

- Experience Tharu cultures in Barahi Mahuwa Tharu village nearby Ramagrama.
- Visit Triveni Dham, Gajendramokchha Dham and Balmiki Ashram.
- Visit other cultural and natural sites.
- Travel back to Bhairahawa via Ramagrama or visit Daunne Devi Temple and monastery on the way to Chitwan.

### Available Facilities and Services

#### Accommodation and Food

- Few hotels with very limited bed capacity are currently available in Sitalnagar, Khairahani and Sunwal to cater services for the visitors. Several local hotels are also available at Sunwal, Bhumahi and Parasi Bazar.
- Ranges of accommodation facilities are available at Sunauli, Bhairahawa, and Butwal, the nearby cities from Devadaha.

#### Accessibility and Transportation

- Bhawanipur is linked by road networks with Butwal, Manigram, Dhakdhai, and Ramagrama.
- Public bus service is available between Butwal and Sitalnagar and Sitalnagar-Sunwal-Ramagrama routes
- E-rickshaw can be hired at Sitalnagar and Khairahani to visit major sites of Devadaha

- Taxi and car can be hired from Butwal and Bhairahawa as well.

### Other Facilities and Services

- Landline and mobile telephone services are readily available in the region.
- Tourist class hotels provide free Wi-Fi to their guests.
- Banking facility is available at Sitalnagar, Khairahani, Sunwal and Butwal. Money exchange facilities are available at Bhairahawa, Butwal and at tourist class hotels.
- Credit cards are accepted by tourist standard hotels in Lumbini, Bhairahawa and Butwal, the nearby cities.
- Basic health and first-aid facilities are available at Khairahani and Sitalnagar. There are hospitals in Butwal and Bhairahawa.
- Trained and experienced heritage tour guides are available but only in Lumbini.
- Free of cost tourist information are provided by tourist class hotels and travel/tour agencies in Sitalnagar, Sunwal, Butwal, Bhairahawa and Lumbini.
- A visitor information center is being constructed at Bhawanipur. Limited information can also be obtained from the personnel at Lumbini Development Trust in Bhawanipur.



### Distance between Bhawanipur and Various other Sites

|                                 |      |                                       |         |
|---------------------------------|------|---------------------------------------|---------|
| Bhawanipur → Lumbini.....       | 57km | Bhawanipur → Devadaha.....            | 4km     |
| Bhawanipur → Manigram.....      | 10km | Bhawanipur → Khayardanda.....         | 4km     |
| Sitalnagar → Sunawal .....      | 7km  | Bhawanipur → Sarantandi.....          | 7km     |
| Bhawanipur → Sitalnagar .....   | 4km  | Bhawanipur → Marthagadhi.....         | 13km    |
| Bhawanipur → Butwal .....       | 17km | Bhawanipur → Pakadi Tree .....        | 2.8km   |
| Bhawanipur → Panditpur .....    | 14km | Bhawanipur → Ramagrama.....           | 25.19km |
| Bhawanipur → Mayadevi Park..... | 3km  | Bhawanipur → Ramnagar-Ramagrama ..... | 33.5km  |
| Bhawanipur → Kanyamai .....     | 3km  |                                       |         |

Please Contact for Further Details

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# DEVADAHA

The Maternal Hometown of Queen Mayadevi,  
Lord Sakyamuni Buddha's Mother



Government of Nepal  
Ministry of Culture, Tourism & Civil Aviation  
Lumbini Development Trust

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## Introduction

Devadaha, the ancient capital of the Koliya Kingdom, located 57 km east of Lumbini, is identified with the maternal hometown of Queen Mayadevi, Prajapati Gautami and Princess Yasodhara, the mother, step-mother and consort of Lord Sakyamuni Buddha respectively. It is believed that Prince Siddhartha had spent some years of his childhood with his step-mother/aunt Prajapati Gautami in Devadaha.

After seven years of his enlightenment, Lord Sakyamuni Buddha had visited Devadaha and had ordained the follower of Jain Sadhu Nirgrantha Nathputra. Present Devadaha area has been identified as ancient Koliya Kingdom with the reference of distance and direction from Lumbini and other Buddhist sites provided by various early Buddhist scriptures and archaeological excavations. Nevertheless, it requires a full-fledged archaeological research to locate the exact capital city of the ancient Koliya.



Images of Mayadevi with baby Buddha

## Significant Monuments and Sites

Major archaeological, religious and historical sites in Devadaha include the followings.



Ancient Well uncovered during excavation, Bhawanipur

**Bhawanipur/Devidamar:** The historical site of Bhawanipur, also known as Devidamar, is located 4km south of Mahendra Highway at Devadaha Municipality Ward No. 4. It is believed to have been ancient Devadaha, the capital of the Koliya. The site consists of a temple dedicated to Queen Mayadevi

and other archaeological sites. Significant religious and archaeological icons and objects here include a long stone column (some consider it to be an Asoka Pillar), stone image of Sun God, ancient brick well etc. Structural wall of ancient constructions are visible even at the surface level here.

**Khayardada:** Situated at Devadaha municipality, Ward No. 10, Khayardada is believed to have been the main city of the ancient Koliya Kingdom. Three mounds can be distinctly observed here, and there are pieces of burnt bricks, potteries and various icons scattered everywhere within a radius of two kilometers. Excavations carried out by Lumbini Development Trust (LDT) and Department of Archaeology (DoA) have discovered extra-large bricks, a single piece weighing 12 kilograms. The burnt bricks found here at Khayardada are similar to those of Kudan and Saina Maina. Structural ruins of ancient palace also have been uncovered here. It is believed that Prince Siddhartha lived in that palace and bathed in Mangal Puskarini Daha (pond) while at maternal uncle's home. The locals opine that the name of the nearby village was coined Ghodaha because the stable of Prince Siddhartha's Ghoda (horse) during his visit was located here.



**Devadaha:** Situated at Devadaha Municipality, Ward No. 10, about half kilometer north of Ghodaha, Devadaha is a pond having religious and historical significance. In Sanskrit language, Deva means god and daha means a pond, hence the literal meaning of Devadaha is “pond of the god”. It is believed that the gods and goddesses and saints bathed in this pond. Prince Siddhartha himself is believed to have bathed in this holy pond during his visit here in Devadaha. It is believed that the water of this holy pond was supplied in the Koliya palace. The Koliya kingdom received its name Devadaha from this very holy pond.

**Kanyamai:** Located at Devadaha Municipality, just 1km south from the junction of Sitalnagar, the Kanyamai Temple is believed to be built in the



memory of Queen Prajapati Gautami, the step-mother of Lord Sakyamuni Buddha. Major images



found in the temple include standing stone image of Lokeshwore holding a lotus flower in one hand, while the other hand is broken off, and many stone idols. Ancient potteries are still visible on the nearby mound. Excavations carried out by Department of Archaeology and LDT have uncovered several structural ruins and stone antiquities at this site. The structures of traditional palace and a well also have been uncovered during the excavation of 2011 AD.



**Bairimai:** Bairimai is located a little more than 1km south from the junction of Sitalnagar at Devadaha Municipality, Ward no. 8. It is believed that the temple of Bairimai was built to pay homage to Mayadevi, mother of Lord Sakyamuni Buddha. Local people opine that the word Bairimai was derived from Badimai, meaning big mother or elder sister referring to Mayadevi, the eldest princess of then Koliya Kingdom. It is believed that both Mayadevi and Prajapati, one gave birth to Prince Siddhartha and the other cared him, were so revered by the people of Devadaha that they were bestowed upon a status of goddess over the passage of time. Archaeologist

Ram Bahadur Kunwar while exploring the site, found decorated bricks, similar to those of Kudan. The temple houses stone images of Goddess and Gods but in more or less fragmented condition.



**Rohini River:** The Rohini river is one of the holiest and most revered rivers in Buddhist scriptures. The holy river served as the border between ancient Kapilavastu and Devadaha. The river originates from the Siwalik Hills and flows through a dense evergreen forest and cultivated plains. It irrigates a large area of land in the region. Once, during a long drought, the Sakyas and the Koliyas were about to fight a battle for its water. The dispute arose between the two states over the sharing of water of a dam constructed close to the river. As the princes and soldiers from both sides had gathered for a battle, Lord Sakyamuni Buddha was informed about it. He traveled from Vaisali and convinced the hostile groups not to fight; telling them blood was thicker than water. The two confronting sides then, calmed down, thereafter shared the water without losing their temper. Harmony was restored and peace prevailed in the region. Some 500 Sakyas and Koliyas converted into Buddhist upon hearing the teachings of Lord Sakyamuni Buddha.

**Kumarabarti:** Located on the bank of the holy Rohini river at Makrahar village, Kumarabarti is believed to be the place where Mayadevi and Prajapati had spent a night while on their way to Devadaha, their maternal home. A temple has been discovered



here recently with the images of Mayarani (Mayadevi) and Prajarani, (Prajapati). Two ancient wells have also been uncovered here close to the temple.

**Kotiamai:** Located at Devadaha Municipality, Ward No. 9, Kotiamai is another historical and archaeological site, but little is known about this place since no archaeological research has been carried out here yet.

**Historical Well:** Two historical wells have been found in Devadaha, one at Petwaniya and another at Bangala. These wells are also believed to have been built during the time of Koliyas.

**Pakadi Tree:** According to the locals, the large Pakari tree dates back to the time of the Sakyas. The tree is 96 feet tall with a diameter of 82 feet. The fact that birds never nest on this tree; vultures and crows never perch on it, and elephants never go near it, amaze the people. The villagers are proud of this long-standing and mysterious tree and have named their village Pakri after this mysterious and treasured tree.

**Mathagadhi:** Atop the Churia Hills, the fort is believed to have been the western gateway to the Kapilavastu kingdom from Koliya in ancient times. Many ancient weapons have been found here at the site. Nepali army used Mathagadhi fort to confront the British soldiers during Anglo-Nepali war. The local communities have conserved the weapons and built a temple at the site. One can see spectacular views of Devadaha, Nawalparasi and Palpa from Mathagadhi hills.

### Important Cultural Attractions

Major cultural/ethnic village worth to visit in Devadaha includes Sisपुर and Bhawanipur Tharu villages, Sarantandi Magar village, and Khairahani Gurung village. Other sites of tourist interest include Mayadevi Park, Dharmodaya Vihara (Sitalnagar), Lokeshwore Temple (Khairahani), Kalika Temple (Sitalnagar), Durga temple (Sitalnagar) etc.



**Mayadevi Park:** Mayadevi Park is located in Devadaha 9, on the bank of holy Rohini River. Locals have built various facilities including green picnic spot, monastery, Mayadevi temple and a park. Besides enjoying the activities in the park, locals also celebrate the Buddha Jayanti each year on the Baisakh Purnima in this park.

**Festivals of Devadaha:** Major festivals and events of tourist interest in these villages include Buddha Jayanti, Chaite Dashain, Holy festival, Lhosar festival, Maghi festival, Durga Puja (Dashain), Deepawali, Chhata Parva etc.

### Sisपुर Tharu Village

Located in the south from Bhawanipur, Sisपुर is one of the ideal Tharu villages in Devadaha to observe and experience the age old cultures, rituals, lifestyle and architecture of the only tribal community (Tharu) that is in existence since the ancient Koliya Kingdom.

### Sarantandi Magar Village

Located 3km north from Ghodaha, on the lap of Churia Hill, Sarantandi is one of the beautiful Magar villages worth to visit. One can see the traditional terrace farming system using traditional equipments and producing the pure organic agricultural products. Spending a night with these indigenous people would be memorable experience.

### Khairahani Gurung Village

This village is located between Sitalnagar and Sunwal and is thickly populated by the Gurung people migrated from the hills. The Gurungs here are credited for preserving their cultures and traditions. One can observe the traditional attire, Ghantu Dance and food of Gurungs in Khairahani village.

### Important Natural Attractions

Located on the foothills of Churia Hills, Devadaha possesses a huge potential in terms of eco-tourism activities including bird watching, eco-hiking, meditation and trekking to Tansen-Palpa via Rampur.

The wetland area located within the complex of traditional Nagthan, north of Ghodaha at Devadaha Municipality, has been identified by many Thai visitors as a good meditation place blessed with high spiritual vibes.

## Recommended Tour Itineraries and Activities

### Tour Highlights

- Pilgrimage and spiritual visit to Bhawanipur, Kanyamai and Bairimai Temple in Devadaha: The Maternal hometown of Lord Sakyamuni Buddha's mother Queen Maya Devi, stepmother Queen Prajapati Gautami and wife Yasodhara.
- Visit other important archaeological, spiritual and pilgrimage sites including Khayardada (considered to be the capital city of Ancient Koliya Kingdom), Mathagadhi (ancient fort), and ancient Bangala well etc.
- Take holy bath in the holy Rohini river and Devadaha.
- Visit the symbolic Koliya era tree: The Pakadi Tree in Devadaha.
- Observe meditation in the spiritual vibes at Simsar (wetland) site in Ghodaha and Bhawanipur.
- Observe various festivals and events including Buddha Purnima, Chaitra Dashain etc.
- Visit cultural villages such as Sisपुर Tharu village, Sarantandi Magar village and Khairahani Gurung village.

### Itineraries

#### i. Day Tour to Devadaha (Suitable for local and regional visitors having their own vehicle)

- Arrival at Devadaha (Ghodaha) and visit the ancient and sacred Devadaha (lake).
- Visit Khayardanda.
- Visit Kanyamai and Bairimai temples and associated archaeological sites.
- Visit the Pakadi Tree.
- Visit Bhawanipur and pay homage to the temple dedicated to Queen Mayadevi and

other significant religious and archaeological monuments such as the long stone column, stone image of Sun God, ancient brick well etc.

- Visit ancient Bangala well and Mayadevi Ban Batika.

#### ii. 1 Night and 2 Days Tour to Devadaha including Ramagrama

DAY 01:

- Arrival at Bhawanipur by private vehicle.
- Arrival at Devadaha (Ghodaha) and visit the ancient and sacred Devadaha area.
- Visit Khayardanda,
- Visit Kanyamai and Bairimai temples and archaeological sites.
- Visit the Pakadi Tree.
- Visit Bhawanipur and pay homage to the temple dedicated to Queen Mayadevi and other significant religious and archaeological monuments such as the long stone column, stone image of Sun God, ancient brick well etc.
- Visit ancient Bangala well and Mayadevi Ban Batika.
- Visit the ethnic Tharu community at Sisपुर, Magar community at Sarantandi village and Gurung community at Khairahani village.
- Stay overnight at Sitalnagar, Khairahani or Sunwal.

DAY 02:

- Visit Ramagrama Stupa and observe the site and meditate.
- Visit a temple consisting of a standing image of Lord Sakyamuni Buddha, built by a Japanese Buddhist Organization, Bishinokai.

