

# The Birthplace of Sakyamuni Buddha

# LUMBINI NEPAL



## The World Heritage Site



*"After I am no more, O Ananda!  
Men of belief will visit the place with faith,  
Curiosity and devotion.....  
Lumbini, the place where I was born.  
The path to ultimate peace is spiritual discipline"*  
-The Sakyamuni Buddha



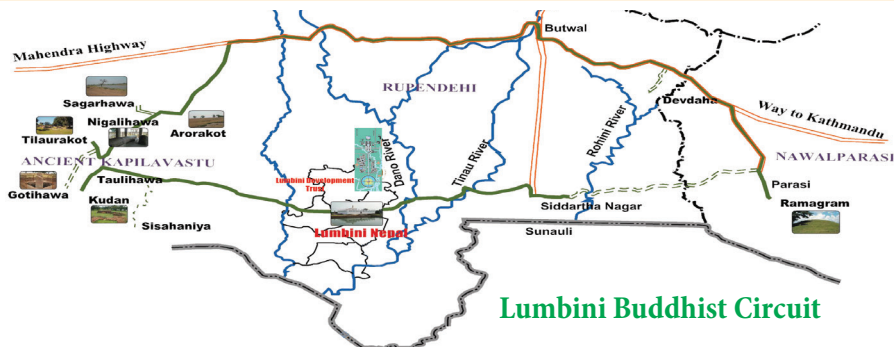
## INTRODUCTION

Situated in the foothills of the Siwalik range in the district of Rupandehi, Lumbini, the birthplace of the Buddha is one of the most important pilgrimage sites. Buddhist literatures mention that newly born Siddhartha took seven steps and uttered an epoch making message to the suffering humanity in the Lumbini Garden. The beautiful *sal* grove of Lumbini Garden was renowned for its beauty of shady grove of lush green trees and colorful flowers.



Maya Devi, the queen of Sakya king Suddhodana of Kapilavastu, on the way to her maternal hometown Devadaha (ancient Koliya kingdom), was passing through the Lumbini Garden. It was the month of Vaisakha poornima (Full Moon Day of the first month of Nepali calendar) of 623 BC, while the queen was walking in the garden, took bath in the Puskarani. After bath, she proceeded to the north 25 paces, there she felt labor pain and supported herself grasping a branch of a tree and gave birth to the holy prince.

The Buddha highlighted the importance of Lumbini from his deathbed: "Ananda, This (Lumbini) place is where the Tathagata was born, this is a place, which should be visited and seen by a person of devotion and which would cause awareness and apprehension of the nature of impermanence. At this place, Ananda, who are on a pilgrimage to (this) shrine, if they should die with devotion in their heart during the course of the pilgrimage, will after (their) death and dissolution of the body be reborn in a good destination, a fortunate celestial realm" (*Mahaparinirvana Sutta*).



**Lumbini Buddhist Circuit**

## MONUMENTS OF LUMBINI

Lumbini Garden changed into a pilgrimage site soon after the Mahaparinirvana of the Lord Buddha. A monastic site evolved around the sacred spot of the Buddha's birth. The birth-spot being the most important point in the whole of the holy land of Lumbini drew attention of generous devotees who erected structures to pay homage to the great master. These constructions were of

religious nature along the religious complex and a civic settlement emerged to meet the growing need of the religious community visiting or living in the holy complex.

### **MAYA DEVI TEMPLE**

The Maya Devi Temple shrine is the heart of all monuments at this holy site. The complex also bears the testimony of several layers of construction over the centuries. The main object of worship here is the Nativity Sculpture. The restored Maya Devi Temple was reopened on May 16, 2003 on 2547th birth anniversary of the Buddha. The government of Nepal, and LDT jointly restored the temple. The ground floor consists of the remains of the foundations of the early Maya Devi Temple that dates back to 5<sup>th</sup> century BC. The sanctum sanctorum is the birth spot of the lord Buddha in the temple.



### **THE MARKER STONE**

This stone conglomerate located deeply buried in the sanctum sanctorum pinpoints the exact birth spot of the Buddha, which was discovered after a meticulous excavation of the old Maya Devi Temple in 1996. The Marker Stone was found in the same distance and direction as mentioned by Hiuen Tsang, the Chinese traveler in his travel account. The size of the marker stone is 70cmx40cmx10cm.



### **THE NATIVITY SCULPTURE**

The image of Maya Devi, also known as the Nativity Sculpture dates back to 4th CE, which depicts the nativity scene, Maya Devi, holding a branch of a tree with her right hand for support in the time of her delivery. Next to her Gautami Prajapati, her younger sister, in supporting posture is standing. The newly born prince Siddhartha is standing upright on a lotus pedestal, with two celestial figures receiving him.



### **THE ASOKAN PILLAR**

The historical pillar was erected by Emperor Asoka in 249 BC bears the first epigraphic evidence with reference to the birthplace of Lord Buddha. It is the most noteworthy monument and an authentic historic document of birthplace of Lord Buddha in Lumbini. The inscription engraved by Emperor Asoka is still intact and testifies the authenticity of the birthplace. The text written in Brahmi script and Pali language is translated as follows:



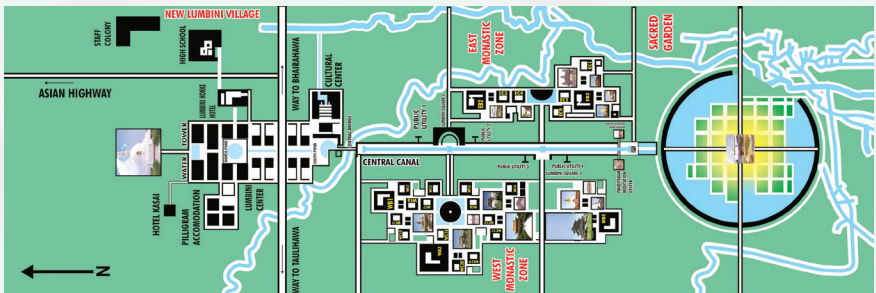
*King Piyadasi (Asoka), the beloved of the Gods, in the twentieth year of reign, himself made a royal visit. Sakyamuni Buddha was born here, therefore, the (birth Spot) marker stone was worshipped and a stone pillar was erected. The lord having been born here, the tax of the Lumbini village was reduced to the eighth part (only).*

## THE PUSKARINI, THE HOLY POND

Close by the Asoka pillar on the southern side lies the holy pond, Puskarini where Maya Devi bathed just before giving birth to prince Siddhartha and the infant prince is believed to have given first purification bath. The pond has terraced steps and is riveted by beautifully layered bricks.



## MASTER PLAN OF LUMBINI



In 1978, the Master Plan designed by Prof. Tange was finalized and approved by the Government of Nepal and United Nations. In 1985, the Lumbini Development Trust Act came into existence and Lumbini Development Trust (LDT) was formed accordingly. Now the Trust is responsible for the implementation of the master plan and for the overall development of Lumbini, and other Buddhist sites of Kapilavastu, Devadaha and Ramagrama.

## CONCEPT OF THE MASTER PLAN

The master plan covers an area of  $1 \times 3$  sq. miles, comprising three zones of a square mile each. The three zones are linked with walkways and a canal, these are:

- a) Sacred Garden
- b) Monastic zone
- c) New Lumbini village

The focus of Tange's design is the sacred Garden located in the southern part. The ultimate objective of the design here is to create an atmosphere of spirituality, peace, universal brotherhood and nonviolence consistent with the time and Buddha's message to the world. The Sacred Garden shelters the ancient monuments at the center in a freshly restored atmosphere of serene and lush forest and water body surrounding the complex.



The Monastic Zone is situated in the middle with a forest area between the Sacred Garden and the New Lumbini Village. The zone is divided into two Monastic enclaves by a Centre Canal. There are 13 plots of land in the East Monastic Zone and 29 in the West Monastic Enclave, having 42 plots in total each allotted for the construction of new monasteries of Theravada and Mahayana schools of Buddhism.

The cultural center lies between the Monastic Zone and the New Lumbini Village. A research centre, a library, an auditorium and a museum provide information to the visitors and research and study facilities to the students and researchers.

The northern part of the master plan area is being developed as the New Lumbini Village. It is also a gateway to the outer world, where the visitors can find comfortable hotels and restaurants offering necessary facilities. The World Peace Pagoda of Japan and the Crane Sanctuary are located here.

## SOME IMPORTANT SITES AROUND LUMBINI

**Tilaurakot:** The ancient capital of Sakya kingdom (Kapilavastu) is located about 27 km west of Lumbini. Tilaurakot houses the vestiges of ancient Sakya palace where Siddhartha lived his early 29 years as a prince. The ramparts of a moat and a fortification wall with its western and eastern gates surround the remains of the citadel including ancient structural remains in the central part of the mound. The eastern gate is known as Mahabhiniskramana Dwara, through which Siddhartha took the great renunciation at the age of 29 in search of supreme knowledge.



**Kudan:** The ancient Nyagrodharama, where king Sudhodana met Lord Buddha, first time after his renunciation lies about 3 km south of Taulihawa. This is the site where Prajapati, Gautami, his second mother offered robe and Yasodhara, his wife invited him for a meal in the palace. Rahula, his son was ordained by Sariputra, his most revered disciple, at the age 8 here. The Buddha preached five important sutras and told the story of his search for supreme knowledge here during his stay with 300 his disciples at Kudan.



**Gotihawa:** About 5 km southwest of Taulihawa is Gotihawa. It is the site for Asoka Pillar where Krakuchhanda Buddha attained nirvana. Gotihawa is one of the major pilgrimage sites for Buddhists from all over the world. This holy site, sanctified by the birth of the Buddha has been marked by the construction of a stupa. An Asoka pillar erected here by Emperor Asoka in 249 B.C. ascertains it as the birth spot of Krakuchhanda Buddha. However, the upper part of the pillar is missing.



**Sagarhawa:** About 12 km north of Taulihawa lies the forest of Sagarhawa, with a long lake known as Lumbusagar. In this site, the Sakyas were massacred by King Virudhaka out of vengeance. The entire area of this site was littered with the blood of thousands of Sakyas. Later, in the memory of the noble Sakyas, hundreds of stupas were built here by their descendants. Dr. A. Fuhrrer excavated and explored these stupas and antiquities in 1897-1898.



**Niglihawa:** Niglihawa lies about 8 km northeast of Taulihawa. It is the birthplace of Kanakmuni, the early Buddha of Bhadrakalpa. The site shelters an Asoka pillar erected by Emperor Asoka in 249 BC. The pillar is broken into two pieces, the lower part bearing inscription submerged in the ground and the upper part lying on the surface. The Asoka inscription engraved in Brahmi script and Pali language testifies the site as the birth spot of the Buddha.



**Aurarakot:** About 3 km northwest of Niglihawa lies a rectangular fortified area popularly known as Aurarakot, which is believed to be the natal town of Kanakmuni Buddha. The rectangular fortification wall is magnificent even in its ruins.



**Sisahaniya:** Sisahaniya is believed to be the site where the Sakyas built a stupa enshrining the precious corporeal relic of the Buddha that they had obtained as one eighth of their share. The Sakyas after building a relic stupa of Lord Buddha at Sisahaniya and worshipped there for a long time. The relic was taken away later. Today, we can see remnants of ancient potteries, burnt bricks and brickbats and even Sakya punch marked coins lying scattered on the surface of the site.

**Devadaha:** Devadaha is the famous ancient capital of Koliya kingdom, the maternal hometown of queen Maya Devi, Prajapati and princess Yasodhara. The site is situated at about 57 km northeast of Lumbini and is well connected by the Mahendra Highway. We can observe many archaeological and historical sites extended in a large area. The potential ancient sites of Devadaha include Kumarvarti, Khayardada, Bairimai-Kanyamai, Bhagawanipur/Devidamar, Kotahimai, the Rohini River, the Telar River etc. More facts on ancient Koliyan civilization will reveal after full-fledged excavations in future.

**Ramagrama:** The Koliyas obtained one of the eight parts of the Buddha's relic which they enshrined here and built a magnificent stupa and worshipped for a long time. Buddhist literary sources mention that Emperor Asoka wanted to open and obtain the Buddha's relic to build eighty four thousand minors stupas throughout his vast empire. However, the emperor did not touch the precious relic out of the request made by Dragon king and people of Ramagrama. This surviving single original relic stupa standing 7 meters high on the bank of the Jharahi River is the most important stupa of its kind in the whole of the world.



## LUMBINI TOUR MAP

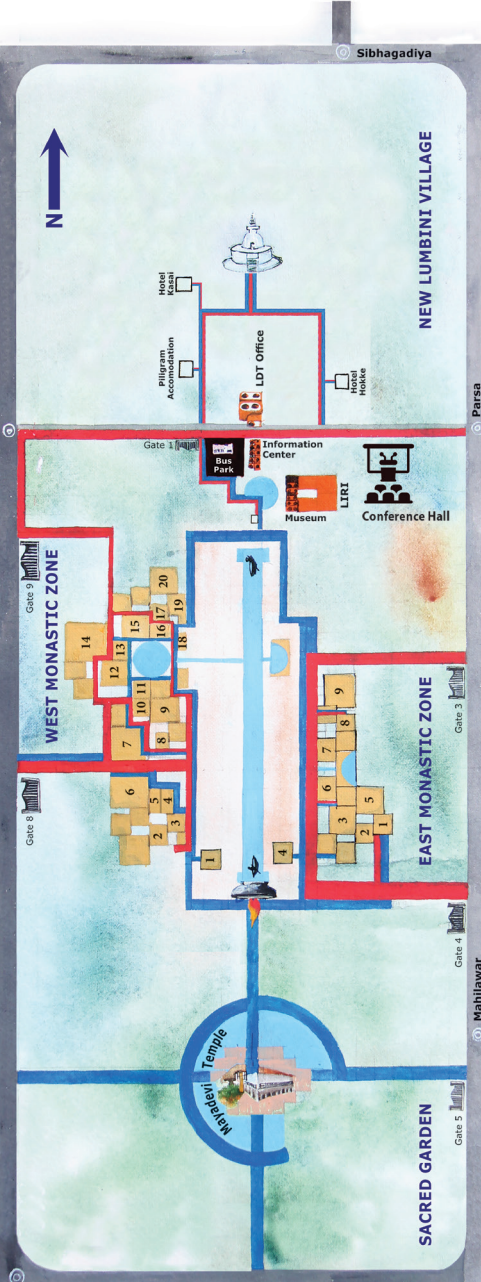


# THE LUMBINI MASTER PLAN लुम्बिनी गुरु योजना



Paderiya

Lokhariya



### Legend

- Road
- Pedestrian Route
- Light Vehicle Route
- Water
- Monastic Zone
- Boat Station
- Chowks
- Bus Park
- Museum
- Gates

### East Monastic Zone

1. Sri Lankan Monastery
2. Gautami Nuns' Temple
3. Myanmar Golden Temple
4. Dhamma Janani Meditation Center
5. Cambodian Monastery
6. Nepal Therabada Vihar
7. Mahabodhi Monastery
8. Bodhi Institute
9. Royal Thai Monastery

### West Monastic Zone

1. Panditarama Meditation Center
2. Manang Samaj Stupa
3. Karma Samtenling Monastery
4. Dharmodaya Sabha Monastery
5. Drubgyud Chhoeling Monastery
6. Korean Monastery
7. Chinese Monastery
8. Austrian Monastery
9. Vietnam Monastery
10. Thangu Vajrabhidya Monastery

11. United Tungaram Monastery
12. Lhn Son Monastery
13. Drigung Kagyud Meditation Center
14. Sokyo Monastery, Japan
15. German Monastery
16. French Monastery
17. Singaporean Monastery
18. Vajrayana Mahavihar
19. Zarong Tupten Chhoeling
20. Ka-nying Shedrup Monastery

SACRED GARDEN

EAST MONASTIC ZONE

WEST MONASTIC ZONE

NEW LUMBINI VILLAGE



## OTHER ATTRACTIONS



*Lumbini Museum*

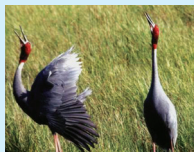


*Lumbini Conference and  
Meditation Center*



*Lumbini International  
Research Institute*

## NATURAL BIODIVERSITY



Lumbini, being the birthplace of the Buddha is a timeless place to spread peace, harmony and solace in the world. It does not promote only contemplative value and spirituality but also attracts many naturalists, botanists



and zoologists with its richness. One can find wide varieties of shrubs, herbs, flowers and plants here. There are more than 250 bird species including the world tallest flying bird Sarus Crane and threatened animals like python, Blue Bull (*boselaphus tragocamelus*), Bengal fox, wild cat etc in Lumbini.

Lumbini Development Trust requests for your generous support to develop Lumbini and its peripherals. Please use following bank details for the donation.

**Nepal Credit & Commerce Bank Ltd., Lumbini**

For Nrs. Donation: Current A/c No.- 0020000261701

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