

## Study on Preservation Planning and Management System of Buddhist Heritage in South Asia

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Buddhist Heritage	Preservation Planning	Management System
Lumbini	Saranath	Budhgaya

## 1. Introduction

Buddhism is one of the main religious beliefs in Asia. It encompasses a variety of traditions, beliefs and practices largely based on teachings attributed to Siddhartha Gautama, who is commonly known as the Buddha. Buddhism may have spread only slowly in India until the time of the Mauryan emperor Ashoka. By his efforts, Buddhism would ultimately lead in two different directions. One is to the spread of Buddhism into China and later other East Asian countries, the other to the emergence of Theravada Buddhism and its spread from Sri Lanka to the coastal lands of Southeast Asia.

A lot of Buddhism related Archeology sites, temples, and stupas (Buddhist religious memorials), which constructed since Ashoka's period, are still left in Asian. These historical remains became to be considered as an important issue within the recent movement of cultural heritage conservation. But different from other heritage, Buddhist Heritage site has its strong religious orientation, and most of them are still in use as a living pilgrimage sites. Thus now its conservation faces a great challenge that a specific method, which could combine its physical protection and at the same time maintain it alive, should be developed by practice.

In order to capture common characters of Buddhism heritage site and its conservation issues, this paper selected 4 typical heritage sites as main objects, which are known as Four Holy Sites that have been witness to some important event in the life of Lord Buddha.

## 2. Four Holy Sites of Buddhism

Four Holy Sites of Buddhism can be seen as the most important places for Buddhist, which are said to be identified by Gautama Buddha himself as most worthy of pilgrimage for his followers, who would produce a feeling of spiritual urgency by visiting these sites. These are: (1)Lumbini: birthplace, (2)Bodh Gaya: the place of his Enlightenment, (3)Saranath: where he delivered his first teaching, and (4)Kushinagar: where he died. As other holy sites which based on Gautama Buddha's life experience, these four sites locate around the Ganges River, where ancient Indian culture was born.

However, since the modern history divided the Ganges basin into different countries, now Lumbini belong to Nepal and the other 3 sites belong to India. Thus beyond spatial characteristics, these four sites also under different management systems. In order to reach the research purpose, this paper compares 4 holy sites in both spatial characteristics and management systems.

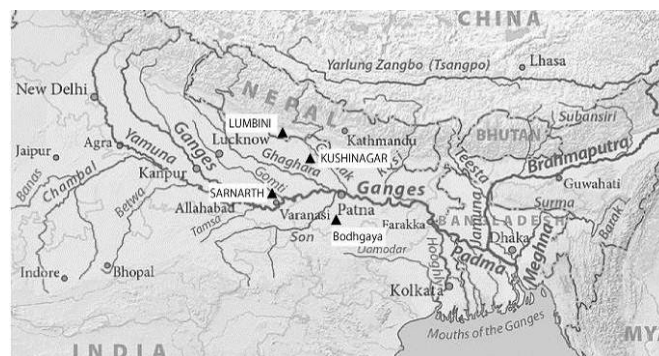


Fig. 1 The location of 4 holy sites of Buddhism



Fig. 2 Photos of 4 holy sites of Buddhism

## 3. Comparative Study

## 3.1 Spatial characteristics

Comparing these four sites in the same scale [Fig. 3], the spatial characteristics of Buddhist Heritage sites can be summarized in 2 main issues as below:

## 3.1.1 Site regulation for preservation

(1) *Zoning*: In order to protect the heritage site and its setting, gradual regulation in spatial level is needed. For example, Lumbini which was nominated as World Heritage, has its Core Zone and Buffer Zone<sup>[1]</sup>, further surrounding with regulated area from Tange Kenzo's Master Plan. While in Indian side, Saranath and Kushinagar which was nominated as National Monuments, have their nominated site, surrounding Prohibited Area and Regulated Area<sup>[2]</sup>.

(2) *Management office*: Since in a Buddhist Heritage site, both protection of archaeological remains and control of religious activities are in need, a management office which is not far away from core area, can be seen important in spatial level.

### 3.1.2 Visitor experience

(1) *Site access*: A typical access route (main access road – entrance court – side walk) is shared by 4 sites. Comparing to other 3 sites, Lumbini which is under the Tange Kenzo Master Plan, has extremely longer distance of side walk from entrance court to the core zone. On the other hand, Saranath and Kushinagar are not planned with entrance court. Thus in these 2 sites, the main access street in front of site is also functioned as an entrance court and is orderless.

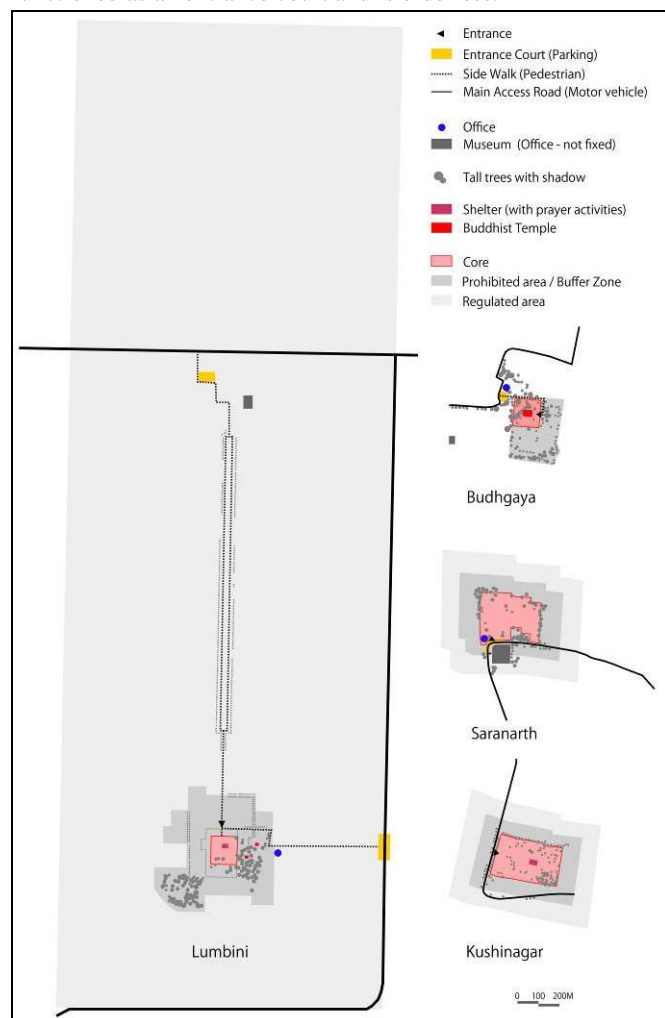


Fig. 3 Spatial Characteristics Analysis of 4 Sites<sup>[3]</sup>

(2) *Religious activity*: Temple, sometimes also a shelter for important Buddhist remains, especially with its close link to religion, provides both visual and spiritual center of whole site. While at the same time, tall trees provide shadow and convenient outdoor space for pilgrims.

(3) *Site understanding*: Museum provides interpretation for visitors to understand the site.

### 3.2 Management system

As shown in Fig.4, 3 kinds of management system are introduced: (1) Saranath and Kushinagar are managed by a national archaeology society which named Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). (2) Lumbini is managed by a special development trust organization which called Lumbini

Development Trust (LDT) and specially nominated by central government. (3) Budhgaya is managed by a local organization which is a religious society under the state government, named Budhgaya Temple Management Society (BTMC).

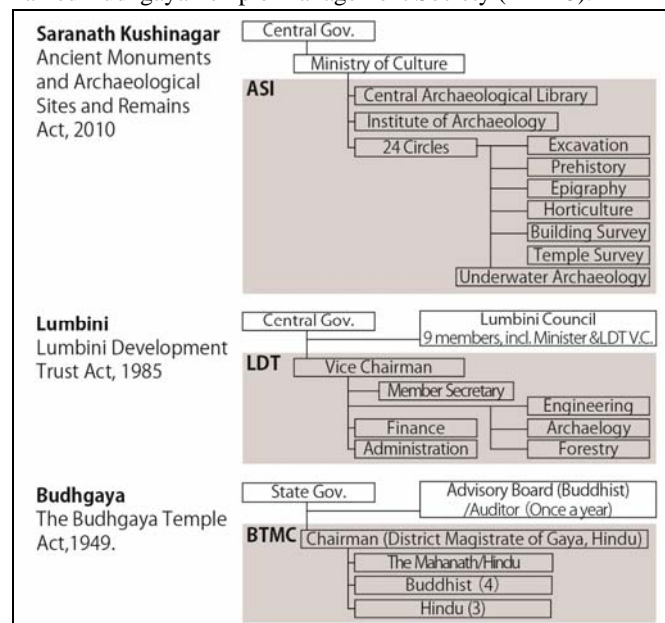


Fig. 4 Management System Analysis of 4 sites<sup>[4]</sup>

Compare these 3 different systems, each system have their advantages. ASI with national level Archaeology National organization based on Archaeology specialists is in better preservation situation. While LDT and BTMC which managed by religion based staff, have better religious atmosphere and alive with various religious activities.

Table.1 Comparison of ASI, BTMC and LDT

	Staff	Locality	Preservation	Religious atmosphere
ASI	Archaeology based experts	Weak	Professional Better	Less Like park
LDT	Religion based leader	Weak	Supported by International experts (Archaeology & Planning) Improvement is needed	Good
BTMC	Religion based users	Strong	Supported by ASI Improvement is needed	Good

### 4. Conclusion and further research

By comparative study of 4 holy sites, the characters of Buddhist Heritage in both spatial and management level are clarified. Based on this result, further research can be proceeded to discuss its conservation challenges and solutions in planning field.

[1] The core zone is the actual World Heritage area, while the buffer zone is an area surrounding the nominated property, important views and other areas or attributes that functionally important as a support to the property and its protection. The buffer area has been designated to ensure effective protection of the core zone.

[2] In India, National monuments are under the regulation by The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act (1958, updated 2010). Usually an area more than 100 meters is specified to be the Prohibited Area, where any construction is prohibited in general. And the Regulated Area is usually 200 meters wide, where construction should not be made without permission.

[3] Author drew based on satellite photograph and on-site survey.

[4] Author drew based on the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act (1958, updated 2010), Budhgaya Temple Act (1949), and Lumbini Development Trust Act (1985), supplied with hearing information from members of each society.