



# Holy Place of Buddha...Bodhgaya

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# Bodhgaya



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## A. Mahabodhi Temple, Bodhagya



- This location is marked as the Buddha have attained enlightenment.
- The site contains a descendant of the Bodhi Tree under which Buddha gained enlightenment, and has been a major pilgrimage destination for Hindus and Buddhists for well over two thousand years, and some elements probably date to the period of Ashoka (died c. 232 BCE).
- All Buddhist devotees from all over the world every year visit this sacred place.
- According to Buddhist scriptures, after three days and three nights, Siddharta attained enlightenment and the answers that he had sought. In that location, Mahabodhi Temple was built by Emperor Ashoka in around 260 BCE.

**The Buddha after Enlightenment** spent the succeeding seven weeks at seven different spots in the vicinity meditating and considering his experience. Several specific places at the current Mahabodhi Temple relate to the traditions surrounding these seven weeks. Those places are in next slide



# 1



## Bodhi Tree

Behind the Mahabodhi Temple, there is a **Bodhi tree** planted since early 19th century. The existing Mahabodhi Tree in Bodh Gaya is believed to be grown from the sapling brought from the original Bodhi tree from Sri Lanka. There is a platform built in between the Maha Bodhi Tree and the Temple. It is a large rectangular red-sand stone slab, thought to be put at the exact place where Gotama Buddha sat for deep meditation and attained the enlightenment. This platform is called '*vajirasila*' (the rock of diamond) or '*vijirasana*' (the diamond seat) and some Buddhists believe that an enormous diamond lay buried beneath the earth fuelling the site's spiritual power.



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# 2



## Animisa Cetiya

About 50 meters at the north-east side of the Maha Bodhi Temple in a small hill, and to the right of the main entrance to the main Temple, there is a small stupa type temple with a Buddha image. This small temple is known as "Animisa Ceti" (Unblinking Shrine), to mark the place where Gotama Buddha spent the second week after enlightenment, remained standing and gazing uninterruptedly to the Bodhi tree.

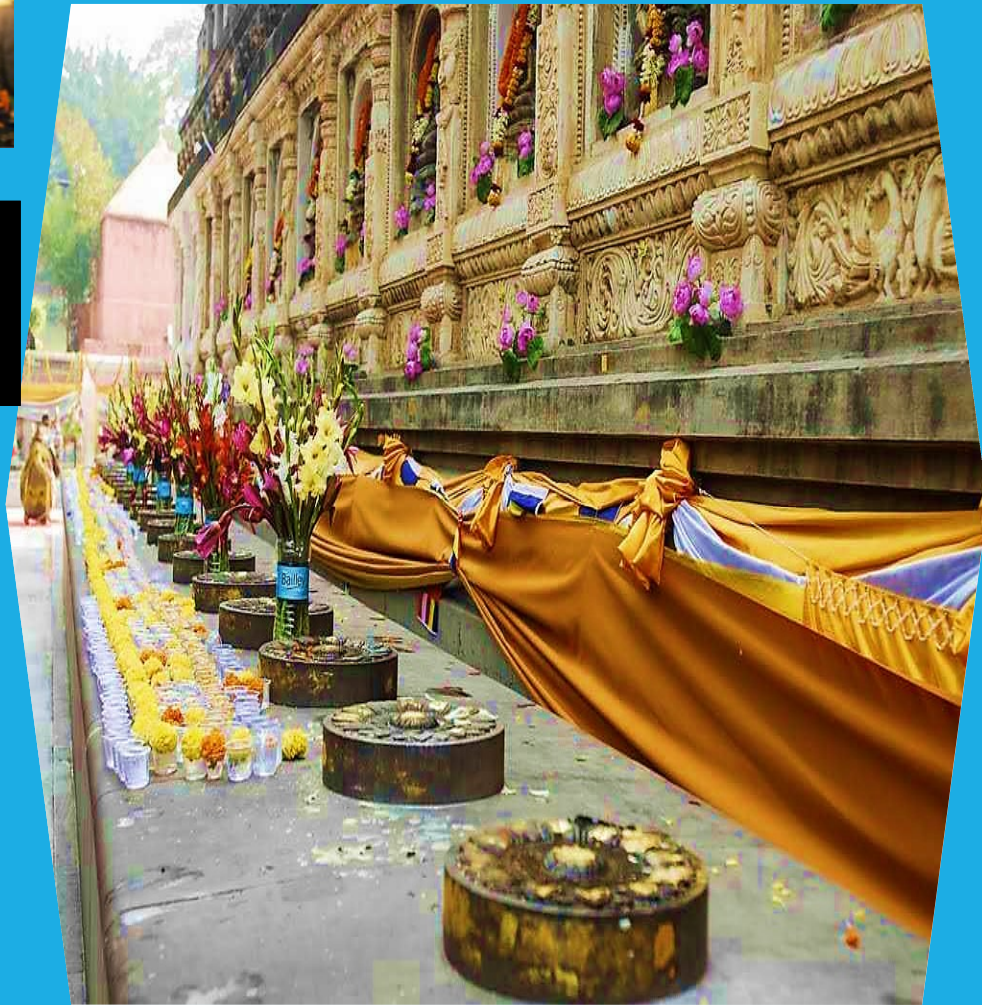


# 3



## Cankamana

At the side of the Maha Bodhi Temple, if one turns around, there is a spot where Gotama Buddha spent third week in meditation, walking back and forth, from the Bodhi tree to unblinking spot. Presently a raised structure with symbols of lotus flowers, known as Jewel promenade Shrine (Ratanacankama Cetiya) showed where the Buddha's feet rested and lotus flowers sprang up. Pilgrims will notice that the Mahabodhi temple is surrounded by the stone railings, dated back to 100 BCE, erected by pilgrims to the temple.





# 4



## Ratanaghara Cetiya

At the North-west of the Bodhi tree, there is a small shrine (Ratanaghara Cetiya or the Jewel House shrine) with small images of Buddha of recent era. It is a place where Gotama Buddha sat for deeper meditation during the fourth week after enlightenment, and the blue, yellow, red, white and orange rays emanated from his body. These colors are used in the present day Buddhist flag.





# 5



## Ajapala Nigrodha

When entering the main gate and descending the stairs towards Maha Bodhi Temple, there is a stone pillar marking Ajapala-Banyan tree, where Gotama Buddha spent his fifth week of meditation after enlightenment. It is also here where Lord Buddha made a response to a question raised by a Brahman that good kamma (action) but not birth made a Brahman. Near the pillar, there is a brass bell donated in early 19th century by the pilgrims from Myanmar. There is a beautifully curved gateway, probably built around the eighth century and at its base on each side, there exists two kneeling figures of ladies/deities, supposed to be left by the Myanmar Missions around mid-1800s.





# 6



## Mucalinda



Just beyond the south-east corner of the Maha Bodhi Temple is a 6m high section of a huge stone pillar, moved to its present place in 1956, and believed to be originally erected by King Ashoka to mark Bodh Gaya with an elephant statue on the top of the pillar which stood outside the temple railing to the right of its east gateway. Walking through the pavilion built just south of the present day pillar, there is a large pond, called Mucalinda, supposed to be a lake where Lord Buddha spent his sixth week of meditation after enlightenment. It is a place where the king of the serpent (Naga) rose up from the water to protect Gotama Buddha from a severe storm created by Mara (the god of chaos) who wanted to disturb the Buddha's meditation. Right in the middle of the pond, there is a Buddha image (of Myanmar style) covered by the serpent king, which was donated by Myanmar pilgrims in early 1990s.

# 7

## Rajayatana



Just a few meters on the south side of the Mahabodhi Temple, a small forest tree which is another type of Banyan tree (called Linlun in Myanmar), replanted by the Myanmar Mission, marks a place at which Gotama Buddha spent the last seventh week after enlightenment. It is here where Gotama Buddha preached to the passersby, including two merchants, Tapussa (Tapassu) and Ballika (Bhiallika) of Ukkala (Utkala) (believed to be modern day Yangon of Myanmar). Gotama Buddha gave them eight strands of hairs and sermons with two gems "Buddham saranam gacchami and Dhammam saranam gacchami". These eight strands of hairs are believed to be placed as relics inside the Shwedagon Pagoda at Yangon, along with the relics of other Buddhas.





## B. Niranjana River



- Before attaining Enlightenment, the prince Siddhārtha Gautama practiced asceticism for six years (ten or twelve years according to some accounts) on the banks of the river, residing in a forest near the village of Uruvilvā.
- After realizing that strict asceticism would not lead to Enlightenment, he recuperated after bathing in the river and receiving a bowl of milk-rice from the milkmaid Sujātā.
- He sat under the nearby pippala tree, where he finally achieved Enlightenment. This tree became known as the Bodhi Tree, and the site became known as Bodh Gayā.

## C. Sujata Garh



Pillar of Ashoka, originally located in front of Sujata Stupa, was brought to Bodh Gaya in 1956.



- The stupa was dedicated to the milkmaid Sujata, from the village of Bakraur, who is said to have fed Gautama Buddha milk and rice at this spot as he was sitting under a Banyan tree, thereby ending his seven years of fasting and ascetism, and allowing him to attain illumination through the Middle Way.
- The stupa was originally adorned with a pillar of Ashoka, which was quarried in part for building material in the 1800s, then placed at the Gol Pather intersection of Gaya, and finally moved to Bodh Gaya in 1956.





## D. Dunngeshwari

- Gautama Siddhartha is believed to have piously meditated at this place for six years before he went to Bodhgaya for the final realization. Two small shrines are built to commemorate this phase of Buddha.
- A golden emaciated Buddha sculpture memorising the rigid penance is enshrined in one of the cave temples and a large (about 6' tall) Buddha's statue in the other. A Hindu goddess deity Dungeneshwari is also placed inside the cave temple.
- There is a popular myth associated with these cave temples and it is said that during his self-mortification, Gautama (as Buddha was earlier called) became emaciated. A cow-herder by the name of Sujata was moved by his weak appearance and offered him food and water. Later, Gautama realised that enlightenment cannot be attained by self-abasement and carried on with his journey to Bodh Gaya.

**Thanks for attention.....**

