

## **Reasons for Conflicts between the Government and the Bhikkhu Community with reference to Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa periods**

G. M. U. Premarathne

Assistant Lecturer, Department of History, University of Kelaniya  
manjuhis88@gmail.com

G.I.S. Perera

Assistant Lecturer, Department of History, University of Kelaniya  
suranjiperera89@gmail.com

Buddhist Bhikkhus were the main link between the rulers and the citizens from the long past. Therefore the rulers constantly anticipated the admonition of the Bhikkhu community. On the other hand, Buddhist Bikkhus were deemed important as they could counsel the kings. As such, there has been a strong social correlation among the kings and Bhikkhus. The main objective of this study is to ascertain the nature of the relationship between the king and the Bhikkhu community in the past. A secondary objective is to identify the propitious and adverse effects of such relationships. The study was conducted using primary and secondary sources. In fact, in Sri Lanka the ruler being Buddhist, the king and the Bhikkhus have had a close and constant relationship in various activities. Therefore king became the patron and guardian of the Bhikkhus and vice versa .During the period of king Devanampiyathissa, there had been a continuous relationship between the king and the Bhikkhus. Such ties were fractured only during the period of King Valagamba, for the first time. The reason for such a break up was due to the redundant link that the Bhikkhus had with laymen. It could be concluded that links between the king and the Bhikkhu community was too intense and this led to such adverse effects. Sources reveal that certain critical incidents in the history of Sri Lanka have caused this falling out. Similarly there is evidence that Bhikkhus have intervened “unnecessarily” in the course of designating kings. However, the formal link between the king and the Bhikkhus has enabled the strict maintenance of the Buddhist order. Constantly agreeing to construct colossal Buddhist dagabas, viharas and shrines has patched up the strained relationships.

**Key words:** Bhikkhu community, disputes, Bhikkhu interventions, historical rulers, Sri Lankan history