

# AN ANALYSIS OF BUDDHAS OF KAPILAVASTU NEPAL FROM TOURISM PERSPECTIVE

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## Abstract

*Normally, people note that Kapilavastu is the birthplace of Lord Gautam Buddha, but it is also the birth place of great previous Buddhas. An analysis of Buddhas of Kapilavastu Nepal from tourism perspective is a study of birthplaces of three prominent Buddhas. The main objective of the study is to find out the general information of the historical birthplaces of Buddhas of Kapilavastu. The study is based in literature review and secondary information. These places are full of tourism potentiality and historical significance. Governments are advised to make sound tourism development master plan of the sacred birthplace of Kapilmuni, Krakucchanda, Kanakmini and Shakyamuni Buddhas.*

**Keywords:** Kapilavastu, Krakucchanda, Kanakmini, Shakyamuni.

## Background

Kapilavastu was the childhood home of Gautama Buddha, on account of it being the capital of the Shakyas, over whom his father ruled. Kapilavastu is the place where Siddhartha Gautama spent 29 years of his life. According to Buddhist sources Kapilavastu was named after Vedic sage Kapilamuni. Kapilavastu refers to the kingdom as well as the administrative centre or the capital of the Shakya dynasty, ruled by King Suddhodhana in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. The place where the Buddha, spent 29 years of his life as Siddhartha Gautama (Rajbhandari, 2014). Kapilavastu, located near the Himālayas, was the city (Sarao, 2017).

The Buddhas of Kapilavastu are Krakucchanda Muni in Gotihawa Kanakmuni in Niglihawa and Shakyamuni in Lumbini. The study highlights the Kapilavastu district from history, geography, and economics as it is the birth place of three ancient prominent Buddhas. The ancient kingdom of Kapilavastu is lying at the foothills of the Himalayas spread between the country of Kosala on the west and Koliyas on the east. It was known to be a stable kingdom flourishing during the time of King Suddhodhana, father of Prince Siddhartha Gautama. It was in the city of Kapilavastu that Prince Siddhartha Gautama spent his early years after his birth in Lumbini in 623 BC (Tuladhar, 2002, p. p.13). Emphasis on Historicity points that the need for a strategy to reorient interest toward the other historical Buddhas, Krakucchanda Muni in Gotihawa, Kanakmuni in Niglihawa, and Shakyamuni in Lumbini. Further, the diversity of Buddhist traditions and interpretations across the

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continent and emphasized the importance of highlighting the extensive network of historic relics and sites of Buddhist significance across South and Southeast Asia. Therefore, Kapilvastu is the city of Buddhist religious tourists.

In 1895 Kapilvastu was rediscovered along with the Niglihwa Asokan pillar with inscription, but not without controversy. The lost city of Kapilvastu was identified as Tilaura Kot until 1898, when W. Peppe found several relic caskets inside an old stupa in Piprahwa believed to contain the relics of Buddha. King Asoka visited Kapilvastu in 249 BC with his spiritual advisor Upagupta. He erected numerous stone pillars and stupas. In Nepal three Asokan Pillars have been found so far one each in Lumbini, Niglisagar and Gotihwa. They are the only three structural elements found today credited to Asoka in Kapilvastu. Lumbini and Niglihwa Pillars are inscribed and dated. The Lumbini and Gotihwa Pillars are in situ. Huen Tsian witnessed all the three pillars during his visit to Kapilvastu in 6th Century AD. In 1177 AD Ripu Malla engraved the date of his visit in the Lumbini and Niglihwa Pillar. All three pillars were erected within the dominion of Kapilvastu of which two were in the vicinity of the city of Kapilvastu. Of the two, one of them have been found in Gotihwa and second one at Niglihwa in Nepal (Gurung, 2016, p. p.24). these magnificent historical sites must be commercialized as one of the top heritage tourism site of the world.

The Kapilvastu Region is Located in the plains of central Nepal, and extending across the present India-Nepal border, the district of Kapilvastu holds tremendous historical significance for Buddhism. The historicity of the ancient Kapilvastu region, is where several Buddhist pilgrimage sites relating to the Sakyamuni Buddha, as well as earlier historical Buddhas like the Kanakmuni Buddha and the Krakucchanda Buddha, are located. It means it is the land of knowledge and peace. The peace and the knowledge propounded by the Buddha must be presented to the pilgrims and tourists around the world. The importance of preventing geopolitical rivalries, excessive commercialism through tourism, and ultra-nationalism are kept in mind that these factors should not be allowed to impact the spiritual weight of this space. The identification of the Gotihwa Pillar with Krakuchanda pillar could be confirmed by the description of Huen Tsian. He had mentioned three pillars erected by Asoka in Kapilvastu commemorating the birthplace Kanakmuni Buddha, Krakuchanda Buddha and Sakyamuni Buddha. The pillar of Lumbinigrama of Sakyamuni Buddha and the Kanakmuni pillar of Niglihwa have been found with inscription so the third one has to be Gotihwa Pillar for there are no records of other pillars erected by Asoka in Kapilvastu (Tuladhar, 2002, p. p. 14). Kapilvastu district is the hometown of Prince Siddhartha. It is also the birthplace of two earlier Buddhas, who descended to the mortal world, attained enlightenment and entered to nirvana before Lord Sakyamuni Buddha. Krakuchanda Buddha was born in Gotihawa whereas Kanakamuni Buddha was born in Niglihawa. Hence, the Greater Lumbini Area may be called as the Land of Buddhas

or the Birthplaces of three Buddhas. Therefore, Kapilavastu must be developed like a museum of heavenly Buddhas.

### **Objective and Method**

An analysis of Buddhas of Kapilavastu Nepal from tourism perspective is a study of birthplaces of three prominent Buddhas. The main objective of the study is to find out the general information of the historical birthplaces of Buddhas of Kapilavastu. The study is based in literature review and secondary information.

### **Literature Review**

Buddhist texts such as the Pali Canon claim that Kapilavastu was the childhood home of Gautama Buddha, on account of it being the capital of the Shakyas, over whom his father ruled. Kapilavastu is the place where Siddhartha Gautama spent 29 years of his life. According to Buddhist sources Kapilavastu was named after Vedic sage Kapila (Leve, 2015).

Kapilavastu is one of the districts of Province No. 5, Nepal. The district, with Kapilavastu municipality as its district headquarters, covers an area of 1,738 square kilometers (671 sq mi) and in 2001 had a population of 481,976, which increased to 571,936 in 2011. The district is situated at a height of 93 to 1,491 meters (305 to 4,892 ft) above sea level. Geographically, the district can be divided into the low land plains of Terai and the low Churiya hills. The summer is hot with temperature above 27 °C and winter temperature remains below 15 °C. Due to extremely hot and cold climatic conditions, the people suffer from viral fever, dengue, malaria etc and cold and diarrhea respectively. At the time of the 2011 Nepal census, Kapilavastu District had a population of 571,936. Of these, 49.8% spoke Awadhi, 17.8% Urdu, 17.1% Nepali, 11.3% Tharu, 1.7% Magar and 0.9% Maithili as their first language. Most of the population of the district is dependent on agriculture. Paddy rice is a major crop of the district. A number of youths rely on foreign employment while sugarcane is an important cash crop. More than 138 historical sites related to Buddha have already been identified within the boundary to the east of Banganga, west of Kothi, north to Indian border and south to Mahendra highway. The forest of the district stands as a natural park. The land is irrigated by the rivers like Banganga, Koili, Surai, Chirai, Bhutera and others. Kapilavastu has the highest number of archaeological sites in the country (Tuladhar, 2002, p. p. 15). The department has identified 136 archaeological sites in the district. It is as below:

### **Kapilavastu**

1. Tilaurakot: The ancient capital of the Shakya Kingdom, the kingdom of Lord Buddha's

father, with remains of the fortification wall and gates; Prince Siddhartha lived here until 29 years of age; site on Tentative World Heritage list

2. Niglihawa: Birthplace of Kanakmuni, who was one of the four Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa era (which is a long and immeasurable period of time and it is believed that the present period is also part of the Bhadrakalpa); site has a broken Asoka Pillar with inscription erected by Emperor Asoka in 249 BC
3. Aurorakot: Ruins of a rectangular fortified area; believed to be the natal town of Kanakmuni Buddha
4. Sagarhawa: A forest with a lake known as Lumbusagar; thousands of Shakyas massacred at this site by King Virudhaka; ruins of hundreds of stupas built to remember those who were massacred
5. Gotihawa: Remains of an Asoka Pillar to mark Krakuchhanda's birthplace; Krakuchhanda was one of the four Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa
6. Kudan: Place where Lord Buddha met his father for the first time after his renunciation; his son Rahul was ordained by Lord Buddha's most revered disciple Sariputra (The son of Sari", born as Upatiṣya, was one of the top disciples of the Buddha. He is considered the first of the Buddha's two chief male disciples, together with Maudgalyāyana. Sariputra had a key leadership role in the ministry of the Buddha and is considered in many Buddhist schools to have been important in the development of the Buddhist Abhidharma. He frequently appears in Mahayana sutras, and in some sutras, is used as a counterpoint to represent the Therawada school of Buddhism).
7. Sisahaniya: Important archaeological site of the Maurya-Kushan era; believed to have an ancient Buddhist monastery (LDT, 2015, p. p. 35)

The visiting Myanmar's President Myint took part in the prayers and observed the artistic Myanmar's monastery in the Lumbini following the visit to the Mayadevi Temple in the Lumbini are the milestone of tourism development and security mechanism. There are different sections, sets and subsets in Buddhism, entire all of them follow or pretend to follow the teaching of Gautam Buddha (Leve, 2015, p. p. 58). Chinese monk Fahsien who visited Kapilvastu, Lumbini and Ramagrama in the 4th century AD prepared notes on important Buddhist sites which he personally visited. His travel account has been an important source to locate these historical sites. He describes Kapilavastu to be close to the places of Krakuchhanda and Kanakmuni Buddhas

(Rai, 2008, p. 34). Things appear to exist when a certain composition of causes (hetu) and requisite conditions (pratyaya) occurs, and things disappear upon the decomposition of their causes and conditions (Rongxi, 2002, p. p. 579). It has occurred but still the situation of the place is not documented properly. Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism are the four major religions in the world. The percentage of Christianity holds the highest (i.e. 33%) and the second highest is Muslims (19.6%) followed by Hinduism and Buddhism (13.4% and 5.9% respectively) (Gurung, 2016, p. p. 4). Buddhism is fourth largest religion in the world. According to scholar Peter Harvey, the number of adherents of Eastern Buddhism (Mahayana) is 360 million, Southern Buddhism (Theravada) 150 million, and Northern Buddhism (Vajrayana) 18.2 million. Seven million additional Buddhists are found outside Asia. Approximately 8% of global population, around 528,000,000 (528 million) people were Buddhists in the world in 2017. It is necessary to analyze that why the message of Kapilavastu are not spread among them. According to an estimate, there are at present around 4000 monasteries, which belong to various Buddhist sects (CERID, 2007, p. p. 56). There are Gumbas under the different sect-based such as *Nyinmapa*, *Kagyupa*, *Shakyapa*, *Gelupa* and *Bonpo*. All these monasteries are in existence since the 13th century.

While thinking about the historical places of the Buddhas no one can ignore Kapilavastu Nepal. But, till the date, there is not sufficient authentic literature that covers the birth places of Buddhas, its geography, history, and economics. There are certain literatures but are not covered the whole Kapilavastu. Kapilavastu has the highest number of archaeological sites in the country. The departments have identified 136 archaeological sites in the district, but are not evaluated from history, geography and economics (Gurung, 2016).

The threat of Commercialization is that Lumbini, the birthplace of Lord Buddha, is a World Heritage Site located in central Nepal. While participants supported efforts to develop this area into a site of religious pilgrimage, and characterized tourism as a positive development, they were apprehensive of the challenges of commercialization. Participants worried that this could result in the exploitation of land and the desecration of the sanctity of its spiritual space. They suggested learning from the developmental efforts employed at other pilgrimage sites to strike a balance between offering visitor's amenities, preserving the authenticity of the site, and benefiting the local Nepalese community. The development of Lumbini is an enormous undertaking involving expertise and support from a wide range of people. We invite you to join us on our journey to preserve and develop the sacred sites in and around Lumbini for current and future generations (UNESCO, 2013, p. p. 43). It is also come to known that Kasyap Buddha was appeared in Mahalaxmi Municipality Lalitpur as well and his relics were deposited in Boudha stupa in Baudhanath (Badal, 2018). It is common to confuse the terms tourism, travel, and hospitality or to define them as the

same thing. While tourism is the all-encompassing umbrella term for the activities and industry that create the tourist experience, the UNWTO (2020) defines travel as the activity of moving between different locations often for any purpose but more so for leisure and recreation

## Analysis

### **Krakucchanda Buddha in Gotihawa,**

Kakusandha Buddha was born in Khemavati Park in Khemavati according to the Theravada tradition. Khemavati is now known as Gotihawa, and it is located about 4 kilometres (2.5 mi) southeast of Kapilavastu, in Kapilvastu District, in the Lumbini of southern Nepal. His father was Aggidatta, a chaplain of the king Khemankara of Khemavati. His mother was Visakha. His wife was Virochamana (also known as Rocani); he had a son, Uttara (son of Kakusandha). Asoka visited Gotihawa, Nepal when he visited Lumbini, Nepal and installed a stone pillar and inscribed his visit in the pillar. There is also a stupa in Gotihawa. Therefore, it is generally accepted due to the pillar that stupa is associated with the nirvana of Kakusandha Buddha (Rongxi, 2002).

Krakusandha lived for four thousand years in the household in three palaces: Ruci, Suruci and Vaddhana (or Rativaddhana). At the age of four thousand, he renounced the worldly life while riding on a chariot. He practiced austerities for eight months. Before attaining enlightenment, he had accepted some milk-rice from the daughter of the Brahmin Vajirindha of the village Suchirindha, as well as grass for his seat from the yavapalaka Subhadda. He attained enlightenment under a sirisa tree, then delivered his first sermon to the assembly of eighty-four thousand monks in a park near Makila. Kakusandha performed the twin miracle under a sala tree, at the gates of Kannakujja. Among his converts was a fierce yaksha named Naradeva. Kakusandha kept the fast-day (uposatha) every year (Rajbhandari, 2014).

His chief disciples were Vidhura and Sanjiva among the monks, and Sama and Champa among the nuns. His personal attendant was Buddhija. Acchuta and Samana among the men, and Nanda and Sunanda among the women were his chief lay-supporters. Acchuta built a monastery for Kakusandha Buddha on the same site, which was later chosen by Anathapindika for Jetavana Arama for Gautama Buddha. According to the Samyutta Nikaya (ii.194), the Vepulla peak of Rajgir was then called Pachinvamsa; and the people of the region Tivara. Kakusandha's body was forty cubits in height, and he died at the age of forty thousand years in Khemavati. The stupa erected over his relics was one league high. The bodhisattva who was to become Siddhartha Gautama was born as King Khema during the time of Kakusandha. Kakusandha was the Buddha who foretold that King Khema, who offered him alms with robes and medicines, would become the Gautama

Buddha in the future (Sarao, 2017).

Modern day Gotihawa was known as Khemavati in ancient times. According to Theravāda Buddhist tradition, Kakusandha Buddha was born in Khemavati. Kakusandha Buddha is one of the ancient Buddhas whose biography is chronicled in chapter 22 of the Buddhavamsa, one of the books of the Pāli Canon. Gotihawa is a village located about 4 kilometres (2.5 mi) southeast of Kapilavastu, in Kapilavastu District, in the Lumbini (Tuladhar, 2002).

### **Kanakmuni Buddha in Niglihawa,**

Situated about 7km northeast of Taulihawa, Niglihawa is identified as the holy place where Kanakamuni Buddha was born. Emperor Asoka visited the site in 249 BC and erected the stone pillar with inscription on it. The Asoka inscription engraved on the pillar in Brahmi script and Pali language attests the fact that Emperor Asoka enlarged the Kanakamuni Buddha's stupa, worshiped it and erected a stone pillar to mark the birthplace of Kanakamuni Buddha on the occasion of the twentieth year of his coronation. The pillar also bears an inscription, "Om mani padme hum and Sri Ripu Malla Chiram Jayatu 1234" of King Ripu Malla written in the year 1234 (Saka Era corresponding to 1312 AD). Dr. Alois Fuhrer discovered this pillar in 1895 AD. It is now in a broken state, into two pieces. The lower part of the pillar with an edict measures 10 feet, 6 inches (3. 20 m). The upper half of Asoka's Pillar is 14 feet 9 inches in length with 2 feet diameter at its uppermost and 2 feet 6 inches at its lower end (Leve, 2015).

Emperor Asoka visited the site in 249 BC and erected the stone pillar with inscription on it as well as enlarged of the Nirvana Stupa of the Kanakamuni Buddha. The site was also visited by the famous Chinese pilgrims, Fa-Hien and Hiuen-Tsang. The Koṅāgamana Buddha is mentioned in a 3rd-century BCE inscription by Ashoka at Nigali Sagar, in today's Nepal. There is an Ashoka pillar at the site today. Ashoka's inscription in Brahmi is on the fragment of the pillar still partly buried in the ground. The inscription made when Emperor Asoka at Nigali Sagar in 249 BCE records his visit, the enlargement of a stupa dedicated to the Kanakamuni Buddha, and the erection of a pillar (CERID, 2007).

### **Shakyamuni Buddha in Lumbini**

Nepal is a country with its unique and diverse blending of history and culture since thousands of years. The mountainous north of Nepal has eight of the world's ten tallest mountains, including the highest point on Earth, Mount Everest, called Sagarmatha in the Nepali language. Lumbini, the birthplace of Lord Gautama Buddha, is located in this region. Lumbini is one of the holiest places

of the Buddhist religion; it contains important evidence about the nature of Buddhist pilgrimages dating from as early as the 3rd century BCE (LDT, 2015). The birthplace of the Gautama Buddha, Lumbini, is one of the four holy places of Buddhism. It is said in the Parinibbana Sutta that Buddha himself identified four places of future pilgrimage: the sites of his birth, Enlightenment, First Discourse, and death in the Buddha's time, Lumbini was a beautiful garden full of green and shady sal trees (*Shorea Robusta*). The garden and its tranquil environs were owned by both the Shakya and the clans. King Suddhodana, father of Gautama Buddha, was of the Shakya dynasty and belonged to the Kshatriya (warrior caste). Discovered by the now famous German archaeologist Dr. Fuhrer, the pillar is the first epigraphic evidence relating to the life history of Lord Buddha and is also the most visible landmark of the garden. The historic importance of the pillar is evidenced by the inscription engraved in the pillar (in Brahmi script). It is said that the great Indian Emperor Ashok visited the site in the twentieth year of his ascendancy to the throne and as a homage to the birthplace, erected the pillar (Rongxi, 2002).

In 1896, General Khadga Samsher Rana and Alois Anton Führer discovered a great stone pillar at Rupandehi, according to the crucial historical records made by the ancient Chinese monk-pilgrim Xuanzang in the 7th century CE and by another ancient Chinese monk-pilgrim Faxian in the early 5th century CE. The Brahmi inscription on the pillar gives evidence that Ashoka, emperor of the Maurya Empire, visited the place in 3rd-century BCE and identified it as the birth-place of the Buddha. The inscription was translated by Parnavitana (Rajbhandari, 2014).

Tourism is a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes. These people are called visitors (which may be either tourists or excursionists; residents or non-residents) and tourism has to do with their activities, some of which imply tourism expenditure (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2008).

## Conclusion

There are thousand Buddhas and *Bodhisattwas* around the world. However, Kasyapa, Krakuchanda, Kanakmuni, Shakyamuni, and Maitriya (Future) Buddhas are prominent Buddhas. Among them the birthplace of Krakuchanda, Kanakmuni, Shakyamuni Buddhas is Kapilavastu. Lumbini Kapilavastu of Nepal is the land of not only Sakyamuni Buddha but also other Buddhas. Thus it is recommended that Nepal Government must make a tourism master plan of whole Kapilavastu showing the historical values of Buddhas in tourism development.



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