

[Nalanda-Rajgir-Bodhgaya historical Trip by the students of BA\(P\) on 25<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> October 2018,](#)  
[Deen Dayal Upadhyaya College, University of Delhi](#)

A historical trip to the world heritage sites of Nalanda, Rajgir and Bodhgaya was organized by the students of BA (P) OF Deen Dayal Upadhyaya College, University of Delhi from 25<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> Oct. 2018. We all know that the University of Nalanda played a great role in the dissemination of knowledge from 5<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> century AD which led to recognizing its value in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and in 1951 a centre of Buddhist studies was opened up by the govt of India near its old site which has become a deemed university under the ministry of culture today where students from various countries are studying Buddhism today. Former president Abdul Kalam, the Govt. of Singapore, Japan, Nobel Laureate Prof Amartya Sen, Govt. of India the Govt. of Bihar resolved to open another international university in memory of the erstwhile glorious Nalanda Mahavihar under the direct control of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This has started functioning now and students from various countries are enrolled there and study in its hostel. Hence the glory of the ancient Nalanda University has been tried to be brought back.

We 13 students of BA (P) having history as one of their main subjects- Vikas Kaswan, Apoorva Bansal, Himanshu Singh, Mohit, Rudrapratap, Prajwal, Sachin Siwach from Sumit Yadav from 3<sup>rd</sup> year, Harsh and Jatin Yadav from 2<sup>nd</sup> year and Himanshu Puniya from the first year reached Nalanda on the 26<sup>th</sup> Oct. 2018 at around 2.30 pm and after putting our luggage in a Taiwanese Buddhist monastery ( which was made available to us free of cost by one of the Buddhist monk delegates who had come to attend and read a paper at our 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference which was organized by the department of History and social sciences and the IGNC, Min. of Culture on 12-13<sup>th</sup> Oct.2018) and taking our lunch in the canteen of the Nava Nalanda Mahavihar deemed University went to see the world famous UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE of Nalanda University ruins where again our entry fee was waived off on request to the authorities. We saw the famous library building, living rooms of the students and the supposed dwelling room of the Chinese student and scholar Xuan Tsang, saw the kitchen, the wells, the temples, the lecture spaces and other buildings. It was mesmerizing and inspirational as it was a world respected educational university where the teachers and students from all parts of India and the world were receiving and transmitting knowledge. There we met some of the foreign students and faculty from the newly established International Nalanda University at Rajgir. Next we visited the Xuan Tsang memorial building at Nalanda established with the help of the Chinese Govt. This is a marvelous building well protected by the Govt. guards and restricted entry. This is well lit in the evening seeming as if the festival of lights Deepawali is being celebrated. In this building huge black basalt images of the Buddha and Xuan Tsang have been installed and his journey from the Chinese capital of Changan, today's Xian city, to Nalanda and back has been created through a map. This is a wonderful part of the gallery of this memorial building which shows Xuan Tsang's appetite for knowledge and Buddhist philosophy. He carried many Mahayani Buddhist texts along with him to Changan and translated most of them before he died. In this hall, he is revered as an Avatar (incarnation of the great Buddha). His role in dissemination of Buddhist philosophy and religion in China and the other far eastern countries like Korea and Japan is well known to the world.

Rajgir: Next day we visited the famous *Veluvana*, a garden frequented by the Buddha and his disciples, the *Vishwa shanti stupa* at the top of a hill by the Bihar Government tourism controlled ropeway by paying Rs. 80, to and fro. From there we descended down by foot to the world famous *Griddhrakoot parvat* (vulture point) where the Buddha delivered his famous sermon on *Saddharmapundarika* (the lotus of the true and righteous path) and which is frequented by hundreds of Buddhist pilgrims every day. This is a captivating site at the top of a hill crossing two caves lived in by the Buddhist monks in the ages gone by. From there we went to see Ghora Katora, a newly developed ecological hill lake park. We had to go there only by a horse driven cart paying 100 Rs. each. This is a very scenic spot where a large lake has formed by the rain waters sipping

through the hills surrounding it on all sides. A huge Buddha stone image measuring 70 feet has been installed in the island that obtains in the middle of the lake. All around it are hill forests rich in fauna, especially snakes, like Python, deers, Nilgai, ducks and birds of many varieties. In the evening it becomes very isolated and a little dangerous. The govt. of Bihar is erecting guard towers near it.

The third day we visited the famous Buddhist temple of Bodhgaya which again is a world heritage site. On the way we visited the valley at the famous village called *Gahalaur* where respected Dasharath Manjhi cut a sixty feet road out of a mountain to facilitate the easy movement of vehicles to reach the nearby medical centres fast. A movie has also been made on his life by the Bollywood. The temple is marvelous as its architecture is so captivating. It is a tall building constructed in the fashion of the north Indian Nagara style of architecture. It also has a small pond inside the complex. All around the temple we saw many small temples where Buddhist devotees from all over the world were residing in small huts and busy worshipping their beloved Tathagat Buddha, the enlightened one. This was a soul stirring spiritual site to behold and one must visit it regularly to get his/her immoral elements and behavioural problems. One must learn to be tolerant, forgiving and a giver of gifts to the poor and the needy.

Nalanda: On 29<sup>th</sup> oct. many of us again visited the Nalanda Ruins to freshen up our recently acquired love for the site. Then we visited the Archeological Survey of India managed Museum which houses the materials like the images, large grain container and bronze and iron implements discovered at the ruin sites and the surrounding regions. One must visit it again and again if one is interested in art history or archeology. Rajgir fortunately is one of the sixteen early kingdoms and we saw the ruins of the ramparts of the fort developed by King Ajatshatru, son of famous king Bimbisara. We visited other some not so famous sites at Rajgir like Sona Bhandar hill cave site which contains an old script inscribed on its walls. The Chief Minister of Bihar has chosen to build a Govt. rest house just 100 meters from this site. Many mythological sites also we visited. We can say that this historical trip will remain a wonder trip in our life forever and for this we thank our teacher Dr Radha Madhav Bharadwaj who, despite his time constraints and other engagements, readily agreed to be our guide and take us to these far off places-around 1100-1200 Kms. and help us see some of the most interesting historical sites which we read in our books. We thank him for this great educational tour.

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