

The Oslo Buddhist Studies Forum

is happy to announce the lecture

"Buddhism and Militarism in Contemporary Sri Lanka"

by Sarah Iselin Frydenlund (IKOS, Univ. of Oslo)

April 27th, 2010, 16:15, PAM, 1st floor, Seminar room 4

Buddhism is often perceived as a religion that emphasizes worldly renunciation and non-violence. In this respect it is often placed in sharp contrast to the social activism and just-war orientation of Western religions like Christianity and Islam. In particular, the non-violent resistance of the Dalai Lama against Chinese occupation has contributed to the West's (as well as the East's) understanding of Buddhism as non-violent. Moreover, the precept of abstaining from taking life is often referred to, by Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike, as one of the key concepts of Buddhism. Given this strong identification of Buddhism with peace and non-violence, the question evidently arises: how do



Buddhists relate to violence and military conflict in the societies in which they live? What are the particularities of the Buddhist tradition(s) in relation to questions about war and peace? Throughout history and across different Buddhist cultures, Buddhist monks have played a central role as preservers of the Buddha's teachings. Given their prominent role as religious teachers and religious *exemplars*, how do Buddhist monks relate to times of conflict? The case of Buddhist monks in Sri Lanka is particularly interesting in this regard, as the country has suffered from severe violence and civil war over the last three

decades. Since the outbreak of the military conflict between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the Sri Lankan Government, Buddhist monks in Sri Lanka have actively participated in public debates about the conflict and its possible solutions. Why, in fact, did the Buddhist monks favor a military solution to the conflict with the LTTE, and how can we, based on the Sri Lankan case, critically engage in a discussion about Buddhism and violence?

ALL ARE WELCOME!

Please send an e-mail to register for participation in the lecture. After the lecture and the discussion light refreshments will be served!

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