

Buddha Places

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There are eight places related to Buddha Life which are described as Atthamahathanani or eight incidents of Buddha Life, as shown on one of the stone slabs in the National Museum in Sarnath.

Original

Four Sacred Places related to Gotama Buddha

"Ananda, there are four places the sight of which will arouse strong emotion in those with faith - Which are they? "Here the Tathagata was born" this is the first. "Here the Tathagata attained the supreme enlightenment" – this is the second. "Here the Tathagata set in motion the Wheel of the Dhamma" – this is the third. "Here the Tathagata attained final Nirvana without remainder" – this is the fourth. And the monk, the nun, the layman or the laywoman who has faith should visit these places. And anyone who dies while making a pilgrimage to these shrines with a devoted heart will, at the breaking up of the body at death, be reborn in heaven."

Mahaparinibbhana Sutta

Four sacred places for Buddhist Pilgrims usually visit at Majjhimadesa (Middle-Land of Buddha Places) that are directly associated with Gotama Buddha as mentioned above are:

(1) Lumbini: the birth place of Gotama Siddhartha at Lumbini, Nepal. On the full moon day of Kason (May or Vesaka) in the year 563 BCE, a noble prince, the Bodhisattva, was born at this place in the Lumbini Garden Park, 16 kilometre from the Sakya city of Kapilavattu. Emerging from the bath, with her face looking to the east, she lean her right arm on the In-ginn tree. The prince was born to from her right side and immediately took seven steps in each of the four directions. In each direction, the newly born prince Siddhartha proclaimed as, by holding his right hand with pointing index finger upwards, with a lion's roar: "I am the highest in the world; I am the Foremost, the best of all beings; this is my last birth."

(2) Bodh Gaya: the place (Mahabodhi ceti and Mahabodhi Tree and related places) for attainment of enlightenment by Gotama Buddha that is situated in Bihar, India. Bodh Gaya or Buddha Gaya is located at 115 km south of Patna, the capital city of Bihar,

India, and is one of the most sacred places for Buddhists and millions of people from all over the world visited this place every year since it is the only place where Sakyamuni or Shakyamuni ("sage of the Shakyas") could have become a Buddha. The Modern village of Buddha Gaya on the bank of the Lilajan (ancient Neranjara) has grown up around the ancient Pipal tree and its surrounding, Sambodhi, the holiest of the holy spots near the ancient village of Uruvel . Sambodhi later on became Mahabodhi, by which name the entire Buddhist establishment came to be designated in later times.

(3) Migadawon: is a place where Gautama gave his First Sermon - "Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta" which is commonly known as "The Great Discourse on the Wheel of Dhamma", to his five old friends, viz., Kondanna (Kondajja), Bhaddiya,

Vappa, Mahanama and Assaji. It is situated at Isipattana Migadaya (the deer park of Sarnath) near Kashi (Varanasi), where Buddha transformed and accepted them as his first five disciples (Bhikkhus).

Soon after, the Buddha converted 55 noble men, including the merchant Yasha and his relatives, who became bhikkus.

Migadawon is the place where the Buddha initiated the order of Bhikkhus, Sangha Yadana as one of the triple gems.

(4) Kushinagar: the

place where Gotama Buddha had entered Maha Parinibbana at Kushinagar, UP State, India. When Gotama Buddha before his entry to Parinirvana in Kushinagar, had spoken his last words and closed his eyes, those who were not yet enlightened wept and cried, the earth trembled, and the Sal trees blossomed and fall like rain. For the next six days, the Malla Kings of Kushinagar prepared for the funeral rites under the direction of Ashin Aniruddha. The last cremation rite was performed at the presence of Ashin Mahakasyapa, the most celebrated disciple of Buddha. The relics and ashes were collected and distributed to the representatives of the Kingdoms presented at the ceremony. Mallas Kings also erected a stupa at the place for the cremation of Buddha.

Four Other Sacred Places related to all Buddhas

Four other sacred

places that are associated with previous and present Buddhas and are also linked with the great miracles performed by Gotama Buddha are:

(a) Sravasti (Savatthi):

where Gotama Buddha took his seat on a thousand petalled lotuses and created multiple representations of himself and the conversion of Angulimala, the robber and murderer, who killed so many people, and also a place where not only Gotama Buddha but also all previous Buddhas and future Buddhas have to stay for the longest years of retreats. Sravasti in modern day is called Saheth-Maheth, near Balrampur in Sravasti District; about 134 km north-west of Lucknow, the capital of UP State in India. The Jetavana Park where Buddha had spent longest years of his life had been maintained by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). There are two oldest Myanmar Buddhist Viharas, one (called as Daw Dwe Zayat) is no more used by Myanmar pilgrims, and another one being inside in the archaeological sites have been agreed to keep as it was as a guest house and maintained by Myanmar monk. A new Myanmar Buddhist Vihara has been constructed in 2006.

(b) Sankisa (Sankasya): where Gotama Buddha, after spending the seventh retreat and preached the Dhamma (Abhidhamma) to his mother and other gods at Tusita (Tushita), descended to earth accompanied by the Brahma and Indra. It is about 300 km south-east of New Delhi, and about 30 km east from Bewa Town on Delhi-Kanpur Road, in UP State, India. There is a ruined stupa with Ashoka's pillar which has an elephant on top. A newly constructed Myanmar Buddhist Vihara is situated about 5 km from the stupa maintained now by the ASI.

(c) Rajagriha (Rajgir): the capital of King Bimbisara where Gotama Buddha spent second longest retreats (over 10 times), and also tamed the wild and mad elephant. Present day Rajgir was a small town with many ruins maintained by the ASI. One of the oldest Myanmar Buddhist Vihara (established in 1936) was situated inside main city compound of Rajgir.

(d)Vesali (Vaishali): a capital of Lichchhavi, one of the first republican states in the world, where a monkey offered honey to Gotama Buddha, and also a place where the Lord accepted the Bikkhunis. Vesali is about 60 km north of Patna, present day capital of Bihar State, India. A new Myanmar Buddhist Vihara is partially built at Vesali, and pilgrims can stop over and having lunches, dinners, or snacks at this Vihara on their way from Patna to Kushinagar or vice-versa.