

Anagarika Dharmapala (1864-1933) (the Great Buddhist Revivalist)

Anagarika Dharmapala the founder of the Maha Bodhi Society of India was born in Sri Lanka on 17th September, 1864. The country was then under foreign rule which was unsympathetic and hostile to Buddhism. Alien manners, fashion and even names were in vogue then. Buddhist culture of the country was waning. It so happened that in 1880 an American theosophist, Col. H.S. Olcott arrived in Sri Lanka, established Buddhist Theosophical Society and started a kind of movement for reviving the age-old Buddhist culture.

Anagarika Dharmapala then known as David Hewavitarne joined his mission of the age of 22 in 1886, after obtaining permission from his parents, renounced worldly ambitions and dedicated his life to the service of others. He adopted the new name of Dharmapala which means 'guardian of the dhamma'. He also became an Anagarika – 'the homeless one' and devoted all his life to the happiness of humanity and service of Buddhism.

Once he came across an article published in the London Telegraph written by Sir Edwin Arnold, the famous author of 'Light of Asia', which dealt with the bad condition of the Buddhagaya Mahabodhi Temple. And this made him to visit India at the age of 27 years in 1891 to see the condition of Buddhagaya. On his visit he observed that the name of the Buddha had been forgotten for almost eight hundred years in its own land and the sacred places were in ruins, neglected or in state of desecration. His heart broke when he saw the pitiable and run down condition of Buddhagaya Temple, where Siddhartha had attained the supreme enlightenment and became the Buddha.

He mentioned in his diary – "As soon as I touched with my forehead the Vajrasana (the Diamond throne) a sudden impulse came to my mind. It prompted me to stop here and take care of this sacred spot - so sacred that nothing in this world is equal to this place where the Sakya Sinha gained enlightenment under the Bodhi Tree". And he made a firm resolution to recover Buddhagaya and other sacred places for the Buddhists.

On his return to Sri Lanka he founded the 'Buddhagaya Maha Bodhi Society' on 31st May, 1891 – which later came to be known as the Maha Bodhi Society of India. In the same year he convened an International Buddhist Conference at Buddhagaya which were participated by the representatives of many Buddhist countries and Dharmapala succeeded in getting their moral support.

In 1892 he started the **THE MAHA BODHI** – an English journal through which he could communicate his message to the community of right thinking persons. In 1893 he had an opportunity to visit the USA and to address at the World Religions Congress at Chicago. And this visit made him so popular in the West too. He toured extensively preaching the message of the Buddha and establishing branches of the Society for which he got support of many benefactors.

Anagarika Dharmapala also established many Centres in India and fought a life-long battle for the good cause of the Maha Bodhi Temple. He had helped India to rediscover the Buddha and to take pride in the Buddhist culture as one of his greatest contributions to humanity. The present flourishing condition of Lumbini, Buddhagaya, Sarnath, Kusinara, Sanchi and many other sacred places of Buddhist interest is the direct result of Dharmapala's hard labour. He breathed his last in 1933 at Sarnath in Varanasi, U.P. where he had erected the Mulagndha Kuti Vihara. His great wish was to be reborn twenty-five times for the service of the Buddha Dhamma.

And as such, Anagarika Dharmapala lives even after death through his great contributions in reviving the Buddha Dhamma in its land of its origin.

Invitation

Namo Buddhaya

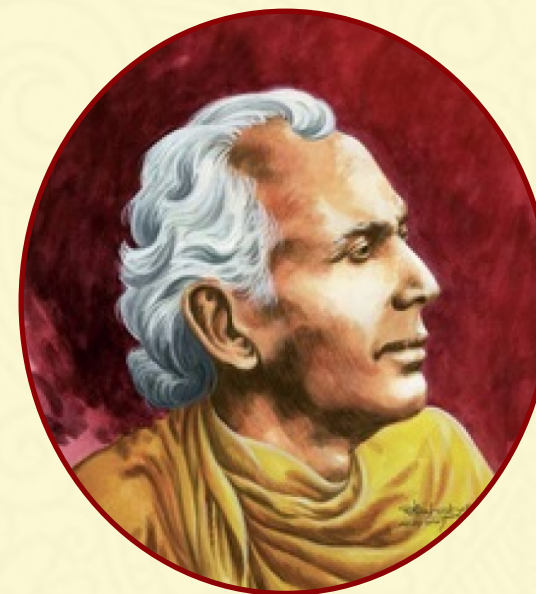
159th Birth Anniversary Celebration

Of

Ven. Anagarika Dharmapala

The founder of Maha Bodhi Society of India

15 - 17 September 2023



MAHA BODHI SOCIETY OF INDIA
Buddhagaya Centre

MAHA BODHI SOCIETY OF INDIA

(A Premier International Buddhist Organization)

BUDDHAGAYA CENTRE

requests your kind presence at the

159TH Birth Anniversary Celebration of

Ven. Anagarika Dharmapala

The Founder of the Society

on Sunday, the 17th September 2023, 3:30 p.m.

The Public Meeting (*Dhammasabha*) will be graced by
Venerable Monks
Distinguished Dignitaries, Scholars
and Social Workers

**Venue of the Function: Anagarika Dharmapala Memorial Hall,
Maha Bodhi Society premises, Bodhgaya**

Bhavatu Sabba Mangalam

Dr. Mahendra Singh
President
Maha Bodhi society of India

Ven. P. Seewalee Mahathero
General Secretary
Maha Bodhi society of India

Ven. A. Gnanissara Thero
Bhikkhu-in-charge, Buddhagaya Centre
Maha Bodhi society of India

PROGRAMME

15th Sept, 2023

- 07:00 am : Sutta Chanting
Inter-School Competition of
09:00 am : Song, Drawing, Speech and Essay Writing
07:00 pm : *Dhammachakka Sutta Desana* at
the Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi Vihara

16th Sept, 2023

Reopening of Maha Bodhi Charitable Homeopathy Dispensary

17th Sept, 2023

- 07:00 am : Procession from Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi Vihara to
Mahabodhi Mahavihara and puja under the Bodhi Tree
08:30 am : Garlanding the statue of Ven. Anagarika Dharmapala
in the Society's Premises
09:00 am : *Prasad (Kheer)* distribution.
03:30 pm : **Public Meeting(Dhammasabha)**
Prize distribution to students &
Memento Presentation
06:00 pm : Illumination of the MBSI premises
07:00 pm : *Dhammachakka Sutta Desana* at the
Jaya Sri Maha Bodhi Vihara

May all beings be well and happy