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# 'Eco-monastery' opening at Siddhartha's birthplace

Hidden solar panels will be incorporated into a mega temple to pow

by **Candace Lombardi** @candacelombardi / March 9, 2011 12:06 PM PST





Elevation sketch of the eco-monastery set to open in Lumbini, Nepal this April.

LumbiniWorld.org

Lumbini, the UNESCO World Heritage Site so marked for being the birthplace of Siddhartha Gautama, the founder of Buddhism, will soon also be home to an "eco-monastery."

The **Lumbini Udyana Mahachaitya World Center for Peace and Unity (LUM)**, which began construction in 2006, opens this April in Nepal. It will be the largest Buddhist temple and meditation hall in Lumbini, but aims to leave the smallest carbon footprint.

The lighting system for the 48,600-square-foot structure will rely entirely on solar panels to generate electricity for its lighting, as well as incorporating the use of natural light in its design. It has cavity walls for increased thermal insulation and was designed so that it can rely on natural passive airflow systems to regulate heating and cooling.

But the temple is not entirely green. The LUM center is being built to withstand earthquakes of up to 7.7 on the Richter scale, it was

**Floorplan for the main building complex of the Lumbini center.**

United Trungram Buddhist Fellowship

constructed using stone and brick masonry, as well as concrete, a material known for its release of carbon gases when manufactured. The building itself, however, was constructed in large part without the use of electricity. That was mainly due to frequent power outages in the area, necessitating workers to even carry "heavy buckets of wet cement to the top of the structure's dome," according to **Dharmakaya**, the organization leading the building effort.

**Trungram Gyaltrul Rinpoche**, the high-ranking lama leading the project.

"Architecturally, unlike many other monasteries, this one will be a modern hybrid monastery. It is a chaitya based on the ancient Indian work of Shariputra's stupa found at Nalanda University, and also incorporates Nepalese architecture, which is then beautified by Tibetan artworks," Rinpoche said.

Rinpoche, a Harvard graduate, is known for being one of the first lamas to earn a Western Ph.D.

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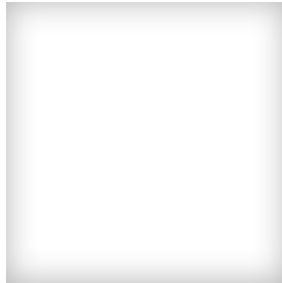
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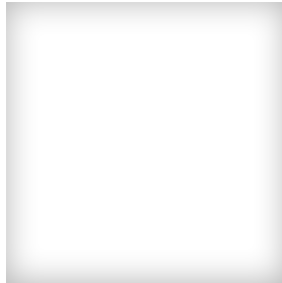
#### **Candace Lombardi** /

In a software-driven world, it's easy to forget about the nuts and bolts. Whether it's cars, robots, personal gadgetry or industrial machines, Candace Lombardi examines the moving parts that keep our world rotating. A journalist who divides her time between the United States and the United Kingdom, Lombardi has written about technology for the sites of The New York Times, CNET, USA Today, MSN, ZDNet, Silicon.com, and GameSpot. She is a member of the CNET Blog Network and is not a current employee of CNET. [See full bio](#)

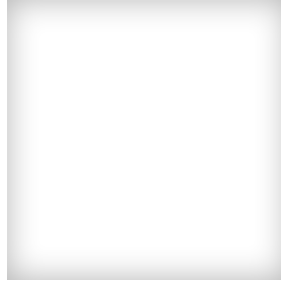
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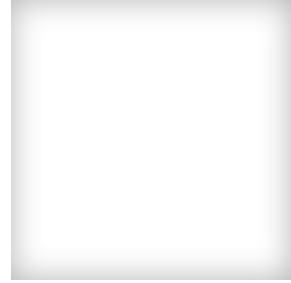
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