



Popularizing Buddhism: Preaching As Performance in Sri Lanka

Mahinda Deegalle

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The first book to focus on the ritual practice of Buddhist preaching in Asia, *Popularizing Buddhism* examines the role of preaching in Buddhist devotional life and its relationship to the vernacular Sinhala literature of late medieval Sri Lanka. Blending ethnography, textual and doctrinal studies, and an analysis of untranslated Sinhala vernacular Buddhist texts, Mahinda Deegalle traces the development of Buddhist preaching within the Sri Lankan Theravada Buddhist tradition. He explains the preaching ceremony popularly known as *bana* and offers a rich depiction of preaching styles, events, and specific preachers. The book delves into the debates surrounding the preaching ritual's origin and its potential beginning and continuity within the *bhanaka* (reciter) tradition, and explores the interactions between vernacular religious traditions of Sri Lanka with cosmopolitan Buddhism. Deegalle advances previous research on the transmission of Buddhist teachings by constructing a vivid picture of the way Sri Lankan Buddhist traditions have shaped the nature of Theravada Buddhism."

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