

DEVADAHA

Significance of Devadaha

Devadaha, the ancient capital of the Koliya Kingdom, is located 57 kilometers east of Lumbini. This historic site holds significant importance as it is recognized as the maternal hometown of Queen Mayadevi, Prajapati Gautami, and Princess Yasodhara, the mother, stepmother, and consort of the Buddha, respectively.

It is believed that Prince Siddhartha spent cherished years of his childhood in Devadaha, cared for by his compassionate stepmother and aunt, Prajapati Gautami, before his enlightenment. After attaining enlightenment, the Buddha returned to Devadaha to share his teachings with the followers of the Jain Sadhu Nirgrantha Nathputra and to resolve the conflict between the Sakyas and Koliyas over the Rohini River, emphasizing that familial bonds are more important than water disputes.

Present-day Devadaha has been identified as the ancient Koliya Kingdom through detailed references to its distance and direction from Lumbini, as well as early Buddhist scriptures and archaeological findings. However, a comprehensive archaeological investigation is needed to pinpoint the exact location of the ancient capital.

Major Monuments, Sites, and Attractions in Devadaha

Bhawanipur/Devidamar: Believed to be the capital of the Koliya Kingdom, this site features a temple dedicated to Queen Mayadevi, a long stone column, a stone image of the Sun God, and an ancient brick well, with structural ruins visible on the surface.

Devadaha: This pond in Devadaha Municipality is of religious and historical significance, believed to have been a bathing site for gods, goddesses, saints, and Prince Siddhartha. The name "Devadaha" means "the pond of the god."

Khayardada: Located in Devadaha Municipality, this site is thought to have been the main city of the ancient Koliya Kingdom. Excavations have revealed large bricks, pottery, and structural ruins, possibly including Prince Siddhartha's palace.

Kanyamai Temple: Located in Devadaha Municipality, 1 km south of the Sitalnagar junction, the Kanyamai Temple is believed to have been built in memory of Queen Prajapati Gautami, the stepmother of Lord Buddha. Significant finds at the temple include a standing stone image of Lokeshwore holding a lotus flower, various stone idols, and ancient pottery visible on a nearby mound. Excavations have uncovered structural ruins, stone antiquities, a traditional palace structure, and a well.

Bairimai Temple: Situated 1 km south of the Sitalnagar junction in Devadaha Municipality, the Bairimai Temple is believed to honor Mayadevi, the mother of Lord Buddha. The name "Bairimai" is thought to derive from "Badimai," meaning "big mother" or "elder sister," referring to Mayadevi, the eldest princess of the Koliya Kingdom. Archaeologists discovered decorated bricks at the site, similar to those found at Kudan. The temple houses fragmented stone images of gods and goddesses.

Historical Wells: Two historical wells have been found in Devadaha, one at Petwaniya and another at Bangala, believed to date back to the Koliya era.

Pakadi Tree: This legendary tree, also known as the "Koliya tree," stands 96 feet tall with a diameter of 82 feet. Locals are fascinated by the fact that birds do not nest in it, and elephants avoid it. The village of Pakri is named after this mysterious tree.

Rohini River: This holy river, mentioned in Buddhist scriptures, served as the border between Kapilavastu and Devadaha and was the site of a water dispute between the Sakyas and Koliyas, resolved by the Buddha.

Kumarabarti: Located on the bank of the Rohini River in Makrahar village, Kumarabarti is believed to be where Mayadevi and Prajapati spent a night while traveling to Devadaha. A temple with images of Mayarani (Mayadevi) and Prajarani (Prajapati) has been discovered here, along with two ancient wells.

Mathagadhi: Situated atop the Churia hills, this fort is believed to have been the western gateway to the Kapilavastu kingdom from Koliya. It was used by the Nepali army during the Anglo-Nepali war. The local community has preserved ancient weapons found at the site and built a temple. Spectacular views of Devadaha, Nawalparasi, and Palpa can be seen from Mathagadhi hills.

Recommended Activities

- Visit the temples of Bhawanipur, Kanyamai, and Bairimai in Devadaha.
- Explore Khayardada, believed to be the capital city of the ancient Koliya Kingdom, as well as the ancient fort of Mathagadhi and the historic Bangala well.
- Take a sacred bath in the revered Rohini River and the waters of Devadaha.
- Witness the symbolic Pakadi tree, a remnant of the Koliya era.
- Meditate and absorb the spiritual ambiance at the Bhawanipur and Simsar (wetland) sites in Ghodaha.
- Immerse yourself in the cultural fabric of Tharu community at Sispur, Magar community at Sarantandi village and Gurung community at Khairahani village.
- Observe the diverse avian and wildlife populations in the Ghodaha area and the Churia forest.

Accessing Devadaha

- Bhawanipur is connected to the nearby towns of Sitalnagar (4km), Butwal (17km), Manigram (10km), and Ramnagar at the Bhairahawa-Bhumahi road (33.5km) via road networks.
- Public bus services are available on routes between Butwal-Sitalnagar and Sitalnagar-Sunwal-Parasi Bazaar.
- Visitors can hire e-rickshaws in Sitalnagar and Khairahani to explore the major sites in Devadaha.
- Taxis and private cars can also be hired from the larger hubs of Butwal and Bhairahawa to reach Devadaha.