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The sociology of early Buddhism

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Abstrak

This volume analyzes the remarkable ability of Buddhism to survive within a strong urban environment despite its renunciant nature. 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. 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 book offers reasons for this apparent inconsistency.