

# On Sri Lankan Monastic Titles

*Monastic Advisory Panel  
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**Monastic titles** such as “**Saṅgha Nāyaka**” and “**Chief High Priest/Monk**” are often bestowed by the various Buddhist monastic authorities of Sri Lanka upon overseas Sinhalese monks in order to honour their role in propagating Buddhism in foreign countries like Malaysia and Singapore. **Many individuals may be conferred the same title.**

These titles are a recognition of the Venerables’ individual contribution and services to Buddhism, but are **purely honorific and carry no hierarchical, administrative or authoritative weight.** This is similar to the conferment of Datuk/Dato’-ship by the Malay rulers in our country.

However, titles such as “**Chief Saṅgha Nāyaka of Malaysia and Singapore**” and “**Chief High Priest/Monk of Malaysia and Singapore**” are **confusing and misleading.** This is because these titles erroneously connote a position of seniority, leadership, administrative authority or representation.

Presently, neither Malaysia nor Singapore has a national organisation comprising *all* local Buddhist monks. Therefore, **there has never been any consensus** for a monk to be appointed or elected as the “Head of the Monastic Community in Malaysia and Singapore”. **Presently, such an office does not exist in Malaysia.**