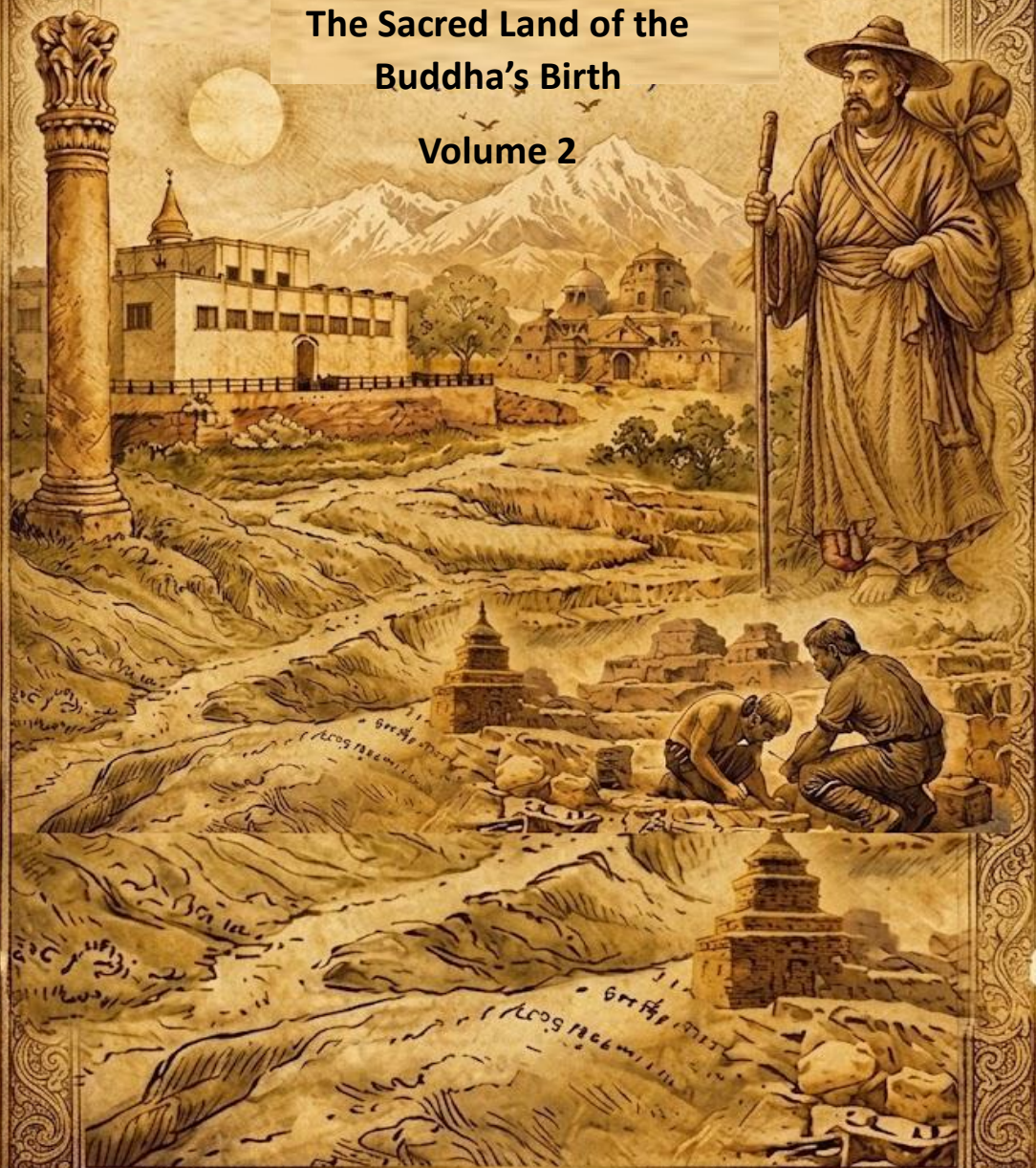


Lumbini to Kusinara:

The Sacred Land of the Buddha's Birth

Volume 2



**Lumbini to Kusinara :
The
Sacred Land of the Buddha's Birth
Volume 2**

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Cover Image: The city of Kapilvastu—capital of the Sakya kingdom situated at the foothills of the Himalayas—along with the picturesque Lumbini and the Ashoka Pillar rising near the Maya Devi Temple, stand as monuments commemorating the noble birth of the Buddha. These sites also evoke the invaluable contributions made by Chinese pilgrims and archaeologists—who conducted excavations at Lumbini—in confirming the birthplace of the Buddha.

**The Gift of Dhamma excels all gifts,
The taste of the Dhamma excels all tastes,
The delight in Dhamma excels all delights.**
(Dhammapada: 354)

Presentation

This publication was compiled to express our gratitude for the immense benefits we constantly receive by following the noble teachings—the Dhamma of the Blessed One. Our effort is like trying to collect the water of the vast ocean into a small vessel with our hands. In this spirit, it is fitting to recall the words of Vidagama Maha Thero from the *Budugunaalankāraya*, which beautifully express the reverence one feels in making even the simplest offering to the Buddha:

**The Blessed One was honoured
And revered with celestial coral flowers.
I have only this humble work to offer to Him, the Great Sage.
My gift is but a wildflower—Yet who can say it is unworthy?**

Remembering those modest words, we offer this humble offering — like an innocent flower in the forest— at the golden feet of the Blessed One.

**“To the Great Sage—an ocean of virtues bestowing blessings,
A healer for the suffering of all beings,
And a dispeller of the dense darkness of ignorance—
I bow in joyful reverence.”**

(Lowada Sangarawa: Ven. Vidagama Maitreya Thero)

Upasika Sudhamma,
Month of Poson, (June) 2026,
Bundanoon, New South Wales, Australia.

Acknowledgements and Tributes

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With much respect and gratitude, we gratefully acknowledge the exceptional English translations of Tipitaka by Venerable Sangha: Bhikkhu Bodhi, Bhikkhu Brahmalī, Bhikkhu Sujato and Mr. Maurice Walshe a devout Buddhist which we used in this work as our primary sources.

Introduction

The primary purpose of this volume, titled **“From Lumbini to Kusinara: The Wondrous Dhamma Journey of Gotama Buddha,”** is to present the incomparable forty-five-year life story and compassionate mission of Gotama Buddha—from His birth as a royal prince in the Sal Grove of Lumbini to His Supreme Parinibbana beneath the Sal trees of Kusinara. Based primarily on the Pali Tipitaka and Buddhist tradition, and enriched with historical and archaeological insights where appropriate, this work seeks to present the Buddha’s extraordinary mission and pivotal life events in a clear manner, bridging ancient wisdom with the contemporary world.

This publication is designed to be released as a multi-volume series, with each volume focusing on significant milestones in the Buddha’s life. Together, they outline His birth as Prince Siddhartha in the Sakya realm, His renunciation of royal comforts in Kapilvastu in search of Truth, His severe austerities in Uruvela, His realization of Supreme Enlightenment through the Middle Path, and His tireless forty-five years of walking from village to village to share the Dhamma for the well-being of all beings, culminating in His Parinibbana in the Upavattana Sal Grove of the Malla Kings at Kusinara.

As you turn these pages, you will trace the sacred footsteps of the Buddha across the dusty roads of ancient India—meeting kings, outcastes, philosophers, and humble farmers alike. You will see how He transformed their lives through the simple yet profound message that the cessation of suffering is achievable by all. Within these pages lie the sacred turning points of an extraordinary life, offering timeless examples of wisdom, patience, rational inquiry, and boundless loving-kindness cultivated over four decades of selfless service.

This work is more than a historical biography; it serves as a spiritual guide for anyone seeking a meaningful and peaceful life. The Buddha’s awakening—transcending the darkness of ignorance through supreme effort and wisdom—stands as a powerful testament to the potential of

human effort. As the greatest spiritual light in human history, the Buddha laid down a path that remains fully accessible to us today.

It is with deep reverence that we present this second volume, **“From Lumbini to Kusinara: The Sacred Land of the Buddha’s Birth.”** The first volume has been published under the title: **“The Noble Birth of the Buddha.”** If reading this account of the Buddha’s wondrous life brings devotion and peace to your heart, our humble endeavour will have achieved its highest purpose.

In Isipatana’s quiet shade,
The Sage set free the Wheel of Truth,
A timeless light for gods and men.
For forty-five devoted years,
He walked the dusty roads of India,
Soothing the world’s quiet —
With boundless empathy and love.

Like an ancient chariot bound with cord,
His body aged, yet never wavered;
Through mountain frost and desert sun,
He bore the lamp of liberation.

Through mountain cold and desert heat,
With His noble Sangha by His side,
He dispelled the night of delusion,
For all who sought the dawn.

Guided by boundless compassion,
Anchored in unshakeable peace,
He trod the quiet path to Kusinara,
To rest beneath the blooming Sal trees.

May the light of the Dhamma shine forever!
May all beings attain the supreme bliss of Nibbana!

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Volume 2: The Sacred Land of the Buddha's Birth

The first volume of this compilation described how Prince Siddhartha was born in the Lumbini Sal grove in ancient India (Jambudvīpa). There are various historical opinions and debates regarding the precise time and location of the Buddha's birth. The primary objective of this chapter is to clearly elucidate these details by correlating the Tripitaka texts, long-standing Buddhist traditions, and modern archaeological findings.

1. The time when Gautama Buddha was born

The specific year of the Buddha's birth is not explicitly stated in the Pali Tripitaka texts. However, Asian Buddhist traditions widely accept that the Buddha was born on the full moon day of the month of Vesak in 623 BCE.

1.1 Vesak Day: The Noble Day of the Buddha

For centuries, the entire Buddhist world has celebrated Vesak by commemorating the three most significant events in the life of the Buddha—collectively known as the 'Themagula' (three auspicious)—namely His birth, Enlightenment (Sambodhi), and the Passing away— 'Parinirvana'. Internationally, this day is also known as 'Buddha Purnima' or 'Buddha Day'. There are two key milestones that contributed to this historic tradition gaining official international recognition.

1) The 1950 World Fellowship of Buddhists (WFB) Conference:

At the inaugural World Fellowship of Buddhists conference held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, a unanimous decision was reached to observe the full moon day of Vesak as the official Buddhist day

commemorating the threefold events in the life of the Buddha. During this grand conference, King Mahendra of Nepal declared Vesak a public holiday in Nepal and invited other Buddhist nations to adopt this noble measure as well. (For details, see: Appendix: 1).

2) Recognition by the United Nations (UN) in 1999:

Through the intervention of several countries, including Sri Lanka, the United Nations granted international recognition to Vesak Day in 1999; from the year 2000 onwards, it became an "International Day of Vesak" officially observed at UN offices. Certain Buddhist traditions—specifically Mahayana and Japanese Buddhist traditions—celebrate the birth of the Buddha in months other than Vesak.

2: Scholars' Views on the Era of the Buddha's Birth

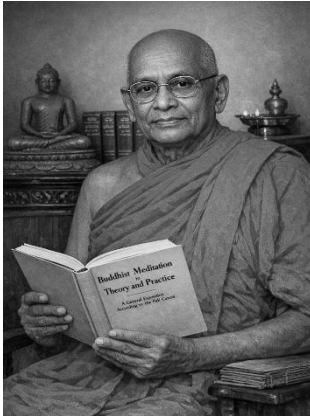
Local and foreign Buddhist scholars, as well as learned monks, have expressed their views regarding the era in which the Buddha lived, employing various historical methodologies. A brief summary of these views is presented below.



2.1 The view of Venerable Narada Maha Thero 1

Venerable Narada Mahathero, who was a Buddhist scholar did an immeasurable mission to popularize Theravada Buddhism internationally, stated in his book: "The Buddha and his Teachings" as follows:

"On the full moon of Vesak in the year 623 BC, in Lumbini Gardens, a noble prince was born who was destined to become the world's greatest religious teacher one day."



2.2 The View of Ven. Dr. Paravahara Vajiranana Maha Thera ²

Ven. Paravahara Vajiranana—a Buddhist scholar well-versed in both Buddhist and Western philosophy who served as the Chief Editor of the Buddha Jayanthi Tripitaka Editorial Board—recorded the birth of the Buddha as follows:

"The Bodhisattva was born on the Vesak full moon day in the year 566 B.V. (Before Vikrama Era) at the Lumbini Sal Grove, belonging to the city of Kapilavastu in the Sakkyan territory."

Chronology: The 'Vikrama Era'—an ancient Indian calendar system—commenced in 58 B.C. Accordingly, the year 566 B.V. corresponds to 624 B.C. When this figure is added to the current year (2026 A.D.), it becomes evident that this event took place 2,582 years ago. This aligns perfectly with the traditional Buddhist Era system used in Sri Lanka.

2.3 The View of Mr. Maurice Walshe and Western Scholars ³

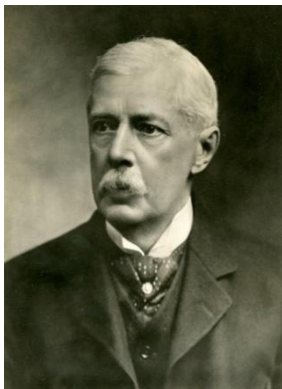
Mr. Maurice Walshe, a renowned Western Buddhist scholar who translated the entire Pali 'Dīgha Nikāya' (long length discourses) into English, notes in the introduction to his work that, based on evidence from Western historians, many Western scholars propose that Siddhartha Gautama lived between 563 and 483 BCE.



However, the Theravada Buddhist tradition of Southeast Asia—including Sri Lanka, Myanmar, and Thailand—accepts the period from 623 to 543 BCE. The historic 2500th Buddha Jayanti celebrations (1956–1957), observed with great reverence across the entire Buddhist world, were also based on this

traditional chronology accepted by Buddhists in Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia. ⁴

2. 4 The View of Dr. John Faithfull (J. F.) Fleet ⁵



Dr. J. F. Fleet—a renowned British civil servant, historian, and epigraphist who engaged in in-depth studies of the life of Gautama Buddha and Indian history while serving in British India—employed a distinctive methodology to determine the era of the Buddha. Based on astronomical calculations conducted in India and analyses of early Buddhist literary sources, he concluded that the Buddha was born around 563 BCE.

2.5 Archaeological evidence revealed by excavations conducted by Professor Robin Coningham and his team at Lumbini in 2013 ⁶

The most significant and crucial recent evidence enabling the scientific confirmation of the precise timeframe of the Buddha's birth was discovered in 2013. An international archaeological team, led by Professor Robin Coningham—a Professor of Archaeology at Durham University (UK) and the UNESCO Chair in Archaeological Ethics and Practice in Cultural Heritage—conducted a remarkable

excavation at Lumbini. Through archaeological excavations carried out in the subsurface layers of the Mayadevi Temple within the sacred site of Lumbini, Nepal, they revealed to the world a robust, scientific, and empirical basis indicating that the birth of the Buddha took place during the 6th century BCE.



Discovery of Timber and Brick Structures: While examining the lower strata of the Mayadevi Temple site, researchers were able to uncover the remains of what is considered the

earliest Buddhist shrine ever discovered. An ancient timber structure found there, along with a brick structure situated above it, was subjected to scientific radio-carbon dating and Optically Stimulated Luminescence (OSL) testing. These tests scientifically confirmed that the structures date back to the 6th century BCE. ⁷

Connection to the story of the Buddha's birth:

According to archaeologists, this ancient wooden structure formed a central enclosure designed to surround a Sal tree (or a similar tree). The religious structure built around this tree aligns perfectly with the historical account in Buddhist literature, which describes Prince Siddhartha being born while Queen Mahamaya held onto a branch of a Sal tree.

This discovery clearly provides a definitive historical resolution to the long-standing debate among scholars regarding the century in which the Buddha was born. A brief description of the evidence emerging from the 2013 archaeological excavations—confirming that the Buddha was born in the 6th century BCE—is provided in Appendix 2.

Our Stance

Although there is no unanimous consensus among international historians regarding the precise year of the Buddha's birth, it is our intention to proceed with this work based on the year 623 BCE—a date widely accepted across the Buddhist world. Furthermore, scientific evidence obtained from modern archaeological excavations conducted in 2013, indicating that the Buddha's birth occurred during the 6th century BCE, serves to further substantiate this position.

3: Lumbini—Is it the sacred site where the Buddha was born?

The following points are presented to provide readers with an accurate understanding of 'Lumbini'—the sacred site where our Gautama Buddha was born into this world as Prince Siddhartha. This presentation draws upon teachings from the Tripitaka, long-standing Buddhist traditions, historical sources, and evidence revealed through modern archaeological excavations.

It is a widely accepted fact among the majority of scholars—both Eastern and Western—that Gautama Buddha was born in ancient Jambudvipa (the region spanning the modern-day borderlands of Nepal and India). However, in recent times, certain groups have put forward theories suggesting alternative locations. Our primary objective is to present the factual details regarding the Buddha's birthplace to the reader—drawing upon evidence from the Tripitaka and archaeological findings—without taking a biased stance or becoming rigidly attached to such external debates.

The Buddha taught 'Ehipassika' (come and see)

In accordance with that noble counsel, we invite the reader to examine this historical evidence with an open mind and critical

discernment—free from blind faith or preconceived notions—and thereby arrive at a true understanding.



4: The Birthplace of the Buddha According to the Tripitaka

Although the Tripitaka does not contain modern geographical descriptions—such as those found on contemporary maps—regarding the specific location of the Buddha's noble birth, it does provide numerous direct scriptural references confirming that He was born in the Shakya Kingdom, situated at the foothills of the Himalayas. The maps shown above illustrate the location of the Sakya territory at that time—at the foothills of Himalaya.

4.1 Scriptural references confirming that The Buddha was born in the Sakya Kingdom of Ancient India

According to Pabbaja Sutta of Suttanipatha, Kuddaka Nikaya:⁸

When the Ascetic Siddhartha arrived in the city of Rajagaha during

his quest for the noble path to liberation from the suffering of 'Samsara', King Bimbisara met him. On that occasion, the King inquired about the ascetic's lineage and clan. In response, the Bodhisattva spoke as follows:

**"There is, O king, a country straight ahead,
on the slope of the Himalayas,
abounding in wealth and energy,
[ruled] by one native to the Kosalans.
I am by clan an Ādicca,
by birth I am a Sakkyan.
I have gone forth from that family, O king,
not longing for sensual pleasures."**

This makes it clear that the Bodhisattva directly identified his native region as the Sakkyia territory situated at the foothills of the Himalayas.

According to Nalaka Sutta of Suttanipatha, Kuddaka Nikaya:⁹ This sutta describes how the deities of the celestial realms rejoiced and proclaimed the news at the historic moment when Prince Siddhartha was born in the Lumbini Sal grove. The direct statement "Lumbini in the Shakya territory" clearly elucidates the precise geographical location where the Buddha's birth took place.

**In Lumbinī, a village in the Sakkyan country,
the Bodhisattva — the excellent gem, unequalled —
has been born into the human world for well-being and
happiness; hence we are so delighted and extremely
jubilant.**

In Buddhavamsa Pali: ¹⁰ The Buddha himself stated the following regarding his birthplace:

"My birthplace is Kapilavastu."

In this sutta too, the Buddha, recalling the place of His final human birth, declares:

"The city named Kapilavastu is the capital of the Sakya kingdom—it is the city of my birth." ¹¹

According to Mahaparinibbana sutta: ¹² As the Buddha was preparing for the Great Parinirvana, He spoke to Venerable Ananda about four significant sacred sites (the Four Great Sacred Sites) ¹³that devout Buddhists could visit to inspire a sense of serene devotion. He specifically identified the first of these sites as:

**"The place where the Tathagata was born"
(that is, Lumbini).**

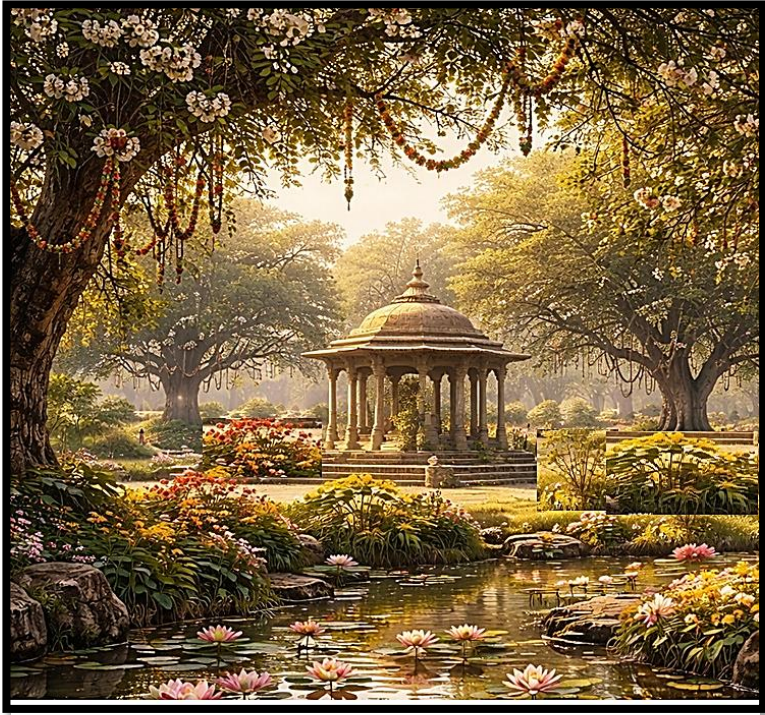
When examining the collective evidence from these discourses, it is irrefutably confirmed that the Shakya Kingdom—situated at the foothills of the Himalayas and encompassing the city of Kapilavastu and Lumbini—was indeed the Shakya territory located in ancient Jambudvīpa (India), the true birthplace of Gautama Buddha.

Therefore, when arriving at any historical conclusion regarding the Buddha's birth, we must prioritize these highly sacred Tripitaka sources.

5: Lumbini Garden

Based on the aforementioned evidence from the Tripitaka, it is confirmed that the Buddha was born in Lumbini, a location belonging to the Sakya territory in ancient India. According to ancient Buddhist literature, Lumbini was a remarkably beautiful grove filled with Sal trees. The garden was situated in the Rohini River valley along the route between the cities of Kapilavastu and

Devadaha. Ancient Buddhist commentaries recount that King Anjana of the Koliya realm had this forest developed into an ornamental garden for his chief consort, Queen Lumbini; consequently, it became known as the 'Lumbini Garden'. ¹⁴



Beautiful Lumbini!

In Buddhist literature, Lumbini Park is described as a magnificent site possessing splendour akin to the 'Nandana Garden' of the gods of the Tavatimsa heaven. The word 'Lumbini' also holds a special meaning in the Nepali language, signifying "beautiful" or "delightful." Mr. Axel Plathe, the former UNESCO representative to Nepal, describes the spiritual and natural beauty of Lumbini Garden as follows:

"Lumbini is a dreamlike, deeply symbolic sacred site. Its sacred Bodhi trees, historic Sal grove, beautiful flower clusters, and the divine serenity pervading the entire environment—all combine to convey to the heart that this is indeed the hallowed ground where Prince Siddhartha was born. Thus, what was once an ordinary grove in the Indo-Gangetic plain has transformed into a noble place of pilgrimage, revered by the entire world."



According to the Current map of Nepal, Lumbini is located near to border of India

Lumbini is currently situated in the Rupandehi District within the ‘Terai’ region—a southern plain area of Nepal. The fact that this sacred garden lies in close proximity to the present-day Indian border demonstrates that a territory which once belonged to the **Middle Country of ancient India** ¹⁵ now falls within Nepal according to modern political maps. (see the Map of Middle Country).

The Tripitaka and ancient texts record that Lumbini was situated within the Sakkyā territory of ancient Jambudvīpa. As we intend to discuss the archaeological evidence confirming that the Buddha’s birth took place in ancient Jambudvīpa at a later stage, we consider it appropriate to include here a brief note on how Lumbini came to be part of present-day Nepal.

During the time of the Buddha, the Sakkyā territory was part of the cultural and political landscape of the Madhyadesha region (Middle country). This sūta passage indicates that the India of that era was known as Jambudvīpa (Dambadiva). ¹⁶ The Buddha spoke as follows:

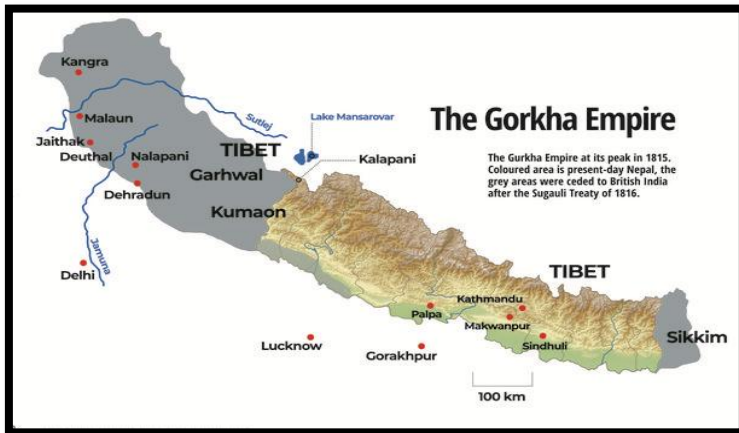
“Monks, in this Jambudvīpa, there are few delightful parks, woodland groves, pleasant grounds, and lotus ponds; yet, there are many mountains and slopes, rivers difficult to cross, thorny terrains, and rugged hills.” ¹⁷

Due to changing political boundaries over time, the ancient Sakkyā region eventually became part of present-day Nepal. ¹⁸ Today, the sacred site of Lumbini is located in the Rupandehi District of southern Nepal, close to the Indian border. (see the Current Nepal Map).

Modern India came into existence on August 15, 1947, upon gaining independence from British rule; ¹⁹however, viewed as a cultural entity, ancient Jambudvīpa (ancient India or Bharat) dates

back thousands of years.²⁰ According to the Tripitaka and archaeological evidence, Lumbini—the birthplace of the Buddha—and the Sakkyia territory where it was located, lie within the region that now spans the border between India and Nepal.

Historical evidence indicates that certain regions of modern-day India once belonged to the Kingdom of Nepal. Maps depicting the territory of the Nepal-Gorkha state prior to 1814 show that areas such as Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, and Darjeeling were part of the former Kingdom of Nepal. (see the map). Following the war between the then British Indian government and Nepal during the 1814–16 period, these territories came under the control of the British Indian government. The grey-shaded areas on the map represent territory that previously belonged to Nepal's Gorkha Kingdom; today, these areas belong to India.²¹



6: Other evidence confirming the Buddha's birth in Lumbini

In addition to the evidence found in the discourses of the Tripitaka, there is a wealth of other compelling external and historical evidence demonstrating that the birth of Gautama Buddha indeed took place at the sacred site of Lumbini. This evidence can be broadly categorized into **four areas**:

1) Emperor Ashoka's Pillar and Inscription: The historic Ashoka pillar—erected by Emperor Ashoka to officially mark, at a state level, the exact birthplace of the Buddha—and the invaluable inscription engraved upon it.

2) Travel accounts by Chinese pilgrims: Highly detailed historical records regarding Lumbini Park left by renowned Chinese Buddhist monks—such as Faxian and Xuanzang—who undertook perilous journeys to the land of the Buddha, risking their lives to visit sacred sites and master Buddhist teachings.

3) Records of travellers who visited Lumbini prior to the 14th century AD: Historical evidence and records left by kings and devotees from various lands who visited Lumbini for pilgrimage before the sacred site became overgrown with forest and fell into oblivion—specifically, prior to the 14th century AD.

4) Modern archaeological excavations: Physical remains and evidence—consistent with Buddhist literature and discourses—unearthed through scientific archaeological excavations conducted in Lumbini and the surrounding region over a long period spanning from the late 19th century to the 21st century.

7: Lumbini Pillar and Ashoka Inscription

Emperor Asoka (Dharmasoka) ²², who left behind a wonderful reputation in ancient India (Jambudvipa), on the completion of twenty years of his consecration (i.e. in 248 BC), engaged in a state pilgrimage to sacred places according to the great Buddhist pilgrimage customs. ²³



**Ashoka the Great Maurya Emperor, the
greatest king of the world**

(Image credit ²⁴)

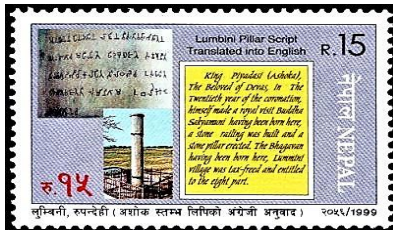
During this historic journey, upon arriving at the sacred site of Lumbini, the **Venerable Upagupta Maha Thera**—Emperor Ashoka’s spiritual mentor— ²⁵ pointed out a remarkable Sal tree and indicated to the King that this was the hallowed ground where Prince Siddhartha (the future Buddha) was born. ²⁶ Filled with profound religious devotion and unwavering faith upon beholding this sacred site, Emperor Ashoka erected a magnificent stone pillar there to permanently mark the birthplace of the Tathagata for future generations, and had a special royal edict inscribed upon it. This priceless inscription, written in the Prakrit language using the Brahmi script prevalent at the time, definitively confirms that Gautama Buddha was born in the village of Lumbini. An image of the inscription given below with translation in English. ²⁷

𑀧𑀺𑀢𑀺𑀓𑀾𑀢	𑀓𑀺𑀢𑀺𑀓𑀾𑀢	𑀧𑀺𑀢	𑀧𑀺𑀢𑀺𑀓𑀾𑀢𑀺𑀓𑀾𑀢𑀺𑀓𑀾𑀢
Devānampiyena	Piyadasina	lājina	vīsati-vasābhisitena
𑀢𑀺𑀢𑀺𑀢	𑀢𑀺𑀢𑀺𑀢	𑀢𑀺𑀢𑀺𑀢	𑀢𑀺𑀢𑀺𑀢
atana	āgāca	mahīyite	hida
𑀢𑀺𑀢𑀺𑀢	𑀢𑀺𑀢𑀺𑀢	𑀢𑀺𑀢𑀺𑀢	𑀢𑀺𑀢𑀺𑀢
silā	vigaḍabhī	cā	kālāpita
𑀢𑀺𑀢𑀺𑀢	𑀢𑀺𑀢𑀺𑀢	𑀢𑀺𑀢𑀺𑀢	𑀢𑀺𑀢𑀺𑀢
hida	Bhagavaṃ	jāte	ti
𑀢𑀺𑀢𑀺𑀢	𑀢𑀺𑀢𑀺𑀢	𑀢𑀺𑀢𑀺𑀢	𑀢𑀺𑀢𑀺𑀢
aṭṭha-bhāgiye	ca		

— Adapted from transliteration by [E. Hultzsch](#), ^[16]

‘When King Devanampriya Priyadarsin had been anointed twenty years, he came himself and worshipped (this spot) because the Buddha Shakyamuni was born here. (He) both caused to be made a stone bearing a horse (?) and caused a stone pillar to be set up, (in order to show) that the Blessed One was born here. (He) made the village of Lummini free of taxes, and paying (only) an eighth share (of the produce).’

The rediscovery of this Ashoka pillar and its inscription through archaeological research conducted in the late 19th century stands as the most vivid and compelling evidence proving to the world that the historical birth of the Buddha indeed took place at Lumbini. (Details of this archaeological discovery are provided under **Section 10** of this volume).



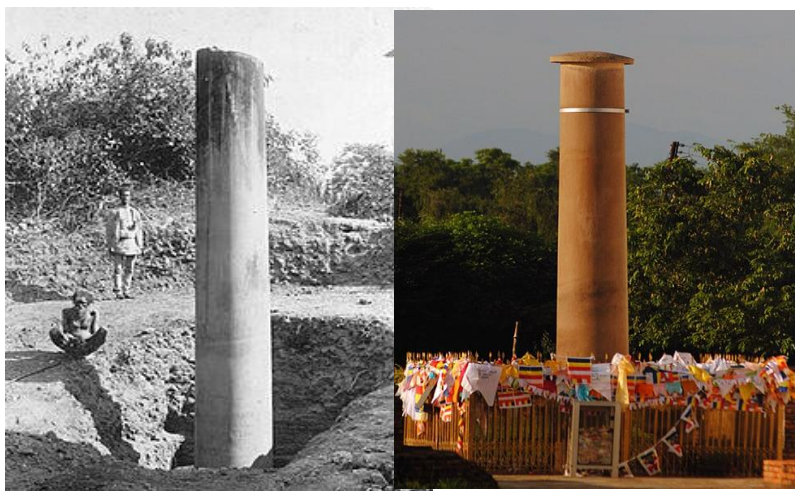
The Nepalese people hold the conviction that the Buddha was born on Nepalese soil; marking the rediscovery of the Ashoka Pillar and the subsequent establishment of Lumbini—

located within the borders of modern-day Nepal—as an international sacred site, the Government of Nepal officially issued a special commemorative stamp. ²⁸



Emperor Ashoka erected a pillar at Lumbini to commemorate the birth of the Buddha and paid homage with a devout heart.

Today, the Ashoka pillar and its inscription at Lumbini are recognized as reliable historical and archaeological evidence of the Buddha's birth. Buddhist devotees arriving from all corners of the globe offer worship with deep devotion at the Lumbini pillar, which marks the site where the Buddha was born.



Left: Lumbini Pillar discovered in 19th century. Right: Lumbini Pillar today- Picture credit: Wikipedia

8: Travel Records of Chinese Monks on Pilgrimage

In ancient times, many monks from China travelled to North India to visit sacred sites associated with the life of the Buddha and to study at renowned institutions such as Nalanda. The travel records they authored have been examined by later historians, providing further compelling evidence that the Buddha was born in the village of Lumbini in the Sakkyia territory.

1) **The monk Zhi Sengzai** (350–375 CE) ²⁹

is considered the first Chinese traveller to visit Lumbini. He visited the city of Kapilavastu and noted that the ancient capital had become overgrown and desolate. He recorded that, at the time, approximately twenty families claiming descent from the lineage of King Suddhodana were residing there. He has also noted a stone image ³⁰ (nativity image- believed to be built by emperor Asoka) near the holy Sala tree, which a branch of it was said to have caught by Queen Mahamaya during the birth of child prince Siddhartha. He further reported that the ancient Sala tree was taken care of by the Buddhist monks who lived there at that time.



2) **The monk Faxian** (337–422 CE)—an elderly Buddhist monk ³¹

who travelled from China to study the Vinaya Pitaka and visit sacred pilgrimage sites—toured numerous holy places, including Kapilavastu, Lumbini, Bodh Gaya, Sarnath, Kushinagar, and Pataliputra. His experiences are documented in the book titled 'A Record of the Buddhist Kingdoms' (Fo-Guo-Ki).



In those records, the monk Faxian further states that, at that time, the city of Kapilavastu was an abandoned and desolate place. He also provides descriptions of the Lumbini Garden and the pond (Pushkarini) where Queen Mahamaya bathed. Later archaeologists relied on

these accounts by Faxian for their excavations, noting that his records were instrumental in accurately identifying these two sites.

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3) **Monk Song Yun** (Song Yun / Songyun) – (510–520 CE): ³³It is said that Monk Song Yun and his party, who travelled to India during the Northern Wei Dynasty, visited numerous Buddhist sites, including those in northwestern India and Gandhara. He brought approximately 170 Tripitaka texts back to China.

Although his original records have not survived, details regarding his journey are reportedly found in other Chinese texts.



4) **The monk Xuanzang** (Hiuen Tsang) – (600–664 CE): Xuanzang, ³⁴who arrived in India during the reign of King Harshavardhana, ³⁵spent a long period of 15 years traveling to numerous Buddhist holy sites, including Lumbini and Kapilavastu. Accounts of these journeys are recorded in "The Records of the Western Regions." (- Si-Yu-Ki).

The monk Xuanzang, who pursued his studies for several years at Nalanda—a renowned Buddhist university of that era—has bequeathed to the world a wealth of valuable information regarding the state of Buddhism in India at the time, as well as the

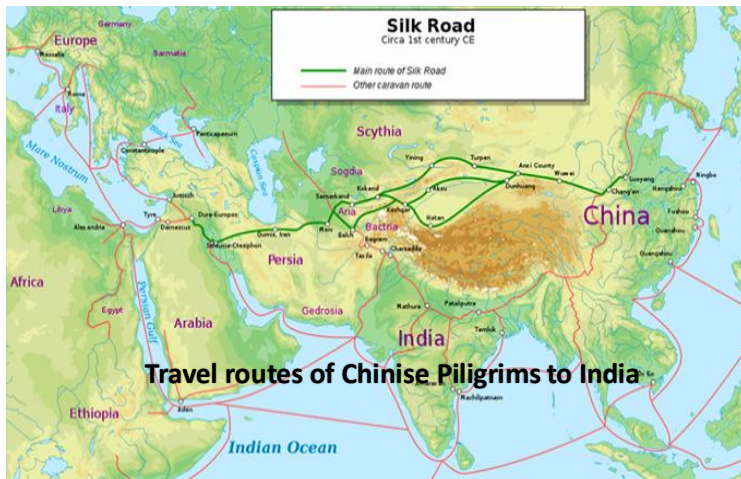
broader religious and cultural landscape. It is reported that his travel records proved immensely helpful during subsequent archaeological excavations in the Lumbini area.³⁶ (A film based on his journey was released in 2016: 'Xuanzang, is a 2016 Chinese-Indian historical adventure film.)

5) The monk Yijing (I-tsing) – (635–713 CE): Yijing ³⁷held the accounts of the journeys to India undertaken by the monks Faxian and Xuanzang in high regard. Indeed, this inspiration was the primary reason for his own journey to India. Yijing travelled from China to India by sea. His travel records also contain references to major Buddhist pilgrimage sites, including Lumbini and Kapilavastu.

It is said that he engaged in academic pursuits at Nalanda University for approximately ten years, during which time he documented detailed information regarding the Buddhist traditions and monastic disciplinary practices of the era. Furthermore, he translated numerous Buddhist sutras—originally composed in Sanskrit and Pali—into Chinese. ³⁸



Nalanda —The Great University of Ancient India



These world-renowned Chinese pilgrim monks documented their experiences while visiting not only Lumbini and Kapilavastu but also numerous other sacred sites associated with the life of the Buddha. Their historical records later served as an invaluable guide for archaeologists and Buddhist scholars in precisely identifying the actual birthplace of the Buddha.

9: Records of travellers who visited Lumbini before the 14th century

Various historical sources reveal that, in addition to ancient Chinese monks, many other pilgrims visited Lumbini at different times. Their travel records further corroborate historical information regarding Lumbini.³⁹

1) Wu-Kong (c. 764 CE): Records left by this traveller from China confirm that, during that era, Buddhist pilgrims recognized Lumbini

as the sacred birthplace of the Buddha and visited the site to perform acts of worship.

2) Fang Chi: Believed to have arrived from China as early as the 7th century CE, Fang Chi personally saw the Ashoka Pillar at Lumbini and noted in his records that it bore an inscription marking the Buddha's birthplace.

3) Prince Ripu Malla – (14th Century AD): Belonging to the Naga dynasty of Nepal and ruling over the Khasa Kingdom, he is believed to have visited Lumbini for pilgrimage during the early 14th century AD. He had the following brief inscription carved onto the Ashoka Pillar located there:

**“Om Mani Padme Hum — Siri Ripu Malla Chirang Jayatu,
Sangrama Malla”**

*(May King Ripu Malla and his son Sangrama Malla be
victorious forever!).*

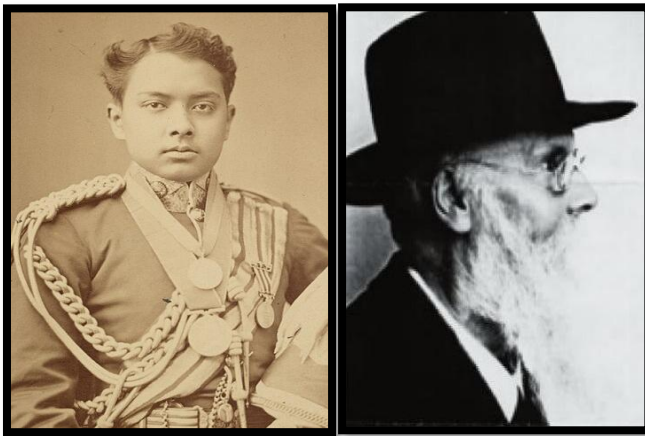
These historical records demonstrate that the memory of the Ashoka inscription and Lumbini persisted continuously among the people for centuries. However, scholars point out that after the 14th century, Lumbini remained undisturbed and devoid of human settlement for centuries, eventually becoming overgrown by dense forest.

History confirms that Buddhism gradually declined in India amidst religious and political transformations; the resurgence of Hinduism and the subsequent spread of Islam—driven by the influence of the Mughal Empire—played significant roles in this shift. Against this backdrop, Lumbini was reclaimed by the wilderness over time and faded from public consciousness.

10: The Revival of Lumbini in the Nineteenth Century

Lumbini, which had been forgotten for centuries, once again drew global attention in 1896. In that year, archaeological excavations led by **General Khadga Shamsheer Rana**—then the Governor of Nepal's western region—and the German archaeologist **Dr. Alois Führer** resulted in the discovery of the historic Lumbini Ashoka Pillar, originally erected by Emperor Ashoka.

At the time of its discovery, more than half of the pillar was buried underground, and it was evident that its upper section had been broken off by a lightning strike. The Ashoka inscription, carved in Brahmi script on the surface of the pillar, was also revealed during this process. Details regarding these significant discoveries are recorded in Dr. Führer's official excavation reports.⁴⁰



1 General Shamsheer Rana and Dr. Alois Führer

The rediscovery of the Lumbini pillar—erected by King Ashoka to commemorate the birth of the Buddha—marks a pivotal milestone in the re-emergence of the sacred site of Lumbini before the modern world. Thus, Lumbini—which had lain hidden for centuries within the dense forests of the Indo-Gangetic plain—rose once

again with renewed dignity in the late 19th century, confirming to the entire world the historic truth:

“This is the sacred site where the Buddha was born.”

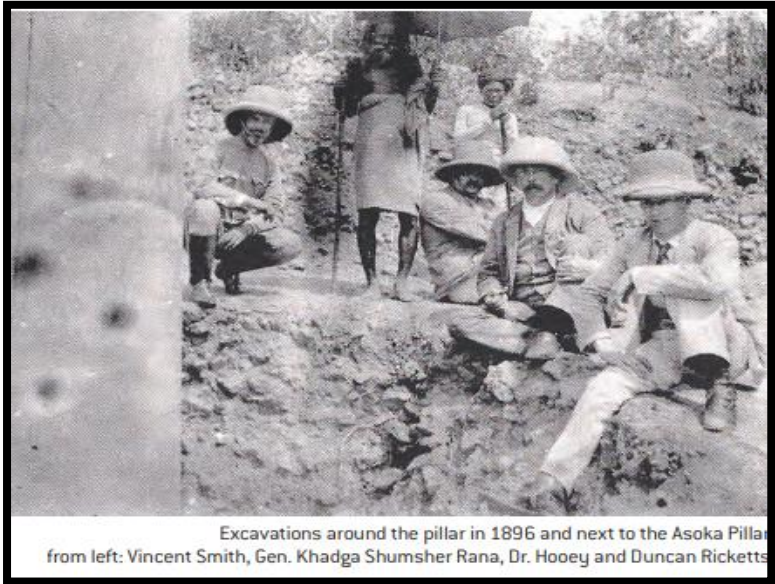


The Lumbini Pillar rediscovered in 1896: Picture
Credit: Wikipedia

11: Expansion of Excavations at Lumbini in 1899

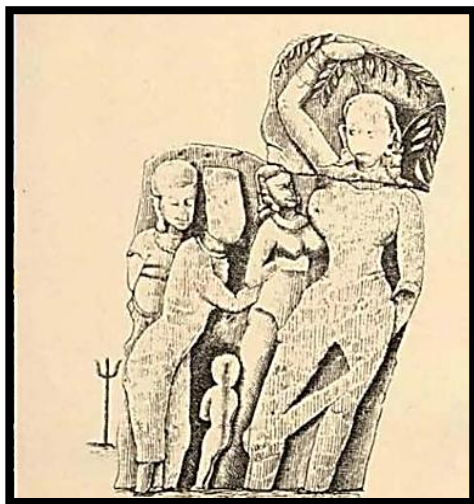
Archaeological excavations at Lumbini, which began in 1896, expanded by 1899, adopting a more systematic and scientific approach. **Mr. P.C. Mukherji**, ⁴¹a renowned archaeologist from the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), initiated the systematic mapping of the Lumbini area and the documentation of

archaeological findings. During these excavations, a distinctive stone relief depicting the birth of the Buddha (nativity)—believed at the time to have been installed by Emperor Ashoka—was discovered. The monk Xuanzang had also recorded details regarding this unique stone sculpture in his travel accounts.



Picture Credit ⁴²

Mr. Mukherji arranged to include a reproduction of this stone carving in his official report (his sketch is given in the next page). Furthermore, during the excavations at Lumbini, he succeeded in uncovering the remains of ancient stupas located near the Mayadevi Temple. His systematic research confirmed that Lumbini was not merely a sacred site confined to traditional beliefs, but a genuine archaeological site substantiated by history and physical evidence.⁴³

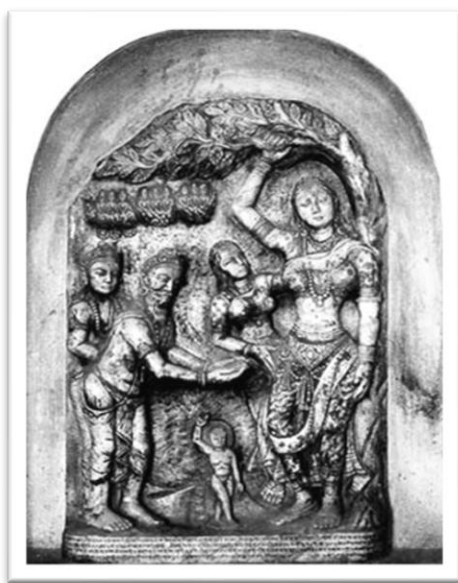


Mukherji 's sketch- Nativity sculpture



Nativity sculpture discovered in 1899

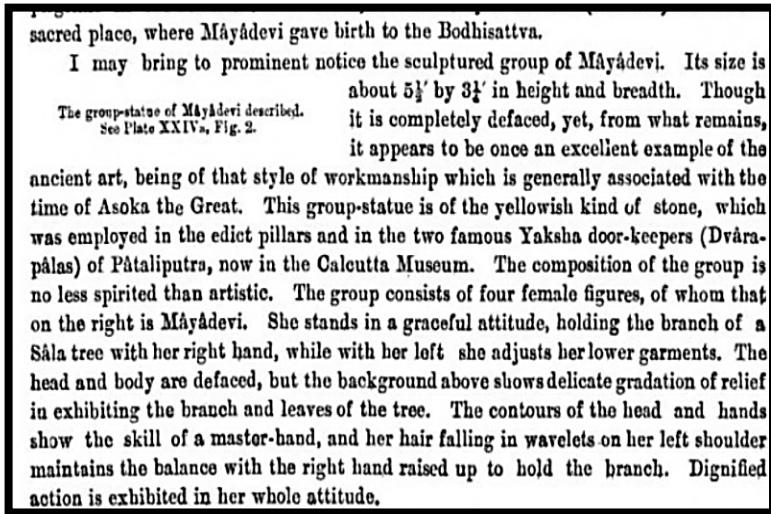
A stone relief depicting the birth of the Buddha (nativity), discovered at Lumbini during the 1896 excavations (pictured above). The Bodhisattva's mother, Queen Mahamaya, is shown standing while holding a branch laden with Sal flowers; beside her stands her sister, Queen Prajapati. Deities are shown receiving the infant prince. The newborn prince (in centre) is depicted standing upon a lotus flower. Scholars acknowledge this archaeological find as strong evidence confirming that the Buddha's birth took place at Lumbini.



Due to the fragility of the original stone carving, the marble replica of the original image created by Nepali artist Chandra Maskey is currently on display at the Mayadevi Temple. ⁴⁴

A note from Mr. Mukherji's report regarding this stone relief depicting the 'Birth of the Buddha' is presented below. ⁴⁵ In his report, Mr. Mukherji states that the stone carving depicting the

birth of the Buddha can be regarded as an artistic creation belonging to the Ashokan era:



“Here, I wish to draw special attention to the group of sculptures featuring Mayadevi. It measures approximately 5 1/2 feet in height and 3 1/4 feet in width. Although the surface details have been almost entirely destroyed, the remaining traces clearly indicate that this was once a magnificent work of ancient art.” This piece exemplifies the superb artistic style generally associated with the era of Emperor Ashoka. The sculptural group is carved from a pale-yellow stone. A similar type of stone was used for Emperor Ashoka’s Dhamma pillars as well as for the famous pair of ‘Yaksha’ guardian statues found at Pataliputra—now housed in the Calcutta Museum.”

According to art historians and modern archaeologists, this sculpture dates back to the period between the 4th and 5th centuries CE, coinciding with the late Kushan or early Gupta era.

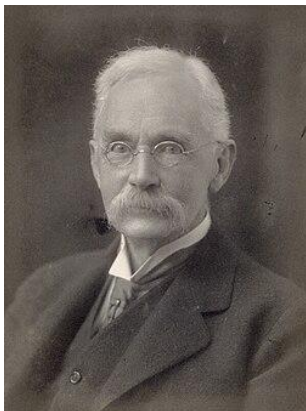
They conclude that the stone carving depicting the birth of the Buddha belongs to the renowned "Mathura art style." ⁴⁶



Picture credit: ⁴⁷

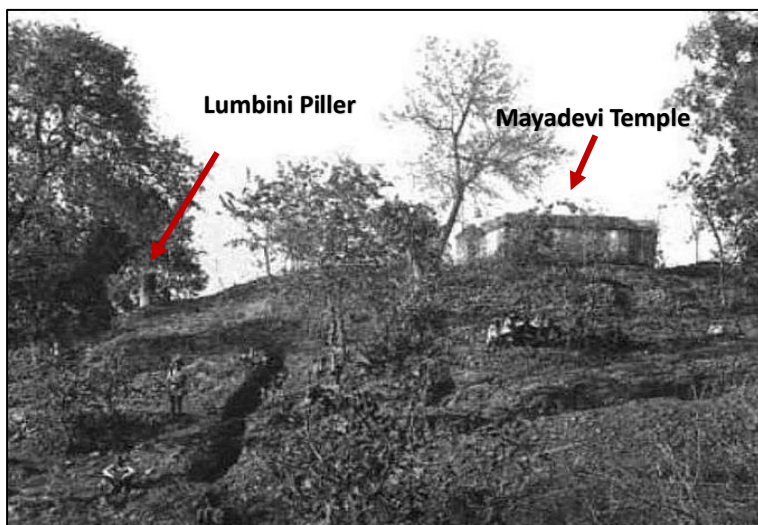
Mr. Mukherji's tireless efforts to confirm the historical authenticity of Lumbini—the birthplace of the Buddha—to the entire world are truly worthy of appreciation.

When all these archaeological findings are considered together, they reveal the continuous religious history that has existed at this sacred site for centuries. They provide irrefutable evidence that Lumbini is the true birthplace of the Buddha.



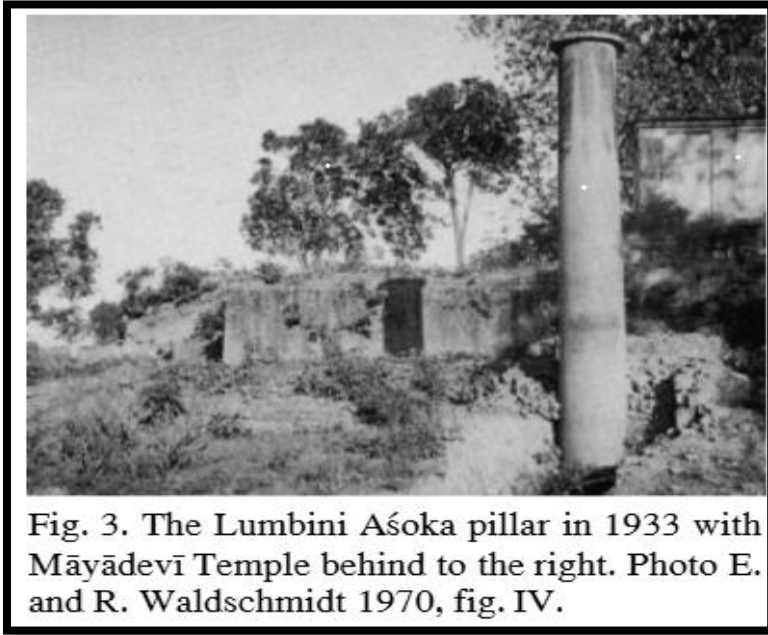
Mr. Rhys Davids, ⁴⁸who visited Lumbini during the period when the aforementioned excavations were taking place (around 1900 AD), examined the Lumbini pillar and reported that the inscription upon it was in an excellent state of preservation.

Following the discovery of the Ashoka Pillar and its associated inscriptions in 1896–1897, he played an active role in the excavation and analysis of Buddhist holy sites across India and Nepal during the late 19th century, including the precise identification of Lumbini as the birthplace of the Buddha. His scholarly contributions succeeded in rapidly drawing international attention to the then-ruined site of Lumbini.



During the excavation in Lumbini in 1896-99 (Image from the report of Mukaji).

With the Buddha's birth at Lumbini thus irrefutably confirmed through archaeological evidence, the site naturally regained its status as a premier place of pilgrimage for Buddhists worldwide.



Picture credit: ⁴⁹

12: The History of Modern Archaeological Excavations and Development at Lumbini

Following the active archaeological excavations conducted at the Lumbini site in the late 19th century, global attention was once again drawn to Lumbini in 1933. A brief overview is presented here to inform the reader about the archaeological explorations carried out in the Lumbini area from that year to the present, as well as the evidence that has emerged confirming Lumbini as a site of supreme sanctity for Buddhists.

12.1 - Development of Lumbini between 1933 and 1939

Development activities in Lumbini officially commenced during this period under the leadership of Field Marshal Keshar Shamsheer

Rana of the Government of Nepal. ⁵⁰The development works undertaken by Field Marshal Rana included:



1. Leveling and systematically organizing the sacred site of Lumbini.
2. Constructing a new building in the Pagoda style within the Maya Devi Temple premises.
3. Enlarging and renovating the historic Lumbini pond (Pushkarini).
4. Constructing a temple structure to securely house the stone carving depicting the birth of the Bodhisattva (Nativity Sculpture).

The development process led by Field Marshal Rana is recorded in history as the first organized step taken to reintroduce Lumbini to the international community.

12.2: International Buddhist attention turned towards Lumbini in 1956.

During the fourth General Conference of the World Fellowship of Buddhists (WFB) held in Kathmandu that year, the urgent and vital need to restore the sacred site of Lumbini was emphasized. In response, **King Mahendra**, the then-ruler of Nepal, took steps to provide the basic infrastructure necessary for Lumbini's development.⁵¹ Consequently, numerous new temples, monasteries, access roads, and other essential facilities were constructed. According to records, King Mahendra even contributed his own personal wealth towards these sacred undertakings.

Thanks to the King's unwavering dedication, Lumbini was revitalized as a vibrant, sacred site—a moment that deeply touched the hearts of Buddhists worldwide.



The 4th World Fellowship of Buddhists (WFB) General Conference was held in Kathmandu, Nepal, 1956 - under the leadership of King Mahendra

12.3 Scientific research related to the Ashoka Pillar in 1962

This year, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and the Department of Archaeology of Nepal jointly conducted a series of special excavations. Under the direct supervision of **Dr. Debala Mitra**—⁵²the then Director General of the ASI—it was revealed that the base of the Ashoka Pillar was constructed from distinctive 'Chunar' sandstone. These findings provided the strongest scientific evidence confirming that the monument belonged to the Mauryan (Ashokan) imperial era, thereby establishing the historical authenticity of the Lumbini pillar.⁵³

Dr. Debala Mitra, the first female Director General of the ASI, played a monumental role in identifying ancient Buddhist heritage sites across India and Nepal.



12.4: Excavations at Lumbini (1970–1980)

In the early 1970s, the veteran Nepali archaeologist **Mr. Babu Krishna Rijal**,⁵⁴ together with **Dr. N. R. Banerjee**, directed excavation work at Lumbini. These activities laid the foundation for modern conservation efforts at the site and paved the way for UNESCO's involvement with Lumbini. Specific details regarding his work are as follows:⁵⁵

1) Discovery of Lumbini Village: By Excavation Near Ashoka Tower and Adjacent Areas- By Excavation of a Mound Near Present Police Station: 2nd Century BC to BC. 10 ancient settlement-cultural stands dating back to the 6th century have been identified.

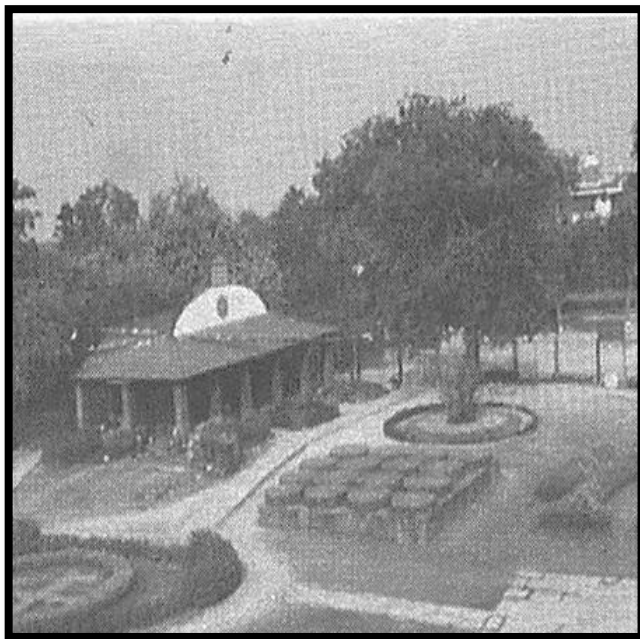
2) Discovery of Northern Black Polished Ware: It presents a distinct cultural sequence. That discovery laid the foundation for 'Kenzo Tange's Master Plan' by UNESCO.

3) Unearthing of relics: Excavated in the area around the Mayadevi temple a stupa (built during Maurya-(Ashoka) period was found. They also discovered the bones relics that had been placed inside the golden casket within the stupa.⁵⁶

Mr. Rijal and his team also found a number of ancient stupas belonging to the Maurya (Ashoka) period near the Mayadevi

Temple Among them, the 16-feet tall stupa in the northern direction is unique. As stupas like these are built only in extremely sacred places of worship, this clearly shows—

that Lumbini was considered the most sacred place of birth of the Buddha from the very beginning to the multidimensionality of the entire world.



The Stupas excavated in 1972 in Lumbini

13: Development of Lumbini between 1972 and 1996

Significant archaeological excavations took place at Lumbini between 1972 and 1992, largely driven by the implementation of the Lumbini Master Plan and the need to preserve the site during development.



Excavation during 1972 near Maya Devi Temple

The tribute flags in the background make it evident that groups of people visited Lumbini for pilgrimage during the 1972 period.⁵⁷

It was explained above that during the period of 1975-1977 Mr. B.K. Rijal's excavations in an area on the south side of the Maya Devi temple revealed important archaeological evidence proving that Lumbini is the place where our Gotama Buddha was born.

1972–78: Following archaeological discoveries at Lumbini by the Nepalese archaeologist B.K. Rijal, UNESCO initiated development efforts centred on the "Kenzo Tange Master Plan"—a visionary urban and landscape design intended to transform Lumbini into a global centre. This plan was launched in 1972 by UN Secretary-General U Thant and a committee representing 15 nations, and was finalized in 1978.⁵⁸



In the 1980s, the Nepalese archaeologist Tara Nandra Mishra conducted systematic excavations at Lumbini and Tilaurakot. His findings were instrumental in accurately identifying the early structural and architectural history of the Mayadevi Temple, situated around the Ashoka Pillar. The evidence unearthed during these excavations is detailed in his official report.⁵⁹

14: Lumbini: Definitive confirmation of the exact site of the Buddha's birth (1995–96)

Excavations jointly conducted within the Mayadevi Temple by the Department of Archaeology of Nepal, the Lumbini Development Trust (LDT), and the Japan Buddhist Federation (JBF) revealed a highly significant fact: **this site had been continuously revered as a sacred place for centuries longer than previously believed.**⁶⁰

The most outstanding achievement of the 1995–1996 excavation process was the uncovering of the "**Marker Stone**" (Simagala) erected by Emperor Ashoka to mark the exact birthplace of the Buddha. This discovery is considered one of the most significant archaeological finds in the entire history of Buddhism.⁶¹ The location of this **Simagala aligns** precisely with the details recorded in the travelogues of the Chinese monk Xuanzang, who undertook a pilgrimage to ancient India. In his writings, he clearly identified the site of the Buddha's birth in relation to the Lumbini Pond, and the authenticity of this was confirmed by the latest excavations conducted in 2013.⁶²



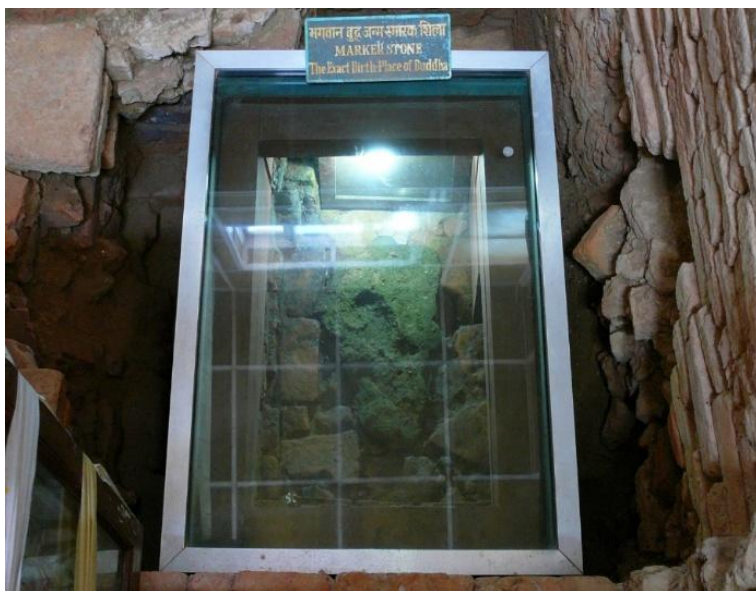
The Marker Stone unearthed in 1995-96 excavation in Lumbini

According to that, the world got a scientific proof both physically and spatially about the birthplace of Lord Gautama Buddha. Before this historic boundary stone was unearthed, it was buried 4.8 meters (about 16 feet) deep in the lower layer of the Mayadevi temple. Nowadays, this Marker Stone has been safely placed in a bulletproof glass enclosure for the Pilgrims and other visitors who come to visit Lumbini. ⁶³

15: The Historical Authenticity of Lumbini – 21st Century

The series of international excavations conducted at Lumbini between 2010 and 2013 under the auspices of UNESCO is of immense historical significance. (A detailed report on this matter is included in Appendix 2 of this chapter.) ⁶⁴

The significance of this research lies in the scientific confirmation that the history of veneration at the Lumbini sacred site extends as far back as the era of the Buddha—the time when the Lord Buddha himself was alive.



The Marker Stone displayed in Lumbini today.

Truth and Correlation

When all the aforementioned elements—Tripitaka accounts, Buddhist traditions, the Ashoka pillar and its inscription, records from Chinese travellers, and evidence unearthed during archaeological excavations at Lumbini—are synthesized, they reveal a historical truth:

**Lumbini is the sacred birthplace of our
Lord Gautama Buddha.**

Today, Lumbini stands as a **World Heritage Site**.⁶⁵ It is also a magnificent international pilgrimage site, cherished as a supreme treasure by Buddhists across the globe.



The Pushkarani pond—believed to be where Queen Maya bathed prior to the birth of the Bodhisatta—and the surrounding archaeological ruins in Lumbini



Lumbini Toady- Mayadevi Tempale and Asoka Pillar



Lumbini from Air-Picture credit: ⁶⁶

Appendix 1: World Fellowship of Buddhist (WFB) Conference

A brief overview of the inaugural meeting: This conference was a highly significant event for Buddhists worldwide. This is because, during the conference, the full moon day of Vesak was internationally recognized as the day marking the '**Threefold Sacred Event**'—the birth, enlightenment, and passing into Parinirvana—of our Lord Gautama Buddha.

The opening ceremony of the World Fellowship of Buddhists (WFB) conference took place on May 25, 1950, at the Temple of the Tooth

Relic in Kandy, Sri Lanka; it commenced with the traditional blowing of the conch shell in the presence of the Maha Sangha. Subsequently, the formal proceedings were held in Colombo. The primary objective of the conference was to unite Buddhists globally and to broaden international awareness of Buddhism. Initiated by Professor G.P. Malalasekera—



then of the University of Ceylon—the conference brought together 129 delegates from 29 countries, representing both the Theravada and Mahayana traditions. **Professor. G.P. Malalasekera** was unanimously elected as the founding President, and the organization's headquarters was established in Colombo.

Key outcomes of the conference included resolving discrepancies regarding the date of the Buddha's birth across different nations and declaring the full moon day of Vesak (May) as the universal "Buddha Day" within the Buddhist calendar. It was also decided to urge governments to designate the Vesak full moon day in May as a public holiday. Furthermore, the year 2494 was formally recognized as the established year of the Buddhist Era. The six-coloured Buddhist flag and the Dharmachakra were adopted as international Buddhist symbols. A primary significance of the conference was the fostering of unprecedented unity among diverse Buddhist traditions. Additionally, establishing a stable foundation for the continuation of humanitarian and cultural activities was another notable achievement. ⁶⁷

The six-colour Buddhist flag and Dhamma chakra were recognized as international symbols of Buddhism. The primary significance of the conference was that it fostered an unprecedented unity among different Buddhist traditions. Also, creating a stable foundation for furthering humanitarian and cultural activities is another significant issue.



The six-colour Buddhist flag and Dhamma chakra



Opening address of WFB conference: By Professor Malalasekera – at the Temple of the Tooth, Kandy.

Prof. GP Malalasekera (9 November 1899 - 23 April 1973):

Prof. Malalasekera, who organized the World Fellowship of Buddhist (WFB) and worked to bring together the Buddhist people who were scattered in different countries, is remembered by Buddhists as well as scholars with respect and gratitude. A Sri Lankan academic, diplomat and Buddhist scholar, he has rendered great service to Pali literature and Buddhist cultural revival.

Prof. Malalasekera was an Emeritus Professor of Pali Language and Dean of the Faculty of Oriental Studies at the University of Ceylon. As the Editor-in-Chief of the Encyclopaedia of Buddhism, he has done a great service by compiling internationally famous books such as the comprehensive Malalasekera English-Sinhala Dictionary (1948), Pali Proper Names Dictionary etc.

Reference:

1. Record of Proceedings of the WFB First General Conference Held at Colombo, Sri Lanka- 25 May – 6 June 2494 (1950) .
2. World Fellowship of Buddhists —A Birds Eye View by Prasert Ruangskul, WFB Secretary-General.

Appendix 2: Evidence from the 2013 Archaeological Excavations at Lumbini

Archaeological discoveries made at Lumbini in 2013 have brought to light significant information regarding the time of the Buddha's birth. Lumbini is traditionally recognized as the birthplace of Gautama Buddha. Ancient Buddhist tradition places the Buddha's birth in the 6th century BCE. Modern archaeological investigations have also provided substantial support for this traditional view.

Between 2010 and 2013, an international team of researchers led by Professor Robin Coningham conducted excavations at the sacred site of Lumbini in Nepal. During these excavations, the structure of an ancient timber tree-shrine was discovered beneath the Mauryan brick temple, which had previously been attributed to the era of Emperor Ashoka. Scientific analyses, including radiocarbon dating and Optically Stimulated Luminescence (OSL), confirmed that this timber structure dates back to the 6th century BCE.

This discovery suggests that the site likely existed as a place of worship during the lifetime of the Buddha himself. Archaeologists have identified the structure of an open-centred tree shrine—often associated with ancient tree worship—(Bodhigara) along with traces of a sacred site. It is believed that this enclosure was constructed around the holy Sala tree, which tradition identifies as the place where Prince Siddhartha was born. Such archaeological evidence confirms that the site has served as a place of worship continuously over a long period.

It has further been pointed out that later structures were built over this ground. These research findings provide strong archaeological support for the traditional view that the Buddha lived during the 6th century BCE. At the same time, it is noted that other archaeological research conducted in areas near Lumbini—particularly at Tilaurakot, widely identified as the ancient city of Kapilavastu—has also uncovered evidence of settlements, as well as urban and social life, dating back to the 6th century BCE.⁶⁸

Some scholars hold the view that one must exercise caution when interpreting the aforementioned archaeological findings, as the sacred tree site may have originally been a place of indigenous tree worship that predated the Buddhist tradition.

Nevertheless, these findings provide compelling evidence that acts of worship took place—even in earlier times—at the site traditionally believed to be the birthplace of the Buddha.

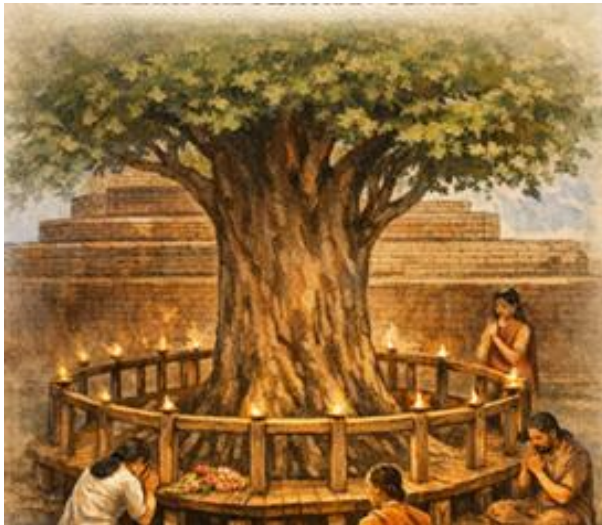
The archaeological discovery made between **2011 and 2013** stands out as an exciting instance that demonstrates the connection between ancient Buddhist tradition and modern scientific research. The invaluable contribution made by UNESCO—which initiated the archaeological survey—and by Professor Robin Coningham and his team, who led the excavations, is highly commendable.

The Wooden Bodhighara Shrine: For decades, scholars hypothesized that organized Buddhist architecture originated during the reign of Emperor Ashoka in the 3rd century BCE. However, excavations conducted by UNESCO beneath the Maya Devi Temple appear to have completely altered the timeline of early Buddhism. Archaeologists excavating beneath the brick foundations of the temple—originally constructed by Emperor Ashoka—have discovered traces of an even older wooden structure.

It is reported that this original wooden enclosure consisted of an open, roofless central area. Analysis of ancient soil and root fragments confirmed that a living tree had once grown at this site. Carbon dating indicates that this wooden shrine existed between 550 BC and 600 BC. This provides the first material evidence directly linking the site to the lifetime of the Buddha, confirming that the location—the ground where the holy Sala tree in Lumbini Garden stood—was regarded as an open-air tree shrine (Bodhighara) following the Buddha's birth.⁶⁹



2103 – Lumbini Excavation: Prof. Conningham and the team



An artistic reconstruction of the ancient tree shrine—or Bodhihara—dating back to the 6th century BCE, discovered beneath the Ashoka Vihara at Lumbini during excavations in 2013.

Volume 2 of the compilation concludes here. Volume 3 the next one describes the life of Prince Siddhartha in the city of Kapilavastu.

Volume 2: End Note

¹ Ven. Narda, Buddhist monk, scholar, translator, educator and Buddhist missionary who was for many years the Superior of Vajiraramaya Temple in [Colombo, Sri Lanka](#). He was a popular figure in his native country, [Sri Lanka](#), and beyond. See: Wikipedia, <https://vajirarama.lk/about-us-2/renowned-monks/renowned-monks-narad-maha-thero/>, <https://buddho.org/about-the-author/narada-maha-thera/>

² His wisdom was not confined to Buddhist philosophy alone; he had also thoroughly studied Western philosophy at Columbia University in New York, USA. His profound understanding of both Western and Buddhist philosophies is clearly demonstrated by the lecture he delivered on 'Nibbāna' (Nirvana) at the University of Ceylon in 1941 (under the auspices of the Dona Alpina Trust). (Source: Foreword written by Mr. Alec Robertson for the book "Buddhist Meditation in Theory and Practice by Paravahara Vajiranana Thero).

³ Maurice Walshe was born in London in 1911 and was an active Buddhist from 1951 until the end of his life in 1998. He served as the Vice-President of the Buddhist Society and Chair of the English Sangha Trust. A scholar of Pali and German, his other works include *Buddhism for Today* and translations of the sermons of Meister Eckhart.

⁴ Source: Introduction to "*The Long Discourses of the Buddha*" (Thus Have I Heard) by Maurice Walshe.

⁵ John Faithfull Fleet (1847-1917) was an I.C.S. Officer who, made some major contributions to the study of Indian history, authoring works on South Indian history and, like Dames, becoming an important figure in the Royal Asiatic Society [RAS] after retirement in London.

⁶ **Prof. Robin Coningham**: see: "*Rediscovering Lumbini: Archaeology and Site Interpretation*" and *The Sacred Garden of Lumbini: Perceptions of Buddha's Birthplace*, UNESCO, 2013.

⁷ Source: BBC- News Report on November 26, 2013 by James Morgan

: "Archaeologists dig at Buddha's birthplace Lumbini"

(<https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-25088960>).

⁸ Snp: 3.1; The Going Forth.

⁹ Snp: 3.11; Nalaka

¹⁰ See: Pali Text Society (PTS) The Buddhavamsa and the Cariya Pitaka Edited by The Rev. Richard Morris, 1882

¹¹ DN14: Mahaapadana sutta.

¹² DN16: Mahaparinibbana sutta.

¹³ The four sacred sites: Lumbini, where He was born; Uruvela, where He attained Enlightenment; Isipatana-Migadaya in Benares, where He delivered the first sermon—the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta; and Kusinara, where the Parinirvana took place.

¹⁴ Source: "Evolution of Buddhism and Archaeological Excavations in Lumbini" by Tara Nanda Mishra.

¹⁵ **Madhyadesha** or the "middle country" was one of the five sub-divisions of [ancient India](#) that extended from the upper reaches of the [Ganga](#) and the [Yamuna](#) to the [confluence](#) of the two rivers at [Prayaga](#). The territory of middle region constitutes a cogent entity—geographically as well as culturally. Inside northern India (ancient [Aryavarta](#)) this region has been instrumental in guiding the main currents of history and the spread of civilization from a very early age.^[1] -Source: Wikipedia.

¹⁶ According to the commentaries, Jambudvīpa is the southern continent in Buddhist cosmology—the "continent of the rose-apple (Jambu) trees." The other three continents are Aparagoyana to the west, Uttarakuru to the north, and Pūbbavideha to the east. Jambudvīpa is named after the "great rose-apple (Jambu) tree" located in the Himalayas.

¹⁷ AN1: *Jambudīpa Repetition Series: 333 (1)–347 (15).*

¹⁸ The Kingdom of Nepal was established in 1768. Monarchical rule ended with the emergence of the Republic of Nepal in 2008. See: Wikipedia and Several Episodes in the Recent History of Lumbini by David P. Jackson: ([PDF](#)) [Several Episodes in the Recent History of Lumbini.pdf](#)

¹⁹ See: India's Struggle for Independence by Bipan Chandra, Modern India: 1885–1947 by Sumit Sarkar, Liberty or Death: India's Journey to Independence and Division by Patrick French.

²⁰ See: 'India: The Ancient Past' by Burjor Avari-2016, A History of Ancient and Early Medieval India: From the Stone Age to the 12th Century by [Upinder Singh](#) (Author) .

²¹ Source: Kaushik S V: https://www.quora.com/?qv_src=email

²² Emperor Ashoka transformed from a ruthless conqueror known as *Chandashoka* (Ashoka the Cruel) into a righteous and peaceful ruler known as *Dharmashoka* (Ashoka the Righteous) after the devastating Kalinga War. See: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ashoka>, Wikipedia, Anuradha Seneviratna (Ed.), "King Asoka and Buddhism", Buddhist Publication Society (BPS), 1994).

²³ See: Tara Nanda Mishra, "Evolution of Buddhism and Archaeological Excavations in Lumbini"

²⁴ Face Book: <https://www.facebook.com/samrata.ravi.maurayavansi>

²⁵ **Venerable Upagupta Maha Thera** (also known as *Shin Upagutta*, *Preah Uppakut*, or *Upakhut*) was a highly revered Buddhist monk and Arhat who lived during the 3rd century BCE. He is most famous for serving as the **spiritual guide to the Mauryan Emperor Ashoka** and playing a monumental role in spreading Buddhism across Asia. See: Wikipedia, baike.baidu.com, <https://www.rigpawiki.org/>, <https://www.encyclopedia.com/>

²⁶ See: Andy Rotman, "Divine Stories: Divyavadana", Part 1 & 2, *Wisdom Publications*, 2008.

²⁷ Source: Wikipedia.

²⁸ Source:

(<https://www.buddhiststamp.com/stamps/5f4f3d1cf315ca14df5236c2>

²⁹ Source: The Sacred Garden of Lumbini: Perceptions of Buddha's birthplace, UNESCO 2013. 1. According to this source: **Yueh-Chih monk Sengtsai** (in around 3:0 A.D.) belonging to the Chin dynasty (265-420 A.D.) has travelled to India. See: 'Evolution of Buddhism and Archaeological Excavations in Lumbini by Tara Nanda Mishra'. Image source:

<https://www.pixtastock.com/illustration/96450742>

³⁰ Nativity relief: this will be discussed under recent archaeological discovery in Lumbini.

³¹ He was about 60 years of age when he arrived in India. See: "The Travel Records of Chinese Pilgrims" – by Tansen Sen, [Columbia University PDF](#). For more details see: *Faxian (399-413 A.D.) Evolution of Buddhism and Archaeological Excavations in Lumbini* by Tara Nanda Mishra. Picture credit: <https://www.instagram>.

³² It is noted that the records of the monk Faxian were instrumental to the reports of archaeologist Dr. Alois Anton Führer—who was pivotal in the rediscovery of the Lumbini Ashoka Pillar in 1895–96—and to those of archaeologist Alexander Cunningham, who initiated the primary excavations at Bodh Gaya.

³³ Source and Picture credit: [Wikipedia - Song Yun](#).

³⁴ Source: "*The Travel Records of Chinese Pilgrims*" – by Tansen Sen, [Columbia University PDF](#). Picture credit: [Wikipedia - Xuanzang Film](#)

³⁵ King Harshavardhana was the Emperor of Kannauj (590–647 CE). He expanded his empire across a vast region of North India, with the Narmada River serving as its southern boundary. Source: [Wikipedia - Harsha](#)

³⁶ His records were instrumental to the arachnological discovery in Lumbini by Dr. Alois Anton Führer and archaeologist Alexander Cunningham, who initiated the primary excavations at Bodh Gaya.

³⁷ Source: "*The Travel Records of Chinese Pilgrims*" – by Tansen Sen. Picture credit: <https://www.instagram..>

³⁸ For details see: Wikipedia.

³⁹ See: *The Sacred Garden of Lumbini: Perceptions of Buddha's birthplace*, UNESCO 2013.

⁴⁰ See: Anton Führer: '*Antiquities of Buddha Sakyamuni's Birthplace in the Nepalese Tarai (1972)*'.

⁴¹ In recognition of this invaluable historical contribution by Mr. Mukherji, a statue of him has been erected in his native village of Panihati in West Bengal. His 175th birth anniversary was also commemorated in 2024. For further details: see: The Telegraph India. Mr. Mukherji also took the initiative to correctly identify Tilaurakot in Nepal as the actual site of the ancient city of Kapilavastu—where Gautama Buddha spent his childhood—and to uncover the main ruins of the ancient city of Pataliputra. See also: [The Annapurna Express](#) and [Inside Himalayas](#).

⁴² Lumbini Development Trust: Coffee Table Book. 2019.

⁴³ Mr. Mukherji's findings were officially published in 1901. The map included therein is considered the first scientific map prepared of the Lumbini ruins. For details, see: P.C. Mukherjee's (Purna Chandra Mukherji) 1901 publication, titled *A Report on a Tour of Exploration of the Antiquities of Kapilavastu, Tarai of Nepal, During February and March, 1899* (often cited as Part I of the Report on the Antiquities in the Tarai of Nepal).

⁴⁴ Chandra Man Singh Maskey (Nepali 1900–1984) was a Nepalese artist who was one of the leaders in the development of contemporary art in Nepal in the early 20th century. Maskey spearheaded the trend of creating art using new techniques for its aesthetic value, and introduced a new style in the milieu of traditional art which is essentially religious and follows descriptions laid down in ancient texts. See: Wikipedia.

⁴⁵ See: the above report of Mr. Mukherji.

⁴⁶ See: 1) *Lumbini the Peace-Shrine and Place of Pilgrimage* - T. R. Vaidya. 2) *Lumbini as International Pilgrimage Destination: Authenticity and Significance* - Dr. Him Lal Ghimire. 3) *Lumbini World Heritage* - GITU GIRI / Lumbini Development Trust.

⁴⁷ <https://theannapurnaexpress.com/story/51556>

⁴⁸ He was a world-renowned scholar of the Pali language. Having laid the foundation for translating ancient Buddhist Tripitaka texts from Pali into English, he was also the founder of the renowned Pali Text Society (PTS) in London. See: Wikipedia.

⁴⁹ See: Several Episodes in the Recent History of Lumbini by David P. Jackson.

⁵⁰ See: *Kaiser Shumsher Jung Bahadur Rana*, Wikipedia.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaiser_Shumsher_Jung_Bahadur_Rana

⁵¹ See: *The Sacred Garden of Lumbini: Perceptions of Buddha's birthplace*, UNESCO 2013. The 4th World Fellowship of Buddhists (WFB) General Conference was held in Kathmandu, Nepal, from November 15 to 21, 1956. It coincided with *Buddha Jayantī*, the global commemoration of the 2,500th anniversary of the Buddha's Parinirvāṇa. The gathering brought together hundreds of international delegates and observers to foster global solidarity

⁵² Dr. Debala Mitra (14 December 1925 – 2 December 2003) was an eminent archaeologist who served as the Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) from 1981 to 1983. She was the first woman to head the institution and excavated numerous prominent Buddhist archaeological sites.

⁵³ See: 'Excavations at Tilaura-kot & Kodan and Explorations in the Nepalese Tarai' by Debala Mitra, Director, ASI: 1972.

https://ignca.gov.in/Asi_data/72151.pdf

⁵⁴ For more details see:) *Reconstruction of Maya Devi Temple on the Birth Spot of Buddha* by Dr. Jiba Raj Pokharel, Professor, Department of Architecture, Tribhuvan University, 2003.

<https://pahar.in/pahar/Books%20and%20Articles/Nepal/2003%20Reconstruction%20of%20Maya%20Devi%20Temple%20on%20the%20Birth%20Spot%20of%20Buddha%20by%20Pokharel%20s.pdf> 2) *The Birth Place of Buddha* by Babu Krishna Rijal PDF:

<https://www.scribd.com/doc/316707472/The-Birth-Place-of-Buddha-by-Babu-Krishna-Rijal-pdf> 3) *100 years of archaeological research in Lumbini*,

Kapilavastu & Devadaha by Babu Krishna Rijal.

⁵⁵ See: (PDF) [Rediscovering Lumbini: archaeology and Site Interpretation](#), [Maya Devi Temple, Lumbini — Gropedia](#), (PDF) [The earliest Buddhist shrine: excavating the birthplace of the Buddha, Lumbini \(Nepal\)](#)

⁵⁶ Source: [*Archaeological Remains of Kapilavastu, Lumbini, and Devadaha*](#)

⁵⁷ Source:

https://lumbinidevtrust.gov.np/upload_file/files/post/1720177457_478288220_Lumbini%20Nepal_Coffee%20Table%20Book.pdf

⁵⁸ Source: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000225765>.

⁵⁹ See: 1. “ Archaeological Remains of Lumbini: The Birth-place of Lord Buddha by R.N.Pandey, Tribhuvan University, 1985. 2. EVOLUTION OF BUDDHISM AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS IN LUMBINI TARA NANDA MISHKA FORMER DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL. DEPT. OF ARCHAEOLOGY, HMG, NEPAL.

⁶⁰ The primary archaeologists and key personnel involved in the excavation of the Maya Devi Temple at Lumbini between 1992 and 1996 were: Satoru Uesaka (JBF), Babu Krishna Rijal: A senior Nepali archaeologist, Kosh Prasad Acharya: A key archaeologist from the Department of Archaeology & Basanta Bidari: Chief Archaeologist of the Lumbini Development Trust.

⁶¹ See: *The lesser known Lumbini Marker Stone that pinpoints Buddha's birthplace*, The Kathmandu Post (May 2024). <https://kathmandupost.com/national/2024/05/25/the-lesser-known-lumbini-marker-stone-that-pinpoints-buddha-s-birthplace>.

⁶² For details see: *The Sacred Garden of Lumbini: Perceptions of Buddha's birthplace*, UNESCO, 2013.

⁶³ Image and details: see: 1. Lumbini Development Trust Report , UNESCO 2013 Research Report and The earliest Buddhist shrine: excavating the birth place of the Buddha, Lumbini (Nepal)- <https://www.westernheritage.ca/>

⁶⁴ See: *The earliest Buddhist shrine: excavating the birth place of the Buddha, Lumbini (Nepal)*; *The Sacred Garden of Lumbini: Perceptions of Buddha's birthplace*, UNESCO 2013; and Live History India: <https://www.livehistoryindia.com/story/monuments/lumbini-nepal>

⁶⁵ From 1970- 1997 the UNESCO was engaged in this matter. In 1997 Lumbini was declared as a 'World Heritage Site'. See: *The Sacred Garden of Lumbini: Perceptions of Buddha's birthplace*, UNESCO 2013

⁶⁶ <https://www.greatvisiontreks.com/tour/lumbini-tour-3-day/> & shutterstock.com

⁶⁷ See: <http://alokabuddhist.com/the-birth-of-the-world-fellowship-of-buddhists/>)

⁶⁸ **See:** “The earliest Buddhist shrine: excavating the birthplace of the Buddha, Lumbini (Nepal): R.A.E. Conningham etl” :

https://www.westernheritage.ca/wp39/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Coningham_etal_2013.pdf#:

⁶⁹ Source: [\(PDF\) The earliest Buddhist shrine: excavating the birthplace of the Buddha, Lumbini \(Nepal\)](#)



Lumbini to Kusinara: The Sacred Land of the Buddha's Birth (Volume Two)

The sublime birth of Gautama Buddha—the wondrous and peerless Teacher who appeared in the world—was detailed in Volume 1 of this edition. This second section—identifying Lumbini in the ancient Sakkyia territory of Jambudvīpa as the sacred site of the Buddha's birth—is the result of research conducted by the author, synthesizing Tripitaka texts, long-standing Buddhist traditions, and modern archaeological discoveries.

The author places key evidence before the reader on a thoroughly scientific and academic foundation. This includes Eastern and Western scholarly views regarding the timeframe of the Buddha's birth, the designation of the Vesak day as the "Noble Buddha Day," and the evidence confirming the exact birthplace—most notably the Ashoka Pillar, Chinese travellers' accounts, modern archaeological findings, and the discovery of the "Marker Stone" (Sima-gala) established by Emperor Ashoka.

As you read the life story of our Buddha—who guided all living beings to cross vast wilderness of suffering in the cycle of existence through Great Compassion rooted in Sublime Wisdom—may your heart be filled with deep devotion and joy!