

- Visit ethnic Tharu community at Sisaur, Magar community at Sarantandi village and Gurung community at Khairahani village.
- Travel to Bhairahawa/Lumbini or Butwal/Chitwan.

Available Facilities and Services

Accommodation and Food

Only a few tourist hotels with very limited bed capacity are currently available at Parasi Bazar, Sunwal and Sittalnagar to cater services for the visitors. But several local hotels are available at Sunwal, Bhumahi and Parasi Bazar. Ranges of accommodation facilities are available at Sunauli, Bhairaha, and Butwal, the nearby towns from Ramagrama.

Accessibility and Transportation

Ramagrama is linked by road networks to Bhairahawa, Sunwal, Bhumahi, and Triveni. Public bus services are available in Bhairahawa-Parasi

Bazar, Sunwal-Parasi Bazar and Bhumahi-Parasi Bazar routes. E-rickshaw can be hired at Sunwal, Parasi Bazar or Bhumahi to visit major sites in Ramagrama. Taxi and car can be hired from Bhairahawa or Butwal.

Other Facilities and Services

Landline and mobile telephone services are readily available in the region. Tourist class hotels offer free Wi-Fi facility to their guests. Banking facility is available at Sittalnagar, Khairahani, Sunwal, Parasi Bazar and Bhairahawa. Money exchange facilities are available at Bhairahawa and Parasi Bazar. Credit cards are accepted by tourist standard hotels in Bhairahawa, the nearby cities. Basic health and first-aid facilities are available at Parasi Bazar, Bhumahi and Sunwal. Hospitals are located in Butwal and Bhairahawa. Trained and experienced heritage tour guides are available only in Lumbini.



Farm Birds at Panditpur



Distance from Ramagrama to Various Sites

Ramagrama (Stupa) → Bhumahi.....	11km	Panditpur → Parasi Bazaar	9km
Ramagrama → Sunwal	13.5km	Ramagrama → Bhawanipur	25.19 km
Parasi Bazaar → Triveni	23km	Ramagrama → Bhairahawa.....	28.56 km
Parasi Bazaar → Maheshpur	11km	Ramagrama → Lumbini	49.5km
Ramagrama → Parasibazaar	4.5km	Ramagrama → Ramnagar-Bhawanipur	33.5km
Ramagrama → Panditpur	13.5km	Sunwal → Sitalnagar	7.0km

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RAMAGRAMA STUPA

The Only Stupa with the Sacred Corporal Relic of
Lord Sakyamuni Buddha



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

Sacred Garden, Lumbini, Nepal | www.lumbinidevtrust.gov.np



Introduction

Ramagrama Stupa is situated in the southwestern part of Nawalparasi district of Lumbini zone, Nepal. Ramagrama is about 50km east of Lumbini and 29km east of Bhairahawa. Ramagrama Stupa is one amongst the eight original relic stupas where the corporeal remains of Lord Sakyamuni Buddha were enshrined. The 7m high brick mound (stupa) is located on the bank of Jharahi river.

Enlisted as UNESCO's Tentative List of World Heritage Property in 1996, Ramagrama is a site of great archaeological and pilgrimage importance as the stupa is believed to have contained the only body relics of Lord Sakyamuni Buddha and not interfered by Emperor Asoka in the 3rd century BC.

Among the eight Lord Sakyamuni Buddha's relic stupas, this is the only one which is still in its original form. Therefore, it is one of the holiest pilgrimage sites for Buddhists who dream of making a pilgrimage to Ramagrama at least once in their lifetime.

Subsequent to the Mahaparinirvana, the body of Lord Sakyamuni Buddha was cremated by the Mallas of Kushinagar and the body remains were distributed among eight claimants, including the Koliyas of Ramagrama. The Koliya King, having enshrined the body relics of Lord Sakyamuni Buddha, erected the stupa with great devotion and reverence. According to Chinese traveler Hiuen Tsang, people witnessed miracles at the holy site. They occasionally saw divine light flashing around the stupa; sick people were cured after praying at the stupa. Even Emperor Asoka himself witnessed a Nag (snake god) and elephants worshipping this Astudhatu (relic) stupa.



Asoka's Visit to Ramagrama

Emperor Asoka visited Ramagrama and wished to open the stupa in order to re-distribute the relics among 84,000 small stupas throughout his vast empire in 249 BC. According to the legends, Emperor Asoka was astonished to behold a dragon king guarding it and a herd of wild elephants worshipping the shrine by offering flowers and sprinkling water. According to another belief, the local people (possibly Naga tribe) who were devout to the shrine, requested the Emperor to spare intact the stupa for them. Respecting the local sentiment, he did not open the stupa but worshipped it, paid homage to Lord Sakyamuni Buddha's shrine and returned home leaving it intact. Hence, it has remained the only stupa in the world where Lord Sakyamuni Buddha's mortal remains are still intact.

Exploration and Excavation of Ramagrama Stupa

The mound structure was first discovered in 1899 AD by Dr. W. Hoey, a historian from the Asiatic Society of Bengal before it was confirmed to be a stupa by S. B. Deo later in 1964. The Department of Archaeology (DoA) of Nepal carried out an excavation of the mound in 1997. Adequate information about the history of the stupa has been brought to light



from the five-year excavation program. However, the core of the stupa was not touched to respect the sentiment attached to its sanctity.

The stupa had four distinct phases of construction, which proves that it is an age-old monument. The archaeological findings revealed that restoration and reconstruction of the stupa occurred during Mauryan, Sunga, Kusan and Gupta phases of constructions occurred during the restoration and reconstruction of the stupa. It can be assumed that the stupa (the core untouched part) belongs to the Sakya era, which was enlarged and restored in phases during different periods of history. The regular maintenance of the stupa in all major historical periods (Maurya, Sunga, Kusan and Gupta) testifies the glory, significance and ancientness of the site. The great value of the precious stupa is confirmed by the due care given to it constantly over major historic periods.

A series of excavations conducted by the DoA, Nepal uncovered grey ware, Painted Grey Ware (PGW) and Northern Black Polished (NBP) ware among the pottery types, while other major findings of the excavations included beads, bangles and art objects that belong to various periods.



Other important sites and monuments worth to visit in the periphery of Ramagrama Stupa include sacred Jharahi lake and river and the park with the image of Baby Buddha, built by a Japanese Buddhist Organization, Bishinokai.

Other Sites and Attractions

Panditpur, Triveni Dham, Madarbaba, Daunne Hill and Gandak Irrigation Canal are other popular attractions in the district worth to visit for visitors.

Major ethnic villages potential for village tour include Panditpur Tharu village and Barahi Mahuwa Tharu village near Ramagrama.

Other interesting religious and cultural sites in the district include Zalim Shah Mazar (grave), Devachuli Hill, Palhi Temple, Bardagariya, Mamisavariya, Mahal Pokhari, Ghumauri Ghat, Kumarvarti Mai, Shivapuri Gadi, Mukundapur Palace, Temple of Laxmi Narayan, Baba Bardagoria, Nrsingha Dham, Siddhidatri Durga temple, Kailash Sanyas Ashram, Hanuman temple, Devasthan pond, Shiva temple, Nanda Bhauju Tal and several ethnic villages.

Panditpur

Based on the findings of the recent excavations carried out by the Department of Archaeology (DoA) of the Government of Nepal, Panditpur area of Nawalparasi district (13.5km from Ramagrama and 14.5km from Bhawanipur) has also been identified as an important archaeological site. Considering the huge area covered by the ruins, some archaeologists have claimed it to be the possible palace site of the ancient Koliya Kingdom.



Triveni Dham

Situated in the southern part of Nawalparasi district, on the western border of Chitwan National Park (inlisted on UNESCO World Heritage Site), Triveni Dham is a confluence of three rivers, Sona, Tamasa and Sapta Gandaki.

Legends link this site to Balmiki Ashram, where Sita, consort of Lord Rama lived with her two sons Lava and Kush in exile. Located in a lush natural setting amidst hills and rivers, it is a sacred site for the Hindus. In addition to the religious destination, this place can be developed as a recreational site with hiking and water based activities. Equally important pilgrimage sites in Triveni are Gajendra Mokchha Dham and temples including Shiva temple.



Daunne Hill

Located just off the highway, at a midway point between Lumbini and Chitwan, Daunne Devi temple and the surrounding hills provide a respite with a cool breeze and lush greenery plus and option of a short hike to Daunne Devi temple and a monastery. Daunne hilltop is also believed to be the meditation site of Queen Mayadevi, the mother of Lord Sakyamuni Buddha. This spot also provides beautiful views of the Himalayan range in the north as well as of the Terai in the south. Recently Daunne is being developed as a lunch/tea stop and a rest area.



Recommended Tour Itineraries and Activities

Tour Highlights

- Pilgrimage and Spiritual visit to the Ramagrama Stupa, the only stupa in the world where the sacred relics of Lord Sakyamuni Buddha are still interred.
- Visit other important archaeological, spiritual and pilgrimage sites in Ramagrama including the nearby Japanese temple with the standing image of Baby Buddha.
- Take spiritual and religious bath at the holy Jharahi River at Ramagrama.
- Participate at meditation sessions with spiritual vibes at Ramagrama Stupa.
- Visit other religious, cultural and natural sites such as Triveni Dham, Madarbaba Ashram, Daunne Devi Hill etc.
- Visit the nearby Tharu and mixed culture villages.

Itineraries

- i. Day Tour to Ramagrama(Suitable for local and regional visitors having their own vehicle)**
 - Arrival in Ramagrama via Bhumahi or Sunwal or Bhairahawa.
 - Visit Ramagrama.
 - Meditation, recitation, participation at spiritual discourses, circumambulation etc. at the relic stupa site.
 - Visit the Baby Buddha Temple built by Bishinokai, Japan.
 - Visit the Gandaki Irrigation Canal, Gandak Hydropower station and border market at Maheshpur (10.5km south from Ramagrama Stupa).

ii. 1 Night and 2 days tour to Ramagrama including Devadaha

DAY 01:

- Visit the Ramagrama Stupa and worship, meditation, recitation, participation at spiritual discourses, circumambulation etc. at the stupa site.
- Visit the Baby Buddha Temple built by Bishinokai, Japan.
- Experience the Tharu cultures in Barahi Mahuwa Tharu village near Ramagrama.
- Visit Triveni Dham, Gajendramokchha Dham and Balmiki Ashram (optional).
- Travel back to Ramagrama and visit Panditpur, the archaeological place.
- Stay overnight at Parasi Bazar, Sunwal, Sitalnagar or Khairahani.

DAY 02:

- Arrival at Devadaha (Ghodaha) and visit the ancient and sacred Devadaha area.
- Visit Khayardanda,
- Visit Kanyamai and Bairimai temples and other archaeological sites.
- Visit Pakadi Tree.
- Visit ancient Bangala well and Mayadevi Ban Batika.
- Visit Bhawanipur and pay homage to the temple dedicated to Queen Mayadevi and other significant religious icons of Gods and Goddesses including the stone image of Sun God, and observe archaeological monuments such as the long stone column, ancient brick well etc.

