

BHIKKU AMOGHAVAJRA AND SINO-SRI LANKAN RELATIONS

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The history of Sino-Sri Lankan relations began as early as the beginning of the 1st century AD and continued for a long period. Buddhism was mainly responsible for the existence and continuance of such relations. Buddhist monks from India, China and Sri Lanka contributed a lot to promote and strengthen those relations. Most important among them was bhikku Amoghavajra.

In this paper, I will pay attention to bhikku Amoghavajra and his services towards the spread of Buddhism in China, and to what extent he was of importance for the study of Sino-Sri Lankan relations.

S. Radhakrishnan, in his book, *India and China* says that Amoghavajra was a Brahmin from North India. Another writer, P.C.Bagchi, in his book, *India and China* says that he hailed from a Brahmanical family and that he had migrated from Northern India to Sri Lanka. Sarat Chandra Das, in his book, *Indian Pandits in the Land of Snow* suggests that he was a Sinhalese monk. In this study I intend to examine this controversy in the light of some historical information I have gleaned from Chinese sources and to substantiate the point that he could be a bhikku from Sri Lanka, who seemed to have contributed to maintaining good relations between China and Sri Lanka during the 8th century.