

Good example of report on lumbini

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Introduction

Lumbini is a garden which is the birthplace of the Buddha known as Siddhartha Gautama. Siddhartha Gautama is the founder of Buddhism. He was born in the sixth or seventh century BC. This garden became a site of pilgrimage up until the 15th century. This site is only visited by a person of great devotion. In the year 246 BC, Emperor Ashoka, a Buddhist convert, visited Lumbini and ordered the creation of a stone pillar and four stupas. Today, Lumbini is visited by pilgrims from all over the world seeking enlightenment and as a tourist attraction. The site is surrounded by favorable agricultural and natural vegetation and domesticable fauna. The pillar constructed by Ashoka has an inscription stating which may be translated in part to read: “ King Ashoka (Piyadasi), beloved of devas, made a royal visit and built a stone railing and stone pillar in honor of Bhagavan (“ the blessed one”)” (Acharya 2). This essay presents information on the site of Lumbini in terms of its geographic and historical relevance and the challenges of its preservation.

Figure 1: The pillar of Lumbini built by King Ashoka (Source: Gardenvisit.com).

Lumbini is located near the Himalaya Mountains in what is now modern Nepal. During the time of Buddha, Lumbini was a beautiful place with green and shady trees. The garden provided tranquility and was owned by the Shakya and Koliya clans. According to Buddhist tradition, Gautama Buddha was born in May as his mother, Maya Devi was travelling back home. Maya Devi had taken rest under a Sal tree after being spellbound by the garden of Lumbini. She soon began to feel labor pains and steadied herself on the

branch of a Sal tree. Buddha was then born (Coningham and Acharya 3). Lumbini is visited by pilgrims seeking awareness and it is said to cause peace and enlightenment. The site is surrounded by favorable agricultural and natural vegetation and domesticable fauna. Historically, Lumbini is a treasure trove of many ancient antiquities and ruins, which have their origins as far back as the pre-Christian era (Coningham and Acharya 3). This site is among the four holy sites of Buddhism pilgrimage as identified by Buddha. This garden could be the reason why Buddhists respect their environment and the natural law (Coningham and Acharya 3).

Figure 2: The Lumbini gardens (Source: Siddharthrajgir. com., 2012).

The authenticity of the Lumbini birthplace was confirmed in 1896 after discovery of the pillar Asoka built. This was discovered together with the remains of stupas, viharas and other numerous layers of structures made of bricks traced back to the 3rd Century BC. Further exploration revealed that there was a brick temple and a sandstone sculpture in the temple itself, which illustrates the scenes of Buddha's birth. Scholars have posited that the Maya Devi temple was built over the base of another stupa or temple. The site at Lumbini attracted pilgrims up to 15th century (Coningham and Acharya 3). It is not clear why Buddhist pilgrims no longer visited it after the 15th century.

Lumbini had been neglected for centuries, falling into disrepair under the forces of denudation such as moisture and wind. This was until the site was discovered in 1895 by Feuhrer, a renowned German archeologist. Recently, several other beautiful shrines have been constructed by devotees from select Buddhist countries (Siddharthrajgir. com., 2012). The current

maintained state of Lumbini has been made possible through the preservation of the archeological remains found at the site. The property at Lumbini is protected under the Monument Preservation Act of 1956.

Figure 3: Maya Devi Temple at Lumbini. (Source: UNESCO 1)

The management of the site is done by Lumbini Development Trust, which is a non-profit organization and autonomous. The property is owned exclusively by the Nepalese Government. The long-term challenges to the management of Lumbini and its properties include the control of visitor impact and natural elements like humidity, wind and industrial development in the surrounding area(Siddharthrajgir. com., 2012). The Lumbini Development Trust in conjunction with the Nepalese Government area in the process of creating a management plan which will ensure that the archeological vestiges and property at the site are managed well, while enabling Buddhist visitors to continue coming to the site.

Conclusion

Lumbini is a garden which is the birthplace of the Buddha. After the Buddha was born, the site was visited by Buddhist pilgrims up until the 15th Century. Since then, the site gradually fell into ruin until 1896 when it was discovered by a renowned German archeologist. The site has been restored under the management of the Lumbini Development Trust. However, challenges such as the impact of visitors, natural elements and upcoming industrial plants around the garden persist. The Lumbini Development Trust hopes to develop a management plan to protect the integrity of Lumbini (Siddharthrajgir. com., 2012). Undoubtedly, Lumbini remains a unique tourist attraction and pilgrim site, and lends itself to artistic and historical interpretations.

Figure 4: Former King Gyanendra and Queen Komal of Nepal visit Lumbini
(Source: <http://blogs.aljazeera.com/blog/asia/lumbini-project-chinas-3bn-buddhism>)

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