

Conference Location

Vaishali is a Buddhist pilgrimage site located in a peaceful village in Bihar, northern India. Buddhist texts record that the Buddha visited Vaishali a number of times, beginning five years after his awakening. It is said that a monkey offered him a bowl of honey and that he announced his imminent passing away (mahaparinirvana) at this place. Vaishali may be reached by train or by daily flights from New Delhi or Kolkata to Patna. From Patna, Vaishali is 37 miles (60 km) or a 1½-hour drive by car or bus. Sites of interest include an Ashoka pillar, two Buddhist stupas containing the Buddha's ashes, a Shanti stupa, a museum, and Bhutanese, Cambodian, Thai, Sri Lankan, and Vietnamese monasteries.

TEMPLE TOUR

A trip to India is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to visit the sacred sites that commemorate the Buddha's life. A variety of tours to Bodhgaya, Rajgir, Nalanda, Sarnath, Kushinagar, Sravasti, and Lumbini will be offered for different budgets. On a tight schedule? Mini-tours can also be arranged.

Sakyadhita
International Association of Buddhist Women
923 Mokapu Blvd.
Kailua, HI 96734 U.S.A.
e-mail: vaishali2013@sakyadhita.org
www.sakyadhita.org



The conference theme, “Buddhism at the Grassroots,” highlights the efforts and achievements of Buddhist women who work to alleviate the sufferings of living beings “on the ground.” Presenters will share their own work and a variety of approaches, including social activism, performance, education, meditation, and philosophy. Since the 1950s, Buddhism has undergone a renewal throughout the world. No longer confined to monasteries and retreat centers, Buddhism is being taught as a practice for everyday living. Until recently, Buddhist women primarily supported the practice of others, but today women are among the most dedicated and diligent practitioners. The 13th Sakyadhita Conference will highlight the achievements of Buddhist women from earliest times until today.

INDIA, SITE OF THE BUDDHA’S AWAKENING

Buddhism began with the awakening of Siddhartha Gautama under a tree in a small village in India. Born as a prince in Lumbini (now Nepal) about the fifth century BCE, Siddhartha’s diligent search for the meaning of life and an end to human suffering culminated in his awakening in Bodhgaya. The teachings of the Buddha, the Awakened One, spread and flourished throughout India and all of Asia. Today, Buddhism is found in almost every country of the world. During the winter months in India, when the weather is cooler, Buddhist pilgrims from countries around the world can be seen meditating, chanting, and paying respect to the Buddha and the innumerable beings who achieved liberation through his teachings.



VAISHALI, HOME OF THE FIRST BHIKSUNI SANGHA

Mahaprajapati Gautami Theri, the foster mother of Sakyamuni Buddha, was the first nun ordained by the Buddha. She is famous for founding the Bhiksuni Sangha, the Buddhist order of nuns, in Vaishali, India. Through her courage and vision, the Buddha recognized women as full participants in his lineage and women gained an equal footing on the path to liberation. Oddly, however, Mahaprajapati and the heroic achievements of these pioneering Buddhist women were almost forgotten, not only in India, but also in many Asian countries where the lineage of bhiksunis was either lost or never introduced. The site where Mahaprajapati became the first Buddhist nun was unmarked and uncommemorated for centuries. This year, the 13th Sakyadhita International Conference on Buddhist Women will be held in Vaishali to celebrate Mahaprajapati’s ordination and the contributions of all Buddhist women.

OPPORTUNITY FOR COMPASSION

Express your loving kindness and compassion by helping a deserving nun or laywoman attend the conference! The cost of sponsoring someone from a developing country such as Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burma, Cambodia, India, Laos, Mongolia, Nepal, Thailand, or Sri Lanka is not great. Donations of any amount are welcome. Help enrich the lives of future women leaders!

TRAVEL TO INDIA

The weather in northern India in January is generally sunny in the daytime and chilly at night, with occasional rain. Be prepared for changes of weather. Temperatures may approach 95 F (32 C) in the daytime, but be quite cool and damp at night and in the early morning, reaching as low as 60 F (15 C). All visitors to India will need passports (valid for at least six months from the date of entry) and tourist visas. Contact the Indian High Commission in your country for information on visa requirements and applications. Be sure to allow sufficient time for processing.

