

White Paper

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## Response Paper #2: Buddhist Nationalism

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**ABSTRACT**

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Professor of Religious Studies at Manchester University, Dr. Kate Eisenbise Crell, has asked her students to answer the questions: What nationalist themes do you hear when the Time's article "The Face of Buddhist Terror" discusses the Ma Ba Tha movement of nationalist monks in Myanmar? What nationalist themes do you hear when analyzing quotes from the movement's leader, Ashin Wirathu?

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**INTRODUCTION**

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Nationalist themes are defined by Stanford University as "the attitude that members of a nation have when they care about their national identity" or as "the actions that the members of a nation take when seeking to achieve (or sustain) self-determination<sup>[1]</sup>." The second part of this definition for Nationalist themes will likely be the most applicable of the two throughout this paper. This second definition is more relevant because I will be observing what actions the Ma Ba Tha group takes in response to conflicts with non-indigenous religious groups. Attitudes, of course, play important roles in conflicts. Attitudes can become the driving motive that produce real responses to conflicts, therefore the attitudes of members of a nation should not be discounted entirely.

The Stanford University source also states: "Multi-cultural states typically bring together groups with very different histories, languages, religions, and even quite contrasting appearances." The article "Encyclopedia of Nationalism: Fundamental Themes" by Alexander J. Motyl argues that, historically, religion has always had a significant role in the

nation and therefore the state<sup>[2]</sup>." Motyl contrasts this statement by talking about philosophers such as Locke or Hobbes who think religion should play no role in defining nationalism. On the contrary, people who think similarly to Roger Scruton, an English philosopher and writer<sup>[3]</sup>, says Nations are cultural communities with shared symbolism in which religion plays a vital role. Now that we have a better understanding of nationalist themes, we are now ready to analyze the Time Magazine Article "The Face of Buddhist Terror" and what the leader, Ashin Wirathu, has to say about the conflict between Buddhists and Muslims during the interview.

The latest best practices in scientific research appears to be using documents that have been assigned a digital object identifier (DOI). "A DOI number is a unique identifying number for an article<sup>[4]</sup>". I am guessing that it is impossible to change the contents of a digital document assigned this identifier. If one looks at the Uniform Resource Locator (URL) for the referenced Time.com article, one might notice that the URL contains a lot of nonsensical digits. This might imply that this article gets revised often which is not great for the scientific method. To improve the quality of

our research, a copy of The Time's article "The Face Of Buddhist Terror" -10/20/2020, will be hosted at source [5].

### **"THE FACE OF BUDDHIST TERROR"**

The Time's article written by Hannah Beech / Meikhtila, Burma, and Pattani, Thailand on Monday, July 01, 2013 is about Buddhists being violent against Muslims. Could we conclude at the end of this paper if this violence was morally and ethically justified? In my previous paper, "On Hindu Nationalism," we found some supporting evidence that the root cause for the violence between Hindus and Muslims could be greatly influenced from events in 1337 where two Hindu kings were captured in battle and forced to convert to Islam. Is it possible history could be repeating itself here and there might be supporting evidence that Buddhists were forced to convert to Islam?

One nationalist theme of this article might be the beginning of the article where it describes a man who holds strong feelings against the minority Muslim population. Another theme could be the Buddhist people justifying their violent retaliations with the suffering that has been dealt to them. The example of suffering that has been dealt to the Buddhist people is when Muslims stole and raped Buddhist women. This would certainly create a lot of emotional tension that would be difficult to resolve peacefully.

Whether the statement that Muslims are stealing and raping Buddhist women is true, violence is usually not the best response. Violence seems to be justified in situations such as World War II where an evil dictator tries to control every country and the opposing countries come together to war against Germany, Japan, and Italy. Violence is also justified in some states of The U.S. with the death sentence for prisoners.

Hopefully with the colonization of Mars, this century will bring a new era of human exploration. One solution could be to give every religion their own inhabitable planet. Another solution could be some form of digitized consciousness where instead of violently killing people in real life, everyone leaves their biological bodies and can live indistinguishable lives in decentralized virtual environments. If we digitize our lives, then we might be able to live until the hypothesized heat death of the universe. If we digitize our lives, then there would be no way to physically kill anyone since people would be backed up on several planets so if you wanted to kill one person you would have to destroy all copies of their data that is scattered through out the universe.

### **CONCLUSION**

Peace within multi-cultural societies is difficult. One idea developed nations share is that violence is bad regardless of the central religion. I do not agree that, because Buddhism symbolizes peace of prosperity, they are never justified in defending themselves against attackers. Mobilizing nationalist movements to be violent towards Muslims is not the right action either. The same reason is if someone did some evil to you and you chased them down and murdered them, you would go to jail for murdering someone if it wasn't strictly self-defense. This is why self-defense court cases rarely favor cases that include someone defending themselves with a knife. This is probably because you have to go after someone with a knife to usually fully kill them.

Religious disputes that involve violent resolutions have been going on for as long as humans have had developed cerebral cortex's. I propose the best solution is to allocate more effort to solving the fragility of human life. This could involve hiring more researchers to research brain-machine interfaces that specialize in recording and decoding neural activities which could ultimately lead to solving many neurological disorders, paraplegia, and prevent the deterioration of our organs.

### **REFERENCES**

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