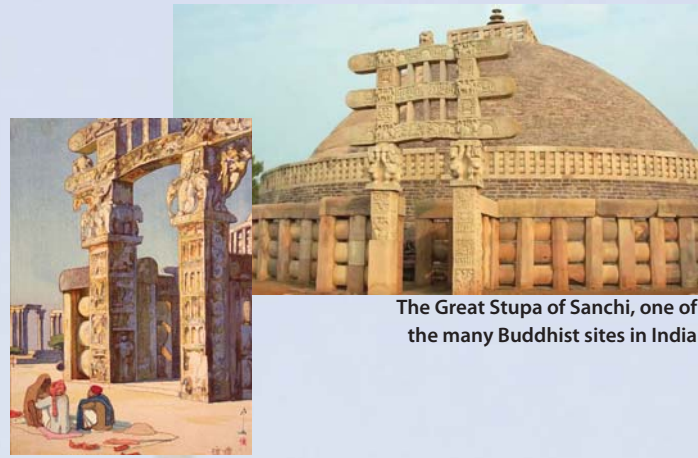


Pilgrimages

The Holy Lands of Tibet and India



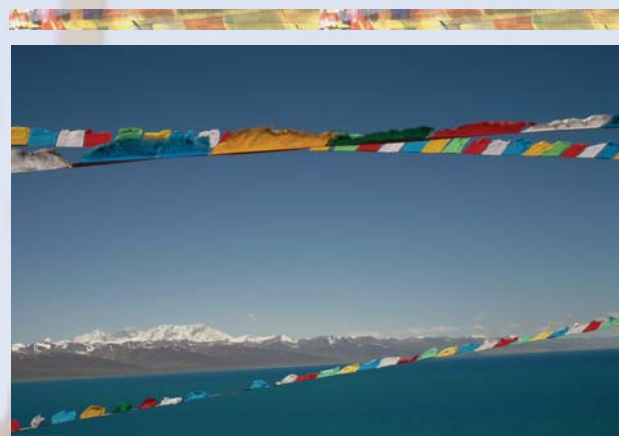
Mount Kailash the sacred mountain of the Hindus, Jains and Buddhists in Tibet



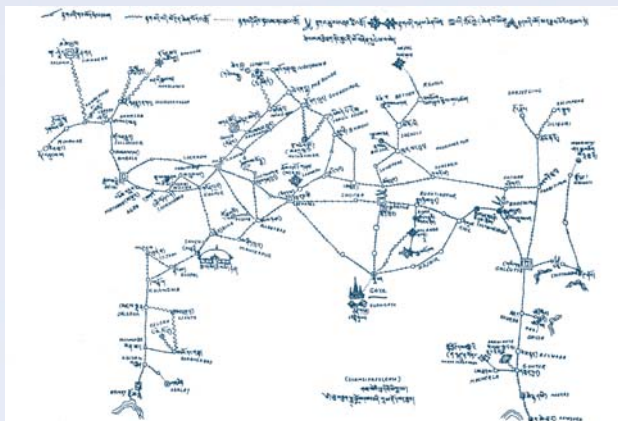
The Great Stupa of Sanchi, one of the many Buddhist sites in India

From time immemorial, pilgrimage has been a cherished occupation of the people of India and Tibet. Mount Kailash in Tibet is considered the abode of Lord Shiva by Hindus, and the nearby lakes of Manasarovar and Rakshas are among the most sacred places in the subcontinent's mythology.

India is considered as Aryabhumi by Tibetans, who for centuries traveled to the sites where the Buddha Sakyamuni lived and preached.



Prayer flags over Lake Manasarovar near Mount Kailash in Tibet



Map of the pilgrimages in India prepared by Gedun Choepel

Indian sites such as Bodh Gaya, Rajagriha, Sarnath, Kushinagar, Sravasti, Rajgir, Sankassa, Vaishali or Nalanda have always been holy for the Tibetans.



Lake Manasarovar and Mount Kailash



Ruins of Nalanda University



Places like Tso Pema (Rewalsar) in Himachal Pradesh are sites of pilgrimage for the Tibetans

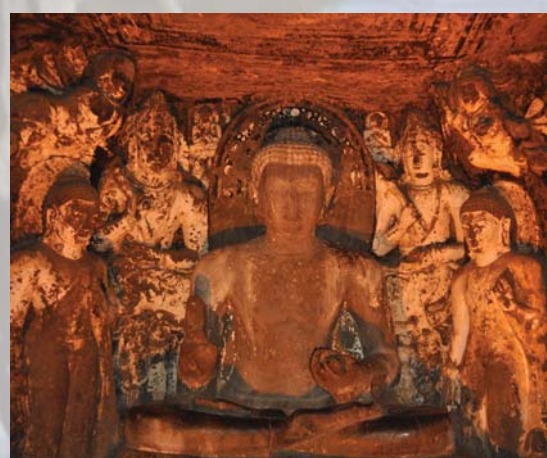
Unfortunately, after the 1962 conflict with China, it has not been easy for Indian pilgrims to visit Mt. Kailash and Manasarovar, though the arduous route through Lipulekh-la is available to a few. Reopening the Ladakh (Demchok) route to Tibet would go a long way to satisfying Indian devotees.



Tibetan monks in Bodh Gaya, Bihar



Detail of the Sanchi Stupa



The Buddha lived and preached in India