

Borobudur and Prambanan Temples: UNESCO Cultural Heritages and Symbol of Indonesian Peace and Religious Harmony

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Abstract

Borobudur and Prambanan are UNESCO heritage sites located in central Java, Indonesia with monument size of 123x123x47 meters (Borobudur) and 34x34x47 meters (Prambanan on Shiva shrine). Based on Guinness World Records, Borobudur is the biggest Buddhist temple in the world and entirely made from massive and solid volcanic stones. These two ancient monuments have abundant bas-reliefs on their walls which illustrate teaching manuscript of Buddhist and Hinduism religions, and represent the life of Buddha (Buddhist texts) and Ramayana documents each. This paper discusses the history and understanding for both religious monuments that now represents symbol of religious tolerance in a country with majority Muslim people. They are believed to be constructed and build in peaceful and tolerant religious harmony among people of the 8th century Mataram Kingdom.

Keywords: Symbol of religious harmony, Borobudur, Prambanan, Buddhist temple, Hinduism shrine

1. Introduction

UNESCO World heritage is natural and cultural legacy of artifacts around the world that are inherited from our past generations. Due to various reasons such as climate change, natural disasters, wars, etc., these valuable world heritages are continuously destroyed from time to time. Natural world heritage such as rain forests with its valuable flora and fauna, for example, are being damaged in one way or another because of bad and terrible climate, because of huge number of tourists which comes to visit them, or as a result of other human activities for city planning and developments. Once those natural or cultural heritages are destroyed, they cannot be recovered or restored back to its present state (Hølleland, Hamman & Phelps, 2019).

Currently there are 1092 UNESCO heritage sites located in 167 state parties (countries) around the world, up to May 2019. Out of these figures, 209 are natural, 845 are cultural and 38 are mixed properties. Most of the natural heritages are defined as places related to countryside and natural environment, together with flora and fauna that are irreplaceable sources of life. While, cultural heritage sites include buildings and historic places, ancient monuments, artifacts, etc., that are considered worthy of preservation. The cultural sites also comprise objects significant to the archaeology, architecture, technology of a specific culture. Sameer & Zhang (2018) points out that main role of both types of heritage treasures often serves as an important part for country's tourist industry and attracts many local and foreign visitors. Table 1 shows heritage sites in Southeast Asian Countries for both Natural and Cultural Heritage Sites (NHS & CHS).

Table 1. UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Southeast Asia

<i>Country</i>	<i>NHS</i>	<i>CHS</i>	<i>Total</i>
Cambodia		3	3
Indonesia	4	4	8
Laos		2	2
Malaysia	2	2	4
Myanmar		1	1
Philippines	3	3	6
Singapore		1	1
Thailand	2	3	5
Vietnam	3	5	8

* Source: <http://whc.unesco.org/pg.cfm?cid=31>

UNESCO defined that world heritage site represents basic criteria and concept of physical artifact which is exceptional and universal in nature (Dragos, 2013). These world heritage sites in general belong to all the peoples of the world, irrespective of the territory on which they are located. In Indonesia, the world heritage sites currently include Borobudur Temple (recognized in 1991), Prambanan Temple Compounds (1991), Komodo National Park (1991, natural), Ujung Kulon National Park (1991, natural), Sangiran Early Man Site (1996), Lorentz National Park (1999, natural), Tropical Rainforest Heritage of Sumatra (2004, natural), and Cultural Landscape of Bali Province: the Subak System as a Manifestation of the Tri Hita Karana Philosophy (2012).

2. Borobudur Temple

Built in the 8th century, Borobudur temple is the greatest Buddhist monuments in the world, and represents ancient sculpture located in central part of Java Island. This colossal relic of Borobudur was built by Shailendra dynasty between 778 to 842 CE; 400 years before Cambodia's Angkor Wat and any other works on great European cathedrals were created (Gunarto, 2007). Little is known about its early history except that a huge workforce - sculptors, artists, statue and carving experts - must have been labored to move and carved 55,000 cubic meters of volcanic stone and lava-rock. As ancient Buddhist temple (candi), Borobudur was built with a single large stupa, and it takes the form of a giant tantric Buddhist mandala, with 123 m by 123 m in size. It is erected on a hill in the form of a stepped-pyramid of six rectangular levels, three circular terraces and a central stupa forming the summit.

Table 2. Monument Specifications of Borobudur Temple

Monument size of 9 terraces/floors	123x123x47 m
Narrative reliefs	1460 panels
Decorative reliefs	1212 panels
Total lengths of both visual panels	2500 m
Total number of Buddha statues in open niches & top terraces	504

As one of major Buddhist centers that was created during Shailendra dynasty in the 8th century (Hunter, 2019), candi Borobudur was built with an overwhelming mass of images and galleries on its

walls depicting the activities of Gods. There are 1,460 narrative panels illustrating the life of Buddha and Buddhist texts, the largest and most complete collection of Buddhist relief in the world. These religious illustrated texts consist of 6 different Mahayana Buddhist doctrines: Karmavibhangga, Lalitavistara, Jatakas, Avadanas, Gandavyuha, and Bhadrachari.

Table 3. Location of all Reliefs and Sculpture

<i>Site Position of Relief</i>	<i>No. of Panels</i>	<i>Manuscripts' Name</i>
Hidden Basement	160	Karmavibanggas
Main wall of Gallery 0	1212	Decorative panels
Gallery 1, upper main wall	120	Lalitavistara
Gallery 1-2 main wall & ballustrade	720	Jatakas & Avadanas
Gallery 2 – 4 main wall & ballustrade	388	Gandavyuha
Gallery 4 main wall	72	Bhadracari

All of six manuscripts are carved on 2500 meters long of stone inscriptions on 5 consecutive galleries' walls. The very first engraved image of the manuscripts starts from east gate on gallery 1 circulating to the left, following round 1, 2, 3, ..., 10. In total, Borobodur temple is created with ten virtual levels of a Bodhisattva's life which they must develop to become a perfect and full enlightenment of a Buddha. The highest level called Arupadhatu has no relief or decorations but has 3 terraces, circular in shape with round and circle walls. The Arupadhatu level is the place for the seventy-two renovated Dhyani Buddhas tucked into small stupa (Gunarto, 2011).

Karmavibhangga is the first manuscript describing the doctrine of good and evil or cause and effect. Second visual manuscript, Lalitavistara represents the life of (Shiddhartha) Gautama Buddha from his birth until his first Sermon at Benares. One full round on the first gallery (upper main wall) was created to this manuscript. Jataka is a collection of 34 poems or Jatakas and contain stories on great deeds performed by Buddha in his former lives. These episodes of reincarnations in Jataka serve as illustration of self-sacrifice. The Avadanas narrative relief similar to Jatakas describe deeds accomplished by Bodhisattvas in their former lives, in preparation for absolute perfect Buddhahood (Miksic & Tranchine, 1990).

Gandavyuha represents the most important part of Buddhist doctrine and the longest manuscript described in gallery 2 upto gallery 4. These passageways describe Sudhana, son of a rich merchant, who in his aim to reach the highest wisdom, met several Bodhisattvas. Two spiritual teachers of these Bodhisattvas are Maitreya (future Buddha) and Samantabhadra (ultimate Buddha). The last part of Gandavyuha, Bhadrachari manuscript is represented in the 4th gallery, and it contains the pledge of Sudhana to follow patterns of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra.

3. Candi Prambanan

About 35 km southeast of Borobodur, Prambanan temples complex (Candi Prambanan) is located with three main temples, namely Vishnu, Brahma, and Shiva temples. Among these three, Shiva temple is the biggest temple and represents symbol of Trimurti Hindu beliefs (Nesbitt, 2018). The Shiva temple is located in the middle of the other two and is facing eastward. Each of these 3 temples has accompanying smaller temple facing to the west just right in front of these temples, namely Nandi temple for Shiva, Swan (Angsa) for Brahma, and Garuda for Vishnu temple as shown in Figure 1. In addition to that, there are another 2 enclosure temples (called Apit temples), 4 entrance gate/Kelir temples, and 4 corner Patok temples. All these 16 temples are built and raised in the center of main compound. Around this central compound, there are another 224 Pervara temple ruins of 240 temples in total.

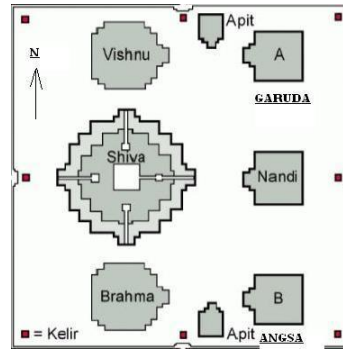


Figure 1. Prambanan Temples Compound: (a) Picture, (b) Position of 8 main temples.

The Shiva temple (also known as Roro Jonggrang temple) is the biggest (34x34m) and highest monument of 47 m tall and consists of 4 rooms (Cappellato and Sala, 2017). The main room has a statue of Shiva, while other rooms each contains Durga (Shiva's wife) statue, Agastya (teacher Shiva), and Ganesha (son of Shiva) statue. Durga statue is also known as image of Roro Jonggrang princess from Ratu Boko palace that possess famous legendary story to local people. In the north side of Shiva temple is Vishnu temple which contains Vishnu statue inside. Known in honorific word of “Brāhmaṇa” (Pain, 2019), Brahma temple located in the south of Shiva temple with a statue of Brahma inside its room. Brahma and Vishnu temple are about the same size and measures 20 meters in length/width and 33 meters tall each.

Just in front of Shiva temple stands Nandi temple which holds a statue of Nandi bull, the vehicle (vahana) of Lord Shiva. In the north side, Garuda temple in front of the Vishnu temple has no statue inside. Most likely this temple once has the statue of Garuda, the vehicle of Vishnu. Garuda represents a mythical bird in Hindu mythology, a bird very much like eagle, which has gold color, white face and red wings. Garuda holds important role and serves as national symbol of Republic of Indonesia, Garuda Pancasila.

Table 4. Specifications of Candi Prambanan Complex with main 16 Temples

Monument size of Shiva temple (the biggest one)	34x34x47 m
Monument size of Brahma temple	20x20x33 m
Monument size of Vishnu temple	20x20x33 m
Narrative reliefs (Ramayana and Kresnayana)	54 & 30 panels
Decorative reliefs (in 6 main temples)	135 panels
Size of each panel/relief (in Shiva temple)	187 x 94.5 cm
Total number of ruined Pervara temples in the outer area	224
Area in which these 240 temples are located	390x390 m

In one of the main pantheons rooms of Shiva temple, a magnificent stone statue represents Roro Jonggrang (Durga) carved image. The body posture of the Durga Mahesasura mardini is described as a slender beautiful goddess having one head and an urna (third eye) on her forehead. There are four right arms holding Cakra (symbolizing rotating earth), Khadga (or sword symbolizing the light of reasoning), a Bana (an arrow), and the tail of Mahisa (asura/demon). Four other left arms grasp 4 different magic weapons obtained from Hindu’s gods: Dhanus (a bow), Khetoka (a shield), axe, and sangka/trumpet. Durga is known with other names such as Narayani, Shiva’s wife, Vishnu Maya, Bhagavati, Saavarni, Ambika, Uma and Parvati.

Three other statues in Shiva temple are Mahadeva Shiva, Agastya (Mahaguru Shiva), and Ganesha statuette. Mahadeva Shiva statue facing eastwards was widely worshipped and exalted by ancient Javanese people and known as the god of destroyer with four arms carrying flower bud, camara (brush), and aksamala (rosary). Agastya figure facing southwards represents a great teacher/guru and illustrated with swollen belly, mustache, and beard with 2 arms. The sculpture of Ganesha (the son of God Shiva and goddess Durga) is depicted as half animal-being with an elephant head and four arms gripping a bowl and an aksamala. Also known as Ganapati, Lambodara and Shurpakarna, facing westwards Ganesha is worshipped as God of science.

Resembling sculptures in Borobudur and in other religious temples in South India (Gutiérrez, 2018), Prambanan temple complex also holds valuable stone panels of relief describing the story of Ramayana and Krishnayana of Hindu religion. The bas-relief panels of Ramayana story start from east entrance of Shiva temple, turning left, and moving around the gallery in clockwise (pradaksina) direction and continuing to Brahma temple in the same direction. On the balustrades of Vishnu temple, 30 bas-relief panels depict Krishnayana, the story of lord Krishna (Table 5).

Table 5. Narrative and Decorative Reliefs in Prambanan Temples

<i>Reliefs Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i># of panels</i>
Narrative Ramayana reliefs	Shiva temple, balustrade &	24 panels
	Brahma temple, balustrade	30 panels
Narrative Krishnayana reliefs	Vishnu temple, balustrade	30 panels
Decorative reliefs	Shiva, Brahma & Vishnu temples	32, 23 & 23
	Nandi, Garuda & Angsa temples	19 each

The epic of Ramayana (von Wyss-Giacosa, 2018) illustrates how Sita, the wife of Prince Rama is abducted by demon Ravana. Sita (Sintha in local dialect) is abducted and held captive in an island of Alengkadiraja as Ravana tries to persuade her to marry him. Rama assembles army of allies comprising of monkeys under the brave monkey king Hanuman. They attack the ten-headed Ravana king (also known as Dasamuka) and his army, including his younger brother, Kumbakarna; and after a fierce battle, Rama succeeds in killing them and freeing Sita. But then, Rama assumes Sita was no longer in her purity and she was burned and left in the forest, and still alive until finally she gave birth to twin boys (Kusa and Lawa). As the end of 54 series panels, the last relief shows recognition of Kusa and Lawa by king Rama and nominated them as his successors.

The Krishnayana story is illustrated along 30 panels of balustrade reliefs of Vishnu temple. It is about Krishna and Balarama, the sons of King Vasudeva in Dvaraka kingdom who fight against powerful evil ruler from Mathura, named Khamsa. He is in fact the brother of their own mother (Devaki) who frightened that someday one of his sister's sons will kill him, so that he tried to slaughter every new born child of Devaki. As survivors, Krishna & Balarama then killed Khamsa and liberated their parents from prison, and reinstated Ugrasena as King of Mathura. In the last panel # 30, relief of Krishna, Balarama and Mucukunda depicted the royal scenery in the Palace (Moertjipto & Prasetya, 1997).

4. Borobudur and Prambanan Temples - Symbol of Religious Harmony

Prambanan temples and its vicinity are very rich of archeological remains that are regarded as religious centers inside an ancient Kingdom with well-supported religious harmony. This Hinduism shrine complex was built side by side with many Buddhist temples nearby strongly indicate that cultural and religious tolerance among people and followers for both religions can be observed from their geographical site locations and from its philosophical point of view. Looking at its structural architecture,

Prambanan that was built during Rakai Pikatan rule for Hinduism consists of Hindu reliefs and statues inside the temple. Alike most Hindu temple's structure found in India it has the topmost part containing lingga structure. But this temple surprisingly used stupa-like shape for its summit that characterizes for Buddhist architecture.

Rakai Pikatan King from Sanjaya dynasty adopted Hinduism and wanted to expand his ancient Mataram Kingdom in central Java region. But to seize power peacefully from King Balaputra Dewa (from Buddhist Shailendra dynasty who still ruled in the northern parts of central Java) he did not have enough power and influence. To achieve his proposed plan Rakai Pikatan married to Balaputra king's sister, Dyah Pramudha Wardhani. The intermix marriage between Hinduism King and Buddhist princess also signified religious tolerance and it was symbolized by the blend of Hinduism architecture of Prambanan temple with Buddhist stupa on top of its monument structure.

From geographical stand point, assimilation and tolerance between Hindu's and Buddhist followers was supported by the evidence that there are many Buddhist temples built around Candi Prambanan which were constructed at around the same era, such as Candi Sewu (only few hundred meters away), Candi Bura, Candi Lumbung (about 400 meters to the north), Candi Kalasan, Candi Plaosan, and Candi Sari (in the radius between 1 to 3 km). It is interesting to show here that Hindu's Prambanan shrine was built in the middle of Buddhist temples (Table 6).

Table 6. Hindu and Buddhist Temples in Central Java Region

<i>Hindu's temples</i>	<i>Buddhist temples</i>
Candi Prambanan complex & Candi Barong, Gebang, Ijo, Kedulan, Sambisari, Ratuboko temples (all are at 3 km radius from main Prambanan temple).	Candi Bura, Banyunibo, Dawangsari, Kalasan, Lumbung, Plaosan, Candi Sari, Candi Sewu, and Candi Sojiwan (around 3 km radius of Hinduism Candi Prambanan).
Candi Arjuna, Candi Bima, Candi Gatotkaca and others in the Dieng plateau about 80 km on the north side.	Candi Borobudur & Candi Mendut & Candi Pawon (2 km east of Borobudur)

From other philosophical side, Prambanan temple depicts a mixture between Hindu doctrine and Buddhist principle. Prambanan temple is basically Hindu temple with famous statues of Shiva, Brahma, Vishnu, and Durga. However, its Krishnayana narrative reliefs cited Buddha as one of Hindu's principles in which, Krishna as reincarnation of Vishnu God come to earth in 10 different avatars (Dashavatara), namely: 1. Matsya (fish), 2. Kurma (turtle), 3. Varaha (swine), 4. Narasimha (human with lion head), 5. Vamana (dwarf), 6. Parashurama (Rama with an axe), 7. Rama (Rama in Ramayana narrative story), 8. Krishna (main character in Mahabharata epic story), 9. Gautama Buddha (Buddhist great teacher and founder), 10. and Kalki (avatar that will appear in the future). Similar Buddhist text in Borobudur temple also mentioned that in Jataka story Hinduism Rama is viewed as previous incarnation of Buddha.

All this evidence draws an image that Javanese people in the past were already in religious plurality, and the acculturation between different cultures met and occurred at the same time and place. There was no serious recorded conflict among Hinduism and Buddhist believers, and societal tolerance and wisdom was built to make the conflicts lesser by creating a religious harmony in their cultures. The cultural blends also happened when Moslem came to Java islands in early 14th century. On the inside mosque building built around 1480s in Kudus town there are many wall decoration and carved stone of animal figures and flowers which is not of any Moslem practice elsewhere for which represents religious harmony between Moslem and Hinduism. This religious and cultural harmony remain and being practiced by all Javanese

and Indonesian people from this time on until today and eventually to the future (Permana, Ormandy & Ahmed, 2019).

5. Conclusion

Borobudur and Prambanan temples are magnificent ancient temples built at around the same era of 8th century that hold valuable relief and carved manuscripts for Buddhist and Hindu followers. Both temples are considered and used as Buddhist and Hinduism pilgrimage center for almost one hundred years of their existence. With the fall of old Mataram kingdom around 930 CE, this religious and cultural life was forgotten for almost 1 millennium, due to Mount Merapi volcanic eruption and the kingdom was moved to east part of Java. After rediscovered in the 19th century, renovation of both temples was done from its ruined condition, and now they become major tourist destination for local Indonesian people and foreign visitors. Nowadays they are used as source of Indonesian history and regarded as symbol of peace and religious harmony of people in a country of majority Muslim citizens.

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