

The 79<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Mulagandha Kutu Vihara in Sarnath, India, was held on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2010. The Vihara was built in 1931 by the late Anagarika Dharmapala in close proximity to the location identified as the place where Lord Buddha set in motion the Wheel of the Dhamma, delivering the first sermon, the

*Dhammacakkapavattana*

*Sutta*

as well as the second sermon, the

*Anatta Lakkhana Sutta*

. The Minister of Tourism & Urban Poverty Alleviation of the Government of India, Kumari Selja, was the Chief Guest on the occasion while High Commissioner Prasad Kariyawasam delivered the keynote address.

The High Commissioner, in his address, highlighted the relevance of Buddhism to solving the contemporary problems of the world, the contributions made by Sri Lankans such as Anagarika Dharmapala to the revival of Buddhism in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and the contributions of the Mahabodhi Society to this task. He also noted in particular the contribution made by Brahmachari Devapriya Valisinha who was the General Secretary of the Mahabodhi Society from 1933 to 1968. Noting that Brahmachari Devapriya Valisinha was the late Anagarika Dharmapala's foremost disciple, he highlighted Devapriya Valisinha's contribution towards the building of the Mulagandha Kutu Vihara and the revival of Buddhism in India.

High Commissioner Kariyawasam also emphasized that the efforts taken by Sri Lankans to revive Buddhism in India and restore places of Buddhist worship as well as the large number of Sri Lankan pilgrims who still visit these sites every year are manifestations of their gratitude to the Buddha and the people of India for the gift of Buddhism received by Sri Lanka in 3<sup>rd</sup> Century BC. He thanked the Government of India through Minister Kumari Selja, for making very practical arrangements for Buddhists from Sri Lanka as well as all over the world to practice their religion in this land of the Buddha, without any hindrance. He recalled in his statement, the role played by the leaders of India along with the likes of Anagarika Dharmapala, in the revival of Buddhism in India. Stating that the presence of Minister Selja followed in the tradition of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru gracing the occasion of the opening of the Mulagandhakuti Vihara in 1931, the High Commissioner also noted that a lady was gracing the 79<sup>th</sup>

anniversary celebrations as the Chief Guest. He added that this is significant in the context of the Buddha's words relating to equality between all human beings.

[\(Read full speech by High Commissioner Prasad Kariyawasam\)](#)

