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Lumbini, Kapilavastu and Devadaha

-Harischandra Lal Singh

Because of the increasing popularity of Buddhism, the Buddha, the biography of the Buddha, the places he was associated with and also Buddhist literature have become subjects of focal interest. Outside Nepal, a good deal of research on the history and culture of Buddhism is going on. In Nepal itself research on Buddhism is only a recent phenomenon. Research on this field was started in the last decade of the 19th century due to the initiative taken by the Archaeological Department of British India and the interest of the Oriental scholars of Western Europe. In course of the preparation of geography of ancient India, the birthplace of Lord Buddha became a subject of quest, which resulted in the exploration of the Kapilavastu region.

The relevance of the message of the Buddha to the suffering humanity has made anything associated with the Buddha a thing of interest and attention. Lumbini, birthplace of the Buddha, Bodhgaya where he attained Supreme Enlightenment, Saranath where he started preaching and Kushinagar where he passed into Mahaparinirvana were and are still known all over the world as sacred places of pilgrimage. But, whereas Bodhgaya, Saranath and Kushinagar have been preserved and developed, Lumbini which is located in West Nepal remains to be developed. The realization of the vital need of developing Lumbini has come very late. In this short article an attempt has been made to give an account of the historical importance of Lumbini, Kapilavastu and Devadaha, known respectively as the birthplace of the Buddha, the kingdom of Shuddhodana and the home of Mayadevi and Prajapati, the wives of King Shuddhodana.

Fa-hien (399-414 A.D.) had said in his travel account that Lumbini located at a distance of 10 miles from Kapilavastu was the birthplace of Lord Buddha. Another Chinese pilgrim, Hsuen-Tsang (629-654 A.D) called it La-pha-ni and that it was located close to a river flowing from south to north. Buddhist literature has mentioned the ancient glory of Lumbini in various ways. This shows that Lumbini at the time of the Buddha might have been a beautiful and prosperous land. According to Lalitavistara, on her way to Devadaha Queen Mayadevi was very much impressed by the natural beauty of Lumbini. While she rested there she gave birth to Siddhartha Gautama and it lent great sanctity to Lumbini. However Lumbini, which was in its grandeur at the time of the visit of Emperor Asoka, remained neglected for centuries.

It was only in the 1890's that after centuries of neglect, Dr. Alois Anton Fuhrer discovered with the help of Khadga Shumsher, the then Bada Hakim (Governor) of Palpa district, a stone pillar on the banks of Nigligagar, an artificial lake near a village called Niglihawa in the present day Lumbini zone of Nepal. The discovery was a fall-out of the historical and archaeological quest started by the Asiatic Society of Bengal. Again it was only in late 1950's especially after the visit of the United Nations Secretary General U Thant in 1967 that steps were taken for its development. U Thant's visit was instrumental in the preparation of the Master Plan of Lumbini development and the start of worldwide cooperation for the development of Lumbini. Prior to this, Lumbini looked desolate as John Blofeld observed:

"At the time of my visit to Lumbini, the road had not quite been completed, so I decided to make the journey from the rail head on horse back, starting at dawn. I set off on a thin, hired nag along a sandy track which took me through the rice fields and across several streams where the villagers were performing the ablutions with which each Hindu day begins.

"I arrived at Lumbini scorched, saddle-sore and altogether miserable. Alas, the beautiful garden had, in the course of two and a half millenniums, given place to near-desert country There were a rest house, a few peddlers' stalls, a small dilapidated Hindu temple; a fine new Buddhist temple with Nepalese style carved windows still under construction, and two calms of carelessly gathered bricks from vanished monasteries. Ah, what a scene of desolation! Why had I come where so little was to be seen? Surely I had been chasing a mirage romantically for something long vanished from the earth.

"... But either the magic of the place itself as the repository of sublime thoughts proceeding from the hearts of generation upon generation of pilgrims, or else the state of mind which the mere thought of being in Lumbini induced, had clad my imagination in such rich colors that I felt like a man awakened from a delicious dream."

When I myself visited Lumbini in 1993, I had almost the same impression, but when I saw the already completed houses, viharas and some other construction works going on, I came to know that the progress of Lumbini is going on though in a very slow pace.

British philosopher Dr. Paul Brunton wrote: To three hundred million Asiatics the lovely little five-acre wood of Rummidei in Nepal is sacred as his birthplace. ... Those statuette-like figures of the wise Gautama bear with them a serene blessing, a sense of utter peace".

Kapilavastu

As the capital city of the Republic of the Shakyas, Kapilavastu occupies a special place in the cultural history of Nepal. Established by the four exiled sons of King Ichhayaku near the hermitage of the sage Kapila, it was known as Tapobhumi, a place of meditation and penance. Named after the great sage, Kapilavastu was also known as Kapilapur and Kapiladwayapura. Buddhist literature reveals that it was a prosperous and advanced city at the time of the Buddha. East of Kapilavastu beyond the Rohini River was Koliya, another Shakya Republic. The neighbouring Republics in the southeast were Pawa and Kushinagar where the Mallas reigned. Further eastwards was the Vriji Republic of the Licchivis. Their boundaries reached down to the Ganges River.

Kapilavastu was a well-organized city. The administrative and judicial businesses of the Shakya clan were carried out publicly in their common Santhagara or Mote Hall at Kapilavastu, where the young and the old alike were present. It was at such a parliament or public assembly that King Pasenadi's proposal to marry a Shakya princess was discussed. Deceived by the Shakyas by offering King Pasenadi a slave girl, Vidudabha, his son and successor, avenged himself later on by massacring the Shakyas and destroying their building and monuments, which

resulted in their flight to the neighbouring republics, to the Nepal valley and as far as away as Burma.

The Buddha himself came to Kapilavastu after his enlightenment. Emperor Asoka visited it in 245 B.C. in the 20th year of his reign along with his preceptor Mogalli Putta Tissa Mahathera. He erected a stone pillar in Lumbini to identify the birthplace of the Buddha. He also erected two stone pillars in Niglihawa and Gotihawa. These are all recorded events of history. Fa-hsien went first to the birthplace of Krakuchhanda, the Adi Buddha, and then to Kapilavastu. Hsuen-tsang first came to Kapilavastu and then to the site of Krakuchhanda. Fa-hien reported that Kapilavastu with its ruins of ancient walls and monuments was not densely populated. Hsuen-tsang however called it Prasadnagar, a city with gardens and flora and fauna, humming with life. It was prosperous and beautiful. For centuries thereafter Kapilavastu was lost until the discovery of a casket containing relics at Piprahawa in 1898. These finds were immediately followed by explorations. It was confirmed that Tilaurakot was the ancient Kapilavastu, thanks to the efforts of Rhys Davids and P.C. Mukherjee.

Devadaha

At present we know very little about Devadaha, the natal home of Mayadevi and Prajapati who were the daughters of the Koliyan republic's chief Anjan. In Devadaha there was a magnificent lake. Members of the royal families of Kapilavastu and Koliya used to take holy dips there on special occasions; that is why it was called Devadaha, meaning a lake where members of the royal family bathed. Later, the city was itself named Devadaha. It is said that Fa-hien visited it and found it desolate. Archaeologist Dr. Hoey discovered a stupa there in 1898. Devadaha was also known as Ramagrama, Koliyanagara and Vyaghrapura.

The Buddhists of Nepal and elsewhere need to think about the ancient glories of the Kapilavastu area. Besides the development of Lumbini, it is necessary to identify and properly demarcate Kapilavastu and Devadaha and develop them as places of pilgrimage.

The Lumbini Development Trust should seriously think about the matter and hold a national or international conference of concerned experts in Kathmandu.

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Concern and Care for Health In Buddhist Scriptures

Prof. Nhuchhe R. Tuladhar

**Head, Department of Clinical Microbiology,
T.U. Teaching Hospital, Kathmandu.**

Prior to the Enlightenment, Prince Siddhartha was looked after and brought up in an environment of royal luxury for 29 years. One day Siddhartha came out of the seclusion of the palace. He saw a very weak old man struggling along the road, then a sick person and finally a corpse. The three incidents can be termed as his very first sight of suffering.

Sensitive as he was, he became very eager to know the reasons for such a painful condition in life. In the pursuit of truth he left his wife, son and luxury of the palace. He wandered about alone and enquired of many learned persons he met about suffering in life. However, he was not satisfied with their explanation.

He then meditated for a period of 6 years to solve the problem by himself. While meditating without regular meals, he became very weak. As he was not physically strong he was not mentally able even to think. This illness was a primary problem. This was also an obstacle in the path of the search for truth. During the six hard years of his search for truth he experienced several incidences of illness. He suffered from different illness such as headache, backache, gastritis, fever, dysentery etc. The Buddha was quite aware of the recurring of sickness.

Health has to be given the first priority in the view of the Buddha. It is a primary need for all the paths in Buddhist philosophy. Without it life becomes a burden to the monk or nun and he or she cannot communicate the messages of the Buddha. Therefore, as reiterated in the Tripitaka, maintenance of sound health is very essential.

Once his young son questioned a father: "what is the way for progress in life? What is most beneficial in life?" Puzzled by these questions, the man went to the Buddha for answer. The Buddha answered the second question by saying that health is most beneficial in life.

Illness can be both mental and physical. Headache without fever is one example of mental illness. This mental sickness is a barrier in the pursuit of truth in life. Physical illness, both non-infectious and infectious, is due to abnormal functioning of the organs of the body system. The heart and kidney problems are usually noninfectious illness. When the mental and physical health is normal, the nonspecific defense system of the body will be active and different kinds of the microbial invasion will be suppressed.

The blood, circulating all over the body, is one active part of the defense mechanism of the body against the microbial invasion. Microbicidal substances present in the blood neutralize the poison produced by the microbial invasion of tissue. However, if a man becomes weak and

exhausted by starvation, cold, overwork etc. the defensive mechanism becomes attenuated. Drug addiction, smoking, excessive alcohol intake etc. also cause exhaustion of the body and weakens the defense system of the body.

Infectious sickness is due to an invasion of tissues of the human body by microbes. When an infection occurs, different categories of white blood cells act in different ways to destroy the microbes. One category of the blood cell called lymphocyte stimulates the production of antibodies. The antibody is a substance that acts against the microbes. Antibodies produced by the invasion of microbes are specific in nature; for example, the antibodies produced due to an invasion by same tuberculosis germs will protect against future attack by the same germs again.

The microbes include bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites. Dysentery, also mentioned in the life of the Buddha, is a disease of the gastrointestinal tract; and this is an example of infectious sickness. Dysentery may be bacterial or parasitic and it often occurs due to contaminated water or foods. Dysentery is a communicable disease.

The microbial infection may occur in any part of the body. The skin, the outer layer of human body, is the great barrier to the entry of microbes. When there is a break in the barrier infection usually occurs. The infection of the Buddha's toe, as mentioned in the Buddhist scriptures, is due to a break in the barrier of the skin. All the facts in Buddhist scriptures regarding this infection reveal that it was probably due to pus-forming bacteria. The pus-forming bacteria are usually the skin's normal flora awaiting a chance to invade the tissue after a break in the skin barrier.

Having experienced several instances of bodily sufferings, the Buddha explained that there are three types of sickness.

1. Mental diseases: headache is an example.
2. Physical diseases: such disease usually shows no symptoms of fever. The problems of the heart, kidney, and backache or muscle pain are examples. This is usually due to an abnormal functioning of body organs.
3. Communicable or infectious diseases: These are diseases of the systems of the body; for example, the intestinal, and respiratory and urinary tracts diseases. Fever usually appears in these cases.

The Buddha was indeed a great physician. He used to attend and take care of sick monks. Buddhist devotees are urged to practice generosity, loving kindness, compassion toward the sick monks and nuns. He emphasized cleanliness of the environment, the human body and the use of good water, foods, etc. Sound health is an essential component in Buddhism as many references in the Tripitaka testify. The Buddha knew that germs are everywhere; cleanliness prevents their access to the human body as well as food and drink. When germs are found in food and drink, technically it is called contaminated and it becomes the primary source of the cause of infection of the human body.

That sickness is a pain in life is universally true. Without health there can be no progress in life. Poor health is obviously a suffering in life- a disease due to physical, mental or both conditions. The Buddha had spoken of the disease and its cause and cure as follows:

- There is a root cause of the disease;
- There is the path to eliminate the cause of disease;
- There is the path to elimination of the root cause of disease.

The Buddha was quite aware of all kinds of mental and physical sickness. In the Buddhist viewpoint, sound health is generated if the individual is pure in conduct. A person in sound mental health denotes one who is free from greed, hatred and delusion. Craving for sensual pleasure and luxurious living as well as all types of cravings virtually afflict the individual at the mental level. The usual symptoms are despair, disappointment, anxiety, worry, sorrow, tension etc. that are gathered up by a complex mental illness. To prevent the sickness prevalent in those days the Buddha had instructed his followers as follows:

- To keep and maintain clean environment;
- To take safe food;
- To put a lid on the pot to make the water safe for drinking;
- To wash the bowl with water after use and dry it in sunlight;
- To take regular bath;
- To take care of oneself while taking care of a sick person.

The instructions given by the Buddha to the monks and nuns in those days were as good as the modern conception of preventive, and curative health services.



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Piprahawa versus Tilaurakot

-Prof. A.T.D.E. Perera

Kapilwastu, according to Hsuan Tsang, had the circuit of 4,000 Li (equivalent to 664 miles). Hence, the argument put forward in favor of the tiny village of Piprahawa as representing the whole territory of the Shakya republic by an official in the service of the Department of Archaeological Survey of India carries little sense. As a matter of fact, it was the same Department itself which after an intensive study of concerned areas declared at the close of the last century that Kapilwastu of Buddha's days is represented as to-day's Tilaurakot region of Nepal.

The search for the lost site of Kapilwastu, as mentioned above, was intensified only after the discovery in 1898 of Peppe's relic-casket from the stupa at Piprahawa. The case of Piprahawa was then under full consideration, but it has to be rejected in the light of newer buildings. Then was focused scholars' attention on Tilaurakot. It was extensively explored and parts of it were even excavated. An exhaustive study of Buddhist texts, travel accounts of the Chinese travelers, new find from Tilaurakot and all other relevant materials was made. Only thereafter experts working under the Department of Archaeological Survey of India jointly arrived at the conclusion that Tilaurakot was Kapilwastu. Thus scientifically was this fact established, and it came to be universally recognized with no ground for controversy. As such it is not something that the fad of an individual can alter at will. Nothing that is said to have been recovered or is expected to be recovered from Piprahawa nor any distortion of the records of the Chinese travelers can have any adverse effect on this already settled issue.

The archaeology official K.M.Srivastava who made the aforesaid vain attempt has brazenly remarked that according to the Chinese travelers Pi prahawa seemed to represent the ancient Kapilwastu. that his arguments lack consistency will be clear from his own words quoted below:

In 1973 he said..... "Piprahawa is six miles to the site of Lumbini Accounts of the travels of Hsuan Tsang and Itsing also hint at the location Kapilwastu in the area (i.e. Piprahawa)..."

- The Indian Express, 1973 April 13

Then came the following baseless argument: - 'Scholars held for a long time that Tilaurakot was Kapilwastu even though there was no solid archaeological evidence to do so. The basis for this erroneous belief (i.e. Tilaurakot is Kapilwastu) was the account given by the Chinese pilgrims... In 300 A.D. Fa Hien went from Kapilwastu to Lumbini.... In 629 Hien Tsang also went from Kapilwastu to Lumbini...'

The Times of India: 1976 Jan. 24

The archaeologist further remarks: —

‘The... indication of Piprahawa being the site of ancient Kapilwastu was furnished by the Chinese traveler Fa Hien. According to his record Lumbini should be nine miles east of Kapilwastu... The difference supposed by the scholars between the distance recorded by Fa hien and Hsuan Tsang was unwarranted...’

- The Illustrated Weekly, 1976 May 16-22

Similarly, the photograph of the structural remains traced around the stupa at Piprahawa was printed as “A Scene of Vihara found in the excavation in Piprahawa”.

Dharmayug 1973 May

And also “The ruins of the Palace of Buddha’s father Suddhodana, in Piprahawa, now identified with Kapilwastu.”

-The Times of India, 1976, Jan 24

The Archaeological Department of HMG, Nepal has already commented on this. In the Illustrated Weekly, 1976 May. 16—22 the same were again declared as the eastern, northern and southern monasteries facing the stupa.

The above extracts sadly expose that the archaeologist K.M.Srivastava up to 1973 he was quite ignorant of the distance between Lumbini and Piprahawa. The actual distance between them is nearly ten miles. Next, the dates about Fa Hien and Hsuan Tsang’s visits to the region of Kapilwastu are hopelessly wrong. As noted above, the conclusion that Tilaurakot was Kapilwastu was based on the most solid archaeological as well as other evidences and a joint decision of a group of different experts. What is more ludicrous is that than one single individual challenging all those experts and baselessly denounced the whole previous work? The accounts of the Chinese travelers furnish a sound basis for the correct location of Kapilwastu. Further, the archaeologist at one time declares Hsuan Tsang’s account about distances between Kapilwastu and Lumbini is correct, but also says that the records of the Chinese travelers are also misleading, thus, his views oscillate like a pendulum the judgments of the archaeologist at different times and in different newspapers.

The actual facts about the issue are given below:

Kapilwastu lay fifteen or sixteen miles west of Lumbini according to Hsuan Tsang and nine miles according to Fa Hsien. The actual distance from Lumbini to the present day Tilaurakot is fourteen or fifteen in miles. Thus the distance given by Hsuan Tsang exactly corresponds to the actual present day distance between Kalpilwastu and Lumbini.

Both Fa Hsien and Hsuan Tsang came to Kapilwastu from Shrawasti. According to Cunningham, Fa Hsien first came to the birthplace of Krakuchchanda Buddha, supposed to have been the present day Kudan or. Gotihawa and from there to Kapilwastu while Hsuan Tsang arrived at Kapilwastu direct. That is why Hsuan Tsang gave the distance from Shrawasti to

Kapilwastu as 83 miles and Fa Hsien 91 miles. They were shown the opposite places of the same Kapilwastu as suggested by V. Smith. Hence Fa Hsien, who passed through the present day Gotihawa, Kudan, etc. before he arrived at Kapilwastu, measured the distance from the easternmost point while Hsuan Tsang measured it from the extreme western point at the present-day Tilaurakot where he had arrived first. Evidently that was the reason why Fa Hsien had said that Lumbini lay nine miles east of Kapilwastu.

Further, these pilgrims not only visited all important places, stupas and other monuments associated with the incidents of Buddha's early life but also elaborately spoke of them in their accounts. But they neither seemed to have gone to Piprahawa nor made any mention of it. Had the present day Piprahawa in Basti been part of Kapilwastu they would certainly not have failed to describe in detail the stupa and monastery there. The fact that none of the three pilgrims, Fa Hsien, Hsuan Tsang and Raja Ripu Malla of west Nepal visited Piprahawa nor made any mention of it clearly indicates that it was probably not even a part of Kapilwastu during the Buddha's days.

Now let us clarify the case of Piprahawa a little more. Its antiquities consist of a few clay seals, the ruins of the stupa from which Peppe took out the relic casket in 1898 and the remains of the monastic structure. Because of the scantiness of its antiquities the archaeologist has now added to it the area of Ganawaria, which too, could yield nothing more than two pieces of the Buddha's head, one piece of terracotta horse figure and a few other figurines, a few copper and silver coins, pieces of precious stones and the like and the so-called remains of two huge palace-complexes, the larger being '30 miles square with 28 rooms, the smaller being '26 miles square with 21 rooms. Thus both the areas provided nothing of any real significance. The Buddha head or horse figurine is not at all a pre-Buddha antiquity. One such horse figurine exactly similar to one found in the Tilaurakot region 1972-3 excavation (Ancient Nepal-22, plate VB). These objects or above-mentioned coins have no bearing on the matter in question. The monastic structure around the Piprahawa stupa was, as stated before, sometimes declared as a monastery and other times as a palace. The archaeologist even claims to have recovered several more relic-caskets similar to the ones discovered by Peppe. He even goes to the extent of asserting that one of the new caskets he has found inside the stupa contains the relics of the Buddha and that Peppe's caskets were only later additions. What the archaeologist claims has yet to be scientifically analysed.

It is also highly improbable, though not impossible, that the palace complexes of a petty ruler like Suddhodana of Kapilwastu comprised an area of 30 sq. miles or 26 sq. miles. Mr. K.M. Srivastava exaggerates his finds. None of them belong to the pre—Buddha age. He himself admits in the Illustrated Weekly. 1976 May I 6-22, that all his findings from Piprahawa and Ganwaria are not older than the 4th or 5th century B.C.

Tilaurakot, on the other hand, contains the ruins of a full-fledged magnificent palace of a fortified capital city fenced with a tall strong wall, penetrable only through city gates built at four directions and surrounded with a wide moat. Besides a lot of polished grey ware shreds and the associated red ware shreds attributable to the 8th or 7th century brick ware and the associated red ware, attributable to the 6th or 5th century B.C. were also recovered from the Tilaurakot region

during the 1972-3 excavation. It was such grandeur noticed in the region that led the earlier experts to declare it ancient Kapilwastu. In comparison to its heritage of antiquities Piprahawa or Ganwaria findings are quite meager. Only when one goes on adding to Piprahawa adjoining areas one after another, just as Ganwaria is added to it, until one reaches Delhi, one can claim that not only Suddhodana's Kapilwastu but also Yudhishthira's Indraprastha has been traced beside Piprahawa.

No place can be accepted as Kapilwastu simply because an object with the word 'Kapilwastu' inscribed in it was found there. The seals of one monastery can be carried anywhere. It cannot be inferred that the structure traced there must necessarily be the ruins of Dewaputra Vihara. 'The Vihara indicated by the seals might have been set up anywhere else.

Whatever Piprahawa ruins may yield they were not dated back earlier than 483 B.C., the historically ascertained year of Buddha's nirwana. In order to be Kapilwastu of Buddha's time whether for Tilaurakot or for Piprahawa, either of them must be able to produce pre-Buddha antiquities. As discussed above, it is Piprahawa, not Tilaurakot that cannot yield a single antiquity, which can be associated with the Buddha's Kapilwastu. Piprahawa totally fails to fulfill necessary conditions. The absence of any stream beside Piprahawa or Ganwaria, which the concerned archaeologist carefully avoids, mentioning, also deserves mention in this connection. In Tilaurakot, on the other hand, are available all requisites. With its matchless geo-physical status including a river running by and with a lot of pre-Buddha remains under its soil and post-Buddha antiquities above Tilaurakot stands to-day as the only unquestioned inheritor of the ancient Kapilwastu.

In this regard, the view of Mr. N. R. Banerjee, director of National Museum, New Delhi, under whose guidance the Department of Archaeology, HMG, Nepal had conducted some excavations and explorations in 1966, is worth considering as it throws further light on the question. On the wrong claim made by Mr. K.M. Srivastava, the above mentioned archaeology official, Mr. Banerjee observes, "This single phenomenon (that is, the terracotta seals said to have been found in Piprahawa in course of excavations from 1973 onwards bearing an inscription) may not prove the identity of Kapilwastu, for the remains of any city in the neighborhood have not been exposed as yet, though there is a large number of mounds in the region. The cutting of one of the adjoining mounds at Ganwaria has revealed the existence of two complexes of houses one with 26 rooms and the other with 21 rooms, but both built around a central courtyard.

"These are apparently ordinary residences, judged from the everyday objects found in them. But they are apparently too small to be identified as palaces and too large to be recognized as private houses upon in rural scene. They could easily have been monasteries, an inference which appears to be the nearest to reality. The probe is on and yet the claim for recognition of the ancient township of Tilaurakot in Taulihawa district of Nepal, excavated by P.C. Mukherjee in 1899. Dr. Mrs. Debala Mitra of the Archaeological Survey of India in 1961, and the Department of Archaeology of the Government of Nepal from 1966 onwards (under the author's guidance in 1966) continues to be accepted."

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Forest and Trees Associated With Lord Buddha

-Basanta Bidari

The relationship between culture and ecology is an integral one in Buddhism. The basic concept in it entails that tree, plants in short the entire environment is our friend.

Nature according to the ancient sages was the sustaining source and pre-requisite for life on earth. Hence the Vedic seers who lived in close proximity with nature stressed that care and goodwill should be showered on tree and plants to invoke their blessings. That is why there are beliefs that plants have supernatural powers to both, bless and punish. Tree Planting has, and still continues to be an act of great religious merit, associated with peace, health, wealth, happiness and abundance of grains.

Traces of ecological protection can be found in ancient scriptures like Vedas, Ramayana, Mahabharata, Upanishads, Puranas, Tripitaka, Jataka stories. Most of the Buddhist literatures mentioned about the forest and trees which are associated with Lord Buddha.

Vedic period: Worshipping, mainly the flowering, shadowy and medicine trees were common practice in the Vedic period. Not only worshipping even various gods had the symbolic identity with the trees they are Kadam (*Anthocephalus chinensis*) for Sri Krishna, Asoka (*Saraca indica*) for Kamadeva, Palash (*Buteamonosperma*) for Shiva, Koiralo (*Bauhinia variegata*) for Laxmi, Kamal (*Nelumbium nucifera*) and Tulsi (*Ocimum sanctum*) for Vishnu, Amaltas (*Cassia fistula*) for God of fortune, Japa-pushpi or China rose (*Hibiscus rosasinensis*) for Durga or Kali, Pipal (*Ficus religiosa*) for Brahma, Neem (*Azadirachta Indica*) for Sitala, Asoka, Pipal, Sala (*Shorea robusta*) for Buddha etc.

The leaf of Bar tree has special importance when the newly married bride groom enters in her new house (Griha pravesh ceremony).

Flowers and leaves of Palas had the great importance in the flower festivals. The flower of Mahuwa (*Engelhardtia spicata*) tree was used to decorate the bridegroom.

Similarly, the APA (*mangifera indica*) tree was also vested with supernatural powers. The leaves of this tree still used on all joyous occasions – birth, marriage, griha pravesh (celebration in the new house) etc. Strings made of mango leaves are hung at the entrance of the house and also within, toward of evil spirits, hence, these leaves are symbolic of good luck. Asoka leaves are associated with Gautama Buddha, Indra, Vishnu and Aditya.

The Banyan (*Ficus benghalensis*) tree still worshipped in the month of July by Hindu women who fast for the long life of their husbands. This day is associated with the Pauranic legend of Satyavan and his wife Sabitri. This tree is also associated with various other Gods and Goddessess like Brahma, Vishnu, Maheswora, Krishna, Kubera, Yakshini and Laxmi.

According to Kalpastura Bar, Durmi (*Ficus glomerata*) Supari (*Acacia catechu*), Palas, Bel (*Aegle marmelos*) etc were mentioned in many religious texts and had a big influence among the people of that period. Among the grasses Dubo (*Cynodon dactylon*) and Kusha (*Desmotachya bipinnata*) had a great significance. Further there are many names of the trees mentioned in various religious texts in Vedic period they are Bar, Dumsi, Palash, bel, Barro (*Terminalia belerica*) Neem, bakaino (*Melia azedarach*) Chatiwan (*Alstonia schoris*) Simal (*Ceibamalabaricum*) Koiralo (*Bauhinia vereigato*) etc.

Ramayana Period Pushpa Vatika of King Janaka, Asoka-Vatika of King Ravana, Alakapuri of Kubera, Nandana Vana of Vali, Madhvana of Sugriba were the most popular forests and gardens find liveliness description in Ramayana. There are many references of the garden in the towns, villages and private houses. It shows us that the flower and gardens were more popular in this period than in the Vedic time.

Ramayana described that the Arjuna (*Terminalia Arjuna*), Kaner of Karvir (*Nerium oderum*), Jupa Pushpa or Karnikar (*Hibiscus mutabilis* or *H. rosasinensis*) were the favorite trees of Sita. This epic further mentions that Hanuman first saw Sita in Asoka garden of Ravana and she was having red flower's garland. The Asoka garden of Ravana used to have Sala (*Shorea robusta*) Asoka (*Saraca indica*) Champa (*Michelia champaca*), Neem (*Azadirachta indica*) and Aap (*Mangifera indica*) Sisso (*Dalbergia Sisso*) in Ramayana period there were well-planned towns and systematic road channels. Both sides of the road there were rows of shadowy flowers and fruit trees. Among the trees the Chandan or Sandal wood (*Santalum album*) was very popular for fragrant and wood.

This epic further gives the story that the tragedy of the separation with Sita, Rama asked about Sita the Kadam, Arjuna, Asoka trees. When Rama could not get the information he roamed in the forest along with Laxmana. On the way, near the pampa pond they enjoyed the flowers and trees of Chameli (*Quisqualis indica*) Mallika (*Jasminum augustifolium*), Kamal (*Nelumbium nucifera*), Ketaki (*Yucca smalliana*), Malsari or Bakula (*Mimusops elegi*) Champa (*Michellia Champaka*) Kadam. Aap (*Mangifera indica*), Koiralo (*Bauhinia variegata*) Sirisa (*Albizia labbek*) Shimal (*Bombax malabaricum*) Palash (*Butea monspersma*) Chandan (*Santalum album*) etc.

Mahabharata Period: Mahabharata mentioned the very famous forest Vrindavana where Krishna and Radhika played in their childhood on the Kadam tree. The town of Indraprastha was decorated with garden, water falls and Asoka, Bar, Pipal, Champa, Palash, Ainaltash Rajavriksha (*Cassia fistula*) trees.

Prajapati Kasyapa in his treaty 'Vriksha Ayurveda' suggested the following trees should plant in the different types of land. For the normal land Dumri (*Ficus glomerata*), Arjuna (*Terminalia Arjuna*) Rukh katahar (Jack fruit or *Artocarpus integrifolia*) Bans (*Bambusa spp.*) Kagati (*Citrus aurantifolia*) Jamuna (*syzygium cumini*), Tilak (*Chlerodendron pholomoides*) Supari (*Areca catechu*) Kera (*Musa paradisiaca*) Palash, Ketuki (*pandanisis*), Nariwal (*cocos nucifera*) trees are good to be planted. For the dryland Bel, Asoka, Neem, Bhalayo (*semecarpus anacardium*) and near the pond area Bar, Pipal, Khayera (*Acacia catechu*), Bhoja patra (*Betula bhojpatra*)

Bans, kadam tree is suitable. For the pleasures places Palash is advised. Kashapa further mentioned that near the religious site or temple are the Aap Supari, Malati (*Tuisqualis indica*) Dumri, Arjuna and Nem trees are best to be planted.

Buddha Period: This period is the landmark for the tree plantation and conservation of the forest. There are lot of forests and various type of trees which are directly or indirectly associated with Lord Buddha. Gardening was quite popular among the people of this period. Most gardens were made near the monasteries and stupas. We find the description of gardens of Nalanda and Takshasila, which were very famous gardens of that time. There are many literary and sculptural references that Lord Buddha was born, enlightened and passed away under the tree. There are more than sixty one names of the forests mentioned in various Buddhist literatures. (The names are attached in the last page) These names are mostly found in Tripitaka, Atthakatha, Jatakas and geography of the Buddha period. According to these references there were many natural forests, man made forests, various deer parks and sub forests. Lord Buddha during his travel generally spent his night either near the pond or in the Amravana (mango grove), Amalakavana (emblic myrobalan), and Arandyavana (natural forest).

The Pali Tripitaka and Atthakathas mention mainly very popular forests of Madhya desa (Central Country) they are Ananda vana of Sravasti, Anjana vana and Kantaki vana of Saketa, Ketakivana of Nalakapan, mahavanas of Kapilavastu and Vaisali, Lumbini vana of Sakya, Salavana of Mallas of Kushinagar, Veshakalavana of Vajji, Parilyya vana of Chedi, Ambatakavana of Kasi, Sisapavana of Alavi and Kausambi, Veluvana of Rajgriha and Kimbila, Pippalivana of Moriya, Nagayana of Vajjiya etc.

Some of the forests are directly associated with Lord Buddha they are:-

1. **Jetavana:** Jetavana was the forest belonged to Prince Jeta of Sravasti. According to Mahapadana Sutta Anathapindika a merchant, purchased that forest and built three monasteries (Kareri kuti, Kosamba kuti and Gandha kuti). King Prasenjit Kosala constructed one Salalaar kuti and these monasteries were presented to Lord Buddha and the community of Monks. Lord Buddha preached Lakkhana sutta and seventy suttas of Majjhima nikaya in this forest. According to Anguttara nikaya and Buddha vamsa Lord Buddha spent his twenty one to forty five rainy seasons (Vassa vasa) in this forest (at Gandha kuti).
2. **Nyagrodhavana:** According to Atthakatha (Manoratha purani) of Anguttara nikaya and Buddhavamsa Atthakatha (Madhurattha vilasini) mentioned that Lord Buddha spent his fifteenth rainy season at Nyagrodhavana of Kapilavastu. This is the place where Lord Buddha met his father Suddhodana for the first time after the enlightenment. Here, Lord Buddha preached five sutras of Majjhima nikaya. This vana is visited by the Chinese traveler Yuan-Chwang in seventh century A.D. and mentioned in his travel account.
3. **Mahavana:** There were three Mahavanas of Vaisali, Uruvela and Kapilavastu as mentioned in the Buddhist literature.
 - a) Mahavana of Vaisali: Mahali sutta mentions that Lord Buddha was seen in the Kutirasala of Mahavana at Vaisali and spent forty sixth rainy seasons in this place.

- b) Mahavana of Uruvela: This place was within the Malla kingdom and Lord Buddha visited here many times. According to the Anguttara nikaya Lord Buddha told to Ananda about this forest and Lord Buddha spent five years following five Brahmins preaching before enlightenment.
- c) Mahavana of Kapilavastu: Various Buddhist suttas have mentioned about this vana. Atthakatha of Vinaya pitaka is very important for the geographical history of Buddha period. This history especially for the Mahavana of Kapilavastu gives the detail description. This vana extended from Himalaya to Vaisali thus this was called Mahavana of Kapilavastu.
4. **Lumbini Vana:** According to Pali literature Lumbini vana was lying in between the Kapilavastu kingdom to the west and Devadaha kingdom to the east. Divyavadana gives the detail description of this forest and mentions that Lord Buddha was born in this forest under an Asoka tree. Both the Chinese travelers Fa-hsien and Yuan-Chwang in fifth and seventh centuries A.D. visited this place and named it La-Fa-Ni Grove.
5. **Venuvana:**
- a) Venuvana of Kajangala: Anguttara nikaya states that Lord Buddha spent many times in this forest. Pali Tripitaka mentions that Venuvana of Kajangala was the eastern boundary of central kingdom.
- b) Venuvana of Rajagriha: In this forest Lord Buddha preached various suttas of Majjhima nikaya. According to the Sutta Nipata and Sumangala vilasini, King Bimbisara met Lord Buddha at Rajagriha and presented Venuvana (Bamboo grove) to him and monk community. Vinaya pitaka further tells that there were other forests too, they were Jivaka amra vana, Latthika vana etc. Lord Buddha spent his second, third and fourth rainy seasons at this Venuvana. The Chinese traveler Yuan-Chwang had seen a big cave in Venuvana where Mahakashyapa had the first Buddhist Council with five hundred monks.
6. **Amravana:** According to the papancha sudani Amravana near Rajagriha was presented to Lord Buddha by one medicant Jivaka. This place was so peaceful and tranquil that King Ajatashatru met Lord Buddha for the first time. Ven. Rahula (son of Siddhartha Gautama) spent most of his time in this forest.
7. **Ambapali vana:** Various Buddhist literature have described about this vana which was situated towards south of Vaisali. Lord Buddha before traveling to Kushinagar for his Mahaparinirvana he spent last year of his life in this vana. Before he traveled to Kushinagar, Lord Buddha accepted the food offered by Amrapali the owner of this vana and she presented this vana to Lord Buddha and the monk community. Both the Chinese travelers visited this place and Yuan Chwang even mentions in his account that he saw that particular place from where Lord Buddha had observed Vaisali for the last time.

Trees directly associated with Lord Buddha:

2. Birth tree:

So far the birth tree concerned there are five different species (may be more) of trees mentioned in various Buddhist texts, travelers accounts and early sculptural panels.

Asoka tree: Asokavadana, the traveler account of Emperor Asoka mentions that Upagupta the spiritual teacher, pointed to the emperor, the actual Asoka tree under which Lord Buddha was born. Fa-hsien saw this tree still alive when he came to Lumbini in fifth century A.D. Yuan Chwang saw this asoka tree in its place, but dead.

According to the Sarvata Vinaya and other authorities, it was an asoka tree. Vinayavasta mentions that when Mayadevi went to Lumbini garden, she gave birth by holding the branch of the tree Tathagata.

Some modern literatures also support the asokan tree as the birth tree. The Teaching of Buddha by B.D. Kyokai states that "All about here were Ashoka blossoms and in delight she reached out her right arm to pluck a branch and as she did so a prince was born". Flowering trees and shrubs in India by D.V. cower also supports the Asoka tree as the birth tree.

1: Asoka tree: there are some early sculptures which depict the branch of Asoka tree which Mayadevi hold, during the time of delivery. This sculptural panel clearly shows the leaves of Asoka tree.

- a) The sculptural panel from Nagarjunakonda now is in the National Museum, New Delhi. On the dexter of the relief, of the third century A.D. is the bent figure of Maya, grasping the bough of a (Asoka) tree, with two attendants.
- b) The birth of Buddha and seven steps, Nalanda, now in Indian museum, Calcutta, as shown here, the birth is attended not only by Indra and Brahma but also by Bishnu. Here too Maya holding a branch of a (Asoka) tree indicated by its leaves.
- c) A panel from Goli (Andhra Pradesh) depicted Vessantara Jataka where Vessantara is seen driving a bullock cart; his wife and two children are within the Wagon. In this panel an Asoka tree is clearly seen by its leaves. The panel is now in the Government Museum, Madras.
- d) The birth of Sakyamuni, stone plaque from Gandhara, is now in Victoria and Albert Museum, London. This plaque illustrates the birth of the infant Sakyamuni from right side of his mother and also shows the child on the ground. Here Maya is holding a branch of a tree (Asoka), birth of Siddhartha, from Mous C, Sahri Bahiol, Pakistan, now in Peshawar Museum, Peshawar, Pakistan. This plaque represents the birth of Siddhartha, when Maya grasping a (Asoka) tree with the child emerging from her right side.

2: Pipal Tree: Lalitavistara and some other Buddhist literature make the tree to have been a Pipal tree. All the Buddhist literature and sculptural panels agreed that Lord Buddha was enlightened under a Pipal tree.

Some sculptural panels show Lord Buddha seating under this tree. They are:

- a) Enlightenment represented by a Pipal tree sanctuary, Relief on the Prasenjit Pillar of the stupa; from Bahrut, Madhya Pradesh, India; 2nd century B.C. Here Pipal tree with its characteristic pointed leaves and rich decoration of parasols and garlands and the throne symbolically represent the Buddha.
- b) The first meal after Buddha's Enlightenment. Stone slab from the dome of a stupa; from Nagarjunakonda. Andhra Pradesh, India, 3rd-4th century A.D. now Nagarjunakonda Archaeological Museum. Here, Buddha is shown seating in front of a papal tree and receives the four alms bowls that the four Great Kings who guard the points of the compass have brought.
- c) Mara's attack: On the wall of cave 26 at Ajanta. On the dexter of the relief, Mara is mounted on his elephant, with his demonic hosts threatening Gautama with various missiles and weapons in order to dislodge him from his seat under a papal tree.
- d) Miracle of Vaisali, on the northern gateway of stupa 1 at Sanchi: the relief, of the 1st century B.C. depicts monkey approaching Buddha (represented by a seat below a papal tree) with a begging bowl which has been filled up with honey.
- e) Temptation and assault of Mara on aslab from Ghantasala, Andhra Pradesh, Now in the Museee Guimet, Paris. This lime stone vaneer of the main stupa. It depicts Mara's daughters tempting Buddha but in vain. The latter's presence indicated symbolically by a throne below the pipal tree.
- f) Devotion to the Pipal tree and Vajrasana at the Bodh Gaya, from Amarawati, Andhra Pradesh, India, 1st century B.C. This scene represents the sacred place of Bodh Gaya, the sacred pipal tree under which the Buddha sat to achieve his enlightenment and his seat vajraasana.
- g) Sakyamuni's Victory over Mara, from Bactro-Gandhara region, Pakistan, now in Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institute Washington D.C. Here the papal tree above Buddha's head and his Bhumi sparsa mudra (earth touching posture) are key elements.

3. **Sala Tree:** There are some high authorities like Hardy and Bigandet, D. Mitra, S.L. Huntigton identified the tree as the Sala tree under which lord Buddha was born. Their main observations is on the basis of sculptural panel, but if these panels are observed keenly there leaves are more similar to the Asoka than Sala. Nevertheless, most of the Buddhist literatures mention that Lord Buddha passed away (enter into Mahaparinirvana) under the Sala tree.

There are some sculptural panels, which show that Lord Buddha passed away in between two Sala trees.

- a) Great disease: from the Gandhara region, now in the India Museum, Calcutta. In this panel the Buddha is seen lying on his right side with one leg resting over the other on a couch spread between two Sala trees (only one tree exists on the slab; the other was presumably carved on another slab which depicted the continuation of the scene).
- b) The final Nirvana of the Buddha, from Kapisa, Afghanistan, Gandhara art, now in

- Kabul Museum, depicts the figure of the enlightened one lying on his right side, his head resting on the palm of his hand and his left arm stretched out hand and there are the figures of two Sala trees.
- c) Mahaparinirvana, cave 26, Ajanta. This sculpture panel depicts that Buddha is lying on a couch between two Sala trees with his eyes closed and head resting on the pillow. Monks and nuns surround him morning, Indra and other gods, are seen descending from sky to welcome the Great being to heaven.
 - d) The final Nirvana and cult of the stupa, from East India (exact provenance unknown); now in British Museum. In this Panel Buddha is lying in between two sala trees and above him is the stupa which indicates that the stupa making tradition was started among the Buddhist after master's nirvana.
4. **Mango tree:** Some of the literatures and sculptural panel depictions indicate that Lord Buddha was born under a mango tree. This tree was variously associated with Lord Buddha in his life time. Amrapali a dweller of Rajgriha presented her Amravana (mango grove) to the Lord Buddha during Buddha's visit to Vaisali. One Chinese Translation Merely has "Lim-pi (Lumbi-Manog? Trees and under one of them the Pusa is born.
- a) The birth of Sakyamuni: Relief sculpture; from the Sundhara Fountain, Deo Patan, Nepal , early Licchavi period, now National Museum, Kathmandu , This relief shows sakyamuni immediately after his miraculous birth from the right side of his mother, Queen Maya. She is holding the branch of mango tree and shows the panel where leaves and mango fruits are clearly identified.
 - b) Vedika rounded showing purchase of Jetavanarama at Sravasti, From Bharhut, Madhya Pradesh, India, Sunga period Ca. 100-80 B.C. now in Indian Museum Calcutta. The Relief illustrates the story of the purchase of a grove by Anatha pindika, who wanted to donate it to Sakyamuni Buddha and the Buddhist community. The workers who are covering the ground with pieces of gold in order to meet the outrageous piece requested by Prince Jeta, owner of the grove, depict this event in the right half of the composition. The grove is represented with five trees and one of them as the mango tree and mango fruits are clearly identified.
 - c) Vedika roundel showing Mahakapi Jataka, from Bharhut, Madhya Pradesh, India, Sunga period now in the Indian museum, Calcutta. This panel demonstrates the performance of good works toward one's relatives. Since the story is concerned with an animal incarnation, there is no reason to expect an anthropomorphic depiction of the Buddha. Once when he was king of eighty thousand monkeys, the monkey Bodhisatwa stretched his body from one tree to another across a river so that the other monkeys could use it as a bridge and escape attack from a human king and in his entourage who had come to find a famous mango tree that yielded extra ordinarily luscious fruit. The last monkey, who was the incarnation of the Buddha's evil cousin Devadatta, stomped on the Bodhisatwa's back and broke it. Impressed by the generosity of the monkey king's sacrifice, the human care for him and the monkey king then taught the human king the virtue and meaning of his actions.

- d) **Sculpted cell and guardian**, lower level, Rani Gumpa, Udayagiri (Khandagiri), Orissa, India. This small chamber may have been intended as guard station. The carving of the relief is extremely lively and freely composed and there is a great sense of crowding of the surface with numerous elements such as elephants, mango trees and figures.
- e) **Bodhisatwa at school**, stone, Borobudur, Java 8th century A.D. depicts long stone carving sculptural panel, south side of the Bodhisatwa a big mango tree with its fruits are early identified.

5: There are some **Buddhist sutras** in which they mention that Lord Buddha was born under a plaksha tree, locally known as Pakada of Kabhro (waved-leaf fig tree ficus infectoria), but sculptural panels are not available showing this tree.

The **Abhiniskramana-Sutra** describes that "when the time come for the perfect Buddha, the Blessed one, to be born in Lumbini Garden, his mother stretched up and held the branch of a tree with her hands. What kind of a tree was it? It was a plaksha tree!

It also says in the **Buddhavamsaka-sutra**: "O son of a good family, when the mother Mahamayadevi arrived at the site of the plaksha tree, the bodies as well as all the messes of offerings of all those who were intent upon presenting offerings to the great Bodhisatwa,"

In the **Arva Upaya Kausatva Mahavana Sutra**, it is stated: "Question: Why was the Bodhisatwa born while his mother was standing upright and turned, holding the limb of a plaksha tree?" Reply: He was born easily in order to remove the kind of doubt that would think....."

We find various species of trees mention in Buddhist literatures and sculptural representation which had direct or indirect association with the Lord Buddha. They are:

- 6: **Bar or Banyan tree**: from the ancient time this tree has continued to be an object of worship with religious and sacred values. Thus bar tree has been worshipped by both the Hindus and Buddhist. Buddhist literatures describe that the lord Buddha spent his fifteen rainy season at Kapilavastu in Nigrodharama (monastery constructed in the bar forest). There are some sculptural representation which depicts the bar tree along with the lord Buddha and sometime bar tree alone.
 - a) **The Cutting of the Hair, Borobudur**, Java, The century A.D. In this panel Bodhisattva is shown in the middle and cutting of the hair with a sword. Behind him are chandaka and horse. There are two bar trees to the right and left side of the Bodhisattva.
 - b) **Buddha's Journey to Banaras**, Borobudur, Java , This represents the Buddha's meeting with an Ajivaka monk to whom he declared that he was going to Banaras for setting motion the wheel of his perfect Dharma. Buddha is seen here with his right hand raised. The Ajivaka with his companions is seen to the left. This panel has six different species of trees and to the right side, (lower one) is the bar tree.

- c) King Suddhodana Paying Homage to Buddha at Kapilavastu, North gate, Stupa 1, Sanchi, 1st century B.C. Here, King Suddhodana is shown with his hands joined in adoration near a banyan (Bar) tree. A throne symbolizes the presence of Buddha. An attendant holds an umbrella over the head of the king.
 - d) Banyan or Bar tree capital, from Vidisa (Besnagar) Madhya Pradesh, India, Sunga period, Ca. 100 B.C. now in the India Museum, Calcutta. Evidence of a stone pillar having been erected at Vidisa is found in a pillar capital carved in the form of a banyan tree, easily recognized by the shape of the leaves and roots, which have been set down by the limb.
 - e) Nagaraja Muchalinda at the foot of Buddha's seat, On the western gateway of stupa at Sanchi, Buddha spent six weeks after Enlightenment in the company of the serpent king Muchalinda who shielded him during a rain-shower by his coil and hoods. In this relief (1st century B.C.) however Muchalinda with a five headed hood is seen seated below the seat of Buddha under a banyan tree, over which is an umbrella. The full retinue of the king consists of his two queens, attendants and a troupe of a dancer and five musicians, all single hooded nagis.
- 7: **Jamun or Black berry** (*Syzygium cumini*) this tree is very common in Nepal and India. It is a large evergreen shady tree with smooth grey bark. There are several references the association of this tree with the lord Buddha. The Buddhist people consider the Jamuna as a sacred tree. There are some sculptural panels which show the Jamuna tree associated with the Lord Buddha.
- a) First meditation of Siddhartha (Sakyamuni Buddha) from mound c, Sahri-Bahlol, Pakistan, Kushan period, now in Peshawar Museum, Peshawar. This sculpture shows one of the important events of the Bodhisattva's life. While a young man living at his father's palace, he was brought to sit under a Jamun (Jambu) tree, where he was to witness a ploughing contest as representative for the king. While sitting he practiced yogic breathing and attained his first trance. When his attendants returned sometime later, they noticed that the shadows of the other trees nearby had moved, but that Jamun tree had remained stationary over the meditating prince. In this representation, this specific meditation is indicated by the Jamun tree above the head of Bodhisattva and the ploughing scene at the lower right.
 - c) The ploughing Festival and the First Meditation, Ananda temple, Pagan, Myanmar 11th century A.D. This sculpture shows Siddhartha as lying on his head under the Jamun *Syzygium cumini* with eight nurses attending on him.
- 8: **Tada Tree:** In order to attract the mind of the Bodhisattva to worldly life, king Suddhodana got him married to a girl called Gopa or Yasodhara. At this time he was sixteen years of age. The Lalitavistara tells us that when Suddhodana wanted to perform the marriage of his son, five hundred Sakyas offered their daughters. The choice of Siddhartha, however, fell on Gopa, the daughter of Dandapani or Suprabuddha who refused to comply until Siddhartha proved his skill in archery and other arts. Although the Bodhisattva was not

interested in such feats, he accepted the challenge. The competitors were all defeated in the contest, as the arrow of the Bodhisattva hit not only farther than theirs but crossed the seven Tada trees, pierced the ground and vanished completely.

The present Sculpture: The Archery Contest, Borobudur Java, 8th century A.D. shows the Bodhisattva holding a strong bow with the arrow released. Other competitors including Devadatta and Ananda are also shown. To the left are the seven Tada trees, which were used as targets.

- 9: **Veluvana:** Most of the Buddhist literatures mention that king Bimbisara of Rajgriha presented the Velu vana (Bamboo grove) to Lord Buddha and community of monks. The bamboo plants shown on either side of the relief suggest this sculpture the Veluvana, North gate, East Pillar, Stupa I, Sanchi, 1st century B.C. Identified of the spot.
- 10: **Unidentified tress:** Many sculptural panels depicts the various flower and fruit trees which are very difficult to be identified. For example: the conversion of the Kasyapas, East gateway, stupa 1, Sanchi, 1st century B.C.

Buddha had to perform a series of other miracles before he could fully convince the Kasyapas of his superiority and convert them. Once a heavy rain fell out of season and there was a flood in all the land. The Kasyapas thought that Buddha had been carried away by the water and hastened in a boat to rescue him.

- a) In this panel shows the elder Kasyapa and one of his disciples, hastening in a boat over the river Neranjana in flood, presumably to the rescue of the Master. In the lower part of the picture, Buddha (represented by his promenade) is shown waling on the surface of the water. In the foreground, the figures of Kasyapa and his disciple are twice repeated, on dry ground, and doing homage to the Master (represented by the throne at the right hand bottom corner of the panel). There are six trees, three in each side and right side of the middle one is the mango tree and other five trees are difficult to identify.
- b) Miracle of Vaisali, on the northern gateway, stupa 1, Sanchi. The relief of the first century B.C. depicts a monkey approaching Buddha (represented by a seat below a Pipal tree) with a begging- bowl, which has been filled up with honey. There is a second monkey behind. Two men, four women and a child possibly represent the crowd, which witnessed this miraculous spectacle. In this panel there are three trees one of course a Pipal and right one is locally called Salifa (?) middle flower tree is unidentified.
- c) The Bodhisattva receiving a leaf of grass from Svastika, Borobudur Java 8th century A.D.

Here the Bodhisattva (Who Stands on a lotus cushion on the road) is seen receiving the present. There are rows of nine trees, which are difficult to identify.

There are many names of the trees mentioned in Buddhist literatures like Tripitaka, Jatakas, Athakathas, Nikayas sutras etc. These trees have directly or indirectly association with the Lord

Buddha. These trees have to be identified with the shape of the leaves, fruits, flowers depicted in the sculptural panels. These trees are:

- 1: Kadam (Anthocephalus Cadamba)
 - 2: Sirisa or parrot tree or East Indian walnut (Albizia labbek)
 - 3: Harro or Black Myrobalam (Terminalia chebula)
 - 4: Barro (Terminalia balerica)
 - 5: Amala of Emblica Myrobalan (Phyllanthus emblica)
 - 6: Bel or wood Apple (Aegle marmelos)
 - 7: Palash or Bastard Teak (Butea monspersma)
 - 8: Kera or Banana or Plantain (Musa paradisiaca)
 - 9: Neem or Margosa tree (Azadirachta indica)
 - 0: Srikhanda or chandan of Sandalwood (Santalum album)
-
- 1: Dumri or Gular (Ficus glomerata)
 - 2: Chyuri or Butter fruit (Bassia buty racea)
 - 3: Sal or Silk cotton tree (Bombax malabaricum)
 - 4: Koiralo or Kachnar (Bahunia variegata)
 - 5: Kabhro or Plaksha (Ficus lacor)
 - 6: Ukhu or Sugarcane (Saccharum officinarum)
 - 7: Rukha Katahar or Jack fruit (Artocarpus integrifolia)
 - 8: Amaltash or Rajvriksha or Indian Laburnum (Cassia fistula)
 - 9: Saj (Terminalia alata) etc.

The Jatakas also mention various names of the cereals which were grown in Buddha's time (even today). They are: 1) Paddy plant of Dhan or rice (*Oryza sativa*), 2) Vajara (*Pennisetum typhoides*), 3) Chana or gram (*Cicer arietinum*), 4) Mung or Mungi or golden gram (*Phaseolus aureus*), 5) Til or Sesame (*Seasum indicum*), 6) Sarasau (*Brassica compestris*), 7) Khursani or Chilly (*capsicum annum*), 8) Jira (*Cuminum cyminum*), 9) Pan or betel (*piper betle*), 10) Supari or arecanut or betel nut palm (*Areca catechu*), 11) Ukhu or Sugarcane (*Gossypium arboretum*) etc.

There are few names of the vegetables, which are mentioned in Jatakas. They are: Pyaza or Onion (*Allium cepa*), Lasun or garlic (*Allium sativum*) Lauka or gourd (*cucurbita pepo*) etc.

At least:

In this present technological age trees play a very important role in our daily life. From the very remote past our ancestors depend upon the trees and forests for shelter, they clothed with tree bark, fruits and later made weapons and tools from the wood. The belief and veneration rendered to plants and trees makes greenery precious enough to be preserved. The traditions associated with them are conductive in giving them long-term effects and these also prove beneficial to the society as a whole.

With the discovery of iron and the industrial revolution, several trees were chopped off to make place for factories trees provide us with several things that make our daily existence more comfortable. So, for their preservation we need to go back to our traditional values and maintain an ecological equilibrium with nature, because it would have several long-term effects not only for us, but also for the generation to come.

Name of the forests as mentioned in Buddhist literatures:

1. Amrapali Vana, 2. Ambataka Vana, 3. Amalaki Vana, 4. Udaka Vana, 5. Karanda Vana (Rajgriha), 6. Karandaka Vana (Himalaya), 7. Karanda Veluvana, 8. Kalaka Vana, 9. Kundadhana vana, 10. Kunda vana, 11. Kuru Jungle, 12. Kausa kala vana, 13. Khemica amra vana, 14. Guna vana, 15. Chitralata vana, 16. Jambu vana, 17. Jatiya vana, 18. Jivakamba vana, 19. Jeta vana, 20. Dandaka vana, 21. Dava vana, 22. Patash vana, 23. Pippali vana, 24. Nyagrodha vana, 25. Naga vana, 26. Veshakatla vana, 27. Buddha vana 28. Maha vana (Vaisali), 29. Mahavana (Kapilavastu), 30. Maha vana (Rajgriha), 31. Mahavana (Uruvela), 32. Mahasaka vana, 33. Basti vana, 34. Lumbini vana, 35. Vrindavana, 36. Veluvana (Buchagala), 37. Veluvana (Rajgriha), 38. Saka vana, 39. Sisapavana (Setavya), 40. Sisapavana (Alavi), 41. Sisapavana (Kausambi) etc.

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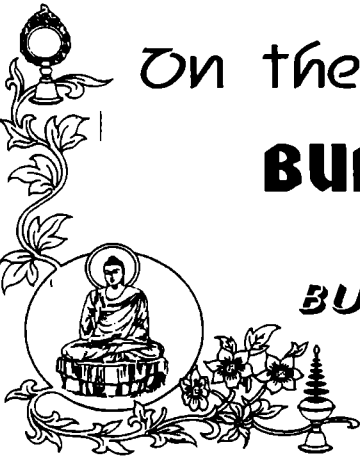


**WARM WISHES
FOR
THE BUDDHA JAYANTI**

From
**Nhuchhe Narayan Manandhar, Dwarika Narayan Manandhar and
Kamal Narayan Manandhar**

Siddhartha Vanasthali, Balaju, Kathmandu, Nepal.
Tel: 4353555, Pager: 9611047

Dhamma Digital
Hearty Greetings
On the Occasion of The
BUDDHA JAYANTI



BUDDHAMAYA OIL SUPPLIER
Parsa Chowk, Lumbini.
Tel: 71-580117, 580154

Development of Lumbini – For What?

-Lauren Leve, Associate Prof.
Princeton University, USA

The Buddha's teachings are eternal. And so must pilgrims to his birthplace find the inspiration. Up to the present, the development of Lumbini and other historical sites of Buddhist importance in the Nepali Tarai has been slow and tourism has been limited. But his lack of development has also insured that visitors to Lumbini have been able to experience the area in its peaceful and natural state in that way, the absence of modern distractions has contributed positively to the quality of the Buddhist experience available to pilgrims at the venerable site of the Sakyamuni Buddha's birth. At present, however, this period of inactivity is ending and the site is changing day by day. And it is doing so in the context of a democratic Nepal, which is undergoing an unprecedented period of privatization and economic liberalization. The increased pace of development at Lumbini then, and its social and historical context raises a critical question for Nepalese Buddhists and Buddhists of the world: what type of development will Lumbini's be?

Plans for the interior of the Lumbini development zone by the Japanese architect Kenzo Tange were finalized in 1978. The Master Plan, as this is known, calls for the division of the site into 3 separate zones: the commercial zone, the monastic zone, and the garden and temple area. Hotels, libraries, restaurants and other secular ventures will be clustered at the commercial end of the zone, and visitors will walk or boat from this area to the garden along a canal that is currently under construction. Between the garden and the commercial area, pilgrims will pass through a monastic zone, home to temples and monasteries representing all schools of the Buddhist faith. The structure of the geography reflects the mandala pattern of the Buddhist universe with the Dhamma at the center and compels the layperson to pass through progressive stage of Buddhist commitment and purity before reaching the garden and the Maya Devi temple.

Perhaps the most brilliant aspect of the Master Plan is the way in which it strives to preserve the natural scenery, peace, and tranquility of the holy site. But the changes that are slated for the area are not limited to the Lumbini development zone itself, and could undermine this thoughtful planning if unregulated. Imagine this carefully sculpted area surrounded by a dense city of resorts, amusement parks and golf courses! This would certainly affect the pilgrim's experience and give a distorted impression of the natural and cultural resources of the region in general. Is this how Buddhists want to commemorate the sacred site of the Buddha's birth?

Development in the 20th century has been imagined according to a number of paradigms. The most influential model until recently equated development with modernization and rated development along a unilinear, evolutionary model that located European, post-industrial countries at the pinnacle of progress. This scheme equated development with the reproduction of western

systems of government, culture and material production in the third world. Miles of road, power lines, and participation in the sanctified cycle of production and consumption measured development. Issues of morality, class and gender inequalities, and human rights were not considered relevant indicators of developmental progress, and local incorporation into an international market was made primary.

Although this modernization still holds sway in many countries and organizations, the paradigm has been effectively discredited based on an unacceptably high failure rate, the rise of nationalist and religious voices who challenged its commercial orientation and secularism, and its contribution to exacerbating inequalities within the affected populations. The dominant paradigm now envisions a holistic, community-based development where education, health care, environmental degradation, and infrastructural innovations are addressed together and in conjunction with a dialogue between the local people and the implementing agencies about what the people want and need. While this prototype, too, is effectively a foreign- originated concept as it is applied through international aid channels, it has a number of advantages, most specifically the insight that there can be no truly effective and sustainable development unless everyone benefits.

This Community Development paradigm has a number of things to teach people concerned with the future of Lumbini. At the beginning of every Buddhist act of worship or practice, when we take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha we are celebrating the unity of the human Buddhist community. The Buddha taught each person to develop his or her self in order that everyone might be released from suffering, and many branches of Buddhism believe that no one will achieve the final release until everyone reaches the bliss of Enlightenment. When developing Lumbini, it would be all too easy for private interests and multinational corporations to buy up the land of the poor farmers of the region, thus creating another landless class of displaced cultivators and unskilled laborers. Modernization pundits point out that such people might find seasonal work in the hotels and other facilities constructed on their farms. But the educated managers and savvy decision makers will be imported from elsewhere and the local people will have exchanged their land, homes and autonomy for a place at the very bottom of the "developed" world. Can such development adequately contribute to the glorification of the Buddha's word? Could such an environment reflect the purity of the Buddhist Sangha, its all-embracing community?

As the compassionate and moral teachings of the Buddha have illuminated other realms, Dhamma can provide a model for humane and Buddhist development. Siddhartha grew up in the Nepal Tarai. Lumbini, Kapilvastu and Devadaha were the lands and places where he lost his mother, was nurtured by his aunt Prajapati, saw the four eternal truths that led him to Dhamma, and renounced his worldly life in order to find a way out of suffering for all humankind. This is where Siddhartha grew into the Sakyamuni Buddha and where the development of the Dhamma began. The world today is full of uninhibited materialism. A commercial cosmos and consumer culture has taken over much of the earth and daily challenges the humanity of its resident-victims. Is this the development that the Buddha taught?

Lumbini has stood as a reminder of the Buddha and his message for more than 25 centuries and it remains poised to inspire us into the future. As the Buddha taught us the principles of right knowledge, right conduct and right livelihood, let every Buddhist insure that this is the meaning of development as it is practiced in and around his sacred land. Confronted with the bleak legacy of modernization, now is the time to imagine and implement a moral and compassionate development paradigm based on Buddhist truth and value and to see that the choices and changes at Lumbini proceed in line with these, our highest goals. The Buddha taught us to develop our insight, our moral beings and ourselves. If all Buddhists of the world are concerned and diligent, development in the Lumbini historical area can stand as a model for humane development in the world in the same way that the Lumbini Garden has stood as a reminder of the Buddha and his compassionate teachings up through this present day. If not, the sacred place of the Buddha's birth may go the way of all commodities that are bought and sold in the process of international development and capitalist expansion.

Globalization Perspective of Lumbini's Development

Prem Khatri, T.U.

(A theme paper presented
in the seminar "Lumbini Today and the Future prospects"
Organized by Chitrakar Society on June 27th, 1998)

In a world driven by strife and social
injustice, and threatened by nuclear
catastrophe, the message of the Buddha
has most compelling clarity.

Javier Peres de Cuellar,
Secretary General, UN

Introduction :

The history of the development of Lumbini is highly checkered. After more than two millennia of hiding in the bushes the holy site appeared at the end of the last century. Again there were decades of oblivion and neglect until the 1960s when the Department of Archaeology started scientific exploration, excavation and conservation of historical sites of the region. Based on the earlier surveys and documentation more focus was given to two main sites: Lumbini where the future Lord Buddha was born as prince Siddhartha and Taulihawa identified as ancient Kapilavastu, where prince Siddhartha grew up to be 29 years of age when he renounced the

royal title and the life associated with it. The materials found in various sites during archaeological activities of the 1960s and 1970s further confirmed the various sites' respective identities as ancient historical sites related to the life and glory of the Buddha. The entire region stretching from Ramagrama in the east to Kapilavastu in the west restored its historical significance as a holy region with strong potential for further exploration, excavation and conservation.

Objectives:

The main objective of this paper is to delineate and discuss Lumbini's development perspectives, specifically focusing on the need to globalize the importance of the complex. The globalization potential is seen through the site's manifold importance – spiritual as well as touristic.

Nepal in the strategically important location

Nepal's location in the map of South Asia is significant from the point of view of the origin and spread of Buddhism in the region. Of four major events in the life of the Buddha – the Birth, Enlightenment, Dharma cakra pravartana or turning the wheel of the Doctrines, and the Mahaparinirvana – the first event or the Birth of the Lord took place in Nepal's Lumbini. This being the case, the Dhamma devotees from all over the Buddhist world come to Lumbini to pay homage to the Buddha. The wave of such devotees is on the rise after the implementation of the Master Plan. After visiting Lumbini, the birthplace, devotees can visit three other places of pilgrimage falling in India in a short span of time. In ancient and medieval periods this region was linked with western hill and mountain region of Nepal and ultimately to Ladakh of northwest India and finally to Tibet. This route also formed sub-branch of the famous silk road of the medieval period.

The modern face of Lumbini

The modern face of ancient Lumbini was a result of both national and international interest and commitment starting from the more scientific archaeological excavations of the 1960s and the historical visit to the site by the former UN Secretary General U Thant and his discussion with the late King Mahendra regarding the development of Lumbini to be considered at the initiative of the world body. The Lumbini Development Trust, which is only the authorized body of HMG involved in the development of Lumbini, is the brainchild of these historical figures. The Master Plan drawn by the famous Japanese architect Prof. Kenzo Tange for the planned construction of new Lumbini on the old site became the historic blue-print. The plan truly internationalized the holy site of Lumbini as interest and cooperation to help realize the plan began to channel. Because of the UN's involvement and substantial support in the process of development of the site, the Trust has now ever growing relationship with many nations of the world.

The construction plan implemented in the leadership of the trust laid by foundation of universalization or globalization of Lumbini. There are several monasteries or viharas and meditation centers catering the need of both Theravada and Mahayana schools of Buddhism at different stages of their construction. These holy centers are directly constructed by donor countries such

as China, Myanmar, Vietnam, Thailand, Sri Lanka, are among others. These centers stand as modern monuments representing different nations in the Lumbini holy complex these provide not only a new face to Lumbini but also function as bridges for the promotion and realization of International Peace and Understanding. Most significantly, they also serve as viable centers of faith and hope in the troubled world today. Religious discourses, meditation, yoga practices and Dhamma instruction and other relevant activities are in the agenda of the viharas of the monastic zone. The quiet and serene natural setting of Lumbini provides perfect spiritual atmosphere for such activities.

The activities organized on regular basis by the viharas are of universal importance to enhance spirituality among the devotees.

The International Buddhist Cultural Center

Its role in the promotion of international understanding, scholarship and peace. The Master Plan of Lumbini made a special provision for a very sophisticated and international standard library, a museum and a large auditorium. These components constitute the Buddhist research and cultural center. The library was built with the financial assistance of Germany. This modern Library with research facilities and materials on different aspects of Buddhism constitutes the main research center of the complex. His Majesty the King inaugurated the center last year and research activities have already started in the complex. The complex also has residential facilities such as student's dormitory and professors' quarters for visiting research scholars. This residential facility adds to the intensive use of the library by the interested scholars visiting the center.

The research center has a big library with modern facilities. The main aim of the library and research center is to provide research facilities and attract more researchers in the field of religious studies – Buddhism, Hinduism and others. This library is unique in the years to come this center of knowledge will be able to spread scholarship and knowledge throughout the world from a place where the Buddha emanated the universal light of peace and non-violence two thousand six hundred years ago.

In today's conflict-ridden world the teaching of Buddhism is much revered around the world, including the non-Buddhist world-from Nepal to Japan, from Mongolia to Europe and from Siberia to the America. The path of the Buddha is followed with respect. Commitment and hope for the future. The international research center could enhance the knowledge of the path considerably and could do important service to those who come to Lumbini for the sake of knowledge. Thus with increased support from national and international agencies, the research facilities at the international center could motivate more people from around the world.

We live in an electronic age. The world of information is all over the air and ether around us. With the tip of a finger one can browse through the largest and farthest collection of books and other resources around the globe. The Research center at Lumbini can hook itself in one of these electronic facilities so that interested people, institutions know what we can afford and what we are up to.

The cultural complex at Lumbini also has a museum with archaeological objects excavated from the region and displayed for the viewers. These objects could be used for research and scholarly publications. Research scholars with interest in the study of Buddhism will find both library and museum complex havens to unravel the research potential and also contribute significantly to the growth of Buddhist scholarship beyond the frontiers of Nepal. Judging from these potentials of the growing institutions one can safely say that in the days ahead these centers will play a very significant role in the globalization process of the entire holy sites of the region, Lumbini being the first and foremost of them all.

The physical growth and development of Lumbini today are pretty much the imagination of the famous Japanese architect Prof. Kenzo Tange. By dividing the entire complex into three main components: a) the Lumbini village, b) the monastic zone, and c) the sacred garden the world's famous architect had visualized the need to have host of activities to be taken place there in different zones.

The sociological-anthropological perspectives of Lumbini region have its own significance which is yet to be explored and studied. This perspective today can be observed along with its religious-ritual perspectives. The holy site of Lumbini falls in the middle of the tribal villages with people following various forms of worship, faiths and traditions. Throughout the history, the Maya Devi shrine is the heart of the sacred garden component of the complex was the center of faith for many villages of the region. The pattern of worship did not change much even after the creation of new Lumbini according to the Master plan.

Regular worship at the Maya Devi shrine complex and celebration of other fairs and festivals in the complex continues unabated. This practice has provided continuity to the activities and spirit of the local people

Thus, the local traditional religious-ritual activities and festivals at the Mayadevi complex continued with equal zeal, wider participation and celebration. But lately, there have been some changes in the pattern. The original Mayadevi shrine was demolished a few years ago in connection with the excavation. The excavation continued vertically to a point where the highly sacred stone conglomeration was reached. The nativity stone image was then transferred or shifted to a newly built building east of the old Mayadevi temple complex. Devotees from far and near now worship the image of the mother of the Buddha on the floor of the new annex building.

For the last few years the fate of the Mayadevi shrine is uncertain. The shrine being heart and soul of the entire Lumbini garden needs to be reconstructed with due consideration to international archaeological norms and traditional ritual practice.

The tourism potential of Lumbini

Lumbini situated near the famous Sal trees of the ancient times and preserved until today is also a beautiful gift of nature. As such the modern development of the holy complex possesses rich tourism potential.

Besides historical-cultural significance Lumbini's beautiful landscape and local culture can be an agenda for the promotion of the integrated sites for the future development of Lumbini. The land route linking Lumbini with Kathmandu, Narayangarh, Butwal and Siddharthanagar, Tansen, Pokhara, among other minor towns provides a scenic beauty to the travelers. The approx. 300k.m. Road provides charming beauty of mountains, hills valleys, rivers, forests, farms and villages with teeming population and colourful local cultures. The two routes—one via Pokhara and Palpa- Tansen and other via Narayangarh merge at Butwal, the growing industrial town of mid-west Nepal. These routes are already popular and with more attention by the concerned departments of HMG and other agencies, the roads can be further improved and made even more safe and comfortable. Small resorts, rest places, and parks could be added along road to Lumbini.

The land routes also provide passengers with people and culture from different ethnic, cultural and religious background. At Lumbini itself there are several different ethnic groups of people living together in complete harmony. Their local cultural assets, performing arts could provide travelers with outdoor recreations.

Need of an international airport in the region

In the recent years, there have been attempts by the politicians and local activists to directly link the birthplace of the Buddha with countries of the Asian region and beyond. In order to make Lumbini an international Buddhist center, and a Mecca for the Buddhists around the world, construction of an international airport has become urgent. Such a proposal has come at a time when the only international airport in Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal is becoming busier and thus smaller. An international airport in the Lumbini-Kapilavastu region would certainly enhance Nepal's tourism potential. It will also divert considerably the noise and air pollution of the Kathmandu valley. But most important of all, a direct link between Lumbini and countries of Asia and Europe would also accelerate the pace and process of development underway in Lumbini.

Lumbini, One of the four tirthas for the Buddhists

Buddha was born in Lumbini. Lumbini is therefore one of the four tirthas or place of pilgrimage for the Buddhists of the world. The number of visitors is on the increase annually.

The Buddha's hometown, Kapilavastu, is another important site in Nepal. It is located only about 17km west of Lumbini garden. So far Kapilavastu is conserved and preserved in its own capacity. But it is the growing need and expectation of the concerned agencies that this site be included in the activities of Lumbini Development Trust.

There is an archaeological museum near the ancient site of Kapilavastu, at a place called Tilaurakot. It has developed as the archaeological site museum with the findings collected from the excavated sites of the region. Later, it also housed archaeological objects excavated in the northern region such as Mustang. This museum can play an important role in disseminating the historical information of the region.

Similarly, Ramagrama, the maternal home of the Buddha is also an important historical place. It figured prominently in the early Buddhist literature as prominent travelers made historic trips to this region. In the future agenda, both national and international agencies could commit themselves to bring the universal significance of this site to light.

With the implementation of the final phase of the Master Plan this ancient and most important Buddhist site will be able to attract many visitors and pilgrims in the days to come.

Nepal is celebrating Visit Nepal Year 1998. This is therefore the most important occasion to focus Lumbini. Special arrangements should be made to help people visit Lumbini this year. In order to promote the site as an international religious and cultural center international seminars on universal theme should be organized by LDT or other agencies responsible for the development of Lumbini.

Such events then should be regular phenomena at Lumbini.

Conclusion

Considering the religious, cultural, and historical significance of the holy complex of Lumbini, the following activities could be considered by the concerned agencies:

- Planning for bigger flow of tourist population
- Plan to keep the entire site clean and in good condition
- Establishment of effective information machinery
- **Coordination among agencies**

The LDT, the Department of Archaeology, Tourism Dept. Road Dept. and local population need to be involved in decision making about the development and future prospects of the site. People of the region should not be selected from the activities to be taken in Lumbini.

• People's participation in planning:

Nepal's main flow relating to conservation and preservation of historical monuments is that people are not involved in the planning and implementation. As a result people often are not aware of the importance of the sites and their role in the preservation of the heritage.

- Need to establish an Up to date information center
- Lobbying for the promotion of Lumbini through international agencies is also essential.

For more permanent and sustainable development of the site, special effort should be made in the field of promotion of historical, cultural significance of Lumbini as a world cultural heritage site.

Promotion of tourism is essential for the sustainable growth of Lumbini. A coordinated and concerted effort by concerned ministries and departments as well as donors should be the main agenda for future programs to be carried out in the complex.

Some groundwork is taking place to make an international airport in Lumbini so that

people can fly directly to and from the site. Without adequate and international standard facilities the globalization Lumbini will remain cry a far in the wild. at their disposal.

Finally, a few word about the work completed by the Lumbini development Trust: The trust has often been criticized for delay in completing the work outlined by the Master Plan. More often the criticisms sound unrealistic. The trust has been a great victim of political instability, a characteristic of recent Nepali political order. There have been frequent changes in the slate of the Trust's executive committee. Such changes have naturally hindered the activities that would otherwise move smoothly. Even then work in all the three zones has progressed relatively well. The Trust is the final authority to make all out effort to introduce Lumbini in the world in a better way. Realizing the true potential for Lumbini globalization, it is the duty of the citizens of the country.

Bhavatu Sabba Mangalam

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Dhamma.Digital

Archaeological Remains of Lumbini: The Birthplace of Lord Buddha

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Kirtipur

Lumbini, the birthplace of Lord Buddha, has the distinction of being the foremost site of religious pilgrimage for the Buddhists of the whole world. According to tradition Lord Buddha took birth at this place under the Sal tree from the right armpit of Queen Mayadevi, the wife of King Suddhodana of the Shakya Republic of Kapilavastu, on the day of the full-moon of the month of Vaisakha (April-May) in 563 B.C. (Pradhan: 98-100) A pond, where the queen bathed before giving birth to the Lord, had existed there for long time. There were also two fountains of cold and hot water and a river of oil, which flowed there at the time of his birth providing cold and hot water and oil to bathe him. (Fuhrer: 30-32)

The Mahaparinirvana Sutra reveals that at the time of the Mahaparinirvana of the Tathagata when Ananda asked him about the future of his religion and followers, he spoke eloquently about the purity and contemplative virtues of the Lumbini Garden and advised his faithful followers and ordinary devotees to visit Lumbini along with the holy sites of Bodhagaya, Sarnath and Kushinagar. (Rijal 1979:30-32) Thus after the Mahaparinirvana of the Buddha, Buddhist pilgrims began to come and pay homage at the holy site of his nativity in order to acquire virtues. After the beginning of the tradition of making stupas, a few were also built by the adherents of Buddhism at Lumbini.

The authentic history of Lumbini Garden begins with the erection of the Chunar sandstone inscription by King Ashoka when he visited the site in 250 B.C. at the direction of Mahasthavira Upagupta. At the time of this visit, Ashoka presented one thousand gold coins (suvarnas) to the people of the country, raised (or enlarged) a stupa at the spot of the nativity of the Lord, and erected the pillar which contains the words, "Here the worshipful was born ", which were uttered to him by Mahasthavira Upagupta, his teacher. (Pradhan: 30-32) A brick railing with dentils was also erected at a distance of one foot six inches from the base of the pillar for its protection. (Mukherji: 35) As monks had begun to come to Lumbini, the patrons of Buddhism to provide accommodation for the monks who lived there and the pilgrims who visited the site must have built monasteries there. The large number of Shunga-Kushana terracotta's and stone heads of the Mathura School discovered here reveal that after the visit of Ashoka pilgrims from Northern India frequently visited the site, offered prayers at the nativity spot of the Tathagata and dedicated images which they brought with them as tributes. (Mitra: 196-205, pls. CXVII-CXXX)

Fa-hien and Hiuen Tsiang were two-noted Chinese pilgrims Garden in A.D.403 and 636 respectively. Fa-hien could see nothing at Lumbini except the holy tree under which the

Buddha took his birth, the Shakya tank where Queen Mayadevi bathed before giving birth to the prince, and a well from which people fetched water for drinking. (Pradhan: 19-26) However, Hiuen Tsiang records that he saw the Sacred Tank, a stupa about twenty-four paces to the south of the spot of the nativity where Indra received the baby in arms, four stupas in its vicinity where the four heavenly kings took charge of the baby, and the stone pillar with the figure of a horse on its top which had been installed there by king Ashoka beside the Tilar Nadi, "The River of Oil", which gushed forth there at the time of the birth of the Buddha providing oil for his bath. (Pradhan: 19-26) The remains of a few monasteries and the extant ceramic and art remains of the site show that Lumbini was a prominent centre of Buddhist Pilgrimage from the fifth or sixth century B.C. until the fourteenth century A.D. The dynasties and kings who ruled this region also seemed to have provided their moral and material support for the embellishment of the site. In A.D. 1314 Ripu Malla, a king of the Solar Dynasty (Adityavamsa) of Western Nepal visited this site. (Pradhan: 29) As he happened to be a Buddhist, he must have worshipped at the holy spot of the nativity and provided facilities for the monks who lived there for the adoration of the sacred stupas and idols.

Bhuvan Lal Pradhan has written that Sikandar Lodi (A.D. 1484-1517) was a bigoted man, and from the beginning of his rule he destroyed the religious sites of Northern India. Lumbini, the sacred site of the birth of Lord Buddha, also suffered a great set-back after the beginning of the rule of the Muslims. The policies of the Later Mughals, such as Aurangzeb, and the local Rajput kings of the region also contributed to the decay and extinction of the Lumbini Garden. Finally it got lost in obscurity until the first-half of the nineteenth century. (Pradhan: 30-32)

Rediscover of the Lumbini Garden

After the beginning of the rule of the British over India, scholars such as James Princep and Alexander Cunningham greatly contributed to the rediscover of Indian history and culture by deciphering the Ashokan Brahmi script and publishing a book called "The Ancient Geography of India." Study of the early Buddhist works by scholars revealed that Kapilavastu and Lumbini were located at the base of the foothills of the Himalayas. Hence, on 1896 Dr. Fuhrer was sent to explore the archaeological potentialities of the Tarai of Nepal lying parallel to the northern boundary of the Basti District of the united provinces. That same year he discovered Lumbini with the help of General Khadga Shamsheer Rana of Nepal. In his exploration report Fuhrer describing the birth of the Buddha at the site as well as a sculpture of Mayadevi, which was discovered in the ruins of the stupa built in the neighborhood of the pillar. He wrote that he saw four ruined stupas close to the edict-pillar in addition to the remains of the four other stupas mentioned by Hiuen Tsiang in his account. Fuhrer also gave an account of the Shakya Tank and the two fountains, which the Chinese pilgrims in their travel-account have so eloquently described. (Fuhrer: 25-29)

The discovery of Fuhrer was quite fascinating and therefore in 1899, Babu P.C. Mukherji was sent to the Tarai of Nepal with a special note from Vincent A. Smith, on behalf of the Government of India, to explore and excavate the archeological remains of the Lumbini Garden

and Kapilavastu. Accordingly, Mukherji excavated several monuments in the region and identified the ruins of Tilaurakot, in the suburbs of Taulihawa Bazar, as Kapilavastu, the capital city of the Shakyas. (Mukherji: 18-25) The main discoveries of his archeological activities at Lumbini are the details of the plinth of the Mayadevi temple on which lies the nativity sculpture of Lord Buddha, the remains of the brick-railing around the Ashoka pillar, the bathing ghata (Shakya Tank), and the remains of five stupas along with the remains of few structures belonging to the monasteries which graced the site during its heyday. (Mukherji: 34-39) Between 1933 and 1939 Keshar Shamsher J.B.R. extensively excavated the ruins of the Lumbini Garden. However, he did not publish any report of his discoveries. Keshar Samsner is credited with providing a high platform around the Mayadevi temple, enlarging the Shakya Tank with successive terraces and a brick veneer, and building some rest house for the convenience of pilgrims. (Rijal 1979: 15-16) In 1960 Mrs. D. Mitra of the Archeological Survey of India excavated a small trench along the western side of the base of the Ashokan pillar in order to ascertain the nature of the brick enclosure described by Babu P.C. Mukerji and the details of the base of the pillar. She has given an exhaustive account of the sculptures and other remains, which has been recovered, from the site in the past. (Mitra: 196-205; pls. CXVII-CXXX)

Recent Archeological Activities

The Department of Archaeology, HMG, began scientific excavation at Lumbini only in the winter of 1970-71. The main aim of the first excavation was to locate the village of Lumbini mentioned in the pillar of Ashoka. The cutting around the old guest-house, located on the southern side of the Mayadevi temple complex, revealed the foundation of a few monasteries of four culture periods as well as ten successive layers of human occupation from the sixth century B.C. onwards. Traces of a mud -well, a terracotta ring, a circular tomb containing a portion of a human skull, one iron sickle, bones of birds and animals kept in a large number of pots, and a terracotta plaque mould of Lord Buddha in the earth-touching posture belonging to the Gupta period are some of the important discoveries. In addition to this is a huge amount of shreds of the Northern Black Polished Ware from the lower levels and red-ware shreds from the upper stratum. (Rijal 1975-77:28-33, pls. 1-6)

Following the cell made by U Thant in 1970 for the development of the Lumbini Garden and the preparation of an architectural master plan for the site by Professor Kenzo Tange in 1972, the task of development the Lumbini Garden was entrusted in 1975 to the Lumbini Developing Committee. (HMG Lumbini Development Committee: 5-19) From 1975 to 1980 Mr. B. K. Rijal of the Department of Archaeology excavated the site under the aegis of this committee every year. His excavated have brought to light the culture sequence of the site in the vicinity of the Mayadevi temple beginning from the N.B.P. period. Finds include the remains of a brick structure of 15 feet four inches by twelve feet inches of the pre-Mauryan period located to the north of the Asokan pillar. A votive stupa, which yielded the lid of a gold-casket, is an important discovery of Mr. Rijal. Other important discoveries of Mr. Rijal include fragments of the Chunar sandstone horse-capital, which Hiuen Tsiang saw and reported in the seventh century A.D., and the terracotta plaque with the Dharmachakra, as well as a few terracotta human heads

of the Gupta period. A terracotta figure of the Bodhisattva, also of the Gupta period, is another important discovery from the site along with the large number of supported jars deposited at the bottom of a well. (Rijal n.d.:7-16) the excavations revealed a large number of N.B.P. sherds belonging to the types discovered at Tilaurakot in period I and at Hastinapur in the periods II and IV. They are mostly wheel-turned and are fragments of bowls, small basins, vases, handis, lids, tumber-like pots and ghata, (Mitra: 204-5) Mr. Rijal also excavated a number of monasteries to the south and south-east of the Mayadevi temple which belong to the Shunga-Kushana and Gupta periods. (Rijal 1975-77:32)

For convenience the archeological remains of the site are studied below under the following headings: Architectural Remains, Sculptures of the Site and Miscellaneous Remains.

Architectural Remains

Building activities started at Lumbini soon after the Mahaparinirvana of the Buddha in the fifth century B.C. The earliest structure of the site so far discovered is one which was exposed off the north-western corner of the Mayadevi temple of the Asokan pillar, it is fifteen feet four inches by twelve feet five inches on plan, and was discovered two feet below courses of burnt bricks seventeen by eight by five inches in size. The texture of the bricks is rough, much husk and straw having been used in their preparation. The structure was sealed in by the Mauryan brickbats, which were properly rammed in to make a floor. The N.B.P. ware and degenerate grey ware sherds discovered in conjunction and most probably belongs to the fifth century B.C. (Rijal 1975-77:32)

Because the Buddha had forbidden his followers to adore his image, stupas came to be built after his death to denote his presence in the palaces activities during his lifetime, or at palaces where he was worshipped. This custom led his followers living at the Lumbini Garden to make a stupa on the spot of the nativity in the fifth century B.C. Asoka later enlarged this at the time he visited the site 250 B.C. This nativity stupa is nowadays buried under the exquisite plinth of the brick temple which was built there long before the visit of the site by the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsiang in the seventh century A.D. and which was subsequently excavated by P.C. Mukherji in 1899. Mukherji's report reveals that the temple was of curvilinear style and sapta-ratha design in plan. It was a beautiful temple, with a temple by ten-foot sanctum floor. Outside the door were a vestibule and a mahamandapa with gates from the north and east. The total length of the temple was forty-eight feet and its width thirty feet. Within the sanctum the nativity sculpture was along the west wall on a raised plinth three feet by one. This sculpture is still worshipped today by pilgrims to the site. Mukherji noticed four successive phases of construction in the course of his excavation. The lowest portion of the wall was plan, four bricks high, above which two courses receded by about an inch, which again, went back by a bend in the vertical line. Then a neck appeared in a single course and on it was a bend of ornaments in two courses of bricks, craved with circular designs by the architects. Above this was a floriated cyma (padma) standing on a fillet in a single course. Above this was another neck, which supported a course of bricks decorated with the design of heads. On this rested a course of large cyma, which occupied the middle of the

plinth wall. The cyma was surmounted by a course of beads and on that was placed a third neck (gala). Above this, projecting out about two inches was a wide band carved with wavy floriation and other decorations and finally crowned with another cyma carved with the design of lotus petals. Lastly the fourth gala (neck) makes its appearance in a hollow line on which was placed an ornamental dasa and kumbha, the torus of the Greek architecture, done in two courses. Above this was another cyma ornament with lotus petals. The plinth, about five feet high, was finally finished with a course of bricks carved in lines of squares and little holes. (Mukherji: 36-7; Pandey 1968:65-6) Mukerji suspected that the remains of an older shrine lay below this plinth. The present author feels that the remains of the stupa which Asoka built or enlarged there in 250 B.C. are buried below this plinth, "considerably down", as Mukerji calculated it. The general details of the plinth indicate that the last temple was built in the fifth century A.D., after the visit of Fa-hien and before the visit to the site of Hieun Tsiang in the seventh century A.D. and that the nativity sculpture, which had existed there for long time, was installed in the sanctum on the raised platform for the worship of devotees. Attached to the temple of Mayadevi was an anti-chamber, which housed a sculpture of the so-called Vajravahni. (Pandey 1980:17) Rijal also exposed this plinth on the side; however, he has not given any details of the exposed wall in his report. The author of this paper also visited the site at the time this plinth was exposed by Rijal and noted the same features, which Mukerji had furnished in his report. Mukerji found that the temple of Mayadevi was linked to the Shakya Tank by a causeway with a flight of steps of baked bricks. (Mukerji: 34-9) The people who wanted to worship the nativity sculpture inside the temple first took a bath in this tank and then proceeded to the temple by the causeway for their prayer and offerings.

Devotees around the periphery of this temple built several stupas. One of them was located sixteen feet to the north of the Mayadevi temple. In the vicinity of the ruin foundation of this stupa Mukerji found several sculpture of the ancient and early medieval periods. To the west of this stupa was another stupa. It was small in size and the northwestern part of its foundation was much broken. Its basement was square, "having rectangular projection in the middle of the sides and rising in regular gradations of courses in rather plain mouldings." (Mukerji: 34-9) Mukerji gave descriptions of some more stupas, which he excavated there, and a few of them were of round form. In the vicinity of the tank Mukerji excavated five stupas. The southern wall of the basement of these stupas showed batter. (Mukerji: 34-9) Five feet to the north of the Mayadevi temple Rijal excavated a square-based stupa of the Mauryan periods. He is of the opinion that this stupa was "cut from the top up to the depth of 3'-0" x 2' 8" possibly during the operation of 1933-39 A.D." by Keshar Shamsheer J.B.Rana. On excavation the floor of this stupa yielded the lid-portion of a gold casket of cylindrical type in association with some charred human bones and other ritual offerings. (Rijal 1975-77:32 pl.48) The container part of relic-casket seems to have been broken into pieces and removed by Keshar Shamsheer Raja himself. This is the reason why the relics of the casket were scattered on the floor. When the upper portion of the stupa collapsed, builders encased it during the Kushana period. In all thirty-three courses of bricks of this stupa have survived today. (Rijal 1975-77:35) To the northeast of the Mayadevi temple sixteen stupas have been found built on a platform. They are

dedicated to the sixteen Arhats. (Rijal 1975-77:35, p. II) All these stupas have been beautiful conserved now.

A few monasteries were also built at Lumbini. One of them, located to the south-east of the Shakya Tank, was of quadrangular shape and had cells on four sides of the courtyard. The partition walls of the cells are now reduced to a few courses only. At places the floors of the cells are visible and at other places they had been removed by the builders of the later phase. (Rijal 1975-77: 32;, Fig. 2) The large bricks (35.5 x 20.3 cm) of the monastery reveal that King Asoka initially built it during the Mauryan period, perhaps at the time of the visit of the site. On the ruins of this monastery are scanty traces of a structure, perhaps the remains of a later monastery. A well was also excavated here. The monks living in the monastery living for the purpose of drinking water used it. There are ruins of some more monasteries on the northern side of these monasteries. However, they are in complete ruins and it is difficult today to ascertain their features and the dates of their construction, though they seem to be structures of the Shunga-Kushana and Gupta or Vardhana periods.

Mukerji excavated a brick railing around the Asokan pillar, which showed three phases of construction: the earliest (five feet six inches high) exhibiting very large bricks, most ancient in style. The middle portion of the railing was two feet eight inches high and belongs to the subsequent period. Mukerji noticed dentils also in between the construction of the first and second periods. (Mukerji: 35) In 1930 Mrs.D. Mitra excavated a narrow trench on the north side of the Asokan pillar to check the nature of the enclosure-wall described by Babu P.C.Mukerji. She is of the opinion that, owing to the disturbances caused by the excavations of Keshar Shamsher, the brick railing no longer exists on the western side of the pillar. (Mitra: 197-8) Mitra has written that on the immediate northeast and southwest of the pillar there were small brick stupas with square bases while the southwestern portion was marked with a triratha brick plinth. Mitra provides a much later date for these structures. (Mitra: 197-8) The revised plan of the structures around the Mayadevi temple shows that there were several stupas and monasteries at Lumbini and that they were in use until the beginning of the rule of the Mohammedans in the sub-continent. (Rijal 1975-77:35, Fig. 2)

The Shakya Tank, located to the south of the Mayadevi temple, was originally oval in shape. Keshar Shamsher cleaned it fully at the time of his archeological activities at Lumbini and made it pakka with the help of kiln-burnt bricks. The Tank is fifty feet square, shows six terraces and a flight of steps for descending to the level of the water (ghata). The bricks used in the repair of the tank bear the date 1939 A.D. in their central cava ties. In the summer when the tank is dry, the oval shape of the original tank is visible even today. (HMG, Lumbini Development Committee: 11, pl. 5)

Sculpture of the Site

Because Lumbini was inhabited for 2,000 years up to the fourteenth century, a large number of terracottas, stone sculpture and metallic statues have been found there in the course of the various archeological explorations and excavations. The most interesting piece of antiquity in

the Lumbini Garden is the inscribed stone column, which was installed there by King Asoka in the middle of the third century B.C. This twenty-one foot high pillar has a lower girth of seven feet nine inches and a diameter of two feet seven and a half inches. Made of Chunar sandstone with tiny blackish specks, it bears the characteristic Mauryan polish. The pillar was a vertical fissure from the top down to the middle, and lighting as noted by Hiuen Tsiang breaks off, its top probably. The capital of the pillar was bell-shaped. The base of the capital, broken into two halves, still exists in the compound of the Mayadevi temple. The fragments of the horse capital, which surmounted the top, have now been discovered. This shows that the pillar was complete in the beginning. The capital shows the usual festoons on the face of the big cyma under which there is a one-foot-deep hole of five inches diameter into which was fitted the copper mort ice that was fixed above the shaft. (Mitra: 197; Mukerji: 34-35; Pandey 1980:16; Fuhrer: 26-34) The pillar contains an inscription in the Pali language and Brahmi script of the third century B.C. which reads as follows:

King Piyadassi, beloved of gods, having been anointed twenty Years came him and worshipped [this spot] saying:

"Here Buddha Sakyamuni was born". And he caused to be made A stone [capital] bearing a horse; and he caused [this]

Stone pillar to be erected, because here the Worshipful one was born. The village of Lumbini has been made free of taxes and a recipient of wealth. (Fuhrer: 33; HMG, Lumbini Development Committee: 4)

The only other engravings on the pillar are from the time of Ripu Malla and Sangrama Malla. The column is more a piece of art than an object of architecture. Its beautiful tapering top, mirror-like Mauryan shining polish and sophisticated chiseling indicate that art under the skillful Mauryan masons had reached an admirable standard. (Pandey 1980: 16)

The sculpture of the nativity of Lord Buddha (size five and a half by three and a half feet) is the most splendid relief of the Lumbini Garden. In the panel Mayadevi is represented life-sized in high relief under the Sala tree, grasping a branch with her right hand, and with her left hand resting on the hip. (Pandey 1980:16-7) The Nidana katha contains the explanation that when the queen came to this most beautiful and stately tree, its branches curiously bent down to ease her reach like a stemmed reed. Stretching out her hand, she caught hold of branches ... and the pains came. Standing thus and holding the branch, she gave birth to Lord Buddha. This legend the artist has successfully carved in relief; and this is the earliest and best of all the nativity relief and this is the earliest and best of all the nativity reliefs so far discovered in the sub-continent. Since the queen has been depicted in maternity, Prajapati holds her waist from the right side. The extreme right of the panel is executed with the figures of Brahma and Indra who wear basket-like crowns and stand in devotion before the queen to receive the divine child, as narrated in the Buddhist literature. Below, between Indra and Mayadevi, is a defaced, standing figure of Gautam with a halo round his head. (Pandey 1980:16-7; Mitra: 197 -8) The sculpture has suffered a vertical abrasion and is

broken into three parts. Mukerji is of the opinion that this sculpture was executed "under the orders of orders of Asoka" because it is similar in material and workmanship to the Yaksha door-keepers of Pataliputra of the Mauryan period. (Mukerji: 37, p. XXIVa, Fig. 2) However, scholars such as V.S. Agrawal think that it is a replica of the original figure set by Asoka and erected during the Kushana period. (Agrawal: 162-3) Mitra has written that stylistically the sculpture is "ascribable to the Gupta period only". (Mitra: 197-8) However, the word **Silagadhabhicha** used in the inscription is said to mean, among other things, a figure (here of Mayadevi). This would mean, as Mukerji also wrote in the late nineteenth century, that the sculpture is the one which was installed here by Asoka in third century B.C. at the time he built or enlarged the holy shrine at the spot of the nativity of the Lord. (Mukerji: P 34-7) (Whether Asoka built or enlarged the shrine is to be yet determined by fresh excavations of the site)

The sculpture of the so-called Vajravahni (size: four feet by two feet one inch) seems, on stylistic ground, to be a sculpture of the Gupta period. The slender body of the goddess is particularly notable. The sculpture is split into two halves across the breast; and, as it is thickly coated with oil and vermilion, the icon-plastic details of the relief are not very clear. (Pandey 1980:17)

Keshar Shamsheer Rana collected a large number of sculptures of Lumbini during his 1933-39 excavations and stored them in a monastery on the site under the projection of the Lumbini Dharmodaya Committee where they remained for a long time. Today the Department of Archaeology of HMG has acquired them. Among these one head of the Buddha of molded red sandstone, which came from the atelier of Mathura, is beautifully marked "with a plain bump-like Usnisa" and a circular mark, or urna, on the forehead. It shows a smiling face and open eyes. Stylistically this head is ascribable to the Kushan period. (Mitra: 199, pl. CXIX A) An image of Buddha on chlorite in bhumisparsa-mudra, seated rigidly in the vajraparyankasana on a visvapadma below the Bodhi tree is also a beautiful relief. (Mitra: 199 pl. CXIX b, 2) Two slab fragments representing the Miracle of Sravasti and the eight great Miracles are quite notable sculptures of the site. In the latter slab the Buddha is executed sitting in vajraparyankasana on a double-petal led lotus, and his damaged right hand shows the bhumisparsa-mudra. He is clad in a dhoti and scarf, the latter with ends tucked in at the left shoulder. The right chest and shoulder are bare. Around the Buddha were represented the seven other great events of his life of which the birth and the first sermon on the right and the offering of honey on the left are the only one preserved. (Mitra: 199-200 pl. CXX B1) Other sculpture of the site include one crudely executed figure of Maitreya on greyish sandstone, a basalt sculpture of a Bodhisattva, a two-armed seated image of a Bodhisattva in lalitasana, two images of Ganesa, and some fragmentary and crudely executed figures and plaques of males and females. (Mitra: 200-1) Of these, two figures show clear-cut Pala influences, denoting that they were executed in the Pala period. (A.D. 750-1160) Two images of the site, one of Bodhisattva and the other of a devotee, belong to the Kushana period, but are of very crude workmanship. (Mitra: 200-1)

Of the several terracotta figures from the Lumbini Garden, one Buddha head, set with an

architectural frame, is quite beautiful. The open eyes with prominently arched eyebrows and stylized daksinavarta curls covering the head and the usnisa of the head indicate that this terracotta is a work of the seventh century A.D. (Mitra: 201) Another important terracotta is the head of an old man with a prominent nose. The head is very individualistic and speaks of a skilled artist in its making. (Mitra: 201) A third head with spiral curls and open mouth displaying the upper row of teeth is ascribable to the Gupta period on the basis of the plastic qualities. (Mitra: 201) Terracotta of the Gupta period is a fine head with half-closed meditative eyes. The modeler has also given it a crown. (Mitra: 201) Among the other terracottas the following are notable: the defaced head of a woman showing fairly good workmanship, a laughing face with open eyes and a mark in the form of a circlet on the forehead, the bust of a female with a necklace in the form of a row of impressed roundels, the lower part of a figure wearing a frilled skirt (antaravasaka) and scarf, and a leaf shaped plaque impressed with the figure of Manjushri Bodhisattva seated in maharaja lilasana on a double pettaled lotus and inscribed with characters of the late ninth century A.D. "in three lines on the dexter and one line on the sinister". (Mitra: 201-2) within the last decade Mr. B.K. Rijal has excavated three terracotta human heads and the upper half of a figure of a Bodhisattva of the Gupta period. (Rijal 1975-77:pl.58)

Of the three heads one, illustrated at the top of the plate, is crudely moulded and datable to the Kushana period. It is three and a half inches in height and badly damaged on the left side of the face. The other two heads belong to the Gupta period. The hairstyle of one of them is the style of deep curls called **dhupika kuntala**. "Its thick lips without any bold depression at the two corners of the lips and in the middle of the chin can be seen as evidence of the transitional phase." Although the facial details of the other figures are abraded, its "turban-like hair dressing is noticeable". (Rijal 1975:32.pl.58) The terracotta sculpture of the Bodhisattva is "endowed with the real grace and elegance of the Gupta period". Only the bust of the sculpture has survived. Rijal has written that the figure is slim with transparent dress and the right hand is raised in the protection pose. The facial expression reveals spiritual contentment and celestial happiness. The face is elongated with a straight nose, smooth cheeks and thick lips with depression at the corners. The two sides of the chin are separated in the middle. The eyebrows take a sharp curve. The forehead is bright and prominent, and the crown with one crest is decorated with a dotted design in a technique of oblique. Thus it is a beautifully executed terracotta figure. (Rijal 1975-7: 32-33, pl. 6A) Terracotta Dharmachakra with thirty-two spokes was found during the excavation of the eastern side of the Mayadevi temple. This piece seems to be part of a big panel of Dharmachakra sculpture, which was worshipped there by the devotees in the past. Among the associates of this panel are two animals, possibly representing a bull and a deer. (Rijal 1975-7:33, pl.68)

The most important discovery of Mr. Rijal at Lumbini is the large number of fragments of the horse capital mentioned earlier in this paper. A short report, which he published from the Lumbini development Project, contains illustrations of forty-one chips of this horse capital. One of them is quite large and bears the distinctive Mauryan polish. (HMG, Lumbini Development Committee: 16, pl.6)

Miscellaneous Remains

Lumbini has provided us with many other remains as a result of the various archaeological explorations and excavations. The most notable among them is a Kushana copper coin, published by Mrs. D. Mitra in her report. The reverse of the coin depicts a king facing to the left and wearing a long coat. With his raised left hand he is offering something on the alter. The deity standing on the obverse is too defaced to be correctly identified. "The diameter of the coin is 2.5 cm, the thickness being 6.3mm." (Mitra: 203 p. CXXIX A7) Two copper coins from Lumbini are preserved in the personal collection of Mr. Surendra Singh, a pleader of Kapilavastu. (Mitra: 203, Footnote 1) Although several kinds of objects have been found in the excavations at Lumbini since 1970, nothing is mentioned about them in the report, which came out from the department of Archaeology and the Lumbini Development Project. Only Mrs. D. Mitra has given details and illustrations of a few such antiquities from the site. Of five beads referred to by Mrs. Mitra, one, long and barrel-shaped, is of semi-precious stone, while the rest are of terracotta "simulating the shape of the areca-nut". (Mitra: pl. CXXIX Z5) One cylindrical ear-stud of japer was also found at Lumbini. (Mitra: 204) A large number of decorated bricks and tiles have also been found. Many of these are impressed with designs of lotus-petals, caitya windows, grids, floral and plant motifs and stepped patterns (as on the bricks of Kudan). (Mitra: 204-5)

The monuments and antiquities reveal that Lumbini was continuously inhabited from the sixth century B.C. until the fourteenth century. The sherds of degenerate Grey ware, N.B.P. ware, and several varieties of red ware elucidate this fact also. The pottery of Lumbini, as I said earlier, is comparable to the pottery types of Tilaurakot (Kapilavastu) and Kudan in Nepal and to that from periods III and IV of Hastinapur in India. (Mitra: 204-5) Recently a large number of spouted vessels have been found deposited in a well; their ceremonial use is clear from their shape. The surface finds of the site include some beads of terracotta and semi-precious stone, mullers, flesh-rubbers, fragments of iron nails and small bits of bronze objects. (Mitra: 206) A large portion of Lumbini remains unexcavated and this author is sure that on excavation many important and interesting antiquities will be discovered and that they will be of great help in revealing the ancient history and grandeur of the site.

Lumbini Development Project

Since early 1968 various phases of development work have been carried out both by the Government of Nepal and the United Nations Organizations according to the master plan of the Lumbini Development project. The master plan comprises three main elements, namely- the Lumbini village, the Monastic Enclave and the Sacred Garden. Emphases have been given under the master plan to create an atmosphere of tranquility, universality and clarity consistent with the idea of the serene environment of the time of the birth of Lord Buddha.

Note: Reprinted from Contributions to Nepalese studies Vol. XII, No. 3, P. 51-62.



भगवान बुद्धको जन्मस्थल लुम्बिनी एक अध्ययन

बुद्धाचार्य शाक्य

आज भन्दा दुई हजार पाँचसय, चारदशक अघि भगवान गौतम बुद्धको जन्म पश्चिम नेपालको कपिलवस्तु राज्य अन्तर्गत लुम्बिनीमा जन्मनु भएको थियो। उहाँ कपिलवस्तुका राजा सुद्धोदन र रानी महामायादेवीका सुपुत्र राजकुमार हुनु हुन्थ्यो।

भगवान गौतम बुद्धको जन्म रानी महामायादेवी आफ्ना माइती देवदहमा सेविकाहरूका साथ लुम्बिनी उद्यानको बाटो हुँदै गईरहेकी थिइन्। रानी महामायादेवी लुम्बिनी उद्यान पुग्दा त्यहाँ रहेको पोखरीमा स्नान गरे। त्यसपछि ती पोखरीको पूर्वतिरका दुईवटा शालको वृक्ष बीच आराम गर्दै एउटा वृक्षको हाँगा दाहिने हातले समाउँदा प्रशब पिडा बिना नै भगवान बुद्ध जन्मिए।

दश महिनासम्म गर्भमा बिना कष्ट रहनु भएका भगवान बुद्ध जन्मनासाथै पूर्वतिर सात पाइला चाल्नु भएको थियो। सो बेला उहाँले यो मेरो अन्तिम जन्म हो भनी घोषणा गर्नु भएको पनि थियो।

उहाँको उक्त जन्म स्थानमा जन्म हुनु हुँदा पहिले दायाँ खुट्टाले भूमिमा टेक्नु भएको थियो। त्यसै उक्त ठाउँमा जन्म स्थल र पहिलो पाउ भूमिमा टेक्नु भएको भूमि लुम्बिनीबाट ३० किलो मिटर उत्तर पहाडको भूगर्भ भित्रका विचित्र ढुंगाको पाउ बनाएर प्रतिष्ठापन गरे। जुन पाउ आकृतीका ढुंगा मायादेवी मन्दिरको गर्भ उत्खनन गर्दा फेला परेको छ।

भगवान बुद्धको पवित्र जन्मस्थलमा सर्वप्रथम राजा सुद्धोदनबाटै मायादेवीको मन्दिर निर्माण गराई भगवान बुद्धको समयकालमै प्रसिद्ध बनाएको थियो। उक्त मन्दिर धेरै वर्ष पछि आगो लागेर लोप हुन पुगे। सो मूर्तिको पुनः निर्माण कार्य भारतका मौर्य सम्राट अशोकले गरेको थियो। पहिलो मन्दिर आगलागीले नष्ट भएको प्रमाण केही वर्ष अघि त्यस मन्दिरको गर्भ उत्खनन गर्दा पाइएको गोल (carbon) बाट दिएको छ।

इशवी तेश्रो शताब्दीमा मौर्य सम्राट अशोकले आफ्नो राज्यरोहणको २० औं वर्षको उपलक्ष्यमा बुद्धधर्म ग्रहण गर्दै भगवान बुद्धको जन्म दर्शन गर्न आउँदा मायादेवीको मन्दिर निर्माण गर्न र भगवान बुद्धको जन्म स्थल यही हो भनी ब्राहमी लिपि कुडिएको अशोक स्तम्भ र पोखरी लगायत चैत्यहरू र विहारको निर्माण गर्न तीन सुनका सिक्का अर्पण गरेका थिए। साथै त्यस वरपरका गाउँहरूलाई अनावश्यक करहरू तिर्न नपर्ने गरेको थियो।

तेलार नदिको किनारमा अवस्थित लुम्बिनी उद्यानको बीच रहेको मायादेवी मन्दिर पाँचौं शताब्दीमा चीनका बौद्धतीर्थ यात्री फाहियान र अर्को चीनका बौद्ध तीर्थ यात्री हुयन साङ्गले सातौं शताब्दीमा दर्शन गरेका थिए। हुयन साङ्गले आफ्नो यात्राको विवरणमा मायादेवीको मन्दिर वरपर अशोक स्तम्भ, पवित्र स्नान कुण्ड र केही स्तूपहरू देखेको कुरा लेखिएको छ। नेपालको राजधानी काठमाण्डौ उपत्यकाबाट २८० किलोमिटर पश्चिम र कपिलवस्तुबाट २० किलोमिटर पूर्वमा परेको लुम्बिनीमा मिथिलाहरूले पनि शासन गरेको थिए। आपसी कलह, भगडा र लडाईंको कारण बेलाबखत लुम्बिनी उद्यान स्थित बुद्धको पवित्र जन्मस्थल उपेक्षित भएको देखिन्छ।

पश्चिम नेपालमा खस राज्य हुँदा राजा जितारी मल्लले भगवान बुद्धको पावन जन्मस्थलमा गई मायादेवीको मन्दिरको दर्शन तथा पूजा गरेको इतिहासबाट थाहा पाउन सकिन्छ। त्यस्तै खस राजा रिपु मल्लले वि.सं. १३६९ मा त्यही गएर भगवान बुद्धको जन्म स्थल दर्शन गर्नुका साथै केही सुधार गरी आफ्नो नामबाट स्तम्भ राखेको कुरा इतिहासबाट थाहा हुन आउँछ।

राजनैतिक परिवर्तन एवं बेलाबखतको युद्ध र अशान्तिको कारण भगवान बुद्धको पवित्र जन्मस्थल करिव ६०० वर्षसम्म लोप हुन गए । बौद्ध ग्रन्थहरूमा भगवान बुद्धको जन्म लुम्बिनीमा भएको भन्ने कुरा प्रष्ट हुँदा पनि सो पवित्र स्थल कता हो ? भन्न नसकिने अवस्थामा पुगे ।

सन् १८९६ को जनवरीमा राणा शासनका पश्चिमाञ्चल प्रमुख भएर पाल्यामा गई शासन गरिरहेका खड्ग शम्शेर ज.ब.रा.को सकृयता र जर्मनका पुरातत्वविज्ञ डा. एलोइफ एन्टोन फुहररको अनुसन्धान कार्यक्रममा लुम्बिनी उद्यान भित्र भगवान बुद्धको जन्मस्थलमा अनेक भग्नावशेषहरू पत्ता लगाईयो जुन बेला अशोक स्तम्भको आधा भागसम्म माटोले पुरिरहेको थियो । तत्पश्चात बुद्धको जन्मभूमि विषय प्रचार प्रसार कार्यहरू स्वदेश तथा विदेशमा हुँदै गए ।

भयानक डरलाग्दो र उजाड लाग्दो अवस्थामा रहिरहेका बुद्धको पवित्र जन्मस्थल उत्खनन गर्दा मायादेवीको मन्दिर, स्नान कुण्ड, स्तुप र विहारका अवशेषहरू देखा पर्दै गए । सो कुराको प्रचार जति हुँदै गए उति नै स्वदेशी तथा विदेशी बौद्ध मार्गीहरूमा त्यस ठाउँमा गई मायादेवी मन्दिरको दर्शन गर्ने उत्सुकता बढ्दै गए ।

आजभन्दा ६७ वर्ष अघि केशर शम्शेर ज.ब.रा. पश्चिमी नेपालको हाकिम भएर खटि जाँदा सन् १९३२ मा मायादेवी मन्दिरको जगहरू माथि नै मन्दिर निर्माण गरी भगवान बुद्धको जन्मस्थलको लोकप्रियता बढाई दिए । केही स्वदेशी तथा विदेशी बुद्ध मार्गीहरू मायादेवी मन्दिरको दर्शन गर्न भारतको गोरखपुर भएर कठिनसाथ त्यहाँ पुग्ने गर्दथे ।

मायादेवीको मन्दिर पुनः स्थापना पश्चात केही स्थानीयवासिन्दाहरूले मायादेवीको मूर्तिलाई काली भनेर पूजा गर्ने र पशुपंछीहरूको बलि चढाउने गरे । तर केही बौद्ध सम्प्रदायका मानिसहरूले आफ्ना छोराहरूलाई छेवर र व्रतबन्ध गर्न त्यस मन्दिरमा जाने गरे । यसर्थ उक्त मन्दिरमा हिंसा गर्न नदिन प्रधानमन्त्री भीम शम्शेरले सन् १९८९ मा आदेश जारी गरे । जसले गर्दा भगवान बुद्धको पवित्र जन्मस्थलको महत्त्व गौरवमय बन्न गए ।

श्री ५ पृथ्वीनारायण शाहले नेपाललाई असली हिन्दुस्थान भनेकोले नेपालमा हिन्दु धर्म नै चाहिन्छ भन्ने धारण भएका राणा शासनको समयमा भगवान बुद्धको जन्मस्थल लुम्बिनीको पुनः प्रकाश भएतापनि यसलाई विकसित गर्दै लानुको सत्ता कुण्ठित पार्ने राजा जयस्थिती मल्लको नियमलाई राणा प्रधानमन्त्रीहरूले पनि पालना गरे । भगवान बुद्धको जन्म भएको राष्ट्र नेपालमा लामा भिक्षु र थेरवादी भिक्षुहरूलाई देश निकाला गर्ने प्रधानमन्त्री जुद्ध शम्शेर ज.ब.रा. नै थिए । किन कि उनैले सन् १९४६ मा अन्तिम पटक थेरवादी भिक्षुहरूलाई देश निकाला गरे र प्रधानमन्त्री पद्म शम्शेर ज.ब.रा.को पालामा सन् १९४८ मा थेरवादी भिक्षुहरूलाई स्वतन्त्रता दिए पछि नेपालमा भिक्षुहरू संगठित हुन सके । साथै उनैले सर्वप्रथम सरकारी कर्मचारीहरूलाई बुद्ध जयन्तीको दिन बिदा दिने परम्परा बसाली दिए । राजा महेन्द्रले नयाँ मुलुकी ऐन लागु गर्दा बुद्ध जयन्तीको दिन मारकाट गर्न निषेध गर्दै कसैलाई मृत्यु दण्ड दिन नपाउने व्यवस्था समेत गरे ।

लुम्बिनीमा नयाँ युगको आरम्भ

वि.सं.२००७ सालमा राणा शासनको अन्त्य पछि अति दूर्गम अवस्थामा रही रहेका भगवान बुद्धको पवित्र जन्मस्थल लुम्बिनीमा भिक्षुहरू रहनु पर्ने महशुस गरियो । सो अनुसार लुम्बिनी उद्यानमा नयाँ युगको शुभारम्भ गर्न वि.सं. २००८ सालमा स्व. श्री ५ त्रिभुवनले भिक्षु महानाम कोविदलाई मासिक ने. रु. ३०।- र भा. रु. ३०।- दुई जना अर्दलीलाई जनही ने. रु. १५।- र भा. रु. १५।- तलब दिएर भगवान बुद्धको जन्मस्थल लुम्बिनीमा पठाईयो ।

सो पछि तत्कालीन भैरहवाका बडाहाकिम शेरबहादुर शाही अध्यक्ष, भिक्षु महानाम कोविद सचिव, साहु मणिहर्ष कोषाध्यक्ष, भिक्षु अमृतानन्द, तौलिहवाका बडाहाकिम अनिरुद्ध प्रसाद सिंह र जमिन्दार शिवशरण प्रसाद चौधरी सदस्यहरू रहेको धर्मोदय समिति लुम्बिनीमा स्थापना गरे ।

त्यसपछि लुम्बिनी उद्यानमा रहेका सम्पदाहरूको सुरक्षा र तीर्थ यात्रीहरूको रक्षा गर्न त्यहाँ सेनाहरू राख्ने र प्रहरी चौकी स्थापना गर्ने काम भयो । यसको साथै हुलाकको व्यवस्था समेत गरे । त्यसपछि एउटा स्वास्थ्य केन्द्र स्थापना गरे ।

भगवान बुद्धको जन्मस्थल लुम्बिनीको दर्शन भ्रमण गर्न जाने, तीर्थ यात्रीहरू र पर्यटकहरूका लागि बाटोघाटो अति संकट परेको हुँदा धर्मोदय समिति लुम्बिनीको अनुरोधमा भारतको उत्तर प्रदेशका प्रान्तीय सरकारले लखनऊ, गोरखपुर र बनारसबाट लुम्बिनी उद्यान जाने मोटर चल्ने बाटो निर्माण गरी सहयोग गरे । उक्त मोटर चल्ने बाटो कर्चि भएको कारण कहिले काहिं यात्रुहरूले दुःख भोग्नु पर्दथ्यो । वर्षायाममा विदेशी पर्यटकहरू त्यहाँ आउँदा धेरै दुर्दशा भोग्नु पर्दथ्यो ।

वि.सं. २०१३ सालमा स्व. श्री ५ महेन्द्रबाट भगवान बुद्धको पवित्र जन्मभूमि लुम्बिनीमा निर्मित हुलाक भवनको उद्घाटन सम्पन्न भयो । साथै श्री ५ महेन्द्र प्राथमिक विद्यालय खोल्न रु. ५०००/- प्रदान गरे । जुन लुम्बिनी विद्यालय भनिन्छ । त्यसपछि त्यहाँका मानिसहरू बिरामी भएमा उपचार गर्ने काममा भिक्षु चुन्द शास्त्री सक्रिय भए । सोही क्रममा लुम्बिनीमा सक्रिय सेवा गरिरहेका भिक्षु महानाम कोविद पक्षघातले पीडित हुँदा उनको सेवा भिक्षु चन्द्र मणिमहास्थविरले गरे । केही शीप नलागेपछि भिक्षु महानामलाई भारतको कुशीनगरमा लगेर उपचार गरी स्वस्थ पारे ।

स्वदेशी तथा विदेशी तीर्थ यात्रीहरू र पर्यटकहरू भारतको लखनऊ, गोरखपुर र वाराणसीबाट मात्र जान पाउनेमा पूर्व पश्चिम राजमार्गको निर्माण पछि भैरहवाबाट लुम्बिनी र कपिलवस्तु जाने मोटर चल्ने बाटोहरू पनि निर्माण गरे । स्वदेशी भूमिको बाटो पाएपछि नेपालका असंख्य तीर्थ यात्रीहरू त्यसतर्फ ओहोरो लाग्न थाले र विदेशी तीर्थ यात्रीहरू र पर्यटकहरू पनि नेपालकै बाटो गरी जाने गरे । यसले गर्दा बुद्धको जन्मस्थलको संरक्षण, सम्बर्द्धन एवं विकास गर्न नयाँ उमंग र जोशहरू बढ्दै गए ।

भगवान बुद्धको जन्मस्थल र मायादेवी मन्दिरको दर्शन गर्न सन् १९६७ मा संयुक्त राष्ट्र संघका महासचिव उथान्त काठमाण्डौको भ्रमणको सिलसिलामा लुम्बिनी पुग्न भयो । उनले आफ्नै चन्दाबाट एउटा भवन बनाउन लगाइयो । सो अवसरमा उनले अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय समुदायसंग भगवान बुद्धको पवित्र जन्मस्थलमा तीर्थयात्रीहरू र पर्यटकहरूका लागि एउटा केन्द्र बनाउन आह्वान गरे । तीन वर्ष पछि उनको अनुरोधमा तेह राष्ट्रहरूले लुम्बिनी विकास निमित्त सहमति जनाइयो । यसैको फलस्वरूप संयुक्त राज्य अमेरिकाको न्युयोर्कमा अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय लुम्बिनी विकास समिति स्थापना भयो । संयुक्त राष्ट्र संघमा रहेका नेपाली स्थायी प्रतिनिधिको अध्यक्ष रहेको सो समितिमा अफगानिस्तान, बर्मा, कम्पूचिया, भारत, इण्डोनेशिया, जापान, लाओस, मलेशिया, पाकिस्तान, सिंगापुर, श्रीलंका र थाइल्याण्ड सदस्य छन् । सो समिति स्थापना भएको तीन वर्ष पछि बंगलादेश, भूटान र दक्षिण कोरिया पनि सदस्य भए ।

अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय लुम्बिनी विकास समितिको स्थापना भएको र यसका सदस्य राष्ट्रहरूले लुम्बिनीको विकास गर्न उत्सुकता देखाए पछि जापनी सुप्रसिद्ध पुरातत्वविज्ञ प्रो.केनजो ताङ्गले लुम्बिनीको विकास निमित्त

गुरुयोजना तयार गर्न अग्रसर भएर सो गुरुयोजना भारत, थाइल्याण्ड र नेपालका प्रतिनिधिहरू जापानको राजधानी टोकियोमा भएको बैठकबाट सर्व सम्मतीबाट अनुमोदन गरियो । सन् १९७८ मा नेपाल सरकारले पनि उक्त योजनालाई अनुमोदन गरे ।

गुरुयोजनामा तीन स्व्वायर माइल जमीनको परिवर्तन गर्ने, भगवान बुद्धको विश्वव्यापी शान्ती र मोक्षको सन्देश फैलाउन खाली जमीन विस्तार गर्ने, सम्पूर्ण मानवलाई भगवान बुद्धको उपदेश मनाउन प्रवेश योग्य प्राकृतिक दृश्यहरूको वातावरण तयार गर्ने, पहिलो लक्ष्य राखिएको थियो । प्राकृतिक दृश्यहरूको पुनः सम्भार र दृश्य खिच्ने, स्व्वायर घेरा बन्दी मण्डलको समानता र साधारणता प्रकट गर्ने र संसारीक गहनको प्रतीक बनाउने दोश्रो लक्ष्य राखिएको छ । स्व्वायर र सर्कल आकारको ढाँचा गरी शान्तिपूर्ण उद्यानको प्राकृतिक संरचना खिच्ने स्मरणार्थ भूमिगृह निर्माण गर्ने र नहर र पोखरीहरू बनाउने तेस्रो लक्ष्य राखिएको छ ।

सो गुरुयोजना अनुसार हाल भैरहवाको पश्चिम १९ किलोमिटर परदेखि उत्तर-दक्षिण धुरीको चतुर्भुज करण आकारको हुने र यसलाई तीन खण्ड गरी प्रत्येकको एक एकमाइल स्व्वायरको बनाईएको छ । ती तीनै क्षेत्रहरूका इकाई मिलेरै १,४९४ मिटर लम्बाई भएको छ । जसमा पैदल हिंड्ने बाटो र नहर पनि बनाइएको छ ।

संयुक्त राष्ट्रसंघको महासचिव स्व. उथान्तको प्रेरणा र मित्र राष्ट्रहरूका योगदानबाट लुम्बिनीको विकास कार्यहरूले निरन्तरता पाइरहेको छ । अतः स्व. उथान्तको देन अत्यन्त प्रसंसनीय छ । उनको कार्यकाल पछि संयुक्त राष्ट्र संघका महामन्त्री भएका जाभिर पेरेज द क्वायलारले पनि भगवान बुद्धको पवित्र जन्मस्थलको विकास निमित्त निकै प्रेरणा दिए । सन् १९८९ जुलाई ११ का दिन लुम्बिनीको विकास गर्न संयुक्त राष्ट्र संघको पूर्ण रूपले हृदयदेखि समर्थन गरेको कुरा प्रकाशमा ल्याइयो ।

लुम्बिनी विकास कोष

लुम्बिनीको महत्त्वलाई विश्वव्यापी आकर्षक बनाउन सन् १९८५ मा श्री ५ महाराजाधिराज वीरेन्द्र वीर विक्रम शाहदेवको संरक्षकत्वमा लुम्बिनी विकास कोष स्थापना भयो । श्री ५ अधिराजकुमार ज्ञानेन्द्रको अध्यक्षतामा स्थापित उक्त कोषको सदस्यहरूमा श्री ५ को सरकारका प्रमुख सचिव, कानून तथा न्याय सचिव, शिक्षा तथा संस्कृतिक सचिव, निर्माण तथा यातायात सचिव, नेपाल संस्कृतिक तथा प्राकृतिक सम्पदा संरक्षण संघका उपाध्यक्ष, धर्मोदय सभाका अध्यक्ष, र श्री ५ महाराजाधिराजका उपप्रमुख सचिव थिए भने परराष्ट्र उपसचिव सदस्य सचिव थियो ।

उक्त कोषको स्थापना पछि लुम्बिनी गाउँ, आश्रित क्षेत्र र पवित्र उद्यानको प्रवन्ध गरियो । लुम्बिनी गाउँ आउन भित्र भगवान बुद्धको जन्मस्थल दर्शन गर्न र भ्रमण गर्न आउने मानिसहरूको लागि सुविधा युक्त आश्रमहरू, खानेकुरा पसलहरू र पर्यटक सुविधाहरूका व्यवस्था भए । निर्देशित आश्रित क्षेत्रहरूमा पूजा, प्रार्थना, ध्यान गर्न सक्ने गराई अध्ययन गर्ने व्यवस्था र विश्व शान्ति, मानवता र मुक्तिका कामना गर्ने अवसरहरू दिने व्यवस्था गरे । पवित्र उद्यान नगिचको हरियाली वन भित्र ४१ जमिन को टुक्रा छुट्ट्याएर आश्रय दिने स्थल बनाइयो । जहाँ विभिन्न राष्ट्रहरू, संस्थाहरू र संगठनहरूले धार्मिक विहारका र संरचनाका स्थानहरू बनाउने र सभागृह, पुस्तकालय, अनुसन्धान केन्द्र र संग्रहालय जस्तो महत्त्वपूर्ण निर्माण कार्य भयो । उपरोक्त व्यवस्थाहरू भगवान बुद्धको विश्वशान्ति सन्देशको अनुभूति गर्न पाओस् भन्ने हेतुले गरेको भनिन्छ ।

लुम्बिनीमा सडक निर्माण, हवाई सेवाको विस्तार, खाने पानीको आपूर्ति, विद्युत सुविधा, संरचना जमिनको समथर, बाढि नियन्त्रय, सम्बन्धी अधिकांश कार्यहरू भई सकेका छन् भने भैरहवा-लुम्बिनी मूल सडक, पैदल यात्रीहरूका लागि मार्ग र बैल गाडीका लागि बाटोहरूका निर्माण कार्यहरू भइसकेका छन् । सडकका दायाँ बायाँ हरियाली वृक्षहरू हुर्किसकेका छन् । यसको साथै काठमाण्डौ लुम्बिनी बीच हवाई सेवा संचालन गर्ने लक्ष्य अनुरूप नापी कार्य पूरा भइसकेको छ । लुम्बिनीमा नै विमानघाट निर्माण भए पछि ४५ मिनेटमा काठमाण्डौबाट लुम्बिनी पुग्न सक्ने छन् ।

लुम्बिनी विकास कोष र पुरातत्व विभागले लुम्बिनी विकास सम्बन्धी कामहरू गुरुयोजना अनुसार भइरहेको छ । यसलाई सुन माथि सुगन्ध छन् मित्रराष्ट्रहरूका सहयोगको महत्त्व पनि त्यतिकै रहेको पाइन्छ । भगवान बुद्धको शान्ति सन्देश विश्वभरी फैलाउन मित्रराष्ट्रहरूले पनि आ-आफ्नै राष्ट्रिय परम्परा र संस्कृति अनुकूल विहारहरूका निर्माण गर्ने गर्दैछन् । यसै सन्दर्भमा चीनले चिनिया बुद्धिष्ट मोनाष्ट्रि भव्य एवं आकर्षक ढंगले निर्माण गरी सकेको छ, र तीर्थ यात्रुहरू र पर्यटकहरूका मन तानी सकेको छ । यस्तै बर्माले लोकामुनि विहारको नामबाट भव्य चैत्य आफ्नै संस्कृती पारामा निर्माण गर्ने काम पुरा गरी सकेको छ । बुद्ध, धर्म र संघको प्रतिक तीन वटा आकर्षक विहारहरू आफ्नै शैलीले निर्माण गरी तीर्थ यात्रीहरू र पर्यटकहरूलाई मनमोहक पार्ने भइसकेका छन् ।

दक्षिण कोरियाले डाइ-सड-सुक गोसा नामको विहार आफ्नै ढाँचाले निर्माण गरी रहे जस्तै भियतनाम, थाइल्याण्ड श्रीलंका र निर्माण गर्न जुटिरहेका छन् । ती निर्माणाधीन विहारहरू दुई वर्षदेखि पाँच वर्षसम्ममा पूरा हुने लक्ष्य छ । जापानबाट निर्माण भइरहेको शान्ति चैत्य विहार सो विहारको निर्माण कार्यमा लागि रहेका जापानी भिक्षु नावातामेको सन् १९९७ जुलाई ३ का दिन हत्या नभएको भए सायद पुरा भई सक्थ्यो । (१९९७ अगष्ट सेप्टेम्बरको द हिमालयन भ्वाईस् हेर्नु होस्)

नेपालीहरूका तर्फबाट बनाइरहेको विहारहरूको निर्माण कार्यहरू हेर्दा तितो र खरौं अनुभव गर्न सकिन्छ ।

सर्वप्रथम अनागारिका धम्मवतीको आयोजकत्वमा निर्माण भइरहेको विहारलाई हेर्दा चारवटा खम्बा माथि स्वयम्भूको चैत्य थियो । सो भन्दा मुनि भगवान बुद्धको जन्म पछि सात वटा पाइला टेकेकोमा पाइलै पिच्छे एक एक वटा गरी सात वटा कमलको फुल निर्माण गरिएको र बीचमा भगवान बुद्धकै मूर्ति रहेको छ त्यसको बायाँ पट्टि मायादेवीले शालको वृक्ष समाइरहेको छ । उक्त ठाउँको दाहिने एउटा लामो लंगको आश्रम र अर्को बायाँ अगाडि तर्फ जोडिएको आवासिय भवन छ । उक्त विहारमा करुणामय चोक मोतिलाल शिल्पकार जावलाखेल भनी उनैले बनाएको विहार भनेर फलामे रेलिङमा नाम लेखिएको छ । उत्तर तर्फ कमलको फुलमाथि भगवान बुद्ध विराजमान भइरहेको पोखरी छ । यसको आयोजना अनागारिका धम्मवती र बनाउने मोतिलाल शिल्पकार भन्ने देखाईएको छ ।

यसै गरी नेपाली विहार भन्ने मन्दिरमा चारैतिर बन्द र अधुरो छ, मन्दिरको माथि चैत्यको गर्भ आकार गुम्ज छ । यसलाई त्यसै छाड्नुको अर्थ कसैले भन्न सकिएन । यसको अघिल्लो तर्फ भने जोडका-तोडले निर्माण गर्दैछन् ।

मायादेवी मन्दिर

सन् १९३२ मा बनाईएको मायादेवीको मन्दिरको पछडिपट्टिको पर्खालमा पिपलको बोट उम्रेको र त्यसको जराहरूले सो मन्दिरलाई बाँधिनै लगेको र मायादेवीको मूर्तिलाई समेत बिथोल्ने गरेको हुँदा ती मन्दिरको जीर्णोद्धार गर्नु आवश्यक थियो । त्यसैले जापान बुद्धिष्ट फेडरेशनले उक्त मन्दिर जीर्णोद्धार गर्न नेपाल सरकारसंग सम्झौता गरे । सो सम्झौता अनुसार बि.सं. २०४९ मा उक्त मन्दिर जीर्णोद्धार गर्न नेपाल सरकारसंग मन्त्रीद्वय रामकृष्ण ताम्रकार र गोविन्दराज जोशीले मन्दिर भत्काउने कार्यको शुभारम्भ गरायो ।

मायादेवीको मन्दिर पुनःनिर्माण गर्ने क्रममा जग उत्खनन गर्ने काम जाँदा सबै भन्दा तल भगवान बुद्धको दाहिने पाउ भन्ने अपूर्व ढुंगाको चिन्ह देखा परे । उक्त चिन्ह सोही ठाउँमा प्रतिष्ठापना गरी अनुकुल किसिमबाट मायादेवीको मन्दिर निर्माण गर्ने भन्दा सो चिन्ह संग्रहालयमा राख्नु पर्ने विवाद चलियो । सोही विवादको कारण पूरै भत्काई सकेको मन्दिर पुनः निर्माण गर्न अनेक विवादले स्थान लिए । यतिका वर्ष बितिसक्दा पनि मायादेवी मन्दिर निर्माण गर्न सकिएन । सो मन्दिरको जगलाई अहिले प्लाष्टिकको बारले घेरियो भने पछि जालितारले घेरी पालले छोपिराख्ने गरे । जो अहिले सम्म त्यस्तै छाडिएको छ ।

उता मायादेवीको मन्दिरबाट भिकेका मूर्ति उत्तरतर्फ दक्षिणमोहडा गरी एउटा टहरा बनाएर राखिराखेका छन् । भक्तजनहरू, तीर्थयात्रीहरू र पर्यटकहरू सो अवस्था देखेर चिन्तित छन् ।

जापान बुद्धिष्ट फेडरेशन मायादेवीको मन्दिर यथासक्दो चाँदो पुनः निर्माण गर्न तैयार थियो तर पनि सकेसम्म मायादेवीको मन्दिर बन्न नदिने षडयन्त्र जारी नै छ । ती षडयन्त्रको कारण मायादेवीको मन्दिर बनाउन ढिलाई हुँदा नेपालीहरू कै धन र श्रमले बनाउने पनि चर्चामा आए । नेपालीहरू कै लगानीबाट गत पौष ७ गते देखि उक्त मन्दिर बनाउने अठोट गर्दै ९५ लाख उठाईयो । तर सो प्रयास पनि असफल सावित भयो । मायादेवीको मन्दिर कहिले पुनः निर्माण हुने हो अहिले सम्म पनि गर्भ मै छ ।

उपरोक्त समस्या बाहेक हाल मायादेवीको मूर्ति रहिआएको टहराको वरपर पनि बोट लगाउने गरेका छन् यसको अर्थ केही वर्ष पछि सो टहरा पिपलको बोटले मायादेवीको मन्दिर जस्तै तहसनहस होस् भन्ने थियो ।

भगवान बुद्धको जन्मस्थलमा रहेको मायादेवी मन्दिर भविष्यमा कुनै प्रकारका खतरा उत्पन्न हुन नसक्ने बनाउनु अनिवार्य छ ।

मायादेवी मन्दिर निर्माणमा जति ढिलो हुन्छ उति नै लुम्बिनी विकास कोष र पुरातत्व विभागप्रति जनआस्था र विश्वास घट्ने स्वभाविक नै हुनेछ । मित्रराष्ट्रहरूका अलावा विश्व समुदायको सामु पनि भगवान बुद्धको पवित्र जन्मथलोमा भइरहेका विवादले बदनामी बन्ने छ ।

सन् १९९७ देखि भगवान बुद्धको पवित्र जन्मस्थल लुम्बिनी विश्व सांस्कृतिक सम्पदाको सूचिमा सूचिकृत भईसकेको छ । अतः मायादेवीको मन्दिर पुनः निर्माण कार्य छिटो छरिटो किसिमले सम्पन्न गर्ने जरुरी छ ।

(साभार The Himalayan Voice, Feb/March 2000, No.18)

Annual Report of International Buddhist Society 2003-2004

Dr. N.K.Mallik
Member-Secretary

Surrounding VDCs of Lumbini, the birthplace of Lord Buddha are very backward in the field of development. Bhikkhu Maitri came from Kathmandu and established International Buddhist Society and started the development activities from 1993 for the help of community people. First of all, IBS started a free health service centre with the help of Nepalese and foreign friends of Bhikkhu Maitri.

Nowadays, the IBS is working in the rural area motivating the local people to work for the benefit of the community and to become healthy, wealthy and civilized.

Free Health Service centre

IBS Free health service centre opens for local poor people daily from 8.00am to 5.00pm. The average number of daily patients is 150-200. They come for check-up and medicines are given free of cost. Even the pilgrims from foreign countries and Nepal are also getting this facility. IBS charges Rs.10 for the new registration and Rs.5.00 for the old patients. Since the beginning, 3,41,869 patients have been checked up to now. 21,138 acupuncture patients have been benefited from this clinic. In 2003, we have treated 41,190 patients. In this year, with the kind contribution of Bob Bowman and Coral Mack, Anicca Foundation, a new building especially for free health service centre has been built. Rs. 13,57,000.00 has been spent. Donations have been received from different donors:

- ~ From Anicca Foundation : Rs. 11,00,000.00,
- ~ Dharma Ratna and Pushpamaya Shakya : Rs. 1,50,000.00,
- ~ Ms. Buddhprabha Shakya : Rs. 50,000.00
- ~ Royal Thai Embassy, Kathmandu : Rs. 57,000.00

Mr. Sunil Shakya of Kathmandu Guest House and Buddhamaya Gardens has donated the furniture needed for the patients at the waiting Anicca hall. Rs. 24,000.00 has been spent for it. IBS Free health service centre had already been shifted in this building on last 2547 Buddha Jayanti. Again another storey has been built for the health education & training program (one hall and a room). This will be opened within the 2548 Buddha Jayanti.

This health centre has treated the patients of dysentery, abnormal pain, gastritis, leucorrhoea, diarrhoea and different diseases and as well as the patients suffering from paralysis, sciatica, joint pains and polio are treated by the acupuncture method. One Doctor, one Health Assistant, one Dispenser and a helper are available in the clinic.

Community Health Program

The surrounding 6 VDCs of Lumbini are Madhubani, Ekla, Tenuhawa, Lumbini Adarsa, Khudabagar and Bhagawanpur have been taken for the Community Health Program project. The survey has been done in 6 VDCs. The total population is 48,833. Since 1996, this project