

# Buddhist Pilgrimage Tour



## Introduction

Buddhist pilgrimage tour is designed to visit all the major Buddhist sites in Nepal (Kathmandu, Pokhara and Lumbini). Tour will let to major attractions in Kathmandu, Pokhara and in Lumbini. Buddhist pilgrimage tour will give you an opportunity to observe the birth place of Buddha and Buddhist culture in Nepal, Nepalese way of life style, Himalayan peaks many more. **About Buddhism** Shakyamuni Buddha (Siddhartha Gautam), the apostle of peace, the founder of Buddhism was born in Nepal's Lumbini in 623 BC. Buddhism was originated in Nepal when Siddhartha Gautam became a Shakyamuni Buddha. Buddhism was introduced as a way of living in the earlier times but later the followers started to take it as a religion. Buddhism is the dominant religion in the thinly populated high mountain in Nepal. The main objectives of the Buddhism are achievement to the enlightenment and non violence. For the time being, the different great masters have developed different philosophy in Buddhism (School) and teachings. There are slightly different in one another. There are 3 major different Buddhism in practice in Nepal. They are Mahayana Buddhism, Therabada Buddhism and Vajrayana Buddhism. Tibetan Buddhism is the most widely practiced in the mountain region. The people (Sherpa, Lopa, Manangi, Thakali, Gurung, Lhomi, Nyimba, Dolpa, Tamang) to the northern part of Nepal follow the Buddhist culture and tradition. The majority of the people are the Hindus in Nepal. However, the Buddhist are respectable in all aspects. Some of the pilgrimage sites are worship by both the Hindu and Buddhist people. **Buddhism in**

**Nepal** Nepal is the most holy land to the Buddhist pilgrimage from all over the world. The legend says that the previous Buddha (Krakuchhanda, Kanakmani, Kasyapa etc) were visited Nepal in different times. The monuments of these bodhisattvas and previous Buddha's can be seen even today. The great teachers, practitioners (Nagarjuna, Mahasanghika Bhiksuis) were visited and live in Nepal in different time of history. The history of Buddhism in Nepal is not stable. Some time it was boom and some time it was suspended from the ruler. There are major 4 types of Buddhism are exist in Nepal. **Mahayana (The great vehicle) Buddhism in Nepal: Mahayana is the heavily practiced Buddhism in the world and in Nepal as well as. The Buddhism was derived from Tibet and most of Tibetans follow Mahayana.** According to the teachings of Mahayana traditions, "Mahayana" also refers to the path of the Bodhisattva seeking complete enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings, also called "Bodhisattvayana". A samyaksambuddha (A fully enlightened Buddha) can establish the Dharma and lead disciples to enlightenment. Mahayana Buddhists teach that enlightenment can be attained in a single lifetime, and this can be accomplished even by a layperson **Theravada (The teaching of the elders) Buddhism in Nepal:** Theravada Buddhism, the doctrine of the elders, is the oldest unbroken traditional Buddhist tradition practised by people since the time of the Buddha. Unfortunately, Buddhism was decline in Nepal or lost itself for many centuries. Late 19<sup>th</sup> century it was reintroduced and nowadays there are number of Theravada monasteries and followers are there in Nepal. **Vajrayana Buddhism in Nepal:** The traditional Buddhism of the Newars (the local of Kathmandu valley) is a very ancient form of Vajrayana Buddhism. It was once much more widespread, being followed throughout South Asia. The great monastic universities of north India were sacked and destroyed by Muslim invaders. The monks fled to Nepal and Tibet and started to remain there being a Buddhist masters. Vajrayana Buddhism in Nepal focuses on sacred complexes known colloquially as *baha* or *bahi* in the Newars' mother tongue, Nepal Bhasa. More honorically they are called *vihara*, the Sanskrit and Pali term for monastery. **Mountain (Highland) Buddhism:** The Highland people of Nepal follow the Tibetan Buddhism. In terms of Buddhism their main source of reference is Tibet, although their practice of Buddhism is not exactly the same as in Tibet. In the past, they used to be trained by Tibetan Lamas either from Tibet or Kathmandu Valley but now this tradition is rarely followed. Among these Nepalese highlanders the most familiar Buddhist term is lama. Lama is not necessarily a celibate Buddhist monk but rather a household priest. Among the Sherpas it is only in the early twentieth century that they began to build Buddhist monasteries (gompa) and have celibate lamas (gelung) and nuns (gelungma). Otherwise they have always practised Sherpa Buddhism in which local married priests (lama) conducted rituals in village temples and at houses, for the benefit of the general populace similar to other highlanders. Among Nepalese highlanders, the affiliation of religion is clearly seen in their life-cycle rituals. Among all rituals the most important ritual is a death ritual where the missing link has to be established between the death and the next life through a medium i.e. Buddhist lamas and Bon shamans. Death ritual (Ghyawa) is the main event of these highlanders and they associate Buddhism with death and otherworldly concerns. Some scholars refer highland Buddhism of Nepal as a development of Nyingmapa school of Tibetan Buddhism. Nevertheless, there are also followers of Gelungpa and Bon traditions. Nying-mapa which means 'adherents of the old [tantras]' puts Padmasambhava, the founder of the sect before the Buddha. In their gompas (temples) the main statue is the figure of Padmasambhava whereas the Buddha is the secondary figure. This is opposite to Gelungpa tradition. These two traditions are widely identified with their hats. Nyingmapa are called red hat because they don red robe and hat, whereas Gelungpa are called yellow hat according to the colour of the hat they wear. The main distinction between these two traditions is celibacy. Nyingmapa priests often live as householders forming a distinct social group or class, and only gather in the local temple for the performance of rituals whereas Gelungpa priests live in monastic lives. The inhabitants of Nepalese highlands belong to various ethnic groups whose socio-religious and culture are heavily

influenced by Buddhism. In northern Nepal live Sherpas, in mid-hills of Nepal live Gurungs, Magars, Thakalis. Tamangs live in most part of mid-hills and around the Kathmandu valley. All these ethnic groups are culturally Buddhists. In their societies they have their own religious men and agents in different forms. Apart from Buddhist priests (lamas) they have exorcists and shamans result of their local beliefs in deities and spirits. According to Tibetan history one part of the credit for introducing Buddhism into Tibet was given to a princess of Nepal, Bhrikuti. She later became a Tara or Buddhist goddess in Tibetan Buddhism. The relationship between Nepal and Tibet, therefore, went back to very early period of their histories. Later Buddhism firmly established in Tibet with assimilation of local beliefs and it was prosperous till China invaded the country a few decades ago. The prosperous of Buddhism in Tibet had direct effect over most Nepalese ethnic groups who have close links with Tibet. Sherpas has the closest links with Tibet socially and culturally, whereas Tamangs, Gurungs and others have distant relationships. However, based on their oral histories they link their lineage with Tibet one way or other. Significantly, Buddhism practiced by those ethnic groups are unique in their own way. They have developed and shaped up different styles of Buddhism from its main reference of Tibetan Buddhism. It can be labelled according to each ethnic background: Sherpa Buddhism, Tamang Buddhism, Gurung Buddhism etc.

## Trip Facts

Best Season	Feb-May/ Oct-NOv
Accomodation	Hotel in the city center
Transportation	Private car/ van/ bus

## Itinerary Details

### Day 01: Arrive in Nepal

Our representative will meet you in the Nepal airport and welcome with Khada as per Buddhist culture. Transfer to your Hotel. Enjoy the welcome drink and at the same time your guide will brief the program. Take a free look around (If your time permits we will drive to Boudhanath to see the butter lamp lighting and make a round to the Stupa by Buddhist followers). Later in the evening we will organize a cultural Nepali dinner at Nepali restaurant. Return to Hotel and night rest at Hotel.

**Transfer:** By private car/ van as per group size

**Accommodation:** Hotel in the city center

**Meal:** welcome dinner at Nepali restaurant

**Taken care by:** City tour guide.

### Day 02: Kathmandu sightseeing tour

Enjoy the breakfast at your hotel. Your guide will be ready with vehicle to take you to the Kopan Monastery (Tibetan Buddhism University). Your guide will give you a short brief about monastery and around. After that you can Spend few hours (talking to Lama sitting for meditation) around. Next you will drive to Nunnery which is just little down from the main monastery. You can observe the Nuns life style, talk to them and spend few hours. Later drive to Boudhanath Stupa. Later in the evening back to Hotel and night rest.

**Transfer:** By private car/ van as per group size

**Accommodation:** Hotel in the city center

**Taken care by:** City tour guide.

**Activities:** Sightseeing around the city.

### **Day 03: Kathmandu sightseeing tour and later fly to Pokhara**

Wake up early (5:30am) in the morning and drive to Swyambhunath stupa locally known as monkey temple. Observe the Buddhist pilgrimage walk around the to the stupa, doing Cora. Some deep followers would paying deep homage to the GOD by folding their arm and slapping their body in the ground. Expore the stupa and around. Return to Hotel for breakfast drive to Patan Durbar Square and visit Buddhist site including Maha Bihar, Golden temple, and some other Bihar. After lunch drive to domestic airport and fly to Pokhara. Transfer to Hotel and rest.

**Transfer:** By private car/ van as per group size/ Domestic flight

**Accommodation:** Hotel in the city center

**Taken care by:** City tour guide.

**Activities:** Sight seeing around the city.

### **Day 04: Pokhara sightseeing tour**

Breakfast will be serving at Hotel and after drive to sight to sightseeing (Tibetan refugee cap, Tibetan Choiling Gumpa, Shanti Stupa, David falls, Seti river gorge) around down town. Later in the evening return to Hotel and night rest.

**Transfer:** By private car/ van as per group size

**Accommodation:** Hotel in the lake side

**Taken care by:** City tour guide.

**Activities:** Drive to Pokhara

### **Day 05: Drive to Lumbini 6-7 hr**

Wake early (6:00 am) and take a breakfast at 6:30 am. After breakfast check out from Hotel and drive (7-8 hr) to Lumbini. The drive passes through the scenic views of Himalaya, Nepalese local village and Rive side. Arrive in Lumbini and check in to Hotel. After refresh visit sacred garden. Back to Hotel and night rest.

**Transfer:** By private car/ van as per group size

**Accommodation:** Hotel in the Lumbini

**Taken care by:** City tour guide.

**Activities:** Drive to Lumbini

### **Day 06: Lumbini sightseeing and return to Kathmandu 7-8 hrs**

Visit Maya Devi temple (birth place of Lord Buddha) in the morning before the breakfast. Back to Hotel for breakfast and and return to hotel for breakfast. After breakfast visit Tilaurakot (the palace of

Siddhartha from where he had a great escape). Later transfer to domestic airport and fly back to Kathmandu. Transfer to hotel and night rest the Hotel.

**Transfer:** By private car/ van as per group size and domestic flight

**Accommodation:** Hotel in the Lumbini

**Taken care by:** City tour guide.

**Activities:** Explore Sacred garden and Buddhist site

### **Day 07: Fly back to Home:**

After breakfast, check out from hotel and drive to UNESCO World Heritage Site Bhaktapur Durbar Square. Later in the afternoon we will drop to international airport and fly to Home. Sweet home.

**Transfer:** By private car/ van as per group size

**Taken care by:** City tour guide.

**Activities:** Visit Bhaktapur Durbar Square and Drive to airport

### **Cost Includes :**

- Arrival pick up and departure transfer from Nepal airport by private vehicle as per group size
- All land transfers as per itinerary by private vehicle
- City Sightseeing as per mention in the itinerary.
- Escort by English speaking city tour guide.
- Accommodation at hotel in the city center.

### **Cost Excludes :**

- Meal in the city (lunch and dinner)
- Monastery or temple and monument entrance fees.
- International flights, visa and departure taxes
- Travel insurance and emergency evacuation (Should cover your insurance)
- Tips and gratuities (crew will expect the tipping)
- Personal expenses such as drinks, postage, laundry
- All the expenses in except on trek/ tour
- Costs arising from unforeseen events outside the control of AATE.