



# Managing Monks: Administrators and Administrative Roles in Indian Buddhist Monasticism (South Asia Research)

*Jonathan A. Silk*

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The paradigmatic Buddhist is the monk. It is well known that ideally Buddhist monks are expected to meditate and study -- to engage in religious practice. The institutional structure which makes this concentration on spiritual cultivation possible is the monastery. But as a bureaucratic institution, the monastery requires administrators to organize and manage its functions, to prepare quiet spots for meditation, to arrange audiences for sermons, or simply to make sure food, rooms, and bedding are provided. The valuations placed on such organizational roles were, however, a subject of considerable controversy among Indian Buddhist writers, with some considering them significantly less praiseworthy than meditative concentration or teaching and study, while others more highly appreciated their importance. *Managing Monks*, as the first major study of the administrative offices of Indian Buddhist monasticism and of those who hold them, explores literary sources, inscriptions and other materials in Sanskrit, Pali, Tibetan, and Chinese in order to explore this tension and paint a picture of the internal workings of the Buddhist monastic institution in India, highlighting the ambivalent and sometimes contradictory attitudes toward administrators revealed in various sources.



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