
25.10.2011	Iselin Frydenlund		Buddhist political culture in post-colonial Sri Lanka	Lecture
01.11.2011	Iselin Frydenlund		<i>Bhikkhu</i> politics	Lecture
02.11.2011	Iselin Frydenlund		Student presentation	Seminar
21.11.2011	Fronter	Final submission for essay in Fronter		

Reading list: Buddhist political culture

Lecture 1: Historical background and analytical themes

Reading:

Abeysekara, Ananda. 2002. 'Formations of Religion and Politics'. In *Colors of the robe: religion, identity, and difference*. Columbia, S.C.: The University of South Carolina Press, 67-108.

Gethin, Rupert. 2007. 'Buddhist monks, Buddhist kings, Buddhist violence: on the early Buddhist attitudes to violence'. In *Religion and violence in South Asia: theory and practice*, edited by J. R. Hinnells and R. King. London: Routledge, 62-82.

Harris, Ian. 1999. 'Buddhism and Politics in Asia: The Textual and Historical Roots'. In *Buddhism and politics in twentieth-century Asia*, edited by I. Harris. London: Pinter, 1-25.

Optional:

Smith, Bardwell L., ed. 1978. *Religion and the legitimation of power in South Asia*. Leiden: Brill.

Tambiah, Stanley Jeyaraja. 1976. *World conqueror and world renoucer: a study of Buddhism and polity in Thailand against a historical background*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lecture 2: Anti-colonialism and Buddhist revivalism

Reading:

Seneviratne, H. L. 1999. *The work of kings: the new Buddhism in Sri Lanka*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1-55, 130-188.

Lecture 3: Anti-colonialism and Buddhist revivalism

Reading:

Seneviratne, H. L. 1999. *The work of kings: the new Buddhism in Sri Lanka*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1-55, 130-188.

Optional:

Bond, George D. 1988. *The Buddhist revival in Sri Lanka: religious tradition, reinterpretation, and response*. Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press.

Rahula, Walpola. [1946] 1974. *The heritage of the Bhikkhu*. New York: Grove Press.

Lecture 4: Student seminar

Lecture 5: Buddhist political culture in post-colonial Sri Lanka

Reading:

Bartholomeusz, Tessa J. 1999. 'First Among Equals: Buddhism and the Sri Lankan State'. In *Buddhism and politics in twentieth-century Asia*, edited by I. Harris. London: Pinter, 173-193.

Tambiah, Stanley Jeyaraja. 1992. *Buddhism betrayed? : religion, politics, and violence in Sri Lanka*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1-202.

Lecture 6: Bhikkhu politics

Reading:

Abeysekara, Ananda. 2002. 'Violence and Religion, Terror(ism) and Identity'. In *Colors of the robe: religion, identity, and difference*. Columbia, S.C.: The University of South Carolina Press, 201-239.

Deegalle, Mahinda. 2006. 'JHU politics for peace and a righteous state'. In *Buddhism, conflict, and violence in modern Sri Lanka, Routledge critical studies in Buddhism*. New York: Routledge, 233-254.

Lecture 7: Student seminar