

**Anagarika Dharmapala's Concept and Vision of Buddha and Buddhism As  
Enunciated in His Chicago Address, *The World's Debt to Buddha: A Critical  
Enquiry and Assessment***

**Subhas Chandra Saha<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>*Former Vice Chancellor, Assam University & Rajiv Gandhi University, India.*

<sup>\*</sup>*scsahaviv@yahoo.co.in*

Anagarika Dharmapala (1864-1933) emerged as a towering figure in the great phenomenon of the resurgent revival of Buddhism in India. He played a key role in reviving and restoring Buddhistic sites and promoting the cultivation of Buddha's teachings and messages not only in India but in several other countries throughout the world. His contribution to the dissemination of Buddha's messages at large acquired a unique dimension when he delivered his resounding lecture "The World's Debt to Buddha" at the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago in United States of America in September 1893. Apart from his life-long crusade to establish and reinvigorate the spread of Buddha's Dhamma for the welfare of humanity through the establishment of Maha Bodhi Society in 1891 in Colombo, and later Maha Bodhi Society of India which was formally registered with its Headquarters in Calcutta (now Kolkata) in 1915, the construction of Dharmarajika Chaitya Vihara in Calcutta in 1920, and Mulagandhakuti Vihara in Sarnath in 1931, and the launching of *The Maha Bodhi* journal in 1892, Dharmapala's distinctive and phenomenal contribution lies in his writings on Buddha, particularly, "The World's Debt to Buddha", a written speech. Dharmapala's literary and philosophical works constitute his constructive hindsight into the glorious past of Buddha's times and foresight into the process of envisioning a Dhamma-inspired illuminated future of the world. In this paper, his Chicago address on Buddha will be critically analysed and investigated in the light of the above-mentioned observations and lines of enquiry.

Key Words : Dhamma, Benevolent tenets of Buddha, Vision of the future of the world, Critical analysis, Concept and vision