

PM Modi to gift Buddha tree sapling to China, Mongolia

[Abdul Qadir](#), TNN | May 9, 2015, 03.02PM IST



GAYA: Prime Minister Narindra Modi would be gifting Buddha tree sapling to China and Mongolia during his ensuing visit to the two countries scheduled this month. The saplings developed in Bodh Gaya under the supervision of the scientists of the Forest Research Institute, Dehradun have been sent to Delhi through a special messenger and a trained gardener from where the sacred sapling will be taken to these countries for presentation during PM Modi's visit.

Though South Korea also figures on the PM's three nation itinerary, the sapling is not being taken to that country, as a sapling was already gifted to a South Korea in March 2014. Besides South Korea, Thailand, Nepal, Sri Lankan, Vietnam and Bhutan are the other recipients of the sapling gift. Earlier, during his Nepal visit for the SAARC summit, PM Modi planted a Buddha tree sacred sapling in the neighbouring country.

The saplings have been developed by germinating the seeds of the sacred tree, a direct descendant of the original Peepal tree that provided shade to Buddha, then a wandering Prince named Siddhartha from the neighbouring Himalayan Kingdom during the last week of his seven week long final meditation. Siddhartha is believed to have attained enlightenment under the tree about 2500 years back to become Buddha, the enlightened one.

Gaya DM Sanjay Agrawal, who heads the Bodh Gaya Temple Management Committee said that the saplings have been sent to Delhi after seeking necessary clearance from the home department of the state government. The sapling will be handed over to the officials of the External Affairs ministry. Special rituals were performed before sending the sapling to Delhi for its onward journey.

Asked if the sapling has been developed by cloning the sacred tree, FRI scientist NSK Harsh said that no cloning has been done and the conventional method of first treating the seeds and then germinating the same has been used. Harsh said that their job was simply to provide health care to the sacred tree and the sapling has been developed at the local level.

On being questioned as to why the conventional method was adopted whereas the modern cloning techniques were available, Harsh said that cloning meant mass production of saplings that would cause hurt to the sentiments of the Buddha followers who want to preserve the tree's sanctity. Only limited production of sapling on special occasions like gifting it to a foreign head of government was being done. There was no plan to clone the tree, said Harsh.

Source:<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/PM-Modi-to-gift-Buddha-tree-sapling-to-China-Mongolia/articleshow/47213373.cms>