

## SPECIAL ISSUE ON BUDDHISM

We are pleased to publish this special issue of *JASO* devoted to the anthropological study of Buddhism, a subject that has interested many at the Oxford Institute of Social Anthropology in recent decades. Indeed, all but one of the contributors to this issue have received their doctorates from the University of Oxford for work in this field, and all but one of these as members of the Institute.

Ever since Durkheim used Buddhism to counter Tylorian definitions of religion, the study of Buddhism has provided a focus for posing key questions to further anthropological debate. Central concerns of the anthropology of religion are debated in particularly interesting ways in the context of Buddhism. Thus, non-specialist readers should find much to interest them in the contributions to the anthropology of Buddhism that comprise this special issue.

We are grateful to our guest editor David Gellner for conceiving and organizing this special issue and for providing a comprehensive introduction to the subject. Regular readers of *JASO* will notice that the issue is some 60 per cent longer than usual. This has been made possible by a generous grant from Oxford University's Inter-Faculty Committee for South Asian Studies, for which we record our thanks.

The Editors