

Anagarika Dharmapala and India – Sri Lanka Relations

150th Birth Anniversary Commemorative Volume



A sketch drawing of Anagarika Dharmapala
(Rasavahini, Vol. 9(3), 1964)



Anagarika Dharmapala and India – Sri Lanka Relations

150th Birth Anniversary Commemorative Volume
1864 - 2014

Edited by
Sandagomi Coperahewa



Centre for Contemporary Indian Studies (CCIS)
University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

Anagarika Dharmapala and India – Sri Lanka Relations

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Message from the President of Mahabodhi Society

Ven. Banagala Upatissa Nayaka Thero



It is with a sense of profound gratitude to the Center for Contemporary Indian Studies, University of Colombo that I write this message for the volume on *Anagarika Dharmapala and India - Sri Lanka Relations*.

Historically, India and Sri Lanka have remained natural allies. The bilateral relations between India and Sri Lanka reached great heights during Emperor Ashoka's time. Sri Lanka is known as Emperor Ashoka's friend. Our vision of Ashoka is that of a ruler who moderated Kautilyan politics of "dhanda" to Buddhist persuasion of "Dhamma". We continue to follow the path that Emperor Ashoka the idealist recommended while altering to the dictates of Kautilya the realist. Emperor, Dharmasoka decreed that Sri Lanka and India to be spiritual and cultural allies.

We look back with a mixture of gratitude, admiration and awe at men such as Anagarika Dharmapala who have succeeded not only to touch out individual selves but have reached the deepest recesses of our national consciousness.

Buddhism which is a faith based on non-violence and the pursuit of spiritual excellence instead of material aggrandizement is the greatest gift that India has bestowed on the island of Sri Lanka.

Anagarika Dharmapala began his romance with India when he first went to India at the age of twenty. He spent a brief period at the Theosophical Center at Adigar. He maintained his ties with India for the rest of his life. In his last will and testament, he expressed even a desire to be reborn in Bharath. His life – long effort to free this holy place failed, though later it was handed over by the Government of India, to a committee of Hindus and Buddhists for its management, as an act of goodwill to Buddhist in Asia. This change was entirely due to the heroic efforts of Dharmapala, aided by the cry of millions of Buddhists throughout the world.

The Mahā Bodhi Society, which Dharmapala had established at Colombo in 1891, was shifted to Calcutta in 1892. There it remains today as a magnificent monument, not only to his memory but also to the great benefactress of the society, Mrs. Mary Foster, of Hawaii. At Calcutta he started the Mahā Bodhi Journal. This has been published continuously for the last 71 years, and today it is one of the leading journals of Buddhism.

Maha Bodhi Society was the pioneer in renewing the historical and religious links between India and Sri Lanka in the twentieth century post-colonial phase of our bilateral relations.



Message from the High Commissioner of India

His Excellency Y. K. Sinha



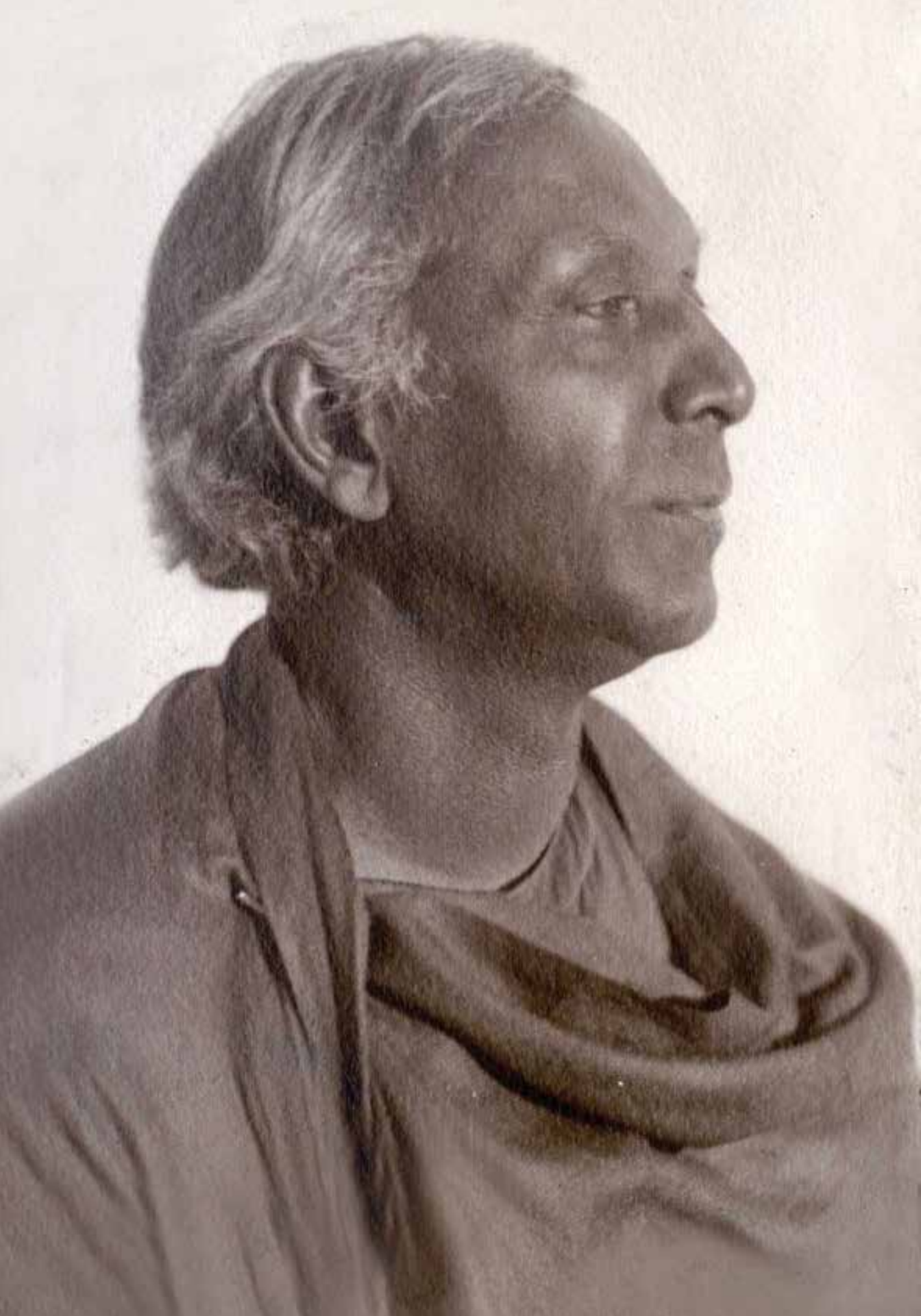
India and Sri Lanka share a rich legacy of civilizational, cultural, religious and linguistic interaction. The great Buddhist revivalist, Anagarika Dharmapala, in many ways symbolizes this shared heritage. He worked tirelessly to preserve the Buddhist legacy in India which is the cradle of Buddhism. At the same time, his role in reviving Buddhism in Sri Lanka and other parts of the world is widely acknowledged. Hence, India and Sri Lanka decided to jointly commemorate the 150th Birth Anniversary of Anagarika Dharmapala in 2014.

Swami Vivekananda and Anagarika Dharmapala – both visionaries and contemporaries, who together participated in the World Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893 – shared many similarities. Both of them appreciated and cherished the more than 2500-year old relationship

between India and Sri Lanka, built upon a legacy of intellectual, cultural, religious and linguistic ties.

It is in recognition of these symbiotic ties that bind us that Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, visited the Mahabodhi Society during his visit to Sri Lanka in March 2015. Earlier, Hon'ble President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee, released a commemorative postage stamp on Anagarika Dharmapala at Rashtrapati Bhavan on October 25, 2014.

I congratulate the Centre for Contemporary Indian Studies and its Director, Professor Sandagomi Coperahewa, for organizing a highly successful symposium on Anagarika Dharmapala last year and for his initiative in bringing out this informative volume on Anagarika Dharmapala.



Message from the Vice Chancellor of University of Colombo

Senior Professor Lakshman Dissanayake



It is with great pleasure I write this message to the volume titled *Anagarika Dharmapala and India – Sri Lanka Relations* published by the Centre for Contemporary Indian Studies (CCIS), University of Colombo.

Anagarika Dharmapala was a towering figure in the Buddhist revivalist work in India, and Sri Lanka. The year 2014 marked the 150th Birth Anniversary of Anagarika Dharmapala and I am delighted to mention that the University of Colombo organized the first International Symposium on Dharmapala on that occasion under the auspices of the Centre for Contemporary Indian Studies.

In 2012, the Centre for Contemporary Indian Studies was established as a multidisciplinary research centre to promote activities connected with developing knowledge in Sri Lanka on contemporary studies in India and strengthening Indo-Lanka relationship through an institutionalized network between the two countries. During the past three years, the CCIS served as a facilitator for lectures, seminars and other

events in the field, including collaborative programmes. I am happy that as a research centre devoted to contemporary Indian studies, the CCIS took the initiative to discuss the socio-historical, cultural and religious significance of Dharmapala's activities in India and Sri Lanka.

Anagarika Dharmapala's work in India is a manifestation of the long-standing cultural and religious links that bind our two countries together. This commemorative volume on Dharmapala, authored by Sri Lankan and Indian scholars, is indeed a substantiation of Dharmapala's impact on India – Sri Lanka relations in the early years of the 20th century. It provides insights on Dharmapala's interest in reviving Buddhism in India, Sri Lanka and his imagination of Buddhism as a global religion.

It is my honest view that this volume will be of immense relevance to those who study Anagarika Dharmapala from a perspective of international relations and history of Buddhism in India and Sri Lanka.



Introduction

Professor Sandagomi Coperahewa
Director | CCIS

Anagarika Dharmapala (1864 - 1933) is one of the most inspiring figures in Sri Lanka's recent social and cultural history. He is widely regarded as a nationalist hero and a Buddhist Revivalist. His Buddhist Revivalist movement was not limited to Sri Lanka. As a Buddhist revivalist he worked tirelessly to spread word of the Dhamma not only to Sri Lankans, but to people throughout the world. As a young man, Anagarika Dharmapala was the guest of Sir Edwin Arnold in London, and went from there to Chicago to attend the World Parliament of Religions, as a spokesman of Buddhism. Later he travelled in most parts of the world – from New York to Yokohama – founding Buddhist temples and propagating Buddhist mission. Dharmapala's work in India especially his struggle to obtain Bodh Gaya for the Buddhists was an outstanding example of his contribution to the Buddhist world. The Mahabodhi Society founded by Dharmapala in 1891 became the most influential international forum for Buddhist missionary work in the early twentieth century. The Society undertook the restoration

and management of every important Buddhist shrine of India.

Many people remember Anagarika Dharmapala for his Buddhist missionary zeal. But there was another aspect to this towering personality – his contribution towards strengthening India – Sri Lanka relations. Dharmapala had a special relationship with India. In India, Dharmapala had many friends and associates. The Mahabodhi Journal, the organ of the Mahabodhi Society was patronized by Indian intellectuals such as Rabindranath Tagore who contributed articles and poems to it. In the first two decades of the twentieth century, the cultural and spiritual collaborations between India and Sri Lanka was deepened through the initiatives of Anagarika Dharmapala and Rabindranath Tagore. Later in his life Dharmapala entered the order of Buddhist monks as Venerable Sri Devamitta Dhammapala and died in 1933 at Sarnath in India.

In the year 2014, India and Sri Lanka jointly celebrated the 150th Birth Anniversary of Anagarika Dharmapala as a tribute to Dharmapala's Buddhist revival



work in India and Sri Lanka. This volume is the outcome of a symposium titled “Anagarika Dharmapala and India - Sri Lanka Relations” organized by the Centre for Contemporary Indian Studies (CCIS), University of Colombo on 24th September 2014 at the Senate Hall, University of Colombo to mark the 150th Birth Anniversary of Anagarika Dharmapala. His Excellency Mr. Y.K. Sinha, the High Commissioner of India addressed the symposium as

the Chief Guest, and Emeritus Professor J. B. Disanayaka delivered the keynote speech. A panel of renowned scholars both from India and Sri Lanka presented papers for the academic session of the symposium. The symposium provided a forum to discuss Dharmapala’s legacy in Buddhist revival in India and its influence on India – Sri Lanka relations. This volume contains five academic papers presented at the symposium. These

contributions provide new insights to understand Anagarika Dharmapala’s Buddhist Revival work in India and Sri Lanka from a socio-religious and historical perspective. In addition, the volume consists other articles relevant to the theme of the volume and a review of Steven Kemper’s new book on Dharmapala.

This volume has come to fruition through the efforts of many, to all of whom the

editor wishes to express his heartfelt gratitude. First, I wish to convey my thanks to all the eminent scholars for their timely contributions. I also take this opportunity to thank the authorities of the University of Colombo and the High Commission of India, Colombo for their continuing support towards the activities of the CCIS. Finally, I would like to record my thanks to the Printec Establishments (Pvt) Ltd., for printing the volume.



Speech by the President of India Shri Pranab Mukherjee on the occasion of Release of a Commemorative Postage Stamp on Anagarika Dharmapala

It gives me great pleasure to be present here today to release a Commemorative Postage Stamp to pay tribute to the great Sri Lankan Buddhist revivalist and writer Anagarika Dharmapala.

I congratulate the Department of Posts for taking this initiative of bringing out a Commemorative Postage Stamp on Anagarika Dharmapala. I hope that this gesture will contribute towards further strengthening the bilateral ties between India and Sri Lanka and bring the two nations closer.

Historically, India and Sri Lanka have remained natural allies. The relations between the two countries have withstood the test of time and socio-cultural exchanges for centuries have fostered further close cooperation in various fields. Both the countries have much to learn and imbibe from each other in order to resolve various issues which are the legacies of a protracted period of colonial rule. I am confident that the relations between the two countries

will continue to further strengthen in the coming years to the mutual benefit of our two peoples.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Buddhism, one of the major religions in the world began in India and is a faith based on non-violence and pursuit of spiritual excellence rather than material aggrandizement. Its principles continue to have great relevance even in this age. Buddhism promotes peace and stability and strongly advocates the spirit of compassion and tolerance. It aims to wean the humanity away from war and skirmishes and inspires people to channelize their collective energy towards the betterment of society.

This stamp release on one of the apostles of Buddhism, once again reminds us to work relentlessly and collectively to ensure an era of peace, stability and friendly bilateral and multilateral ties in order to create an enabling environment for the rapid socio-economic development of the people.



In this backdrop, it becomes much more imperative to recall the achievements and safeguard for posterity the memories of the great Buddhist thinker and preacher, Anagarika Dharmapala who practically lived and breathed Buddhist ideals and worked till the last to revive Buddhism.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Anagarika Dharmapala, was one of the founding contributors of Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism and was also a pioneer in the revival of Buddhism in India. He not only embraced Buddhism but also lent it Sinhalese nationalist character. He waged a protracted struggle to protect and conserve the foundations of Buddhism in its place of birth, India. He joined the Theosophical Society and spearheaded the reform and revival of Ceylonese Buddhism and its propagation. He later entered the order of Buddhist monks as Venerable Sri Devamitta Dharmapala and is considered a Bodhisattva in Sri Lanka. He was

ordained a bhikkhu at Sarnath in 1933 and he died there in December of the same year.

In 1891, Anagarika Dharmapala went on a pilgrimage to the Mahabodhi Temple at Bodh Gaya, where the Buddha had attained enlightenment. He decided to work towards restoring its glory. Accordingly, the Maha Bodhi Society at Colombo was founded in 1891 and one of its primary aims was the restoration to Buddhist control of the Mahabodhi temple at Bodh Gaya.

Many people remember Anagarika Dharmapala for his religious zeal. But there was another aspect to this towering figure - his practical vision regarding the alleviation of poverty. The voice of Anagarika Dharmapala was also a significant factor in Ceylon's historical struggle for freedom from the British Raj. He spoke of the importance of a firm educational and economic foundation if the struggle for freedom was to succeed. He also concentrated on establishing schools



Return of Buddhism to India

Anagarika Dharmapala



and hospitals in his country. He had a vision of a newly emerging Ceylon, which could effectively link up with other countries and forge ahead.

In 1893 Dharmapala was invited to attend the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago as a representative of "Southern Buddhism" - which was the term applied at that time to the Theravada. There he met Swami Vivekananda and like him, he was also a great success at the Parliament.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On this occasion, as I pay my humble homage to this towering personality, I once again congratulate the Department of Posts for bringing out the Commemorative Postage Stamp on Anagarika Dharmapala who worked selflessly all his life with a missionary zeal to propagate Buddhist ideals and to restore the glory of Buddhism.

Anagarika Dharmapala, was one of the founding contributors of Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism and was also a pioneer in the revival of Buddhism in India. He not only embraced Buddhism but also lent it Sinhalese nationalist character. He waged a protracted struggle to protect and conserve the foundations of Buddhism in its place of birth, India.

The Law of Righteousness has triumphed. Twenty – five hundred years ago Our Lord Buddha preached the Law of Righteousness and the principles of Universal Brotherhood. The Noble Eightfold Path shows the way to realise perfect happiness here on this earth by means of *Sila*, *Samadhi*, and *Pragna*. The first two principles of the Eightfold path are- *Sammaditthi* and *Samma Sankappa*. The former enunciates the Law of Cause and Effect and the latter of renunciation, universal love and harmlessness, compassion and love. A religion that is devoid of these three principles of renunciation, ahimsa and love lack the principle of Wisdom.

When Our Lord Buddha visited Kapilavastu after his attainment of Buddhahood with his band of disciples-Bhikkhus-He went begging from door to door, and His father, Raja Suddhodana hearing that his son is begging food from people, felt aggrieved and approached Our Lord and said that princes of Ikshvaku

clan have never begged and Our Lord thereupon said "my race have always begged" and what is that race His father asked? He said, "the race of the Buddhas". From the very commencement of His mission of Love and Compassion Our Lord made no discrimination between high and the low. Everyone was the object of His tender solicitude. So long as Buddhism was flourishing in this land there was no question of untouchability among Buddhists. High and the low were admitted into the Order.

There was a feeling of universal love wherever Buddhism had penetrated. The Principal disciples of Buddha were all Brahmins and He had 1250 of them who formed the Sangha and He had 500 princes who also joined Him. During the period, Buddhism reigned in India the Law of Righteousness prevailed. Compassion was the keynote of the Dharma. Hatred and anger were all suppressed. Lord Buddha taught that 'Hatred does not cease by hatred,



hatred ceases by love.' He further taught that the Dhamma is supreme that no God, Brahmin or Mara can violate that supreme law. He who does evil he suffers, he who does good he reaps the reward thereof. Therefore, he taught the uselessness of animal sacrifices, of bodily mortification and of meaningless rituals.

The one doctrine that differentiates Buddhism from all other religions is the doctrine of Anatma. All other religions show that there is a permanent Atma residing within the body of man. Buddha discovered by His supreme omniscience that no such Atma could exist. That man is a compound of the five *skandhas* that he lives by the power of karmic thought. Therefore, He taught that man can develop good thoughts and avoid evil thoughts. For 1700 years in India, there was no question of untouchability in His Religion. Everyone was allowed to approach the Lord and even the sweeper could approach Him, talk to Him and if He wants He could also enter the Holy Order.

The supremacy of the individual was emphasised. No man was low because of his caste. It is not caste that makes a man great.

It is the noble character that elevates man. He rejected the pretensions of Brahmins who assert that they were supreme because they came from the mouth of Brahma. He shows the stupidity of this assertion by biological law. For the first time the supremacy of the Brahmins was promulgated just 1700 years after the parinirvana of our Lord. Sankaracharya preached a neo-Brahmanism. He revived animal sacrifices and asserted that Brahman is supreme. From that period onwards the Law of Righteousness received a set-back. He preached especially against Buddhism; and the common tradition is that he was responsible for the destruction of Buddhism in India. Two hundred years after Sankaracharya Neo-Brahmanism progressed, Buddhists were subject to terrible persecution and the masses sank into oblivion. One caste alone rose up. The cohesiveness of Aryan polity was disturbed. Two or three centuries later the destructive bands from Arabia and Persia invaded the northwest province of India like a devastating tornado.

Buddhists suffered as well as Brahmins. Viharas and temples were all destroyed. Libraries

were burnt and the Bhikkhus who were dwelling in the Viharas were all massacred and Buddhism went out of existence. The solidarity of the Indian people was for the first time disturbed by Sankara and his colleagues. During 800 years, Mohammedanism had prevailed Aryan civilization was entombed. Semitic civilization and Semitic ideas prevailed. India today is in reality founded on Arab ideas. Existing manners, customs, have been influenced by the Arab and Persian domination.

The self-sacrifice of the saintly Mahatma Gandhi has opened the eyes of the people as to the terrible injustice done to the sixty millions of the so called untouchables. We believe that henceforth the great Law of Compassion will prevail and that the sublime doctrine of the all merciful Lord Buddha will be taken up by the people of India.

If Buddhism returns to the land of its birth, India will have the sympathy of the people of China, Japan Cambodia and other Buddhist countries. India will then become the holy land associated with the sacred memory of the Tathagata. If people will only without prejudice study the Dhamma of

the Tathagata Sammasambuddha they will find how lofty the principles are compared to other sectarian religions. The doctrine that He taught is based upon common sense, on scientific rationalism, on the law of righteous wisdom.

We, therefore, hope that the younger generation in India will take up seriously the study of the Buddha Dharma which is now prevailing in Burma, Ceylon, Siam and Tibet. We, therefore, emphasise that if India is again to become a great nation it cannot progress without the progressive doctrine of the all compassionate Teacher of Nirvana and the Law. What He taught for 45 years is embodied in a three line gatha-

*Sabba papassa akaranam,
Kusalassa upasampada,
Sacitta pariyodapanam,
Etaṃ Buddhana Sasanam.*

“The first is avoid doing evil, second, increase in doing good, and the third purify one’s own heart, this is the teaching of the Buddhas.”

(*Maha Bodhi Journal* Vol. 40, Oct. 1932)

The Maha Bodhi Society: The Embodiment of Anagarika Dharmapala’s Hopes and Aspirations

Dr. Ananda W. P. Guruge



In January 1891, I visited Bodh Gaya, the holy spot in India where the Buddha received enlightenment... My heart swelled with emotion as I rode along the bank of the river and passed pilgrims journeying afoot to the holiest shrine of Buddhism... Perhaps, no other place in the world has been so venerated for so long a period by so many people...

For seventeen hundred years Bodh Gaya was in the hands of yellow-robed Buddhist monks... The temple was rebuilt by the Government of India in 1884. Six years later, the officials, not finding at the spot any representative Buddhist with whom to deal handed over the inner management of the temple to the temple of Sainvite fakirs.

In Bodh Gaya, when I visited the bo-tree, an offshoot of the original tree under which the Buddha sat, I had the same winged peace of soul as the humblest pilgrim from Burma. Reverently I visited the brick temple,

built in the form of a pyramid, and examined the carvings on the ancient stone-railing. But I was filled with dismay at the neglect and desecration about me... It seemed an outrage that this holiest temple of the Buddhists should be under the management of a man whose ancestors had always been hostile to Buddhism.

I intended to stay a few weeks and then return to Ceylon; so I had only a few rupees with me. But, when I saw the condition of the shrine, I began an agitation to restore it to Buddhist control. I communicated with the leading Buddhists of the world and urged them to rescue Bodh Gaya from Siva-worshipping Hindu fakirs.

On May 31, 1891, I started the Mahabodhi Society to rescue the holy Buddhist places and to revive Buddhism in India, which for seven hundred years had forgotten its greatest teacher. In 1892 I started the journal of the Society, The Mahabodhi.

Thus recalled Anagarika Dharmapala the circumstances which led to the founding of the Mahabodhi Society exactly a century ago. It had a two-fold objective of restoring the sacred Buddhist shrines of India to the Buddhists and to bring back to India the greatest spiritual and cultural contribution she has made to the world in the form of Buddhism. But the dynamism of Anagarika Dharmapala was so indelibly imprinted on the organization and functioning of the Society that it became within a decade the very first international Buddhist forum which rallied around itself the entire Buddhist community of the world.

On the day he worshiped the sacred Bodhi-tree and vowed to rescue Bodh Gaya for the Buddhists, Anagarika Dharmapala made a solemn *saccakiriya* which he called a “will prayer”. It was: *If the work I am doing is good, then let help come to me and if the work is good, help will surely come to me.* He did not have to wait long before this very criterion convinced him that the work he commenced was for the benefit of humanity. The Society received support, both moral and financial, and more so the dedicated and active involvement of workers from the most unexpected sources.

On reviewing its thirty-eight year progress in 1930, Anagarika Dharmapala said,

“When I found the Maha Bodhi Society on 17 (?) May 1891, with the late illustrious Maha Nayaka Sumangala, Principal of Vidyodaya College, as its President, little did I anticipate that the tiny seed would grow into a healthy tree.”

He added further,

On that memorable afternoon (under the shade of the sacred Bodhi tree), I surrendered my life to the Blessed Tathagata and unto this day I have served the holy cause with persevering energy. The little journal became the vehicle of communication between myself and the civilized world.

The Society’s first most memorable achievement was the International Buddhist Conference at Buddha Gaya on 31st October 1891 when, “on a spot facing the sacred Bo-tree, delegates from different Buddhist countries sat in solemn conclave and discussed the future programme of Buddhist activity”. The twenty-seven year old Anagarika Dharmapala, with this single achievement, became a recognized international Buddhist leader. His devotion matched his earnestness and true to the Buddha’s own exhortation he went forward and never looked back.



Ven. Weligama Sri Sumangala



Sir Edwin Arnold



Col. Henry Steele Olcott

A number of equally devoted men had rallied round him and given him every encouragement right from the beginning. Among them was Sir Edwin Arnold, the celebrated author of the *Light of Asia* who not only deplored the neglect of Bodh Gaya in his *India Revisited* in 1885 but also urged Ven. Weligama Sri Sumangala Nayaka Thera to organize the Buddhists to petition the British Government of India to restore the holy site to the Sangha.

Colonel Henry Steele Olcott, the great American theosophist, who had been Anagarika’s mentor in his initiation to Buddhist work, joined in organizing the Maha Bodhi Society and, in fact, raised in Akyab within one week Rs. 6000 which enabled the Society to establish its headquarters in Calcutta. Babu Neel Comul Mookerjee, Rai Bahadur Narendranath Sen, Neerodenath and Naranath Mookerjee of Calcutta offered Anagarika “such loving kindness and hospitality as

I could expect from my nearest kin”.

The Rangoon Maha Bodhi Society – the first branch organization – was established on the initiative of Moungh Hpo Mhyin, whom Anagarika described as “my friend whom I love and revere, who has been a teacher and guide to me and whose enlightened company I have always enjoyed”.

Sir William Hunter in his *History of the Indian Empire* added a chapter on Buddhism and commented on Anagarika Dharmapala’s work in heartening terms:

During 1891-92 a new central Buddhist society with local branches and a monthly English journal was organized in Calcutta..... The first number of its journal opens with the following words: The Maha Bodhi Society has commenced its mission for the resuscitation of Buddhism in the land of its birth.

Dr. John Henry Burrows of the Chicago Congress Committee for the organization of the historic World Parliament of Religions was so impressed with the very first issue of the Maha Bodhi Journal that he appointed Anagarika as a member of the Advisory Committee.

Anagarika Dharmapala's participation in this Parliament of Religions gave the Maha Bodhi Society a great boost. He wrote in 1894:

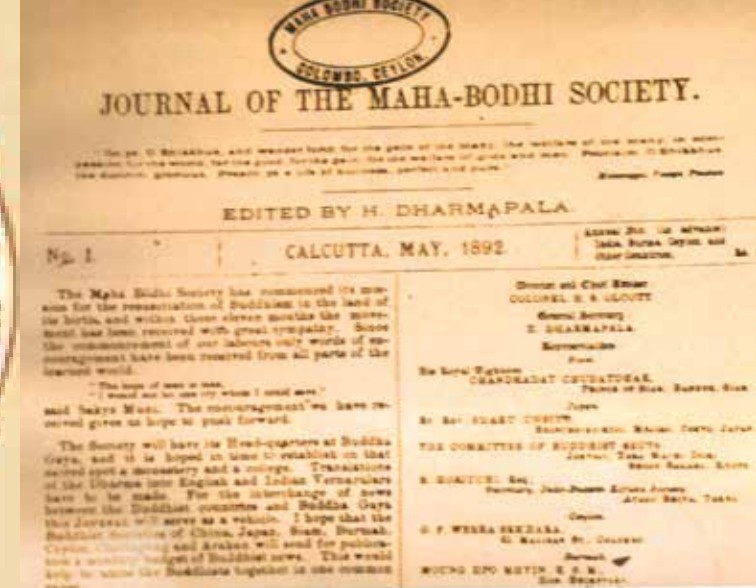
The one motive I had all along to visit America was to disseminate the law of the gentle Lord Buddha abroad and of bringing into prominence the great idea originated by the Maha Bodhi Society. To visit China, Japan and Siam for the purpose of laying before the influential Buddhists of the countries the objects of the Maha Bodhi Society was of supreme importance. The consolidation of the different Buddhist nations, the restoration of the sacred Buddhist sites of India, the rehabilitation of the Law in the land where it originated, the founding of an international Missionary Training College for young men in Benares or Buddha Gaya: these are the objects of the Society which it hopes to achieve.

On the eve of Anagarika's departure to USA, the Society had to confront its first major challenge. He had received confidential information that the sacred shrine of Buddha Gaya would come to the possession

of the Society if it could raise one lakh of rupees within three months. He said later, *Two and a half years of uninterrupted work, by a strange coincidence, reached its climax at crisis.... Time was approaching near and yet there was no hopeful response from any Buddhist country.* With great diffidence and "deep anxiety" and "uncertainty", he turned to Burma, where on the very last day due to the munificence of Moung Shwe Oh of Moulmein, the objective was accomplished. Anagarika said, *With anxiety I came to Burma and I left her delightful shore with a pleasant heart.*

Despite these initial successes, the Society could not be maintained without enormous sacrifice. If not for the undaunting courage of its prodigious founder neither the Society nor the Journal would have survived. Although the money to re-possess the shrine of Buddha Gaya was collected in time, the transaction fell through. In addition, the Society faced failure with regard to its very first objective.

In February 1895, the men of the Hindu fakir, the Mahant, persecuted the Bhikkhu residents and forcibly carried away the Buddha image. The Maha Bodhi Society was obliged to enter into protracted legal proceedings. The Society, however, took steps to



build a Pilgrims' Rest in 1904. If that was not done, the pilgrims to this foremost Buddhist shrine would have had no place to stay because in 1910 Mahant took possession of the Burmese Pilgrims' Rest which had been in use for seventeen years.

Even a rival society under the name of the "Buddhist Shrines Restoration Society" came into existence. The Maha Bodhi Society lost the sympathy of the Burmese friends on account of malicious propaganda against it in Rangoon. In 1906, the Commissioner of Patna officially condemned Buddhist activity in Buddha Gaya. In 1910, the Japanese formed an alliance with the Hindu Mahant to create a political centre in Buddha Gaya and Sri Lankan Buddhists were expelled from the area. Anagarika's laconic remark on the event was "Things were all dark".

The Society survived the turbulence. Its founder, with

matchless resilience, found it a wider and more enduring role. With the stalemate in the efforts to rescue Buddha Gaya, the Society concentrated on educational and social services in Sri Lanka. It established the Maha Bodhi Press in 1906 and started the Sinhala newspaper *Sinhala Bauddhaya*. The school at Rajagiriya experimented with Anagarika's concepts of education and vocational training. The Maha Bodhi College was similarly developed. To counteract foreign influences reaching a remote village, it started a school at Hiniduma. The network of rural schools which the Society established similarly to serve disadvantaged remote communities was quite extensive and functioned effectively until the take-over of Assisted Schools in 1960. The society also started in 1914 the Foster Robinson Free Hospital. Simultaneously, the society began to play a leading role in the national revival with

independence as its ultimate goal. The national political and social philosophy which evolved in the process continues to be the underlying policy-base of successive governments of the country.

The unfortunate events of 1915 affected the Society as well as its illustrious founder. The virtual incarceration in Calcutta, with an injunction barring his return to Sri Lanka, did little damage to his indomitable spirit although his physical health was adversely affected.

But as soon as he could move freely again, the Society was back in the front line of action. It built the Vihara in Calcutta from 1915 to 1920 and even got the Government of India to present it a share of the relics of the Buddha. In 1922 it began the construction of the Mulagandhakuti Vihara in Sarnath and completed it in 1930. In the international scene, it continued its Buddhist missionary activities in USA and Britain. The founding of the Mary Foster Permanent Fund in 1923 and the establishment of the British Buddhist Mission in 1926 were significant landmarks.

Even as these laudable projects were being implemented, the Society was going through immense difficulties. A report in 1917 said,

“For twenty-six years, the Maha Bodhi Society continued to exist in spite of the many obstacles thanks to the generosity of a few friends of the Anagarika Dharmapala... For twenty years we are sorry to state the wealthy Buddhist dignitaries in Buddhist countries failed to respond generously for the expansion of the objects of the Maha Bodhi Society. Japan and Siam have not helped by a single contribution... Burma contributed generously at the commencement of operations of the society, but since sixteen years have failed to render any assistance. Several hundreds of subscribers to the Maha Bodhi Journal in Burma, India and Ceylon have failed to pay their subscriptions and the loss thereby to the journal amounts to several thousand rupees... For nearly twenty years the Society received very little help from the people of Ceylon.

Yet Anagarika Dharmapala was neither dismayed nor discouraged. Thirteen years later, he looked back on the work of the Society, achieved single-handed, and was still optimistic. The motivation came from the success it met in the West.

Around 1930, reviewing the first thirty-nine years of the Society's work, he wrote:

The Maha Bodhi Society has a splendid future in European Countries and it is the only international Buddhist society which has kept the torch of Enlightenment burning for the



last 39 years. In another eleven years, the Society shall celebrate its jubilee and in another twenty-seven years the first half of the five thousand years will expire. Then will come the glorious period of Buddhist activity in Europe and America.

This is about the last of Anagarika's comments of the Maha Bodhi Society so far found. Three years later he passed away.

Anagarika Dharmapala did not look to the future of the Society beyond the Buddha Jayanti. He did not see in his life-time the full accomplishment of his dreams, hopes and aspirations which he formulated into the objects of the Society.

His joys, therefore, would have known no bounds if he saw that the struggle he launched to rescue the sacred Bodhi-tree shrine in Buddha Gaya culminated in unqualified success. He would have been even more delighted that all Buddhist shrines in India have been restored to Buddhists and the Society he created continues to play a major role in maintaining the traditional Buddhist ambience of these shrines and that the Sri Lankan monks placed there by the Society fulfill a magnificent spiritual function.

What would have given him even much greater satisfaction



is that his efforts to bring back Buddhism to the land of its birth has been achieved to an extent that he himself could never have imagined. India has re-embraced its Buddhist past as symbolized by such external as the inclusion of Dharmacakra in the national flag, the adoption of Asoka's Saranath pillar-capital as the official seal and the presence of the Mathura Standing Buddha in the House of Parliament. Even more spectacularly the mass conversions to Buddhism in millions which have taken place since Baba Sahib B. R. Ambedkar's lofty example and leadership have underscored that Anagarika Dharmapala's hopes and aspirations have been achieved even as the Society approached its diamond jubilee.

He would have been equally happy to find that the study of Pali and Sanskrit as well as Buddhism in all its diverse forms has made remarkable progress and departments of Buddhist Studies in Universities and specialized institutions are to be found in almost every major country in the world. That the tradition of the Buddhist University of Nalanda has been revived by India with a fitting institution, located nearby but with the same name, would have compensated for not seeing the Society's object of having such an institution at Buddha

Gaya or Saranath. But he would have expressed his satisfaction with the presence of high level Tibetan Buddhist Institutions with similar objects in both these places.

Today, as the Maha Bodhi Society celebrates its centenary; it could proudly lay claim to a record of world-wide presence and activity. In India alone its centres number a dozen: namely, Calcutta, Buddha Gaya, Sarnath, Sanchi, New Delhi, Lucknow, Bombay, Nowgarh (Lumbini), Ajmer, Madras, Bhubaneshwar and Bangalore. USA has four centres in Wisconsin, New York City, Chicago and Los Angeles while Japan has three in Atami, Nagoya and Tokyo. U. K., Republic of Korea, Ghana and Taiwan have each a centre. The Maha Bodhi Society of Sri Lanka not only functions as a leading light in national Buddhist movements but continues to fulfill many of the special tasks assigned to it by Anagarika Dharmapala. It continues to be the pre-eminent Dharmaduta Movement based in Sri Lanka. One may, however in retrospect bemoan that some of the original branch organizations in Burma, Chittagong (Bangladesh), Thailand and France have now become defunct. It may still be possible for the Maha Bodhi Society to resuscitate some of these centres.

As one examines how this prestigious Society has gone through many a vicissitude and still managed to remain an embodiment of the founder's hopes and aspirations, one has to give due credit to Anagarika's foresight and sagacity. With whatever financial support he received, specially from Mary Elizabeth Foster, Anagarika Dharmapala ensured the financial viability of the Society. With his own dedication and example and with the care and attention he paid to the development of human resources for the service of Buddhism, he inspired up to now at least six generations of Buddhist workers to continue to keep the torch he lit on 31 May 1891 burning to give light and illumination to humanity. Our celebrations, therefore, should be a fitting tribute to this unparalleled doyen among our national leaders – the great man whose clarion call to the whole of human – kind was

“Arise, awake, unite and join the Army of Holiness and Peace and defeat the hosts of evil”.

May the Maha Bodhi Society continue its glorious service for centuries to come.

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Anagarika Dharmapala: His Vision and Mission

Keynote Address by
Emeritus Professor J. B. Disanayaka

Anagarika Dharmapala is considered the most outstanding ideologue of the Sinhalese Buddhist revival of the last century. It was he who provided the conceptual framework for this movement.

A Sri Lankan who goes on pilgrimage to sacred Buddhist sites in India, particularly in the North, cannot bypass the presence of Anagarika Dharmapala, the Sinhalese Buddhist who led the Buddhist Revival in the latter part of the nineteenth and the early part of the twentieth century. As the pilgrim walks along roads that have been named after him and relaxes at the guest-rooms in the Mahabodhi societies, he cannot but thank the man who made all that possible, Anagarika Dharmapala.

Anagarika Dharmapala is considered the most outstanding ideologue of the Sinhalese Buddhist revival of the last century. It was he who provided the conceptual framework for this movement. He was a man with a vision and a mission. His vision was to regain the lost identity of the Sinhalese Buddhists and his mission was to spread the universal message of the Buddha beyond the land of His birth, India.

The Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, was born in India, which

was then called 'Jambu-dvīpa'. Sri Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime-minister of modern India, says in his *'Glimpses of World History'* that the Buddha is "the greatest son of India". The English historian, H.G.Wells, says in his *'Outline of History'* that Buddhism is "clear and simple and in the closest harmony with modern ideas. It is beyond all dispute the achievement of one of the most penetrating intelligences the world has ever seen."

Albert Einstein has said that "if there is any religion that would cope with modern scientific needs it would be Buddhism"

Until the onset of Western colonialism in Sri Lanka at the turn of the sixteenth century, this island was a Buddhist kingdom where the majority was 'Sinhalese Buddhist'. The term 'Sinhalese Buddhist' had not come into currency because there was no need to identify them as a distinct ethno-religious entity. The Portuguese, the first colonial masters who arrived in this country in 1505, came here with "a sword in one hand and the Bible in the other".

With colonialism, the Sinhalese Buddhist identity began to lose ground. To seek employment under the colonial masters, the Sinhalese were compelled to give up the two most distinctive features of their identity: their Sinhala names and their religion, Buddhism. This continued under the Dutch and the British, the two nations that followed the Portuguese.

In that colonial tradition, young Dharmapala was named 'Don David' by his father who was 'Don Carolis'. His younger sister was named 'Dona Engaltina' and his younger brothers were given alien names such as 'Edmond' 'Simon Alexander' and 'Charles'. Since charity begins at home, Don David began the revival by changing his own name from 'David' to 'Dharmapala': 'the one who is governed by the Dhamma, the teachings of the Buddha'

Since there were no Buddhist colleges of any standing at that time, he had no choice but to attend several Christian missionary schools, such as S.Thomas', St. Benedict's

and Christian College at Kotte. The atmosphere in these schools was alien : boarding masters shooting birds that alight on the trees, and teachers throwing non-Christian books into the dustbin. Young Dharmapala was determined to change this sad state of affairs.

His mission was both ethnic and religious. Ethnically, he wanted to regain the lost identity of the Sinhalese and religiously, he wanted to spread the teachings of the Buddha. To regain the lost identity of the Sinhalese, he ridiculed those Sinhalese who had foreign names and those who wore the European dress.

Once he asked a bright boy whom he met at a meeting what his name was and the boy answered "Pedrick Silva". Snapped Dharmapala "Who is the bloody fool that gave you that silly name? Hereafter you will be called Piyadasa Sirisena!" Piyadasa Sirisena grew up to become one of the most outstanding writers of this period.

As Sarath Amunugama says, in his paper on 'Anagarika Dharmapala and Sinhala Buddhist Ideology', *Dharmapala launched a frontal attack on the concept of English superiority. He reversed the existing relationship and contrasted the past of English civilization with that of the Sinhalese. In place of the imperialist stereotype of the coloured man as a savage and heathen, Dharmapala, with a sense of mass psychology, substituted his own stereotype of the Englishman as a barbarian. In contrast, the Sinhalese were portrayed as the heirs of a magnificent civilization: What other nation on earth is there which could boast of a history of the island, a history of the great line of kings, a history of religion, a history of sacred architectural shrines, a history of the sacred tree, a history of the sacred relics?"*

To revive Buddhism, he had the support of many others: monks and laymen; Sri Lankans as well as foreigners. Among Sri Lankans were distinguished monks such as Ven. Hikkaduwe Sumangala, Ven. Migettuvatte Gunanada, Ven. Heyyantuduwe Devamitta, Ven. Valane Siddhartha and Ratmalane Dharmarama – monks who were instrumental in conducting the so-called 'Debates', such as the Debate at Panadura, that inspired many a foreigner to come to Sri Lanka and embrace Buddhism.

Among Sinhalese laymen were scholars such as Valisinghe Harischandra and among non-

Sinhalese Sri Lankans were men such as Leadbeater, (who later became the principal of the most prestigious Buddhist school). Among foreigners were men and women such as the American colonel, Henry Steele Olcott; the Russian theosophist, Madame H.P. Blavatsky and the American philanthropist Madame Mary Foster Robinson (from Honolulu).

To revive Buddhism in Sri Lanka, he established a series of Buddhist colleges for boys and girls to educate them in a Buddhist environment. Among the boys' schools were Ananda (Colombo), Dharmaraja (Kandy), Mahinda (Galle) Maliyadeva (Kurunegala) and among girls' schools were Visakha (Colombo) Mahamaya (Kandy) and Sanghamitta (Galle). To teach Buddhism per se, an educational institution known as a 'Dhamma school' was established and it was conducted on Sundays.

To coordinate work he established an organization that was named 'the Mahabodhi' in Colombo, which continues even to this day. To educate the Sinhalese Buddhists, he published newspapers and periodicals both in Sinhala and English: in Sinhala, the most prestigious Sinhala weekly was '*Sinhala Banddhaya*' (Sinhalese Buddhist); in English, the most prestigious periodicals were '*The*

Buddhist' and '*The Mahabodhi*'.

To revive Buddhism in India, the land of its birth, he spent the best years of his life in India. His first visit to India was in 1884, when he was just a young man of twenty. It was Colonel Olcott and Madame Blavatsky, the Buddhist theosophists that invited him to join them to visit Adayar in Madras where they had their Theosophical Society.

His visit to Bodhgaya, six years later, was an eye-opener. He found that the temple at Bodhgaya, where Prince Siddhartha attained Enlightenment, was under the control of the Hindus who religiously conducted Hindu rites and rituals in full vigour. His mission was to reestablish Buddhism at the place of its birth. Over many years, he had to fight a hard battle in a foreign land, and was able to gain a foothold for the Buddhists there. In this struggle, there were many Indian Buddhists who helped him. Today, Bodhgaya has become a UNESCO heritage site and the Mahabodhi there caters to the needs of the Sinhalese Buddhist pilgrims.

In Saranath, where the Buddha delivered His first sermon, he set up not only a Mahabodhi but also a new temple, named 'Mulagandhakuti Vihara'. In old Calcutta, he built a vihara, which was named, 'Dharmarajika Vihara',



His mission was both ethnic and religious. Ethnically, he wanted to regain the lost identity of the Sinhalese and religiously, he wanted to spread the teachings of the Buddha. To regain the lost identity of the Sinhalese, he ridiculed those Sinhalese who had foreign names and those who wore the European dress.

to recall a temple built by Emperor Dharmasoka in Gandhara.

To spread the teachings of the Buddha and help pilgrims, branches of the Mahabodhi were established in many parts of India: Madras (Chennai), Calcutta (Kolkata), Bodhgaya, Saranath, Kusunagar and Lumbini (in modern Nepal).

It was Anagarika Dharmapala that took the message of the Buddha beyond India to the West and the East: His participation at the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893 was a landmark in the history of Buddhism in the West. His speech, made with eloquence and elegance, made such an impact on the non-Buddhist audience that Prof. Barrows who chaired the sessions is reported to have said that Dharmapala looked “like Christ in a saffron robe”!

To establish Buddhism in Britain, he went to London a couple of times. His visit in 1925, when he was 60 years old, was to open a Buddhist vihara in London. As Sinha Ratnatunga, (Managing Trustee of the Anagarika Dharmapala Trust) says “His arrival in England, ten days after his 60th birthday, was to realise his dream of opening a Buddhist vihara in London...As he sailed the Atlantic



Ocean his diary entry for New Year's Day (January 1st 1926) is as follows: 'May the Sasana be established in England. Thirteen hundred years ago, the Roman clergy established the Catholic Church in England. In the 16th century, Henry VIII established the Protestant Church. Why should not England also have the Aryan Religion of the Shakya Prince?' (Anagarika Dharmapala and Spread of Buddhism, London Buddhist Vihara, 2014).

As a result of his endeavour, the London Buddhist Vihara was established in Chiswick, which

celebrated its 88th anniversary this year.

Anagarika Dharmapala also inspired Buddhists in other Asian countries, such as China, Japan, Korea, Thailand and Myanmar to revive their Buddhism to keep up with modern trends. He visited all these lands where he was given a warm welcome.

For many years he was called 'Anagarika' meaning 'the Homeless', the one who has left household in pursuit of truth. In his last years,

he entered monkhood and called himself 'Devamitta Dhammapala', after his teacher, Ven. Heyyantuduve Devamitta. He spent the last years of his life in Saranath and died on April 29th 1933 at the age of sixty nine, with the hope that he would be born at least twenty five times more to reestablish the Buddha Sasana by taking the universal message of the Buddha to the world, for “*the good of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world*”



Anagarika Dharmapala and India: Efforts at Forging a Buddhist World

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Before we turn to Dharmapala's time in India, let us examine the broader context of Indian Buddhism. I suggest that there were two strands contained in the genealogy of modern Buddhism in India.

Three years after the death of Anagarika Dharmapala in 1933, the famous Bengali sociologist Benoy Kumar Sarkar gave a speech at a meeting in Calcutta on the occasion of his death anniversary. In it, he called Dharmapala a “world-man” with a rare *sammaditti*, a Pali word meaning “complete view” or “right understanding”. According to him, Dharmapala, as a “hero of action”, understood with visionary clarity that Ceylon was part of a “Greater India” and that India, Ceylon and Burma were in turn, part of “Buddhist Asia”. He was the “architect of [a] new Buddhism” which respected the texts but was much more practical and cognizant of “actual realities”. Further still, he was the agent of a veritable “spiritual revolution” in inviting representatives of Japanese Mahayana Buddhism into regions that were no longer Buddhist. In so doing he was a maker of a new and vibrant “Young Asia”.

This was high praise indeed for a controversial man who during his lifetime had endured much criticism

and fallen out with many prominent figures like the Theosophist Henry Olcott and to some extent, Swami Vivekananda, considered by many to be the founder of modern Hinduism. He also had a difficult relationship with the British colonial masters of India and Ceylon, and faced many obstacles including the apparent disinterest on the part of the very Japanese Buddhists that Sarkar claims that he made common cause with. Today, in modern-day Sri Lanka, he is remembered and revered (and sometimes reviled) as a champion of Sinhala Buddhist nationalism. Elsewhere, in Burma and other countries of Southeast Asia, he is remembered fondly for his efforts towards the restoration of Buddhist shrines in India to Buddhists. But in India, he barely finds mention in standard accounts of Indian history despite having spent the majority of his life based first, in Calcutta and then in Sarnath. In fact, in these accounts, it is the year 1956 and the much better known figure of Bhim Rao Ambedkar, that are most often mentioned in connection with

Indian Buddhist revival. In that year, Ambedkar, the chief draftsman of India's Constitution, converted to Buddhism with millions of his so-called untouchable caste fellows or ‘dalits’. Yet, in Dharmapala's own time, he was a well-known public figure in Calcutta as his association with the Mahabodhi Society coincided with and contributed to the rise in Bengali middle-class interest in Buddhism in the late 19th and 20th centuries.

Before we turn to Dharmapala's time in India, let us examine the broader context of Indian Buddhism. I suggest that there were two strands contained in the genealogy of modern Buddhism in India. One was this more radical strand represented by Ambedkar where Buddhism was sought to be exploited for its supposed emancipatory possibilities. But there was another more liberal strand that began at least sixty years prior. In this phase, Buddhism captured the imagination of various native publics notably in Calcutta, Madras, the United Provinces and later in Bombay, as offering a

solution to India's many problems of caste, superstition, religious intolerance, economic backwardness, and resistance to modern institutions and indeed modernity itself. It was in this phase that a more critical thing happened—the insinuation of Buddhism in the national, scholarly and popular imagination in India. The first phase of interest in Buddhism from the 1890s till about the end of the 1920s recognized its international importance. Revivalists and academics in this period sought to fructify international Buddhist connections and networks, loosely aiming to make the ‘Buddhist world’ a tangible entity. In the second phase, from about the 1920s to the 1950s, Buddhism was appropriated by the nationalists and spoken of as one of India's great (if not greatest) contribution to human history. In this phase, Buddhism was increasingly spoken of as an Indian faith. And finally, from 1956, Buddhism became a liberation theology for those who felt most disenchanted by the new post-colonial dispensation—the dalits. Led by Ambedkar, the dalits



B.R. Ambedkar

converted to Buddhism in a radical move that repudiated the post colonial state's claims of promoting a more egalitarian society.

Dharmapala belonged to the first liberal and internationalist phase of Buddhism. In his own lifetime, he was unsuccessful in gaining the converts to Buddhism that he so desperately wanted. But I argue that he and the Mahabodhi Society were remarkably successful in reviving Buddhism in the Indian imagination. Further, he was immensely successful in positioning the Mahabodhi Society that he started in 1891, as the chief spokesperson for Buddhists in India. On questions of relic transfers or the state of Buddhists in India, the British government

turned to the Mahabodhi Society for answers and support. Often, Dharmapala's vision of a Buddhist world is seen at odds with that of his purported Sinhalese bigotry. I suggest that if seen through the rhetoric of his conception of Indo-Aryan civilization, these two strands of his thought and activity no longer appear so contradictory. Also, the Mahabodhi Society that he established emerged as an important intermediary and mediator bringing together a community of commentators (scholars, amateur scholars, nationalists, men of religion, revivalists, littérateurs) on Buddhism that contributed to its revival in the national imagination. Further, Dharmapala and the Mahabodhi Society were able to generate links (although often sporadic or short-lived) across the Buddhist world chiefly through his campaign to restore the Bodh Gaya temple (the place where the Buddha was said to have attained Enlightenment) to Buddhists and his efforts at reviving pilgrimage to Indian Buddhist sites. And finally, Dharmapala and the Mahabodhi Society employed a range of concrete strategies to revive Buddhism in India. I shall round up this paper with a brief discussion of these.

This talk focuses on Dharmapala's activities in Calcutta which was at least as important if not more

important a base for him than Colombo. Secondly, I propose to examine one dimension of his work about which very little has been written i.e. his attempts at reviving Buddhism in India and the work of the Mahabodhi Society in India. Born in 1864 to a wealthy Ceylonese business family, the Hewawitharane-s, he was educated in missionary schools. Inspired by the Theosophists, Henry Olcott and H.P. Blavatsky, who visited the island in the 1880s, he joined the Theosophical Society. He accompanied Olcott and Blavatsky in their travels but by the early 1890s, he began to drift away from them. His relationship with Olcott ended in public acrimony in the late 1890s, with each publishing scathing critiques of the other in the journals of their respective organizations.

In 1891, he arrived in India for a Buddhist pilgrimage and horrified by the state of the Mahabodhi temple, he vowed to restore Bodh Gaya to its rightful claimants—the Buddhists. He then returned to Ceylon to set up the Buddhagaya Mahabodhi Society in 1891 under the presidency of Hikkaduve Sumangala and then left for Calcutta where he set up its headquarters and started *The Journal of the Mahabodhi Society*. But it was in 1893 when Dharmapala really burst on the scene while at the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago. Of course, in India, the story usually



In many ways Dharmapala's arrival on Calcutta's intellectual firmament mirrored that of Swami Vivekananda. Both attended the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893 and attained celebrity status there, grabbing the spotlight from the other South Asian representatives and receiving a considerable amount of press coverage.

told is that of another reformer who also found fame there—Swami Vivekananda, the founder of the Ramakrishna Mission and the so-called founder of modern Hinduism.

In many ways Dharmapala's arrival on Calcutta's intellectual firmament mirrored that of Swami Vivekananda. Both attended the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893 and attained celebrity status there, grabbing the spotlight from the other South Asian representatives and receiving a considerable amount of press coverage. In their speeches, both assumed spokesman - ship for much larger communities. Dharmapala spoke on behalf of 475 million Buddhists around the world. Vivekananda spoke on behalf of millions of Hindus in India. Further, both saw themselves as wandering monk missionaries—Vivekananda as a Vedantic missionary and Dharmapala as a Buddhist one. Both sought to elevate their respective faiths into comprehensible and distinct religions that could answer the call of modernity. In so doing, they presented their religions as universal, as world faiths. Further still, Vivekananda was keen to emphasize the ease with which his version of monotheistic Hinduism melded with modern science. Dharmapala was even more strident in this

regard. For him, Buddhism was the perfect religion of rationality, completely at one with modern science. Initially, at the Parliament, both were mutually appreciative though Vivekananda was somewhat dismissive of Dharmapala's actual knowledge of religion remarking to a friend that Dharmapala used Western references far too often when he spoke. Dharmapala was in turn perturbed by Vivekananda's conduct, expressing surprise that he drank champagne. Initially, Vivekananda was under the mistaken assumption that Dharmapala would work with him in reviving modern Hinduism. But such was the amiable relationship the two enjoyed after the Parliament that in 1894, Dharmapala defended Vivekananda in Calcutta at a public meeting. Dharmapala understood the power that he had acquired in the US in shaping the opinion of so-called eastern religions and philosophies, and recognized his undisputed place in Calcutta's public sphere. Further, he was aware that he himself was new to Calcutta and that his Bodh Gaya campaign could be construed (as did indeed happen) as anti-Hindu. He was anxious to avoid that confrontation, but this ploy failed to work. Vivekananda's fondness for Dharmapala evaporated when word reached him of the latter's Bodh Gaya campaign, writing to a friend that Dharmapala should avoid getting involved in "things

Indian". Towards the end of his life, he tried to support Shaivite claims to the Mahabodhi temple in Bodh Gaya. Consequently, by this time, in private, Dharmapala's opinion of Vivekananda was less than reverential. Though the Mahabodhi Society Journal carried an unqualified eulogy for Vivekananda when he died in 1902, calling him a "prince among men", "foremost patriot" and "the great disciple of a great master", in his private diary for that year, Dharmapala appears unhappy with the eulogy in the Journal, feeling that it was excessive. After Vivekananda's death, the Ramakrishna Mission finds almost no mention in the Journal. In the same year, it published a scathing critique of Sister Nivedita's views on Buddhism.

The relationship between Hinduism and Buddhism for Dharmapala was one that he had to negotiate very carefully while in Calcutta. It was no coincidence that he chose Calcutta as the base from which to launch his efforts at Buddhist revival in India and consolidate and gain the support of the Buddhist world for his Bodh Gaya campaign. Calcutta was quite simply the most important colonial city in the British empire. Besides being the capital of British India, Calcutta was the hub of a powerful Indian, Western-educated elite that debated not only some of the most fashionable ideas and theories of



the day but also generated new ideas about Indian history, civilizations, and social reform in a colonial milieu. It was to this class, generally referred to as the *bhadralok*, that Dharmapala directed his appeals for the revival of Buddhism. The trouble was that this important community was predominantly Hindu and often practiced caste ceremonies and Hindu rituals. While Dharmapala's aim was certainly to separate Buddhism from Hinduism, he had to keep the idea just nebulous enough so as to maintain *bhadralok* involvement in and support for his endeavours. In the first decade of the Mahabodhi Society journal, there are exhortations for Hindus and Buddhists to unite. In particular, Hindus are called upon

to see Buddhists not as threats but as brothers. Consequently, many of the Mahabodhi Society's most enthusiastic members over the sixty-year period of this study were often practicing Hindus, attracted by the ethics and philosophy of Buddhism. Ironically, in the 1930s, the Mahabodhi Society enjoyed a good relationship with the Hindu Mahasabha as the latter apparently recognized Buddhists as a separate community.

Dharmapala himself lectured and wrote about the relationship between Hinduism and Buddhism. In Dharmapala's view Buddhism, as a distinct entity, contained the best of Hinduism and was the East's answer to the demands of Western modernity, a modernity that was bereft of spiritual content which was in turn necessary for the improvement of the human condition. Further, Hindus and Buddhists were from the same racial stock i.e. that of the Aryans. The high point of the "Aryan nation" was reached just as Buddhism was thriving on the Indian sub-continent. He suggests that Buddhists and Hindus were imbued with the perfect Aryan characteristics namely "contentment", "gentleness" and culture. Buddhism was the perfect Arya dharma or Aryan faith/religion.

It was on the grounds of Indo-Aryan cultural one-ness that

Dharmapala made a case for the existence of a Buddhist world and campaigned for its consolidation. Dharmapala was influenced by while also contributing to, various visions of pan-Asian unities that were in circulation in Calcutta as well as notions and discourses of culture in developing his own grounds for a Buddhist world and for the need for the Buddhist revival. For him, a return to a pure form of Buddhism was the most important means of returning to an authentic Asian culture. Once Indians, in particular, returned to the Buddhist fold, the Buddhist sites would be again protected and Asia would once again be Buddhist. Once Asia was Buddhist, it would return to the former glory of its Indo-Aryan days during which life had been near perfect, peaceful, tranquil and abundant.

The logical outcome of Dharmapala's utopian evocation of an Indo-Aryan civilization was a certain idea of a shared culture around Buddhism wherever it spread. While Dharmapala was never clear on whether he saw China or Japan as Indo-Aryan necessarily, we can safely surmise that it was possible for non-Indo-Aryan people to imbibe the best of Indo-Aryanism i.e. Buddhism. The construct of "Indo-Aryan" was, therefore, one that pertained to the realm, not of race necessarily but

culture. One could become Indo-Aryan culturally if one adopted Buddhism. Therefore, the idea of a Buddhist world that Dharmapala so often invoked was one based on a shared culture of Indo-Aryanism and Buddhism, and not race. At the same time, there were some Western cultural habits that Dharmapala felt ought to be imbibed in South Asia such as cleanliness, orderliness and productivity, as well as significant markers of modernity like science and technology, education and equal rights for men and women. These were, in his view, perfectly in keeping with the philosophy of the Buddha and in some cases were even supported by him in his time.

The Mahabodhi Society from the outset sought to be an organ for the unification of the Buddhist world and deployed a number of strategies in this connection. The first and most important was the Bodh Gaya issue, which Dharmapala hoped would serve as a pivot around which Buddhists from around the world, and particularly around Asia were to unite. In the very first volume of the Journal, in 1892, the list of patrons of the society reads like the who's who of the Buddhist world including the King of Siam and a High Priest of a major temple in Tokyo as well as men from Burma, Colombo and Chittagong.



Dharmapala's own travel schedule was prolific and everywhere he went, he would issue appeals to other Buddhist leaders and communities to donate funds for his mission and for the restoration of Buddhist shrines in India, and to provide missionaries who could spread Buddhism in India and help in revitalizing Buddhist pilgrimage sites. He adopted the epithet of 'Anagarika' or "without a home" which was considered to be quite a unique role that he placed firmly between the monks and the laity, and was an entirely novel one for this time. In his many wanderings around the world, he saw himself as a missionary in the tradition of Asoka and a wanderer in the tradition of the Buddha himself.

Throughout this time, the Mahabodhi Society's Journal held true to its original mission of serving as an important mouthpiece for the Society and in providing news from various parts of the Buddhist world without any sectarian bias. One example of a news item of this nature was about one particular event that captured Dharmapala's fancy as indeed of all of Calcutta was news of Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese war in 1904-5. On the occasion of the Mahabodhi Society Waisakh day celebrations in Calcutta in 1907, well-known Theosophist and journalist Norendra Nath Sen expressed the already widely held view that Japan's victory

over a major Western power was a "triumph of Buddhism" that attracted the world's attention to the "ancient and modern life of Japan". Further, Hindus could claim brotherhood with Japan as a "Buddhist nation". Besides carrying news, the Journal was also important as a platform for conversation and the exchange of ideas between a number of scholars, revivalists and nationalists. Tensions were also played out in the Journal but all in all, it served as a productive meeting point for a variety of figures to discuss Buddhism and India's future.

Dharmapala and the Mahabodhi Society were also very successful in facilitating movement around the immediate Buddhist areas – Burma, Ceylon and India. In response to his calls for help at Indian pilgrimage sites, several monks from Burma made their way to India in the 1910s and 20s. One such monk was U Chandramani who lived for seven decades of his long life in Kusinara which he almost single-handedly championed. He eventually presided over Ambedkar's conversion to Buddhism in 1956. Other monks stayed for various periods of time at Bodh Gaya, Lumbini, Sravasti, Rajagriha and Nalanda. But that is not all. Besides promoting the movement of monks to consolidate Buddhist pilgrimage, the Mahabodhi Society also sent interested students to Ceylon for



further instruction in Buddhism. A number of scholars and activists traveled to Ceylon and Burma in this connection like the Hindi litterateur Rahula Sankrityayana, the poet, translator and later Marxist teacher, Ananda Kausalyayana, and Jagadish Kashyapa, the Bihari monk and scholar.

Besides the consolidation of pilgrimage, Dharmapala and the Mahabodhi Society employed another strategy to promote the engagement of Buddhists everywhere in their activities in India—the organization of the "spectacle" event. This would usually be a big event around a relic or the opening of a vihara (a Buddhist place of rest and worship) or the meeting of important personages,

and could involve processions and colourful representations of Buddhists from around the world. One such event was the opening of the Mulagandakuti Vihara in November 1930. Lord Willingdon, the Viceroy of India, himself attended to hand over the relics to be housed and addressed the gathering. A number of nationalists were in attendance including Jawaharlal and Kamla Nehru. Buddhists from all over Asia attended the event and tents were set up in the grounds near the Sarnath stupa, with tents for different nationalists marked by different flags. The installation of relics was marked by a spectacular and well-orchestrated parade of Buddhists from all over the world. The reliquary was often remarkably ornate and was put on display for

Buddhist devotees to worship. Buddhist chanting and readings of the Buddhist texts could be heard throughout the days leading up to the event.

The relics of the Buddha and his disciples were the most revered objects in Buddhism and their importance at this time cannot be over-emphasised. Each of the three major viharas that the Mahabodhi Society constructed, in Calcutta, Sarnath and Sanchi, contained relics that the British gave them. They promoted the discussions on relics as they were being discovered and used these to generate awareness of Buddhism. Further, they had emerged as advisors for the British whenever the latter had a question about the relics or simply did not know what to do with them. Thus, they received a regular supply of relics which they used in their buildings or distributed elsewhere. In 1920, 1930, 1932 and 1935, they received relics from the British. By the end of the 1930s, the British mission of the Mahabodhi Society had begun to petition the Victoria and Albert Museum in London for the return of the Sanchi relics (taken to England in 1852). These were transferred back after the Second World War and after a long journey through southeast Asia and the Buddhist Himalaya of India, they were

installed in the presence of India's first Prime Minister, Nehru in Sanchi in 1952. Nehru's involvement in relic distribution and installation is an important story that cannot be fully recounted here, but suffice it to say that he used the Sanchi relics to enact a kind of soft diplomacy to encourage the easy integration of India's Buddhist Himalayan territories into India (like Ladakh, Arunachal Pradesh and elsewhere). It was quite difficult at the time to ensure the safety of the relics, and its bearers, in these areas where communications and link roads were poor, but despite the dangers, Nehru appreciated the efficacies of this relic diplomacy enough to ensure a successful journey. The relics had the desired effect and crowds reputedly gathered everywhere in worship.

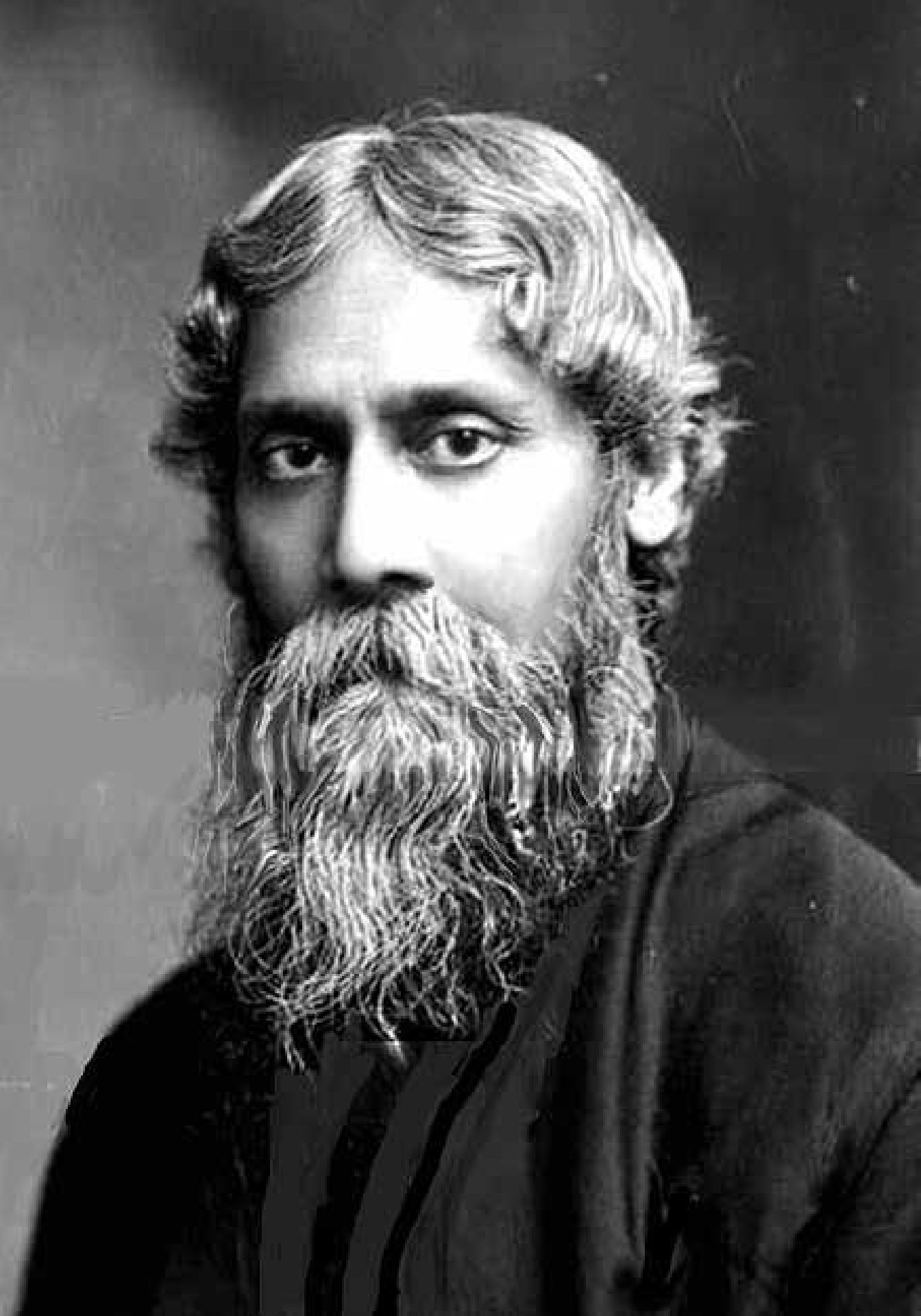
Another important strategy was the celebration of Waisakh day that began in 1896 in a small way at the Mahabodhi Society in Calcutta. From then on, these celebrations only got bigger and more elaborate. By the 1930s, Waisakh Day was a big enough event that calls began to be made for the government to declare it a holiday. In post-independence India, the Journal reports the gradual manner in which the different provinces of India began to declare this day

a holiday. In 1953, the central government finally followed suit.

Like many other modern reformist organizations, the Mahabodhi Society also involved themselves in relief works to publicize their activities and reach out to people during times of famine and eventually during the Partition riots and in particular, the Great Calcutta Killings of 1946 when many took refuge in the Calcutta Vihara. The Mahabodhi Society also took part in educational initiatives.

Thus, Dharmapala's time in India was critical to the emergence of modern Indian Buddhism. But through his efforts to control Buddhist sites in India and other strategies outlined above, he hoped to generate both an Indian consciousness of Buddhism as well as a kind of world Buddhist community. Consequently, one of the most striking features of this period was the tremendous mobility of Buddhist ideas, people and things. Dharmapala and the Mahabodhi Society were at the very heart of these transnational flows and indeed, helped facilitate them.





Rabindranath Tagore

This is a message written by Anagarika Dharmapala to the Septuagenary Celebrations held at Kolkata in December 1931

*Sprinkle the world with the water of Everlasting life,
Those who art the fountain of Peace, of Welfare, of
Holiness of Love.*

With this solemn hymn to Lord Buddha, sung in the Waisakha Celebration, Rabindranath Tagore sends all over the world the eternal message of India. Peace is the keynote of Hindu history and Peace and Fraternity are the greatest contributions of India to humanity. Naturally the poet Laureate of Asia, amidst the sunset glow of his genius, is harping on that eternal theme to reclaim the benighted human beings from hatred and cruelty to sacrifice and love. The world had deservedly crowned him as the greatest living poet of the present age and one of the greatest for any age, but very few realize as yet that his silent and often unnoticed labour in the cause of World Peace, is one of his greatest titles to immortality. Poets will come and poets will go, but very few of the creative artists of the world would show this unique record of Tagore, as a spinner of the golden dream of Maitri, fellowship, making the whole world kin, silently removing the apparently irremovable barriers between nation and nation. Through his prophetic messages and passionate poems men and women all over the world have felt that they belong to one family, and that is the greatest miracle which Rabindranath has worked in this age darkened by selfishness and savagery. May the blessings of all beings be on his noble life and may victory attend on his dreams, illumining the Future of Mankind!

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India as Source and Inspiration: Dharmapala's Vision of India

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The visit to India also goaded him to think of his identity. He found that the Indians who retained their own cultural identity retained their indigenous names.

A nagarika Dharmapala (1864-1933) Sinhala patriot and Buddhist worker was born into a family of businessmen in Colombo who were great patrons of Buddhist causes in the burgeoning urban landscape. He was inspired in his youth by the great Buddhist activist monks of the time like Migettuwatte Gunananda Thero (1824-1891) and Hikkaduwe Sumangala Thero (1826-1911). Dharmapala, whose original name was David came under the influence of these monks as his family was closely associated with them. His father Carolis Hewavitharana and his maternal grandfather Carolis Dharmagunawardhana who were both wealthy businessmen in Colombo were great patrons of the Buddhist revival which was taking place at the time in which the two monks were leading figures.

The other great influence on young David was that of Col. H. S. Olcott an American who was attracted by the anti – Christian movement led by Gunananda thero and others and arrived in the island in 1880.

He had formed a society named the Theosophical Society in New York and coming to Sri Lanka established a branch which he termed the Buddhist Theosophical Society. Olcott became a key figure in the Buddhist revival by teaching the Sri Lankan Buddhists how to utilize modern forms of organization to combat Christian expansionism. He initiated system of Buddhist schools which eventually became an effective combater to the Christian school system run by the missionaries, which so far had been having almost a monopoly in modern educational activity.

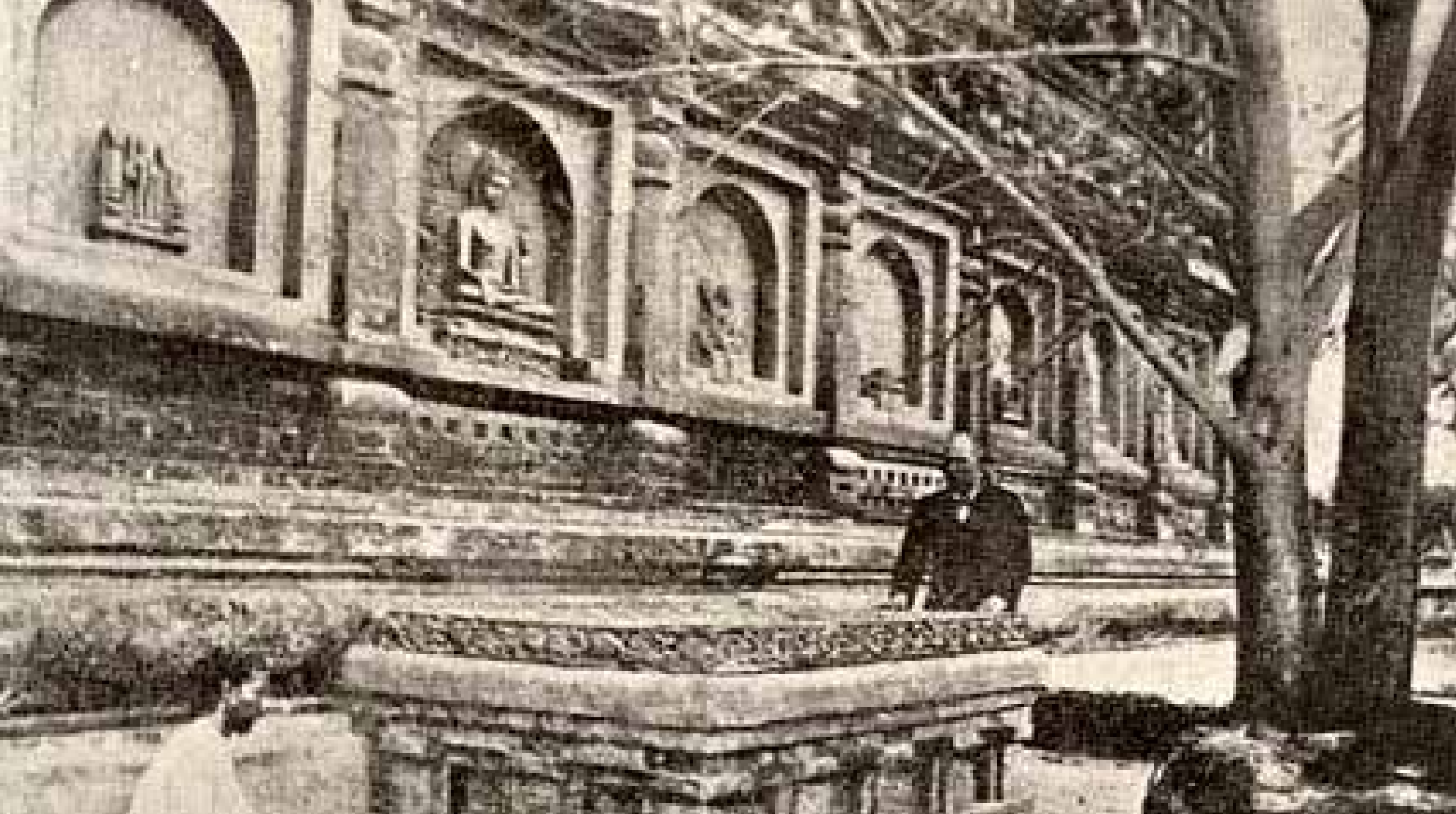
Olcott started touring the countryside taking the revivalist message to the people. He enlisted young David as his interpreter and he would have noted the energy and intelligence of the young man. The close association thus form prompted Olcott to take David on his visit to India in 1887 and this visit was to be a key factor in molding the future career of David Hewavitarana.

Young David saw the vast destruction Islamic invaders had brought upon Bihar, particularly the Buddhist shrines like Buddha Gaya and centres of learning such as Nalanda. David writes with great feelings about the impact this sight made on him. Buddha Gaya, the holy place where the Buddha had attained enlightenment had fallen with the hands of Hindu priestly landlord called Mahanta and the whole site was more a Hindu place of worship than a Buddhist one. This state of affairs of the holy place seems to have made a deep impression on the young man and he would have made the resolve to win back Buddha Gaya for its rightful owners – The Buddhists.

The visit to India also goaded him to think of his identity. He found that the Indians who retained their own cultural identity retained their indigenous names. It was only a Christian convert who adopted European names such as David. He made a resolve to change his name and did so after he returned to Sri Lanka. Thus he started using the name Dharmapala and started a campaign urging fellow Buddhists to

discard European names and adopt “Arya Sinhala” names. In fact the *Sarasavi Sandaresa*, the newspaper published by the Buddhist Theosophical Society published in 1889 a book titled *Arya Sinhala Nam Potha* to help people to select good Sinhala names.

The *Arya Sinhala* concept which has been a key feature of Dharmapala's thinking on national identity owes its origin to Indian inspiration. We must remember that to begin with “Arya” in a concept near and dear to all Buddhists. The Noble Eightfold Path – the way to the end of suffering and attain Nibbana is *Arya Astangika Margaya* as every Buddhist is aware. And there were many concepts in Buddhist parlance such as *Chathurarya Sathya* (The Four Noble Truths). *Ariya Puggala* (The Aryah person) referring to one who has attained Arahantship – the highest spiritual attainment in Buddhism. Thus “Arya” denotes the most sacred of concepts in Buddhism. In the case of the Arya Sinhala identity which Dharmapala sought to promote, however, the



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Aryan concept had religious as well as secular connotations. I quote here a passage from one of Dharmapala's writings in a series he wrote to *Sinhala Bauddhaya*, the weekly newspaper he funded in the early years of the 20th century:

This Thampanni and the Sinhala Dipa which became the place of origin for valorous and Sinhala who have been living here setting forth the lion's roar for over seventy generations descending from a Sinhala populace who had come forth from a country of Aryan lineage belonging to the noble Aryan race with pure Sinhala blood. This is the unparalleled, one and

only country where Buddhism exists. This noble religion is declining day by day. Our noble nation in declining day by day... The noble Sinhala nation started declining the day it started associating with barbaric non Aryan Dravidian, Arabic false believer nations who came here from foreign countries (Sinhala Bauddhaya, Jan 6 1912). (My Translation).

In this long -winded paragraph what Dharmapala attempts to convey to his readers is that they as the Sinhala have a noble decent a “pure blooded”Aryan ancestry. The original Sinhala who settled in the country have come from a

land or human settlement of “pure Arya Sinhala” people. As the island was settled by them it came to be known as *Sinhaladipa* – The island of Sinhala. They had retained their noble qualities for generations. But eventually became of associating with non-Aryan barbaric people. The Sinhala people were going into decline and their cherished religion too in at risk.

Dharmapala next brings in the ethical values that have to be preserved by the Aryan Sinhalese:

All the customs of Buddhists are different from European and Muslim

false believers.... Racially too the Aryan Sinhalese are different from people of other races... Hence is it proper for Aryans to act as killers of cows? Is it proper for the Aryans to commit adultery? It is the bounden duty of Aryan Sinhalese Buddhists to refrain from lying, slandering malicious speech and frivolous talk and from drinking intoxicant drinks (Sinhala Bauddhaya, 13th Jan 1913).

Very dexterously the Aryan, Sinhala and Buddhist strands are woven together into one single identity. Most importantly, the ethnical basis of the identity is given emphasis. We note that the Buddhist vision of

then “Arya” (noble) is the basis of this ethical characterization.

It was noted above that Dharmapala saw the origin of the “Arya Sinhala Race” in India. Incidentally in the Indian tradition the land is identified, among other names, as *Aryavārtha*, roughly meaning the land of the Aryans. Dharmapala would have been aware of that too. In the quotation given below he gives a specific identification of the location from which Sinhala people came.

The Sinhalese came to this land from Bengal and the Bengalese were superior in their intelligence to other communities in India” (Sinhala Bauddhaya, 13 January 1912).

In his later visits to India Dharmapala formed close friendships with many Indians. He stayed for a long time in Kolkata, the main city in Bengal and even established there a branch of the Maha Bodhi Society he formed to “free Buddhagaya” from the hands of “false believers” such as Mahanta. The reference to the superior intelligence of the Bengalis is obviously a myth current in Bengal and Dharmapala connects it with what he saw as the greatness of the Sinhala people in ancient times. In his view *“The Sinhala nation has survived for 2450 years because of their pure ways and customs” (Sinhala Bauddhaya, 7 May 1906).* He proceeded to state :

“The only race with noble ethics handed down from generation to generation in the Aryan race” (Sinhala Bauddhaya, 2 March 1912). And to couple with that he brings a linguistic concept, perhaps to indicate that similarity an unbroken linguistic heritage too had survived:

It is only the Aryan language that possesses a complete set of character (aksara) having specific sound (sabasvara aeti). Tamil, Telegu, Arabic, English and Latin can be understood as barbaric (milechcha) languages (Sinhala Bauddhaya, op cit.).

It is to arrive at this point that Dharmapala prepares the ground”.

The Magadhi language was the language spoken by those who were born in the central circle (madhaya mandalaye) of the Aryan race. It is the belief of some people that Magadhi, Sauraseni, Maharastri, Vanga etc are being spoken in different regions originated from Sanskrit. The Sinhala language originated with roots in Sanskrit and Pali (op.cit.).

Dharmapala thus gives the Sinhala Language a very special place among the Indic languages. While other Indic languages seem to owe their origin to Sanskrit alone it is only the Sinhala which is connected to both Sanskrit and Pali origins. The Pali (Magadhi) connection is given particular emphasis because it is identified as originating in the epicenter of Aryanness. It is now clear why Dharmapala saw the

Sinhala people as belonging to the purest stock of the Aryan race. He saw in particular the link between language and identity. In his view,

The only way to learn about the ancient Sinhalas who maintained noble customs is through the Sinhala language. For a person who has studied well the Sinhala and Pali languages the way is open for developing a love for the Sinhala nation (Ibid).


Dharmapala thus saw the importance of studying the ancestral language is the foundation of a strong feeling for one’s national identity. In this case it was not only Sinhala but Pali also had to be studied if one were to develop a strong nationalist feelings. It was through the classical language Pali which was also the language of the Buddhist scriptures that the Aryan connection was established.

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Anagarika Dharmapala and his Vision of a Global Buddhism

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In this discussion, I use the term 'global Buddhism' not to refer to any kind of new school of Buddhism, but to convey Dharmapala's perception of Buddhism as a globally applicable philosophy and a way of life.

Introduction

Anagarika Dharmapala (1864-1933) was a many-faceted personality. First and foremost, he was the leading national hero of the Sinhala people and the leading revivalist of Buddhism in the colonial Sri Lanka, then known as Ceylon. While these local concerns were very important in his life, Dharmapala's interests spread beyond the confines of this small island. His long and arduous strivings to reintroduce Buddhism to India, the birthplace of Buddhism, and to preserve its Buddhist heritage, and in particular, to regain the ownership of Buddhagaya from its Hindu custodians were a major preoccupation of Dharmapala's life till its very end. In addition to these local and near local Indian interests, Dharmapala imagined Buddhism as a global religion spreading far and wide surpassing all other religions. This aspect of his work, began with the historic Parliament of World Religions in 1893 in Chicago, lasted till the end of his life and culminated in establishing the London Buddhist Vihara.

Dharmapala's life, thought and work, in the three areas just outlined has been discussed very widely. It is not my intention to do a comprehensive literature survey and review of what has been written on him by various academics and activists, in both appreciative and critical manners. Nor is it my intention to present a chronological biography of AD, one of the most colourful and multi-faceted personalities of the recent history of Buddhism in Sri Lanka, India and the United Kingdom.¹ My effort in this paper is to highlight the wide perspective of Buddhism that Dharmapala had developed as the fundamental assumption of his thought and activism. I shall conclude the discussion with some observations on the future of Buddhism, including Theravada, in the West, which was very close to Dharmapala's heart.

In this discussion, I use the term 'global Buddhism' not to refer to any kind of new school of Buddhism, but to convey Dharmapala's perception of Buddhism as a globally applicable philosophy and

a way of life. In Dharmapala's perception, this also included the view of Buddhism as non-sectarian, non-regional and 'universal', although he may have had his basic understanding of Buddhism shaped according to the local Theravada school in Sri Lanka. In addition to this global perspective of Buddhism, Dharmapala's vision of life itself surpassed limited boundaries of nationality and religion to absorb a universalist outlook. One might think that this claim flies in the face of Dharmapala's Sinhala nationalist sentiments and his resultant disparaging of what is alien to what he perceived as 'pure Aryan' characteristics of the ancient Sinhala Buddhist society, expressed, at times, in harsh and incisive terminology. Dharmapala may more accurately be described not as one who was motivated by narrow nationalist sentiments and spread hatred among different social groups, but as one who took pains to uplift the culture of Sinhala people to create a modern state based on their great ancient traditions. Although I am not going to argue my case at this point, I

would, nevertheless, maintain that Dharmapala's national activities themselves were motivated by his global perspective fortified by a great sense of modernity.²

Beginnings of Dharmapala's global vision

Urbanity and modernity intermingled with traditionality were a part of Dharmapala's life from his very infancy. His parents, Don Carolis Hewavitharne and Mallika Dharma Gunawardhana belonged to rich, urban business families in Colombo. Don Carolis' father, Dingiri Appuhami, was a furniture businessman whose business his son inherited. Mallika's father was the one who donated the land where Vidyodaya Pirivena, one of the two leading monastic education centres in the 19th century Sri Lanka, was established by a leading lay group under the guidance of by Hikkaduwe Sri Sumangala Nayaka Thera, who was the foremost Sangha authority during this period. Dharmapala was given a Portuguese - English name, Don David, following the

custom in his day. In his formative years, he had the good fortune to associate with such great monastic figures as Hikkaduve Sri Sumangala and Mohottivatte Gunananda, who acquired international fame after *Panadura Debate* (1873). The atmosphere at home with his mother who was quite religious, and with visits of erudite monks, was very Buddhist. The education Don David received, nonetheless, was very Christian. He started with St. Mary's school, Pettah, and subsequently went to a private Sinhala school at Kotahena which had to be closed due to the Christian education policy of the colonial government. Next Don David was sent to St. Benedict school from where he was sent to the boarding school in Kotte and finally to S. Thomas' College. The life in these schools was dominated by Bible studies and Western ways of life. Consequently by the time Don David concluded his studies he remembered a good part of Bible, developed a liking to the New Testament (as he claimed later), was familiar with Christian religious rites and rituals and also with Western table manners. Apart from the poor quality of food, an experience he had at Kotte Christian school was particularly devastating. When one of his teachers who himself was a clergy shot down a bird with his gun, young Don David, who had a Buddhist religious background could

not believe his eyes. This proved a sharp contrast between Christianity and his own religion. Although this early childhood and adolescent exposure to Christianity was against his mild sensitivities and was not always pleasant, it nevertheless, gave him the confidence to work with and speak, the later in his life, to predominantly Christian groups in the West.

The arrival of Colonel Henry Steel Olcott (1832-1907) and Madame Helena Petrovina Blavatsky (1831-1891) in Ceylon in 1880 provided young Dharmapala (then only 16 years old) with a rare opportunity of an encounter with the West and the world at large. It is as a result of reading a report of the great Panadura Debate compiled³ by J. M. Peebles and distributed in New York that Olcott and Blavatsky came to Ceylon with the intention of working with the Buddhists in the country. From the very first meeting with the two visitors Dharmapala developed an admiration toward them, and gradually became, with his father and grandfather, a supporter of the educational, social and religious activities initiated by Olcott. In the course of time, Dharmapala became a close associate of the two eminent people, helped in the activities of Colombo Theosophical Society started by them, and also became the translator of Olcott's speeches in and outside Colombo.

There are two important events that seem to have been instrumental in broadening Dharmapala's vision regarding his own life and its purpose and his perception of the teaching of the Buddha.



When Dharmapala travelled with Olcott as his interpreter to various parts of the island, he not only acquired knowledge of how a Westerner thought and worked, but also he gained invaluable knowledge of the condition of the poor people in his own country, knowledge which was very helpful for him in his own reform activities later. By 1883, he had changed his name to Dharmapala, which even later was added with 'anagarika' (home-less).

There are two important events that seem to have been instrumental in broadening Dharmapala's vision regarding his own life and its purpose and his perception of the teaching of the Buddha. In 1884, Dharmapala accompanied Olcott and Blavatsky to Adhyar, the headquarters of Theosophical Society in Chennai, South India. The

idea was to study theosophy more deeply. Although this journey was done with mixed feelings on the part of his parents and the Buddhist monks he associated with, something unexpected happened in Adhyar: Madame Blavatsky called him one day to her and dissuaded him from pursuing theosophy and asked him to study, in its stead, Pali 'wherein all the knowledge necessary for him was available' and work for the welfare of the humanity. Dharmapala came back to his country determined to spend his life for the welfare of others. He left home, assumed the role of 'anagarika', took residence at Colombo Theosophical office and thus was born his life as Anagarika Dharmapala. Although Dharmapala subsequently developed differences with Olcott and his treatment of Buddhism he continued to have relation with him.

Olcott was of the belief that numerous schools of Buddhism had a common core and was working on it. Finally in 1891 Olcott developed a document with 14 points which he believed to be common to all Buddhist schools, and obtained the approval of representative scholars and leaders of all schools. From Ceylon, it was approved by Hikkaduwe Sri Sumangala Nayaka Thera. Dharmapala actively supported Olcott to secure this approval from Sri Sumangala. In 1891, taking along him the latter's approval, Dharmapala went to Adhyar to take part in the international Buddhist conference organized by Olcott. Olcott's this effort of uniting all Buddhist schools, with which Dharmapala himself agreed, must have given him an occasion to view Buddhism from a broader universal perspective, going beyond many familiar national boundaries.

It is after the conference in Adhyar that Dharmapala went on a pilgrimage to the Buddhist shrines in India, a pilgrimage which gave a cause for Dharmapala to dedicate the rest of his life and reason to live in India although he frequently traveled in his home country and in the World and intermittently resided in Sri Lanka. Dharmapala was shocked to see the utter neglect that the Buddhist holy places were subjected to.

His shock was boundless when he saw that Buddhagaya, the most sacred of all Buddhist holy places, which had virtually been converted to a Shiva temple with a Shiva linga in the middle of the compound. On his arrival back in the country, Dharmapala convened a meeting of all Buddhist leaders, lay and monastic, and explained the unfortunate situation of Indian Buddhism and the need for an organized effort to address this issue. The Mahabodhi Society, which was originally called Buddhagaya Mahabodi Society was born accordingly. Hikkaduwe Sri Sumangala Nayaka Thera was appointed the president of the new society, Olcott as the director and chief organizer and Dharmapala as the General Secretary. The motives behind the establishment of the society are expressed in the following words:

At this hallowed spot, full of imperishable associations, it is proposed to re-establish a monastery for the residence of Bhikkhus representing the Buddhist countries of Tibet, Ceylon, China, Japan, Cambodia, Burmah, Chittagong, Nepal, Korea and Arkan. We hope to found, also a college at Buddha-Gaya for training young men of unblemished character, of whatever race and country for the Buddhist Order (Sangha), on the lines of the ancient Buddhist University at Nalanda, where were taught the Mahayana and also works



belonging to the eighteen sects. The study of Sanskrit, Pali, and English will be made compulsory to all students. One or more Buddhist scholars from each of the Buddhist countries will in time be attached to the staff of teachers (Guruge:2006 p.54).

In conformity with this vision, Mahabodhi Society was to include in it representatives of all three schools of Buddhism. The constitution of the society makes this point very clear: "The society represents Buddhism in general. ... shall preserve absolute neutrality with respect to doctrines and dogmas taught by sections and sects among Buddhists."⁴ It is important to note that Dharmapala had the vision to appoint a board comprising a majority from other Theravada Buddhist countries and other Buddhist traditions. Those selected as representatives comprised, among others, His Royal Highness Chandradar Chaudatdhar, Prince of Siam, Rt. Rev. Shaku Unisiyo, Shincho-ko-kuji Mejiro, Tokyo,

Jokyoji Tera Machi, Sojo Sagaru, Kyoto, S. Horiuchi, Tokyo, Maung Hpo Mhyin, K.S.M., Burma, Krishna Chandra Chaudhury, Chittagong, and Maung Hla Pru, Arakan.⁵ Dharmapala's awareness of the fact that Buddhagaya was the common heritage of all Buddhists must have made him constitute the organization meant to restore Indian Buddhism in this manner. It does not seem that Dharmapala received as much support as he expected from other Theravada countries or Mahayana countries such as China and Japan. But on his own part Dharmapala was broad - minded enough to project his activities in a global setting.

World's Parliament of Religions and Anagarika Dharmapala's Global Buddhist Mission

Dharmapala represented Theravada Buddhism in the historic assembly in Chicago in 1893. Although Dharmapala was from Ceylon and belonged to Theravada tradition, it



After the Chicago conference, Dharmapala returned to Ceylon via Pacific ocean, and on his way, the ship stopped at Honolulu, Hawai'i, where, among those who had come aboard to welcome him was Mary Elizabeth Foster, a noble woman of Hawaiian royal ancestry, who virtually became 'the foster mother' for Dharmapala.

is clear that he perceived himself as representing Buddhism as a world-wide phenomenon, notwithstanding the presence of a Japanese Buddhist delegation. In his opening address Dharmapala said the following:

I bring to you the good wishes of four hundred and seventy-five-million of Buddhists, the blessings and the peace of the religious founder of that system which has prevailed so many centuries in Asia, which had made Asia mild, and which is today, in its twenty-fourth century of existence, the prevailing religion of those countries. I have sacrificed the greatest of all work to attend this Parliament; I have left the work of consolidating the different Buddhist countries, which is the most important work in the history of modern Buddhism (Guruge: 1965 p.655).

Two very important observations Dharmapala makes in his statement are that he represents the entire community of the followers of all schools of Buddhism in the world, indicating that he does not represent merely the tiny Ceylon or its Theravada tradition, and that he was in the process of consolidating the Buddhists all over the world, which for him was the most important of all his work. This statement reveals that Dharmapala had the vision of a globalized Buddhism already in him and that he was consciously working to achieve that goal. In this trip, Dharmapala made a lasting impression of

himself and of Buddhism in the minds of the people who were keen on learning and practicing the teachings of the Buddha. He made several public speeches on Buddhism at various places. His speech delivered at a well-attended session of the Parliament of Religions on 18th September 1893 on "The World's Debt to Buddha" was enthusiastically received by his audience, as contemporary reports testify (Guruge: 1965 p.3). Dharmapala made several trips to USA within next several years, not only to lecture on the Dhamma, but also to study American education system and its industries from which he received inspiration for his own work for social development, which he initiated both in India and Sri Lanka.

After the Chicago conference, Dharmapala returned to Ceylon via Pacific ocean, and on his way, the ship stopped at Honolulu, Hawai'i, where, among those who had come aboard to welcome him was Mary Elizabeth Foster, a noble woman of Hawaiian royal ancestry, who virtually became 'the foster mother' for Dharmapala. Beginning from this encounter, till her death in 1930 this generous lady donated so much money to Dharmapala for his religious and educational projects in India, Sri Lanka and in England. The lady was so magnanimous that

she thanked Dharmapala for giving her opportunity to support his good work, and often asked him to use the money she donated to him also for his own comfort which Dharmapala does not seem to have listened to.⁶ On his part, Dharmapala was ever grateful to this modern day Visakha for her exceptional generosity. It is partly due to her generosity that Dharmapala was able to purchase a piece of land and a building for London Buddhist Vihara, and for several years she supported the maintenance of the vihara with her monthly contributions.

Dhamma to the UK

Dharmapala visited London for the first time on his way to Chicago via Atlantic. In London, he was received by Sir Edwin Arnold (1832-1904), who wrote the celebrated *Light of Asia*, and Ms. Annie Besant (1847-1933) of Theosophical Society, London, and spent several days meeting people, visiting interesting places and getting acquainted with the intellectual environment of the great city. In 1904, Dharmapala visited England again, this time to study industrial schools in London and Liverpool. During the next two decades, Dharmapala was occupied with work in Ceylon and India, and after 1915 riots, for next seven years, his movements were restricted and he was confined to India. He nevertheless kept in touch with

Buddhist activities in England. He was aware of the Venerable Ananda Metteyya's (Allen McGregor Bennett 1872-1923) work, and in 1909 April-May issue of Mahabodhi Journal, Dharmapala published an appeal in support of London Buddhist Society's work to establish a monastery in London. He concluded this appeal with the following words: *I consider it a privilege that the Sinhalese Buddhists have been given the opportunity to help this great movement. Let each one of us make whatever sacrifice he can and contribute his mite for the London Buddhist Monastery Building Fund* (Guruge: 2006 p. 56). This project, however, did not succeed, and by 1925 the society had ceased to be functional.

Dharmapala believed that giving the Dhamma to the West was one of the most important things that Buddhist countries could do. In an article titled "Our Duty to the Peoples of the West" published in 1927 September issue of the Mahabodhi journal, Dharmapala articulates his views on propagating the Dhamma to the West:

The time is come to give the sublime Dhamma to the people of the West. Christianity is confronted with modern Science and Science is against all dogmatic theology. Science is modern, while dogmas of Christianity belong to an antiquated age. China is waking up and also India. The missionaries are now meeting with

opposition in China. Some oriental scholars are now in league with the missionaries. Both are paid for their services, and they know that if Buddhism enters the field the missionaries will have to recede. In England there is an increasing number of Freethinkers and Rationalists and their activities have to be taken into account (Guruge: 1965, p.658).

Then Dharmapala goes on to describe Buddhism as 'pure science' and contrasting it with Christian beliefs on creator God, and dismisses eternal hell and heaven as superstitions. Although we may not describe the teachings of the Buddha as 'pure science' today, that went along well with how Buddhism was then introduced to the West by its Western admirers themselves. Dharmapala's characterization of Buddhism as advocating oneness of all human beings and his emphasis on the need for an ethics "embracing all humanity, and the world of animals as well as gods" remains and continues to be valid. It is Dharmapala's understanding of the teaching of the Buddha as universally applicable that provided impetus for him to strive to give that teaching to the West.

The universalist perspective in the teaching of the Buddha, which Dharmapala noticed, is not his own creation in response to the historical circumstances of his time



but part and parcel of the Buddha's understanding of reality. This characteristic is clear from the very beginning of Prince Siddhartha's quest for deathlessness. A discourse in the Samyutta-nikaya (II. p.104 PTS) articulates in the following words the understanding that prompted the future Buddha to embark on his great renunciation:

This world has fallen into trouble, in that it is born, ages, and dies, it passes away and is reborn, yet it does not understand the escape from this suffering [headed by] aging-and-death. When now will an escape be discerned from this suffering [headed by] aging-and-death? (Bodhi 2000 p. 537).

The use of the term 'loka' in this context is noteworthy for it refers to the world, meaning all those who have not escaped suffering. The problem of suffering (dukkha), the main focus of the teaching of the

Buddha, is universal, and all those including gods, maras, brahmas, ascetics, Brahmins and human beings (sadevake loke samarake sabrahmake sassamanbrahmaniya pajaya sadeva manussaya...) are subject to this predicament. Furthermore, it is not limited by any constraints of time or space, it is found anywhere and anytime in the world. In the practice, Buddhism has demonstrated this universality by adopting a position that all (human) beings have the potentiality to realize freedom from suffering irrespective of their caste or 'colour' into which they are born. The Brahmins, who maintained categorically that only certain groups of people can attain purity, found fault with the Buddha for his position that all four 'colours' (social groups)⁷ can attain purity. The organization of the Sangha which the Buddha initiated was open



to men and women of all social categories.

Dharmapala's ambition was to give the sublime teaching of the Buddha to the entire West, including the USA, England and Europe. He started with England, and outlined the following series of actions to be implemented for this purpose:

(1) To hold a conference composed of the Chief Maha Theras of the three Nikayas to adopt methods to propagate the Buddha Dhamma in European countries and to establish the Buddha Sasana in England and in America.

(2) To send a *sandesa* (Dispatch) signed by the Chief Nayakas of the island to the Kings of Siam and Cambodia and to the High Priests of Japan, Korea and China, to the President of the Republic of China and to the Tashi Lama now in Peking to cooperate with the Ceylon Buddhists to establish a Buddhist Monastery and a Vihara in or near about London.

(3) To invite the principal leading lay Buddhists to attend the above conference and to adopt measures to collect subscriptions from Buddhists throughout the island to build the Vihara in London and for the establishment of a Training School in London to train a number of young English men and

women as preachers to go all over England proclaiming the Doctrine of the Lord Buddha. (Guruge: 1965 p.671)

Although Dharmapala could not do everything that he anticipated, he did manage to buy a property in London for the Buddhist Vihara with the savings from money he received from his family and Mrs. Foster for his own expenses. The London Buddhist Vihara was thus born making his dream to establish the Sasana in the West, a reality. In the new monastery, three monks observed, for the first time, the rainy retreat in 1928 indicating that the traditional Sangha was functioning in the UK. The story of this historic vihara has been told and retold by better - qualified authors by now, and hence, I am not going to tread the already well - trodden paths. Let me just quote Guruge by way of summary of the history of the *vihara*:

As the first ever Buddhist monastery to be established outside the continent of Asia, it has become a leading centre of Theravada Buddhism. From Knightsbridge, it was moved to Heathfield Gardens in Chiswick in 1964 and is now located in The Avenue, Chiswick, London W 4. The chief bhikkhus from Sri Lanka, who had served the growing community of Buddhists other than during the WWII years in the 1940s,⁸ are the famous scholar-monks:

Venerable Dr. Paravabera Vajirajñana Nayaka Thera (1928-1932), Venerable Narada Mahathera of Vajiraramaya, Venerable Mirisse Gunasiri Thera (1954-1957), Venerable Dr. Hammalawa Saddhatissa Nayaka Thera (1957-1985) and Venerable Dr. Medagama Vajiragnana Nayaka Thera (1986-2005). Venerable Bogoda Seelawimala Thera is currently the chief monk. Among the lay patrons who had supported the Vihara in various capacities, mention has to be made of Mrs. Mary Elizabeth Foster, Sir Edwin Arnold, Dr. C.A. Hewavitarne, Daya Hewavitarne, W.E. Bastian, Christmas Humphreys (1901-1983), Dr. Gunapala Malalasekera (1899-1973), Sir Cyril de Soysa, Gamini Jayasuriya and Russell Webb (Guruge: 2006 p.75).

Anagarika Dharmapala's Vision for the Future of Buddhism

It is a mere truism to assert that the world Dharmapala was born into one hundred fifty years ago has changed dramatically in all imaginable respects. In 1926 Dharmapala took great pains to establish a Buddhist monastery in the UK and was successful in his effort. Today there is not only that particular vihara, but there is a dozen of Sri Lanka Theravada monasteries in the UK alone, not to mention many other Theravada Buddhist monasteries and still many other monasteries and centres belonging to other schools of Buddhism, all

over the Western world. According to an author who has done extensive studies on the current Buddhist atmosphere in the UK:

A detailed analysis of groups, centres and organizations listed in The Buddhist Directory (1997, 2000) and/or Religions in the UK (1997, 2001) shows that by the end of the twentieth century there were over thirty different traditions or sub-traditions of Buddhism in Britain, with almost 1,000 Buddhist groups and centres in all. These were made up of 454 East Asian (a convenient term for traditions originating in China or Japan, including 300 Soka Gakkai and 111 Zen groups), 284 Tibetan (including 183 New Kadampa groups), 124 Theravada and fifty - eight unaffiliated groups (Bluck 2012 . 400).

As was revealed in an anthology published in Sri Lanka on the occasion of the 2600 Sambuddhatva Jayanti (Abenayaka and Tilakaratne 2012), the Buddhist religious picture in the rest of the Europe, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand does not appear to be different: Swans have come to the lake, and they have come abundantly, and Dharmapala can surely be happy that the kind of globalized Buddhism he imagined has come true. But is this the end of the story? Can we say that all lived happily ever after? The answer does not seem to be all that simple.

The increased number of Buddhist monasteries and physical proximity have given way to new challenges and problems. In one of my earlier writings (Tilakaratne 2012), discussing the effects of globalization on Buddhism I proposed the term 'trans-yanic Buddhism' or 'mishra-yana' to describe a form of an emerging Buddhism which runs across all three major traditions. The reduction of time and space and innovations in information technologies have caused Buddhist schools, which were physically segregated till only several decades, to come physically close to one another and share not only their physical spaces but also conceptual spaces. Today Buddhist monks from many different schools and sub-schools get together in world forums and discuss matters common to all Buddhist schools or matters common to all across religions. Buddhist teachers including HH Dalai Lama, going beyond their own doctrinal confines, quote freely from various Buddhist textual traditions. In the Buddhist practice too, it has become increasingly common to absorb even from non-Buddhist traditions such as Yoga. Mindfulness meditation, which finds full expression in the Pali canon of the Theravada school, has become almost the standard practice among all Buddhists, as well as many non-Buddhists. This, I think, is an





A painting by Upasena Gunawardhana - Saranath Maha Bodhi Museum

improvement and it is to be lauded. Dharmapala's own thinking of unity of all Buddhists resulted in the birth of World Fellowship of Buddhists (WFB) under the leadership of Gunapala Malalasekera, a Sri Lanka Buddhist scholar, activist and diplomat, who came under direct influence of Dharmapala.

The developments of this nature, however, do not seem to be exercising a major influence on what is actually being practiced in the traditional South, Southeast and East Asian Buddhist monasteries and communities found in the West. The kind of Buddhism practiced by immigrant Buddhist communities has been variously termed as 'baggage Buddhism' 'diaspora Buddhism' or 'cultural Buddhism'. The phenomenon has been widely discussed by the authors who have discussed Buddhism in the West. The monasteries originating from the traditional Buddhist habitats usually look after their own local groups by practicing a form of Buddhism as close as to what they would have found in their home countries. There is no doubt that this exercise is valuable, and by taking care of the religious and cultural needs of those who are far away from their original religious and cultural settings, the monasteries representing traditional Buddhist schools fulfill a much needed cultural and psychological role. This, however, is not without

its own problems. As has been pointed out by many who have studied Buddhism in the West (e.g. Degalle & Sumana 2008), this practice gets constrained with the widened generation gap among these Buddhists. While the replication of the traditional local Buddhism becomes attractive to the first or even to the second generation, the third generation onwards, who have most probably absorbed into the host culture, may not find this form of Buddhism as attractive, meaningful or relevant as their parents and grand-parents would have found. There is no easy solution to this problem, for to be attractive to two cultures simultaneously does not seem an easy task. One cannot hope for a solution with the passing of time, for the process of emigration to the West from the rest of the world will not likely to end in the near future. Although Dharmapala brought monks from Sri Lanka to reside in the West, from his writings one can gather that his ultimate aim was to have a local British Sangha to evolve. To take an example from history, when Arahant Mahinda brought the Sasana to Lanka, he handed over the tradition to the local hands within his life time itself. This, however, cannot be done by the traditional Buddhist monks in the West, for they have their local flocks to look after. History up to this point has shown that evolving a Western

Buddhism from Asian Buddhist traditions is not something that can be realized within only a several generations, although it is still too premature to predict anything definitively.

Concluding Remarks

We noted that Anagarika Dharmapala was a many-sided person with an indefatigable urge to work. As I mentioned at the outset of this discussion, he had three arenas for his activism, Ceylon, India and the traditional Buddhist world, and the UK and the West. While striving to establish Buddhism in the West, Dharmapala was having an eye on his work of building the vihara at Mulagandhakuti at Sarnath, which was completed before he passed away in 1933. His local work was thought out in global terms. That is the reason why his activities in the colonial Ceylon, India and the West were inter-linked. Buddhism in the UK was only the beginning point for him, and he conceptualized a Buddhist future for the entire Europe. Dharmapala's concept of Buddhist Europe was not a result of converting people by following methods similar to those practiced by Christian missionaries in colonial Ceylon. Instead, he believed in reason

and scientific knowledge as means for Westerners to accept Buddhism.

Reflecting today after more than a century of his first visit to Buddhagaya, Anagarika Dharmapala's dream of taking Buddhagaya into Buddhists' hands and Buddhism's becoming a global religion does not appear to have been in vain. Although he could not win his Buddhagaya struggle during his life time, today the birth place of the enlightenment of the Buddha has become the centre of the piety of Buddhists belonging to all schools and visited by hundred thousands of them annually. This is notwithstanding the fact that still the administration of Buddhagaya is executed by a board comprising Buddhists and Hindus in equal number. Although the world is not converted to Buddhism (and it was not Dharmapala's dream anyway), it has come to share the Buddhist vision of life increasingly in recent times and has adopted meditation in many aspects of life:⁹ the facts that testify to the validity of Dharmapala's dream.

Endnotes

1. See Steven Kemper (2015) *Rescued from the Nation: Anagarika Dharmapala and the Buddhist World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press) for a comprehensive bibliography of works on Anagarika Dharmapala and a detailed and systematic account of his life in chronological order.
2. In his well-researched new book on Dharmapala (2015), Steven Kemper argues that Dharmapala's vision was a form universalism which was motivated by competing universalism of his day. Explaining Dharmapala's Sinhala Buddhist nationalism Kemper says: For reasons that are more historical than philosophical, nationalism complicated Dharmapala's universalizing project. As Lanka's leading nationalist campaigned to create a united Buddhist world, he needed to gain the cooperation of people themselves energized and reshaped by nationalist feelings. His challenges included not only nationalism but also the proliferation of other universalism. To make a united Buddhist world Dharmapala had to engage
3. This was compiled on the basis of the text, *A Full Account of the Buddhist Controversy held at Panadura*, written by John Capper and published by Ceylon Times office, Colombo, 1873. (Sugataratana et al. 2003)
4. As quoted by Kemper (2015) from *Journal of Mahabodhi Society* 1. No.1 1892: 1-2.
5. Siri Sumedha Thera (2006) pp. 17-18.
6. Although there is no evidence to show that Dharmapala used the funds he received for his own comfort his critics were quick to point out his failure to make available to the public the accounts of Mahabodhi Society and the Buddhagaya court case (A letter to the editor of *Daily News* by 'a sincere Buddhist' 9th December 1926).
7. The standard accusation leveled to the Buddha was the following: the ascetic Gotama proclaims purity for all the four colours (samano gotamo catuvannim suddhim pannapeti: Assalayana-sutta, Majjhima-nikaya 93).

8. From 1940 to 1954 the vihara was closed, and was reopened with Venerable Narada Maha Thera as the head and Venerable Bope Vinita Thera as his assistant.
9. Eric Braun (2013. p.230 note # 92) refers to works that discuss how mindfulness meditation can be used in improving eating habits, and sexual relations and raising children.

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Anagarika Dharmapala: His Contribution towards the Buddhist Revival in Sri Lanka and India

Dr. K. D. G. Wimalaratne

When the Buddhist revival movement occurred during the 1860's Anagarika Dharmapala or Don David Hewavitharana was four years old, born on 17th September 1864, 150 years ago, to a wealthy mother and father, viz; Don Carolis Hewawithrana and Mallika Srimathi Dharmagunawardena. His father and uncle being wealthy timber and furniture merchants in Sri Lanka during that period. His parents were a mixed caste marriage, which is not normally approved during the 19th century, but bore pleasant and unparalleled results for the family and their services to the country. There were six siblings, eldest being Don David others, Edmond, Simon Alexander. Charles Alwis, Dona Engletina, another daughter who died in 1881, aged two years. The death of this sister, David saw the depressed state of his mother and finally decided "Not to become an avenue for sorrow to a woman, it means to say never to marry".

The Buddhist revival movement in Sri Lanka, which gathered momentum during the second half of the 19th Century, was not due to the failure of the Buddhist revival movement which took place in the Kandyan kingdom under the leadership of Ven. Welivita Asarana Sarana Saranakara Maha Nayake Thera, during the second half of the 18th century. It was due to the fact kings of Kandy could not devote much time to the development of Buddhism, as they were fighting the Western powers.

The 19th Century Buddhist Revival was not due to the decline of the Sangha or the lack of educated Buddhist priests in the fields of Buddhism and oriental languages. The revival was necessary not due to the lack of attention received under the Sinhalese Kings, but the suppression by a Christian government which was under great pressure by the missionaries and, as a result, did not patronize or protect Buddhism.

The 19th Century Buddhist revival was not due to the decline of the sangha or the lack of educated Buddhist priest in the fields of Buddhism and oriental languages. The revival was necessary not due to the lack of attention received under the Sinhalese Kings, but the suppression by a Christian government which was under great pressure by the missionaries and as a result, did not patronize or protect Buddhism.

The missionaries who established Christian schools attracted Buddhist children to those schools, and the Pirivena schools were in a low ebb as reported by W. M. G. Colebrook in 1831. At a time when Buddhism faced an immense challenge from the Christian missionaries, who were aided by the British government, it was fortunate that there appeared a band of Buddhist revivalists – scholar - priests and philanthropic laymen, who tendered their whole hearted support for the cause of Buddhism.

The establishment of oriental schools of education, viz; pirivenas was commenced by Walane Sri Siddhartha Thera in 1841 at Paramadhamma Chetiya, Ratmalana, followed by Vidyodaya Pirivena in 1873 and Vidyalankaraya in 1875, produced Buddhist monks well - versed in the Dhamma and oriental languages.

Moreover, the three centres of the Buddhist revival in the second half of the 19th Century, viz; Deepaduththarama, Kotahena

(1832), Paramadhamma Chetiya, Ratmalana (1841) and Kumara Maha Vihara, Sailabimbarama at Dodanduwa, were instrumental in establishing Buddhist schools for girls and boys, headed by Dodanduwe Piyarathana Tissa, and Koratota Sobitha Theras, before the coming of Olcott in 1880.

Anagarika Dharmapala was nine years old when Ven. Mohottiwatte Gunanada Thera defeated the Christians in memorable five religious Debates culminating at the Panadura debate, in 1873. The first stage of the Buddhist revival was under the leadership of Ven. Mohottiwatte Gunananda Thera, with the assistance of erudite Buddhist monks, headed by Ven. Hikkaduwe Sri Sumangala and supported by a galaxy of head priests, of the day. They were supported financially and morally by the Laity, such as the father of Anagarika Dharmapala, viz; Don Carolis Hewavitharana and his uncle Lansage Andries Perrea Dharmagunawardena. The philanthropy of Andries Perrera helped to donate a land for the

establishment of Vidyodaya Pirivena at Maligakanda. Don Carolis was a pioneer, founder member of Vidyodaya Pirivena in 1873. Accordingly, Anagarika Dharmapala had in his maternal and paternal side, people who unhesitatingly support him in a national cause, viz; the revival of Buddhism.

When Col. Olcott who was an invisible friend of Ven. Dodanduwe Piyaarathana Tissa Thera, Ven. Mohottiwatte Gunannada and Hikkaduwe Sumangala Theras visited Sri Lanka for the first time on 17th May 1880, the stage was set by the Sri Lanka Buddhist clergy and laity to undertake the second phase of the Buddhist revival here.

Dharmapala, by the year 1880, had attended five Christian schools and after the Kotahena riots of 1883, he was forced to leave his catholic school by his father and joined Vidyodaya Pirivena to learn Sinhala, Pali and Buddhism. His education at the Catholic schools influenced him in using numerous evangelical idioms and following many Christian values. He wrote, "Divine lord conquered the world by the fulfillment of the parameters". He wrote his diaries in English and signed in English.

Under Col. Henry Olcott, the Buddhist revival movement took a new turn and gathered momentum in various aspects,

such as, establishment of more schools in the island, which rose up to 226, schools from 1880-1900 had a student population of 2702. Anagarika Dharmapala's father and uncle were active members of the Buddhist Revival movement, as they held key positions in the Buddhist Defence Committee of 28th January 1884, and Vesak Poya organizing committee of April 1885, which designed the six colours Buddhist flag for the whole world. Both of them held posts of President and Vice-president in these committees, being diehard revivalist at the time.

Anagarika Dharmapala was sixteen years, when the Theosophists under Olcott visited the island. He listened to Olcott's first lecture in Colombo, and on the same day introduced to the founders of Theosophy by his father and uncle. Madam Blavatsky's occultism attracted him when Olcott visited the island in 1884, to form the Buddhist Defence Committee, Dharmapala wished to become a member of the B.T.S, although he was under age, not yet 20 years. However, the founder accepted it.

If not for the intervention of Carolis Pujitha Gunawardena, Anagarika Dharmapala would not obtain permission to go to Adyar for the B. T. S. Conventions, as C. P. Gunawardena was a relation of his mother and also an active pioneering Buddhist Revivalist.



Ven. Mohottiwatte Gunanada



Ven. Hikkaduwe Sumangala



Don Carolis Hewavitharana

Anagarika Dharmapala saw the deteriorating situation of the B. T. S in Colombo, he wanted to work full time to develop the B.T. S and left his mansion in Pettah and took up residence at the B.T. S office room, where the Sasasavi Sanderesa press was situated, became its Manager. He did all the work involved with the newspaper. When Olcott and leader came here to collect money for the Buddhist education fund, he resigned his job at the education department and joined them as their interpreter. By the year 1890, he became the leading representative of the B. T. S in their two national conventions. In these travels in the countryside, he saw the poor condition of the village people, which he was deeply moved.

He clashed with the British Regime in Ceylon for neglecting Buddhism and Christian proselytization. He stood for a Sinhala Buddhist cause in uncompromising and dogmatic ways. His knowledge on Christianity and Buddhism helped him to compare and contrast the two and

appeal for Buddhists to uphold their religion and culture. He attacked Buddhist priests and laymen who were lazy and not working towards the protection and upliftment of Buddhism in Sri Lanka. His mission slid between Sinhala Buddhist nationalism and Sinhala nationalism. The Buddhist priests largely dissociated him, but the laity stood by him as his cause was

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national. His thoughts and speech was direct and vociferous, which was misunderstood by many. His arrogance was for a noble national cause under the circumstances, not for personal gain. He was the only leader at that time who toured the country in a made up vehicle, denouncing beef eating and consuming alcohol, preaching them and to see their woes act, first hand.

At the World Parliament of Religions - in 1893 at Chicago, his speech was outstanding and opened the eyes of the Westerners on the importance of Buddhism to the world peace.

Dharmapala distanced himself from the B.T. S and Col. Olcott by the year 1890, and on 31st May 1891, established Mahabodi Society at Maligakanda with Ven. Hikkaduwe Sumangala Thera as President. He made Col: Olcott as a Hon. Director and advisor. Dharmapala was its Secretary.

Anagarika Dharmapala and Revival of Buddhism in India

During the Sojourn in India, in 1891, he visited the ancient Buddhist shrines. He came to Buddha Gaya, stood in meditation. Saw the lamentable position of the place, Lord Buddha attained and its surroundings. When he established the Maha Bodhi Society, objectives were fivefold.

1. To gain possession of the Buddhist Sites in India.
2. Disseminate his teachings throughout the world.
3. To gain young men as Buddhist missionaries.
4. To find a Pali and Sanskrit College at Calcutta
5. To erect monasteries at Buddha Gaya, Benares Kusinara and Kapilavastu.

In view of these, he commenced the *Maha Bodhi Journal* on 10th June 1892, and the "*Sinhala Bauddhaya*" newspaper on the 7th May 1906.

When he decided to file a lawsuit against "Mahanta" who held rights to Buddha Gaya, Sir Edwin Arnold and Col. Steel Olcott was dissatisfied with Dharmapala's management. However, Dharmapala stood by himself, unmoved and resolute, fought the legal battle. Olcott became unpopular among his Indian admirers of Theosophy. During this time the Indian cultural revival under oriental societies, such as Brahma Samaj, Dayananda Saraswahi's "Arya Samaj", "Ramakrishna mission" of Swami Vivekananda were challenging the philosophy of Theosophy which was neither Hinduism nor Buddhism.

Anagarika Dharmapala had many legal battles to save Buddha Gaya from the clutches of "Mahanta and faced defeat and partial success, as the government of India was sympathetic towards Dharmapala's cause. However, it's not well known that, ultimate success to hand over Buddha Gaya to a governing body in 1949, with the passing of the Buddha Gaya Temple Bill came from the "Rajendra Prasad Report, when Dr. Cassius Perera (later Ven: Bambalapitiye Kassapa Thera of Vajirarama Bambalapitiya, led a delegation to the Indian Congress Convention held in Belgaum in 1924, made representation in an eloquent manner, that the Indian leaders who were much impressed with his speech.



However, it is unanimously accepted that Anagarika Dharmapala was a National Leader, who awakened the Sinhala Buddhist from their slumber under a foreign yoke, forgetting their cultural habits, to rise as a united community in achieving social, cultural, economic and political goals to be on par with other countries of the world.

He gave back "Buddhism in return, a gift of Sri Lanka to India, which brought about a veritable Buddhist renaissance in India. The Buddhist renaissance in India is symbolized by the inclusion of the "Dharma Chakka" in the National Flag, the adoption of Asoka's Saranath- pillar capital as the official seal and the presence of the Mathura standing Buddha in the House of Parliament. In addition, Vesak day was declared a public holiday throughout India by the Indian government.



Anagarika Dharmapala and Saranath

[Extracted from J. B. Disanayaka's *Saranath : The Cradle of Buddhism* Colombo: Government Press, 1994]

Sarnath came into prominence again in the twentieth century mainly due to the Buddhist revival spearheaded by Anagarika Dharmapala (later Ven. Devamitta Dhammapala), who founded the Maha Bodhi Society, the first International Buddhist organization. Ven. Dhammapala was born in Sri Lanka in 1864, and received his education in Christian schools. "As a lad of just 26, fired by a burning enthusiasm and drive far beyond normal human expectations, he started the Maha Bodhi Society, with the guidance of the Ven. Hikkaduve Sri Sumangala Thera and erudite Sri Lankan monk in every sense, and an American Theosophist, Colonel Henry Steel Olcott, by then, a hundred years ago, a sensation in the island" (SR.vi).

At first, Anagarika Dharmapala's attention was focused on Bodhi Gaya, which was at this time under the control of the Hindus. Gradually, his attention shifted to other sites as well, and one of the first holy places to have received his attention was Sarnath. His main objective was

to build a shrine at Sarnath, for the benefit of modern pilgrims. "*When I first visited Sarnath in January 1891*" recalls Dharmapala, "*the village was in the occupation of low class hog breeders..... in January 1901 I was able to purchase 'three bhigas of land' from the Zamindar to open a free school with the money provided by my dear mother who is now 85 years old*". (SR.55).

Among those who helped Dharmapala were other Sri Lankan Buddhists, such as Devapriya Valisingha, and foreigners such as Mrs. Foster Robinson, a devout Buddhist from Honolulu.

The new Vihara was named the Mulagandhakuti Vihara. It was opened to the public in 1931. "Amidst a hum of voices" began a news dispatch issued by the 'Associated Press of India', "speaking in the tongues of India, Ceylon, Siam, China, Japan, Tibet, Cambodia and Burma, but all professing the one great religion of Gautama Buddha, there was opened this afternoon a magnificent new Vihara at Sarnath, a few miles

away from the sacred Hindu city of Benares” (SR.56).

The relics of the Buddha to be enshrined in the Vihara were sent by the British Viceroy and Governor – General of India. His message ran thus.

“It gives me great pleasure to be able to present to the Maha Bodhi Society certain well-authenticated relics of the Sakya Sage, Gautama Buddha, and it is a matter of deep gratification to me that they will be enshrined at a place where the Buddha preached his first sermon (SR.55).

In the same year, Anagarika Dharmapala entered the Buddhist order of monks, under the name Devamitta Dhammapala. He received his Higher Ordination, upasampada, three years later. On the twenty ninth of April 1933, he passed away at Sarnath. His ashes were deposited in a memorial at Sarnath itself.

There are a few other symbols in Sarnath to commemorate his dedicated service to its resurgence. One of these is the statue of Dharmapala erected in front of the Mulagandha Kuti Vihara. The main gate that opens to this Vihara is named ‘Dharmapala Gate’. The stretch of road that runs through the bazaar has been named ‘Dharmapala Road’ which is also written in the Sinhala script – to remind the

Sinhalese pilgrim of the greatest champion of the modern Buddhist renaissance both in India and Sri Lanka. In the Maha Bodhi Society at Sarnath located on this road, the Sinhalese Buddhist pilgrim finds ‘a home away from home’.

Dharmapala, in the context of his times, was a rebel, but a rebel with a legitimate cause: to regain for Buddhism what it had lost over the centuries in the land of its birth. He was no ordinary rebel either. As he wrote in one of his official letters, “I have to be active and activity means agitation according to constitutional means”. Thus Anagarika Dharmapala immortalised his name in the hearts of millions of Buddhists who visit the sacred centres of Buddhist pilgrimage in India today, including Sarnath, the cradle of Buddhism.

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RESCUED FROM THE NATION

Anagarika Dharmapala and the Buddhist World



STEVEN KEMPER

Book Review

Steven Kemper, *Rescued from the Nation: Anagarika Dharmapala and the Buddhist World*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press | 480 pages | 2015

Discussing the influence of Nagarjuna on the subsequent Indian Buddhism T R V Murti remarked that “philosophy never returns to its former placid state after the shock of a great philosopher”¹ Kemper’s latest book on Anagarika Dharmapala (AD) reminds me of this statement by Murti because it challenges, quite forcefully, all the major stakeholders of Dharmapala scholarship up to now. Kemper is so comprehensive and critical in the treatment of his subject matter that anyone writing on Dharmapala in future will not be able to by-pass him. How substantial and valid is Kemper’s challenge has to be judged by the more knowledgeable in the field, and I leave Kemper’s criticisms of the views of the eminent scholars to those scholars themselves who are well capable of defending themselves. Mine is only by way of introducing this important, by no means uncontroversial, work in Dharmapala scholarship.

The very title highlights the main thrust of the book: Dharmapala,

who has been made a hero of the Sinhala nation has to be rescued from the nation, and needs to be placed above the bounds of this particular nation – in fact, Dharmapala has to be placed above all nations for he is a universalist: this is what Kemper tries to establish from his work. In his well-researched and substantial work (running into nearly 500 pages), Kemper locates Dharmapala, or Dharmapala’s Buddhist universalism, in the context of emerging universalisms of India, Japan, Britain and United States.

Kemper starts his work with a discussion of universalism for which Dharmapala is portrayed as providing an example. In this long introductory chapter titled “World Renunciation in a Nineteenth Century World” Kemper sketches out his argument running through the book. Subsequently he treats his subject matter in six respective chapters titled ‘Dharmapala as a theosophist’, ‘Buddhists in Japan’, ‘Universalists Abroad’, ‘Dharmapala, the British and the Bengalis’, ‘Dharmapala and

the British Empire” and “World Wanderer Returns Home”. The Afterword brings the discussion into a conclusion returning to Dharmapala’s universalism. The book has two appendices. The second, a chronology of the life of Dharmapala, is a useful guide to those who are interested in Dharmapala’s life from his birth to death. Since the book does not discuss Dharmapala in a chronological order this appendix provides systematic basic information on Dharmapala. The first appendix, “The Diaries and Notebooks Explained” can be considered the highlight of the whole work for the light it throws on those very important and indispensable source materials for Dharmapala study. In fact, the main reason behind the forcefulness of Kemper’s work has to be attributed to his extensive and careful use of these diaries and notebooks. As I will show later, however, the use of these documents is not without problems.

One of Kemper’s criticisms of his predecessors is that they have not gone beyond Ananda Guruge’s collection of Dharmapala’s speeches, essays and letters.² Although a substantial collection running into 850 pages, Guruge’s is still a collection of carefully selected items to portray Dharmapala as a national hero. Kemper has noted

that its publisher has been the government of Sri Lanka itself. Guruge has selected what he needed for his specific purpose. But the real problem, according to Kemper, lies with those who relied on Guruge for their theories and interpretations.

Where Guruge’s book had its effect was not so much on the Buddhist public as on scholars who have relied on the book’s treatment of Dharmapala.

It is not surprising that he comes across a patriot in a government publication. What is surprising is that scholars have approached Dharmapala only in terms of Guruge. We can do better by looking at the evidence (p.37).

Discussing this further, Kemper says that “not looking for evidence beyond Guruge has led to inferences that have no warrant”, and refers to Gombrich who said (in his *Theravada Buddhism*³ 188) that Dharmapala left Colombo in 1892 because his political activities had attracted official attention (footnote # 80, p.37). But according to Kemper, Dharmapala’s troubles with the British government started two decades. After Kemper’s critical gaze does not spare any major Dharmapala scholar including Gananatha Obeyesekera, Richard Gombrich already mentioned, K M de Silva, Kitsiri Malalgoda, H L Seneviratne and Tessa Bartholomeusz.

The idea of ‘Protestant Buddhism’ initially coined by Obeyesekera and subsequently used by such scholars as Gombrich and Malalgoda receives substantial critical comments from Kemper. Although Kemper does not dismiss the concept altogether, he finds fault with Obeyesekera for “seeing him [Dharmapala] as the source of a Protestant Buddhism, which then becomes a precondition for an evolving national subjectivity” (p.40). Kemper questions the role attributed to Dharmapala as the one who gave lead to Protestant Buddhism and the resultant changes including laicization of Buddhist life (p.44) and shows how Dharmapala emphasized the need for renunciation for a proper social activism, and concludes that he was “an ascetic who pursued social reform, not a social reformer who practiced asceticism” (p.44).

It is not my effort here to summarize Kemper’s discussion of all the scholars mentioned and not mentioned here. Kemper produces substantial evidence against the received views about Dharmapala and tries to see all major happenings in his life in the light of universalism attributed to him. Dharmapala’s first visit to Buddhagaya and his determination to not to leave the place until he rescued it from Hindu Mahants, according to Kemper, is not merely a

result of his love for the Buddhagaya but a result of his effort to emulate the life of the Buddha who made a similar vow that he will not leave his seat of enlightenment without being successful. Dharmapala, in Kemper’s reading and reconstruction, is a renouncer who opted to become homeless (anagarika) and adopted a form of universalism based on the teachings of the Buddha. However, “for reasons that are more historical than philosophical, nationalism complicated Dharmapala’s universalizing project” (p.9). Adding to the complexity of Dharmapala’s life, Kemper reveals,

Dharmapala had several simultaneous facets in his life. In addition to his local role as a reformer, Dharmapala had much of his life spent in India while going around the world several times and developing extensive involvements with UK and USA and many other countries. His roles and activities and relations with people took different shapes in different places.

based on evidence from the diaries, that he remained loyal to theosophy to the moment of his death, which is not conducive to the constructed image of Dharmapala as a Buddhist hero pure and simple.

Kemper disagrees with Obeyesekere's Freudian interpretation of Dharmapala's life, in particular, his alleged love for his mother and the distancing himself from his father. Kemper adduces evidence to prove that this is not the case (Kemper p.49). Nevertheless, it does not seem that Kemper has been able to explain all the possible reasons behind some important events of Dharmapala's life such as Dharmapala's choice of anagarika life, his father's wish/request that he should try to become a Buddha (Kemper, p.49) and his sudden change of mind to leave behind Madame Blavatsky and the Theosophical organization to start his Buddhist work, to mention a few.

A student of Dharmapala is lucky to have so much information about him including his diaries and notebooks. However, it is a question as to what extent one can rely on Dharmapala's [or anyone else's for that matter] personal diaries as providing reliable information. In Dharmapala's case, we have what he did, what he said he

did and what others said he did. It is possible that one's own autobiographical accounts are not exactly true records of one's own life. Kemper seems to rely on what Dharmapala said he did for he takes Dharmapala's diaries and notebooks as providing 'evidence' on his life and events. The mentality behind diary-writing is such that even the most secretly kept diaries are ultimately meant by the author herself to be read by others. In his case, Dharmapala clearly meant his diaries to be read by others. It is quite imaginable that he was providing explanations and justifications of his behavior for those unknown readers. If this is the case, the key source of Kemper's information is not without problems. But this is not to cast doubts on Dharmapala's honesty and integrity indiscriminately. As Kemper has shown Dharmapala has recorded his own inner sexual feelings and conflicts and his close associations with a number of women and even troubles with some of them, information potentially damaging to his adopted mode of life as an *anagarika*. This, I must admit, supports Kemper's trusting attitude to Dharmapala's diaries and notebooks.

Dharmapala had several simultaneous facets in his life. In addition to his local role as a

reformer, Dharmapala had much of his life spent in India while going around the world several times and developing extensive involvements with UK and USA and many other countries. His roles and activities and relations with people took different shapes in different places. His 'Buddhism' took different shapes in these places. In Sri Lanka people have made him a Buddhist and national hero for which there is ample evidence from his life. They seem to have ignored or even not been aware of universalizing tendencies and such matters operative in Dharmapala which were perceived as simply irrelevant to their image of Dharmapala. This image has served and continues to serve a useful purpose for his admirers. But according to scholars such as H.L. Seneviratne (*The Work of Kings*) this image of Dharmapala has influenced a segment of Sri Lanka Sangha in an adverse manner. It does not seem an easy task to make one homogenous Dharmapala.

Dharmapala has been studied by many scholars. His life has been interpreted and re-interpreted, appreciated and condemned. Kemper's is the latest in this genre but surely will not be the last. Historical circumstances and life situations of Dharmapala are so complicated that it is unlikely that anyone will ever be able

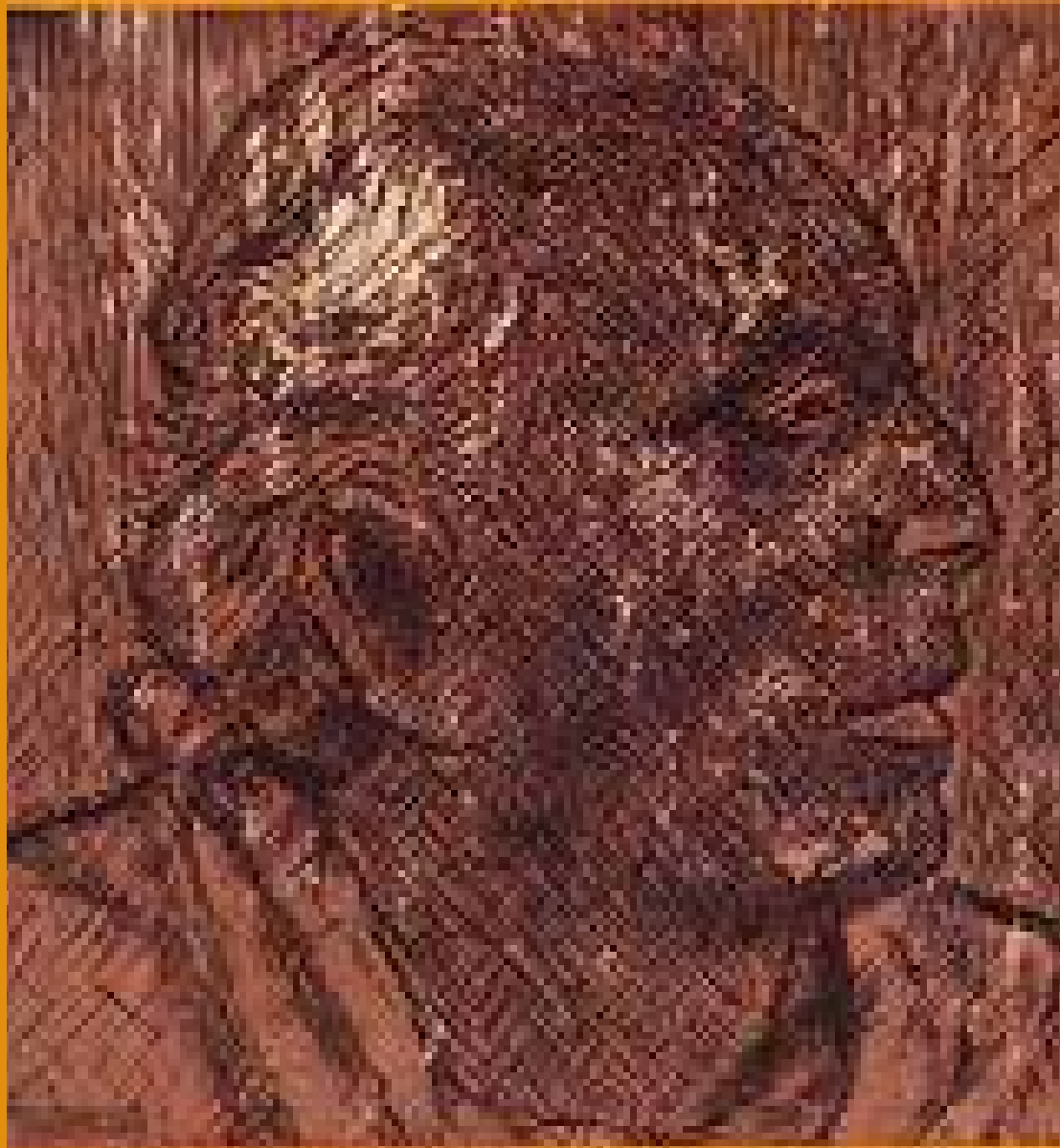
to say the last word on him or to explain all events in his life. Dharmapala is a good example that Aristotle's principle of non-contradiction is not easily applicable to human behaviour. Kemper's is a gigantic effort meant to bring order, coherence and consistency to the life of one of the most picturesque and complex personalities of the recent history of Sri Lanka Buddhism. He has introduced a new category (universalism) as a theoretical tool to bring order to the complexity. To judge whether or not Kemper has succeeded in his effort is beyond my immediate purpose.

Endnotes

1. T R V Murti (1955) *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism* (London: George Allen and Unwin), p.104.
2. *Return to Righteousness*, The Government Press, 1965.
- 3 Richard F. Gombrich (1988) *Theravada Buddhism: A social history from ancient Benares to modern Colombo* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul).

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Anagarika Dharmapala



RETURN TO
RIGHTEOUSNESS

The Life and Work of Anagarika Dharmapala

[Extracted from Ananda Guruge, *Return to Righteousness : A Collection of Speeches, Essays and Letters of the Anagarika Dharmapala* Third Edition, Colombo: Godage, 2014]

Few national leaders of Sri Lanka had left behind such a wealth of autobiographical information as the Anagarika Dharmapala (*vide chapters 86-94*). A well prepared chronology of his life was published in the Mahabodhi Journal Vol. XXXV (January, 1927) and it is reproduced here with additions to bring it up to the time of his death:-

January 1886

Left Government Service to work in the interest and welfare of the Buddhist Theosophical Society wherein he was engaged as General Secretary of the Buddhist Section, Manager of the Sandaresa (paper) and the Buddhist press, Manager of Buddhist Schools and Assistant Secretary of the Buddhist Defence Committee from March 1886 to December 1890.

2nd January 1891

Visited Isipatana now called Sarnath, Benares and Buddhagaya. Seeing the deserted condition of the Holy Temple at Buddhagaya, he made a vow before the Bodhi Tree that he would surrender his life to rescue the Holy Place from neglect.

March 1891

Left Buddhagaya for Rangoon via Calcutta. At the latter place, he was welcomed by the late Babu Neel Comul Mookerjee, who showed hospitality.

March 1891

Arrived in Rangoon and had no place to stay and passed the night in the room occupied by a Sinhalese goldsmith. Suddenly met a Burmese who took him to the garden house of his sister where Anagarika stayed for two weeks expecting to meet the late Moungh Hpo Mhyin. Met him and he welcomed him in whose house Anagarika stayed for a month, and started for Colombo.

May 1891

Started the Maha Bodhi Society on the 31st of that month under the name of Buddhagaya Maha Bodhi Society, which for brevity's sake became known as the Maha Bodhi Society.

July 1891

Got four Ramanna Nikaya Bhikkhus to go to Buddhagaya. He escorted them to Calcutta by steamer Rosetta and thence to Gaya by train. Three of the four Bhikkhus were Chandajoti, Sudassana and Sumangala.

October, 1891

Gave his first English Lecture at the Calcutta Albert Hall on the kinship between Buddhism and Hinduism. Stayed in the house of the late Babu Neel Comul Mookerjee who became his Dayaka for the next twenty years. Secured the friendship of Mr Norendronath Sen, Editor, Indian Mirror. Until his death, he remained a friend of the Buddhists.

January 1892

Established the Maha Bodhi Journal. A demy quarto size journal of 8 pp. It was welcomed by many and led to the invitation to attend the Chicago Parliament of Religions.

October 1892

Visited Akyab with Col. Olcott and the formation of the Akyab Maha Bodhi Society. Arakan Buddhists were the first give help to the work of the Maha Bodhi Society whose aid gave the society a hired house in Calcutta, 2 Greek Row, where the work was carried on until May 1904, and then closed for a time.

June 1893

Visited Rangoon.

July 1893

Left India for London and America via Ceylon to attend the Congress of Religions.

August 1893

Arrived in London, was the guest of Sir Edwin Arnold and Mrs. Besant. Accompanied her to New York.

September 1893

Delivered Address at the Parliament of Religions on behalf of Southern Buddhism. Met with a cordial reception.

17th October 1893

Met Mrs. Marry Foster on board the s.s. Oceanic in the harbour at Honolulu.

November 1893

Arrived in Japan and was received by Secretary of the Ido Busseki Kofukai. Received beautiful Japanese Image from the congregation of the Tentokuji Temple, Shiba, Tokio headed by the last Revd. Asahi.

January 1894

Visited Shanghai. Delivered lecture at the Temple which was translated by Revd. Edkins and Dr. Franke.

February 1894

Visited Bangkok and was the guest of Prince Rajsaki and a branch of the Maha Bodhi Society was formed with the help of Prince Vivit and other Princess.

April 1894

Arrived at Colombo and received promises of help from Wealthy Buddhists for the purchase of the Maha Bodhi village.

September 1894

Started the Buddhagaya Fund and received generous help from Buddhists.

December 1894

The first organized pilgrimage by Sri Lankan Buddhists to Buddhagaya and other places. The ladies of the party wore the sari for the first time. At Madras they went on shore and visited Col. Olcott at Adyar.

February 1895

The Japanese Buddha image was placed in the shrine at Bauddhagaya, but the Mahant's servants had it forcibly removed and thrown out into the open.

February 1895

Instituted case against the Mahant's men for disturbance of worship. The case was widely known as the great Buddhagaya case. The Burmese rest – house was placed at the disposal of the Maha Bodhi Society and the Japanese Image was placed therein where it remained until 1910 when it was removed to Calcutta in accordance with the order of the High Court of Calcutta and the Burmese rest house became the property of the Mahant. The government helped the Mahant to secure resthouse, which ever since has remained in the hand of Mahant, who has closed it for the Buddhists.

May 1896

First Vaisakha Celebration held in Calcutta.

July 1896

Second visit to America to preach Buddhism.

October 1901

Visit of the Lt. Governor Woodburn to Buddhagaya when representations were made by the Maha Bodhi Society to have a Dharmasala built. The Lt. Governor sanctioned the acquisition of land the money for which was provided by the Maha Bodhi Society of Mandalay and Colombo. But for the accommodation provided for the Buddhist pilgrims in this rest house today there would be no place for the Buddhists to rest at Buddhagaya. The temple remains under the dual control of the Government and Mahant. What is needed is the presence of Bhikkhus at Buddhagaya. There is freedom of worship in the Temple. The Bhikkhus can stay at the rest house which is known as the Maha Bodhi Dharmasala.

January 1901

Purchased land at Isipatana (Sarnath) Benares.

April 1902

Third visit to Japan.

October 1902

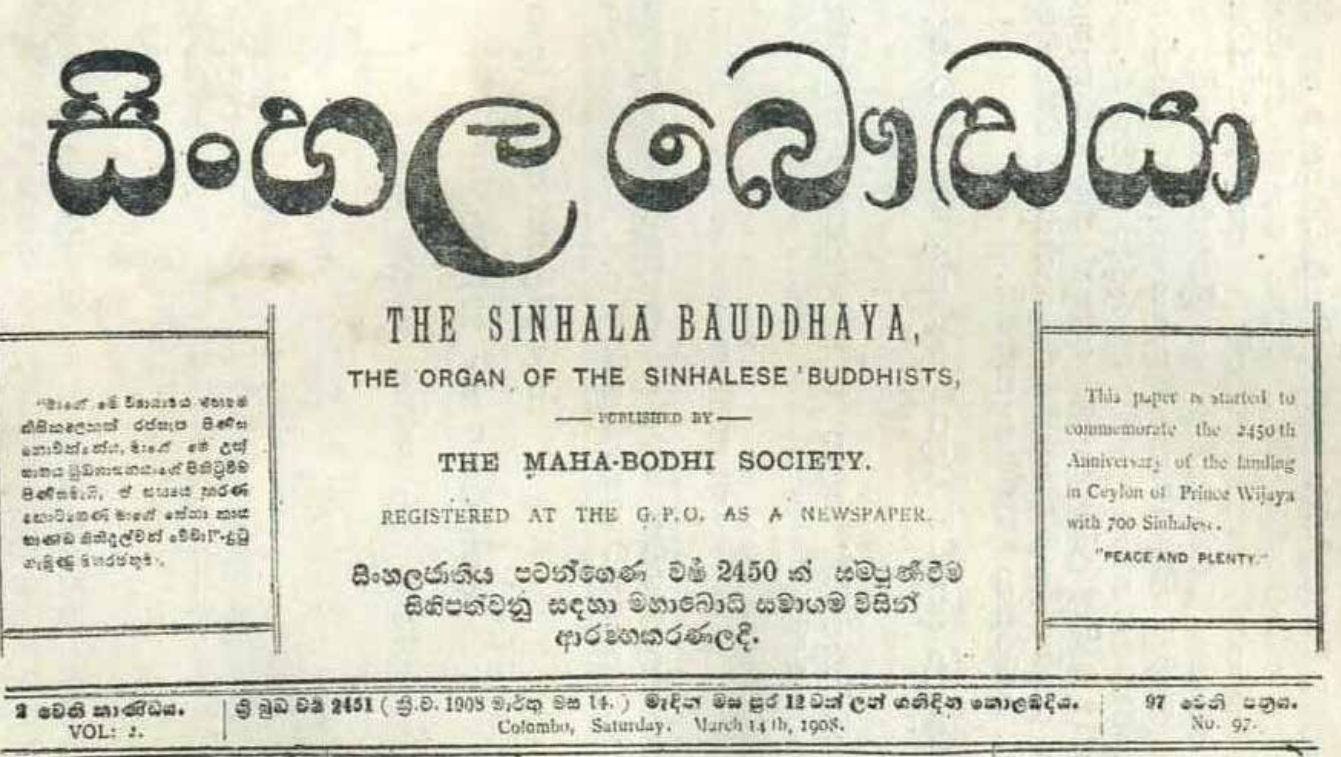
Third visit to America. Landed in San Francisco.

1903

Tour all over the United States visiting Industrial Schools.

January 1904

Started Industrial School Fund at San Francisco, Mrs. Mary Foster contributing Rs. 10,000.



January 1904

Arrived in London. Visited the Industrial Schools in London, Liverpool, Holland, Denmark and Italy.

April 1904

Arrived in Colombo.

July 1904

Started Industrial School at Sarnath Benares.

October 1904

Left Benares for Colombo. On the way went to Adyar to see Col. Olcott, with whom he had an altercation because Col. Olcott insulted the feelings of the Buddhists by showing disrespect to the Tooth Relic, a copy of which he had placed under a shelf. Col. Olcott showed bad temper and broke off friendship with him after a period of twenty years. Anagarika was initiated by him in January, 1884 into the Theosophical Society.

March 1906

Began campaign against the Theosophical Society as the local Theosophical society's being under Buddhist it was suggested that there should be harmony with Theosophy and Buddhism, and wanted the name Theosophy to be eliminated. Certain members wished to retain the name and the campaign was therefore started.

May 1906

Established the *Sinhalā Bauddhaya* and Maha Bodhi Press.

October 1906

Started the Hiniduma school.

1906

Erection of school building at Rajagiriya on the land purchased from the donation received from Mrs. Mary Foster of Honolulu.

May 1907

Burmese Resthouse Case instituted by the Hindu Mahant at Buddhagaya for the removal of the Japanese image from the Burmese Resthouse. The case was dragged for a long time, but eventually decided in favour of the Mahant on the report of the Government Custodian, and the Buddhists had to remove the image and also the resident Bhikkhu who was living there since 1896 in February, 1910.

July 1908

House in Calcutta, Baniapooker Lane, purchased from donation received from Mrs. Marry Foster of Holonlulu.

1912

Started National Revival and toured all over Ceylon.

1913

Left for Japan and Honolulu. Met Mrs. Foster at Honolulu in June 1913 and from her received a splendid donation to establish a Free Hospital.

1914

Dedicated the house and ground at Darley lane which was given to him by his father for the use of the Buddhists under the name of Mallika Santhagara.

1914

Opening of the Foster Robinson Free Hospital.

1915

Removed the Maha Bodhi College to the Mallika Santhagara.

May 1915

Ceylon Riots. Many Buddhists shot and he was interned in Calcutta from June 1915 to 1920.

July 1915

Purchased property in 4, College Square to build a Vihara.

July 1916

Received communication from the Government of India and they are prepared to present a Relic of the Lord Buddha to the Maha Bodhi Society if the latter would build a Vihara in Calcutta.

July 1918

Work started at College Square. No 4, to erect a Vihara

November 1920

The Vihara completed and it was ceremoniously opened by the Governor of Bengal, Lord Ronaldshay. A grand procession started from the Government House bringing the Relic to the Vihara.

November 1922

Laying of the foundation stone to build a vihara by the Governor of the United Provinces, Sir Harcourt Butler at Sarnath, Benares.



July, 1922

Restarted the *Sinhala Banddhaya* which was suspended by order of Sri Lankan Government in 1915 during the Riot Period.

July 1923

Founding of the Mary Foster Permanent Fund with a capital of 1,50,000 dollars.

September, 1925

Started for America on a visit to Mrs. Mary Foster who was then staying in San Francisco. Met her and was cordially received, and she promised to give a monthly donation of £ 61 for the London Buddhist Mission.

December 1925

Lecture at the Town Hall, New York, organized by Mr. Kira, a Sinhalese Buddhist.

January 1926

Arrived in London to establish the British Buddhist Mission.

July 1926

Permanent headquarters established at the Foster House, Ealing, London W.5. The house was purchased from the money from the firm of H. Don Carolis who are the Trustees of his father's estate and the personal gift from Mrs. Foster. The sum of £ 2,600 was paid to purchase the house and ground.

December 1926

Arrived in Sri Lanka to raise a Fund for the British Buddhist Mission.

1927

Returned to India and proceeded with the building of Mulagandhakuti Vihara, Sarnath.

1930

Completed Mulagandhakuti Vihara.

1931

Visited Sri Lanka for the last time and created the Anagarika Dharmapala Trust.

13th July 1931

Ordained as a Bhikkhu with the name Sri Devamitta Dhammapala.

16th January 1933

Received Higher Ordination.

29th April 1933

Died at Sarnath, Benares.

[Extracted from Ananda Guruge, Return to *Righteousness: A Collection of Speeches, Essays and Letters of the Anagarika Dharmapala* Third Edition, Colombo: Godage, 2014].

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