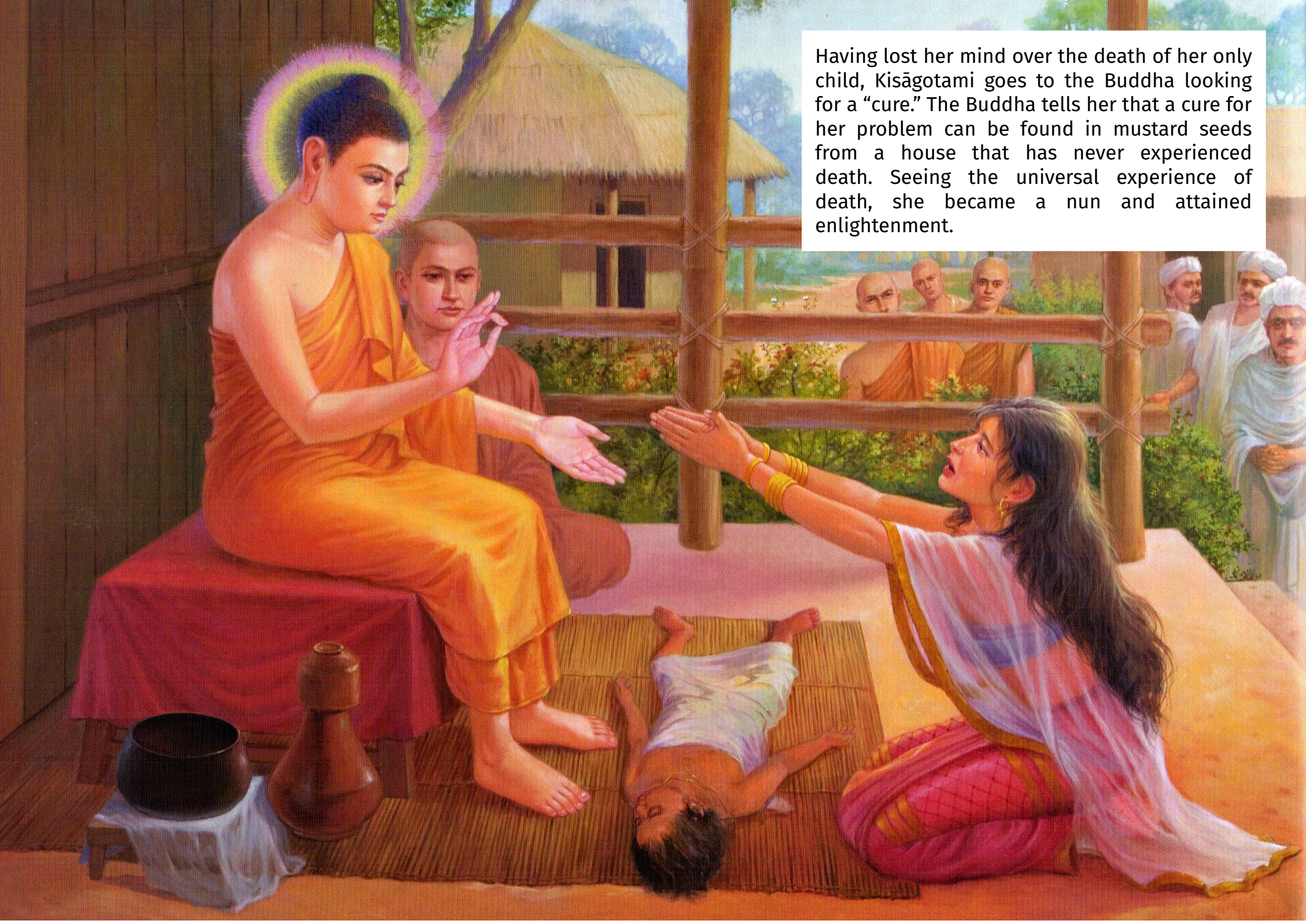
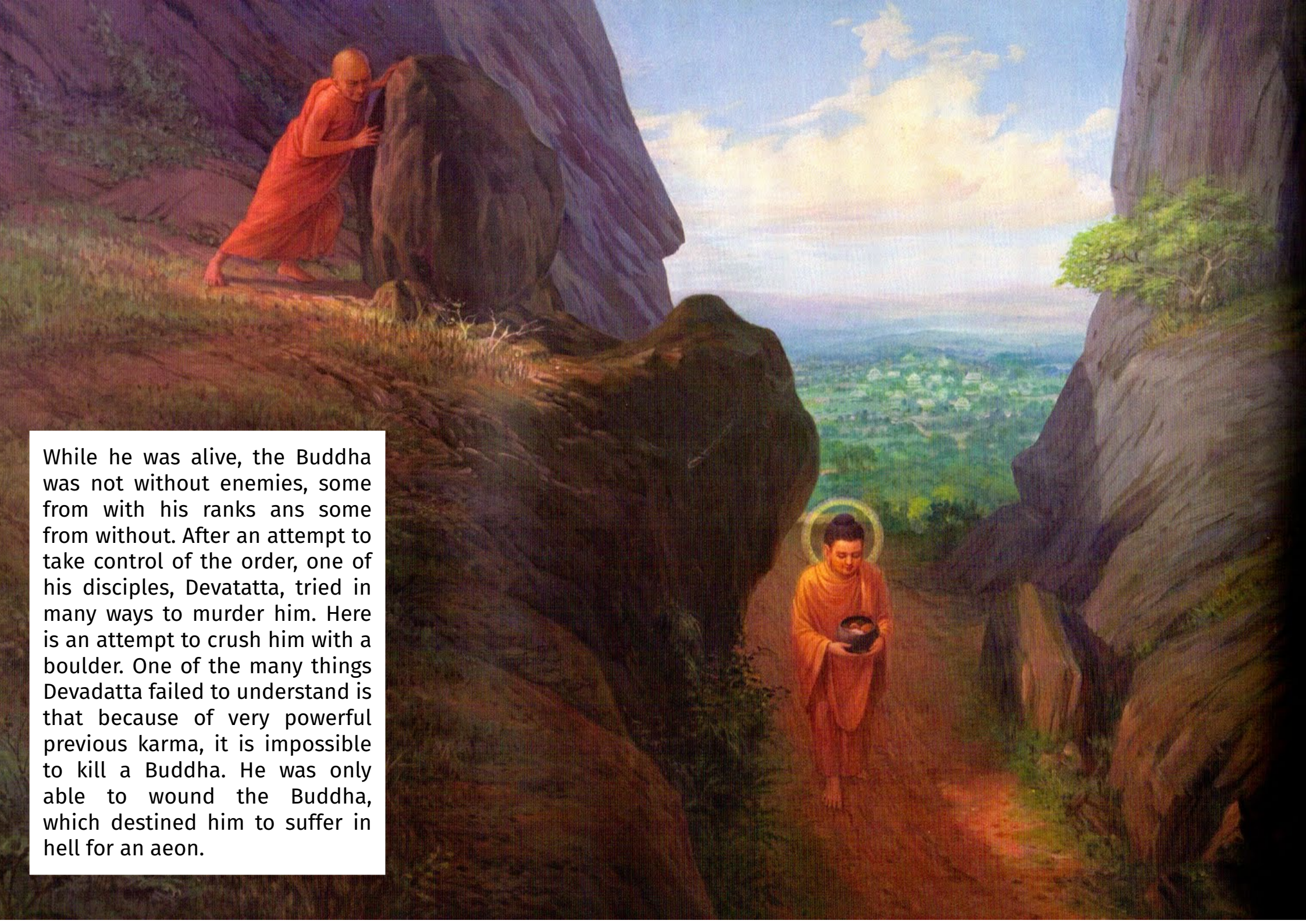
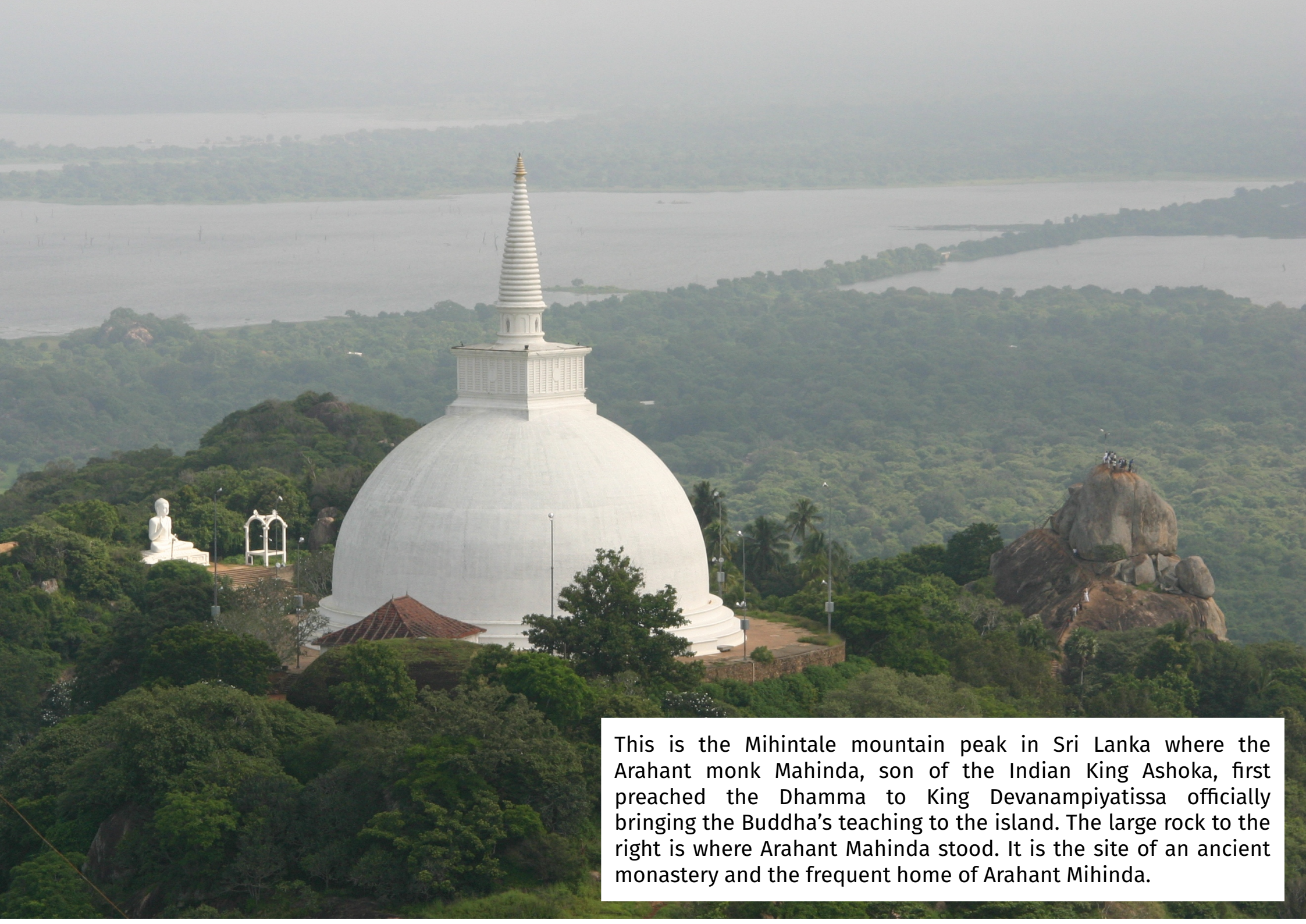


Having lost her mind over the death of her only child, Kisāgotami goes to the Buddha looking for a “cure.” The Buddha tells her that a cure for her problem can be found in mustard seeds from a house that has never experienced death. Seeing the universal experience of death, she became a nun and attained enlightenment.

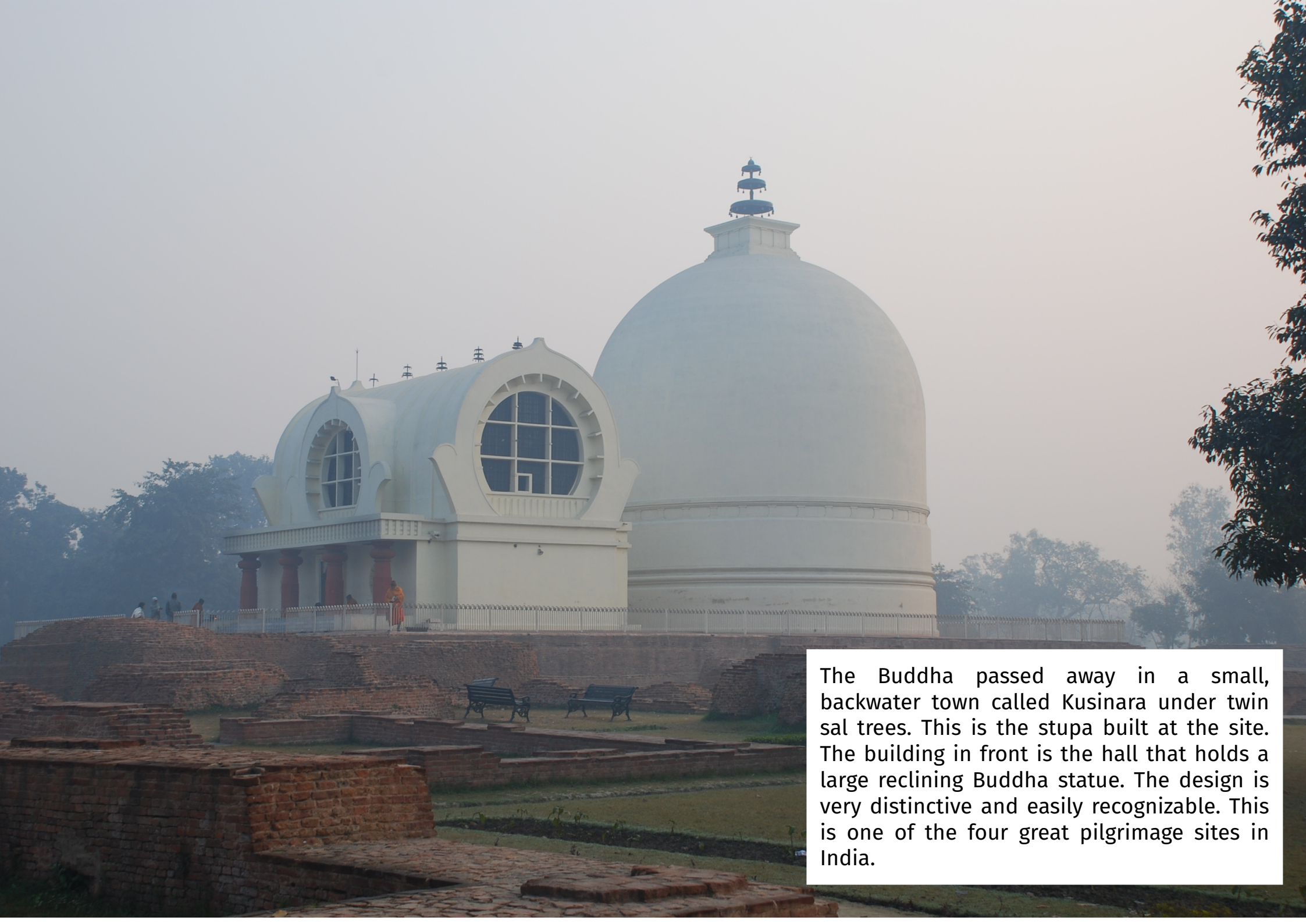




While he was alive, the Buddha was not without enemies, some from within his ranks and some from without. After an attempt to take control of the order, one of his disciples, Devadatta, tried in many ways to murder him. Here is an attempt to crush him with a boulder. One of the many things Devadatta failed to understand is that because of very powerful previous karma, it is impossible to kill a Buddha. He was only able to wound the Buddha, which destined him to suffer in hell for an aeon.

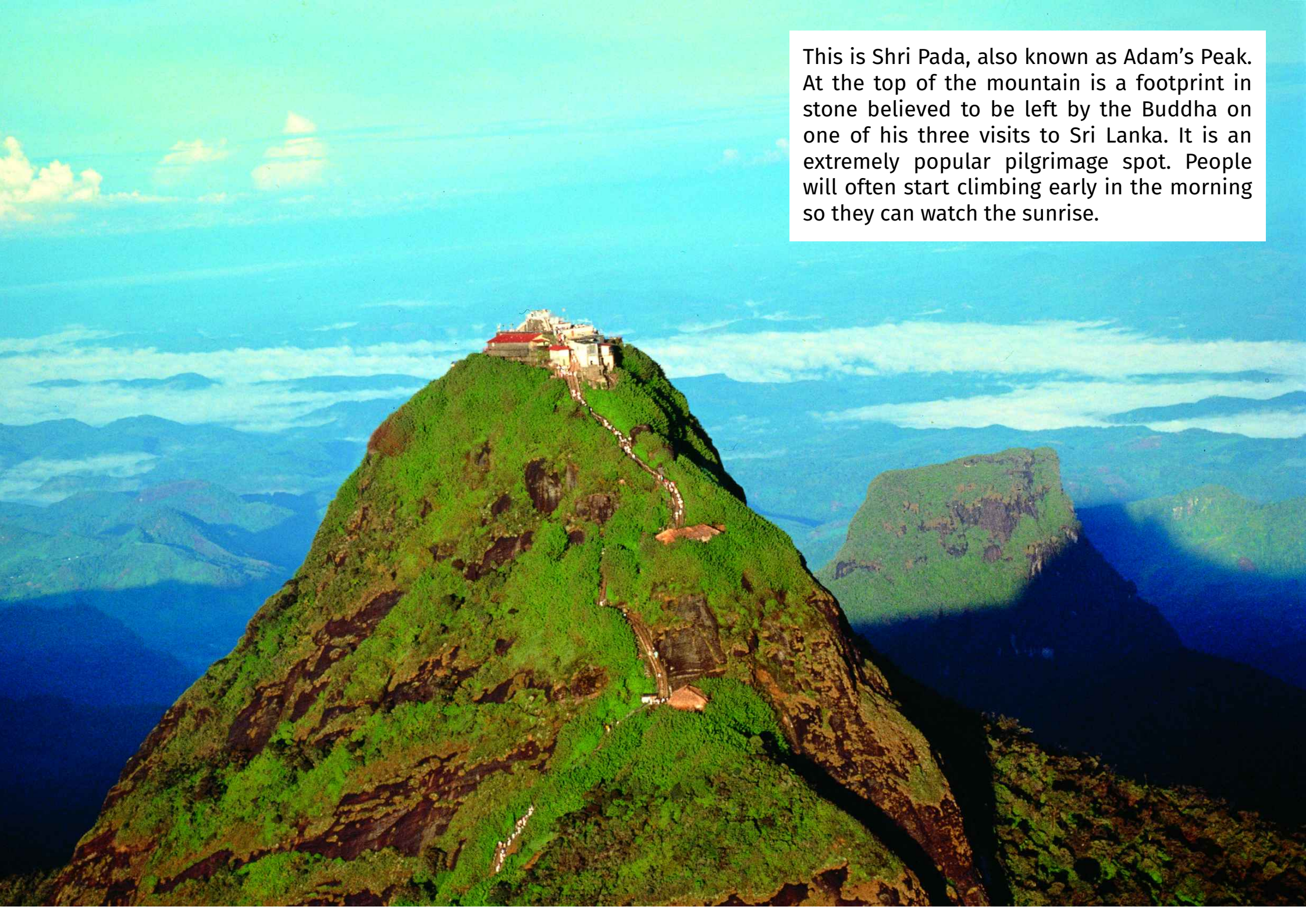


This is the Mihintale mountain peak in Sri Lanka where the Arahant monk Mahinda, son of the Indian King Ashoka, first preached the Dhamma to King Devanampiyatissa officially bringing the Buddha's teaching to the island. The large rock to the right is where Arahant Mahinda stood. It is the site of an ancient monastery and the frequent home of Arahant Mihinda.



The Buddha passed away in a small, backwater town called Kusinara under twin sal trees. This is the stupa built at the site. The building in front is the hall that holds a large reclining Buddha statue. The design is very distinctive and easily recognizable. This is one of the four great pilgrimage sites in India.

This is Shri Pada, also known as Adam's Peak. At the top of the mountain is a footprint in stone believed to be left by the Buddha on one of his three visits to Sri Lanka. It is an extremely popular pilgrimage spot. People will often start climbing early in the morning so they can watch the sunrise.





The Sri Maha Bodhi tree in Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka, has grown from the cutting brought from India by the Arahant Nun Sanghamitta. It is the tree supported by the gold poles.



The Buddha first preached the Dhamma in the Deer Park to the group of five ascetics that he lived with during his time of austerities practice. Countless heavenly beings also attended this sermon, seen floating on clouds. The sermon he preached is called the Setting in Motion the Wheel of Dhamma, found in SN 56:11.

At the request of Arahant Mahinda, King Devanampiyatissa built Thuparamaya to hold the collarbone relic of the Buddha. In the inset image you can see how the pillars once supported a structure surrounding the stupa.





The birth of the Bodhisatta (the Buddha-to-be) is one of the most common events depicted in Buddhist art. This carving is from the Gandhara region of modern day Afghanistan. Notice Queen Mahamāyā grasping a brance of the sal tree.



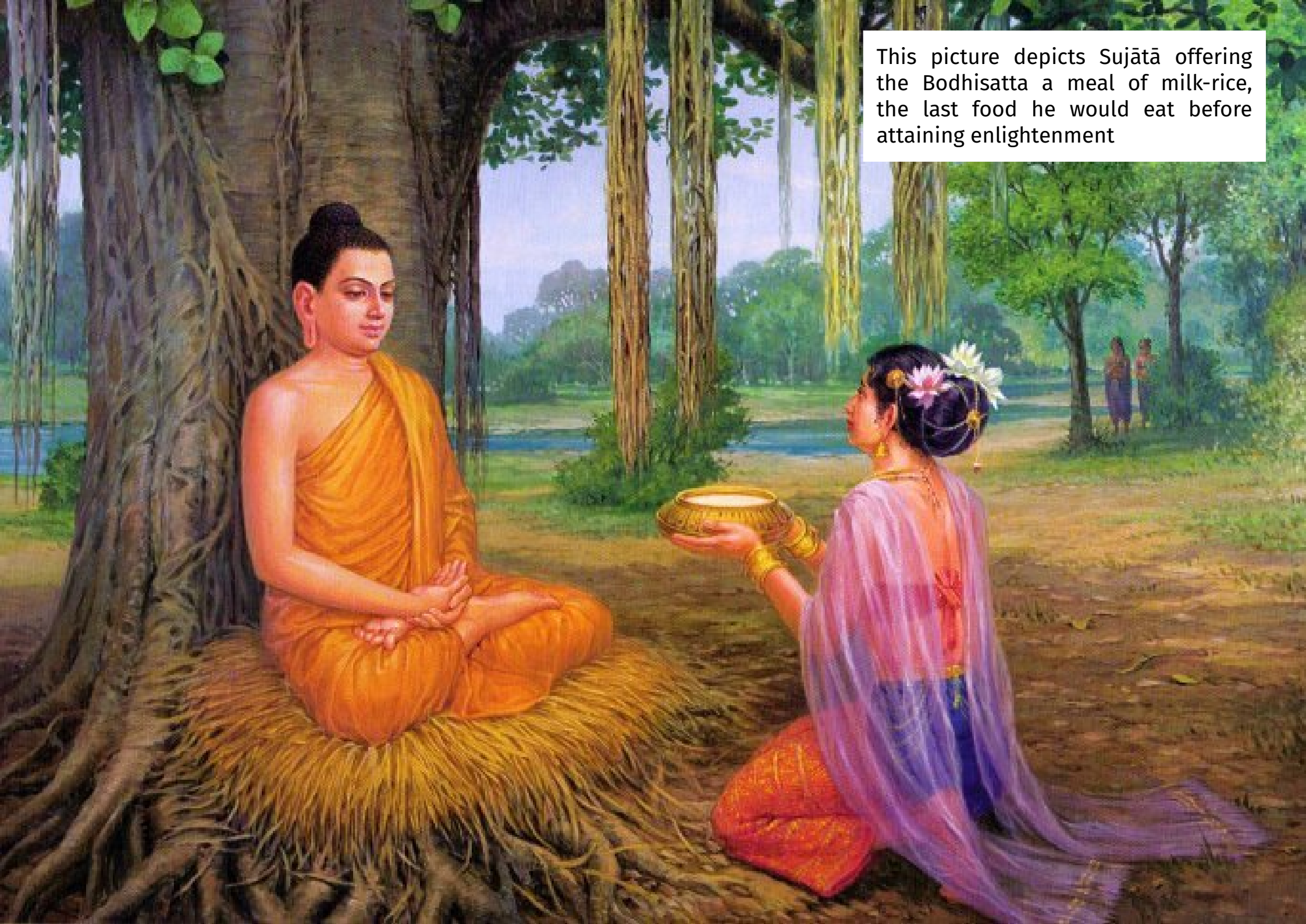


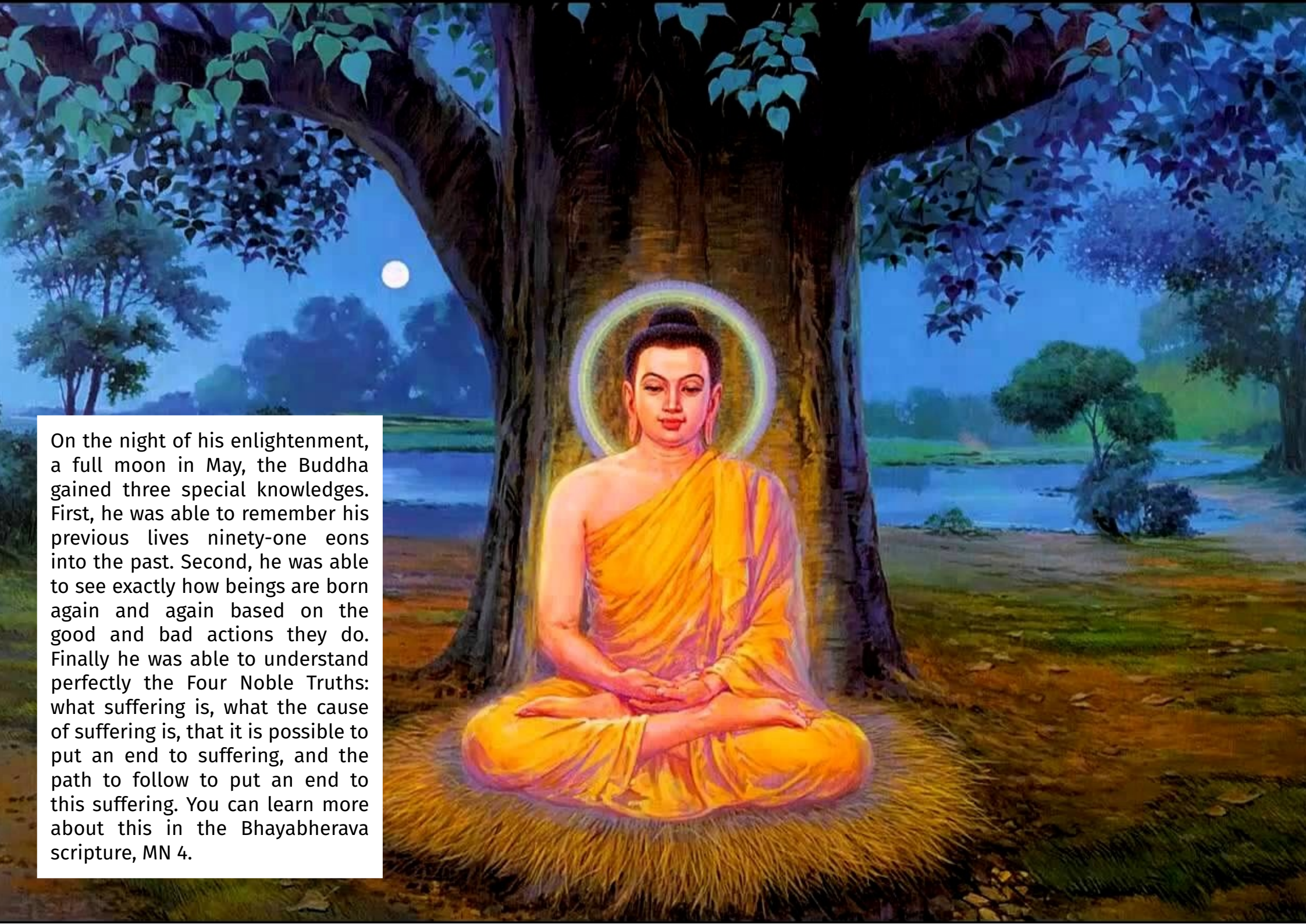
After teaching the Truths he discovered for forty-five years, the Buddha passed away without being reborn ever again. In this stone carving you can see people weeping and wailing at their loss. Below the Buddha is a fully enlightened monk meditating peacefully. Also, the wanderer Subhadda, the last person who went for refuge to the Buddha while he was alive.

This is a shrine built over the place the Buddha was born, Lumbini, in southern Nepal. Queen Mahā Māyā was headed back to her home town to give birth, as was the custom. Along the way, she stopped in this sal tree garden. While she was there, the Bodhisatta was born. The government has set up a huge nature reserve around the site making it one of the most peaceful of all the pilgrimage destinations.



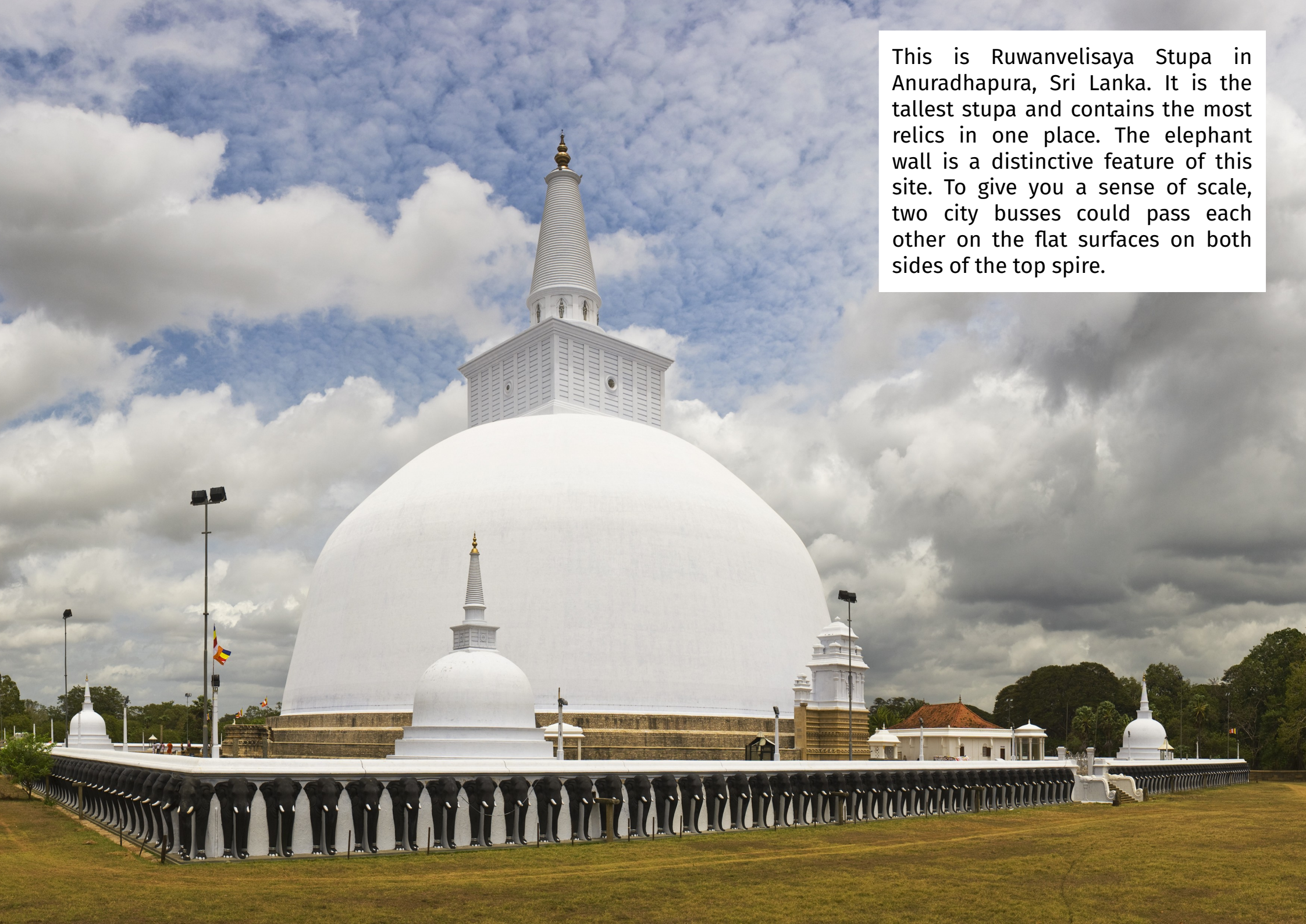
This picture depicts Sujātā offering the Bodhisatta a meal of milk-rice, the last food he would eat before attaining enlightenment





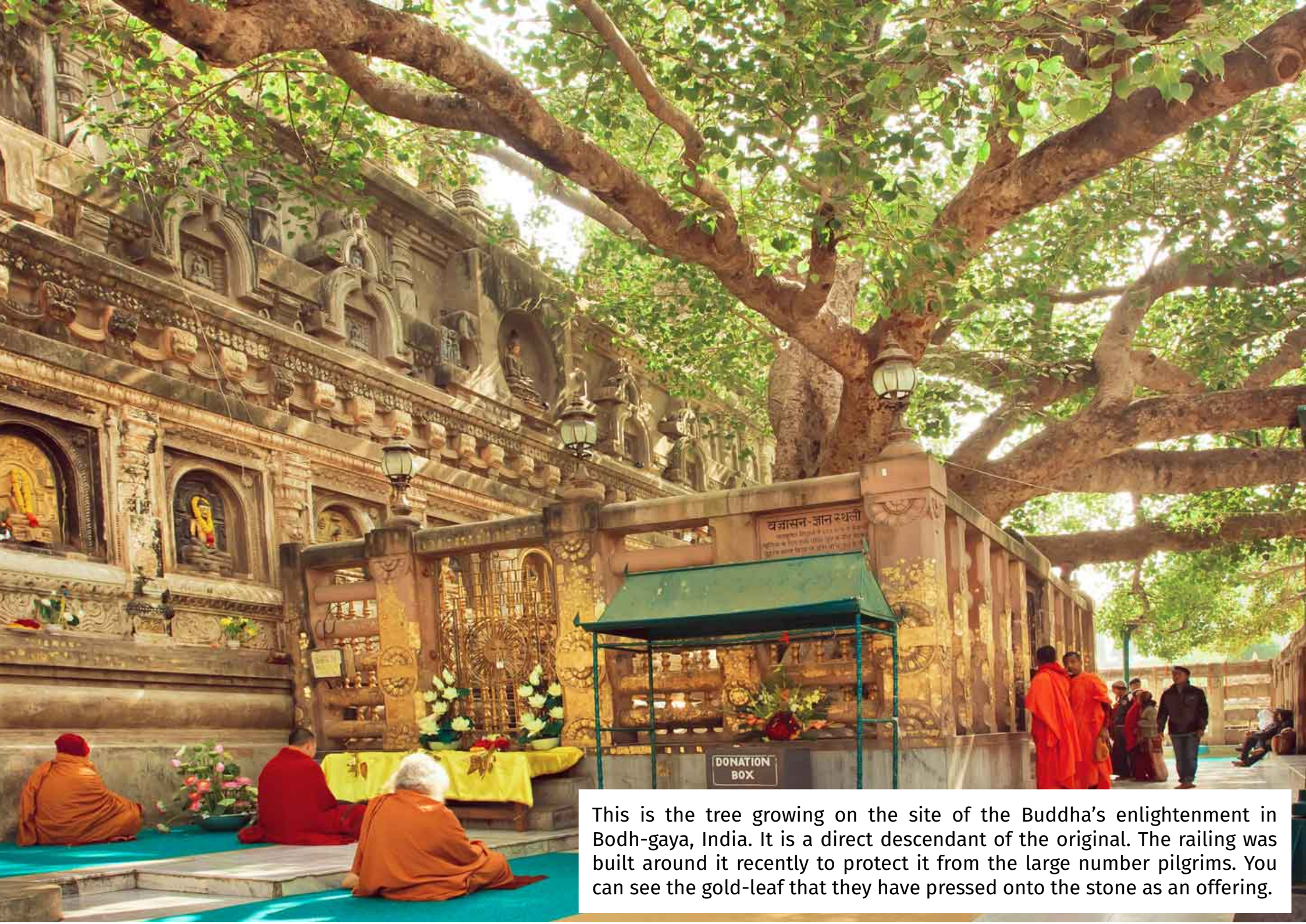
On the night of his enlightenment, a full moon in May, the Buddha gained three special knowledges. First, he was able to remember his previous lives ninety-one eons into the past. Second, he was able to see exactly how beings are born again and again based on the good and bad actions they do. Finally he was able to understand perfectly the Four Noble Truths: what suffering is, what the cause of suffering is, that it is possible to put an end to suffering, and the path to follow to put an end to this suffering. You can learn more about this in the Bhayabherava scripture, MN 4.

This is Ruwanvelisaya Stupa in Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka. It is the tallest stupa and contains the most relics in one place. The elephant wall is a distinctive feature of this site. To give you a sense of scale, two city busses could pass each other on the flat surfaces on both sides of the top spire.





This is a flower offering being made on the site of the Buddha's hut in Jeta's Grove in Sāvatti, India. There is now a huge, peaceful park on ancient land of the monastery built by Anāthapiṇḍika.



This is the tree growing on the site of the Buddha's enlightenment in Bodh-gaya, India. It is a direct descendant of the original. The railing was built around it recently to protect it from the large number pilgrims. You can see the gold-leaf that they have pressed onto the stone as an offering.



On the night the Bodhisatta was conceived in Queen Mahā Māyā's womb, a great white elephant visited her in a dream. This scene is very common in Buddhist art around the world.



This is the site of the Buddha's hut on Mount Vulture Peak outside of the city of Rajagaha. Many famous sermons were given on this mountain. It was a peaceful escape from the busy city. It is still a popular and quiet pilgrimage destination.





The most sacred relic on the island of Sri Lanka is the holy tooth relic of the Supreme Buddha kept in the mountain city of Kandy. It is held in an ancient royal palace in the structure you can see with the golden-coloured roof.



The birth of a human destined to become a fully enlightened Buddha, known as a Bodhi-satta, is always accompanied by a series of great miracles. The Buddha was born in modern-day Nepal in Lumbini Park under a sal tree. He was received by gods, you can see floating on clouds. More details are in the Accariya Abbhuta Scripture, MN 123.



This statue depicts the week after the Buddha's enlightenment when he was protected by the great snake deva Muchalinda during a great storm. It is a common image in Buddhist art. You can read about the incident in the Udana, sutta 2.1.



A reclining Buddha is usually depicting his passing away. On the left and right of the image you can see the twin sal trees. You can read more about this event in the Mahaparinibbana scripture, DN 16.



This is one of the earliest serial killers in history, Angulimāla. He was converted by the Buddha and later attained enlightenment. You can read about this in the Middle Length Discourse MN 86.



After it was predicted that the Bodhi-satta would leave his life of luxury in the palace to seek enlightenment, his father did everything he could to make sure his son saw nothing of the true nature of life. Despite this effort, the Bodhi-satta eventually got to see the realities of, old age, sickness and death. He also saw a monk and realized this might be the solution.





With the determination to find a solution to the problem of suffering, the Bodhisatta left the palace on his horse Khantika with his driver Channa. After crossing the Anoma river he gave up his jewelry and royal clothes, cut off his hair and took up the clothes of a wanderer.

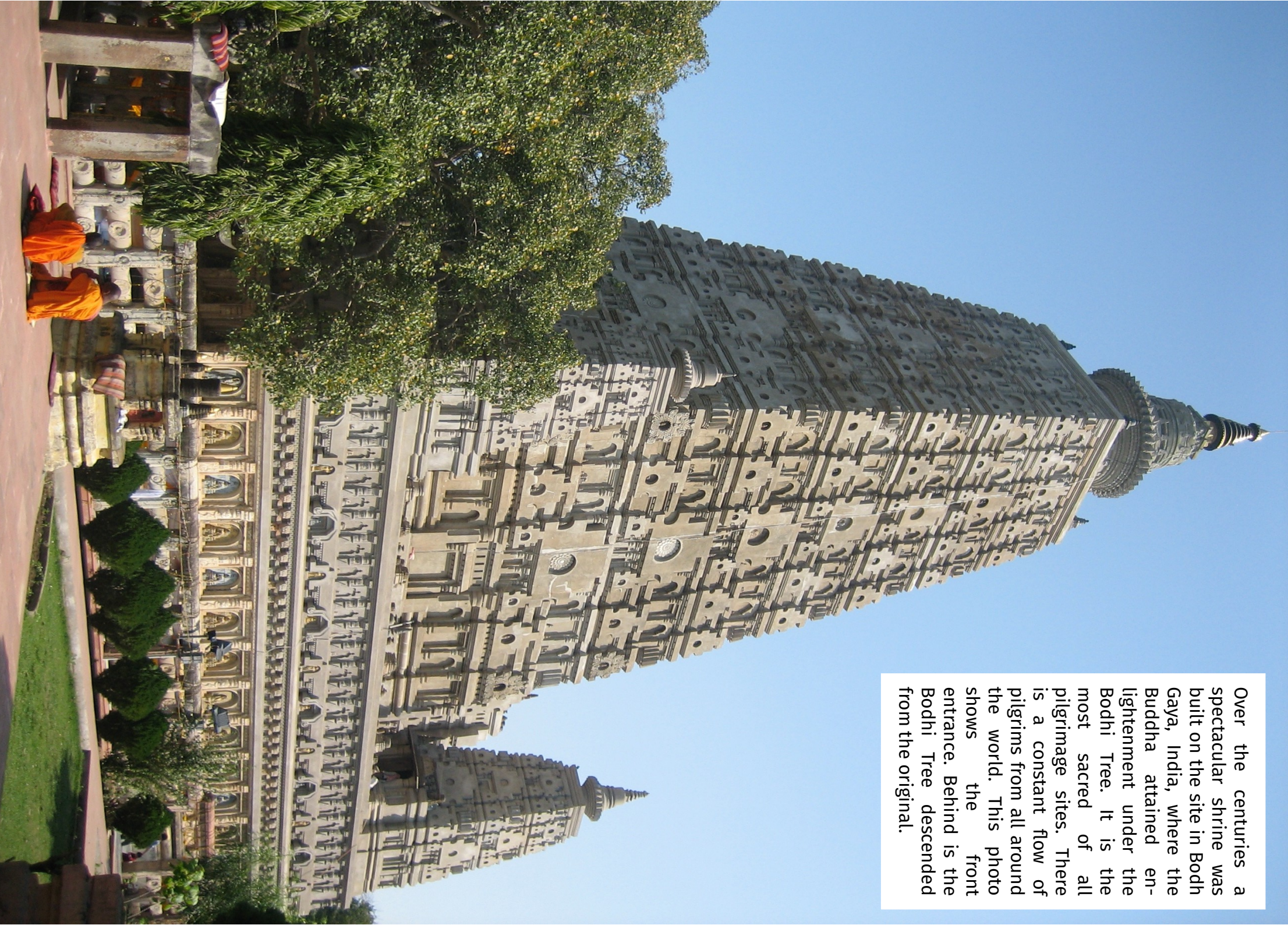


Before he realized that extreme ascetic practices were useless, the Bodhi-satta tried every possible method of torturing his body in every way imaginable to try and purify his mind. He became so thin that when he touched his belly he could feel his backbone. A statue of the Buddha in this condition can often be seen in monasteries. You can learn more about this in the Mahasaccaka scripture, MN 36.



The Buddha first preached the Dhamma in the Deer Park at Isipatana. This is a stupa built at the site. The shape is very distinctive with the tall, flat sides. This is one of the four great pilgrimage sites in India. It is a huge park that provides a peaceful oasis in the city of Varanasi.

Over the centuries a spectacular shrine was built on the site in Bodh Gaya, India, where the Buddha attained enlightenment under the Bodhi Tree. It is the most sacred of all pilgrimage sites. There is a constant flow of pilgrims from all around the world. This photo shows the front entrance. Behind is the Bodhi Tree descended from the original.





For centuries after the Buddha's passing away, his images was never represented in artwork. Instead a Bodhi tree, an empty chair, or his footprints were used. Here you can see a carving at the stupa of Sanci in India where he is signified by the Bodhi tree and an empty seat.

Two hundred years after the passing away of the Buddha, the great Indian king Ashoka sent his daughter, the Arahant Bhikkhuni Sanghamitta, to Sri Lanka to establish the order of nuns and bring a cutting from the right side of the Bodhi tree to the island. In this painting, found in the Kelaniya Monastery, you can see Devanampiya Tissa coming out to greet Arahant Sanghamitta.

