

# ŚIVAGRHA (PRAMBANAN TEMPLE) AS AN ARCHETYPE OF HINDU THEOLOGY IN NUSANTARA (AN ENDEAVOR TO DISCOVER HINDU THEOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE THROUGH ANCIENT TEMPLE HERITAGE)

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Paper received: 10 March 2020  
Paper revised: 3 – 13 June 2020  
Paper approved: 2 July 2020

## ABSTRACT

*Many scholars believe that the Hindu community in Nusantara worship Trimūrti (Brahmā, Visnu, and Śiva) equally. This opinion is shared among the experts. However, it is not prevalent within Hinduism. Hence, it contradicts the concept of Ista Devata (the glorification of one Devata among the others). This qualitative study examines Prambanan Temple as an Archetype of Hindu Theology in Nusantara. This study focusses on the structure of the Prambanan temple complex, which related to the concept of Hindu Nusantara Theology, the depiction of Hindu Nusantara Theology, and the special meaning of Prambanan Temple. Data analysis was carried out using an Ethnographic Content Analysis (ECA). This study concludes that Prambanan Temple is convincing as an Archetype of Hindu Theology, in two typologies. The typology of Nirguna Brahman lies in the concept where Prambanan is a place to worship Parabrahman, The Absolute, The Supreme God. Meanwhile, the typology of Saguna Brahman lies in the concept where Prambanan is a Śivagrha, The House of Lord Śiva, a place to worship Śiva as the Highest Gods. This typology of Saguna Brahman is the base of Śivaistik Theology. Prambanan temple construction uses the Vāstupurusamandala pattern, which made it as the grandest temple in Nusantara. Even though Śivagrha is popular as a temple complex to worship Tri Murti as equals, the fact which lies in temple structures as well as in the manuscript (prasasti) proves that it has a Śivaistik Concept, where Śiva is worshiped as the highest Devata (Parabrahman).*

**Keywords:** Prambanan, Hindu temple, archetype, Hindu theology, Vāstupurusamandala

## INTRODUCTION

The discourse of Hindu Nusantara Theology in Indonesia should be accepted by constructing as well as identifying its concepts and thoughts so that it grows into an established knowledge. Likewise, scientific research must be carried out to appoint a theological archetype. The discourse of Hindu Nusantara theology will not develop without the emergence of new thoughts resulted from discussed materials originating both from the study of texts and also various relics of Hindu masterpieces in Nusantara. In this article, the term Nusantara is used to describe an archipelago

that stretches from Sumatra to Papua, which is now largely part of Indonesia. The word was first recorded in Central Javanese literature (12<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> century), under the reign of Majapahit (van der Kroef 1951:170). This article strengthens the position of Hindu Nusantara theological discourse by presenting theological concepts and thoughts of around the 8<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> Century, which depicted in Prambanan Temple structures.

Theology is often acknowledged as the essence or strength of religion. Pereira (2010: 6) says that Hindu theology is the culmination of the world's most ancient and varied intellectual

because it originates from Indian philosophy, which is currently very popular in the West. It has appeared in the second millennium B.C., evolved around the seventh century, and crystallized between the seventh century to the seventeenth century B.C., which came to be called The Millennium Century of Hindu Theology. Then, why do Westerners understand that this Hindu writing existed long before this Millennium? Partly because the discourse that later appeared seemed more accessible than before, and it is written in Sanskrit, which was much more comfortable. Moreover, partly because the earlier translator was not very clear with the origin of this theology. Many works from the second half of Millennium have been ignored - especially at a time when Hindu theology is developing.

Meanwhile, Shastri (1963: 7) revealed that since 300 BC in the reign of the Mauryan dynasty, Indian sailors had often cruised the seas around the islands and countries in Southeast Asia. Kautilya, *Mahamantri* (Prime Minister) of Maurya Kingdom, reported in his book, *Arthashastra*, about the countries located in the Northeast of Bengal. It is said that Swarna Dwipa, Kudiaka Dwipa, and other countries are famous for their rare goods such as sandalwood, spices, and other raw materials. Indian maritime activities have been supporting the contact between India and the islands of Southeast Asia. Various Hindu and Buddhist kingdoms in Southeast Asia, including Nusantara, bequeath magnificent buildings in the form of palaces and temples. These heritages showed the greatness of the old civilization. *Śivagrha*, which then more popular as Prambanan Temple, is one of those magnificent heritages. Several studies have been completed mainly on the archeological aspects of this temple complex—however, only a few of them, which is related to Hindu theology.

A masterpiece often saves messages for future generations. The notion of Prambanan Temple was built as an archetype in Hindu Nusantara Theology can be seen through its name, structure, as well as the concept of worship. Therefore, this article contributes to explaining the past

theological concepts, which eternalized through the masterpiece of the great shrine.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The terminology of 'theology' has been used by the Greeks to explain the knowledge of God. In Hinduism, it can be paired with *Brahmavidya*, which was formulated during the life of *Maharsi Vyasa*, who lived in the *Mahabharata* Era, as stated by Ramanuja (Vireśvarānanda 2002: 6). Thus *Brahma-vidya* (theology) in Hinduism existed 5000 years ago. In line with the coronation of Parikesit, Arjuna's grandson, as the king of Hastina Pura, which occurred on February 18, 3102 BC (Titib 1996: 7). *Maharsi Vyasa* is not only the compiler of the *Brahma Sutra* but also the *Brahma Vidya*. Therefore, *Brahmavidya* (Theology) in Hinduism is 5,109 years old.

Nusantara, as outlined by Vlekke in his book, *Nusantara: Sejarah Indonesia*, is a name introduced by Ki Hadjar Dewantara (1889-1959), the national figure who founded Taman Siswa (Vlekke 2008: 17). The word Nusantara itself referred to a particular period of time when Majapahit controlled Indonesia, especially in the reign of *Mahapatih Gajah Mada*. Majapahit was a model of the unitary state in the past. The author selects Nusantara word to refer to a specific ancient period, wherein the archipelago stands a triumphed Hindu empire. The emporium implanted the Hindu theology concept, which was adaptive and adapted to people's minds at that period. So, the Hindu Theology of Nusantara refers to the Hindu Theology that has developed in Nusantara. This Theology is alleged to have undergone some modification and diffusion. Therefore, it is strongly suspected of having experienced an adjustment in the Southeast Asian region.

Donder (2015: 33) stated that, in general, Hinduism, has two types of theology. Firstly, *Nirguna Brahman* Theology, which is a theology that talks about God that cannot be equated with anything, a God without form. This theology can only be understood by people who have

established spiritual knowledge such as *rsi*, yogis, or Sufis. The second typology is *Saguna Brahman*, a theology that is suitable for humanity in general. This theology allows humans to imagine the Unimaginable God. The *Saguna Brahman* Theological Concept is the basis for the emergence of the concept of God's manifestations and religious symbols to help humans overcome their difficulties in imagining God.

Prambanan Temple is a common name used for the largest Hindu temple complex in Indonesia, located in Prambanan Village, Bokoharjo District, Sleman Regency, and partly entered the Klaten area. Together with the famous Borobudur Temple, this temple complex is the pinnacle of Javanese-Hindu-Buddhist art. Both of these relics, bear witness to the majesty of the past of Central Java. It is referred to as the 'classical period,' i.e., a period of approximately between 775-900 AD (Jordaan 2009: 3). This temple has an essential role as a religious center, center for spiritual learning, and theological depiction through temple construction.

The book "*Memuji Prambanan: Bunga Rampai Para Cendekiawan Belanda tentang Kompleks Percandian Loro Jonggrang*" the work of several researchers such as Roy Jordaan, J.W. IJzerman, J.Ph. Vogel, N.J. Krom, F.D.K. Bosch, B. de Haan, W.F. Stutterheim, V.R. van Romondt, and A.J. Bernet Kempers, is often used as a reference in studies of Prambanan. The researchers elaborate on the naming of Prambanan, the myths that preceded it, the cigars, the Prambanan statues, their reliefs to the restoration. This paper confirms the hypothesis that Prambanan was thought, designed, and built as a 'holy water sanctuary.' It was concluded at the end of the article that architecturally, Prambanan Temple is as amazing as Borobudur Temple (Jordaan 2009). Although this work is classified as comprehensive, there is no explicit discussion of the theological aspects. However, various reviews of the statue, the height of the temple building, the layout of the statue and the temple are very helpful in constructing Hindu theology in the Prambanan temple.

The book "Magical Prambanan" described Religion: a Hinduism, as reflected at Prambanan, written by Thomas M. Hunter and discussion of Cult Statues by V. Degroot. Both assert that Prambanan is a Hindu temple with the worship of each God. Also, about statues that are worshiped in the vast complex of Prambanan (Nuryanti 2013: 33-35). But the article does not discuss intensely on the aspects of Hindu theology. It only explains the existence of a God who inhabits each niche yet does not touch much on the theological discussion. Therefore, this paper helps to understand, more naturally, the concepts of worship and theological typology as hidden knowledge of the Prambanan temple complex, which requires further explanation.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

### The Concept of Building a Complex of Worship in Hinduism

The construction of temples or worship complexes in the Hindu tradition applies the concepts contained in the ancient treatise of *Vāstu* and *Śilpa Śāstra*. Acharya (1996: 97), in the summary of the *Mānasāra* text, stated that the first *mantra* is a prayer for Brahma, the creator of the universe. The second mantra is an indication that the architecture (*Vāstu Śāstra*) descends from *Śiva*, *Brahma*, and *Viṣṇu* through *Indra*, *Brhaspati*, and *Nārada* to *Ṛṣi Mānasāra* who systematized it. Therefore, architecture is an essential knowledge in Hindu civilization, which is developed in many places following the development of Hinduism itself.

*Vāstu Śāstra* is an Indian architecture that dated back in the time of Vedas (1500-1000 BC). The first proof of the text was found in the Rig Veda, where the guardian of the secret ordinance (*Vastospati*) was mentioned in (Rigveda VII. 54. 1). Acharya, in his book, Hindu Architecture in India and Abroad (1996), stated that Vedic Architecture is a knowledge of a very systematic building that originated in the Vedas and developed in *Brāhmaṇa* and *Sūtra*. It was said that Hindu architecture, which developed over



several periods of time, had fascinating structural details based on reliable scientific principles, which became the main characteristic of Hindu architecture (Acharya 1996: 63).

*Vāstu Śāstra*, as applied science, was developed continuously over at least 2,500 years. It produced a large number of texts such as *Shashtra Kashyapa Shilpa*, *Brihat Samhita*, *Viswakarma Vāstu Śāstra*, *Samarangana Sutradhara*, *Vishu Dharmodhare*, *Purana Manjari*, *Mayamata*, *Aparajitapecha*, *Silparatna Vāstu Śāstra*, etc. Some sages, teachers, and preachers of *Vāstu Śāstra* are *Brahma*, *Narada*, *Brihaspati*, *Bhrigu*, *Vasistha*, *Vishwakarma*, *Maya*, *Kumara*, *Anirudha*, *Bhoja*, *Sukra* and others (Rao 1914: xi-xii).

Indian architecture has brought significant influence, especially to East Asia since the birth and spread of Buddhism. Several Indian architectural elements such as a *stupa*, *shikhara*, *pagoda* (Meru), *Torana* (gate) have become well-known symbols of Hindu and Buddhist architecture. It has been evolved and used in East and Southeast Asia. The example can be found in the temple buildings of Angkor Wat in Cambodia and Prambanan in Indonesia. Through the design of temples in Southeast Asia from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> Century, the Hindu architecture is known. At that time, several kingdoms were divided into regions to the North and South. These two Kingdom regions influence the characteristics of Hindu temples, often called the Dravidian Temple in South India and Nagara temple in North India. Besides, there are styles in the area of Bengal, Kashmir, and Kerala. Generally, the temples with the best designs that become icons of Hindu architecture were built in the South. Temple architecture in South India does not use the concept of temple architecture in North India, which was influenced by Persia, Rajasthan, and Jaina styles.

According to the original design, Prambanan is a temple complex that consisted of more than 250 temples, ranging from large and small constructions. The temples are placed in three

parts of the yard and separated by walls. The main yard is in the form of an elevated terrace, surrounded by a sturdy rectangular stone wall. This stone wall is still intact, although it does not have a decorated upper part that can be owned once. Three of the four gates that were built on a ladder structure remained only the ruins. This wall surrounds the whole complex and separates it from the surrounding area (Jordaan 1993: 77).

### **Vāstupuruṣamandala-Vedic Cosmology and Prambanan Temple Costruction**

The construction of a Hindu worship site closely follows the concept of *Vāstupuruṣamandala*, which is closely related to the construction patterns, Vedic cosmology, and Theology. Raddock (2011: 220) stated that the *Hayaśirṣa Pañcarātra* text placed the temple at the center of the universe through the concept of *vāstupuruṣamandala*. According to Taddock's interpretation, *Vāstupuruṣa-mandala* is both a ritual and a practical diagram.

Most of the temples in North India from the 7<sup>th</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup> Century are square-based structure. Furthermore, to connect walls and shrines, a constructive grid is used, which also has a ritual significance related to the ancient construction of the brick altar. The *mandala* acts like bridges between the Vedic altars and their layout, and the complex construction of Hindu temples, that can reach historical gaps in human understanding of temple architecture. The word *mandala* is a Sanskrit term that means "circle" or "discoid object." *Maṇḍala* is the generic name for any plan or chart which symbolically represents the cosmos. The Vedic altar may be considered as a *mandala* in its well-defined layout. In the *Pāñcarātra* tradition, *mandalas* play a prominent role: for meditation, as part of the initiation, and as a way of worship. *Pāñcarātra Saṃhitā* gives meaning not only to the problem but also the constituent parts. *Maṇḍala* is a constituent part of the Deity's body. Therefore, it is also connected to the principle (*tattvā*) that arises from primary matter (*prakṛti*), which also represents the universe (Kramrisch 1976).

The word *vāstu* is a Sanskrit terminology which refers to a place of residence, which has traditionally been numbered according to *śilpa śāstra*; earth or land (*bhūmi*), temple (*prāsāda*), conveyance (*yānam*) and couch (*śayanam*). *Vāstu* is a planned, building site, generally in the form of the square structure. *Vāstupuruṣamaṇḍala*, as a syntactic unit, consists of three words: *vāstu* (building site), *puruṣa* (human), and *maṇḍala* (closed plan or form, generally square). As suggested by Kramrisch, the syntactic unit shows the relationship between the layout of the temple and man, the genitive *tātpuruṣa* (*vāstupuruṣasya maṇḍalam*) - the *maṇḍala* of *Vāstupuruṣa* (Apte and Supekar 1983: 8).

Raddock (2011) stated that the purpose of *vāstupuruṣamaṇḍala* had been discussed by experts including Stella Kramrisch, in her monumental work, *The Hindu Temple*. These scholars identify that the destination of *vāstupuruṣamaṇḍala* varies from one to another. One function of *vāstupuruṣamaṇḍala* is to plan the temple. *Vāstupuruṣamaṇḍala* also functions as a symbol for the universe. All the Gods of guidance are placed in it. *Vāstupuruṣa-maṇḍala*, indeed, does have cosmic symbolism. Cosmic symbolism is represented in *Vāstupuruṣa*. At the same time, it was the seat of the *Devatas*. Various scholars and worshipers considered this temple as heaven on earth, as a palace for Gods, as representations of the universe, or as bodies of Gods. These ideas are not always mutually exclusive (Smythies 2006: 14).

An essential concept of building religious sites is to stabilize the World and invite *devatapāda* to *Vāstupuruṣamaṇḍala*. According to the *Hayaśirṣa Pañcarātra*, it is connected with the layout of the temple. But this is not the only purpose of *vāstupuruṣamaṇḍala* (Raddock 2011: 246). Thus, the initial concept of building a temple is an effort to stabilize the World and invite Devata to the *maṇḍala* created so that it is pleasing to provide welfare to humans.

Kramrisch (1976) stated that the *maṇḍala* also has a ritual function just like the *Vāstupuruṣa*

in the *Hayaśirṣa Pañcarātra*. However, this ritual function is almost forgotten. The Gods placed in each part of the *maṇḍala* is the focus of *devatapāda*. Thus, it is aimed to keep the earth stable and make it a suitable place for the construction of temples. The Gods who hold *Vāstupuruṣa* were assigned to specific areas in *vāstupuruṣamaṇḍala* and then worshiped there with various substances, especially food, *kuśa* (grass), and flowers. Following the story of *Vāstupuruṣa*, several devas, and other creatures, were summoned and given offerings in *Vāstupuruṣamaṇḍala* boxes. These deities, in several texts, are identified with God holding *Vāstupuruṣa* to the ground.

Raddock (2011) explains in many texts, such as the *Hayaśirṣa Pañcarātra* the relationship between the *Vāstupuruṣa* story and the *maṇḍala* is not explicit. The layout featuring a large center consisting of four squares seems more appropriate for a temple where one plans a central room proportionately more extensive than what is around it.

*Hayaśirṣa Pañcarātra* placed the deity, starting from the northwest corner, then on the east side, on the south side, along the west side and finished with the north side, coming full circle as it has returned to the beginning. The deities of the inner circle are placed following the same pattern, and finally, *Prajāpati* is placed at the center. This movement makes *pradakṣiṇa*, or pre-conduction starts with a favorable direction, past the most unfavorable trends first, and ends at a more convenient place (the same as where someone starts). The movement is a circular motion towards the inside.

Generally, there are two types of changes represented in the temple and *Vāstupuruṣamaṇḍala*. First, a movement by circling the temple and the *maṇḍala*. Second, the move from outside to inside. In the *Pañcarātra* context, to go into a holy place in a temple or to enter a *maṇḍala*, one must be initiated. Thus, one can see the order on how to place *devatapāda* as a trajectory reflex, a travel pattern, or a pattern

of traffic through space. There are several other movements connected with this in the building process. Sometimes, the pattern of movement changes when the *pradakṣiṇa* path is equipped with a wall. The limited space will indicate that the movement will change. Maybe a limited area will also suggest that not everything is accepted. Most of the deities described in *vāstupuruṣamaṇḍala* are Gods in the direction of the compass. The *Hayaśīrṣa Pañcarātra* has arranged 44 *pāda* devatas to be placed in *vāstupādamaṇḍala*. The majority of these are connected by path and stars—important directions for rituals and temple construction. Every instruction is connected with God (Kramrisch 1976); (Michell 1988).

Generally, temples in Indonesia do prepare space for *pradakṣiṇa*. It could be seen from the pattern and structure of buildings. Moreover, large temples such as Prambanan, Borobudur, Plaosan, and Ceto have outstanding concepts of *vāstupuruṣa-maṇḍala*, where the ritual space around the temple is apparent. Likewise, in Prambanan, the Temples of *Śiva*, *Viṣṇu*, and *Brahma* have space in the main chamber to do *pradakṣiṇa*.

Based on data from the Prambanan museum, the Prambanan temple was designed with a complex pattern built on three *maṇḍalas*, namely *Bhur*, *Bvāh*, and *Svāh*, in the Hindu concept representing the lower, middle and upper realms (*devaloka*). The three levels of the temple zone begin with *bhurloka*, which is the lowest level, describing the human realm, which is bound by passion, passion, and sensual. The second zone of *Bvāhloka* is a place for saints, *rsi*, and ascetics to pray prayers. In this zone, there are 224 ancillary temples. Entering this realm, humans begin to see the light of truth. The highest zone is called *Svarloka* or *Svargaloka*, which is the highest and holiest realm, where *Devatas* are residing.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This article employs a qualitative study approach that gives attention to a depth dimension. The data collection techniques

include interviews, field observations, the study of documentation, Focus Group Discussion, as well as literature studies. The process of collecting data was carried out systematically; the main activity of the researcher was reading and recording information contained in the data. Phasing of this research was carried out according to the empirical cycle of Wallace (1990), as Wallace's empirical cycle describes the relationship of components in social research is a clear and detailed procedure. It is also directly relevant for other empirical researchers who aim to conduct some testing, comparison, as well as logical integration so that research objectives can be achieved effectively (Wallace 1990: 48-49).

This research starts with the problem. It then looks for the proper theory that can be utilized in this study—through logical deduction in order to draw a hypothesis. This investigation started with a hypothesis, then followed by making observations. The results of the observation were then used to make generalizations to find correlations, which leads to the rest of the research direction.

Data analysis was carried out according to the pattern of content analysis Ethnographic Content Analysis (ECA). It is a combination of objective content analysis with participant observation. The ECA has allowed the researcher to interact with documentation material or even conducting in-depth interviews so that specific statements can be put in the right context for analysis. This study utilizes a theological approach with specific theories, namely, Deterministic Theological Theory and deconstruction theory. These two theories significantly contributed to the understanding of the structure of Hindu Nusantara Theology.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### The Concept of Hindu Nusantara Theology in Prambanan Temple

The history of classical Indonesian art, which extends from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, was marked by several relics called temples.



The word "*candi*" or temple comes from the word *candikagrha*, which means 'house for the Goddess Candika or goddess of death' (Soeroso et al. 1985: 10). From that understanding, one interprets *candi* as burial buildings (Stutterheim 1931: 1-15). However, another further research completed by (Soekmono 1995: 11) concludes that *candi* is not a burial building. It is a temple. The existence of temples in Indonesia has a long history related to the emergence and glory of Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms, which are marked by historical relics, such as temple, which located in various regions.

Helfritz (1979: 111) emphasized that according to a 9<sup>th</sup> A.D. text, the name "Prambanan" comes from a village named *Parawan*, where the inhabitants are assigned to take care of the temple. In return, the local authorities free the hamlet from levies tax. In terms of language, this explanation is hard to believe because the Javanese word *parawan* only means 'girl' or 'daughter.' While a Javanese study expert, C.F. Winter (1839), as cited in Jordaan (2009: 12), used the word Prambanan through the words *Parambanan* and *Poerambanan*, from the name (*H*) *empu rombo*. It means "*Rombo* the blacksmith." In ancient times, a blacksmith was an essential figure in a village. However, Winter did not discuss a relationship that might just be a coincidence between such a blacksmith and the temple. He did not consider the possibility of other hamlets named Prambanan if the etymology was correct.

According to Brumund (1853: 52), the word *hempu* is interpreted as "Javanese Volcano" and is related to Mount Merapi. However, the meaning links with the temple complex are also not discussed here. There is another possibility, which Helfritz mentioned, that is, the origin of the name comes from the word *brahmin*, which was subsequently changed to *brambanan* and then to *Prambanan*. This explanation was preferred by most British and Dutch scholars from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Mackenzie (1814) wrote about the temples of "*Brambana*," while Crawford (1855:67

in Jordaan 2009: 12) rated the name Prambanan as "euphonic punching [a combination of sounds that were considered pleasant to hear] on the word *Brambanân*, which means "*the abode of the Brahmins*." This explanation by Jordaan considered very doubtfully because, although there are *brahmins* who ever visited the *Śiva* temple, the translation "*the abode of the Brahmins*" suggesting that the enshrinement of Prambanan is a *brahmin*, in a narrow sense. Jordaan argues the Sanskrit word "*parambrahma* (n)," which means "Spirit of the World," "The Absolute," and refers to a public place of worship, which may be used by both the *Śiva* and the Buddhists, which includes *Loro Jonggrang* Temple and *Sewu* Temple (Jordaan 2009: 12). This opinion is closer to the context and concept of Hindu theology, where the supreme God is called *Parabrahman*. The word Sankerta *para* (पर) means far, the highest (Surada 2007: 198). *Brahman* (ब्रह्मन्) means the most elevated soul, hymns, Vedic sacred books, *brahmins*, penance, holiness, ultimate happiness, theology/ science of divinity, creator, *brahmin*, sun (Surada 2007: 239). So that *Parabrahman*, can be interpreted as the highest *Brahman*, the connotative meaning can also be interpreted as the highest temple, the final temple associated with the status of this temple in Nusantara. It can also be interpreted as the main temple of Hindu worship, penance, and achieving ultimate happiness.

On the other hand, in Thomas Raffles' famous book, *History of Java* (2019), a copy of a sketch made by J. Mitran was found about ruined rubble, which we now know as the *Śiva's* bathing complex in Prambanan. The title of the sketch reads "the main temple in *Jonggrangan*." In this *Jonggrangan* name, we can get to know another local name that is more popular for the temple complex, namely *Loro Jonggrang*, which means 'Slender Girl,' referring to the statue of *Durgā* which is located in the North chamber of the main temple (Raffles 2019).

Therefore, to profoundly understand the existence of the Prambanan temple and its

Godhead concept, data from the inscription are required. Several inscriptions found around Prambanan can be used as a further study material. Soeroso et al. (1985: 13) states to know the historical background that occurred in the area around Prambanan in the 9<sup>th</sup> Century, the data contained in the inscription are necessary. The inscriptions found in the area around Prambanan and date from around the 9<sup>th</sup> Century include:

1. Śivagrha Inscription (A.D. 856),
2. Ratu Boko Inscription (A.D. 856),
3. Wukiran Inscription or Pereng Inscription (A.D. 863),
4. Inscription in Candi Plaosan Lor (without pointing the year), and
5. Wuatan Tija Inscription (A.D. 880).

Of these inscriptions, the most commonly referred to is the *Śivagrha* inscription. Soeroso et al. (1985: 14) stated that *Śivagrha* inscription was issued on the 11<sup>th</sup> *Suklapaksa* in *Margasira* in 778 *Saka* or November 12, 856. Therefore, that date was thought to be the inauguration of the temple project (Nuryanti et al 2013: 20). This inscription is written in Old Javanese letter and language, with poetic form.

*Śivagrha* inscription informs change of government, from Jatiningrat to Dyah Lokapala, who was ordained in the Medang Palace in Mamratipura. He was appointed as king because he had contributed to the war victory and managed to save the kingdom from enemy attacks. Dyah Lokapala was identified with Rakai Kayuwangi Pu Lokapala. He was the youngest son of Jatiningrat or Rakai Pikatan. This has been identified from the word *valaputra* in verse seven, which means "youngest king's son."

Many further inscriptions confirm that the original name of the magnificent temple complex in Sanskrit is *Śivagrha* (House of *Śiva*) or *Śivalaya* (*Śiva* Realm), based on the *Śivagrha* inscription is dated 778 *Saka* (856 AD). This inscription is still in good condition at the National Museum

of Indonesia even though there are some worn parts, as shown in figure 1:

**Figure 1**  
Prasasti *Śivagrha* in National Museum



Source: Nasional Museum Indonesia (Nuryanti et al 2013: 21)

The development of theological concepts reflects in several aspects, such as ritual forms, text contents, manuscripts, and even architecture. Explaining theology of the Hindu Nusantara requires the study of many elements such as the existence of manuscripts, inscriptions, texts, and temple structures that will be directly related to the theological concepts. In general, Prambanan Temple is understood as a Hindu sacred building complex dedicated to the *Tri Murti*, the three Deities in Hinduism, who are associated with Cosmology in the form of creation, preservation, and demolition, which are called *Brahma*, *Viṣṇu*, and *Śiva*. *Śiva* is also known by other names such as *Mahesvara* and *Mahadeva*. The worship of *Tri Murti* is indeed seen from the three main temple buildings dedicated to the three Gods.

However, the *Tri Murti* worship degree by the believers here does not equal among the Three Gods as, yet, it placed *Śiva* as the highest *Devata*. Interestingly, the Prambanan theological concept is not rigid in one Hindu typology between *Nirguna Brahman* or *Saguna Brahman*. From the structure of the Prambanan temple, the *Saguna Brahman* concept can be seen from *Sivaistik*, namely *Śiva*, as the highest



peak of consciousness. But, it does not stop there; there is a more important concept, as an effort to surpass the *Saguna Brahman* typology. Namely by worshiping the supreme *Parabrahman-Brahman* without form. Where *Brahman* can be worshiped through a great taste, which can be experienced as a spiritual ecstasy that occurs when entering this temple area, Prambanan guides worshipers to come into the region of the highest typology, *Nirguna Brahman*.

Some evidence can be presented that Prambanan is a Hindu Nusantara Theological Archetype. The name of this temple complex, refers to the word *Para-Brahman*, as previously described as the Supreme *Brahman*, this temple is dedicated as the main temple in the *Brahman* worship. Besides, this temple was designed using a unique *maṇḍala* with *Vāstupuruṣamaṇḍala*, a complete and extensive design, built-in three main *maṇḍalas* that can be given meaning. The original name of this complex, *Śivagrha*, indicates the tenet adopted during the construction of this temple, the *Śivaistic* theology, which was later translated in the building complex of worship, also utilizing the existence of other *devatas* to unite and attract worshipers. This is a characteristic of Hindu theology that unites, embraces, nurtures other forms of worship, and *Ista Devata*, for the sake of attaining glory.

### **Śivaistik Concept in Prambanan Temple**

In order to express the concept of religiosity of time, it is necessary to explore who the ruler is and what their religious orientation is. For this reason, the author quotes the opinion of (Muljana 2006: 182), which reveals that from the Canggal Inscription, written in Sanskrit, dating to *Saka* 654 or in A.D. 732, King Sanjaya adheres to the concept of *Śiva*.

From the Canggal charter, it is evident that King Sanjaya embraced the religion of *Śiva* and oriented it to South India. The name *Kunjara* or *Kunjaradari*, in South India, is famous as the Sages Agastya. *Kunjaradari* is the center of *Śiva's* Religion. The ancestors of King Sanjaya indeed came from South India. Specifically, from a place called

*Kunjaradari*. The reference of Sanjaya's name on the *Balitung* inscription proved to match reality. Sanjaya's name was indeed found on the Canggal inscription. Sanjaya was considered as the first King in Mataram and referred to as Rakai Mataram. While the Canggal inscription issued by Raja Sanjaya himself stated that before Raja Sanjaya, Central Java was ruled by his father named Raja Sanna (Muljana 2006).

Muljana's opinion is seen as a common thread between *Śiva* and *Rsi Agastya*. In Nusantara, the description of *Rsi Agastya* in the form of the sculpture and folklore is commonly found in various places. Tracing the concept of *Śivaistik* in Hindu texts, *Śiva* is worshiped and glorified as the highest essence. At Prambanan Temple, this concept is clearly seen with the depiction of buildings and statues found in the temple's chamber.

The discovery of *Śiva Mahādeva* statue in the central chamber of the main temple, which took place during an attempt of excavation by (Ijzerman 1887), provides evidence that this temple was indeed built as the House of *Śiva*, as is the language of its inscriptions. Also, the physical resemblance to Buddhist temples shows mutual tolerance and about living in harmony between Buddhism and *Śivaism* in ancient Java. For some reason, he even spoke of "*Buddhisme yang merosot dan Śaivismisme yang penuh semangat*" (Ijzerman 1887: 271, 1891: 55).

Living side by side in harmony between the two religions was the attribution of the developments in Ancient Java from what is called the *Śiva-Buddha* cult, a syncretic phenomenon that was previously demonstrated by Crawford. (Jordaan 2009: 36) said that later researchers, such as M. Tonnet (1908) and G.P. Rouffaer (1918), have referred to this relation. It associated Loro Jonggrang with the emergence of the cult of *Śiva-Buddha*, which was assumed to have evolved in East Java, around A.D. 920-1500, the construction of the temple complex was dated in the 10<sup>th</sup> Century, at the end of Central Java.

The Prambanan Temple was first built around the A.D. 850 by Rakai Pikatan and was

continuously refined and expanded by Raja Lokapala and Raja Balitung Maha Sambu. Based on the *Śivagrha* inscription dating to A.D. 856, this sacred building was built to glorify the God *Śiva*. The original name of this building in Sanskrit is *Śivagrha* (Sanskrit: *Shiva-grha* which means the House of *Śiva*) or *Śivalaya* (Sanskrit *Shiva-laya* meaning Sanskrit or *Śiva* Realm). Several inscriptions explain the influence and glorification of Lord *Śiva* in the period adjacent to the construction of Prambanan. The existence of this inscription helped to give an idea of how theological concepts were adopted at that time.

Inside the temple chamber of *Śiva*, it is also found other statues, namely *Agastya*, *Gaṇeśa*, and *Durgā*. Krom, in his writings, the Prambanan statues in detail, describes the type and position of the statues in the chambers of the main temple. In his description of the temple of *Śiva* Temple, (Krom 2009: 200-201) writes:

To the West, *Gaṇeśa* is sitting on a throne. The God is shown in his usual outward appearance, which can be found thousands of times everywhere on Java: with a skull and a crescent moon as his headdress, a caste belt in the form of a snake, and he has four arms. In his left front hand, he held a small food plate with the tip of his trunk, in his right hand the front hand was grasped with broken ivory; in his left hand in his back there is an ax, and his right hand in his back, he holds a string of *akṣamālā* (rosary) in a slightly elevated position.

Following the concept of Hindu theology, *Gaṇeśa* is the First God worshiped as a god who destroys all obstacles and obstacles and confers *Sidhi* and *Budhi*. In addition, *Gaṇeśa* was the earliest deity worshiped before worshiping *Śiva*, who was his father. *Gaṇeśa* as a destroyer of obstacles and barriers.

Beside the *Gaṇeśa* chamber, there is another chamber with the statue *Agastya* which is also known as *Bhaṭṭāra-Guru*. The teacher's role is indeed pivotal in achieving enlightenment and awareness within Hinduism. Therefore,

teacher worship is a prevalent tradition because the teacher is considered as a guide to attain consciousness. The teacher is seen as a means of learning divinity and achieving supreme awareness. *Agastya*, in various texts, is known as *Bhaṭṭāra-Guru*. *Agastya Parwa* (Sura et al., 2002: 111) stated that *Bhagawan Agastya* is famous in Sanskrit literature as a *Bhagawan* who spread Hinduism to South India to Nusantara. He was a wandering *Bhagawan* who didn't return to India. So, according to *Agastya Parwa*, *Bhagawan Agastya* was not merely a fictitious figure but was considered a guiding master who was even in one room with *Śiva*'s family.

The northern chamber, which is dedicated to *Durgā*, is *Loro Jonggrang* in Javanese tradition. The statue of the goddess was undoubtedly completed beautifully, which was once again equipped with a backrest and halos. It depicts *Mahīśāsurmardīnī* wearing a luxurious outfit standing on a buffalo that turns to the left of it. This goddess has eight arms, and in her right hand in the front, she holds the animal's tail. In contrast, with her left hand, she grabs *Asura*'s hair with a club in her hand, a necklace with a skull hanging around her neck and a striking ornament consisting of ribbon pockets sticking out from their waist-standing on the beast. On the other hand, the right, the goddess holds an arrow, a sword, and a chakra, while on the left, there are a bowl, shield, and winged shells. The statue is relatively intact; only the nose was damaged. The shape of the backrest is completed with flames and *Makara*. It can be scanned instantly, even though quite a lot of the mat has been lost. When the statue was placed in front of it, most of the *Makara* and fire tongues fire were hidden back (Krom 1923 in Jordaan and Wessing 1996).

Shakti worship, as well as the aspect of feminism, is also found in Prambanan Temple. The worshiped aspect of *Durgā*, known by the local people as *Loro Jonggrang*, is related to a developing myth. The existence of this *Durgā* statue attracts the attention of researchers and photographers. This statue can also be traced to a picture that was allegedly taken in 1900.

**Figure 2**

The *Durgā Mahiṣāsūramardīnī* or Loro Jonggrang statue, before being returned into her cubicle on the north side of Śiva Temple. The picture was taken around A.D. 1900



Source: (Jordaan 2009: 16)

Figure 2 illustrated the *Durgā* completed with various weapons, which stands on the buffalo so that it is known as *Durgā Mahiṣāsūramardīnī*. In the colonial era, worship of *Durgā* was still prevalent around this temple complex. This can be traced from the writings of Ijzerman (1891), as quoted in Jordaan (2009: 50). It is stated that the *Durgā* Statue attracts tremendous attention from local residents, witnessed from the forms of offerings in the form of incense, rice, flowers, or money. This has made it quite common to find living goats nearby the site (Krom 2009: 444). By the assistance request, *Durgā* was nicknamed "Notre Dame de Bon Secours" from Prambanan by (Scheltema 1912: 90). So, *Durgā* is considered a Mother who is worshiped in Prambanan, and various requests are conveyed to Her.

Śiva became the center of worship and the center of the *maṇḍala* of the Prambanan temple complex. Śiva is believed to grant the highest freedom to his worshipers. It can be seen from the Main Temple, which is Śiva Temple, He was worshiped by Śiva's family, with *Agastya* as *Bhatara Guru* or *Śiva Guru*. *Agastya*, *Gaṇeśa*, and *Durga* help humans to attain the highest consciousness - Lord Śiva.

## The Concept of *Tri Murti* with *Siva* as The Pinnacle of Consciousness

Smythies (2006), in his thesis, concludes that iconography is complementing the temple architecture. Although there are Gods in the lead, a balance is reached between the Gods through several arrangements. It includes the arrangement of the shrine's location, the number, and placement of *vighrahas* in the temple. The choice of deity also reflects the *devasthanam* strategy to combine Hindu theological concepts to bind the community together. This is a preferred conservative style, which further develops strategies to provide a friendly atmosphere for temple visitors to attend worship together.

In the same spirit, despite placing Śiva as the highest *Devata*, Prambanan achieved its equilibrium by placing *Brahma* and *Viṣṇu* as *Devata*, who was worshiped in the process of cosmic balance. Likewise, the existence of other *Devatas* gives happiness and friendliness to temple visitors who may worship different *Devata*. However, it can still feel the pulse of worship in the Prambanan temple complex. This politically also remembers and unites the worshiper, so the goal of building a temple as a center of spiritual activity can be achieved.

Three conclusions can be drawn. First, the conservative choice of architecture complements the *Devasthanam*'s desire to adjust to the orthodoxy of the worship tradition of Śiva, which strictly refers to religious texts. Second, the great transformation that took place was a fusion of shrines and temples to make room for congregational worship in the temple. Third, while adherence to ancient traditions is essential, the transformation has been done by not dedicating the temple to one God. But to facilitate collaboration between the different groups that make up the temple community, which signifies the level of the Gods by building their temples all very similar architecture.

Regarding the worship of Śiva as the highest entity, according to Sivananda (2007: 39), Lord Śiva is pure, eternal, without attributes,



and transcendental awareness that permeates everything. He is an absolute impersonal *Brahman*. Titib (2003: 239) states that the word *Śiva* means one who gives good fortune (wellbeing), who is kind, friendly, forgiving, pleasing, giving a lot of hope, being calm, happy, and so on. His *Śakti Durgā* or *Pārvati* supports *Sang Hyang Śiva* in moving his law of omnipotence.

### Sacred Worship and Theological Concepts in Hindu Nusantara Theology

Hindu Nusantara theology, as depicted in the Prambanan Temple complex, does not drown women in the desert of masculinity. In Prambanan Temple, *Śiva* was worshiped as the highest aspect of worship concept. However, the worship of *Durgā* was also very important and, in fact, very popular. In the past, local people named the temple as Roro Jonggrang Temple, which is none, but *Durgā* itself. Likewise, researchers describe that in the past, the *Durgā* Statue was very attractive to devotees.

**Figure 3**

The figure of *Durgāmahisasuramardhini* in the Prambanan Museum. This statue is in damaged condition



Source: Author documentation, 2018

The *Durgāmahisasuramardhini* depicted in Prambanan is a *Śakti* or feminine aspect.

However, it is still filled with all the strength, including the triumphant element. It can be seen through its name, which means *Durgā*, who kill "Mahisa the Giant" with tremendous power. *Durgā* is depicted as the defeater of evil. Various Goddesses statues aside from *Durgā* can also be found around Prambanan, such as statues of Sri Devi and statues of Goddesses in Buddhist traditions.

The concept of Hindu Nusantara theology does not drown the worship of feminine aspects, the creative aspect, in the desert of the masculine theology. Behind its tenderness, the feminine aspects are designed as a force that can maintain and subdue evil power. Goddess's figure is not only worshiped in kindness but also strength, wealth, and wellbeing. The virtue and uniqueness of Hindu Nusantara theology lie precisely in this concept. This theological concept should influence the mindset of society that women must be placed in greatness. The woman is not just a marginal figure in the creation that can be treated disrespectfully.

In Hindu tradition, *Durgā* is the Goddess and the Mother of the universe. The worship of Goddess *Durgā* has been conducted for more than 4,000 years. In Hindu literature, from the Vedic era until now, the worship of Goddess *Durgā* takes an essential place (Titib 2003: 332). In Nusantara, worship of *Durgā* is common, as the worship of Universal Mother, who provides protection and compassion. The evidence of the worship of *Durgā* is found widely in various places, both in the form of statues or recorded in various ancient manuscripts.

In Buddhist traditions, worship of the goddess is also common. In Prambanan Museum, various Goddess Statues related to Buddhist worship traditions are also found, such as *Tara* and *Vajrapani*. The statue of *Tara*, as shown by figure 4, is displayed in the Prambanan Museum.

**Figure 4**

Statue of Goddess *Tara* at the Prambanan Museum



Source: Author Documentation, 2018

The Kalasan Temple is located in the Kalasan area, Central Java. This temple is also known as the Tara Temple because it is dedicated to Goddess *Tara*. In ancient Java, the *Bodhisattva Tara* was greatly worshiped in Kalasan Temple. This can be proved from the explanation in the Kalasan inscription.

**Figure 5**

Statue of Śrī Devi at the Prambanan Museum



Source: Author documentation, 2018

The worship of *Śrī Devi* or *Lakṣmī Devi* is also known in ancient Java. The *Śrī Devi* statue, which exhibited at the Prambanan Museum, is the evidence that the worship of the goddess aspect is a request for fertility and wellbeing. The people around Prambanan until now are familiar with the name *Śrī Devi*, which is related to agricultural and soil productivity. Titib (2003: 352-353) in *Devi Bhāgavata IX* States that *Maha Lakṣmī Devi* divided herself into two daughters who were equally beautiful, charming, sparkling, regal, wearing jewelry, and full of hospitality. One of the most beautiful daughters was *Lakṣmīdevī* and the other *Rādhādevī*, *Rādhā* then married *Śrī Kṛṣṇa* and took a position on the left, while on the right as *Viṣṇu* with four hands, marrying *Lakṣmīdevī*. In *Devi Bhāgavata*, *Śrī* is better known as *Śrī - Lakṣmī*, which is the *Śakti Viṣṇu*, first appeared when the stirring the sea of milk. *Śrī - Lakṣmī* carries a wealth of golds and gems, as well as *amṛta* water. The emergence of *Śrī - Lakṣmī* create excitement and awe in the attendance. *Śrī - Lakṣmī* becomes *Viṣṇu*'s companion, as the *Śakti* of *Viṣṇu*, *Lakṣmī* gives strength and ability. Without *Śrī - Lakṣmī*, *Viṣṇu* becomes weak and has no ability. As the *Śakti* of the guardian deity of the world, *Śrī - Lakṣmī* is known to be very loyal to her husband and Dharma. She was also well known as the goddess of fertility and prosperity. Generally, the worship ceremony for *Śrī - Lakṣmī* is carried out to get welfare, fertility (plants), crops, and abundant wealth. Her worshipers were mostly traders, farmers, and agrarian societies in general (Titib 2003: 354).

In the Prambanan museum, some statues are only named Dewi statues, which require further identification. But the existence of this statue indicates that in the tradition of Hindu Nusantara Theology, the worship Goddess is common to both Hindu and Buddhist traditions.

The specialty of Hindu theology, which depicted in Prambanan Temple, is a unique theological typology. It includes the worship of *Tri Murti*, *Śivaistik*, theology (the *Śakti/Durgā* worship) as well as the worship of other Gods in one

large worship complex. This theology embraces all concepts. If we don't carefully conclude, it will look confusing. But clearly, it is a unique typology that is built on the worship of *Parabrahman* (Supreme Brahman, the Absolute), the object of worship for people who have attained the highest consciousness. This typology is embracing the lower typology of *Saguna Brahman*, with the pattern of worshiping the goddess and conciliate it, making it the same noble, unite it and bring it to the highest consciousness. Here we see the superiority of the Nusantara Theology that was built at that time. The author believes it seems so difficult to find these similarities elsewhere, including in India; that is, the theological concept that embraces both typologies and elevates human consciousness to a higher stage without degrading one God or another concept.

## CONCLUSION

In general, Hindu theology glorifies one God; *Śiva*, *Vaisnava*, or *Śakti*, as the highest embodiment. This theology is typical in the *Saguna Brahman* region. However, the Hindu Nusantara Theology, which lies in the constructive structure of Prambanan Temple, shows its uniqueness and distinctiveness. Therefore, Prambanan Temple is convinced as an Archetype in Hindu Theology of Nusantara, with proof that the *Parabrahman* has become Prambanan, which means worship of the Supreme God. The temple construction applies the *vāstupuruṣamaṇḍala* pattern. The concept of worship in this temple attracts people to worship the Supreme Lord; whatever their *Devata* is, all are united in one large worship complex. This temple illustrates the adopted theological concept and, at the time, embraced the values within the construction of a beautiful worship monument area in Java. Prambanan Temple depicts not only the glory of Hinduism in the past. It also represents the theological concepts and religious thoughts that are developing in this modern time.

Prambanan Temple depicts the Concept of Hindu Nusantara Theology in two typologies. The typology of *Nirguna Brahman* and the typology

of *Saguna Brahman*. The typology of *Nirguna Brahman* lies in the concept where Prambanan is a place to worship *Parabrahman*, The Absolute, The Supreme God. Meanwhile, the typology of *Saguna Brahman* lies in the concept where Prambanan is a *Śivagrha*, the House of Lord *Śiva*, a place to worship *Śiva* as the Highest Gods. This typology of *Saguna Brahman* is the base of *Śivaistik* Theology.

Therefore, although Prambanan Temple features the worship of *Tri Murti*; *Brahma*, *Viṣṇu*, *Śiva*, it is contrary to the common understanding of worshiping *Tri Murti* as equal. In reality, Prambanan holds *Śivaistik* Theology. It adheres *Śiva* as the Supreme Devatas. *Śiva* as the embodiment of *Parabrahman* itself. The *Śivaistik* theological concept is illustrated by the collision and structure of the three main temples in Prambanan, where the Temple of *Śiva* is made higher and more prominent than the temple of *Brahma* and *Viṣṇu*. *Śivaistik* theology is also adhered to worship *Śiva* with his family. The evidence can be found through some murti in *Śiva* Temple. Such as *murti* in the form of *Agastya* (a teacher), *Ganeśa* (son of *Śiva*), and *Pārvati* or *Durgā* as His *Shakti* in aspects of *Durgāmahisasuramardhini*.

Prambanan Temple has particular functions and meanings, including the superiority of Hindu architecture, as a center of worship that attracts the public in general, as a spiritual center, as a center for *yatra* and as a place to study Hinduism. This tremendous historical monument has been a virtue for hundreds of years, and it continues to benefit until today. So, it is not merely a magnificent monument in the past, that has been turned into worthless debris. In contrast, Prambanan has a privilege and historical significance that holds thousands of stories to be told.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author expresses her gratitude to various parties who had supported this research. Special appreciation is conveyed to the Dirjen Bimas



Hindu Kementerian Agama RI, for the financial support that has made this study completed.

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