IMPORTANT EVENTS OF THE MAHA BODHI SOCIETY OF INDIA

17.09.1864  Anagarika Dharmapala was born in Sri Lanka (Ceylon)
21.08.1884  His first visit to India
22.01.1891  He visited Buddha Gaya for the first time and vowed to restore the great temple
31.05.1891  Founded the Buddha Gaya Maha Bodhi Society
01.05.1902  Founded the Maha Bodhi Journal
11.09.1902  Maha Bodhi Society started its office in Calcutta
18.09.1903  The Anagarika delivered address at the “Parliament of World Religions in Chicago”
06.02.1895  Instituted case to restore the Buddha Gaya Maha Bodhi Temple
06.07.1908  The Society Headquarters opened at Beniapukur Lane, Calcutta
03.04.1915  Maha Bodhi Society became a registered body
26.11.1920  Sri Dharmarajika Vihara, Calcutta was ceremonially opened
13.07.1931  The Anagarika entered ordination at Sarnath and named Siri Devanmita Dharmapala
11.11.1931  Opening ceremony of Mulagandra Kuti Vihara in Sarnath
16.01.1933  Ven’ble Siri Devanmita Dharmapala received higher ordination
29.04.1933  Ven’ble Devanmita Dharmapala passed away in Sarnath
17.09.1991  The Society celebrated its Centenary.

The Great Buddhist Revivalist
ANAGARIKA DHARMAPALA
Founder - Maha Bodhi Society (1891)

1998

Maha Bodhi Society, Titel eines Kalenders für das Jahr 1998
DIE MAHA BODHI SOCIETY


After driving 6 miles (from Gaya) we arrived at the holy spot. Within a mile you could see lying scattered here and there broken statues etc. of our blessed Lord. At the entrance to the Mahant’s temple on both side’s of the portico there are statues of our Lord in the attitude of meditation and expounding the Law. How elevating! The sacred Vihara - the Lord sitting on his throne and the great solemnity which pervades all round makes the heart of pious devotee weep. How delightful! As soon as I touched with my forehead the Vajrasana 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 the world is equal to this place where Prince Sakya Sinha gained Enlightenment under the Bodhi Tree... When the sudden impulse came to me I asked Kozen priest whether he would join me, and he joyously assented and more than this he had been thinking the same thing. We both solemnly promised that we would stop here until some Buddhist priests came to take charge of the place.
MULAGANDHAKUTI VIHĀRA
ERECTED BY
THE ANAGĀRIKA DHARMAPĀLA
FOUNDER AND GENERAL SECRETARY OF
THE MAHA BODHI SOCIETY
WITH THE HELP OF
MRS. MARY ELIZABETH FOSTER
OF HONOLULU AND OTHERS
ON THE SITE WHERE
OUR LORD BUDDHA GAUTAMA
PROMULGATED THE SADDHAMMA 2520 YEARS AGO.
MAY ALL LIVING BEINGS BE HAPPY.
2475 B.E. 1931 C.E.

HONORARY ARCHITECT & ENGINEER
RAI SANEH HARI CHAND, C.E.

CONTRACTOR
MUNHALAL GOVILA.

Gedenktafel am Haupteingang der Mulagandhakuti Vihara in Sarnath


The Parliament of Religions ended on 27 September, 1893. After delivering a few more lectures in America, Dharmapala sailed for India via Japan and China. A chance meeting with Mrs. Mary Elizabeth Mikhala Foster on Board the S.S. Oceanic at Honolulu on 18 October 1893 proved of immense significance both for Mrs. Foster as well as for Dharmapala. Mrs. Foster was born in the far off Hawaii islands in the Pacific Ocean and was a descendent on her mother’s side of King Kamehameha the Great of Hawaii. She was married to a wealthy merchant of North America. It is said that she was of an indomitable temper which she was unable to control. As a remedy for this ailment, Dharmapala advised her to cultivate will-power, and to
Statue vor der Mulagandhakuti Vihara. Inschrift:
Anagarika Dharmapala, Founder of Mahabodhi Society and Pioneer of Buddhist Revival in India. Born in Colombo, Ceylon, September 17, 1864. Died at Sarnath, April 19, 1933
repeat the formula „I will be good, I will control the rising anger.“ These simple words of a practising Buddhist worked wonders. Mrs. Foster was able to get over her temper and gained serenity. She was so deeply impressed by this change that she decided to divert her enormous wealth for the spread of the gospel of the Buddha for which Dharmapala was trying hard.


The foundation stone of Mulagandhakuti Vihara, the life of new Sarnath, was laid in November 1922 by Sir Harcourt Butler, the Governor of the United Provinces. The name ‘Mulagandakuti’ has a historic basis. This name was first used for the monastery in which Lord Buddha actually resided. During the archaeological excavations at Sarnath a piece of tablet was found on which this name was inscribed. This discovery prompted Anagarika Dharmapala to name the new Vihara as ‘Mulangandhakuti Vihara’. The Mulagandhakuti Vihara cost about Rs. 1,20,000 and the principal donor was Mrs. Mary E. Foster of Honolulu, who is generally called the modern Visakha of the Buddhists.

This magnificent Vihara was opened on November 11, 1931 (Kartik Purnima). On the same day, the sacred relics of Lord Buddha, which were discovered from Taxila, Punjab, in 1913-14 by Sir John Marshal, were presented by the Director General of Archaeology to the Maha Bodhi Society on behalf of the Government of India, and enshrined in this Vihara.
MAHABODHI SOCIETY OF INDIA, SARNATH.

ACTIVITIES OF THE CENTRE.

From 1st October, 97 to 31st January, 98.

(1). 66th Anniversary of the Mulagandha Kuti Vihara Celebrated.

The 66th anniversary of the Mulagandha Kuti Vihara was celebrated on the Kattik Fook Moon day - the 14th November, 1997. The Programme of the day started with Dharma Desana in the morning. The Holy Relics Darshan was held in the Vihara in the forenoon and Sanghadana was given at noon which was participated by hundreds of Ven'ble monks from various Buddhist countries of the world. The Holy Relics Procession was conducted in the after noon. Besides thousands of Buddhists from different parts of India, Buddhists from different Buddhist countries of the world participated in this procession. In the evening, a Public meeting was held in the campus of the Mulagandha Kuti Vihara to commemorate this historic occasion. Mr. Kalyan Singh, the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, participated as the Chief Guest in this meeting while Mr. K.B. Ratnayake, the Hon'ble Speaker of Sri Lanka participated as the Chief Speaker in this meeting. Mr. Mangala Moonesinghe, High Commissioner for Sri Lanka in India was the Guest of Honour at the meeting. Among the distinguished persons who participated in this meeting, were Ven'ble Lama Lobzang, member, National Commission for Scheduled Casts and Scheduled Tribes, Government of India, His Excellency Prof. Prabhakar Jha, Ambassador for India in Madagascar, Hon'ble Prof. Om Prakash Singh, Minister of Irrigation and Sugarcane, Government of Uttar Pradesh, Hon'ble Mr. Virendra Singh, Minister of State for Agriculture, Government of Uttar Pradesh, Hon'ble Smt. Saroj Singh, Mayor of Varanasi, Ven'ble Dwimala Thero, Bhikkhu-in-charge, Sarnath Centre, welcomed the guests on this occasion and presented the annual report of this centre. The meeting was conducted by Dr. Benimadho, Principal, Mahabodhi Inter College, Sarnath as well as Mr. Upali Rupasinghe, Publicity Officer at the Head Quarters of the Mahabodhi Society of India. The meeting terminated with the blessings by the Bhikkhu Mahasangha.

(2). 49th REPUBLIC DAY OF INDIA CELEBRATED.

The 49th Republic Day of India, coinciding with the Golden Jubilee year of India's Independence, was celebrated under the auspices of the Mahabodhi Society of India, Sarnath. Besides the students

S. 1 des Tätigkeitsbericht des Sarnath-Centre der MBS, Okt. 97 - Jan. 98

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Hier trat Anagarika Dharmapala im gleichen Jahr als Novize Devamitta (Götterfreund) Dharmapala in den Sangha der Mönche ein, hier auch wurde er im Januar 1933 zum Vollmönch ordiniert. Als er drei Monate später starb, wurden Überreste seines in den letzten Lebensjahren teilweise gelähmten Körpers auf dem Tempelgelände eingäschert. Alljährlich zum November-Vollmond wird in einer Feier der Gründung und Einweihung der Mulagandhakuti Vihara gedacht (vgl. S. 46).“


Erfreulicher und harmonischer verlief die Begegnung mit einer anderen bedeutenden Persönlichkeit, die wenige Jahre später das Haus besuchte: Venerable Anagarika Dharmapala. Er war wohl acht oder zehn Tage bei uns, und wenn wir abends in der Bibliothek zusammensassen, strahlte er so viel gelassene Heiterkeit, so viel Humor aus, daß sonst ernste Gespräche oft von seinem und unserm fröhlichen Lachen unterbrochen wurden. Am Tage, wenn Dr. Dahlke seine Sprechstunde abhielt, pflegte er oft im Tempel oder im offenen Vorraum zu sitzen und halblaut Pali-Verse zu rezitieren. Seine hohe, imponierende Gestalt in der gelben Robe und seine liebenswürdige Persönlichkeit kann man so leicht nicht vergessen.

Abgesehen von der polemischen Schärfe des Briefes von Dharmapala bleibt bemerkenswert, daß er als einziges Dokument „aus seiner Feder“ in einer zum hundertjährigen Bestehen der Maha Bodhi Society in Bodh Gaya erschienenen Festschrift aufgenommen wurde!

Das hier anschließend (vgl. S. 55) daraus außerdem noch wiedergegebene Dokument soll die offizielle Selbsteinschätzung der Maha
Activities of the Maha Bodhi Society of India
SARNATH CENTRE

- Maha Bodhi Mulagandha Kuti Vihara Library and Reading room – Free service to readers and students with a vast collection of books.
- Mahabodhi Book Agency – Publication and distribution of Books on Buddhism, philosophy with world-wide agencies.
- Maha Bodhi Inter College – A complete institution with building and other modern facilities for general higher education with government assistance.
- Dhammapala Bhikkhu and Bhikkhuni Training Centre – A Centre for teaching Buddhist Philosophy and Sangha Vinaya with preliminary training of Buddhist missionary works.
- Maha Bodhi Primary School – A complete body with trained staff to Educate children.
- Maha Bodhi Girls Junior High School – An institution for girls education with trained staff which provides service to the girls of the area.
- Maha Bodhi Birla Dharmashala – A notable service by the society for pilgrims fully maintained by donations.
- Maha Bodhi Sangharama – A hostel for resident monks with free food and other facilities.
- Dhammapala Museum – A specially designed place where Anagarika Dhammapala's personal belongings including robes, wheel-chair, arm-chair, walking-sticks, begging bowl, books, personal notes and other important documents are exhibited.
- Maha Bodhi Hospital (Under Construction) – This twenty beds hospital is being constructed specially for rendering medical service to the poor patients in this area. The construction cost is estimated rupees thirty Lakhs in Indian Currency and one hundred thousand U.S. Dollars. The donors and well-wishers are requested to donate generously towards this noble cause and earn the merit.

THE SARNATH CENTRE OF THE MAHA BODHI SOCIETY OF INDIA INVITES YOU FOR YOUR KIND CONTRIBUTION FOR MAINTENANCE OF THE ABOVE INSTITUTIONS

Kindly send your contribution to:
D. Wimala Thero
Secretary and High Priest
Maha Bodhi Society of India
Sarnath, Varanasi (U.P.) India

- Die MBS hat gegenwärtig acht Zentren in (Nord-)Indien, sie arbeitet an fünf weiteren (auch südindischen) Orten mit anderen Gruppen in sog. „Affiliated Centres“ zusammen.


- Die Bhikkhus der MBS sind ganzjährig ortsbunden. Sie wirken als Repräsentanten des Sangha in ihren jeweiligen Viharas und darüberhinaus als Moderatoren von angegliederten Maßnahmen vor allem im Erziehungs- und Gesundheitsbereich.

- Nach gerade überlebenswichtig für die vielen Pilger aus Sri Lanka sind die Herbergen der MBS in Bodhgaya und Sarnath.

- Nach wie vor wichtig für die internationale Vermittlung der Aktivitäten der MBS und die angemessene Reflektion der Lehren des Pali Kanon an eine englischsprachige Leserschaft ist „The Maha Bodhi“ (vgl. „A Panorama of Indian Buddhism“, 1995).


APPENDIX I
Anagarika Dharmapala's Letter to Francis J. Payne,
London dated 3.4.1925
NAMO BUDDHAYA

VEN: ANAGARIKA DHARMAPALA
DIRECTOR GENERAL
BUDDHIST MISSION OF INDIA
4A College Square
Calcutta

My dear Sir,

It seems that your vigorous activities in the arena of the Dhamma propaganda have come to a standstill. How did the collapse come? What have you done with regard to the publication of your Buddhist Bible? Have numerous literate people understood that life has got to body while we were alive we have to do good harmony? What are we here for? The answer is given in the Maha Mangala Sutta. There is nothing so evil as association with the muddle headed, and that is what 99% of people do. Priests, theologians, political leaders, lawyers, statesmen are of one mind the people are enslaved. They have to work for the benefit of those who have created a god and elevated a being. Should a Buddhist of some sort be bound to what a being, But if

It seems that your vigorous activities in the arena of the Dhamma propaganda have come to a standstill. How did the collapse come? What have you done with regard to the publication of your Buddhist Bible? When activities cease people understand that life has left the body. While we are alive we have to do good Kamma? What are we here for? The answer is given in the Maha Mangala Sutta. There is nothing so evil as association with the muddle headed, and that is what 99 percent of people do. Priests, theologians, political leaders, lawyers, statesmen are of one mind. The people are enslaved. They have to work for the benefit of

Faksimile eines Briefes von Anagarika Dharmapala vom 3.4.1925

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those who have created a god and elected a king. Jehovah told Samuel to warn the Hebrews not to elect a king. But he failed to convince the idiots and gave the tallest of the lot, a donkey—driver, to be made king. The conflict arose between Jehovah and the people's sovereign. Both parties went down when Nebuchad—nessar captured Jerusalem. Jehovah went into a state of suspended animation. The Hebrews went into captivity.

The Dhamma of the Tathagato is little understood in the West. No two scholars agree with the ultimates of the Dhamma. The first requisite necessary to understand the Dhamma is Wisdom (Panna). To have panna one should be armed with the adjuncts of the first two principles of the Noble Eightfold Path. The British people are imbued with the spirit of sensualism, which is a hindrance to enter the Path. Absolute renunciation is too philosophic a requisite to be undertaken by the muddle headed who wish to be governed by the priest and the aristocrat, failing both the wife.

Forty years of ceaseless activity has made me
Physically weak. For 14 years I have spent my life in India in voluntary exile. The name of the Lord Buddha was hardly known 37 years ago by the people of India. Today all India acknowledges Him as their God. There was no Vihara in India, no Buddhist publication, no preaching until started by the Maha Bodhi Society. There is a great harvest to be reaped if there are Buddhist workers. The number of Untouchables waiting to be rescued from the Brahmanical despotism is 65 millions. The Brahmans don't want them. They are threaten the Untouchables to walk in the same road with them. Christians and Moslems wish to convert then and steps are being taken by both to have them converted. There are 70 millions Moslems. If the Untouchables are converted the number of Moslems will increase to 135 millions. Padres will be glad to have the number of Native Christians increased from 3 millions to 68 millions. When the Untouchables become Moslems there will be a tough fight between Moslems and Hindus.

Faksimile eines Briefes von Anagarika Dharmapala vom 3.4.1925
Indian Christianity is synonymous with butchery and alcoholism. I wish to start a propaganda to carry the Dhamma to the untouchables, but I am now so very weak that the Doctors advise me to take complete rest in a German Sanatorium for 3 months, otherwise I shall be completely broken down and be of no use to the Cause.

I propose leaving Calcutta next month about the 10th of May and go to Colombo, then to take steamer for Marseilles. After my arrival I shall let you know. Would it be helpful to the Cause if I visit England? The Buddha Dhamma is too sublime for the barbarian pagans. They do not want to give up alcohol and meat. They are satisfied with the low-caste gods and the fetish priests.

Yours affectionately

The Anagarika Dharmapala

Francis J. Payne Esq.
London.

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Yours affectionately

The Anagarika Dharmapala.
THE MAHA BODHI SOCIETY OF INDIA  
(Estd. by Anagarika Dharmapala in 1891)  
POST BOX NO.: 12365  
4-A, BANKIM CHATTERJEE STREET, CALCUTTA - 700 073 INDIA

MESSAGE

Maha Bodhi Society's main objective was the restoration of Buddhagaya Temple and its vicinity. Hence amongst all activities of Mahabodhi Society during past hundred years Buddhagaya had been main which used to rotate other things and gave impetus to the activities.

The Centenary Celebrations of Mahabodhi Society actually means the 100 years that revolution for restoration of Buddhist prestige in India, which was started from Buddhagaya. This is the most worthy place for the Celebrations, and the Buddhagaya Centre is doing this.

I feel immense pleasure that the year 1991 has rejuvenated most of the Mahabodhi Centres at different places to take on various social and welfare activities. The Buddhagaya has come forward with opeing a hospital, a school, a Bhikkhu Training Centre and—literary organ—which all had been wished by the founder Ven. Dharmapala, for Buddhagaya. It has been brought in action with this Centenary.

I wish all success and I shall co-operate in all of my capacities with its all activities.

Bhavatu Sabba Mangalam.

(Ven. M. Wipulasara Maha Thera)  
General Secretary  
Maha Bodhi Society of India

Grußbotschaft der Maha Bodhi Society, Calcutta, anlässlich der Feiern zum hundertsten Jahrestag des „Buddhist Revival“ in Bodh Gaya.
The Name...

The Maha Bodhi Society derives its name from the tree under which about two thousand five hundred and thirty five years ago, at Buddha Gaya, the Great Being, Gautama Buddha, took his adamantine seat (Vajrasana) and visualised the Truth, The Reality. This Tree was an Asvattha (Ficus Religiosa), which was sanctified by Siddhartha Gautama's attaining Supreme Knowledge (Bodhi) beneath its shade. Thenceforth, it became known as the Bodhi-Tree in India and Bo-Tree in Sri Lanka. Today the word Bodhi has become internationally known term or noun in connection with the Buddhist activities.

The Seal...

The Seal of the Maha Bodhi Society, of which an engraving is printed here, was copied from an alto-redievo tablet in the Indian Museum, Calcutta, and may be seen against the right-hand wall of the large square room, Sculpture Gallery. It is included by Major General Sir computed to be more than Cunningham and most it was the seal adopted by Viharas of those days. The the three Gems — Buddha, supporting it is the Dharma the Couched Deer refer to Benares, where the Buddha entitled the Dhamma his doctrines. The two figures typify the celestial hosts in the act of adoration. The Japanese auxiliary of the Maha Bodhi Society (Indo Busseki Kofuku Kwai) has adopted this as their emblem.

The Aim...

Maha Bodhi Society, a true missionary organisation of the type which the founder of the religion had in his mind and carried out literally the direction given by the Buddha in the memorable words:—

"Go ye, O Bhikkhus, and wander forth for the benefit of the many, for the welfare of many, out of compassion for the worldly beings, for the benefit, good and happiness of men and gods. Do not two of you set forth in the same direction. Proclaim, O Bhikkhus, the doctrine, excellent in the beginning, excellent in the middle and excellent at the end — true in its meaning, true in its letter, preach ye a life of holiness perfect and immaculate".

—Mahavagga Vinaya Pitaka

Selbstbeschreibung der Maha Bodhi Society, Calcutta, 1992
The Maha Bodhi
Founded by Anagarika Dhamapala
First Published in 1892

Centenary Volume

Editor-in-Chief
Venerable Prof. Dr Walpola Sri Rahula Maha Thera
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B.A., Ph.D., D.Litt., LL.D.
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Santosh Bikash Barua
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Editor
Upali Rupasinghe
Senior Journalist — Sri Lanka

Associate Editor
T.B. Dissanayake
Formerly of the Sri Lanka Administrative Service

Printer
Arvind Vajpeyi
Clarion Printing
4/2B, Leonard Road, Hastings
Calcutta 700 022

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General Secretary and Managing Editor,
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4A Bankim Chatterjee Street, Calcutta 700 073

The Society's Objectives

The Maha Bodhi Society of India is an Association registered with the Government of India in 1915 (under Act VII of 1913) and its Head Quarters is situated at 1A, Bankim Chatterjee Street, Calcutta-73.

The objectives of the Society are set out in the Memorandum of Association and among them a few important ones are as follows:

- To revive and propagate Buddhism in India and work towards inter religious harmony through the message of Love and Compassion of the Buddha.
- To popularise the study and dissemination of Pali and Sanskrit Buddhist Literature.
- To publish Pali and Sanskrit Buddhist and other Indian Religious Texts.
- To translate such texts and literature into English and Indian vernaculars.
- To educate illiterate people in domestic sciences, such as hygiene, technical industries and home crafts.
- To open schools in villages for boys and girls to teach them arts and crafts.
- To open vocational schools and gymasia for physical culture.
- To revive ancient Buddhist and other Religious Arts and Crafts by importing teachers from Buddhist and other countries.
- To start a Medical College and Hospital to cater to the sick and needy people.
- To train young men of unblemished character to become Bhikkhu Missionaries to carry the Message of the Lord Buddha of Love and Compassion to the people of India and other countries.
- To found orphanages and free Schools to educate needy children and found homes for needy elders.
- To found the nucleus of a Buddhist University on the lines of the ancient University of Nalanda to which students of all religions and faiths could gain admission.
- To found Pali Scholarships and Lectureships.
- To send students for further studies to Buddhist and other countries.
- To provide facilities for foreign Buddhist and other needy students in Calcutta.
- To found International Libraries and Museums with special stress on Buddhist and other Religious Books, Literary and Cultural works.
- To set up centres and branches of the Society and to build Buddhist Viharas, Pilgrim Centres and Pilgrim Guest Houses in India and abroad.
- To establish a fully equipped Press to print texts, books and pamphlets on Buddhism, and other literary and cultural works on Indology and on physical and moral sciences.
- To start journals in English and in the Vernaculars for disseminating Buddhism, Buddhist Art and Culture and Buddhist Literature as well as other Indian Religions, Art, Cultural and Literary works.
- To revive the ancient ideal of Brahmacarya life of self-abnegation and disinterested service for the welfare of the many, and to revive the forgotten science of Buddha Yoga.
- To incorporate any Society or Association having similar objectives as this Association.
- To receive any property for any one or more of the objectives of the Association.
- To maintain liaison and contact with all other National and International Buddhist Organisations.
- To do all such things as are incidental or conducive to the attainment of the above objectives or any of them.

Books by Dharmapala

- The Arya Dharma of Sakyamuni Gautama, the Buddha.
- The Life and Teachings of Buddha.

— Maha Bodhi Publications

Ziele der Maha Bodhi Society, 1992
The Maha Bodhi Society of India
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Sri Diwan Chand Ahir,
Rev. Dr. Kim Kwan Tae, and
Dr. Sukomal Chowdhuri.

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General Secretary (Ex-Officio),
Treasurer (Ex-Officio),
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Ven. Dr. D. Rewatha Thera — Deputy General Secretary,
Ven. B. Pannarama Thera — Asst. General Secretary,
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Sri A.K. Bandyopadhyay,
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