

Legend and History: A Critical Study of Siddhārtha Gautama's Birth and Associated Events

Arun Kumar Yadav
Professor & Head
Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies
Banaras Hindu University
Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, India -221005
email: kumarakumar@bhu.ac.in

Abstract

This research paper presents a comparative study from both literary and historical perspectives of the various events surrounding the birth of Siddhārtha Gautama (the Buddha), drawing upon Pāli, Sanskrit, Chinese, and other available Buddhist sources. The primary objective of the research is to critically examine the historicity of the Buddha's birth in Lumbinī and the associated events. In this context, by comparing the birth narratives found across various Buddhist traditions, the study seeks to distinguish between elements belonging to the early tradition and those that evolved in later periods. The study will be grounded in both Buddhist texts and archaeological evidence, specifically the epigraphic and archaeological findings from Lumbinī.

The research will also analyse events associated with the Buddha's birth that have been imbued with a supernatural or miraculous character within Buddhist tradition. For instance, a critical review will be conducted of elements such as the mention of a specific tree at the time of birth, the newborn Siddhārtha's seven steps, his extraordinary proclamation, the concept of *Sattasahajāta* (the simultaneous birth of seven others alongside Siddhārtha), and the death of his mother. It will also examine the forms in which these accounts appear in early Buddhist literature and how they underwent transformation and expansion over time.

Furthermore, the research paper will attempt to elucidate how various Buddhist sects and literary traditions portrayed the birth narrative in the process of establishing the Buddha's greatness and supernatural nature.

Thus, this research will present a comprehensive analysis of the historical, religious, and literary dimensions of the narratives surrounding the Buddha's birth, and will attempt to determine which elements are supported by historical evidence and which have evolved as a result of later literary and religious imagination. This study will not only enrich the historical understanding of the Buddha's life but also make a significant contribution to the study of Buddhist literature, the tradition of Buddhist thought, and its gradual evolution.

Keywords: Gautam Buddha, Lumbinī, Buddhist texts, Pāli literature, Sanskrit Buddhist literature, Chinese Buddhist literature.

If one examines the religious texts of any faith across the world, a common pattern emerges regarding their deities or great figures: there is a tradition of depicting their births not as natural occurrences, but as supernatural events. These births are likely portrayed symbolically to emphasize that they do not enter the world in the same manner as ordinary humans thereby distinguishing them from the rest of us. This same principle appears to apply to Siddhārtha Gautama; consequently, his birth, too, is depicted as extraordinary.

In the Buddhist tradition, regarding the birth of Siddhārtha Gautama as an extremely sacred and exceedingly rare event, it is said-

Dullabho purisājañño, na so sabbattha jāyati.

*Yattha so jāyati dhīro, taṃ kulam sukhamedhati.*¹

Means, the birth of an exalted person (a great soul) is extremely rare; such a person is not born everywhere. Wherever such a steadfast, wise, and great man is born, that lineage, that family attains happiness and prosperity.

The *gāthā* described above centers on Gautama Buddha and other figures of his stature; historically, the event of his birth took place approximately 2,550 years ago on the full moon day of the month of Vesākha (Viasākha)². Almost all the traditions of Buddhist literature particularly the *Theravāda* tradition hold that two other significant events, namely the attainment of Enlightenment (*Bodhi*) and the *Mahāparinirvāṇa* (great demise), also occurred on this very day³; for this reason, the occasion is known as the *Tividha Pāvanī* (thrice-sacred) Vesākha Purnimā. It is important to note, however, that some Buddhist traditions maintain these three events occurred on separate days rather than a single day, a view corroborated by the travel accounts of the great 7th CE Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang (often pronounced 'Hiuen Tsang' in India). According to literary sources, the event of the Buddha's birth holds immense significance, as Gautama Buddha himself stated in the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta* that there are

four sites associated with his life that evoke a sense of spiritual urgency (*samvejaniyaṭṭhāna*) and should be visited by his followers. Among these sites, he specifically mentioned his birthplace at Lumbinī⁴; consequently, this research attempts to analyse the birth and the events associated with it.

A fundamental question arises here, how do ordinary people today come to know about the life story of the Buddha? The answer is likely that whatever we know or understand about the Buddha today comes to us through literature available in modern Indian or foreign languages; however, the events of Lord Buddha's life as we encounter them now are not actually presented in ancient Buddhist texts with such simplicity, consistency, or chronological order in any single place. Upon study and analysis, it appears that the information currently available to us has been compiled and presented by modern scholars, who have utilized various sources to make it accessible through modern literature. Some of this information pertains to the birth of Gautama Buddha, his birthplace, and other related matters; among these, a discussion of his birthplace, Lumbinī, is essential.

From a literary perspective, it is evident that his birthplace was 'Lumbinī'⁵, although the account of this event appears to have evolved in varying ways across different texts. Linguistically, the Suttanipāṭa⁶ considered as one of the oldest texts within the Pāli Tipiṭaka clarifies that he was born in 'Lumbinī', a territory of the Śākya clan. This fact is further corroborated by the 3rd century BCE pillar inscription of Emperor Aśoka found at Lumbinī⁷. Additionally, archaeological remains unearthed in recent excavations suggest that the site existed even prior to the 3rd century BCE⁸. It is important to clarify here that the term 'Lumbinī' has been used to denote both a *gāma* (village) and a *janapada* (larger territory)⁹; however, archaeological evidence indicates that the site was essentially a village and likely remained so.

Citing various passages from ancient Pāli literature, the erudite scholar Dharmanand Kosambi posits that Siddhārtha Gautama's father, Suddhodana (Śuddhodana), was not a king of Kapilavastu but merely a landowner in Lumbinī¹⁰. Kosambi argues that while several Suttas provide evidence that Kapilavastu was under the authority of Mahānāma Śākya¹¹, the Mahāvagga is the only text that associates Suddhodana with Kapilavastu¹². It is also worth considering whether Lumbinī could ever have been a *Janapada* (an independent territory or state); the existence of a *Janapada* at Lumbinī seems doubtful given the proximity of a kingdom (or major settlement) like Kapilavastu. Furthermore, the inscription on the pillar erected by Emperor Ashoka in the third century BCE refers to it as "Lumbinī-gāma" (Lumbinī village)¹³, reinforcing the view that it was a village-although the actual archaeological

discovery of such an ancient village site remains awaiting. If this reasoning holds, it is logical to conclude that the Lumbinī area was merely a small, relatively obscure village at the time. Additionally, Kosambi clarified that the region was under the control of the Śākya, who lived under a democratic system; consequently¹⁴, different areas had different landowners, and Suddhodana was the landowner of Lumbinī¹⁵.

Buddhist texts inform us that Siddhārtha Gautama was born in the village of Lumbinī. These texts also clarify that his mother, Mahāmāyā, wished to visit her parental home in Devadaha during the tenth month of her pregnancy¹⁶, a journey for which Suddhodana granted her permission. Both the Northern and Southern schools of Buddhism agree on this point, and the fact can be accepted without doubt, given that the custom of women visiting their parental homes during pregnancy remains common in Indian tradition. However, a significant question arises here that casts considerable doubt on the narrative: would any parents or husband even under favorable conditions decide to undertake (or permit) such a risky journey during the final stage of pregnancy (specifically the tenth month)? This is particularly pertinent considering the era, when there were no proper road networks or emergency medical facilities available. Even under normal circumstances, such permission and travel appear highly unusual¹⁷; therefore, accepting this account exactly as stated does not seem logical. Indeed, even today despite the availability of modern medical care, the practice of traveling during the final stage of pregnancy is virtually non-existent in India, except in cases of emergency.

Therefore, from both literary and archaeological perspectives, there should be no objection to accepting that Siddhārtha Gautama was indeed born in Lumbinī; however, the account of the journey itself appears somewhat questionable. If the journey did not actually take place-yet Siddhārtha Gautama was indeed born in Lumbinī, this reinforces Kosambi's argument that Suddhodana was a resident of Lumbinī and that Siddhārtha was born in a garden there. It is possible that, due to the infusion of supernatural elements from an early stage, the story was framed to suggest that Siddhārtha was born at a place called Lumbinī while the party was on route from Kapilavastu to Devadaha.

In this context, André Bareau holds an interesting view that this might be a form of myth, given the scarcity of references to Lumbinī in ancient Buddhist texts. He further argues that Siddhārtha was likely born in Kapilavastu, but Lumbinī was linked to the narrative because a mother goddess was worshipped at that site¹⁸. His first argument holds some weight, as 'Lumbinī' appears in only one or two instances in ancient Pāli texts, thereby casting doubt on its status as the birthplace; conversely, while Kapilavastu is not explicitly cited as the birthplace,

it is frequently mentioned in those same texts raising the question of why the birthplace Lumbinī is rarely named while the place of upbringing is cited so often. If we accept the second argument that Siddhārtha was born in Kapilavastu we must conclude that the Lumbinī episode was a later addition, although there is no concrete evidence to substantiate this.

If we consider André Bareau's perspective, it appears that the narrative of the Buddha's birth in a forest as presented in the scriptures was shaped by the prevailing tradition of Mother Goddess worship in Lumbinī; this raises the question of why such a specific setting was deemed necessary. A writer could have centered the story on any location such as Kapilavastu and established a narrative that eventually took root in the public consciousness, a phenomenon for which countless examples exist across various religions. While absolute clarity on this matter remains elusive, the sources found in the oldest texts certainly hint at this possibility; therefore, it is practical to continue regarding Lumbinī as the birthplace until concrete evidence emerges to the contrary. Nevertheless, this is a significant hypothesis that cannot be easily dismissed, and establishing the facts of the matter will require comprehensive sources and solid evidence.

The Naming of Lumbinī:

An extremely interesting fact regarding the naming of the place Lumbinī is worth noting here; it appears nowhere in Pāli literature or other known texts ancient or modern nor is it part of Buddhist oral tradition or current local lore in the Lumbinī region. Chinese translations of certain Sanskrit Buddhist texts state that the Lumbinī grove was named after Siddhārtha Gautama's maternal grandmother¹⁹, whereas another reference attributes the name to the wife of his maternal grandfather's prime minister²⁰. In my view, the latter account is likely the result of an error by the author. While the first version might be accepted as more logical from a literary standpoint, there is insufficient evidence to corroborate it historically. Thus, the matter calls for in-depth research and concrete evidence to accurately understand the facts surrounding the naming of this site.

Following an analysis of the birthplace, the discussion will focus on the depiction of Mahāmāyā extensively described and portrayed in Buddhist literature and art holding a tree branch with her hand. Most Buddhist texts state that Siddhārtha Gautama was born while Mahāmāyā was in a standing position, grasping a tree branch. There is a disagreement between Northern (Mahāyāna) and Southern (Theravāda) Buddhist texts regarding the specific tree held by Mahāmāyā at the time of Siddhārtha Gautama's birth. Theravāda texts²¹ unanimously mention only the Sāla tree²², whereas Buddhist Sanskrit texts lack uniformity on this matter. The

Mahāvastu text contains the term ‘*Lumbodiyāna*’; Senart interpreted this as a "grove of Lumba trees," identifying Lumba as a specific type of tree²³, a view supported by the Chinese text 《修行本起經》 Caryānidānasūtra (reconstructed Sanskrit title)²⁴, which also identifies it as the ‘Lumba’ tree, although the exact nature of such a tree remains unclear. In his dictionary, Edgerton identified it as a specific tree possibly the Plakṣa, though this interpretation is open to doubt; conversely, the term ‘Lumba’ has also been identified as the name of a specific goddess²⁵.

According to some texts²⁶, Siddhārtha was born beneath a Plakṣa tree²⁷; other texts²⁸ mention an Aśoka tree²⁹; and some consistent with Pāli literature, describe him being born while holding the branch of a Sāla tree³⁰.

References to these three specific trees are also found in ancient Buddhist texts translated into Chinese. Such facts suggest that the story of giving birth while holding onto a tree branch likely evolved through varying practices across different Buddhist traditions, reflecting a journey of literary diversity and development. This description was possibly incorporated within symbolic or religious contexts to imbue the event of the Buddha's birth with special significance.

Walking Seven Steps After Birth:

In the sequence describing the events following his birth, Siddhārtha is depicted walking step by step. It is important to note here that within the Pāli Tipiṭaka, the account of walking seven steps reminiscent of the story associated with Gautama Buddha appears only in a few suttas (discourses) such as the Mahāpadāna Sutta³¹ and the Acchariyaabbhuta Sutta³². However, these accounts refer to Vipassī Buddha³³ and other Buddhas traditionally regarded as predecessors to Gautama Buddha rather than to Siddhārtha Gautama himself. Thus, it is possible that over time, this narrative was adapted and attributed to Gautama Buddha in the Buddhavaṃsa text, a work many scholars consider to be a later, expanded composition³⁴. Otherwise, why is there no mention of this event regarding Gautama Buddha in the more ancient texts? A study of the Buddhavaṃsa Aṭṭhakathā (commentary)³⁵ reveals that the account of the twenty-seventh Buddha, Gautama, is presented at the end, following the same biographical pattern used for the preceding Buddhas³⁶. While some texts merely mention the act of walking seven steps³⁷, Sanskrit Buddhist texts elaborate on the narrative, depicting him walking seven steps in every direction³⁸.

Furthermore, various supernatural events surrounding the birth of Siddhārtha Gautama are described in almost all the texts. These include the presence of deities, a shower of flowers

from the sky, the trembling of the earth, and Siddhārtha's declaration that "this is my final birth." Such variations across the texts indicate that the accounts of the events surrounding the Buddha's birth evolved over time and likely circulated in different forms across various traditions.

Siddhārtha Gautama's Co-borns:

The chronological account of the events surrounding his birth suggests that likely with the aim of making the Buddha's biography more compelling and divine significant figures destined to play pivotal roles in his future life came to be depicted as having been born simultaneously with Siddhārtha Gautama.

For instance, according to the Theravāda tradition, those born on the same day as Siddhārtha Gautama include Yasodharā (Rahula's mother), Channa (Siddhārtha's charioteer), Kāludāyi³⁹ (a Śākya prince), Kanthaka (the horse on which Siddhārtha renounced the world), Ānanda (his cousin, who later became the Buddha's chief disciple), the Bodhi tree (beneath which he attained enlightenment), and four pots of treasure⁴⁰. However, all these accounts appear to be the result of later literary embellishments, as conflicting views regarding this matter exist even within Pāli literature itself, giving grounds to question these details. For example, some Pāli texts describe Ānanda as younger than the Buddha⁴¹, whereas here he is depicted as having been born simultaneously with Siddhārtha even though both accounts appear in the commentaries⁴².

This suspicion is further reinforced by the Northern Buddhist tradition, which states that on the very same day and at the same time, four kings were also born-Bimbisāra⁴³ (King of Magadha, who later became a prominent follower of the Buddha), Prasenajita⁴⁴ (King of Kosala and a follower of the Buddha), Candapraditya⁴⁵ (King of Avanti), and Udayana⁴⁶ (King of Kosāmbi)⁴⁷. These figures went on to play significant roles in the Buddha's life and became renowned monarchs of that era. Meanwhile, other Buddhist Sanskrit texts elaborate on the miraculous nature of this event, stating that alongside the birth of the Bodhisattva, daughters and sons were born into the households of nobles, Brahmins, Kṣatriyas, and wealthy merchants⁴⁸. Thus, it becomes evident that both literary traditions selected individuals who were directly or indirectly connected to the Buddha, served as his associates, or contributed to enhancing the aura of his miraculous nature.

Death of the Mother (Mahāmāyā):

Regarding the events surrounding his birth, we learn that Siddhārtha Gautama's mother, Mahāmāyā, passed away seven days after his birth. While various Buddhist texts unanimously agree on the timing of her death, it appears that rationales were introduced into Buddhist literature to prevent the mother's death or the newborn child from being perceived as inauspicious. Theravāda literature explains that the womb which gives birth to a being like the Buddha is supremely sacred; therefore, no other being can be conceived in that womb in the future, necessitating the death of every Buddha's mother on the seventh day after the birth⁴⁹. Meanwhile, other schools of Buddhist thought suggest that she passed away on the seventh day because she could not have borne witnessing her son renounce the worldly life⁵⁰. It is evident from these explanations that such narratives were likely incorporated to ensure the event was not viewed as an inauspicious omen.

Such a diverse range of accounts regarding this subject suggests that the factual elements within the stories and events surrounding the Buddha's birth likely accumulated gradually; over time, the narrative took on increasingly miraculous and divine characteristics a transformation likely driven by the need to enhance the Buddha's stature and influence, making him more widely revered and popular within society.

Conclusion:

An analysis of the events surrounding the Buddha's birth makes it evident that his birth in the Lumbinī grove is the most ancient and historically authenticated fact. This fact is corroborated by Pāli, Buddhist Sanskrit, and Chinese Buddhist texts, as well as by the archaeologically significant Lumbinī pillar inscription of Emperor Aśoka; other archaeological evidence also supports it, although there remain certain grounds for doubt that may be clarified through future research and archaeological findings.

In contrast, the inconsistent references to the Lumba, Sāla, Plakṣa, and Aśoka trees reflect later literary evolution. Theravāda texts mention only the Sāla tree, demonstrating a literary consistency wherein no alterations were seemingly accepted, whereas the influence of other texts and factors is evident in later literature.

Sanskrit Buddhist and Chinese texts make reference to the Lumba, Plakṣa, Sāla, and Aśoka trees; this reflects the flexible and literature-oriented ethos of these traditions, which nurtured and enriched the sentiments of the common people of that era. Such diversity suggests that the concept of a "birth tree" likely evolved differently across various traditions.

Similarly, the story of Siddhārtha Gautama taking seven steps also appears to be a later addition; from a scientific and logical perspective, the history of modern medical science records no instance of a newborn infant walking. While Pāli texts mention only the act of taking seven steps, Sanskrit Buddhist texts elaborate on this by specifying that seven steps were taken in every direction- a detail suggesting that this modification was likely introduced over time to firmly establish the supernatural nature of the Buddha.

The stories regarding the *Sahajātas* individuals said to have been born on the same day as the Buddha and who played roles in his life at various stages appear historically dubious; they seem to be products of literary imagination rather than historical fact, serving to link these figures to the Buddha's life. Such inconsistent accounts reflect literary diversity rather than historical authenticity.

Thus, it can be stated that the mention of the Lumbinī grove in connection with the Buddha's birth is the most ancient and historically authenticated fact, whereas other events likely evolved later. Various tales concerning trees, the concept of taking seven steps, the *Sattasahajāta* (the seven co-born entities), the appearance of the Four Kings, and the accounts in the *Lalitavistara* appear to be mere elaborations within literary and religious traditions, additions likely intended to establish the Buddha's divinity. In my view, while Siddhārtha Gautama's birth in Lumbinī can be accepted as a historical fact, the other narratives should be regarded merely as literary compositions inspired by tradition and faith.

¹ Dhammapada (Igatpurī: Vipassanā Research Institute, Chatṭha Saṅgāyana C.D. ROM Edition, 1998), p. 36.

² Visākhanakkhattena jāto. See- Buddhavaṃsa-Atṭhakathā (Igatpurī: Vipassanā Research Institute, Chatṭha Saṅgāyana C.D. ROM Edition, 1998), pp. 149, 344.

³ Visākhanakkhattena jāto ca abhisambuddho ca parinibbuto ca. See- Buddhavaṃsa-Atṭhakathā, p. 149, 344; Dhātuvāṃsa (Igatpurī: Vipassanā Research Institute, Chatṭha Saṅgāyana C.D. ROM Edition, 1998), p. 21.

⁴ “Āgamiṣanti kho, Ānanda, saddhā bhikkhū bhikkhuniyo upāsakā upāsikāyo- ‘idha Tathāgato jāto’tipi, ‘idha Tathāgato anuttaraṃ sammāsambodhiṃ abhisambuddho’tipi, ‘idha Tathāgatena anuttaraṃ dhammacakkaṃ pavattita’ntipi, ‘idha Tathāgato anupādisesāya nibbānadhātuyā parinibbuto’tipi. Ye hi keci, Ānanda, cetiyacārikaṃ āhiṇḍantā pasannacittā kālaṅkarissanti, sabbe te kāyassa bhedaṃ paraṃ maraṇā sugatiṃ saggāṃ lokāṃ upapajjissanti”ti. See- Dīghanikāya-Atṭhakathā-II (Igatpurī: Vipassanā Research Institute, Chatṭha Saṅgāyana C.D. ROM Edition, 1998), pp. 105–106; Bhagavā hi paṭhamāṃ Lumbinivane, dutiyaṃ Bodhimāṇḍeti lokiyalokuttarāya uppattiyā vaneveva uppanno. Paṭisambhidāmagga-Atṭhakathā-II (Igatpurī: Vipassanā Research Institute, Chatṭha Saṅgāyana C.D. ROM Edition, 1998), p. 117.

⁵ The region situated in the present-day Terai area of Nepal was once under the rule of the great Magadhan Emperor Ashoka- a fact confirmed by an inscription found there, which records his decision to waive taxes for the village of Lumbini. See- D. R. Bhandarkar, Asoka (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1925), pp. 337-340; N. A. Nikam and Richard McKeon, trans. The Edicts of Ashoka (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), p. 69.

⁶ “So Bodhisatto ratanavaro atulyo, manussaloke hitasukhatthāya jāto. Sakyāna gāme janapade Lumbineyye, tenamha tuṭṭhā atiriva kalyarūpā.” See- Suttanipāta (Igatpurī: Vipassanā Research Institute, Chatṭha Saṅgāyana C.D. ROM Edition, 1998), p. 185 ; “Tadā ajāyi Siddhattho, ramme Lumbinikānane; hitāya sabbalokassa, sukhāya ca narāsabho.” See- Apadāna-II (Igatpurī: Vipassanā Research Institute, Chatṭha Saṅgāyana C.D. ROM Edition, 1998), p. 152; Nanu Bhagavā Lumbiniyā jāto, Bodhiyā mūle abhisambuddho, Bārāṇasīyaṃ Bhagavatā

- dhammacakkaṃ pavattitaṃ, Cāpāle cetiye āyusaṅkhāro ossattho, Kusinārāyaṃ Bhagavā parinibbutoti? See- Kathāvatthu (Igatpurī: Vipassanā Research Institute, Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana C.D. ROM Edition, 1998), pp. 91, 451.
- ⁷ Harry Falk, The Discovery of Lumbini (Lumbini: Lumbini International Research Institute, 1998), pp. 15–16.
- ⁸ Lumbini: The Birthplace of the Lord Buddha World Heritage Property Nepal-Addendum 2023 to State of Conservation Report 2022 (Kathmandu: Department of Archaeology, Government of Nepal and UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2023), p. 3.
- ⁹ Sakyāna gāme janapade Lumbineyye, tenamha tuṭṭhā atiriva kalyarūpā. See- Suttanipāta (Igatpurī: Vipassanā Research Institute, Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana C.D. ROM Edition, 1998), p. 185.
- ¹⁰ Dharmanand Kosambi, Bhagwan Buddha (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi/Rajkamal Prakashan, 1956), p. 96.
- ¹¹ Kosambi, Bhagwan Buddha, pp. 92-94.
- ¹² Mahāvagga (Igatpurī: Vipassanā Research Institute, Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana C.D. ROM Edition, 1998), pp. 103–105.
- ¹³ D. R. Bhandarkar, Asoka (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1925), pp. 337-340; N. A. Nikam and Richard McKeon, trans. The Edicts of Ashoka (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), p. 69.
- ¹⁴ Kosambi, Bhagwan Buddha, pp. 55, 58-59.
- ¹⁵ Kosambi, Bhagwan Buddha, p. 108.
- ¹⁶ Mahāmāyāpi devī dasa māse kucchinā Bodhisattaṃ pariharitvā paripuṇṇagabbhā nātigharaṃ gantukāmā Sudhodanamahārājassa ārocesi-“Icchāmahā, mahārāja, Devadahanagaraṃ gantu”nti. Rājā “Sādhū”ti sampatiṇṇhitvā Kapilavatthuto yāva Devadahanagaraṃ añjasaṃ samaṃ kāretvā. See- Buddhavaṃsa-Atthakathā, p. 315.
- ¹⁷ Kosambi, Bhagwan Buddha, p. 99.
- ¹⁸ John S. Strong, The Buddha: A Short Biography (London: Oneworld Publications, 2015), pp. 52–53.
- ¹⁹ Strong, The Buddha, p. 52.
- ²⁰ Samuel Beal, trans., The Romantic Legend of Sākya Buddha: From the Chinese-Sanskrit (London: Trübner & Co., 1875), p. 42.
- ²¹ Athassā sānipākāraṃ parikkhipitvā mahājano paṭikkami. Sā sālasākhaṃ gahetvā tiṭṭhamānāya eva tassā gabbhavutṭhānaṃ ahoṣi. See- Buddhavaṃsa-Atthakathā, p. 315.; Sā Devadahanagaraṃ adivūre Lumbinisālavanuyyānaṃ disvā uyyānavicaraṇatthāya cittaṃ uppādetvā rañño saññaṃ adāsi. See- Majjhimanikāya-Atthakathā-IV (Igatpurī: Vipassanā Research Institute, Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana C.D. ROM Edition, 1998), p. 133; Tāvadeva ca deviyā kammajavātā calimsu, athassā sāniṃ parikkhipāpetvā mahājano paṭikkami. Sālasākhaṃ gahetvā tiṭṭhamānāya eva tassā gabbhavutṭhānaṃ ahoṣi. Taṅkhaṇaṇṇeva cattāro visuddhacittā Mahābrahmāno suvaṇṇajālaṃ ādāya sampattā. See- Apadāna-Atthakathā-IV (Igatpurī: Vipassanā Research Institute, Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana C.D. ROM Edition, 1998), p. 65.
- ²² Botanical Name: *Shorea robusta*.
- ²³ Émile Senart, ed., Le Mahāvastu: Texte Sanscrit publié pour la première fois, Tome I (Paris: Société Asiatique, 1882), p. 99:6. Also see: Franklin Edgerton, Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary, Vol. II: Dictionary (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953), p. 463.
- ²⁴ Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association (CBETA), Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō, Vol. 3, No. 184 (Taipei: CBETA, 2023), p. 463c7–21.
- ²⁵ Franklin Edgerton, Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary, Vol. II: Dictionary (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953), p. 463.
- ²⁶ Émile Senart, ed., Le Mahāvastu: Texte Sanscrit publié pour la première fois, Tome II (Paris: Société Asiatique, 1888), p. 19:17.
- ²⁷ In the Amarakośa, this tree is identified as Pākaḍa (botanical name: *Ficus virens*); an island is also named ‘Plakṣadvīpa’ due to the abundance of this tree there. See- Amarasiṃha, Amarakośa (Nāmaliṅgānuśāsanam), Rāmāśramī-vyākhyā-sahita, ed. Paṇḍita Vāsudeva Lakṣmaṇa Śāstrī Paṇaśīkara (Delhi: Chaukhambā Saṃskṛta Pratiṣṭhāna, 2002), pp. 139, 143.
- ²⁸ Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association (CBETA), Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō, Vol. 3, No. 189 (Taipei: CBETA, 2023), p. 625a20–24; CBETA, Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō, Vol. 3, No. 191 (Taipei: CBETA, 2023), p. 939b5–11; CBETA, Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō, Vol. 53, No. 2122 (Taipei: CBETA, 2023), p. 344a11–19.
- ²⁹ Two types of species of Aśoka tree are found in India, one tree whose botanical name is *Saraca asoca* is believed to be the birthplace of Buddha, while the other tree is known by the botanical name *Polyalthia longifolia* which is considered an artificial Aśoka tree, which is mainly an ornamental tree and grows tall, while the second tree spreads like a mango tree and has a red coloured flower blooming in it.
- ³⁰ Senart, Le Mahāvastu, Tome II, p. 18:9; Mahāvastu-Avadāna-II, ed. Rādhāgovinda Basāka (Calcutta: Sanskrit College, 1964), pp. 25–26.
- ³¹ Dhammatā esā, bhikkhave, sampatiṇṇhitvā Bodhisatto samehi pādehi patitṭhahitvā uttarābhimukho sattapadavītiḥārena gacchati, setamhi chatte anudhāriyamāne, sabbā ca disā anuviloketi. See- Dīghanikāya-II (Igatpurī: Vipassanā Research Institute, Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana C.D. ROM Edition, 1998), p. 11; Majjhimanikāya-III (Igatpurī: Vipassanā Research Institute, Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana C.D. ROM Edition, 1998), p. 165.

- ³² Majjhimanikāya-III (Igatpurī: Vipassanā Research Institute, Chatṭha Saṅgāyana C.D. ROM Edition, 1998), pp. 159-166.
- ³³ According to the Theravada Buddhist tradition, he is the 21st Buddha, although the number of Buddhas varies across Buddhist texts. See- Buddhavaṃsa-II (Igatpurī: Vipassanā Research Institute, Chatṭha Saṅgāyana C.D. ROM Edition, 1998), pp. 348-350.
- ³⁴ K. R. Norman, A History of Indian Literature- Pāli Literature (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1983), 92-94; Oskar von Hinüber, A Handbook of Pāli Literature (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1996), p. 62.
- ³⁵ The commentaries (Aṭṭhakathās) provide detailed explanations of the subjects found in the various texts of the Tipiṭaka akin to the tikā (commentaries) written on Sanskrit texts; while Theravāda tradition traces their origin to the time of the Buddha, many scholars hold the view that they were developed in a later period. See- Bharata Singh Upādhyāya, Pāli Sāhitya kā Itihāsa (Prayāga: Hindī Sāhitya Sammelana, 2000), pp. 587-595.
- ³⁶ Buddhavaṃsa-Aṭṭhakathā (Igatpurī: Vipassanā Research Institute, Chatṭha Saṅgāyana C.D. ROM Edition, 1998), pp. 310-340.
- ³⁷ “Mahāpurisa, tumhehi sadiso ettha natthi, kuto uttaritaro”ti āhamsu. Evaṃ dasa disā anuviloketvā attanā sadisaṃ adisvā uttaradisābhimukho sattapadavītiḥārena agamāsi.” See- Buddhavaṃsa-Aṭṭhakathā, p.316.
- ³⁸ Lalitavistara, ed. P. L. Vaidya (Darabhaṅgā: Mithilā Vidyāpīṭha, 1958), pp. 61-62.; Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association (CBETA), Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō, Vol. 4, No. 192, Fo Ben Xing Ji Jing (佛本行集經) (Taipei: CBETA, 2023), p. 1b9-12; CBETA, Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō, Vol. 3, No. 191, Zhong Xu Mo He Di Jing (眾許摩訶帝經) (Taipei: CBETA, 2023), p. 939b18-20.
- ³⁹ “Tadā ajāyi Siddhattho, ramme Lumbinikānane; hitāya sabbalokassa, sukhāya ca narāsabho. Tadaheva ahaṃ jāto, saha teneva vaḍḍhito; piyo sahāyo dayito, viyatto nītikovido.” See- Apadāna-II (Igatpurī: Vipassanā Research Institute, Chatṭha Saṅgāyana C.D. ROM Edition, 1998), p. 151.
- ⁴⁰ Yasmiṃ pana samaye amhākaṃ Bodhisatto Lumbinīvane jāto, tasmimyeva samaye Rāhulamātā devī, Ānando, Channo, Kāludāyī amacco, Kaṇḍako assarājā, Mahābodhirukkho, catasso nidhikumbhiyo ca jātā; tattha eko gāvutappamāṇo, eko adḍhayojanappamāṇo, eko tigāvutappamāṇo, eko yojanappamāṇo ahoṣi. Ime satta saha jātā nāma honti. See- Buddhavaṃsa-Aṭṭhakathā, p.317.
- ⁴¹ Ānandatthero Amitodanassa, so bhagavato kaniṭṭho. See- Majjhimanikāya-Aṭṭhakathā- I (Igatpurī: Vipassanā Research Institute, Chatṭha Saṅgāyana C.D. ROM Edition, 1998), p. 372.
- ⁴² Buddhavaṃsa-Aṭṭhakathā, p.317 ; Majjhimanikāya-Aṭṭhakathā-I, p. 372.; Kappasatasahassaṃ pana tattha tattha bhava puññāni karontova amhākaṃ Bodhisattena saddhim Tusitapure nibbattitvā tato cuto Amitodanasakkassa gehe nibbatti. See- Theragāthā-Aṭṭhakathā- II (Igatpurī: Vipassanā Research Institute, Chatṭha Saṅgāyana C.D. ROM Edition, 1998), p. 351.
- ⁴³ G. P. Malalasekera, Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names. Vol. II. (London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, W.1, Published for the Government of India, 1938), pp. 285-289.
- ⁴⁴ G. P. Malalasekera, Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names. Vol. II, pp. 168-174.
- ⁴⁵ G. P. Malalasekera, Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names. Vol. II, pp. 838-839.
- ⁴⁶ G. P. Malalasekera, Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names. Vol. I. (London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, W.1, Published for the Government of India, 1937), pp. 379-380.
- ⁴⁷ Hendrik Kern, Manual of Indian Buddhism (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1896), p. 14.
- ⁴⁸ Aśvaghoṣa, Lalitavistara, ed. P. L. Vaidya (Darabhaṅgā: Mithilā Vidyāpīṭha, 1958), p. 69; Mahāvastu-Avadāna-II, ed. Rādhāgovinda Basāka (Calcutta: Sanskrit College, 1964), pp. 25-37.
- ⁴⁹ Na sakkā aññena sattena āvasiṭuṃ vā paribhuñjituṃ vā, tasmā Bodhisattamātā sattāhajāte Bodhisatte kālaṃ katvā Tusitapure nibbatti. Buddhavaṃsa-Aṭṭhakathā, p. 314; Apadāna-Aṭṭhakathā-I (Igatpurī: Vipassanā Research Institute, Chatṭha Saṅgāyana C.D. ROM Edition, 1998), p. 65.
- ⁵⁰ Lalitavistara, ed. P. L. Vaidya (Darabhaṅgā: Mithilā Vidyāpīṭha, 1958), p. 70; Lalitavistara, trans. Śāntibhikṣu Śāstrī (Lucknow: Uttar Pradesh Hindī Saṃsthāna, 2016), p. 199.