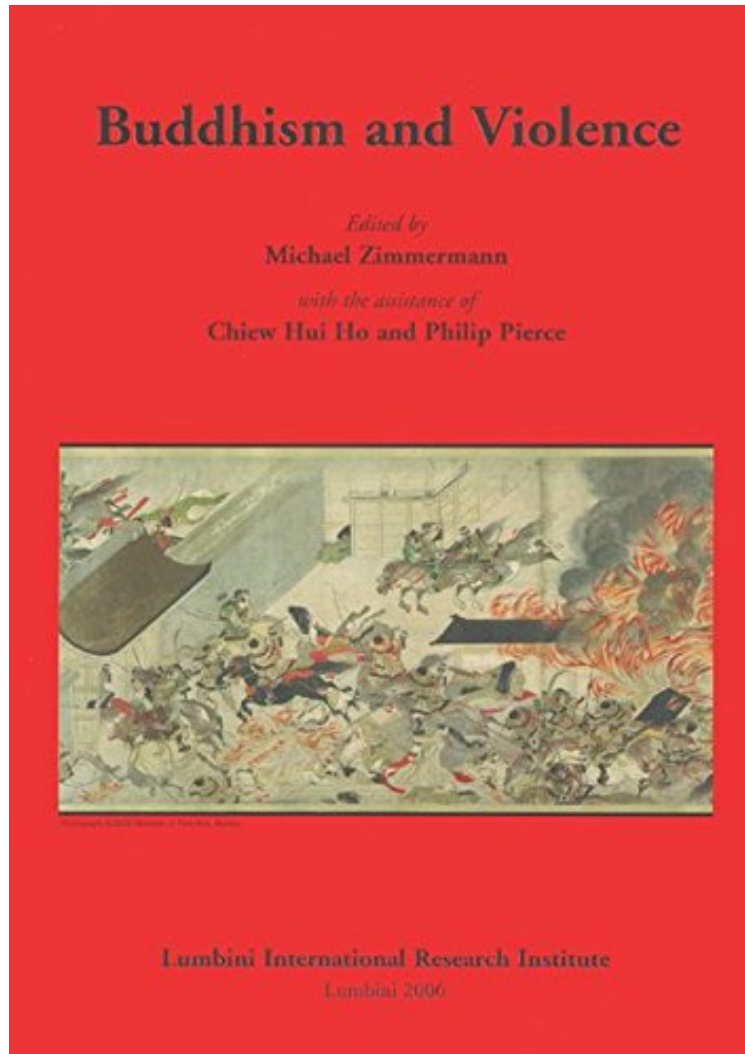


# Buddhism and Violence (Publications of the Lumbini International Research Institute, Nepal)

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**From Brand: Reichert Verlag : Buddhism and Violence (Publications of the Lumbini International Research Institute, Nepal)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Buddhism and Violence (Publications of the Lumbini International Research Institute, Nepal):

17 of 19 people found the following review helpful. The Rage of the Buddhists By Clandestine Library For Further Reading Michael Zimmermann and company have done humanity a big favor in assembling one of the first anthologies of Buddhist history, ethics, traditions, and beliefs in terms of violence. In the "West" Buddhism is often times seen as a system of beliefs that have peace and compassion in the forefront, however, just like any other world view or

fundamental set of beliefs, what the common man calls "religion" (i.e. Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Atheism, Taoism), violence and blood spilling can emerge and has in the case of Buddhism throughout its 2,000+ years of spreading in Asia. In reality Buddhism has a mixed history of violence just like any other nation or body of people would have. Buddhists have inflicted, created, and supported violence for more than two millennia and still do today. Buddhist traditions are diverse and their rules and regulations are often times contradictory, especially since the scriptures of Buddhism are not universally accepted as canonical or even authentic by differing schools like Theravada, Mahayana, Zen, and so on, and the massive amounts of Buddhist writings emerging every few decades make it hard to even set limits on what the true Buddhist scriptures would be, excluding the Pali texts and a few others. Throughout this book, there is much discourse on the all types of Buddhist violence from suicide to deaths of criminals to warfare to death and duties of rulers and kings as punishers and executioners. Buddhist monks have used violence for at least two millennia and continue to do so, but with little media coverage of Asia, it is understandable that the people of the "West" can find little or no violent episodes of Buddhist monk activities, due to ignorance of Asian History and beliefs of the denominations on Buddhism. For a few modern examples of violence one can read *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, 3rd Edition (Comparative Studies in Religion and Society, Vol. 13), *Buddhist Warfare, In Defense of Dharma: Just-War Ideology in Buddhist Sri Lanka* (Routledge Critical Studies in Buddhism), *Shotoku: Ethnicity, Ritual, and Violence in the Japanese Buddhist Tradition*, and others. This is not to say that Buddhists are horrible people, they are not, but they too have stains of blood on their hands and should not be seen as different than other cultures in terms of sanctioning violence. Atheists, Muslims, Christians, and well every society really, have had bad episodes with periods of violence, why see Buddhism as if it were any different? It's not. Here is a list of the Essay titles with short summaries:

"The Path of Bodhisattva and the Creation of Oppressive Cultures"-By Francis Brassard Here there is discourse on the origins of good ideas having negative consequences and how practices and ideas "spill over" to the general society with good and bad consequences. Examples are the Indian caste system (where people are born predetermined by their lineage to eat impure substances and do dirty jobs), vegetarianism; also the Japanese Buddhist monks who get irritated with western tourists who lack "mindfulness" for another's habits (putting shoes in order before entering the temples). And so on.

"Views of Suicide in Buddhism: Some Remarks"-By Martin Delhy Conditions for suicide are discussed such as the unclear rules of allowing suicide found in the Vinayapitaka, historical accounts of Buddhists committing suicide (whether it be for political gain such as self-immolators in protest to the Vietnamese governments under the influence of Mahayana Tradition), Karmic consequences of suicide, the problem with lack of historical Buddhist prohibition of suicide, modern prohibitions of suicide by modern monks like K. Sri Dhammananda, lack of historical scriptures equating of suicide to being treated as killing a living being, Tantric views of suicide.

"Evil Monks With Good Intentions? Remarks on Buddhist Monastic Violence and It's Doctrinal Background"- By Christoph Klein Dialogue on Japanese Warrior Monks and discourse on historical data of at least 400 disturbances caused by Buddhist monks between the 10th to 16th century. Accounts of the abbotship of Ryogen and the monks army that "like to hurt as Butcher's sons". Soldier monks were employed for 1. Forceful protests against government that affected Buddhist practices, 2. Internal struggles between Buddhist schools emerged, 3. Struggles with competing Buddhist orders, 4. Attacks on heretics of Buddhism (examples are given). Discussion on Buddhist texts on killing criminals and an account of the Buddha actually killing a wicked man to save 500 traders altering karmic consequences from the "Sutra of Skillful Means" is mentioned. The Mahayanistic moral code allowing a bodhisattva to kill a robber out of compassion is touched a bit too and the ethical relativism of a bodhisattva believing the non-existence of sin and voidness of the killer and his victim (rendering the bodhisattva ultimately free of guilt or culpability for killing another). There is even a documentation of verses from the Mahaparinirvana Sutra outright encouraging murder and killing of those who oppose the Dharma (the teachings of the Buddha which lead to enlightenment) and are called the "enemies of the Buddha".

"Between the Profane and the Sacred? On the Context of the Rite of "Liberation" (Sgrol ba)" - By Carmen Meinert Deep discussion on Langdarma's (presumed enemy of Buddhist Teachings) assassination by lHa ling dPal gyi rdo rje (Spiritual teacher of monks and Buddhist monk) in Tibet in 842 AD after being spoken to by a deity who told him to go for the kill. "Liberation" killing is discussed as compassionate killing and as a sacrifice to restore order and as a ritual. Reinterpretations of the five poisons of aggression, arrogance, passion, envy, and ignorance lead to possibilities of "Liberation".

"Compassionate Killing or Conflict Resolution? The Murder of King Langdarma according to Tibetan Buddhist Sources" - By Jens Schlieter More on "Liberation" as taking tyrants out of their misery and preventing further bad karma to develop by ending the tyrant's life to liberate the tyrant from "rebirth". The modern Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso calls this "killing out of mercy". There is discussion on Buddhist texts that unambiguously claim enemies of Mahayana Buddhist teachings, people who commit patricide, and matricide should be killed.

"D.T. Suzuki and Japanese Militarism: Supporter or Opponent?" -By Brian Victoria Zen Buddhist Suzuki is analyzed how he influenced Japan's Zen community by his remarks and silence against fellow Buddhist militarists during the Manchurian Incident between China and Japan in 1931 and the war between China and Japan that was still occurring in 1938. Zen scriptures supported battle and war as well and Suzuki saw heathens (anti-nationalists ) who needed to be dealt with unto death. He even identifies Zen to Bushido and he sponsored the view of voidness to the self of warrior class

Japanese, leaving them innocent of the blood they are allowed to shed for Buddhism. In other words they were left with no moral responsibility of their action ultimately. He and other Buddhists contributed to kamikaze philosophy and indirectly contributed to the deaths 3 million Japanese and 20 million other Asians and Allied troops in WW II. "Buddhism and Killing of Animals in Premodern Japan" - By Klaus Vollmer Here there it simply talks of restrictive creeds on what animals can and can't be killed in Japan. Confucius influenced Japan and merged with Buddhism on this issue. Sacrificial killing to gods, killing animals is seen as compassionate killing by helping sentient beings reach enlightenment via killing a lower life form and ending it's worthless existence and speeding the rebirth process of the killed animal to be reborn as a higher form. Freeing captured animals for shrines was seen as a stupid act. "Only a Fool Becomes a King; Buddhist Stances on Punishment" - By Michael Zimmermann In ancient India (before the Common Era), jurisprudence texts (the dharmasutras and dharmasastras) authorized brutal killings and punishment tortures (beating, whipping, mutilation of body parts, etc.). The ideal Buddhist ruler is reviewed here with duties to protect the people and the execute criminals at will, according to Buddhist sources (Mahayana sources mainly). Some see the ruler as a nasty bad karma producing job that leads to hell, because of the punishing a Buddhist ruler must do to maintain order. Pali sources, however, give royal virtues and highlight good habits for kingship including punishing without killing such as beatings and imprisonment while showing compassion for the criminal and trying to develop a friendship with the criminal in hopes of changing the ways of the criminal. Finally capital punishment is addressed. Overall, this is another book that deserves a wide audience and people who are interested in Buddhism must read these studies in order to get a better picture of Buddhism and violence and its diverse history. This anthology is sure to provoke thought place Buddhism in historical context that is much needed. Having said this, it would be a shame for this book to go unnoticed.

This volume studies the evidence that, at particular moments in their history and in certain aspects of their doctrines, the traditions of Buddhism, like other religious traditions, have actively or passively promoted - and may continue to promote - violent modes of behavior or structural violence. The articles in this volume cover a broad spectrum of the Buddhist world in term of regions and periods. They deal with aspects of violence starting in India before the Common Era and ranging to the support of Japanese militarism by Buddhist leaders far into the 20th century.