

**A CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN
FOR
THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES IN
THE LUMBINI ZONE**

Prepared by

JOHN SANDAY

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PROPOSAL SUMMARY

This paper recommends the formation of specialized conservation management team as part of the Lumbini Development Trust to undertake the preparation of a long term and short term Archaeological Conservation Management Plan for the sites in and around Lumbini associated with the life of the Lord Buddha. It recommends also that the management team develops specific archaeological projects as well as a program for their implementation. It is suggested that the conservation management team works under the direction of the Lumbini Development Trust and collaborates closely with the Department of Archaeology and Tribhuvan University in all research issues and the development of conservation management proposals.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Location of Buddhist Sites in the Lumbini Zone

The site of the birthplace of Lord Buddha and a collection of exceptional archaeological sites relating to the life of the Buddha are grouped together in the Lumbini Zone in Western Nepal. Lumbini is in the western Terai or Lowlands of Nepal 22 kilometers to the west of Bhairawa close to the Indian border and at an altitude of 106m. They consist of eight sites dating from the 5th Century B.C. and can be identified as follows:

- 1) Lumbini
 - a) The Sacred Garden (Birthplace of the Buddha)
- 2) Kapilavastu Kingdom
 - a) Tilaurakot Citadel
 - b) Kudan (Associated)
 - c) Gotihawa & Pipari (Associated)
 - d) Nirlihawa & Araurakot (Associated)
 - e) Sagrahawa (Associated)
- 3) Koliya Kingdom
 - a) Ramagrama
 - b) Devadaha (Associated)

All the sites are within a 40 kilometer radius of the Village of Lumbini and the Headquarters of the Lumbini Development Trust.

The Sacred Garden of Lumbini is located within an ambitious project under the direction of the Lumbini Development Trust to establish Lumbini as an international pilgrimage and tourist centre. The total area designated as the Lumbini archaeological garden and the village site is enclosed within a circular levee measuring 960 m diameter.

The Citadel of Tilaurakot lies 28 km to the West of Lumbini and it is situated in relatively open farmland on the eastern bank of the river Banganga. The nearest town of Taulihawa is three kilometers to the south. Tilaurakot consists of a slightly raised wooded “kot” or fortified tract of land measuring about 500 m X 400 m.

The village of Kudan or Lori-Kudan is located about 2 km south west of Taulihawa in a shaded archaeological garden. The northwest corner of the site is bound by dwellings and the eastern boundary is the present road. The designated area measures about 300 sq metres.

The sites of Gotihawa and Pipari are about 3 km to the West of Kudan across the fields. The site of Gotihawa is now located in the middle of a small village where the broken Asokan Pillar and associated archaeological remains are located. The site of Pipari which is an isolated mound is about 2 km to the North in a total agrarian setting.

About 6 km to the Northeast of Tilaurakot are located the large tank, the Asokan pillar and the associated archaeological remains of Niglihawa. Beyond the tank and 1.5 km to the east is the fortified city of Araurakot.

About 2km due west of Niglihawa lies the battlefield and an important collection of votive stupas around a large tank. The indicative mound at Niglihawa measures approximately 500 m X 400 m.

In the kingdom of Koliya are two of the more remote sites known as Devadaha which is about 34 km to the Northeast of Lumbini and Ramagrama which is 42 km East of Lumbini. The two archaeological mounds identified as Devadaha are located close to the village of Khaireni, about 14km Southeast of Butwal.

The secluded and remarkable stupa and archaeological remains of Ramagrama are close-by and associated with the present day village of Kerwani. Kerwani is located about 4 km south of the District town of Parasi.

Historical Summary of Sites in Lumbini Zone

Buddha was born to Queen Maya Devi, the wife of King Suddodhana the ruler of Kapilavastu. Maya Devi was on her way to her maternal home in Devadaha located some 50 km distant from Tilaurakot where the family resided. She managed to reach the half way point, Lumbini, where the baby was born. The parents of Lord Buddha came from wealthy and prominent families and his father ruled over a large empire.

In 249 BC Emperor Asoka, the third Mauryan Sovereign to rule over India, made a pilgrimage to Lumbini and other adjacent sites and erected three inscribed pillars (referred to as the Asoka Pillars) which commemorate his visits to Lumbini, to Gotihawa and to Niglihawa.

The early history of Lumbini, Kapilavastu and the Koshala kingdom have been well documented by the Chinese pilgrim travellers, Fa Hsein who was the first to visit Lumbini in

5th Century A.D. followed by Hsuan Tsang in the 7th Century A.D. very detailed documentation which enables scholars today to accurately identify many of the structures.

Only at the end of the 19th Century was Lumbini rediscovered by a local Administrator of the District who undertook excavations there having learnt from local people that there was a stone pillar hidden in the forest. Subsequently archaeologists of the Archaeological Survey of India in 1896 and 1899 made extensive surveys of the areas associated with the birth of the Buddha and brought to light most of the sites that are in evidence today. Only intermittent archaeological excavations have taken place during the 20th Century with a concentration of exploration being undertaken by the Department of Archaeology, HMG Nepal in the 1970's.

Lumbini is today renowned as the birthplace of Lord Gautama Buddha. At this site over the century's temples, stupas and monasteries have been raised only to fall into ruin and become forgotten. Through the discovery of the Asokan pillars of Gotihawa, Niglihawa and Lumbini, a reliable history of the birthplace of the Buddha has been ascertained and further exploration of the area has enabled scholars to ascertain the parental home of Tilaurakot, where Buddha's father Suddhodana was king. At Tilaurakot the remains of the moat, city walls, the east and west gates and a central structure have been excavated. At Kudan further archaeological remains have proven this to be the site where the Buddha met his father, King Suddhodana after his enlightenment.

Further to the East the little explored site of Devadaha is the home of Maya Devi the Buddha's mother, which also dates from the 5th Century B.C. A further 20 km to the south-east is the remote and beautiful site of Ramagrama where there is the intact Stupa containing one of the original eight bone relics of the Buddha, which was raised in the 5th Century B.C. after Buddha's death.

The Lumbini Development Trust

In 1967 U Thant, Secretary General to the United Nations made a pilgrimage to Lumbini and he was convinced that it should become a place where religious and secular leaders could work together in the interests of peace and prosperity for the world. U Thant called upon the international community to create a pilgrimage centre focusing on the birthplace of the Lord Buddha. An enthusiastic response from 13 nations resulted in the creation of the International Lumbini Development Committee in New York. Subsequently the renowned Japanese architect Professor Kenzo Tange was commissioned to produce a master plan for the development of Lumbini as a pilgrimage and tourism centre which was finalised in 1978. In 1985 His Majesty King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev of Nepal created the Lumbini Development Trust, an autonomous non-governmental organization. The trusts task is to implement Professor Tange's master plan which maps out proposals for the protection of the archaeological site known as the sacred Garden; the creation of a monastic zone where nations, institutions and organisations from around the world can build places of worship that reflect their religious ideals and the development of a new tourist village separate from the other two zones which will provide the necessary infrastructure for the Lumbini Development Project.

Amongst its various responsibilities The Lumbini Development Trust is now in charge of the conservation and preservation of the sites within the Lumbini Development Project, with assistance from the Department of Archaeology of HM Government of Nepal. More recently the Trust has been made custodians of all the sites related to Lord Buddha's life in the region.

The Lumbini Nomination to the World Heritage List

The World Heritage Convention which administers the World Heritage List is an international convention which has 115 State Parties as members - one of which is Nepal. The Convention has a mission to define the worldwide natural and cultural heritage and to draw up a list of sites and monuments considered to be of such exceptional interest and such universal value that their protection is the responsibility of mankind. The Convention tries to define the shared heritage of mankind by drawing up the World Heritage List.

The criteria set by the World Heritage Convention are extremely demanding, stating that the buildings or sites should be of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history art or science. It also requires the sites to be properly defined; for adequate legislation to be in place and for a protective buffer zone to be created: and more recently the convention requires well-defined conservation management policy to be in place.

Already, Nepal has seven cultural heritage sites listed in the Kathmandu Valley and two Natural Heritage sites of Chitwan Nature Reserve and the Sagarmatha (Everest) National Park. There were plans to nominate Lumbini to the World Heritage List in May 1979 but due to the excavation for waterways and landscaping of the site which disturbed the ancient site of Lumbini Village and because there was a lack of proper site protection and management, it was decided to delay the application.

In 1992, the Lumbini Development Trust made a full application to the World Heritage Convention but the application was deferred, not turned down, because the World Heritage Committee were deeply concerned about the lack of adequate protection of the sites and the absence of a conservation management plan. Both these are criteria which must be met to qualify under the World Heritage Lists operational guidelines.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ESTABLISHING A CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN AT LUMBINI

It is recommended that a Conservation Management Plan will be developed in four specific phases which are defined as follows:

I Emergency Protection

II Emergency Conservation

III Archaeological Master plan

IV Project Implementation Phase

A detailed work plan following these four phases is suggested below. Each phase can be approached as a separate unit but they are best planned as a group of coordinated activities.

I. Emergency Protection - Existing Situation

The only site with any realistic protection is Lumbini. The development project has created a clear site boundary and buffer zone. Tilaurakot, Kodan and Ramagrama have scant boundaries that barely included the archaeological zones. The remaining five sites have no boundaries at all.

Recommendations for the Emergency Protection of Sites

Each of the Emergency Protection Recommendations is a requirement under the regulations of the World Heritage Convention. The protection of the sites is considered the most urgent activity. The sites are in most cases under no immediate threat of development except in the case of Devadaha where a brick factory is encroaching the archaeological remains. The following actions are required:

- Define Boundaries: Each site needs to be carefully surveyed and realistic boundaries established.
- Recommend Land Purchase: Based on the site survey at each site recommendations will be made to the Lumbini Development Trust for immediate land purchase to ensure the integrity and protection of each site.
- Propose Buffer Zones: During the survey process consideration will be given to the definition of suitable buffer zones to ensure environmental protection and control.
- Recommendations for the Implementing of Buffer Zones: Buffer Zones can be created either by the purchase of large tracts of land or by enacting laws to limit the use of land to agricultural activities. Methods of achieving sufficient protection by buffer zones will be studied and recommendations made to the Lumbini Development Trust.

II Emergency Conservation - Existing Situation

In most cases the state of preservation of the archaeological sites is very poor. There is little or no planned conservation or maintenance program for any of the site nominated to the World Heritage List - one of the Conventions primary requirements. The exposed sites of Tilaurakot, Kodan, and Gotihawa are in need of urgent conservation to stem the decay and to control pilferage of materials for local construction. The following recommendations should be given immediate consideration:

Recommendations for Emergency Conservation Measures: Surveys by an archaeological conservation team should be undertaken at each of the sites to consider the following:

- Emergency stabilisation of structures
- Emergency materials conservation
- Protection against water penetration

- Proper site drainage
- Regular maintenance program
- Budget Requirements at each site

It is recommended that the outcome of these surveys will be the presentation to the Lumbini Development Project of a work plan and budget.

- Implementation of Emergency Conservation Measures: Following on from the above recommendations, an immediate and urgent programme of works should be budgeted for and initiated.
- The Maya Devi Archaeological Programme: It is recommended that an immediate review of the Maya Devi Archaeological Programme is undertaken in the light of the programme agreed by the Lumbini Development Trust in August 1992. It is recommended that the overall administration of this programme reverts to the Lumbini Development Trust under the direction of the conservation management team.

III Archaeological Master plan

There is a great need for the development of an Archaeological Master plan and the establishment of a Conservation Management Plan to meet the requirements of the World Heritage Convention. It is recommended that the present management of all the sites is decentralised and the sites are placed under the administration of the Lumbini Development Trust. The requirements of the World Heritage Convention stipulate the need for a qualified agent to administer the conservation and maintenance of the sites and for a management plan to be in place.

- Recommendations for the Development of an Archaeological Master plan: The development of a Master plan is a major undertaking. However, with much of the ground work already planned for in the above recommendations, it should be a spontaneous follow on from the previous activities. It will require a well-integrated team of specialists who will undertake the necessary field research and, in close cooperation with the Lumbini Development Trust will develop a long term and short term master plan which in turn will be transferred into a Conservation Management Plan for Lumbini and Associated Archaeological Sites.

The Conservation Management Plan would take into consideration the following recommendations:

General Recommendations for Archaeological Sites in Lumbini Zone

- Archaeological Principles and Procedures
- Infrastructure
- Tourist Facilities
- Publications
- General Work plan

Specific Project Proposals for Each Site

- Excavation Programmes
- Conservation Programmes
- Site Presentation
- Site Maintenance
- Work Plan
- Project Budget
- Annual Maintenance Budget

IV Project Implementation Phase

The Project Implementation Phase will be clearly defined in the Conservation Management Plan. At this stage it is important only to focus on the need for both the budget and the administration to implement the proposals. It is important to start the procedures to establish a suitable budget for the implementation and maintenance phases. Funds should be allocated from visitor revenue and should be programmed into the overall management and maintenance schemes for the Lumbini Centre.

BUDGET AND TIME FRAME

A Budget has been derived from the time allocation to undertake the emergency surveys and the implementation of the emergency conservation programme. The total budget for fund raising purposes will be approximately \$US 175,000.

A Budget for the Master plan will be derived separately but it is anticipated it will be in the region of approximately \$US75, 000. This presupposes that most of the groundwork will be completed in the emergency programmes.

The time required to undertake and complete the initial survey is likely to be a period of nine to twelve months. The master plan will take approximately six months to complete. It is therefore anticipated that the setting up and development of the conservation management plan inclusive of negotiations and formalisations could be fitted into a two year time frame.

CONCLUSION

The archaeological sites centered around Lumbini are unique. So far there have been only minor disturbances to some of the sites. However, with the growing interest in Buddhism, the creation of a major pilgrimage centre at Lumbini itself and the uncontrolled development taking place in Nepal at the moment the condition and the environment of these sites can change dramatically in a very short space of time. Not only the Lumbini Development Trust but the people of Nepal have a responsibility to mankind to protect and preserve these sites.