Early Buddhism flourished because it was able to take up the challenge represented by buoyant economic conditions and the need for cultural uniformity in the newly emergent states in northeastern India from the fifth century BCE onwards. This book begins with the apparent inconsistency of Buddhism, a renunciant movement, surviving within a strong urban environment, and draws out the implications of this. In spite of the Buddhist ascetic imperative, the Buddha and other celebrated monks moved easily through various levels of society and fitted into the urban landscape they inhabited. *The Sociology of Early Buddhism* tells how and why the early monks were able to exploit the social and political conditions of mid-first millennium northeastern India in such a way as to ensure the growth of Buddhism into a major world religion. Its readership lies both within Buddhist studies and more widely among historians, sociologists and anthropologists of religion.

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Abbreviations

A        Anguttara Nikāya
AŚ       Arthāśāstra
BṛhU     Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad
ChU      Chāndogya Upaniṣad
D        Dīgha Nikāya
Dhp       Dhammapada
Dhs       Dharmasūtra
HR       History of Religions
IÍJ      Indo-Iranian Journal
J        Jātaka
JAOS     Journal of the American Oriental Society
JESHO    Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient
JIABS    Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies
M        Majjhima Nikāya
Mbh      Mahābhārata
MP       Milinda Pañha
PTS      Pali Text Society
S        Samyutta Nikāya
Sn       Sutta Nipāta
Udû       Udāna
Vin      Vinaya
WZKSA    Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens
ZDMG     Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft