

BOROBUDUR

Waiting for the Maitreya Buddha



Dr Uday Dokras

Including Chapter on **WHO BUILT BOROBUDUR?**

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CHAPTER I

Is Borobudur waiting for the Maitreya Buddha



Candi Borobudur is a product of the caitya worship or the belief in the descent of Buddharaja Maitreya first established and promoted by Nagarjuna and the Satavahana king in South India around the beginning of the third century A.D. Although Borobudur shows some influences from Nagarjunakonda and Amaravat! in its architectural structure and iconographical design, its designers created their own Javanese styles of caitya that are not seen elsewhere in Asia. Borobudur demonstrates its unique Javanese interpretations of the beliefs and figures stated in the Verification Sutra. For instance, the image and the role of Bodhisattva Samantabhadra is very much emphasized and is depicted in many styles not seen elsewhere. Bodhisattva Samantabhadra's image and role is basically depicted also in sites such as Nagarjunakonda, AmaravatI, Ajanta and Ellora. Although these sites promote the same belief, however, their depiction of the image of the Bodhisattva is very mechanical,he is always standing by one side of Buddharaja Maitreya.¹

Maitreya is **the earliest bodhisattva** around whom a cult developed and is mentioned in scriptures from the 3rd century ce. He was accepted by all schools of Buddhism and is still the only bodhisattva generally honoured by the Theravada tradition. The name Maitreya is derived from the Sanskrit maitrī (“friendliness”).

Iconographically, Borobudur also presents many detailed depictions of the esoteric beliefs prevailing in Asia at that time. For instance, there are the esoteric images of Avalokitesvara Amoghapasa and the Bodhisattva image of Buddharaja Maitreya.

India in the 1st and 2nd centuries CE was divided into various states, including the Kushan Empire and the Satavahana Kingdom. At this point in Buddhist history, the Buddhist community was already divided into various Buddhist schools and had spread throughout India. At this time, there was already a small and nascent Mahāyāna movement. Mahāyāna ideas were held by a minority of Buddhists in India at the time. As Joseph Walser writes, "Mahāyāna before the fifth century was largely invisible and probably existed only as a minority and largely unrecognized movement within the fold of nikāya Buddhism." By the second century, early Mahāyāna Sūtras such as the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* were already circulating among certain Mahāyāna circles.



...2 Nagarjuna paintings



Glazed ceramic sculpture of Budai, the semi-historic monk always smiling China, Ming dynasty, 1486. TO THE RIGHT Maitreya from Patan Museum

Nāgārjuna (c. 150 – c. 250 CE) was an Indian Mahāyāna Buddhist thinker, scholar-saint and philosopher. He is widely considered one of the most important Buddhist philosophers. Nāgārjuna is widely considered to be the founder of the madhyamaka (centrism, middle-way) school of Buddhist philosophy and a defender of the Mahāyāna movement. His *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* (Root Verses on Madhyamaka, MMK) is the most important text on the madhyamaka philosophy of emptiness. The MMK inspired a large number of commentaries in Sanskrit, Chinese, Tibetan, Korean and Japanese and continues to be studied today. Nāgārjuna was an advisor to a king of the Sātavāhana dynasty which ruled the Deccan Plateau in the second century. This is supported by most of the traditional hagiographical sources as well. Archaeological evidence at Amarāvati indicates that if this is true, the king may have been Yajña Śrī Śātakarṇi (c. second half of the 2nd century). On the basis of this association, Nāgārjuna is conventionally placed at around 150–250 CE



Maitreya 9th Century. Metropolitan museum N.Y.

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1. **caitya worship or the belief in the descent of Buddharaja Maitreya -Uncovering the Meaning of the Hidden Base of Candi Borobudur Conclusion Architecturally and iconographically, A SHORT EXPLORATION OF T.Y.S LAMA GANGCHEN'S THEORIES ABOUT THE MEANING OF THE SACRED GEOMETRY AND MANDALA SYMBOLISM OF CANDI BOROBUDUR IN THE LIGHT OF ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP ON THE SUBJECT by Caroline Gammon, MA.**
-

The Satavahanas contributed greatly to the embellishment of the Buddhist stupa of Sanchi. It was heavily repaired under King Satakarni II. The gateways and the balustrade were built after 70 BCE, and appear to have been commissioned by the Satavahanas. An inscription on the Southern Gateway records that it was the work of Satakarni II's royal architect Ananda. An inscription records the gift of one of the top architraves of the Southern Gateway by the artisans of the Satavahana Emperor Satakarni:

Gift of Ananda, the son of Vasithi, the foreman of the artisans of rajani Siri Satakarni



Satavahana Kingdom Architecture as exemplified by the Sanchi Stupa

Maitreya (Sanskrit) or **Metteyya** (Pali) is regarded as a future Buddha of this world in Buddhist eschatology. In some Buddhist literature, such as the *Amitabha Sutra* and the *Lotus Sutra*, the being is referred to as Ajita.

According to Buddhist tradition, Maitreya is a bodhisattva who will appear on Earth in the future, achieve complete enlightenment, and teach the pure dharma. According to scriptures, Maitreya will be a successor to the present Buddha, Gautama Buddha (also known as Śākyamuni Buddha). The prophecy of the arrival of Maitreya refers to a time in the future when the dharma will have been forgotten by most on the terrestrial world.

Maitreya has also been employed in a millenarian role by many non-Buddhist religions in the past, such as Theosophy, the White Lotus, as well as by modern new religious movements, such as Yiguandao.



Foreigners making a dedication to the Great Stupa at Sanchi.

The name *Maitreya* is derived from the Sanskrit word *maitrī* "friendship", which is in turn derived from the noun *mitra* "friend". The Pali form *Metteyya* is mentioned in the *Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Sutta* (Dīgha Nikaya 26) of the Pāli Canon, and also in chapter 28 of the *Buddhavamsa*. Most of the Buddha's sermons are presented as having been presented in answer to a question, or in some other appropriate context, but this sutta has a beginning and ending in which the Buddha is talking to monks about something totally different. This leads scholar Richard Gombrich to conclude that either the whole sutta is apocryphal or that it has at least been tampered with. One mention of the prophecy of Maitreya is in the *Maitreyavyākaraṇa*. It implies that he is a teacher of meditative trance *sādhana* and states that gods, men and other beings:

Will lose their doubts, and the torrents of their cravings will be cut off: free from all misery they will manage to cross the ocean of becoming; and, as a result of Maitreya's teachings, they will lead a holy life. No longer will they regard anything as their own, they will have no possession, no gold or silver, no home, no relatives! But they will lead the holy life of oneness under Maitreya's guidance. They will have torn the net of the passions, they will manage to enter into trances, and theirs will be an abundance of joy and happiness, for they will lead a holy life under Maitreya's guidance

Chan from Sanskrit *dhyāna* (meaning "meditation" or "meditative state"), is a Chinese school of Mahāyāna Buddhism. It developed in China from the 6th century CE onwards, becoming dominant during the Tang and Song dynasties. After the Yuan dynasty, Chan more or less fused with Pure Land Buddhism. The Yuan dynasty was founded by the Mongol warlord Kublai Khan in 1271 and conquered the Song dynasty in 1279. The Yuan dynasty lasted nearly a hundred years before a series of rebellions known as the Red Turban Rebellion resulted in its collapse in 1368 and the rise of the Ming dynasty.



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Chan is the originating tradition of Zen Buddhism (the Japanese pronunciation of the same character, which is the most commonly used name for the school in English). Chan Buddhism spread from China south to Vietnam as *Thiền* and north to Korea as *Seon*, and, in the 13th century, east to Japan as Japanese Zen.

In the Greco-Buddhist art of Gandhara, in the first centuries CE in northern India, Maitreya was the most popular figure to be represented along with Gautama Buddha (often called *Śākyamuni* "sage of the Shakyas"). In 4th to 6th-century China, "Buddhist artisans used the names Shakyamuni and Maitreya interchangeably... indicating both that the distinction between the two had not yet been drawn and that their respective iconographies had not yet been firmly set". An example is the stone sculpture found in the Qingzhou cache dedicated to Maitreya in 529 CE as recorded in the inscription (currently in the Qingzhou Museum, Shandong). The religious belief of Maitreya apparently developed around the same time as that of Amitābha, as early as the 3rd century CE.

Maitreya is typically pictured seated, with either both feet on the ground or crossed at the ankles, on a throne, waiting for his time. He is dressed in the clothes of either a bhikṣu (monk) or Indian royalty. As a bodhisattva, he would usually be standing and dressed in jewels. Usually he wears a small stupa in his headdress that represents the stupa with relics of Gautama Buddha to

help him identify it when his turn comes to lay claim to his succession, and can be holding a dharmachakra resting on a lotus. A khata scarf is always tied around his waist as a girdle.

In the Greco-Buddhist art of Gandhara, Maitreya is represented as a northern Indian nobleman, holding a kumbha in his left hand. Sometimes this is a "wisdom urn" (Tibetan: *Bumpa*). He is flanked by his two acolytes, the brothers Asanga and Vasubandhu, who founded the Yogacara tradition.

Examples of Buddhist art at Sanchi in Madhya Pradesh include the now world famous Great *stupa* which saw a lot of additions and modifications during the Gupta period, in the 5th century. A figure of *Vajrapani* capital near the northern gateway is at the Site Museum at Sanchi. Mahayana forms became prominent at this time. Cosmologically speaking, access to enlightenment is gained through the north. There are four Buddhas on all four sides. He is depicted in *dhyana* mudra, indicative of meditation.



Temple 17, Sanchi, Madhya Pradesh/ Buddha statue, Great Stupa, Sanchi, Madhya Pradesh.

During this time many new temples were added. At Sanchi is a temple called Temple 17 which is a well preserved small shrine. It has simple *mandapa* and a *garbagriha*. The temple has both Buddhist and Hindu architectural features.

The *Maitreyasamiti* was an extensive Buddhist play in pre-Islamic Central Asia. The *Maitreyavyakarana* (in Sataka form) in Central Asia and the *Anagatavamsa* of South India also mention him.

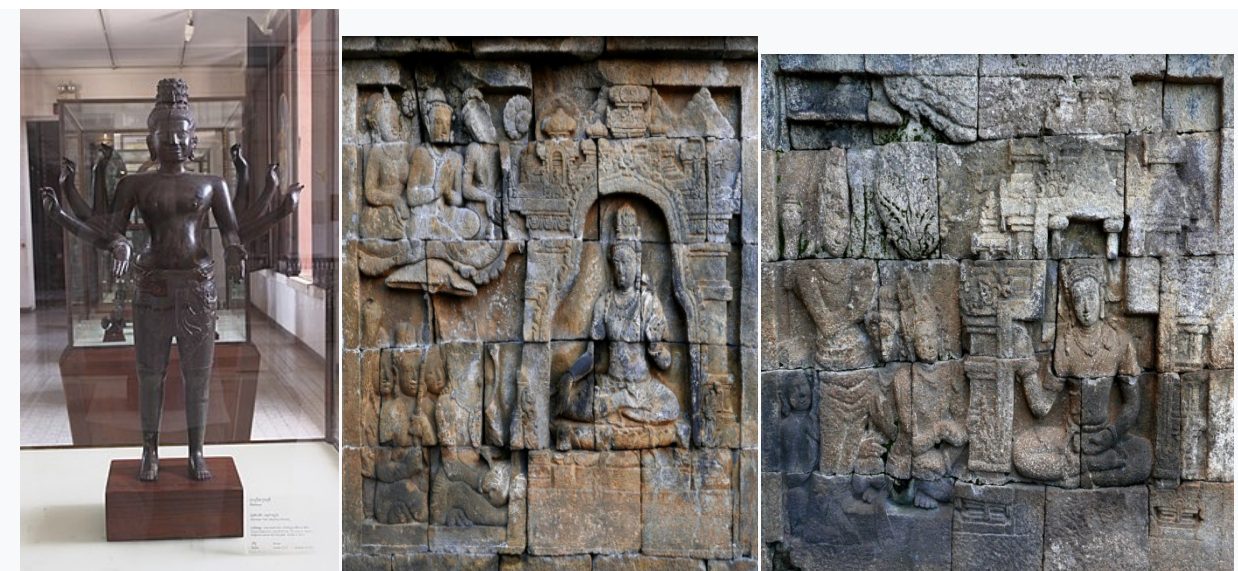
On the sides of the Borobudur stupa-mandala of Central Java are carved several sutras in the form of bas-reliefs. The longest one with 450 panels is Sudana the merchants son's quest for enlightenment.

The Buddha sends him to the South, to meet Manjushri and then Manjushri sends him on a pilgrimage on which he meets 50 other gurus, in the form of monks, a nun, wives, mothers, businessmen, a sailor, school children, yogis, kings and queens, gods and goddesses, a school teacher, artisans and doctors. Each one explains one aspect of the bodhisattva path to Sudana who under their guidance of the final gurus, Maitreya and Samantabhadra evolves into a

bodhisattva with direct understanding of reality, fully committed to working for the benefit of humanity.



Maitreya currently resides in the *Tuṣita* Heaven (Pāli: *Tusita*), said to be reachable through meditation. Gautama Buddha also lived here before he was born into the world as all bodhisattvas live in the *Tuṣita* Heaven before they descend to the human realm to become Buddhas. Although all bodhisattvas are destined to become Buddhas, the concept of a bodhisattva differs greatly in Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism. In Theravada Buddhism, a bodhisattva is one who is striving for full enlightenment (Arahantship in Pali), whereas in Mahayana Buddhism, a bodhisattva is one who has already reached a very advanced state of grace or enlightenment but holds back from entering nirvana so that he may help others.



Eight-armed male deity (Maitreya). Provenance Vat Ampil Tok, Kg. Chhnang. 10th century. Bronze with dark patina. Green traces on the feet. H. 75 cm. Inv. 2024. National Museum of Cambodia. Phnom Penh.RIGHT Maitreya preaches in the bhahmalok,Borobudur EXTREME RIGHT Relief on Level 3, Inner Wall at Borobudur, Java, Indonesia Sudhana salutes Maitreya

According to the Lotus Sutra in Nichiren Buddhism, all people possess the potential to reveal an innate Buddha nature during their own lifetimes, a concept which may appear to contradict the idea of Buddha as savior or messiah. Although Maitreya is a significant figure in the Lotus Sutra, the explanation of Nichiren is that Maitreya is a metaphor of stewardship and aid for the Bodhisattvas of the Earth, as written in the Lotus Sutra:

Moreover... all the bodhisattvas, Bodhisattva Maitreya... will guard and protect the votaries of the Lotus Sutra, so one may indeed rest assured.

Thus, each individual can embody the character of the Maitreya because he is a metaphor for compassion:

The name Maitreya means ‘Compassionate One’ and designates the Votaries of the Lotus Sutra.



Thailand

Excerpts from an Article which I find worth quoting from since I have myself not been to the Site.

Introduction to the Gaṇḍavyūha Reliefs at Borobudur

Since the exact purpose of Borobudur is not clear, as it is not a temple, and it is not simply a stūpa, and it is not clear if it was meant as an introduction to Buddhist teaching for the layman either. It is fairly safe to say that it broadly belongs to the Mahāyāna, but it shows signs of Tantric influence.

Many of the texts that were illustrated on the walls have by now been identified, although the exact version of the texts remains unknown, and the stories on the reliefs do seem to differ somewhat from the received texts that we now know. At the base of the shrine, and now covered up, are found illustrations of the Mahākarmavibhaṅga text, which tells of the workings of karma and the rewards for good and bad deeds in heaven and hell, some of the reliefs have been identified as belonging to certain stories, but the majority have not.

Although this part of the shrine is no longer accessible, except for a small corner which has been opened up, it was photographed in the late 19th century by the Javanese photographer Kassian Cephas, and it is in fact one of the most important parts of the monument, because it was covered over before it was completed, and the builders left traces of inscriptions on some of the half-finished reliefs, which would have been removed upon completion as they were elsewhere. It is from these inscriptions, which are written in Sanskrit and in an old Javanese script, that we can date the monument on epigraphic grounds quite accurately and that we also have an idea of the texts that were available to the builders, and how they went about construction.

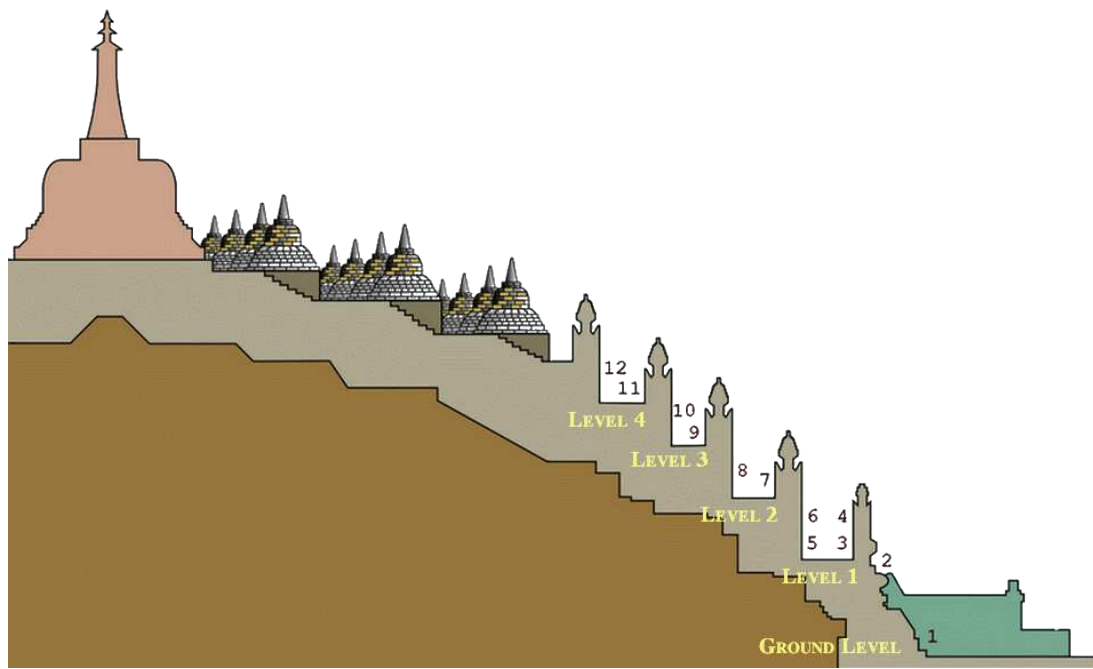


Above that in ascending order we have Jātaka tales from the previous lives of the Buddha, the exact source book for which is unknown; the Life of the Buddha told on 120 panels according to the story as found in the Lalitavistara, a Sanskritised Prakrit text that appears to be an expansion of an earlier work belonging to the Sarvāstivāda school, which is the work we are centrally concerned with in this book.

Many of the reliefs in the next set have been identified as belonging to the Avadāna series of stories, which again tells of the karmic results of actions good and bad. A number of them – but not all apparently – occur in the collection known as the Divyāvadāna (the Divine Traditions), but many of the reliefs remain unidentified from those stories.

On the next level there are more Jātaka and Avadāna type stories, and also the beginnings of the illustrations of the major work that is featured at Borobudur, the Gaṇḍavyūha and its culminating hymn, the Bhadracarī, which tells of the young man Sudhana’s pilgrimage along the Bodhisattva Path, in which he meets a series of spiritual friends who reveal parts of the truth which he seeks.

This is topped by three more levels where no reliefs occur. On the penultimate level we find chetiyas, or shrines, housing Buddha statues displaying particular gestures indicative of teaching and blessing, and at the top of the monument is a large stūpa, which dominates the whole construction.



That is an overview of the Candi, but it is far from the whole story, because it is clear that the monument was part of a larger construction which was built along a twelve kilometre lay line, that takes in the ancient candis of Pavon, Mendut and Ngawen as well. As with Borobudur itself the exact function of these temples in the greater scheme of things is still unclear, though they do in themselves house shrines and also have relief carvings, and may have been part of a pilgrimage route to the greater monument.



The Gaṇḍavyūhasūtra

The *Gaṇḍavyūhasūtra* is one of the main scriptures of the Mahāyāna tradition, and is available to us in the original Sanskrit, and also in one Tibetan and several Chinese translations. It is counted as the 5th of the 9 great texts of that tradition in Nepal. It is clear the scripture is one of the earliest of the *Avatamsaka* collection and it circulated as a separate text for many centuries. Almost certainly the version of the text known to the builders of Borobudur was still separate from the later collection.



The Śailendra dynasty in Java at the time of the construction of Borobudur seems to have had relations with the heart of Buddhist philosophical development in the great universities of north-east India, such as Nālandā and Vickrāmaśīla, and it is probably through these contacts that the *sūtra* had made its way to Java, where it was obviously held in the highest esteem.

When designing the Borobudur the architects had chosen to illustrate numerous Mahāyāna texts on the walls: the *Karmavibhaṅga* on the base (which is now mainly hidden from view). The *Jātaka* on three walls and the *Divyāvādāna* texts on one wall on Levels 1 & 2. The *Lalitavistara*, which relates the early life of the Buddha, on the top section of the inner wall at Level 2. However, the *Gaṇḍavyūha* occupies a much larger amount, covering five walls from Levels 2-4, in over 470 panels, and is the culmination of the relief work at the monument.

Owing to the philosophical nature of the text and the great deal of space allotted to it, it must have been the most difficult of the texts for the sculptors to illustrate, as a lot of what is written about cannot easily be put into concrete form. To overcome this problem the sculptors have often taken long, involved sentences and illustrated items from them on succeeding panels.

The Story in Brief

The *Gaṇḍavyūha* is a long and complex text, filled with elaborations and repetitions, that sometimes serve to obscure the movement of the narrative, and it may help to have an outline of the story in mind so we can see how the characters that are featured on the walls at Borobudur fit in to the overall storyline.

The *sūtra* opens at the Jetavana in Śrāvastī with the Buddha in his Dharma body as Vairocana sitting surrounded by disciples: lay, monastics and Bodhisattvas. The Buddha then enters a special meditation state and reveals the true interpenetrative nature of the cosmos (*Dharmadhātu*), but only to those who are developed enough to see and understand it.

It is notable that the Buddha never speaks in this *sūtra*, his teaching is only conveyed through visionary experience. This also applies to the methodology of the spiritual friends who guide the hero of the story, Sudhana, along the way: direct teaching is kept to a minimum, and seems to be incidental, rather than central. It is what Sudhana sees and experiences for himself that is important.

After the revelation of the *Dharmadhātu*, the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī breaks away from the assembly and surrounded by a group of monks, including Ven. Śāriputra, travels south where his own devotees gather round. There he points out Sudhana, the hero of the story, who establishes his *Bodhicitta* (a mind set of Awakening).

Mañjuśrī instructs him to go and meet with his first spiritual friend (*kalyāṇa-mitra*), the monk Meghaśrī, and ask him for instruction in the Bodhisattva path. Sudhana follows this instruction and Meghaśrī praises him for his request and explains what he himself has realised up till that time. He then points out that is all he knows, and he should go and meet with another friend who may be able to help him further.

As Sudhana goes to the next friend he renews his thoughts of why meeting with spiritual friends is necessary, and renews his commitments. He then seeks out the next friend on his pilgrimage, who is usually surrounded by a great glory of one kind or another, and often a retinue of followers, and is sometimes teaching.

He tells his aspiration, and is confirmed in it by the friend, who then shows him a vision of what he himself knows, or practices: it often includes visions of incalculable Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, acting out their callings in all the multiverses; and may also include demonstrations of good practices, such as generosity, and other perfections (*pāramita*).

In the text Sudhana sometimes asks his friends how they got the wonderful visions and abilities they display, and the answer is usually an occasion for relating their past lives in which they did various good deeds which are seeing fruition in the present.

Although no overall timespan is given for the pilgrimage, we sometimes get an indication of the great dedication Sudhana had on the journey, as when it takes twelve years of searching to find his 5th spiritual friend, the rich merchant Mukta; or when he meets his 6th friend, Sāradhvaja, and spends six months continuously in meditation with him.

Worthy of note is that the friends Sudhana meets include both Buddhist and non-Buddhist (e.g. Mahādeva, identified as the god Śiva), monastic and lay, male and female, rich and poor. For those with eyes to see, the truth is revealed regardless of status or affiliation.

A surprisingly high number of the friends he meets are female, both human and divine, and many of these are counted amongst the longer encounters in the book, so that there seems to be a definite emphasis on the feminine, which, as we will see, is brought out even more so on the walls at Borobudur.

Exactly why the encounters with females has been emphasised is unknown, unless it has to do with royal patronage at Borobudur itself. It is quite possible that the Śailendra queens were the main donors of the monument, and therefore emphasis was placed on good deeds done by Queens and other women.

Eventually Sudhana meets with Maitreya, who will be the next Buddha in this aeon. It is he who allows Sudhana to enter the Great Tower containing the Chamber of the Adornments of Vairocana (*Vairocana-vyūhālamkāra-garbha-mahā-kūṭāgāra*), where he comes to understand the nature of reality in the universe, and which occupies by far the longest part of the story, both in the texts and on the walls.

He then meets again with Mañjuśrī, who had first sent him off, thereby coming full circle in his pilgrimage. However, the encounter is very short as Mañjuśrī simply passes him on to the ultimate Bodhisattva, Samantabhadra, who explains to Sudhana that the knowledge he has attained is to be used for the benefit of others. The text culminates in the famous *Bhadra-cari-praṇidhāna* verses.

The Story on the Walls

Although the story on the walls follows the text in outline it sometimes varies from the written word in detail. We might find, for instance, that a meeting is described in the text as taking place in a forest, but is then transposed to inside a building on the walls. Also details that are central to the textual story are occasionally omitted. It seems from this that only very general instructions were given to the sculptors and not a detailed description or plan to follow.

A technical limitation is imposed on the sculptors of the reliefs by the number of blocks on the walls they had to carve. On the inner walls they are three blocks on top of each other to make up the height of the panel; the balustrades, on the other hand, have only two blocks. We therefore find that there can be three levels of action on the inner walls, but everything had to be accommodated within two levels on the balustrades.

A second matter that needs noting is that characters are represented by type, and there seems to be no attempt to retain consistency of representation, even in the main character of Sudhana, so although we can recognise him for the most part, his appearance changes from panel to panel. This applies to other features also, and there seems to have been no felt need for consistency of presentation.

Another point of interest is that on the walls Sudhana is normally portrayed along with his companions. These companions, however, are never mentioned in the text. It doesn't seem unreasonable that he would have been traveling with others – devotees or guards – as they are sometimes shown, but they don't find mention in the text.

It appears that originally the illustrations were only meant to occupy the three inner walls on levels 2-4, and we can see how the story leads from one to the other as we ascend. Later it seems the reliefs on the balustrades were added – as they were on other levels – and were filled in, in

this case, with more stories of the good works of the Bodhisattva Maitreya. This then leads to an imbalance in the stories that are allotted to the panels.

The first series of reliefs, on the inner wall at level two, which has 128 panels, illustrate Sudhana's meetings with the first fifty or so of his spiritual friends. There is a peculiarity though, in that most of the meetings are represented twice. There is a first and almost complete series (16-71), and then a partial second series (73-128).

On the inner wall on the third level (88 panels), with Maitreya's blessing, Sudhana enters the Great Tower containing the Chamber of the Adornments of Vairocana where he comes to understand the nature of the *Dharmadhātu*. Maitreya in person stays outside, but inside he is often seen as pervading the universe and his deeds in the three times are revealed to Sudhana.

The balustrades on Levels 3 (88 panels) and 4 (60 panels) depict Maitreya's previous good deeds, and the last 24 panels on Level 4 show Sudhana's early encounters with Samantabhadra, his final teacher.

The inner wall on Level 4 also concerns Samantabhadra and there are shown 72 panels which illustrate the first 48 of the 64 verses of the text of the *Bhadra-cari-praṇidhāna* which concludes the Gaṇḍavyūha, sections of which are recited throughout temples and homes in East Asia to this day. A complete translation of these verses is presented here.

Some Characters

Here are some of the main figures shown on the walls. Note that. Bodhisattvas, kings and members of the nobility are all shown as being richly decorated, with crowns and jewellery, and even sitting in similar postures, and it is therefore sometimes difficult to tell them apart when we are unsure of the story being represented.

1. **Sudhansa:** The main character of the story, and indeed the hero, is Sudhana. He is a Bodhisattva and is usually shown as crowned and in rich adornment like many others. However, he is highlighted by having a parasol held over him, and he is usually shown as amongst the first group of characters that we see as we walk along the walls which were designed to be viewed from the point of view of the *pradakṣiṇa*, or ritual circumambulation, which is made by keeping the right side of the body to the object of reverence. This means that when looking at the inner walls Sudhana appears mainly on the right of the panel; while on the balustrade he appears usually on the left. There are variations that are pointed out, but this is the general pattern
2. **kalyāṇa-mitra:** On the first wall the spiritual friend (*kalyāṇa-mitra*) that Sudhana meets with is the main character in the relief, and is usually shown inside a pavilion that serves to highlight his position as the central character. Occasionally this friend will be situated not in a building, but under an elaborate tree. Sometimes they share their shelter with one or more people, and sometimes they alone are inside and others are outside.
3. **Maitreya:** Sudhana's most important spiritual friend is Maitreya, who is shown on level three, both sides, and most of level four, balustrade. He can be identified by

the *stūpa* which is set in his crown, though as with all the types, this can sometimes be missing, and is occasionally lost to decay.

4. **Bodhisattvas**: Bodhisattvas, as stated, are usually dressed in finery, and have crowns and jewellery decorating their bodies.
5. **Monastics**: Monastics, on the other hand, are simply dressed, and are shown with very short, or shorn, hair.
6. **Devas**; These are supernatural beings. *Devas* are normally portrayed above the clouds, often paying homage or making offerings to the main figure in the scene below.
7. **Nagas**: which are earth-bound *devas* who have snakes in their headress;
8. **Garudas**: *garuḍas*, human-type creatures, but with strong beaks;
9. **yakṣas**, thick-set with heavy mustaches;
10. **gandharvas**, who play musical instruments;
11. **asūras**, who are heavy-set and bearded; and
12. **kinnaras**, who are females but with bird bodies from the waist down.
13. **Brahmins** are also portrayed as having beards, and are sometimes hard to distinguish from *asūras*.

<https://www.photodharma.net/Indonesia/Reading-Borobudur/Gandavyuha.htm>

CHAPTER II

Spiritual Technologies at Borobudur



“Every morning we are born again. What we do today is what matters most.”

– **Buddha**

Buddhist stupas and mandalas are understood as “spiritual technologies” that harness spiritual “energies” in the creation of sacred space. The symbolization of enlightenment these stupas represent is not intended to be merely aesthetic. The repetition of form and the circumambulatory progress of the pilgrim mimic, and thereby access, the cosmological as a microcosm. The clockwise movement around the cosmic center reproduces the macrocosmic path of the sun. Thus, when one emerges from the dark galleries representing the realms of desire and form into the light of the “formless” circular open air upper walkways, the material effect of light on one’s physical form merges concomitantly with the spiritual enlightenment generated by the metaphysical journey of the sacred path.

Light, in all its paradoxes, is the ultimate goal. The crowning stupa of this sacred mountain is dedicated to the “Great Sun Buddha” Vairocana. The temple sits in cosmic proximity to the nearby volcano Mt. Merapi. During certain times of the year the path of the rising sun in the East seems to emerge out of the mountain to strike the temple’s peak in radiant synergy. Light illuminates the stone in a way that is intended to be more than beautiful. The brilliance of the site can be found in how the Borobudur mandala blends the metaphysical and physical, the symbolic and the material, the cosmological and the earthly within the structure of its physical setting and the framework of spiritual paradox.

.guide to Enlightenment



Gautama Buddha was born in India in the 6th century. At the age of twenty-nine, he renounced riches to become a monk and lead a life of meditation. Originally, Buddhism was not a religion, but a doctrine that explained the steps to reaching Nirvana, a release from life's misery. The ultimate goal is to avoid rebirth and a continuation of life, cycle after cycle. When the Buddha gained Enlightenment, he taught his followers. In his famous sermon at Deer Park in what is now Benares, he established the principles of a faith that brings inner tranquility:

Hear me, gracious ones, for I offer you knowledge of the path to Enlightenment. This is the first noble truth: life is suffering. The second noble truth: suffering is caused by human fears and desires. Third: suffering can be eliminated. And the fourth noble truth is that the elimination of suffering can be achieved by following the Noble Eight-fold path.

The Eight-fold path shows the way to extinguish desire: correct view, correct intention, correct speech, correct conduct, correct livelihood, correct zeal, correct remembrance (which retains what is true and excludes the false) and correct meditation.



The panels of Borobudur depict a branch of Buddhism known as Mahayana Buddhism, which developed around the beginning of the Christian era. In Mahayana Buddhism, the ideal is to become a Bodhisattva, an enlightened being who rejects personal salvation and returns to life in order to help others reach Nirvana. The journey up Borobudur shows the way to become a Bodhisattva through good deeds, contemplation and meditation.



Borobudur is a place of pilgrimage rather than of worship, a training center for those who wish to achieve Enlightenment. The student is guided along successive terraces and staircases to the uppermost level, walking in a clockwise direction – the outside world blocked from sight by the balustrades – and experiencing physically as well as spiritually the long hard journey in search of ultimate truth.

The monument is built to represent the universe according to Buddhist cosmology, divided into the Spheres of Desire, Form

and Formlessness.

Kamadhatu, the Sphere of Desire, is represented by the panels of the hidden base, which depict man's concern for worldly desires and pleasures.

Rupadhatu, the Sphere of Form, is represented by the five square terraces above the base, which illustrate the pathway to freedom from passions, though man is still bound by the illusion of form.

Arupadhatu is the Sphere of Formlessness, represented by the three concentric circular terraces at the top of the monument, symbolizing freedom from the phenomenal world.

Built by the wealthy Sailendra kings of Central Java, Borobudur would have been a testament to their Buddhist faith and a mark of their social, political and religious standing. In keeping with the precepts of Mahayana Buddhism, a Sailendra king had to do his utmost to accumulate as much merit as possible during his reign. The entire population would have participated in Borobudur's construction, reaping a great deal of good karma and ensuring the material and spiritual well-being of the entire kingdom.

The journey

Set high upon a hill vertically enhanced by its builders to achieve a greater elevation, Borobudur consists of a series of open-air passageways that radiate around a central axis mundi (cosmic axis). Devotees circumambulate clockwise along walkways that gradually ascend to its uppermost level. At Borobudur, geometry, geomancy, and theology all instruct adherents toward the ultimate goal of enlightenment. Meticulously carved relief sculptures mediate a physical and spiritual journey that guides pilgrims progressively toward higher states of consciousness.

The entire site contains 504 statues of the Buddha. 1460 stone reliefs on the walls and opposite balustrades decorate the first four galleries, with an additional 1212 decorative reliefs augmenting the path. The relief sculptures narrate the Buddha's teachings (the Dharma), depict various events related to his past lives (Jataka tales), and illustrate didactic stories taken from important Buddhist scriptures (sutras). Interestingly, another 160 relief sculptures adorn the base of the monument, but are concealed behind stone buttresses that were added shortly after the building's construction in order to further support the structure's weight. The hidden narrative reliefs were photographed when they were discovered in the late 19th century before the stones were put back to help ensure the temple's stability.

A little while later the governments of the United Kingdom and The Netherlands swapped territories and Java became administered by the Dutch. Hartmann, the Dutch Administrator of the Kedu Region in Java, arranged for further removal of the debris and the cleaning of the galleries, so that by 1835, the entire monument was freed from its last disfiguring cover. In 1885, Yzerman the Chairman of the Archaeological Society in Yogyakarta excavated the broad base and discovered what became known as the "hidden foot" and the series of relief carved around it. Photographs of the relief were taken in 1890-1891 before the "hidden foot" was covered again with the original stones of encasement (Soekmono, 1976).

Yzerman's discovery alerted the Dutch Government to take serious action for safeguarding Candi Borobudur, and early in the 20th century the first major restoration was carried out under the direction of Theodor van Erp, a Dutch engineer. He directed the rebuilding of the crumbling stupas, the relaying of pavement in the terraces, and the removal of lichen and moss from the carvings. This great restoration was completed in 1911 and resulted in the monumental monograph by N.J. Korm and Th. Van Erp (<http://www.rubens.anu.edu.au>), which included photographs of all sculptures and relief, including the hidden foot taken before, during and after restoration. This photographic documentation has been of great value from 1926 when the first study of the stability of the monument was carried out after the restoration (Soekmono, 1976; Voute, 1980).

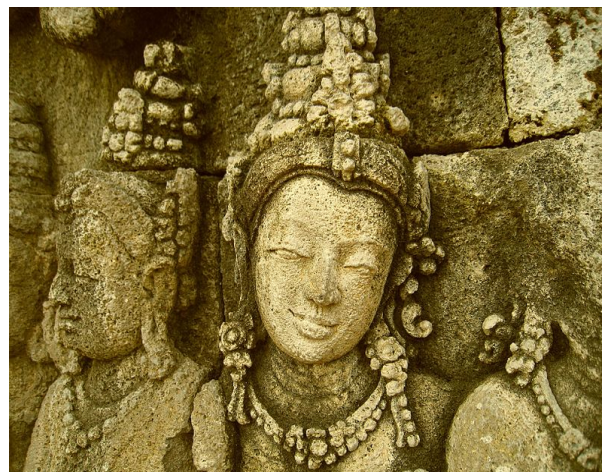
Paradoxically, Candi Borobudur has suffered more damage after the restoration than over the hundreds of years before. In 1929 Government Commission distinguished three different categories of damage: damage caused by corrosion, by mechanical forces, and by tension. The recommendations of the Commission were highly appreciated by the Government. However, the world-wide economic depression in 1930 caused the lack of

financial support for the Archaeological Survey to do the work and finally the Second World War absorbed the entire attention of the Government.

The problem of safeguarding Candi Borobudur became an international one as soon as the Republic of Indonesia was recognized and joined the United Nations and UNESCO in 1950. Since that time international experts have been sent to Indonesia to study and investigate the temple as a UNESCO mission. In 1968, the Indonesian government and the United Nations, working through UNESCO, launched a campaign for saving Candi Borobudur. Over the next fifteen years, millions of dollars were raised to support the bold plan to dismantle and reconstruct the lower terraces of the monument. This major restoration involved many disciplines: physical sciences such as geophysics, seismology, geology, hydrology, petrography, and meteorology; engineering skill such as foundation engineering, architecture, mechanics and landscape planning; positioning techniques such as surveying and photogrammetry including terrestrial photogrammetry; and other sciences such as chemistry, microbiology, archeology, and conservation technique. It was known that it would be necessary to dismantle and rebuild Borobudur's terraces, to provide adequate drainage, and to clean the most disfigured of its sculptures. It was also known that requirements would be beyond the resources of Indonesia, a developing country with pressing priorities to meet.

An international collaboration was launched under the sponsorship of UNESCO on 6 December 1972. The restoration work carried out by the Badan Pemugaran Candi Borobudur (The Agency for the Restoration of Candi Borobudur), assisted by international experts was mainly concerned with the monument itself. The work involved dismantling (registering, cleaning and treating) the carved stones, restoring of the carved stones, and rebuilding the temple (Soekmono, 1976). The restoration took more than 6 years and employed 600 technicians and laborers including experts from ten countries. By 1982, the restoration work was completed and Candi Borobudur regained its splendor and grandeur.

Once the restoration was finished, the gigantic task of preserving the monument for the centuries ahead needed to commence. Since that time significant site maintenance has been undertaken to preserve the monument.



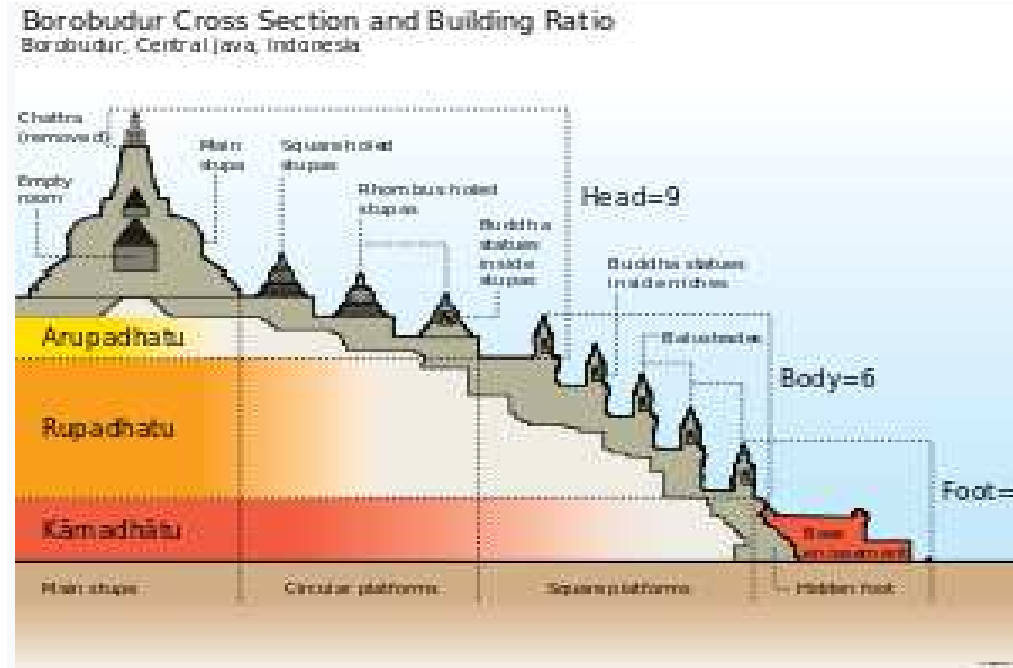
Lalitavistara deva on a relief

The monument's three divisions symbolize the three "realms" of Buddhist cosmology, namely *Kamadhatu* (the world of desires), *Rupadhatu* (the world of forms), and finally *Arupadhatu* (the formless world). Ordinary sentient beings live out their lives on the lowest level, the realm of desire. Those who have burnt out all desire for continued existence leave the world of desire and live in the world on the level of form alone: they see forms but are not drawn to them. Finally, full Buddhas go beyond even form and experience reality at its purest, most fundamental level, the formless ocean of nirvana. The liberation from the cycle of Samsāra where the enlightened soul had no longer attached to worldly form corresponds to the concept of Śūnyatā, the complete voidness or the nonexistence of the self. *Kāmadhātu* is represented by the base, *Rupadhatu* by the five square platforms (the body), and *Arupadhatu* by the three circular platforms and the large topmost stupa. The architectural features between the three stages have metaphorical differences. For instance, square and detailed decorations in the *Rupadhatu* disappear into plain circular platforms in the *Arupadhatu* to represent how the world of forms—where men are still attached with forms and names—changes into the world of the formless.

Congregational worship in Borobudur is performed in a walking pilgrimage. Pilgrims are guided by the system of staircases and corridors ascending to the top platform. Each platform represents one stage of enlightenment. The path that guides pilgrims was designed to symbolize Buddhist cosmology.

In 1885, a hidden structure under the base was accidentally discovered. The "hidden footing" contains reliefs, 160 of which are narratives describing the real *Kāmadhātu*. The remaining reliefs are panels with short inscriptions that apparently provide instructions for the sculptors, illustrating the scenes to be carved. The real base is hidden by an encasement base, the purpose of which remains a mystery. It was first thought that the real base had to be covered to prevent a disastrous subsidence of the monument into the hill. There is another theory that the encasement base was added because the original hidden footing was incorrectly designed, according to *Vastu Shastra*, the Indian ancient book about architecture and town planning. Regardless of why it was commissioned, the encasement base was built with detailed and meticulous design and with aesthetic and religious consideration.

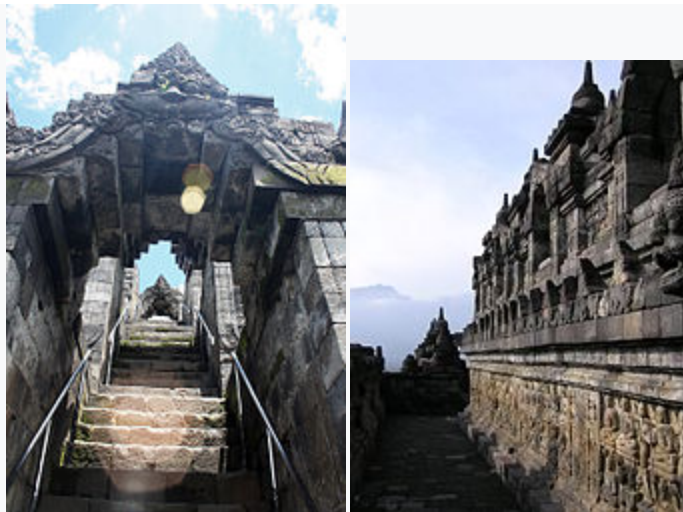
Building structure



Half cross-section with 4:6:9 height ratio for foot, body and head, respectively

Approximately 55,000 cubic metres (72,000 cu yd) of andesite stones were taken from neighbouring stone quarries to build the monument. The stone was cut to size, transported to the site and laid without mortar. Knobs, indentations and dovetails were used to form joints between stones. The roof of stupas, niches and arched gateways were constructed in corbelling method. Reliefs were created *in situ* after the building had been completed.

The monument is equipped with a good drainage system to cater to the area's high stormwater run-off. To prevent flooding, 100 spouts are installed at each corner, each with a unique carved gargoyle in the shape of a giant or makara.



Stairs of Borobudur through arches of Kala/A narrow corridor with reliefs on the wall

Borobudur differs markedly from the general design of other structures built for this purpose. Instead of being built on a flat surface, Borobudur is built on a natural hill. However, construction technique is similar to other temples in Java. Without the inner spaces seen in other temples, and with a general design similar to the shape of pyramid, Borobudur was first thought more likely to have served as a *stupa*, instead of a temple. A *stupa* is intended as a shrine for the Buddha. Sometimes stupas were built only as devotional symbols of Buddhism. A temple, on the other hand, is used as a house of worship. The meticulous complexity of the monument's design suggests that Borobudur is in fact a temple.

Little is known about Gunadharma, the architect of the complex. His name is recounted from Javanese folk tales rather than from written inscriptions.

The basic unit of measurement used during construction was the *tala*, defined as the length of a human face from the forehead's hairline to the tip of the chin or the distance from the tip of the thumb to the tip of the middle finger when both fingers are stretched at their maximum distance. The unit is thus relative from one individual to the next, but the monument has exact measurements. A survey conducted in 1977 revealed frequent findings of a ratio of 4:6:9 around the monument. The architect had used the formula to lay out the precise dimensions of the fractal and self-similar geometry in Borobudur's design. This ratio is also found in the designs of Pawon and Mendut, nearby Buddhist temples. Archeologists have conjectured that the 4:6:9 ratio and the *tala* have calendrical, astronomical and cosmological significance, as is the case with the temple of Angkor Wat in Cambodia.

The main structure can be divided into three components: base, body, and top. The base is 123 m × 123 m (404 ft × 404 ft) in size with 4 metres (13 ft) walls. The body is composed of five square platforms, each of diminishing height. The first terrace is set back 7 metres (23 ft) from the edge of the base. Each subsequent terrace is set back 2 metres (6.6 ft), leaving a narrow corridor at each stage. The top consists of three circular platforms, with each stage supporting a row of perforated *stupas*, arranged in concentric circles. There is one main dome at the center, the top of which is the highest point of the monument, 35 metres (115 ft) above ground level. Stairways at the center of each of the four sides give access to the top, with a number of arched gates overlooked by 32 lion statues. The gates are adorned with Kala's head carved on top of each and Makaras projecting from each side. This Kala-Makara motif is commonly found on the gates of Javanese temples. The main entrance is on the eastern side, the location of the first narrative reliefs. Stairways on the slopes of the hill also link the monument to the low-lying plain.

R E L I E F S

Borobudur is constructed in such a way that it reveals various levels of terraces, showing intricate architecture that goes from being heavily ornamented with bas-reliefs to being plain in *Arupadhatu* circular terraces. The first four terrace walls are showcases for bas-relief sculptures. These are exquisite, considered to be the most elegant and graceful in the ancient Buddhist world.

The bas-reliefs in Borobudur depicted many scenes of daily life in 8th-century ancient Java, from the courtly palace life, hermit in the forest, to those of commoners in the village. It also depicted temple, marketplace, various flora and fauna, and also native vernacular architecture. People depicted here are the images of king, queen, princes, noblemen, courtier, soldier, servant, commoners, priest and hermit. The reliefs also depicted mythical spiritual beings in Buddhist beliefs such as asuras, gods, bodhisattvas, kinnaras, gandharvas and apsaras. The images depicted on bas-relief often served as reference for historians to research for certain subjects, such as the study of architecture, weaponry, economy, fashion, and also mode of transportation of 8th-century Maritime Southeast Asia. One of the famous renderings of an 8th-century Southeast Asian double outrigger ship is Borobudur Ship. Today, the actual-size replica of Borobudur Ship that had sailed from Indonesia to Africa in 2004 is displayed in the Samudra Raksa Museum, located a few hundred meters north of Borobudur.

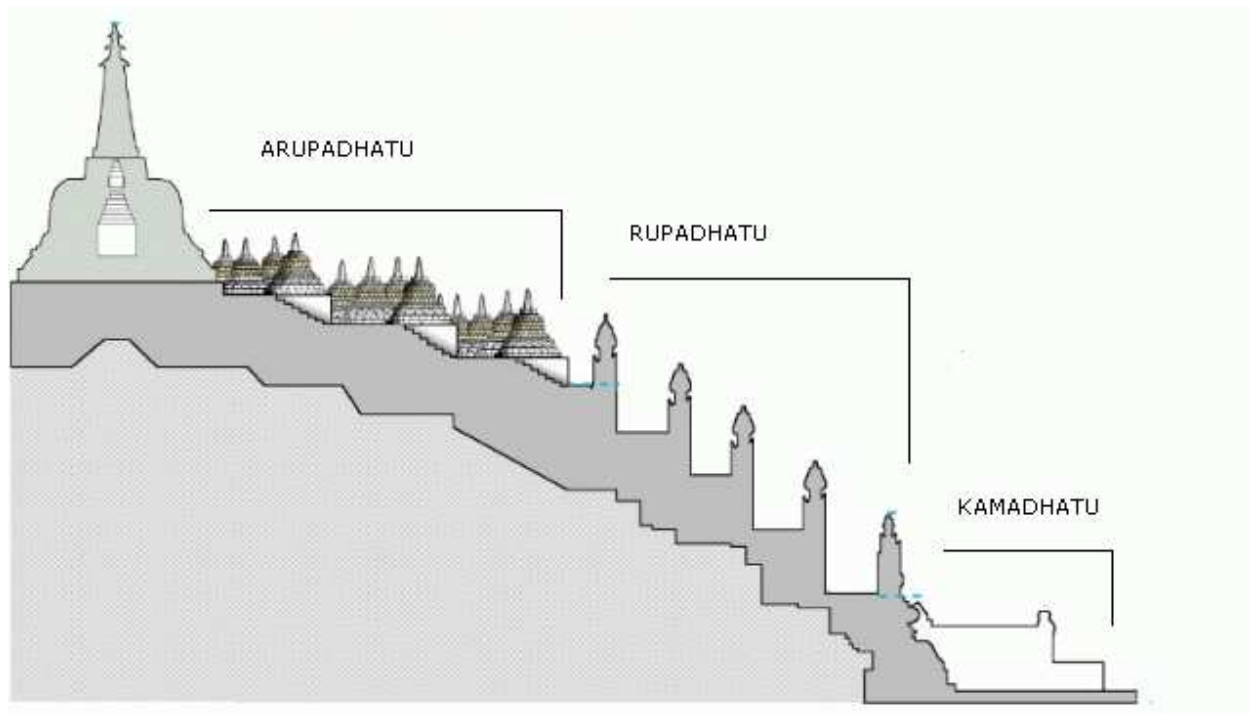
The Borobudur reliefs also pay close attention to Indian aesthetic discipline, such as pose and gesture that contain certain meanings and aesthetic value. The reliefs of noblemen, noble women, kings, or divine beings such as apsaras, taras and bodhisattvas are usually portrayed in tribhanga pose, the three-bend pose on neck, hips, and knee, with one leg resting and one upholding the body weight. This position is considered as the most graceful pose, such as the figure of Surasundari holding a lotus.

During Borobudur excavation, archeologists discovered colour pigments of blue, red, green, black, as well as bits of gold foil, and concluded that the monument that we see today – a dark gray mass of volcanic stone, lacking in colour – was probably once coated with *varjalepa* white plaster and then painted with bright colors, serving perhaps as a beacon of Buddhist teaching. The same *vajralepa* plaster can also be found in Sari, Kalasan and Sewu temples. It is likely that the bas-reliefs of Borobudur was originally quite colourful, before centuries of torrential tropical rainfalls peeled-off the colour pigments.

Narrative panels distribution			
Section	Location	Story	No. of panels
hidden foot	wall	Karmavibhanga	160
first gallery	main wall	Lalitavistara	120
		Jataka/Avadana	120
	balustrade	Jataka/Avadana	372

		Jataka/Avadana	128
second gallery	balustrade	Jataka/Avadana	100
	main wall	Gandavyuha	128
third gallery	main wall	Gandavyuha	88
	balustrade	Gandavyuha	88
fourth gallery	main wall	Gandavyuha	84
	balustrade	Gandavyuha	72
Total			1,460

Borobudur contains approximately 2,670 individual bas reliefs (1,460 narrative and 1,212 decorative panels), which cover the façades and balustrades. The total relief surface is 2,500 square metres (27,000 sq ft), and they are distributed at the hidden foot (*Kāmadhātu*) and the five square platforms (*Rupadhatu*)



The narrative panels, which tell the story of Sudhana and Manohara, are grouped into 11 series that encircle the monument with a total length of 3,000 metres (9,800 ft). The hidden foot contains the first series with 160 narrative panels, and the remaining 10 series are distributed throughout walls and balustrades in four galleries starting from the eastern entrance stairway to the left. Narrative panels on the wall read from right to left, while those on the balustrade read from left to right. This conforms with *pradaksina*, the ritual of circumambulation performed by pilgrims who move in a clockwise direction while keeping the sanctuary to their right.

The hidden foot depicts the workings of karmic law. The walls of the first gallery have two superimposed series of reliefs; each consists of 120 panels. The upper part depicts the biography of Lord Buddha, while the lower part of the wall and also the balustrades in the first and the second galleries tell the story of the Buddha's former lives.^[94] The remaining panels are devoted to Sudhana's further wandering about his search, terminated by his attainment of the Perfect Wisdom.

The law of karma (Karmavibhanga) The Karmavibhanga scene on Borobudur's hidden foot, on the right depicting sinful act of killing and cooking turtles and fishes, on the left those who make living by killing animals will be tortured in hell, by being cooked alive, being cut, or being thrown into a burning house.

The 160 hidden panels do not form a continuous story, but each panel provides one complete illustration of cause and effect. There are depictions of blameworthy activities, from gossip to murder, with their corresponding punishments. There are also praiseworthy activities, that include charity and pilgrimage to sanctuaries, and their subsequent rewards. The pains of hell and the pleasure of heaven are also illustrated. There are scenes of daily life, complete with the full panorama of *samsara* (the endless cycle of birth and death). The encasement base of the

Borobudur temple was disassembled to reveal the hidden foot, and the reliefs were photographed by Casijan Chepas in 1890. It is these photographs that are displayed in Borobudur Museum (Karmawibhanga Museum), located just several hundred meters north of the temple. During the restoration, the foot encasement was reinstalled, covering the Karmawibhanga reliefs. Today, only the southeast corner of the hidden foot is revealed and visible for visitors.

The story of Prince Siddhartha and the birth of Buddha (Lalitavistara)



Queen Maya riding horse carriage retreating to Lumbini to give birth to Prince Siddhartha Gautama

The story starts with the descent of the Buddha from the Tushita heaven and ends with his first sermon in the Deer Park near Benares. The relief shows the birth of the Buddha as Prince Siddhartha, son of King Suddhodana and Queen Maya of Kapilavastu (in Nepal).

The story is preceded by 27 panels showing various preparations, in the heavens and on the earth, to welcome the final incarnation of the Bodhisattva.^[96] Before descending from Tushita heaven, the Bodhisattva entrusted his crown to his successor, the future Buddha Maitreya. He descended on earth in the shape of white elephants with six tusks, penetrated to Queen Maya's right womb. Queen Maya had a dream of this event, which was interpreted that his son would become either a sovereign or a Buddha.



Prince Siddhartha Gautama became an ascetic hermit.

While Queen Maya felt that it was the time to give birth, she went to the Lumbini park outside the Kapilavastu city. She stood under a plaksa tree, holding one branch with her right hand, and she gave birth to a son, Prince Siddhartha. The story on the panels continues until the prince becomes the Buddha.

Introduction to the Lalitavistara Reliefs at Borobudur

Candi Borobudur is the largest Buddhist monument in the world, and one of the greatest cultural achievements of mankind, being a veritable library carved in stone illustrating some of the most important stories in the Buddhist tradition, and having no direct parallel found anywhere else.

It is situated on the plains of central Java at the heart of present-day Indonesia, and is in the vicinity of the large and volcanoes of Merapi and Merbabu, the former being still active. Although there are no records pertaining to its building or purpose, we can be fairly sure that it was built in the late 8th and early 9th centuries during the height of the Śailendra dynasty, which was a great empire ruling over much of Java and Sumatra.

It is built from nearly a million blocks of volcanic rock, which have been mined locally and built over a small hill, where they were assembled on nine levels. The first five levels were carved with around 1,460 bas-reliefs, and it is also home to around 750 Buddha statues and over 70 small and uniquely fashioned chetiyas which are in a style found nowhere else in the Buddhist world.

As there are no records surviving from those who commissioned the building that might have explained what the builders themselves had in mind, it has been subject to many different theories as to its purpose, and even its affiliation with regard to Buddhist sect.

Its exact purpose is not clear, as it is not a temple, and it is not simply a stūpa, and it is not clear if it was meant as an introduction to Buddhist teaching for the layman either. It is fairly safe to say that it broadly belongs to the Mahāyāna, but it shows signs of Tantric influence.

Many of the texts that were illustrated on the walls have by now been identified, although the exact version of the texts remains unknown, and the stories on the reliefs do seem to differ somewhat from the received texts that we now know.

At the base of the shrine, and now covered up, are found illustrations of the Mahākarmavibhaṅga text, which tells of the workings of karma and the rewards for good and bad deeds in heaven and hell, some of the reliefs have been identified as belonging to certain stories, but the majority have not.

Although this part of the shrine is no longer accessible, except for a small corner which has been opened up, it was photographed in the late 19th century by the Javanese photographer Kassian Cephas, and it is in fact one of the most important parts of the monument, because it was covered over before it was completed, and the builders left traces of inscriptions on some of the half-finished reliefs, which would have been removed upon completion as they were elsewhere.

It is from these inscriptions, which are written in Sanskrit and in an old Javanese script, that we can date the monument on epigraphic grounds quite accurately and that we also have an idea of the texts that were available to the builders, and how they went about construction.

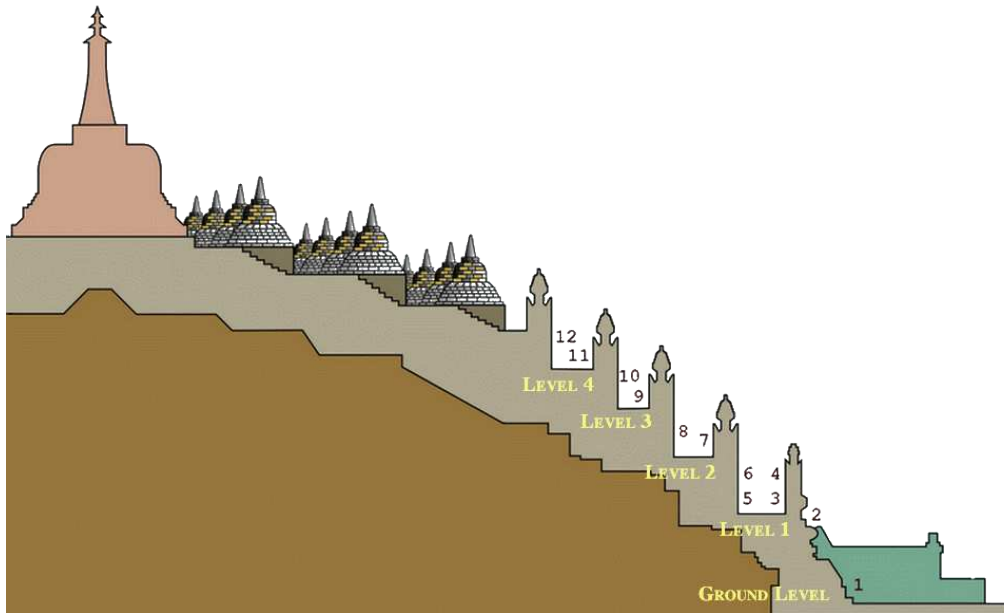


Above that in ascending order we have Jātaka tales from the previous lives of the Buddha, the exact source book for which is unknown; the Life of the Buddha told on 120 panels according to the story as found in the Lalitavistara, a Sanskritised Prakrit text that appears to be an expansion of an earlier work belonging to the Sarvāstivāda school, which is the work we are centrally concerned with in this book.

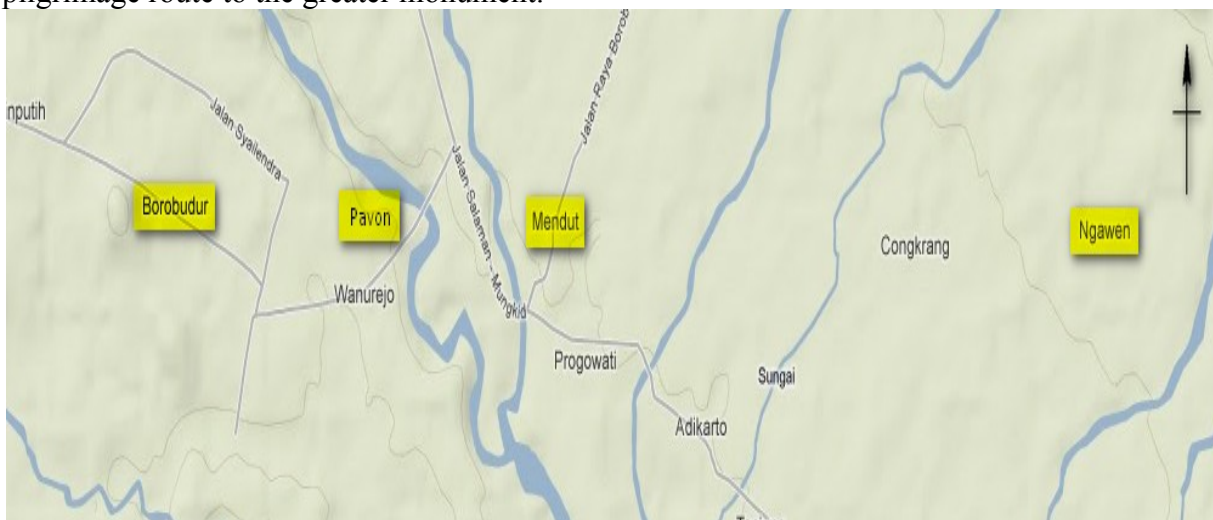
Many of the reliefs in the next set have been identified as belonging to the Avadāna series of stories, which again tells of the karmic results of actions good and bad. A number of them – but not all apparently – occur in the collection known as the Divyāvadāna (the Divine Traditions), but many of the reliefs remain unidentified from those stories.

On the next level there are more Jātaka and Avadāna type stories, and also the beginnings of the illustrations of the major work that is featured at Borobudur, the Gaṇḍavyūha and its culminating hymn, the Bhadracarī, which tells of the young man Sudhana's pilgrimage along the Bodhisattva Path, in which he meets a series of spiritual friends who reveal parts of the truth which he seeks.

This is topped by three more levels where no reliefs occur. On the penultimate level we find chetiyas, or shrines, housing Buddha statues displaying particular gestures indicative of teaching and blessing, and at the top of the monument is a large stūpa, which dominates the whole construction.



That is an overview of the Candi, but it is far from the whole story, because it is clear that the monument was part of a larger construction which was built along a twelve kilometre lay line, that takes in the ancient candis of Pavon, Mendut and Ngawen as well. As with Borobudur itself the exact function of these temples in the greater scheme of things is still unclear, though they do in themselves house shrines and also have relief carvings, and may have been part of a pilgrimage route to the greater monument.

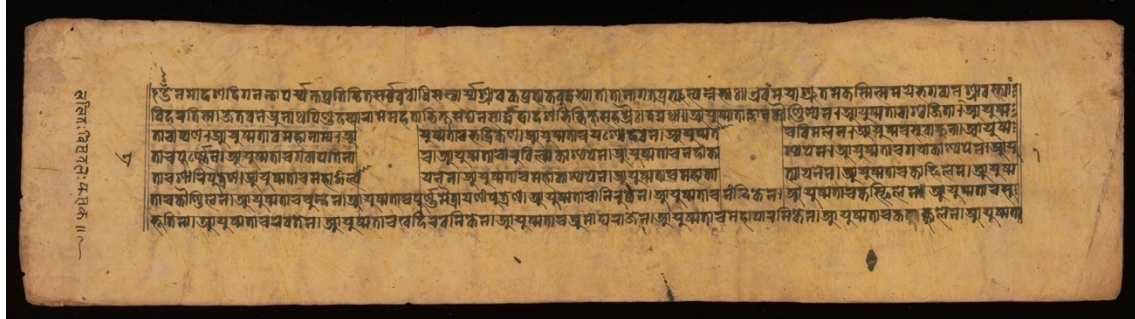


Lalitavistara

The Lalitavistara is one of the central texts of the Mahāyāna tradition, it tells part of the traditional story found in all the early schools of the life of the Buddha, and covers the period from when he is approached in his last life in the Tuṣita Heaven until the preaching of the first sermon in the Deer Park at Rṣipatana near Vārāṇasi.

The correct interpretation of the title is not known, as it is not explained in the text itself, but it seems to mean An Elaboration (*Vistara*) of the Play (*Lalita*) (of the Buddha's life), either meaning that this is an elaborate telling of the story, a telling *in extensio*; or an elaboration, or enlargement, of an earlier telling of the story.

The emphasis is on how the Bodhisattva attained Buddhahood and then started his teaching career, rather than on what happened after he began teaching. This corresponds to only a section of the story known to the early traditions, and omits his long career through many hundreds of lives as a Bodhisattva, and also his later life and teaching, and indeed his final Emancipation from the sorrowful world of *samsāra*.



Cambridge University Library (CC BY-NC 3.0)

The extended (*vaipūlya*) text as we have it now is a patchwork of early and later writings in prose and verse, that have been pieced together rather imperfectly, not having been very well edited or harmonised, so that some parts of the story are told more than once, and they sometimes even contradict one another.

Similarly, the language is also a kind of hybrid, with some early Buddhist Sanskritised Prākṛt, mixed with a more regular and well-formed Sanskrit, which shows that the time span for the writing of the text is probably quite wide, incorporating very early materials, which have an oral or folklorish feel to them, with writings in a more learned and studied fashion from a later period.

There are several editions of the text still available to us in Sanskrit, Tibetan and Chinese but they differ somewhat from each other, and although the written source for most of the panels can be identified, it appears that the text the sculptors worked from was either different from any we have received, or they felt able and free enough to depart from it when they wished to.

This is shown best when we come to the panels near the end of the story, which illustrate in fair detail the Buddha’s journey from Gayā, where he attained Awakening, to Rṣipatana, the place where he gave his First Sermon. In the Lalitavistara texts we receive this is passed over very quickly, but in the panels we see the Bodhisattva being entertained along the way by various gods and prominent people, something which is known to us not from the Lalitavistara, but from other texts like the Mahāvastu.

The Panels and their Iconography

The 120 panels that illustrate the Lalitavistara story form the upper registrar of the first floor of Borobudur, and are placed above similar panels illustrating the Divyāvadāna texts. They are all of the same height, being approx. 34" tall, with the width varying, the most regular being approx 9ft wide (giving an aspect of 2.9:1), but some that have to fit into corner-pieces are only a little over 6ft wide (2.2:1).



The story that is illustrated on the panels can be divided into five sections:

Conception and Pregnancy, panels 1-27

Birth and Youth, panels 28-52

Signs and Renunciation, panels 53-69

Meetings and Striving, panels 70-95

Awakening and Teaching, panels 96-120

When you take time to look a little more deeply at the reliefs you will see that the Borobudur craftsmen had a wonderful eye for detail, and also for conveying the emotion of the characters, as well as producing harmonious compositions.

The former is especially evident in the detail in which costumes, ornamentation and instruments are presented; and also in the amazing exuberance of flora and fauna which populate the reliefs.

The memorable expressions of the faces of the gods, bodhisattvas and humans, which make up the central figures, is sublime even after centuries of wear have taken their toll on the figures.

The ability to encompass stories, or parts of stories, on the reliefs and act as a storybook is remarkable, and it is possible to return to the reliefs over and over again and still find more of the story embedded in the stone.

The carvings themselves are bound by the blocks of stone the sculptors were carving on: these were not one large plain and open surface. The Lalitavisatara reliefs for instance, are four blocks high, and faces especially had to be fitted to the space available on the blocks, so we see both the constraint of the medium and the ingenuity of the artist is working with the materials on hand.



What follows now is a guide to the reliefs themselves which give detail on the story being illustrated, and also point out some of the significant parts of the relief, and things to look out for on the panels.

The stories of Buddha's previous life (Jataka) and other legendary people (Avadana)



A relief of Jataka story of giant turtle that saving drowned sailors.

Avadāna (Sanskrit; Pali cognate: *Apadāna* is the name given to a type of Buddhist literature correlating past lives' virtuous deeds to subsequent lives' events.

Richard Salomon described them as "stories, usually narrated by the Buddha, that illustrate the workings of karma by revealing the acts of a particular individual in a previous life and the results of those actions in his or her present life.

This literature includes around 600 stories in the Pāli language Apadāna ("Legends"). There are also a large number in Sanskrit collections, of which the chief are the Mahāsāṃghika's *Mahāvastu* ("Great Book") and the Sarvāstivāda's *Avadānaśataka* (*Century of Legends*) and *Divyāvadāna* (*The Heavenly Legend*).^[3] These latter collections include accounts relating to Gautama Buddha and the third-century BCE "righteous ruler," Ashoka.

Amongst the most popular *avadānas* of Northern Hinayāna Buddhism are:

- Ratnamālāvadāna, which is a collection of stories about traveling merchants.
- the story of Sudhana, preserved in the *Mahāvastu* under the title *Kinnarī jātaka*, amongst others, who falls in love with a kinnarī and saves her life.
- the *Vessantara Jātaka*, the story of the compassionate prince who gives away everything he owns, including his wife and children, thereby displaying the virtue of perfect charity.
- the *Suvannasankha jātaka*

Though of later date than most of the canonical Buddhist books, *avadānas* are held in veneration by the orthodox, and occupy much the same position with regard to Buddhism that the Puranas do towards Hinduism.^[3] They act in a similar way to other texts describing past deeds or past lives held in other traditions in the region, such as the aforementioned Puranas, the Dasam Granth and Janamsakhis of Sikhism, and the Kalpa Sūtra of Jainism.

Jatakas are stories about the Buddha before he was born as Prince Siddhartha. They are the stories that tell about the previous lives of the Buddha, in both human and animal form. The future Buddha may appear in them as a king, an outcast, a god, an elephant—but, in whatever form, he exhibits some virtue that the tale thereby inculcates.^[98] Avadanas are similar to jatakas, but the main figure is not the Bodhisattva himself. The saintly deeds in avadanas are attributed to other legendary persons. Jatakas and avadanas are treated in one and the same series in the reliefs of Borobudur.

The first twenty lower panels in the first gallery on the wall depict the *Sudhanakumaravadana*, or the saintly deeds of Sudhana. The first 135 upper panels in the same gallery on the balustrades are devoted to the 34 legends of the *Jatakamala*. The remaining 237 panels depict stories from other sources, as do the lower series and panels in the second gallery. Some jatakas are depicted twice, for example the story of King Sibhi (Rama's forefather).

Sudhana's search for the ultimate truth (Gandavyuha)



A relief of the Gandavyuha story from Borobudur 2nd level north wall.

The *Gaṇḍavyūha Sūtra* or *The Excellent Manifestation Sūtra* (Tib. sdong po bkod pa'i mdo, Sutra of the Tree's Display; cf. Skt "gaṇḍi", "the trunk of a tree from the root to the beginning of the branches") is a Buddhist Mahayana Sutra of Indian origin dating roughly c. 200 to 300 CE.

It depicts one of the world's most celebrated spiritual pilgrimages, and comprises the 39th chapter of the *Avatamsaka Sutra*, or *Flower Ornament Scripture*. In Buddhahadra's Chinese translation of the *Avatamsaka*, this 39th chapter is entitled "Entrance into the Dharma Realm".^[4] The Sutra is described as the "Sudhana's quest for the ultimate truth", as the sutra chronicles the journey of a disciple, Sudhana ("Excellent Riches"), as he encounters various teachings and Bodhisattvas until his journey reaches full circle and he awakens to teachings of the Buddha.

In his quest for enlightenment, recounted in the last chapter of the Flower Ornament Scripture, Sudhana would converse with a diverse array of 53 *kalyāṇa-mittatā* (wise advisors), 20 of whom are female, including an enlightened prostitute named Vasumitrā, Gautama Buddha's wife and his mother, a queen, a princess and several goddesses. Male sages include a slave, a child, a physician, and a ship's captain. The antepenultimate master of Sudhana's

pilgrimage is Maitreya. It is here that Sudhana encounters the Tower of Maitreya, which — along with Indra's net — is a most startling metaphor for the infinite:

In the middle of the great tower... he saw the billion-world universe... and everywhere there was Sudhana at his feet... Thus Sudhana saw Maitreya's practices of... transcendence over countless eons (*kalpa*), from each of the squares of the check board wall... In the same way Sudhana... saw the whole supernal manifestation, was perfectly aware of it, understood it, contemplated it, used it as a means, beheld it, and saw himself there.

The penultimate master that Sudhana visits is the Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva, the bodhisattva of great wisdom. Thus, one of the grandest of pilgrimages approaches its conclusion by revisiting where it began. The *Gaṇḍavyūha* suggests that with a subtle shift of perspective we may come to see that the enlightenment that the pilgrim so fervently sought was not only with him at every stage of his journey, but before it began as well—that enlightenment is not something to be gained, but "something" the pilgrim never departed from.

Gaṇḍavyūha is the story told in the final chapter of the *Avatamsaka Sutra* about Sudhana's tireless wandering in search of the Highest Perfect Wisdom. It covers two galleries (third and fourth) and also half of the second gallery, comprising in total of 460 panels.^[100] The principal figure of the story, the youth Sudhana, son of an extremely rich merchant, appears on the 16th panel. The preceding 15 panels form a prologue to the story of the miracles during Buddha's *samadhi* in the Garden of Jeta at Sravasti.

Sudhana was instructed by Manjusri to meet the monk Megasri, his first spiritual friend. As his journey continues, Sudhana meets 53 teachers, such as Supratisthita, the physician Megha (Spirit of Knowledge), the banker Muktaka, the monk Saradhvaja, the upasika Asa (Spirit of Supreme Enlightenment), Bhismottaranirghosa, the Brahmin Jayosmayatna, Princess Maitrayani, the monk Sudarsana, a boy called Indriyesvara, the upasika Prabhuta, the banker Ratnachuda, King Anala, the god Siva Mahadeva, Queen Maya, Bodhisattva Maitreya and then back to Manjusri. Each spiritual friend gives Sudhana specific teachings, knowledge, and wisdom. These meetings are shown in the third gallery.

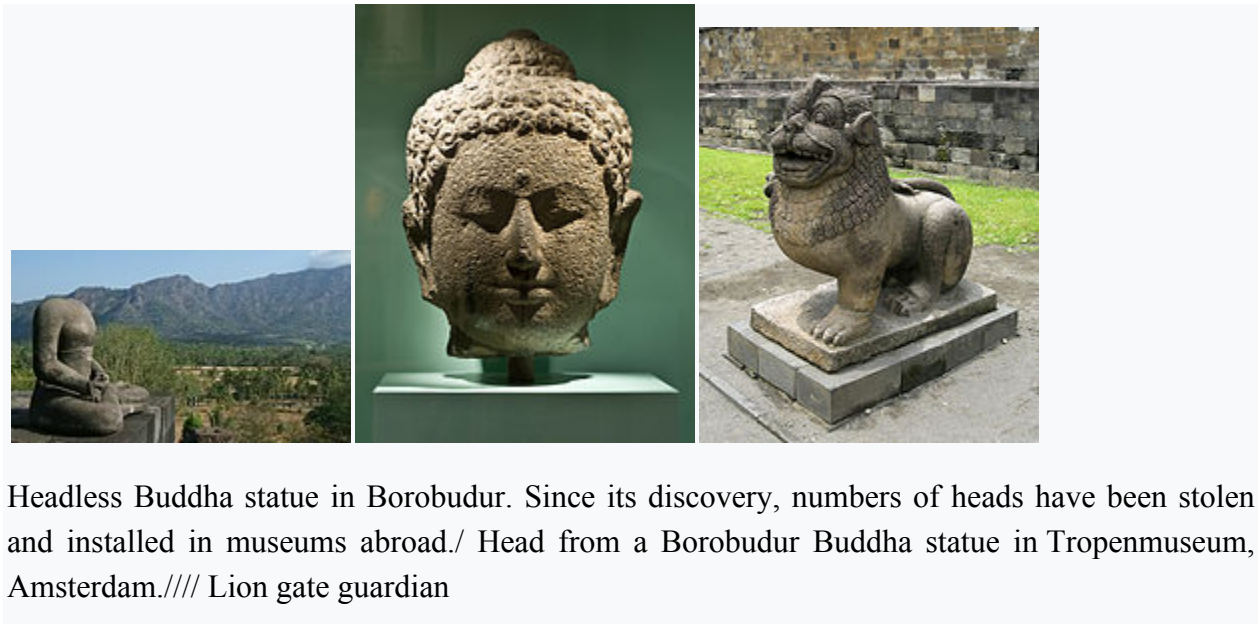
After a second meeting with Manjusri, Sudhana went to the residence of Bodhisattva Samantabhadra, depicted in the fourth gallery. The entire series of the fourth gallery is devoted to the teaching of Samantabhadra. The narrative panels finally end with Sudhana's achievement of the Supreme Knowledge and the Ultimate Truth.



A Buddha statue with the hand position of *dharmachakra mudra*

Apart from the story of the **Buddhist cosmology** carved in stone, Borobudur has many statues of various Buddhas. The cross-legged statues are seated in a lotus position and distributed on the five square platforms (the *Rupadhatu* level), as well as on the top platform (the *Arupadhatu* level).


The Buddha statues are in niches at the *Rupadhatu* level, arranged in rows on the outer sides of the balustrades, the number of statues decreasing as platforms progressively diminish to the upper level. The first balustrades have 104 niches, the second 104, the third 88, the fourth 72 and the fifth 64. In total, there are 432 Buddha statues at the *Rupadhatu* level.^[4] At the *Arupadhatu* level (or the three circular platforms), Buddha statues are placed inside perforated stupas. The first circular platform has 32 stupas, the second 24 and the third 16, which adds up to 72 stupas. Of the original 504 Buddha statues, over 300 are damaged (mostly headless), and 43 are missing. Since the monument's discovery, heads have been acquired as collector's items, mostly by Western museums. Some of these Buddha heads are now displayed in numbers of museums, such as the Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam, Musée Guimet in Paris, and The British Museum in London. Germany has in 2014 returned its collection and funded their reattachment and further conservation of the site.



Headless Buddha statue in Borobudur. Since its discovery, numbers of heads have been stolen and installed in museums abroad./ Head from a Borobudur Buddha statue in Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam.//// Lion gate guardian

At first glance, all the Buddha statues appear similar, but there is a subtle difference between them in the *mudras*, or the position of the hands. There are five groups of *mudra*: North, East, South, West and Zenith, which represent the five cardinal compass points according to Mahayana. The first four balustrades have the first four *mudras*: North, East, South and West, of which the Buddha statues that face one compass direction have the corresponding *mudra*. Buddha statues at the fifth balustrades and inside the 72 stupas on the top platform have the same *mudra*: Zenith. Each *mudra* represents one of the Five Dhyani Buddhas; each has its own symbolism.¹ Following the order of *Pradakshina* (clockwise circumambulation) starting from the East, the *mudras* of the Borobudur buddha statues are:

Statue	Mudra	Symbolic meaning	Dhyani Buddha	Cardinal Point	Location of the Statue
	<i>Bhumisparsa mudra</i>	Calling the Earth to witness	Aksobhya	East	<i>Rupadhatu</i> niches on the first four eastern balustrades
	<i>Vara mudra</i>	Benevolence, alms giving	Ratnasambhava	South	<i>Rupadhatu</i> niches on the first four southern balustrades
	<i>Dhyana mudra</i>	Concentration and meditation	Amitabha	West	<i>Rupadhatu</i> niches on the first four western balustrades
	<i>Abhaya mudra</i>	Courage, fearlessness	Amoghasiddhi	North	<i>Rupadhatu</i> niches on the first four northern balustrades
	<i>Vitarka mudra</i>	Reasoning and virtue	Vairochana	Zenith	<i>Rupadhatu</i> niches in all directions on the fifth (uppermost) balustrade

Statue	Mudra	Symbolic meaning	Dhyani Buddha	Cardinal Point	Location of the Statue
	<i>Dharmachakra mudra</i>	Turning the Wheel of <i>dharma</i> (law)	Vairochana	Zenith	<i>Arupadhatu</i> in 72 perforated stupas on three rounded platforms

The aesthetic and technical mastery of Borobudur, and also its sheer size, has evoked the sense of grandeur and pride for Indonesians. Just like Angkor Wat for Cambodia, Borobudur has become a powerful symbol for Indonesia — to testify for its past greatness. Indonesia's first President Sukarno made a point of showing the site to foreign dignitaries. The Suharto regime — realized its important symbolic and economic meanings — diligently embarked on a massive project to restore the monument with the help from UNESCO. Many museums in Indonesia contain a scale model replica of Borobudur. The monument has become almost an icon, grouped with the wayang puppet play and gamelan music into a vague classical Javanese past from which Indonesians are to draw inspiration.

Several archaeological relics taken from Borobudur or its replica have been displayed in some museums in Indonesia and abroad. Other than Karmawibhanga Museum within Borobudur temple ground, some museums boast to host relics of Borobudur, such as Indonesian National Museum in Jakarta, Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam, British Museum in London, and Thai National Museum in Bangkok. Louvre museum in Paris, Malaysian National Museum in Kuala Lumpur, and Museum of World Religions in New Taipei also displayed the replica of Borobudur. The monument has drawn global attention to the classical Buddhist civilization of ancient Java.

The rediscovery and reconstruction of Borobudur has been hailed by Indonesian Buddhists as the sign of the Buddhist revival in Indonesia. In 1934, Narada Thera, a missionary monk from Sri Lanka, visited Indonesia for the first time as part of his journey to spread the Dharma in Southeast Asia. This opportunity was used by a few local Buddhists to revive Buddhism in Indonesia. A Bodhi Tree planting ceremony was held in Southeastern side of Borobudur on 10 March 1934 under the blessing of Narada Thera, and some Upasakas were ordained as monks. Once a year, thousands of Buddhist from Indonesia and neighboring countries flock to Borobudur to commemorate national Waisak celebration.

The emblem of Central Java province and Magelang Regency bears the image of Borobudur. It has become the symbol of Central Java, and also Indonesia on a wider scale. Borobudur has become the name of several establishments, such as Borobudur University, Borobudur Hotel in Central Jakarta, and several Indonesian restaurants abroad. Borobudur has appeared on Rupiah banknotes and stamps and in numbers of books, publications, documentaries and Indonesian tourism promotion materials. The monument has become one of the main tourism attraction in Indonesia, vital for generating local economy in the region surrounding the temple.

The tourism sector of the city of Yogyakarta for example, flourishes partly because of its proximity to Borobudur and Prambanan temples.

Behind the splendor of the great temple built by Syailendra dynasty on the 8th century AD which is also known as one of the 7 wonders of the world. Till this day, the **Borobudur temple** was still leaves some big question marks about its existence. The temple has been described in a number of ways. Its basic structure resembles that of a pyramid, yet it has been also referred to as a caitya (shrine), a stupa (reliquary), and a sacred mountain. In fact, the name Śailendra literally means “Lord of the Mountain.” While the temple exhibits characteristics of all these architectural configurations, its overall plan is that of a three-dimensional mandala—a diagram of the cosmos used for meditation—and it is in that sense where the richest understanding of the monument occurs.

Moving past the base and through the four galleries, the devotee emerges onto the three upper terraces, encountering 72 stupas each containing a three-dimensional sculpture of a seated Buddha within a stone latticework. At the temple’s apex sits the large central stupa, a symbol of the enlightened mind.^[56]

The experience of meaning

While the sheer size and scope of a mandala structure such as this makes the site worthy of admiration, it is important to understand how the experience of Borobudur relates to the philosophic and spiritual underpinnings of the Buddhist religion it reifies and commemorates. Since its inception, roughly 2500 years ago, Buddhism has directly engaged what it sees as the paradoxical nature of human existence. The most essential tenet the religion promulgates is the impermanent, transient nature of existence. Transcendental wisdom via the Dharma (the Noble Eight-Fold Path) hinges on recognizing that attachment to the idea of a fixed, immutable “self” is a delusion.

Enlightenment entails embracing the concept of “no-self” (*anattā*), understood to be at the heart of eliminating the suffering and dissatisfaction (*dukkha*) of sentient beings. This is the ultimate message expressed in the sacred scriptures that are solidified in artistic magnificence along the stone walls and railings of Borobudur. The physical movement of circumambulating the structure symbolizes the non-physical—or spiritual—path of enlightenment. In a real sense, then, the concept of path within Borobudur monumentalizes the impermanent. Like a river that is never the same from moment to moment, to physically move along the path while meditating on the spiritual message of the sutras is meant to help one fully embrace the Buddha’s paradoxical message of impermanence.



Borobudur, photo: Paul Atkinson (CC BY-SA 2.0)

Crowning stupa, Borobudur, Indonesia //From the Gandavyuha Sutra, Borobudur, photo: Photo Dharma (CC BY 2.0)

From the Gandavyuha Sutra, Borobudur, Indonesia (photo: Photo Dharma, CC BY 2.0)

The texts illustrated on the walls refer to pathways as well. For instance, the Gandavyuha Sutra forms a major segment of the temple’s upper galleries. The last chapter of a larger text called the Flower Garland Sutra, it relates the story of Suddhana, a youth who commences a journey to meet fifty-three teachers while seeking the path to enlightenment. The concept of “path” is a central theme in the text. He eventually meets an enlightened being (bodhisattva) named Samantabhadra. Excerpts from the larger sutra illustrate the concepts under discussion:
“I will lead those who have lost their way to the right road. I will be a bright light for those in the dark night, and cause the poor and destitute to uncover hidden treasures. The Bodhisattva impartially benefits all living beings in this manner.

I vow to shut the door to evil destinies and open the right paths of humans, gods and that of
Nirvana.

Once any sentient beings see the Buddha, it will cause them to clear away habitual obstructions.

And forever abandon devilish actions: This is the path traveled by Illumination.

Sentient Beings are blinded by ignorance, always confused; the light of Buddha illuminates the path of safety. To rescue them and cause suffering to be removed.

All sentient beings are on false paths—Buddha shows them the right path, inconceivable, causing all worlds to be vessels of truth...”

The full text is available [here](#).

From darkness into light

The idea of moving from the darkness into the light is the final element of the experience of Borobudur. The temple’s pathway takes one from the earthly realm of desire (*kamadhatu*), represented and documented on the hidden narratives of the structure’s earthbound base, through the world of forms (*rupadhatu*) as expounded on the narratives carved along the four galleries set at right angles, until one finally emerges into the realm of formlessness (*arupadhatu*) as symbolized and manifested in the open circular terraces crowned with 72 stupas.

However, the symbolization of enlightenment these stupas represent is not intended to be merely aesthetic. Buddhist stupas and mandalas are understood as “spiritual technologies” that harness spiritual “energies” in the creation of sacred space. The repetition of form and the circumambulatory progress of the pilgrim mimic, and thereby access, the cosmological as a microcosm. The clockwise movement around the cosmic center reproduces the macrocosmic path of the sun. Thus, when one emerges from the dark galleries representing the realms of desire and form into the light of the “formless” circular open air upper walkways, the material effect of light on one’s physical form merges concomitantly with the spiritual enlightenment generated by the metaphysical journey of the sacred path.

Light, in all its paradoxes, is the ultimate goal. The crowning stupa of this sacred mountain is dedicated to the “Great Sun Buddha” Vairocana. The temple sits in cosmic proximity to the nearby volcano Mt. Merapi. During certain times of the year the path of the rising sun in the East seems to emerge out of the mountain to strike the temple’s peak in radiant synergy. Light illuminates the stone in a way that is intended to be more than beautiful. The brilliance of the site can be found in how the Borobudur mandala blends the metaphysical and physical, the symbolic and the material, the cosmological and the earthly within the structure of its physical setting and the framework of spiritual paradox.

The journey

Set high upon a hill vertically enhanced by its builders to achieve a greater elevation, Borobudur consists of a series of open-air passageways that radiate around a central axis mundi (cosmic axis). Devotees circumambulate clockwise along walkways that gradually ascend to its uppermost level. At Borobudur, geometry, geomancy, and theology all instruct adherents toward the ultimate goal of enlightenment. Meticulously carved relief sculptures mediate a physical and spiritual journey that guides pilgrims progressively toward higher states of consciousness.

The entire site contains 504 statues of the Buddha. 1460 stone reliefs on the walls and opposite balustrades decorate the first four galleries, with an additional 1212 decorative reliefs augmenting the path. The relief sculptures narrate the Buddha’s teachings (the Dharma), depict various events related to his past lives (Jataka tales), and illustrate didactic stories taken from important Buddhist scriptures (sutras). Interestingly, another 160 relief sculptures adorn the base of the monument, but are concealed behind stone buttresses that were added shortly after the building’s construction in order to further support the structure’s weight. The hidden narrative reliefs were photographed when they were discovered in the late 19th century before the stones were put back to help ensure the temple’s stability.

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CHAPTER III

Borobudur- *BIG BUDDHA*- as a complete exposition of doctrine

Citation: Dr uday Dokras, Borobudur- *BIG BUDDHA*- as a complete exposition of doctrine Indo Nordic Author's Collective 2021

You are walking down a forest path. You meet a man who positively beams serenity. You ask his teacher's name. He replies, Nobody is my teacher. Nobody is comparable to me. I am the only perfect buddha in the world. I have attained supreme enlightenment. I am conqueror over all. I know everything. I am not contaminated by anything at all... I have all the powers of the omniscient. I am an arhat in the world. I am unrivaled in all realms, including those of the gods. I am the victor who conquered Mara. This happened—so we are told—to a wanderer named Upagu, sometime in the fifth century BCE. Upagu answered with a shrug, "perhaps," and left quickly by a different road. Now we remember Upagu as the fool. He could have been Fakyamuni Buddha's first disciple. But where a wiser man would have recognized the truthful words of a Buddha fresh from enlightenment, Upagu heard a megalomaniacal rant: violent words of conquest seemingly at odds with the serene visage of the man who spoke them. Would you have recognized the man as enlightened? Would you have discerned a spirit of universal peace, beyond politics, in words that valorize hierarchy, celebrate raw power, and speak well of battle?

I Raniero Gnoli, ed., The Gilgit Manuscript of the Sakghabhedavastu (Rome: ISMEO, 1977), 1:132.

Someone asked : Does enlightenment mean illumination?

Illumination is when someone shines a torch in your ear. Enlightenment is when you're the torch.

Introduction: Scholars disagree about the nature of Candi Borobudur, for instance, whether it is a symbolic mountain of the Sailendra kingdom, a stupa or a mandala. At its simplest, a stupa is a dirt burial mound faced with stone. In Buddhism, the earliest stupas contained portions of the Buddha's ashes, and as a result, the stupa began to be associated with the body of the Buddha. Adding the Buddha's ashes to the mound of dirt activated it with the energy of the Buddha himself. Borobudur is built as a single large stupa and, when viewed from above, takes the form of a giant tantric Buddhist mandala, simultaneously representing the Buddhist cosmology and the nature of mind. The original foundation is a square, approximately 118 metres (387 ft) on each side. Kesariya Stupa is a Buddhist stupa in Kesariya, located at a distance of 110 kilometres (68 mi) from Patna, in the Champaran (east) district of Bihar, India. The first construction of the Stupa is dated to the 3rd century BCE.

A stupa, Buddhist commemorative monument usually housing sacred relics associated with the Buddha or other saintly persons. The hemispherical form of the stupa appears to have derived from pre-Buddhist burial mounds in India. Many stupas are Pooja Pradakshina on all levels? What does that mean and how to explain to non- hindus? Puja is paying obeisance to God and pradakshina is circumambulation of the Godly image. Puja involves a ritual= whether in

Buddhism or Hinduism. Lighting Candles, Ringing bells, turning prayer wheels all are rituals. One such ritual is circumambulation. In Borobudur as well as many other Stupas some discussed below this ritual is and that Stupa are presented. One pays one's respect by circumambulation to the stupa.



Kesariya Stupa seen in the above picture, is a Buddhist stupa in Kesariya, located at a distance of 110 kilometres (68 mi) from Patna, in the Champaran (east) district of Bihar, India. The first construction of the Stupa is dated to the 3rd century BCE. Kesariya Stupa has a circumference of almost 400 feet (120 m) and rises to a height of about 104 feet (32 m).

The construction of stupas were considered acts of great merit. The purpose of stupas were mainly to enshrine relics of Buddha. The design specifications are consistent within most of the stupas, entrances to stupas are laid out so that their centre lines point to the relic chambers.

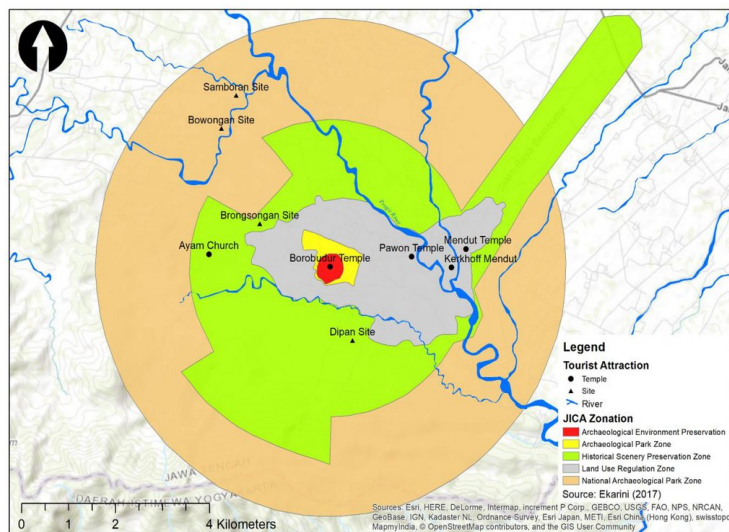
The **Shailendra dynasty** with a name derived from Sanskrit combined words *Śaila* and *Indra*, meaning "King of the Mountain", was the name of a notable Indianised dynasty that emerged in 8th-century Java, whose reign signified a cultural renaissance in the region. The Shailendras were active promoters of Mahayana Buddhism with the glimpses of Hinduism, and covered the Kedu Plain of Central Java with Buddhist monuments, one of which is the colossal stupa of Borobudur, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

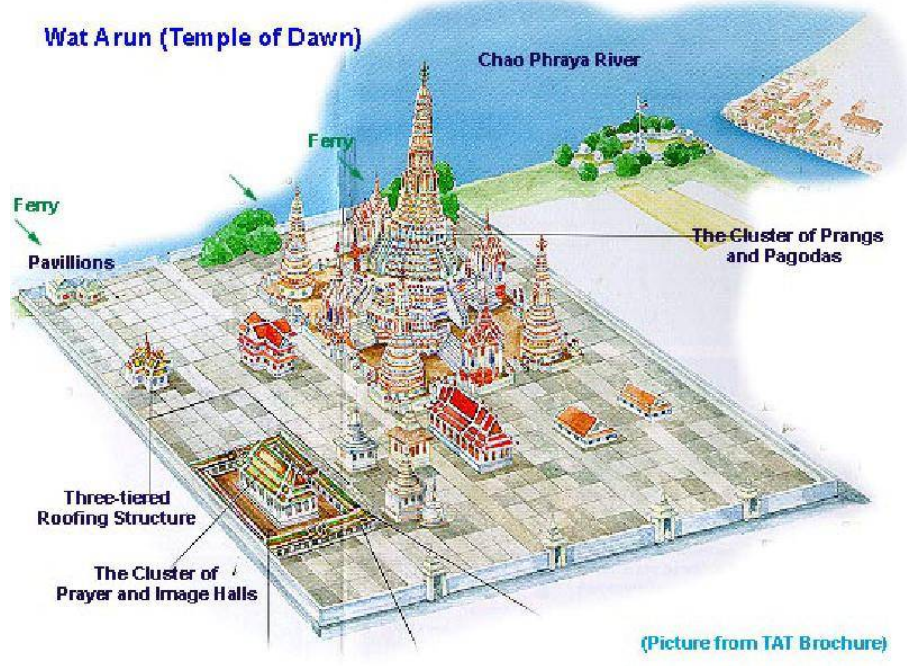


The bas relief of 8th century Borobudur depict a King sitting in *Maharajalilasana* (king's posture or royal ease) pose, with his Queen and their subjects, the scene is based on Shailendran royal court. The

Shailendras are considered to have been a thalassocracy and ruled vast swathes of maritime Southeast Asia, however they also relied on agricultural pursuits, by way of intensive rice cultivation on the Kedu Plain of Central Java. The dynasty appeared to be the ruling family of both the Medang Kingdom of Central Java, for some period, and the Srivijaya Kingdom in Sumatra.

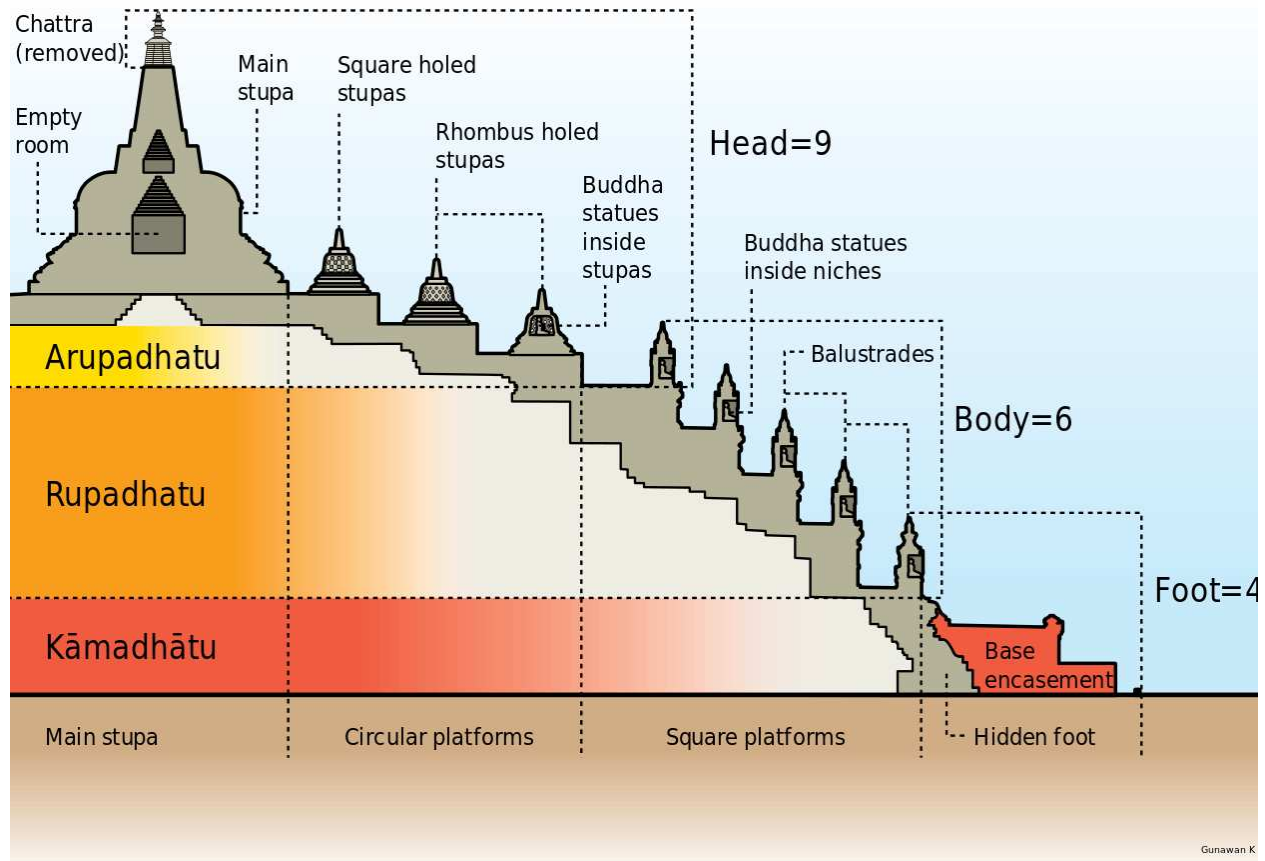
The inscriptions created by Shailendras use three languages; Old Malay, Old Javanese, and Sanskrit - written either in the Kawi alphabet, or pre-Nāgarī script. The use of Old Malay has sparked speculation of a Sumatran origin, or Srivijayan connection of this family. On the other hand, the use of Old Javanese suggests their firm political establishment on Java. The use of Sanskrit usually indicates the official nature, and/or religious significance, of the event described in any given inscription.





Borobudur Cross Section and Building Ratio

Borobudur, Central Java, Indonesia



SIMILARITIES WITH BORIOBUDUR

It has been noted that the Kesariya stupa shares many architectural similarities with the Buddhist temple located in Indonesia, Borobudur which points to a historical connections between east India and South East Asia. Both monuments share a circular mandala form with terraces containing figures of Buddha in the niches. Like Borobudur, Kesariya is also built atop of a hill. The excavated chambers at Kesariya show a combination of statues in *bhumisparsha* (of Akshobya) and *dhyanimudra* (of Amitabha) on the same side, whereas Borobudur houses four Jina Buddhas, displaying their respective mudras on the four sides of the monument.

In Indonesian, ancient temples are referred to as *candi*; thus locals refer to "Borobudur Temple" as *Candi Borobudur*. The term *candi* also loosely describes ancient structures, for example gates and baths. The origins of the name *Borobudur*, is derived from Boro for big and Budur for Buddha. The name Borobudur was first written in Raffles's book on Javan history. Raffles wrote about a monument called *Borobudur*, but there are no older documents suggesting the same name. The only old Javanese manuscript that hints the monument called *Budur* as a holy Buddhist sanctuary is *Nagarakretagama*, written by Mpu Prapanca, a Buddhist scholar of Majapahit court, in 1365. Most *candi* are named after a nearby village. If it followed Javanese language conventions and was named after the nearby village of *Bore*, the monument should have been named "BudurBoro".

Raffles thought that *Budur* might correspond to the modern Javanese word *Buda* ("ancient")—i.e., "ancient Boro". He also suggested that the name might derive from *boro*, meaning "great" or "honourable" and *Budur* for Buddha. However, another archaeologist suggests the second component of the name (*Budur*) comes from Javanese term *bhudhara* ("mountain").

Vihara Buddha Uhr: Another possible etymology by Dutch archaeologist A.J. Bernet Kempers suggests that *Borobudur* is a corrupted simplified local Javanese pronunciation of *Biara Beduhur* written in Sanskrit as *Vihara Buddha Uhr*. The term *Buddha-Uhr* could mean "the city of Buddhas", while another possible term *Beduhur* is probably an Old Javanese term, still survived today in Balinese vocabulary, which means "a high place", constructed from the stem word *dhuhur* or *luhur* (high). This suggests that Borobudur means vihara of Buddha located on a high place or on a hill. As far as I understand, Vihara Buddha means the Abode of Buddha and not the city...

Inscriptions: The construction and inauguration of a sacred Buddhist building—possibly a reference to Borobudur was mentioned in two inscriptions, both discovered in Kedu, Temanggung Regency.

1. The Karangtengah inscription, dated 824, mentioned a sacred building named *Jinalaya* (the realm of those who have conquered worldly desire and reached enlightenment), inaugurated by Pramodhawardhani, daughter of Samaratungga.
2. The Tri Tepusan inscription, dated 842, is mentioned in the *sima*, the (tax-free) lands awarded by Çrī Kahulunnan (Pramodhawardhani) to ensure the funding and maintenance of a *Kamūlān* called *Bhūmisambhāra*. *Kamūlān* is from the word *mula*, which means "the place of origin", a sacred building to honor the ancestors, probably those of the Sailendras.

Bhūmi Sambhāra Bhudhāra: Casparis suggested that *Bhūmi Sambhāra Bhudhāra*, which in Sanskrit means "the mountain of combined virtues of the ten stages of Bodhisattvahood", was the original name of Borobudur. That is however incorrect, even a schoolchild in India will tell you that Bhumi means land. See the puja bhoomipoojan or the actress of Bollywood- Bhumi Pednekar.

Apart from being called a most impressive monument, Borobudur is both a temple and a complete exposition of doctrine, designed as a whole, and completed as it was designed, with only one major afterthought. It seems to have provided a pattern for Hindu temple mountains at Angkor, and in its own day it must have been one of the wonders of the Asian world.

Built about 800, it probably fell into neglect by *c.* 1000 and was overgrown. It was excavated and restored by the Dutch between 1907 and 1911. It now appears as a large square plinth (the processional path) upon which stand five terraces gradually diminishing in size. The plans of the squares are stepped out twice to a central projection. Above the fifth terrace stands a series of three diminishing circular terraces carrying small stupas, crowned at the centre of the summit by a large circular bell-shaped stupa. Running up the centre of each face is a long staircase; all four are given equal importance. There are no internal cell shrines, and the terraces are solid. Borobudur is thus a Buddhist stupa in the Indian sense.

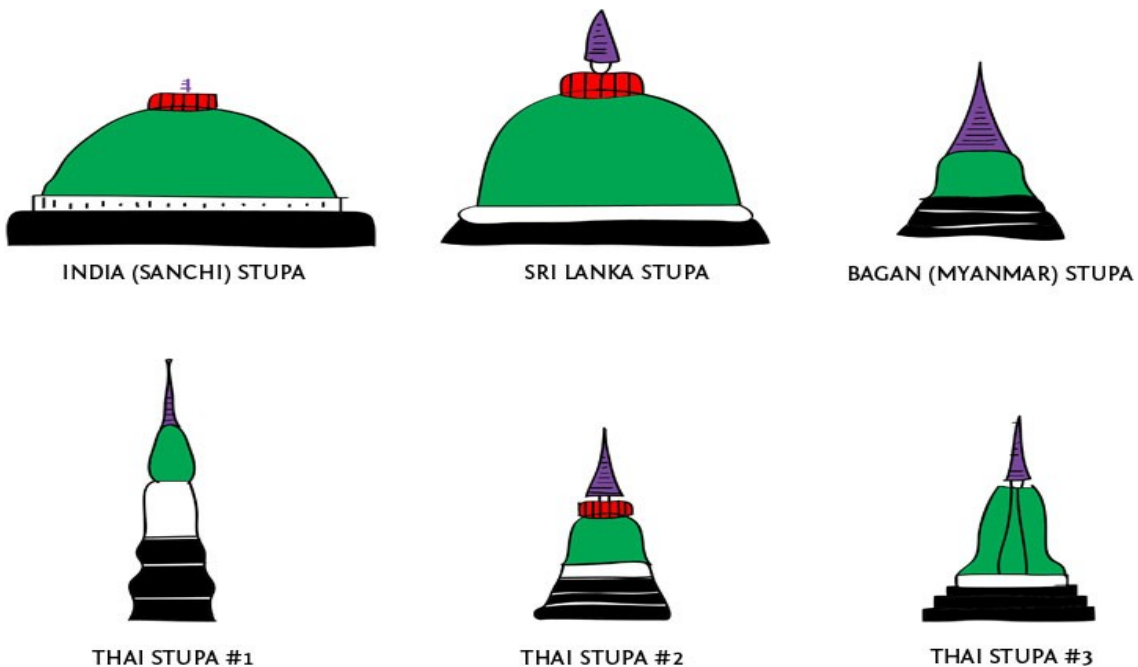
Each of the square terraces is enclosed in a high wall with pavilions and niches along the whole perimeter, which prevents the visitor on one level from seeing into any of the other levels. All of these terraces are lined with relief sculptures, and the niches contain Buddha figures. The top three circular terraces are open and unwallled, and the 72 lesser bell-shaped stupas they support are of open stone latticework; inside each was a huge stone Buddha figure. The convex contour of the whole monument is steepest near the ground, flattening as it reaches the

summit. The bottom plinth, the processional path, was the major afterthought. It consists of a massive heap of stone pressed up against the original bottom story of the designed structure so that it obscures an entire series of reliefs—a few of which have been uncovered in modern times. It was probably added to hold together the bottom story, which began to spread under the pressure of the immense weight of earth and stone accumulated above.



Borobudur: Buddha sculpture and stupas

The Thai & Myanmar Stupas—There are three basic forms of the Thai Stupa; each will be explored in turn. These forms — as well as those of India, Sri Lanka, and Myanmar’s Bagan (Burma) — are laid out in Fig. below. Note that andas are highlighted in green, harmikas in red, chatras in purple, and bases or terraces in black. We will continue to refer to back to this three style framework as we review the stupas in specific temples in sections that follow.



Thai stupa predecessors and types.

The whole building symbolizes a Buddhist transition from the lowest manifestations of reality at the base, through a series of regions representing psychological states, toward the ultimate condition of spiritual enlightenment at the summit.

Maynmar influenced?-For about 250 years, from *c.* 1044 to 1284 CE, Pagan or Bagan, was the capital of a kingdom covering most of what is modern-day Myanmar (Burma).

During this period, more than 2,500 Buddhist monuments—stupas, temples, and monasteries—were built in and around the city alone; further religious edifices were erected in the provincial centers of the kingdom, such as Pakkoku, Sale, Salin, and Myinmu.

The people of Pagan were in close contact with other Buddhist communities of South and Southeast Asia, most notably Sri Lankans, Northeast Indians, and the Khmers, and perhaps with the Tibetans and Chinese as well. Between these regions and communities, there was a regular flow of royal ambassadors, Buddhist monks, artists, pilgrims, and other travelers, who exchanged letters and Buddhist scriptures, skills, and ideas.

Given this position as a nodal point in a wider Buddhist network, the Buddhism of Pagan was cosmopolitan in nature, embracing influences from various sources and different traditions. Particularly in the late 12th and the early 13th centuries, when increased contact with external Buddhist communities coincided with the maturation of internal developments, Pagan became the crucible in which the major features of Burmese Theravada were mixed.

What is enlightenment? For Buddhists it involves the discovery of the truth of dukkha—pain, suffering, and sorrow—followed by the realization that dukkha can be brought to an end. In like manner, Protestant Christians speak of enlightenment as a moment when, touched by God, one becomes aware of one’s own escape from eternal damnation. Likewise, European philosophers have imagined an age of Enlightenment, a time of individual freedom and social equality. In all three cases, enlightenment, as insight into reality, is conjoined with enlightenment, as a state of harmony and peace, beyond politics. Beyond Enlightenment treats the political implications of this apolitical ideal. It is a sophisticated study of some of the assumptions underlying, and ramifications involved in, the study of Buddhism (especially, but not exclusively, in the West), and of the tendency of scholars to ground their study of Buddhism in particular assumptions about the Buddha’s enlightenment and a particular understanding of religion, traced back through Western orientalist to the Enlightenment and the Protestant Reformation. Richard Cohen’s book will be of interest to buddhologists, indologists, scholars of comparative religion, and intellectual historians. - Richard S. Cohen

Borobudur represents the unity of the cosmos permeated by the light of truth, which the visitor will search and get as he climbs up the terraces. This transformation occurs while climbing through the levels of Borobudur, encountering illustrations of progressively more profound doctrines nearer to the summit.

The indefinable ultimate spiritual state is at the topmost terrace, where an unfinished image of Buddha that was hidden from the spectator’s view, symbolized that crystallization of fruition. The 72 openwork stupas on the circular terraces, with their barely visible internal Buddhas,

symbolize incomplete states of enlightenment on the borders of manifestation. The usual way for a pilgrim to pay reverence to a Buddhist stupa is to walk around it, keeping it on his right hand. The vast series of reliefs about three feet (one metre) high on the exterior walls of the terraces would thus be read by the visitor in series from right to left. Between the reliefs are decorative scroll panels, and a hundred monster-head waterspouts carry off the tropical rainwater. The gates on the stairways between terraces are of the standard Indonesian type, with the face of the Kala monster at the apex spouting his scrolls.



The reliefs of the lowest level illustrate scenes that show the causal workings of good and bad deeds through successive reincarnations. They show, for example, how those who hunt, kill, and cook living creatures, such as tortoises and fish, are themselves cooked in hells or die as children in their next life. They show how foolish people waste their time at entertainments. From these scenes of everyday life, one moves to the terraces above, where the subject matter becomes more profound and metaphysical. It illustrates important Mahayana texts dealing with the self-discovery and education of the bodhisattva, conceived as being possessed by compassion for and devoted wholly to the salvation of all creatures. The reliefs on the uppermost terraces gradually become more static. The sensuous roundness of the forms of the figures is not abated, but, in the design, great emphasis is laid upon horizontals and verticals and upon static, formal enclosures of repeated figures and gestures. At the summit all movement disappears, and the design is entirely subordinated to the circle enclosing the stupa.

The iconography of Borobudur suggests that the legend of the royal bodhisattva recounted in many of the reliefs was meant to “authenticate” some king or dynasty. Yet, it hardly seems possible that Borobudur was the focus of a specific royal cult, as there is no provision at all for the performance of royal ritual. It must have been, then, in some sense a monument for the whole people, the focus for their religion and life, and a perpetual reminder of the doctrines of their religion.

A considerable number of bronzes, some small, some large, have been found in Indonesia in a style close to that of the sculptures of Borobudur and Mendut. One fine, large standing image comes from Kotabangun in Borneo, but some come from Java. Many small cult images of the Buddha and Buddhist deities exist. Some are close in type to the early Pala images of Indian Bihar, the homeland of Buddhism, with which the Javanese must have maintained close touch. A few small but extremely fine gold figurines of undoubted Javanese workmanship have also turned up. For all their small size they must rate as first-class works of art. As well as images, there are many beautiful bronze ceremonial objects, such as lamps, trays, and bells.

Pyramid? We all know about Great Pyramids of Ancient Egypt. How many of us know about Great Pyramid of Ancient India?

Bareilly, formerly known as Ahichhatra was mentioned in Mahabharata as capital of Draupada's kingdom Panchala. It was later conquered by Arjuna and bestowed upon Drona. Drupada had to shift his capital to Kampilya in Southern Panchala. Ahicchatra was described as a great city

Excavations in Bareilly have uncovered a giant ancient temple in form of a large pyramid. Even the ruin is 22 meters in height(for comparison, Kaaba is 13 m) and there is a Linga on top. The site is 187 hectares. By comparison, London of Roman era was just 140 hectares

If the brick temple ruin is so massive even after its destruction by ISLAMIC invaders in 12th century , one could only imagine how gigantic the temple would have been in its heydays. Ahichhatra is probably the longest surviving site in India. Remains from earliest layers in 2000 BC include ochre colored pottery followed by Painted Grey Ware(PGW). The site survived for 3000 years until "iconoclastic tendencies" in 12th century destroyed it. Many Hindu sculptures have been found at the site They are now in Museums around the world. There is a sculpture of Ganga standing on Makara. Another is of lord Shiva in what seems to be depiction of Kiratarjuniya scene





Considering the dimensions of the site covering an area of over 187 hectare, it is, however, interesting to note that there is no perennial source of water despite the site being located between Ramganga and Ganga. It is no doubt one of the largest (area wise) and probably the longest surviving site in India. The earliest known culture here is that of ochre coloured ware and the habitation moves along with changing paraphernalia in tune with changing times until the iconoclastic tendencies coupled with the catastrophic earthquake disrupt the city for good around 11th-12th century AD. With whatever modest and conservative estimation settlement here survived for more than 3000 years (from 2000 BC to 1100 AD).

Borobudur - Buddhist Stupa in the Indian sense

There are no internal cell shrines, and the terraces are solid. Borobudur is thus a Buddhist stupa in the Indian sense. Each of the square terraces is enclosed in a high wall with pavilions and niches along the whole perimeter, which prevents the visitor on one level from seeing into any of the other levels. What is the difference between stupa and pagoda?



While **there is not a clear distinction between** a stupa and a pagoda, a stupa tends to be a structure that usually can not be entered, while a pagoda is often referred to as a building that can be entered. It is easy to get confused because a pagoda is generally a temple, but the design of a pagoda evolved from stupas.

In the Borobudur, around the circular platforms are **72 openwork stupas**, each containing a statue of the Buddha. The vertical division of Borobudur Temple into base, body, and superstructure perfectly accords with the conception of the Universe in Buddhist cosmology.

First of all can be mentioned that nowhere else has it been found a combination of stupa and terraced circumambulatory platforms like what we have at Borobudur. Moreover, the whole structure might be regarded as an integration of the stupa concept and the terraced sanctuary. The last one being possibly inherited from the prehistoric period, functioning as a sanctuary to worship ancestors. Moreover, we found here at Borobudur a combination of circular and rectangular platforms. In terms of religious concepts and their physical-visual interpretations, there are two phenomena that can be indicated at Borobudur. The first is the physical-spatial interpretation of the concept of *bhumi* and *dhatu* as it has been interpreted and exposed in the previous studies of J.G. deCasparis, and the second one is regarding the pantheon and its placing within the structure of the sanctuary.

It has been said that the merchants and tradesmen from India, bringing with them a mixed bag of folk and oral traditions from the Indian spiritual heritage served as the source of inspiration to the Indonesian sculptors and grand visualisers alike. But what was the mixed bag like? Some interesting examples from Cambodia are seen in the Terrace of the Elephants at Angkor Thom, as well as at Bayon. Here we also find several hidden panels, much like the hidden base at Borobudur. This paper will explore both structural and metaphorical explanations for this hidden panel phenomenon.

The caitya worship is known as the belief in the descent of Buddharaja Maitreya. Descent or ascent. From being a prince with worldly possessions of immense value and appeasement, he became a hermit, a wanderer- seeking enlightenment and asking others to meditate and introspect and thus ascend. To a Higher Level!

Candi Borobudur and Candi Mendut were the two sites in Central Java that promoted caitya worship. Even before their establishment in the 8th century A.D., it is probable that the belief was already brought into Java by Gunavarman the architect of Borobudur in the beginning of the 5th century A. D.1

*1. A RE-INVESTIGATION OF THE NATURE OF CANDI BOROBUDUR by Kathy Cheng Mei Ku
Proceedings of INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR Borobudur, Magelang, f - 5'' July 2008 pn
Uncovering the Meaning of the Hidden Base of Candi Borobudur*

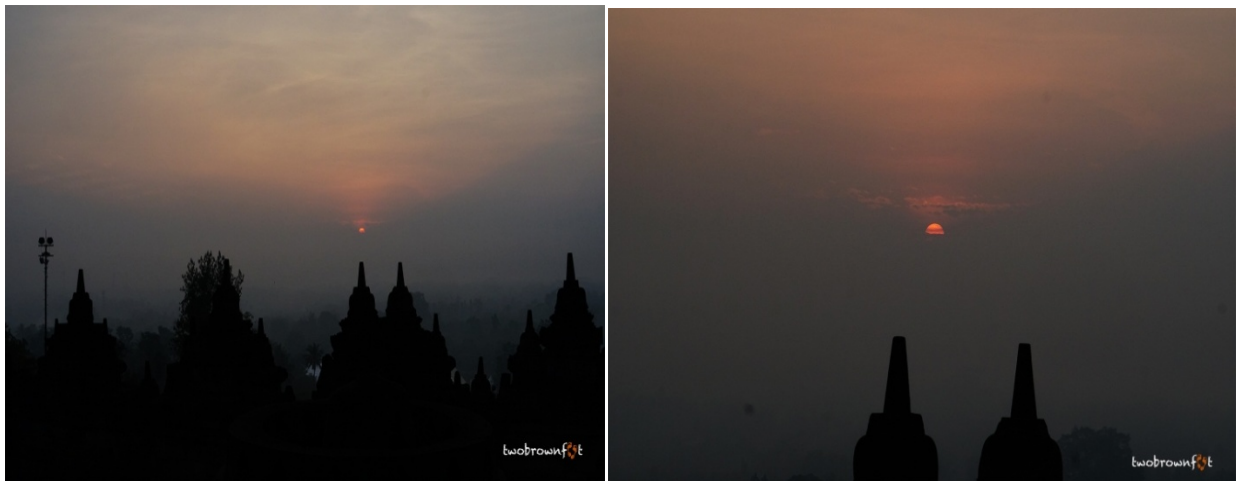
CHAPTER IV

From darkness into light --the Idea of Gunavarma behind the design of Borobudur



Buddha's Wisdom is broad as the ocean and His Spirit is full of great Compassion. Buddha has no form but manifests Himself in Exquisiteness and leads us with His whole heart of Compassion. THE TEACHING OF BUDDHA, BUKKYO DENDO KYOKA

The idea of moving from the darkness into the light is the goal of the experience of Borobudur- both for the layman and the bikkhu. The uniqueness of the Borobudur archaeological remain as we find it today suggests that there was an underlying genius of innovative ideas behind it during its time of planning and construction in the past. The Borobudur shows the process of Buddhism, the scenery and features show that it was set in Java. Borobudur is thus a Buddhist stupa in the Indian sense. Each of the square terraces is enclosed in a high wall with pavilions and niches along the whole perimeter, which prevents the visitor on one level from seeing into any of the other levels. The temple's pathway takes one from the earthly realm of desire (*kamadhatu*), represented and documented on the hidden narratives of the structure's earthbound base, through the world of forms (*rupadhatu*) as expounded on the narratives carved along the four galleries set at right angles, until one finally emerges into the realm of formlessness (*arupadhatu*) as symbolized and manifested in the open circular terraces crowned with 72 stupas. Candi Borobudur and Candi Mendut were the two sites in Central Java that promoted caitya worship. Even before their establishment in the 8th century A.D., it is probable that the belief was already brought into Java by Gunavarma the architect of Borobudur in the beginning of the 5th century A. D.



Sunrise and sunset at the site

**Someone asked : Does enlightenment mean illumination?
Illumination is when someone shines a torch in your ear. Enlightenment is
when you're the torch.**

1. THE CONCEPT OF CAUSE & EFFECT; The rendering of the text Karmavibhangga in a continuous row of reliefs is indeed only found at the Borobudur sanctuary. In such a format is not found anywhere else in the world.
2. A number of 160 panels are found on the walls of the hidden base.
3. The specific structural scheme of this row of scenes in stone is that each panel consists of two parts: the left and the right side (from the spectator's view), each with a separate scene,
4. however both are interconnected.
5. The first one, which is on the left, contains "the cause" scene,
6. whereas the second scene on the right contains "the effect", following the teachings of the Karmavibhangga regarding rewards for good deeds and punishments for bad deeds.
7. Each panel is clearly demarcated by the 'frame' of the panel,
8. whereas the separation between the left and the right scene within one panel is not demarcated by an explicit line. There is only an imaginary line between the two scenes within one panel.
9. This imaginary line might have the form of a tree, or two groups of people sitting or standing back to back, the line of their backs thus forming the imaginary separating line.
10. Since the Karmavibhangga is a didactic text that has no single story line with permanent characters, and seems to be meant as guidance for the population in general, so the sculptors possibly had a free reign to portray scenes with the model taken from real life in his social environment.
11. It is in this aspect that this row of relief might have its significance as an 'information' on daily life in the time of Borobudur's conception and realisation.
12. The forms of performing arts, both among the elites as well as among the commoners, the midwife's activity, the market scene, are among the spheres of activity that are 'reported' through the panels
13. In this respect the Karmavibhangga row of reliefs is the most prolific among other rows of reliefs in ancient Javanese temples.¹

There are no known records of construction or the intended purpose of Borobudur. The duration of construction has been estimated by comparison of carved reliefs on the temple's hidden foot and the inscriptions commonly used in royal charters during the 8th and 9th centuries. Borobudur was likely founded around 800 AD. This corresponds to the period between 760 and 830 AD, the peak of the Sailendra dynasty rule over Mataram kingdom in central Java, when their power encompassed not only the Srivijayan Empire but also southern Thailand, Indianized kingdoms of Philippines, North Malaya (Kedah, also known in Indian texts as the ancient Hindu state of Kadaram). The construction has been estimated to have taken 75 years with completion during the reign of Samaratunga in 825.

There is uncertainty about Hindu and Buddhist rulers in Java around that time. The Sailendras were known as ardent followers of Buddhism, though stone inscriptions found at Sojomerto also suggest they may have been Hindus.¹ It was during this time that many Hindu and Buddhist monuments were built on the plains and mountains around the Kedu Plain. The Buddhist monuments, including Borobudur, were erected around the same period as the Hindu Shiva Prambanan temple compound. In 732 AD, the Shivaite King Sanjaya commissioned a Shivalinga sanctuary to be built on the Wukir hill, only 10 km (6.2 mi) east of Borobudur.

Construction of Buddhist temples, including Borobudur, at that time was possible because Sanjaya's immediate successor, Rakai Panangkaran, granted his permission to the Buddhist followers to build such temples. In fact, to show his respect, Panangkaran gave the village of Kalasan to the Buddhist community, as is written in the Kalasan Charter dated 778 AD. This

has led some archaeologists to believe that there was never serious conflict concerning religion in Java as it was possible for a Hindu king to patronize the establishment of a Buddhist monument; or for a Buddhist king to act likewise. The 856 battle on the Ratubaka plateau was much after and was a political battle. There was a climate of peaceful coexistence where Sailendra involvement exists in Lara Jonggrang.

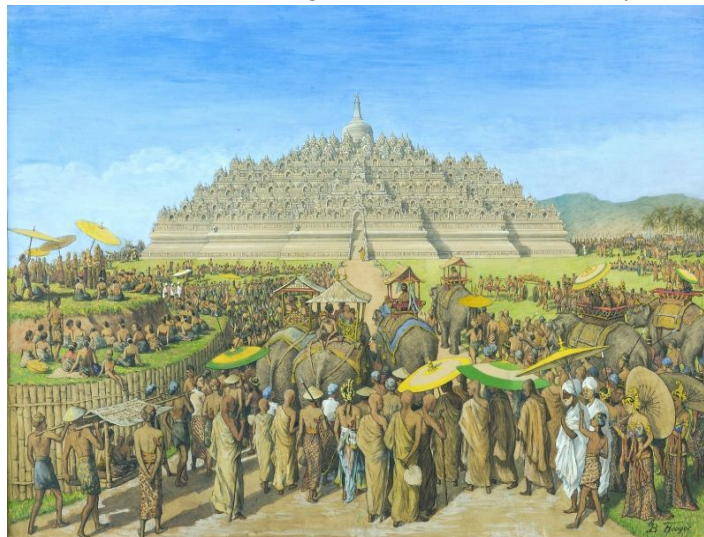
Age: Built in the 9th century during the reign of the Sailendra Dynasty, the temple's design in Gupta architecture reflects India's influence on the region. It also depicts the Gupta style from India and shows influence of Buddhism as well as Hinduism. The monument was both a shrine to the Lord Buddha and a place for Buddhist pilgrimage. The monument guides pilgrims through an extensive system of stairways and corridors with 1,460 narrative relief panels on the walls and the balustrades.

The journey for pilgrims begins at the base of the monument and follows a path around the monument and ascends to the top through three levels symbolic of Buddhist cosmology: Kāmadhātu (the world of desire), Rupadhatu (the world of forms) and Arupadhatu (the world of formlessness).

Evidence suggests Borobudur was constructed in the 9th century and abandoned following the 14th century decline of Hindu kingdoms in Java, and the Javanese conversion to Islam..

Apart from being called a most impressive monument, Borobudur is both a temple and a complete exposition of doctrine, designed as a whole, and completed as it was designed, with only one major afterthought. It seems to have provided a pattern for Hindu temple mountains at Angkor, and in its own day it must have been one of the wonders of the Asian world.

How age of Borobudur was estimated: The construction time has been estimated by comparison between carved reliefs on the temple's hidden foot and the inscriptions commonly used in royal charters during the 8th and 9th centuries. Borobudur was likely founded around 800 CE. This corresponds to the period between 760 and 830 CE, the peak of the Sailendra dynasty in central Java, when it was under the influence of the Srivijayan Empire. However, there is no written record of who built Borobudur or of its intended purpose. There is also no clear indication of how long it took to build from 75 years – 100 years.



Hot balloon over Thai Stupa. /// painting by G.B. Hooijer (c. 1916–1919) reconstructing the scene of Borobudur during its heyday

1. Manfred Sommer-Indonesia - Java - Borobudur Temple - Stone Relief With Carved Images



Shailendra dynasty- Borobudur was constructed between about 778 and 850 ce, under the Shailendra dynasty. completed during the reign of Samaratungga in 825. It was buried under volcanic ash from about 1000 and overgrown with vegetation until discovered by the English lieutenant governor Thomas Stamford Raffles in 1814.

There is confusion between Hindu and Buddhist rulers in Java around that time. The Sailendras were known as ardent followers of Buddhism, though stone inscriptions found at Sojomerto suggest they may have been Hindus. It was during this time that many Hindu and Buddhist monuments were built on the plains and mountains around the Kedu Plain. The Buddhist monuments, including Borobudur, were erected around the same time as the Hindu Shiva Prambanan temple compound. In 732 CE, the Shivaite King Sanjaya commissioned a Shivalinga sanctuary to be built on the Wukir hill, only 10 km east of Borobudur.

THE ARCHITECT of the BOROBUDUR

Candi Borobudur and Candi Mendut were the two sites in Central Java that promoted caitya worship. Even before their establishment in the 8th century A.D., it is probable that the belief was already brought into Java by Gunavarma the architect of Borobudur in the beginning of the 5th century A. D.

Gunavarma was an Indian monk from Jibin (ancient Gandhara) who is said to have been the designer behind the site. Not much is known about him and after searching far and wide I have arrived at this below given excerpt. Gunavarma traveled to Java from Sri Lanka around the beginning of the 5th century A.D. Not long after his arrival, the Javanese king Po-duo-jia suffered from a foot injury caused by an arrow in a war. Gunavarma healed the king's injury and won his trust and friendship. Showing respect and gratitude to Gunavarma, King Po-duo-jia decided to rule his kingdom with Buddhist belief.

As a Buddhist cakravartin, he gave all his possessions to the poor and the people were ordered to abstain from killing. The people were also instructed to respect Gunavarma and even to receive the 5 precepts from him. The Chinese sources do not say that Gunavarma helped King Po-duo-jia

to implement the belief in the descent of Buddharaja Maitreya. However, we may surmise that Gunavarma did this from the fact that he was officially invited to China by Emperor Wen of the Song (424-453) and from his activities in the Song. We describe these below. About 9 years after Faxian had brought the painting of Nagapuspa back to the South, Emperor Wen of the Song decided to implement the belief as his political ideology. In the 9th month of the first year of the Yuanjia reign (424), the monks Huiguan and Huicong persuaded the emperor to send letters to the Javanese king and Gunavarma, respectively, inviting Gunavarma to China. Later, the monks Fachang, Daochong and Daojun etc., were dispatched to bring Gunavarma to China.

Gunavarma arrived in China in the year 431. Another Indian monk, Senghavarma also arrived in 433. Both subsequently translated the Sutrallekha for the emperor. The Sutrallekha was a letter sent by Nagarjuna to King Satavahana persuading him to practice Buddhism and to implement the cakravartinship to rule his kingdom. Gunavarma must have been an expert in promoting the belief in the descent of Buddharaja Maitreya. Otherwise, he would not have been invited by Emperor Wen of the Song to China. Besides translating the Sutrallekha for Emperor Wen, Gunavarma was also appointed by him to oversee the ritual of Bodhisattva pratimoksa.

Bodhisattva pratimoksa. is the most important ritual that initiates an emperor to become a cakravartin or a Buddharaja. Soon after his arrival at the capital of the Song, Gunavarma was appointed to perform this ritual. But due to an internal revolt that erupted suddenly, Emperor Wen immediately dropped the idea of becoming a cakravartin/Buddharaja Maitreya.

The Chinese sources tell us that Gunavarma had stayed and preached the Dharma in Sri Lanka for quite a while thus making him an expert in the implementation of the belief and it is likely that he would have helped the Javanese king to promote it. One can surmise that in 2 succession of countries he transmitted the belief i.e. to Java from Sri Lanka.¹

The role of Rakai Panangkaran: Panangkaran or formal regnal name Mahārāja dyāḥ Pañcapaṇa kariyāna Paṇamkaraṇa was the king of Shailendra dynasty and also the ruler of Mataram Kingdom between AD 760—775, the kingdom of which its power centralized on Java island of Indonesia. Crowned as Rakai Panangkaran, he was the immediate successor of Sri Sanjaya, the founder of Sanjaya Dynasty as mentioned in the Kalasan inscription. The name of Panangkaran is mentioned in the Balitung charter (found in the Kedu Plain area) as the line of kings who were named as the 'builders of kraton'.

In the late 8th and early 9th centuries, Java observed rivalries between two dynasties. The first four Sanjaya Dynasty lines after King Sanjaya (Panangkaran, Panunggalan, Warak and Garung), which was known as the *Amrati Kings*, competed over their power and religious influences with the Sailendras princes in the south of central Java who had arisen since 779. The Sanjayas were Hindus while Sailendras were Buddhists. There was only an isolated kingship in the east of Java, Gajayana, who appeared to have control over the Mount Kawi region in 760.

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Although relationship between the Amrati Kings with Sailendra was important at that time, the rivalries between the two is still unclear. From the Kalasan and Ratu Boko inscriptions, there were stated that Panangkaran granted permission requested by the collective *guru* of the Sailendra king to build Buddhist sculptures, shrines and monasteries in honor to the goddess Tara. The construction was built under Panangkaran's supervision, but was supported by Sailendra's expenses. In order to show his respect to the *guru*, Panangkaran consented the building of the shrine by giving the village of Kalasan to the Buddhist community.

Construction of Buddhist temples, including Borobudur, at that time was possible because Sanjaya's immediate successor, Rakai Panangkaran, granted his permission to the Buddhist followers to build such temples. In fact, to show his respect, Panangkaran gave the village of Kalasan to the Buddhist community, as is written in the Kalasan Charter dated 778 CE. This has led some archaeologists to believe that there was never serious conflict concerning religion in Java as it was possible for a Hindu king to patronize the establishment of a Buddhist monument; or for a Buddhist king to act likewise. However, it is likely that there were two rival royal dynasties in Java at the time—the Buddhist Sailendra and the Saivite Sanjaya—in which the latter triumphed over their rival in the 856 battle on the Ratubaka plateau. This confusion also exists regarding the Lara Jonggrang temple at the Prambanan complex, which was believed that it was erected by the victor Rakai Pikatan as the Sanjaya dynasty's reply to Borobudur, but others suggest that there was a climate of peaceful coexistence where Sailendra involvement exists in Lara Jonggrang.

Borobudur as a Complete Exposition of Doctrine

The construction of stupas were considered acts of great merit. The purpose of stupas were mainly to enshrine relics of Buddha. The design specifications are consistent within most of the stupas, entrances to stupas are laid out so that their centre lines point to the relic chambers. It is therefore no surprise that the Shailendra Dynasty not only gave assent to Temple but also Stupa construction.

The stupas were covered with a coating of lime plaster, plaster combinations changed with the requirements of the design, items used included lime, clay, sand, pebbles, crushed seashells, sugar syrup, white of egg, coconut water, plant resin, drying oil, glues and saliva of white ants. The fine plaster at Kiri Vehera used small pebbles, crushed seashells mixed with lime and sand were used in the stupas from the fifth to twelfth centuries.

Borobudur is one of the most impressive monuments ever created by humans. It is both a temple and a complete exposition of doctrine, designed as a whole, and completed as it was designed, with only one major afterthought. It seems to have provided a pattern for Hindu temple mountains at Angkor (*see above* Cambodia and Vietnam), and in its own day it must have been one of the wonders of the Asian world. Built about 800, it probably fell into neglect by *c.* 1000 and was overgrown. It was excavated and restored by the Dutch between 1907 and 1911. It now appears as a large square plinth (the processional path) upon which stand five terraces gradually diminishing in size. The plans of the squares are stepped out twice to a central projection. Above the fifth terrace stands a series of three diminishing circular terraces carrying small stupas, crowned at the centre of the summit by a large circular bell-shaped stupa. Running up the centre of each face is a long staircase; all four are given equal importance. There are no internal cell

shrines, and the terraces are solid. Borobudur is thus a Buddhist stupa in the Indian sense. Each of the square terraces is enclosed in a high wall with pavilions and niches along the whole perimeter, which prevents the visitor on one level from seeing into any of the other levels. All of these terraces are lined with relief sculptures, and the niches contain Buddha figures. The top three circular terraces are open and unwallled, and the 72 lesser bell-shaped stupas they support are of open stone latticework; inside each was a huge stone Buddha figure. The convex contour of the whole monument is steepest near the ground, flattening as it reaches the summit. The bottom plinth, the processional path, was the major afterthought. It consists of a massive heap of stone pressed up against the original bottom story of the designed structure so that it obscures an entire series of reliefs—a few of which have been uncovered in modern times. It was probably added to hold together the bottom story, which began to spread under the pressure of the immense weight of earth and stone accumulated above.



if consciousness is light then the opposite of consciousness is un-consciousness and the opposite of light is darkness BUT since the 'I AM' is infinitely aware of its consciousness the state of un-consciousness is also a state of consciousness and so the darkness is also within the light.....

....darkness by itself has no existential conception the same as the hole in the sock has no existence without the sock....darkness needs the light first in order to exist as much as un-consciousness needs consciousness first to exist.....the nothing needs the everything first for its existence....

....in order for the soul go gain enlightenment, it has to gain understanding and that understanding is only accessible to the individual soul, when the soul has experienced enough and is now desiring to understand its own reality, it wants to understand of why it experiences the universe and the world in the way it does.....

....once that desire becomes an all absorbing longing, crowding out anything and all, the rapid ascent toward the light begins....the individual soul begins to realise that life flows from inner contemplation, it begins to see the pattern that nothing in its life can be experienced that was not first internally contemplated and accepted....once the soul has grasped this truth, the inner eye (third eye) is opened and the world for the first time is seen as it really is.....

....with the opening of the inner eye, the soul begins to understand its connection to all and everything because it now knows that nothing exists without a conscious contemplation, our mind is trying to keep us away from that understanding because it is beyond the rational and anything that it cannot discern rationally, it simply rejects.....the bravest of the brave soul press on and don't let themselves be pulled back into the world of judgement and at a time that is unknown, the heavens open and the soul gets a true understanding of its own oneness with the I AM....

The whole building symbolizes a Buddhist transition from the lowest manifestations of reality at the base, through a series of regions representing psychological states, toward the ultimate condition of spiritual enlightenment at the summit. The unity of the monument effectively proclaims the unity of the cosmos permeated by the light of truth. The visitor was meant to be transformed while climbing through the levels of Borobudur, encountering illustrations of progressively more profound doctrines nearer to the summit. The topmost terrace, whose main stupa contained an unfinished image of Buddha that was hidden from the spectator's view, symbolized the indefinable ultimate spiritual state. The 72 openwork stupas on the circular terraces, with their barely visible internal Buddhas, symbolize incomplete states of enlightenment on the borders of manifestation. The usual way for a pilgrim to pay reverence to a Buddhist stupa is to walk around it, keeping it on his right hand. The vast series of reliefs about three feet (one metre) high on the exterior walls of the terraces would thus be read by the visitor in series from right to left. Between the reliefs are decorative scroll panels, and a hundred monster-head waterspouts carry off the tropical rainwater. The gates on the stairways between terraces are of the standard Indonesian type, with the face of the Kala monster at the apex spouting his scrolls.



The reliefs of the lowest level illustrate scenes that show the causal workings of good and bad deeds through successive reincarnations. They show, for example, how those who hunt, kill, and cook living creatures, such as tortoises and fish, are themselves cooked in hells or die as children in their next life. They show how foolish people waste their time at entertainments. From these scenes of everyday life, one moves to the terraces above, where the subject matter becomes more

profound and metaphysical. It illustrates important Mahayana texts dealing with the self-discovery and education of the bodhisattva, conceived as being possessed by compassion for and devoted wholly to the salvation of all creatures. The reliefs on the uppermost terraces gradually become more static. The sensuous roundness of the forms of the figures is not abated, but, in the design, great emphasis is laid upon horizontals and verticals and upon static, formal enclosures of repeated figures and gestures. At the summit all movement disappears, and the design is entirely subordinated to the circle enclosing the stupa.

The iconography of Borobudur suggests that the legend of the royal bodhisattva recounted in many of the reliefs was meant to “authenticate” some king or dynasty. Yet, it hardly seems possible that Borobudur was the focus of a specific royal cult, as there is no provision at all for the performance of royal ritual. It must have been, then, in some sense a monument for the whole people, the focus for their religion and life, and a perpetual reminder of the doctrines of their religion.

A considerable number of bronzes, some small, some large, have been found in Indonesia in a style close to that of the sculptures of Borobudur and Mendut. One fine, large standing image comes from Kotabangun in Borneo, but some come from Java. Many small cult images of the Buddha and Buddhist deities exist. Some are close in type to the early Pala images of Indian Bihar, the homeland of Buddhism, with which the Javanese must have maintained close touch. A few small but extremely fine gold figurines of undoubted Javanese workmanship have also turned up. For all their small size they must rate as first-class works of art. As well as images, there are many beautiful bronze ceremonial objects, such as lamps, trays, and bells.

How old is Borobudur Temple? 1,196 years old.

Was Borobudur painted?

Originally, it was probably plastered white, and painted in bright colours. There must have been a substantial monastery for the monks who looked after the structure and the pilgrims, but nothing adequate has yet been discovered. What Stone is Borobudur made of?- andesite. Built from nearly two million stone blocks of andesite, a bluish-gray volcanic stone, Borobudur is shaped like a stepped pyramid, the base of which is 402 feet long from north to south and 383 feet long from east to west; the height is now 95 feet above ground level.



Each stupa is bell-shaped and pierced by numerous decorative openings. Statues of the Buddha sit inside the pierced enclosures. The design of Borobudur took the form of a step pyramid. How many levels are there in Borobudur?

S T E P P Y R A M I D

The main temple structure at Borobudur is constructed on three levels with a pyramid-shaped base replete with five square terraces, the trunk of a cone with three circular shaped platforms, and on the upper level, a grand monumental stupa. How big is the Borobudur Temple? The area of the temple is 2,500 m²

A step pyramid or stepped pyramid is an architectural structure that uses flat platforms, or steps, receding from the ground up, to achieve a completed shape similar to a geometric pyramid. Step pyramids are structures which characterized several cultures throughout history, in several locations throughout the world. These pyramids typically are large and made of several layers of stone. The term refers to pyramids of similar design that emerged separately from one another, as there are no firmly established connections between the different civilizations that built them.

Some detail facts and figures of CANDI BOROBUDUR is shown below:-

- 1) MONUMENT SIZE: 123m by 123m and 42 meter height.
- 2) NARRATIVE RELIEF: 1,460 panels and decorative relief: 1,212 panels.
- 3) BUDDHA STATUES IN OPEN NICHES: 368 (Original 432) and 72 on top terraces.
- 4) NUMBER OF GALLERIES: 4 (each has 2 wall panels: main wall and balustrade)
- 5) TOTAL LENGTH OF VISUAL PANELS: Circa 2,500 meters
- 6) TOTAL VOLUME OF STONE USED: Circa 55,000 cubic meters.
- 7) TIME TO BUILD: perhaps 66 years, and

8) USUAGE PERIOD: Almost 200 years ¹

Lundquist, J. M. (1995) ² says that the top 2 terraces are not circular but eleptical and can be clearly seen from aerial photos of the structure- the third being definitely circular. What reason this was done for is unclear. Perhaps some structural calculations of that time.

If seen from the air and from the small reproduction of it in the museum and it was made in the form of a Hindu Meru which is a vertical representation of the Sri Yantra. Apparently this was the shape of a Buddhist mandala. The height of the whole edifice before renovation was 42 meters. Now it is only 34.5 meters since the lowest level has been used as a supporting base.

Two ancient Ganesha statues are at the entrance but there was a pool in front of the hotel in which you found a statue of Lakshmi which had a striking resemblance to the Chinese goddess of prosperity called Kuan.



1. (PDF) *Borobudur - A Splendid Zenith of World Heritage*-
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326413314_Borobudur_-
_A_Splendid_Zenith_of_World_Heritage](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326413314_Borobudur_-_A_Splendid_Zenith_of_World_Heritage)

2. Borobudur: The Top Plan and the Upper Terraces. *East and West*, 45(1/4), 283–304.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/29757214>



Prasat Thom of Koh Ker temple site Cambodia- another step pyramid

The step pyramid is the basic design of 8th century Borobudur Buddhist monument in Central Java. However the later temples built in Java were influenced by Indian Hindu architecture, as displayed by the towering spires of Prambanan temple. In the 15th century Java during the late Majapahit period saw the revival of Austronesian indigenous elements as displayed by Suku temple that somewhat resembles a Mesoamerican pyramid, and also stepped pyramids of Mount Penanggungan.

The koh ker pyramid: The archaeological site of Koh Ker in northern Cambodia contains a seven-tiered pyramid called *Prang* which was probably the state temple of Jayavarman IV. Construction of the sanctuary was started in 928 AD. At ground level one, side of the square building measures 62 m (203 ft). The height is 36 m (118 ft). Originally on the top platform stood a huge lingam probably more than 4 m (13 ft) high and having a weight of several tons. Inscriptions say that it was the tallest and most beautiful Shiva-ling-am. The ling-am probably stood in a shrine which some researchers say could have been about 15 m (49 ft) high. On the north side of the pyramid is a steep staircase leading to the top. Concerning the seventh tier some scientists say, this was the platform of the shrine because on its sides beautiful reliefs of Garudas were made.



The main pyramid of Suku temple

As well as menhirs, stone tables, and stone statues Austronesian megalithic culture in Indonesia also featured earth and stone step pyramid structure, referred to as *punden berundak* as discovered in Pangguyangan site near Cisolok and in Cipari near Kuningan. The construction of stone pyramids is based on the native beliefs that mountains and high places are the abode for the spirit of the ancestors.

One can venture to compare the Buddhist Cosmological design of this structure with the Thailand Stupas (called *chedi* in Thai). This design is said to have originated in India, where the rounded

shape of ancient funerary mounds was adopted for Buddhist reli-quary monuments. These mounds were often set atop platforms and topped by elaborate umbrellas. Over time each component part of the stupa was given a symbolic meaning and evolved distinctive regional variations as Buddhism spread across Asia.



Temples of Ayutthaya

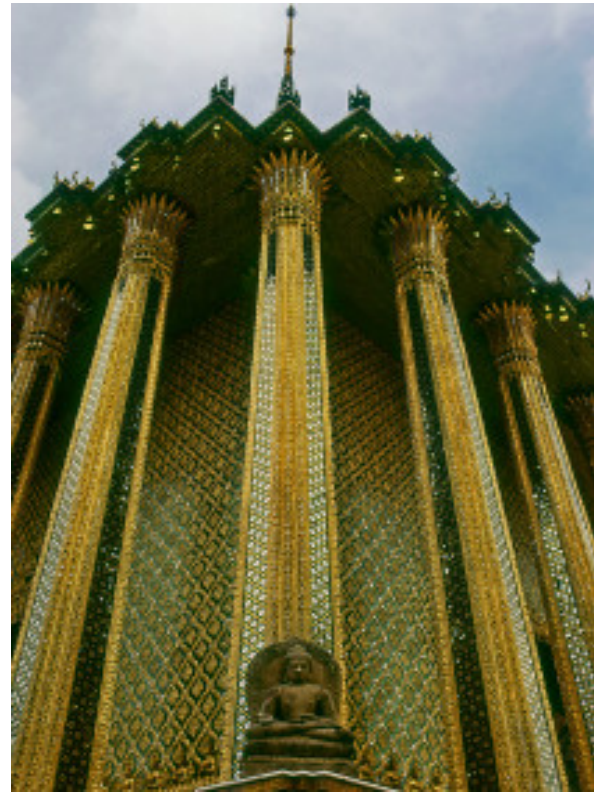
Wat is the Thai word for temple. Wat Ratchaburana was built in the mid 15th century by the seventh king of Ayutthaya. It features a tall Khmer-style prang tower over the sanctuary, which is covered with stucco decoration, and three porticoes facing east, north and south, set atop a high platform accessed by steep stairs. The silhouette is reminiscent of the medieval Hindu temples of north-central India.

Under the Chakri dynasty the Thai kingdom (known in the West as Siam) prospered, avoiding colonization by the European powers and laying the foundations of a modern nation state. During this period, in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, older architectural models were reinterpreted with the addition of elaborate surface decoration in glittering gold leaf and mosaics of shell, ceramic and colored glass.



Graceful Dance Pose(left)Elaborate Decoration

The characteristic Thai roof profile also emerged at this time, featuring sloping tiled surfaces with high gables and overhanging eaves enhanced by long pointed finials marking the ends of the ridge poles. The exaggerated effect is reminiscent of southern Chinese architecture which may have inspired it.

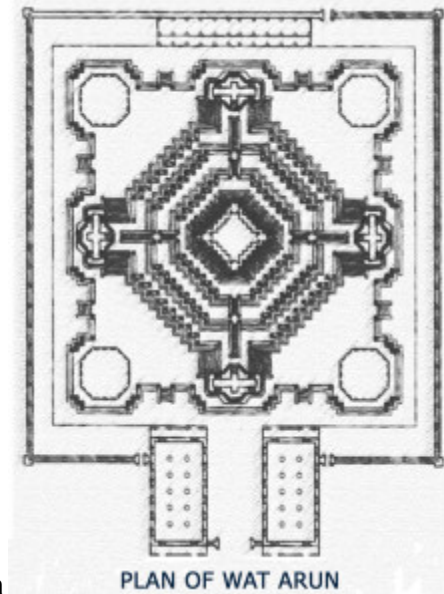


Overlapping Roof Eaves Glittering Surfaces

Chinese influence is more explicit in the use of porcelain mosaics to decorate the surface of chedis at Wat Pho and at Wat Arun, the famous “Temple of the Dawn.” Construction of this magnificent structure was begun by king Rama II over an existing foundation and completed by his successor, Rama III, in the 1840’s. The Khmer-style prang tower is the tallest in the country.



Front View of Wat Arun



PLAN OF WAT ARUN

The brick core is covered with plaster and embedded with multi-colored porcelain shards from the ballast carried by Chinese trading ships. The zig-zagging glistening surfaces impart a sense of rhythmic movement to the structure which follows a complex mandala plan. The grouping of five towers represents Mount Meru, the central mountain of Buddhist cosmology, encircled by the guardians of the four directions.

Set in a prominent riverside location, Wat Arun is a distinctive beloved Bangkok landmark. Many of Bangkok's most famous temples and historical monuments lie on the banks of the Chao Phraya River which winds through the city and the best way to visit them is by a long-tailed motor boat. These water taxis offer a refreshing alternative to the modern city's notoriously congested traffic.

The *mondop* or *maṇḍapa* in Sanskrit, is a building form in traditional Thai religious architecture featuring a square or cruciform building with a usually pointed roof. In the narrow sense, it refers to an enclosed square building with a roughly pyramidal, multi-tiered roof culminating in a tall pointed spire, with a roof structure very similar to the smaller *busabok*. In the wider sense, the term may refer to religious buildings following a wide range of architectural styles, including historical structures more closely reflecting the Indic *mandapa*, from which they are likely derived.

Phra Mondop, the sumptuous library building within the Grand Palace's Wat Phra Kaew temple complex, was built by king Rama I in the late 18th century. It epitomizes the Thai style, with its super-imposed roof structures and overlapping eaves, dramatic upturned finials and richly decorated surfaces.

BAS RELIEFS

Borobudur contains approximately 2,670 individual bas reliefs (1,460 narrative and 1,212 decorative panels), which cover the façades and balustrades. The total relief surface is 2,500 square metres and they are distributed at the hidden foot and the five square platforms.

However, the symbolization of enlightenment these stupas represent is not intended to be merely aesthetic. Buddhist stupas and mandalas are understood as “spiritual technologies” that harness spiritual “energies” in the creation of sacred space. The repetition of form and the circumambulatory progress of the pilgrim mimic, and thereby access, the cosmological as a microcosm. The clockwise movement around the cosmic center reproduces the macrocosmic path of the sun. Thus, when one emerges from the dark galleries representing the realms of desire and form into the light of the “formless” circular open air upper walkways, the material effect of light on one’s physical form merges concomitantly with the spiritual enlightenment generated by the metaphysical journey of the sacred path.

Light, in all its paradoxes, is the ultimate goal. The crowning stupa of this sacred mountain is dedicated to the “Great Sun Buddha” Vairocana. The temple sits in cosmic proximity to the nearby volcano Mt. Merapi. During certain times of the year the path of the rising sun in the East seems to emerge out of the mountain to strike the temple’s peak in radiant synergy. Light illuminates the stone in a way that is intended to be more than beautiful. The brilliance of the site can be found in how the Borobudur mandala blends the metaphysical and physical, the symbolic and the material, the cosmological and the earthly within the structure of its physical setting and the framework of spiritual paradox.

The journey

Set high upon a hill vertically enhanced by its builders to achieve a greater elevation, Borobudur consists of a series of open-air passageways that radiate around a central axis mundi (cosmic axis). Devotees circumambulate clockwise along walkways that gradually ascend to its uppermost level. At Borobudur, geometry, geomancy, and theology all instruct adherents toward the ultimate goal of enlightenment. Meticulously carved relief sculptures mediate a physical and spiritual journey that guides pilgrims progressively toward higher states of consciousness.



The entire site contains 504 statues of the Buddha. 1460 stone reliefs on the walls and opposite balustrades decorate the first four galleries, with an additional 1212 decorative reliefs augmenting the path. The relief sculptures narrate the Buddha's teachings (the Dharma), depict various events related to his past lives (Jataka tales), and illustrate didactic stories taken from important Buddhist scriptures (sutras). Interestingly, another 160 relief sculptures adorn the base of the monument, but are concealed behind stone buttresses that were added shortly after the building's construction in order to further support the structure's weight. The hidden narrative reliefs were photographed when they were discovered in the late 19th century before the stones were put back to help ensure the temple's stability.

The narrative panels, which tell the story of Sudhana and Manohara,[69] are grouped into 11 series encircled the monument with the total length of 3,000 metres (9,800 ft). The hidden foot contains the first series with 160 narrative panels and the remaining 10 series are distributed throughout walls and balustrades in four galleries starting from the eastern entrance stairway to the left. Narrative panels on the wall read from right to left, while on the balustrade read from left to right. This conforms with pradaksina, the ritual of circumambulation performed by pilgrims who move in a clockwise direction while keeping the sanctuary to their right.

The hidden foot depicts the workings of karmic law. The walls of the first gallery have two superimposed series of reliefs; each consists of 120 panels. The upper part depicts the biography of the Buddha, while the lower part of the wall and also balustrades in the first and the second

galleries tell the story of the Buddha's former lives. The remaining panels are devoted to Sudhana's further wandering about his search, terminated by his meeting with the Gautama.

At first glance, all the Buddha statues appear similar, but there is a subtle difference between them in the mudras or the position of the hands. There are five groups of mudra: North, East, South, West and Zenith, which represent the five cardinal compass points according to Mahayana. The first four balustrades have the first four mudras: North, East, South and West, of which the Buddha statues that face one compass direction have the corresponding mudra. Buddha statues at the fifth balustrades and inside the 72 stupas on the top platform have the same mudra: Zenith. Each mudra represents one of the Five Dhyani Buddhas; each has its own symbolism.

Borobudur's vertical organization reflects Buddhist cosmology, according to which the universe is divided into three superimposing spheres: kamadhatu (desire), rupadhatu (forms) and arupadhatu (formlessness). Buddhist cosmology is the description of the shape and evolution of the Universe according to the Buddhist scriptures and commentaries.

It consists of temporal and spatial cosmology: the temporal cosmology being the division of the existence of a 'world' into four discrete moments (the creation, duration, dissolution, and state of being dissolved; this does not seem to be a canonical division, however). The spatial cosmology consists of a vertical cosmology, the various planes of beings, their bodies, characteristics attainment of the Perfect Wisdom.

Apart from the story of the Buddhist cosmology carved in stone, Borobudur has many statues of various Buddhas. The cross-legged statues are seated in a lotus position and distributed on the five square platforms (the Rupadhatu level) as well as on the top platform (the Arupadhatu level).

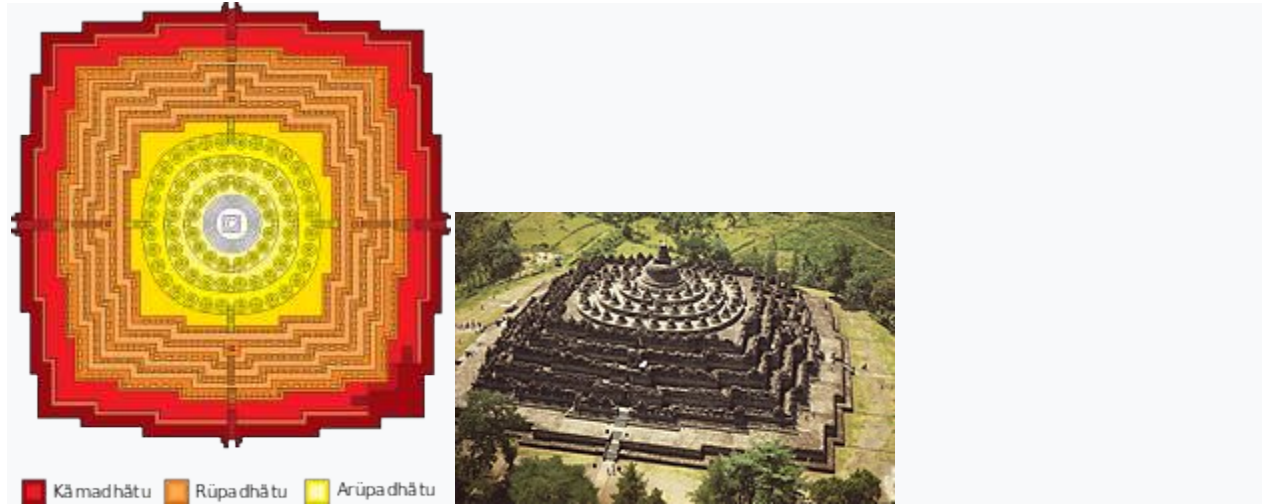
The Buddha statues are in niches at the Rupadhatu level, arranged in rows on the outer sides of the balustrades, the number of statues decreasing as platforms progressively diminish to the upper level. The first balustrades have 104 niches, the second 104, the third 88, the fourth 72 and the fifth 64. In total, there are 432 Buddha statues at the Rupadhatu level. At the Arupadhatu level (or the three circular platforms), Buddha statues are placed inside perforated stupas. The first circular platform has 32 stupas, the second 24 and the third 16, that add up to 72 stupas. Of the original 504 Buddha statues, over 300 are damaged (mostly headless) and 43 are missing (since the monument's discovery, heads have been stolen as collector's items, mostly by Western museums).

, food, lifespan, beauty and a horizontal cosmology, the distribution of these world-systems into an "apparently" infinite sheet of "worlds". The existence of world-periods (moments, kalpas), is well attested to by the Buddha.

The historical Buddha (Gautama Buddha) made references to the existence of aeons (the duration of which he describes using a metaphor of the time taken to erode a huge rock measuring 1x1x1 mile by brushing it with a silk cloth, once every century),^[3] and simultaneously

intimates his knowledge of past events, such as the dawn of human beings in their coarse and gender-split forms his ability to convey his voice vast distances,^[5] as well as the ability of his disciples (who if they fare accordingly) to be reborn in any one of these planes (should they so choose).

If we talk about Spatial Cosmology of Buddhism



The plan of the Borobudur temple complex in Java mirrors the three main levels of Buddhist cosmology. The highest point in the center symbolizes Buddhahood. Aerial view of Borobudur

Spatial cosmology displays the various, multitude of worlds embedded in the universe. Spatial cosmology can also be divided into two branches. The *vertical* (or *cakravāḍa*; *Devanagari: चक्रवाड*) cosmology describes the arrangement of worlds in a vertical pattern, some being higher and some lower. By contrast, the *horizontal* (sahasra) cosmology describes the grouping of these vertical worlds into sets of thousands, millions or billions.

Manuṣyaloka मनुष्यलोक is the world of humans and human-like beings who live on the surface of the earth. Birth in this plane results from giving and moral discipline of middling quality. This is the realm of moral choice where destiny can be guided. The Khana Sutta mentioned that this plane is a unique balance of pleasure and pain. It facilitates the development of virtue and wisdom to liberate oneself from the entire cycle or rebirths. For this reason rebirth as a human being is considered precious according to the Chiggala Sutta. The mountain-rings that engird Sumeru are surrounded by a vast ocean, which fills most of the world. The ocean is in turn surrounded by a circular mountain wall called *Cakravāḍa* चक्रवाड which marks the horizontal limit of the world. In this ocean there are four continents which are, relatively speaking, small islands in it. Because of the immenseness of the ocean, they cannot be reached from each other by ordinary sailing vessels, although in the past, when the cakravartin kings ruled, communication between the continents was possible by means of the treasure called the cakraratna (Pāli cakkaratana’’’), which a cakravartin king and his retinue could use to fly through the air between the continents. The four continents are:

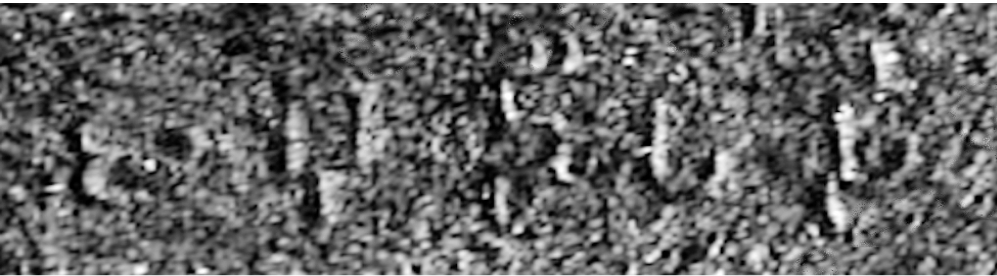
1. **Jambudvīpa** located in the south and is the dwelling of ordinary human beings. It is said to be shaped "like a cart", or rather a blunt-nosed triangle with the point facing south. (This description probably echoes the shape of the coastline of southern India)
2. **Pūrvavideha** पूर्ववदिह or **Pubbavideha** पुब्वदिह located in the east, and is shaped like a semicircle with the flat side pointing westward (i.e., towards Sumeru).
3. **Aparagodāniya** अपरगोदानीय or **Aparagoyāna** अपरगोयान located in the west, and is shaped like a circle.
4. **Uttarakuru** उत्तरकुरु is shaped like a square.

1. **Tiryagyoniloka** त्रियग्योनलोक This world comprises all members of the animal kingdom that are capable of feeling suffering, regardless of size. The animal realm includes animals, insects, fish, birds, worms, etc..
2. **Pretaloka** प्रेतलोक or **Petaloka** पेतलोक are mostly dwellers on earth, though due to their mental state they perceive it very differently from humans. They live for the most part in deserts and wastelands. This is the realm where ghost and unhappy spirits wander in vain, hopelessly in search of sensual fulfillment.

Jambudvīpa जम्बुद्वीप; is the dvīpa ("island" or "continent") the geographical area and ancient name of Greater India in Ancient Indian History. The term *Jambudvīpa* is used by Ashoka perhaps to represent his realm in 3rd century BC, same terminology is then repeated in subsequent inscriptions for instance Mysorean inscription from the tenth century AD which also describes the region, presumably Ancient India, as *Jambudvīpa*.

The word Jambudvīpa literally refers to "the land of Jambu trees" where jambu (also known as jamun) is the Indian Blackberry (*Syzygium cumini*) and dvīpa has two meanings: "island" or "continent," and "planets" situated in the ocean of outer space.

"The planets are called dvīpas. Outer space is like an ocean of air. Just as there are islands in the watery ocean, these planets in the ocean of space are called dvīpas, or islands in outer space" (Chaitanya Caritamrita Madhya 20.218, Purport)



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The Prakrit name *Jambudīpasi* (Sanskrit "Jambudvīpa") for "India" in the Sahasram Minor Rock Edict of Ashoka, circa 250 BCE (Brahmi script).

Map of Jambudvīpa

According to Puranic cosmography, the world is divided into seven concentric island continents (*sapta-dvīpa vasumati*) separated by the seven encircling oceans, each double the size of the preceding one (going out from within). The seven continents of the Puranas are stated as Jambudvīpa, Plaksadvīpa, Salmalidvīpa, Kusadvīpa, Krouncadvīpa, Sakadvīpa, and Pushkaradvīpa. Seven intermediate oceans consist of salt-water, sugarcane juice, wine, ghee, yogurt, milk and water respectively.. The mountain range called Lokaloka, meaning "world-no-world", stretches across this final sea, delineating the known world from the dark void.

Continent Jambudvīpa (*Indian Blackberry Island*), also known as *Sudarshanadvīpa*, forms the innermost concentric island in the above scheme. Its name is said to derive from a Jambu tree (another name for the Indian Blackberry). The fruits of the Jambu tree are said, in the Viṣṇupurāṇa (ch.2) to be as large as elephants and when they become rotten and fall upon the crest of the mountains, a river of juice is formed from their expressed juice. The river so formed is called Jambunadi (Jambu river) and flows through Jambudvīpa, whose inhabitants drink its waters. Insular continent Jambudvīpa is said to comprise nine *varshas* (zones) and eight significant *parvatas* (mountains).

Markandeya Purana portrays Jambudvīpa as being depressed on its south and north and elevated and broad in the middle. The elevated region forms the varsha named *Ila-vrta* or *Meruvarsha*. At the center of Ila-vrta lies the golden Mount Meru, the king of mountains. On the summit of Mount Meru, is the vast city of Lord Brahma, known as *Brahmapuri*. Surrounding Brahmapuri are 8 cities - the one of Lord Indra and of seven other *Devatas*.

Markandeya Purana and Brahmanda Purana divide Jambudvīpa into four vast regions shaped like four petals of a lotus with Mount Meru being located at the center like a pericarp. The city of *Brahmapuri* is said to be enclosed by a river, known as *Akash Ganga*. *Akash Ganga* is said to issue forth from the foot of Lord Vishnu and after washing the lunar region falls "through the skies" and after encircling the Brahmapuri "splits up into four mighty streams", which are said to flow in four opposite directions from the landscape of Mount Meru and irrigate the vast lands of Jambudvīpa.

The common names of the dvīpas, having their varṣas (9 for Jambu-dvīpa, 7 for the other dvīpas) with a mountain and a river in each varṣa, is given in several Purāṇas.^[8] There is a distinct set of names provides, however, in other Purāṇas. The most detailed geography is that described in the *Vāyu Purāṇa*.

The Buddhist cosmology divides the *bhūmaṇḍala* (circle of the earth) into three separate levels: Kāmadhātu (Desire realm), Rūpadhātu (Form realm), and Ārūpyadhātu (Formless realm). In the Kāmadhātu is located Mount Sumeru which is said to be surrounded by four island-continents. "The southernmost island is called Jambudvīpa". The other three continents of Buddhist accounts around Sumeru are not accessible to humans from Jambudvīpa. Jambudvīpa is shaped like a triangle with a blunted point facing south, somewhat like the Indian subcontinent. In its center is a gigantic Jambu tree from which the continent takes its name, meaning "Jambu Island".

Jambudīpa, one of the four Mahādīpas, or great continents, which are included in the Cakkavāla and are ruled by a Cakkavatti. They are grouped round Mount Sineru. In Jambudīpa is Himavā with its eighty-four thousand peaks, its lakes, mountain ranges, etc.

This continent derives its name from the Jambu-tree (also called Naga) which grows there, its trunk fifteen yojanas in girth, its outspreading branches fifty yojanas in length, its shade one hundred yojanas in extent and its height one hundred yojanas (Vin.i.30; SNA.ii.443; Vsm.i.205f; Sp.i.119, etc.) On account of this tree, Jambudīpa is also known as Jambusanda (SN.vs.552; SNA.i.121). The continent is ten thousand yojanas in extent; of these ten thousand, four thousand are covered by the ocean, three thousand by the Himālaya mountains, while three thousand are inhabited by men (SNA.ii.437; UdA.300).

Jambudvīpa is the region where the humans live and is the only place where a being may become enlightened by being born as a human being. It is in Jambudvīpa that one may receive the gift of Dharma and come to understand the Four Noble Truths, the Noble Eightfold Path and ultimately realize the liberation from the cycle of life and death. Another reference is from the Buddhist text Mahāvamsa, where the emperor Ashoka's son Mahinda introduces himself to the Sri Lankan king Devanampiyatissa as from Jambudvīpa, referring to what is now the Indian subcontinent. This is Based In the Kṣītigarbha Sūtra in the Mahayana.

From what we understand, Borobudur lay hidden for centuries under layers of volcanic ash and jungle growth. The facts behind its abandonment remain a mystery. It is not known when active use of the monument and Buddhist pilgrimage to it ceased. Sometime between 928 and 1006, King Mpu Sindok moved the capital of the Medang Kingdom to the region of East Java after a series of volcanic eruptions; it is not certain whether this influenced the abandonment, but several sources mention this as the most likely period of abandonment. The monument is mentioned vaguely as late as ca. 1365, in Mpu Prapanca's Nagarakretagama written during Majapahit era and mentioning "the vihara in Budur". Soekmono (1976) also mentions the popular belief that the temples were disbanded when the population converted to Islam in the 15th century.

The monument was not forgotten completely, though folk stories gradually shifted from its past glory into more superstitious beliefs associated with bad luck and misery. Two old Javanese chronicles (babad) from the 18th century mention cases of bad luck associated with the monument. According to the Babad Tanah Jawi (or the History of Java), the monument was a fatal factor for Mas Dana, a rebel who revolted against Pakubuwono I, the king of Mataram in 1709. It was mentioned that the "Redi Borobudur" hill was besieged and the insurgents were defeated and sentenced to death by the king. In the Babad Mataram (or the History of the Mataram Kingdom), the monument was associated with the misfortune of Prince Monconagoro, the crown prince of the Yogyakarta Sultanate in 1757. In spite of a taboo against visiting the monument, "he took what is written as the knight who was captured in a cage (a statue in one of the perforated stupas)". Upon returning to his palace, he fell ill and died one day later.

Lieutenant Governor-General Thomas Stamford Raffles took great interest in the history of Java. He collected Javanese antiques and made notes through contacts with local inhabitants during his tour throughout the island. On an inspection tour to Semarang in 1814, he was informed about a

big monument deep in a jungle near the village of Bumisegoro. He was not able to make the discovery himself and sent H.C. Cornelius, a Dutch engineer, to investigate. In two months, Cornelius and his 200 men cut down trees, burned down vegetation and dug away the earth to reveal the monument. Due to the danger of collapse, he could not unearth all galleries. He reported his findings to Raffles including various drawings. Although the discovery is only mentioned by a few sentences, Raffles has been credited with the monument's recovery, as one who had brought it to the world's attention.

The Dutch East Indies government then commissioned F.C. Wilsen, a Dutch engineering official, who studied the monument and drew hundreds of relief sketches. J.F.G. Brumund was also appointed to make a detailed study of the monument, which was completed in 1859.

Borobudur attracted attention in 1885. The restoration was carried out between 1907 and 1911. Due to the limited budget, the restoration had been primarily focused on cleaning the sculptures, and Van Erp did not solve the drainage problem. Within fifteen years, the gallery walls were sagging and the reliefs showed signs of new cracks and deterioration. Van Erp used concrete from which alkali salts and calcium hydroxide leached and were transported into the rest of the construction. This caused some problems, so that a further thorough renovation was urgently needed.

In 1973, a master plan to restore Borobudur was created. The Indonesian government and UNESCO then undertook the complete overhaul of the monument in a big restoration project between 1975 and 1982. The foundation was stabilized and all 1,460 panels were cleaned. The restoration involved the dismantling of the five square platforms and improved the drainage by embedding water channels into the monument. Both impermeable and filter layers were added. This colossal project involved around 600 people to restore the monument and cost a total of US\$ 6,901,243. After the renovation was finished, UNESCO listed Borobudur as a World Heritage Site in 1991. It is listed under Cultural criteria "to represent a masterpiece of human creative genius", "to exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design", and "to be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance".

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CHAPTER V

Grand iteration of Buddhist Monumentation and world heritage site.

DID BOROBUDUR GET INSPIRED FROM INDIAN STUPAS?



Stupas originated as pre-Buddhist tumuli, in which ascetics were buried in a seated position, called chaitya. After the parinirvana of the Buddha, his remains were cremated and the ashes divided and buried under eight mounds with two further mounds encasing the urn and the embers. Little is known about these early stupas, particularly since it has not been possible to identify the original ten monuments.

Amar Nath Khanna Amar Nath Khanna, *Hindu and Buddhist Monuments and remains in South East Asia* (New Delhi, 2008) writes that the date of Borobudur stupa (8-9th century CE) and Tabo monastery (10-11th century CE) lead to the hypothesis that mandala form of architecture came to India from Java. This theory got support from the proven cultural flow from Java to India in 9th century CE as evidenced through a copper plate inscription (now in Indian Museum, Kolkata) found in 1921 from monastery site 1 at Nalanda. It records

that upon request from King Balaputradeva of Suvarnadvipa (Sumatra in Indonesia) through a message, King Devapala (of Pala dynasty, 810-850 CE) granted five villages for the maintenance of monks and for copying of manuscripts in the monastery built by a foreign king from Sumatra.

Mandalas in the form of buildings are rare in east Asia although they are found in Nepal and Tibet. The oldest surviving architectural mandala outside Indonesia was built in India two hundred years after Borobudur at Tabo in the Spiti valley of Himachal Pradesh.

However, these presumptions came at a time when Kesariya stupa was not discovered. The excavation of Kesariya stupa datable to 5-6th century CE with features suggesting beginning of mandala architecture, as discussed in preceding paragraphs, reverses the direction of flow regarding the concept of mandala form.

It can now safely and reasonably be said that mandala architecture went from India (Kesariya of 5-6th century CE) to Java (Borobudur of 8-9th century CE). A holistic assessment of the two stupas on the basis of literary and archaeological evidences as discussed above definitely indicates that Kesariya stupa was the forerunner of Borobudur stupa leading to common features like high rise terraced architecture, iconic form of depiction on terraces and mandala form. This was disclosed in the 2021 IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science Evidences in resemblance of archaeological structures of Kesariya and Borobudur Stupa was offered by I Sinha and K P Tucuna-(Sinha and K P Tucunan 2021 *IOP Conf. Ser.: Earth Environ. Sci.* 778 012036)

1 **Kesariya Stupa** is a Buddhist stupa in Kesariya, located at a distance of 110 kilometres (68 mi) from Patna, in the Champaran (east) district of Bihar, India. The first construction of the Stupa is dated to the 3rd century BCE. Kesariya Stupa has a circumference of almost 400 feet (120 m) and raises to a height of about 104 feet (32 m). This Buddhist stupa is one of the tallest and biggest Buddhist stupas in the world. The Kesaria Stupa is a 104 feet tall structure with a circumference of almost 400 feet. The original height of the stupa was 150 feet but after the 1934 Bihar earthquake, the structure was reduced to its present height. It is said that the stupa dates back between 200 AD and 750 AD. The Kesaria Stupa was excavated in 1998. It is also called 'Devala' meaning 'house of god' by the local people. It is also believed that Lord Buddha visited Kesaria to preach the Kesaputtiya Suttas which included the Kalama Sutta. The stupa is now a protected monument of national significance.



Buddha Statue

The site's exploration reportedly started in the early 19th century, from its discovery led by Colonel Mackenzie in 1814 to General Cunningham's proper excavation in 1861–62. An excavation was conducted by archaeologist KK Muhammed of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) in 1998. The original Kesariya stupa probably dates to the time of Ashoka (circa 250 BCE), as the remains of a capital of a Pillar of Ashoka were discovered there.^[2]

The stupa mound may even have been inaugurated during the Buddha's time, as it corresponds in many respects to the description of the stupa erected by the Licchavis of Vaishali to house the alms bowl the Buddha has given them.

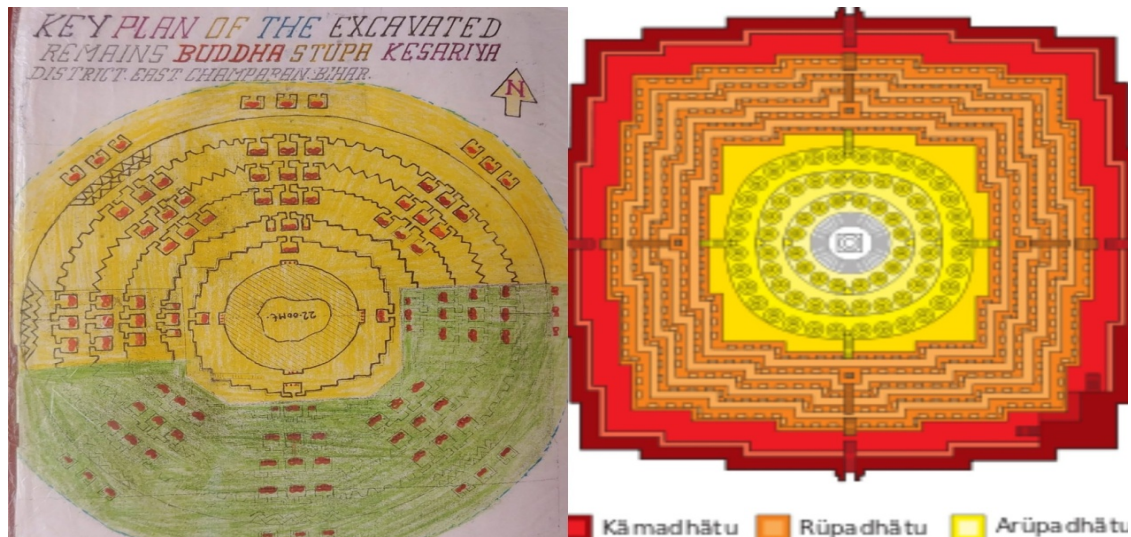
The current stupa dates to the Gupta Dynasty between 200 AD and 750 AD, and may have been associated with the 4th century ruler Raja Chakravarti. The local people call this stupa "Devala", meaning "house of god".

The ASI has declared the stupa a protected monument of national importance. Despite being a popular tourist attraction, Kesariya is yet to be developed and a large part of the stupa still remains under vegetation.



It has been noted that the Kesariya stupa shares many architectural similarities with the Buddhist temple located in Indonesia, Borobodur which points to a historical connections between east India and South East Asia. Both monuments share a circular mandala form with terraces containing

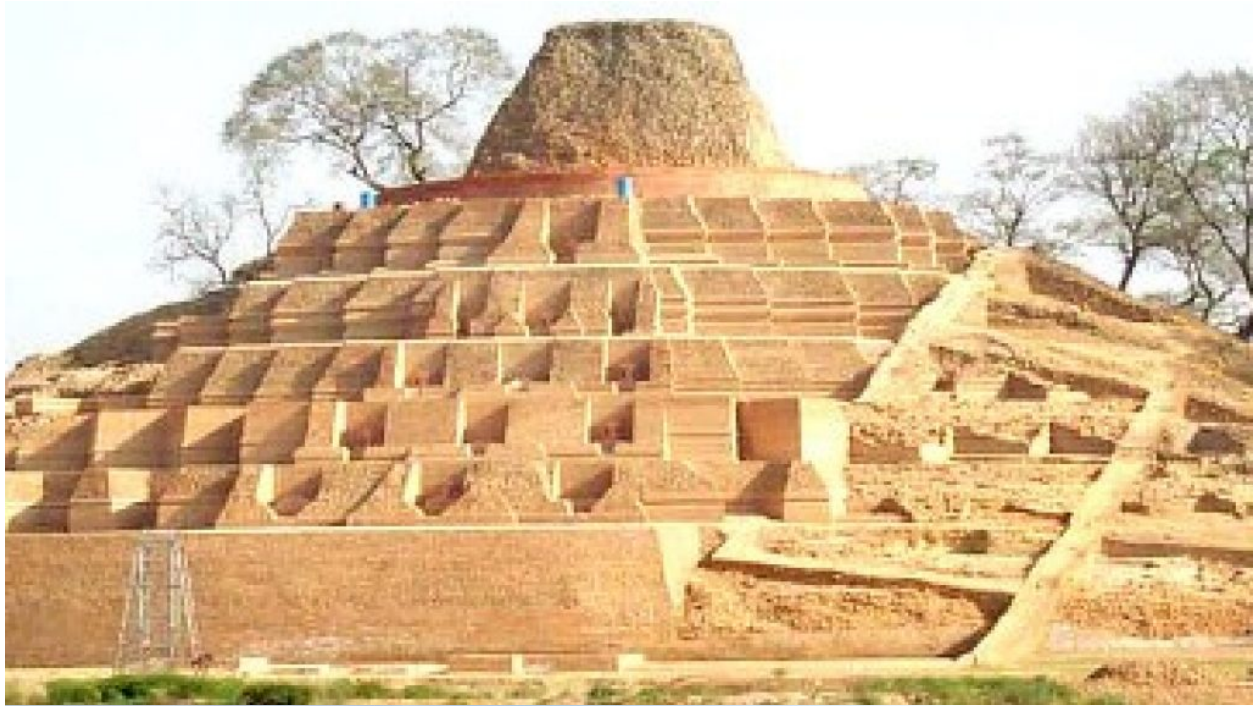
figures of Buddha in the niches. Like Borobodur, Kesariya is also built atop of a hill. The excavated chambers at Kesariya show a combination of statues in *bhumisparsha* (of Akshobhya) and *dhyanimudra* (of Amitabha) on the same side, whereas Borobudur houses four Jina Buddhas, displaying their respective mudras on the four sides of the monument.



It is hard to ignore the similarities between the Kesariya Stupa in Bihar (on the left) and the Borobodur Temple (on the right) in Central Indonesia. Could the older and more simplistic Kesariya Stupa have influenced the one in Indonesia all those years later ?









Other pre- Borobudur Stupas that were standing in India were:

1. Sanchi Stupa, Madhya Pradesh



The Buddhist complex, Sanchi is famous for its Great Stupa which is one of the most famous stupas in India. The Great Stupa (Mahastupa) is situated on a

hilltop is considered one of the oldest stone structures in the country. The monument is very valuable, important, and the best-preserved ancient stupa. Its construction was commissioned by Ashoka the Great and he along with his wife supervised the work. He even constructed one of the pillars which are inscribed with his proclamation. The famous sandstone pillar of Ashoka is still at the complex in Sanchi. Toranas, the free-standing arched gateways are intricately engraved. The hemispherical stone had a 'chatra' which intended to honor and shelter Buddha's relics. The Sanchi Stupa is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and is also featured on the rear side of the 200 rupees note.

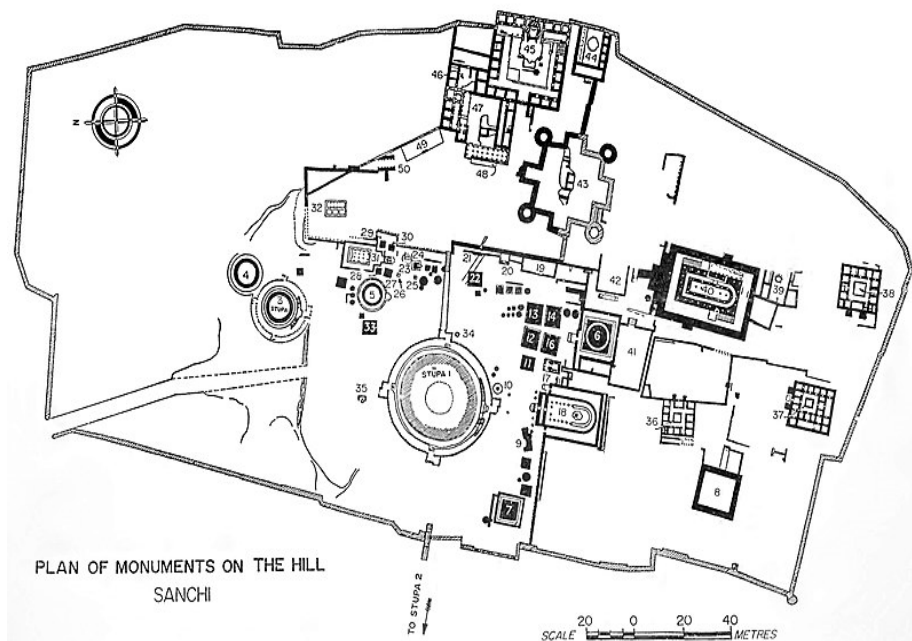
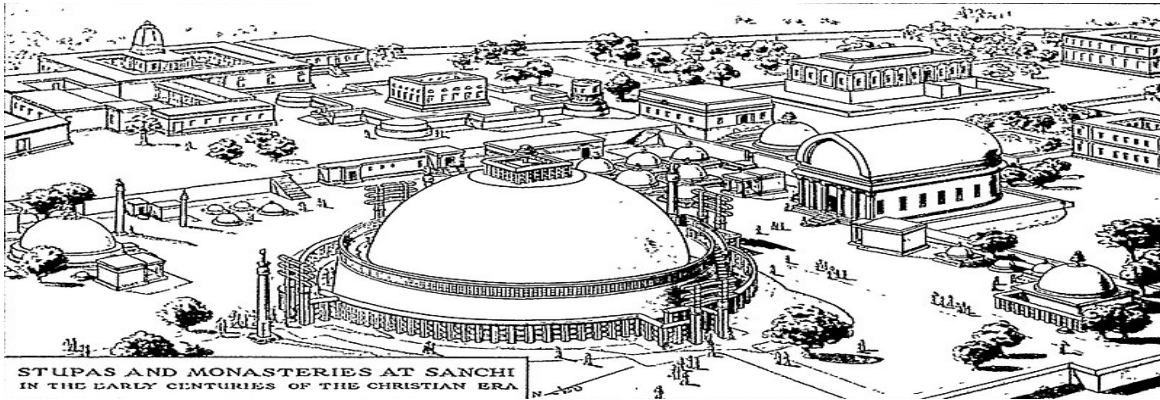
Although the initial craftsmen for stone reliefs in Sanchi seem to have come from Gandhara, with the first reliefs being carved at Sanchi Stupa No.2 circa 115 BCE, the art of Sanchi thereafter developed considerably in the 1st century BCE/CE and is thought to predate the blooming of the Greco-Buddhist art of Gandhara, which went on to flourish until around the 4th century CE. The art of Sanchi is thus considered as the ancestor of the didactic forms of Buddhist art that would follow, such as the art of Gandhara. It is also, with Bharhut, the oldest.

As didactic Buddhist reliefs were adopted by Gandhara, the content evolved somewhat together with the emergence of Mahayana Buddhism, a more theistic understanding of Buddhism. First, although many of the artistic themes remained the same (such as Maya's dream, The Great Departure, Mara's attacks...), many of the stories of the previous lives of the Buddha were replaced by the even more numerous stories about the Bodhisattvas of the Mahayana pantheon. Second, another important difference is the treatment of the image of the Buddha: whereas the art of Sanchi, however detailed and sophisticated, is aniconic, the art of Gandhara added illustrations of the Buddha as a man wearing Greek-style clothing to play a central role in its didactic reliefs.

The presence of Greeks at or near Sanchi at the time is known (Indo-Greek ambassador Heliodorus at Vidisha circa 100 BCE, the Greek-like foreigners illustrated at Sanchi worshipping the Great Stupa, or the Greek "Yavana" devotees who had dedicatory inscriptions made at Sanchi, but more precise details about exchanges or possible routes of transmission are elusive.

The monuments at Sanchi today comprise a series of Buddhist monuments starting from the Mauryan Empire period (3rd century BCE), continuing with the Gupta Empire period (5th century CE), and ending around the 12th century CE. It is probably the best preserved group of Buddhist monuments in India. The oldest, and also the largest monument, is the Great Stupa also called Stupa No. 1, initially built under the Mauryans, and adorned with one of

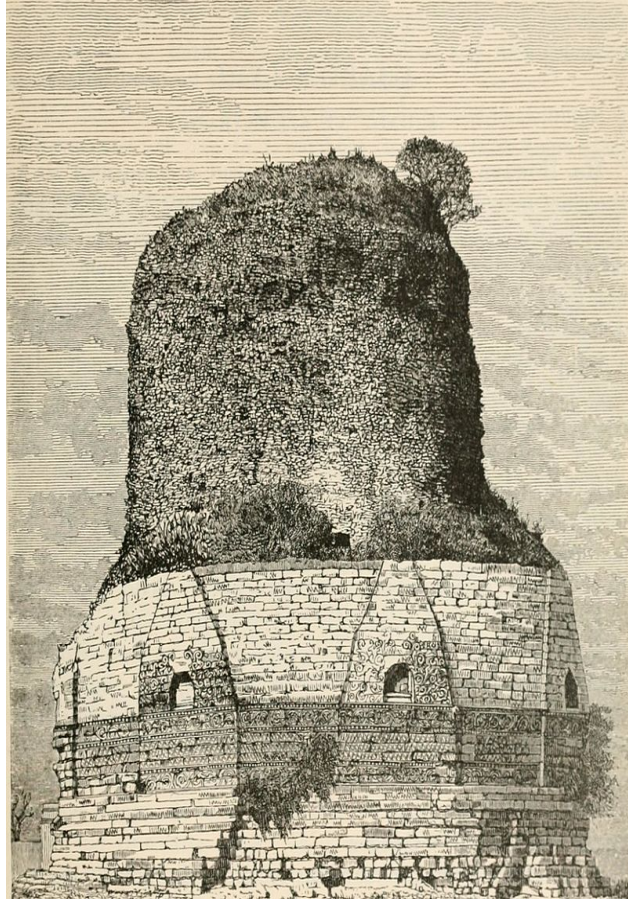
the Pillars of Ashoka. During the following centuries, especially under the Shungas and the Satavahanas, the Great Stupa was enlarged and decorated with gates and railings, and smaller stupas were also built in the vicinity, especially Stupa No.2, and Stupa No.3.



2. Dhamekh Stupa, Sarnath



Located at Sarnath, Uttar Pradesh, the Dhamekh Stupa is a massive structure, originally built in 249 BCE and later reconstructed in 500 CE. It was commissioned by Ashoka the Great, who wanted to enshrine the relics of Buddha and his disciples. There is an Ashoka pillar with engraved edicts standing on the site. The Dhamekh stupa is an exquisite piece of Buddhist architecture and is engraved with birds, flowers, humans, and inscriptions in Brahmi script. The shape is a strong cylinder of bricks and stones with a diameter of 28 meters and a peak of 43.6 meters. The Stupa is believed to mark the spot of a deer park where Lord Buddha delivered his first sermon after attaining enlightenment in Bodh Gaya. The panels of the stupa also have 'Swastikas' on them. However, some later stupas, such as at Sarnath and Sanchi, seem to be embellishments of earlier mounds. The Dhamekh Stupa was built in 500 CE to replace an earlier structure commissioned by the great Mauryan king Ashoka in 249 BCE, along with several other monuments, to commemorate the Buddha's activities in this location. Stupas originated as circular mounds encircled by large stones. King Ashoka built stupas to enshrine small pieces of calcinated bone and other relics of the Buddha and his disciples. An Ashoka pillar with an edict engraved on it stands near the site.



litho from 1891

3. Amaravati Stupa, Andhra Pradesh



Image-

The **Amarāvathī Stupa**, popularly known as the great *stūpa* at Amarāvathī, is a ruined Buddhist monument, probably built in phases between the third century BCE and about 250 CE, at Amaravathi village, Guntur district, Andhra Pradesh, India. The site is under the protection of the Archaeological Survey of India. The campus includes the *stūpa* itself and the Archaeological Museum. The important sculptures from the site are now in a number of museums in India and abroad; many are considerably damaged. The great majority of sculptures are in shallow relief, and the original sculptures do not include large iconic Buddha figures. Its stunning architecture and a diameter of about 50 meters and a height of 27 meters. Built during the reign of Ashoka in 200 CE, the Stupa has a circular vedika that portrays Lord Buddha on top of an elephant. The stupa was called a Mahachaitya in ancient inscriptions. It is an important spot for Buddhism as the Vajrayana teachings of Kalachakra are practiced here. The stupa was neglected and was buried under dust and debris but some of its relics, sculptures, and inscriptions that depict the life of Lord Buddha are preserved in several museums. There are a few broken pillars that remain at the site for significance and past glory of the stupa.

4.avikonda Stupa, Andhra Pradesh



Located at a distance of 16 km from Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, the Bavikonda Buddhist Complex is situated about 130 meters above mean sea level on a hill. Bavikonda is also known as the hill of wells as the place has

many wells for rainwater collection. This Buddhist complex is an excavated site and it contains numerous relics which date back to the 3rd century BCE. The excavated remnants included remains of Buddha, pottery, bricks, coins, caskets, inscriptions, etc. which were recovered by the State Archaeological Department. Bavikonda along with three other places is a heritage site by UNESCO. The term Bavikonda in Telugu means a hill of wells. As per its name, Bavikonda is a hill which has wells for the collection of rainwater. Bavikonda^[1] Monastic ruins dates back to the 3rd century BCE.

A large Buddhist complex was excavated at this site. The excavated remnants are as follows:

- A piece of bone stored in an urn, supposed to be one of the remains of the Buddha,
- Inscriptions,
- Pottery,
- Relic caskets,
- Tiles,
- Bricks,
- Coins etc.

were recovered here by the State archaeological Department.

The Buddhist sites of Thotlakonda and Pavurallakonda are situated close by.

5. **Chaukhandi Stupa, Sarnath**



The Chaukhandi Stupa in Sarnath, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh was initially built as a terraced temple between the 4th and 6th centuries to mark the area where Lord Buddha met his first disciples on their journey from Bodh Gaya to Sarnath. Afterward, Raja Todar Mal's son redesigned the stupa and built the octagonal tower to celebrate the visit of Mughal ruler, Humayun. However, the stupa became declared a monument of countrywide significance in June 2019. The stupa is a high earthen mound with brickwork all over it and the place is surrounded by lush gardens and museums.

The Chaukhandi Stupa is thought originally to have been built as a terraced temple during the Gupta period between the 4th and 6th centuries to mark the site where Buddha and his first disciples met traveling from Bodh Gaya to Sarnath. Later Govardhan, the son of a Raja Todar Mal, modified the stupa to its present shape by building the octagonal tower to commemorate the visit of Humayun, the powerful Mughal ruler.

Today the stupa is a high earthen mound covered with a brickwork edifice topped by an octagonal tower. It is maintained by the Archaeological Survey of India.

How many stupas are in India?



84,000 stupas-According to Buddhist tradition, Emperor Ashoka (rule: 273—232 BCE) recovered the relics of the Buddha from the earlier stupas (except from the Ramagrama stupa), and erected 84,000 stupas to distribute the relics across India. Borobudur is the largest Buddhist temple/stupa in the world. It is located in Java, Indonesia and was built in the 9th century. The monument is UNESCO World Heritage Site. The Great Stupa at Sanchi is one of the oldest stone structures in India, and an important monument of Indian Architecture.(described in brief above). Basically, there are five types of stupas based on the functions they are created to serve. The relic stupas serve as Buddha and the disciple's burial place, the object stupas which house the objects of sacred importance to Buddhism that belonged to the Buddha or his disciples. China is the country with the largest population of Buddhists, approximately 244 million or 18.2% of its total population. Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar, Bhutan, and Sri Lanka are the major Buddhist countries (over 70% of population practicing) while Japan, Laos, Taiwan, Singapore, South Korea, and

Vietnam have smaller but strong minority status. New movements continue to develop to accommodate the modern world.

Stupas appeared in China with the import of Buddhism and, during a long history of well over a thousand years, have become a valued part of the national Buddhist art. ... They were shared among the kings of eight nations, who built stupas to house them for worship. What is a Chinese stupa called? A pagoda is a Asian tiered tower with multiple eaves common to Nepal, China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam and other parts of Asia. ... The pagoda traces its origins to the stupa of ancient India. Chinese pagodas (Chinese: 塔; pinyin: Tǎ) are a traditional part of Chinese architecture. What is the difference between a pagoda and a temple?



In English, 'temple' is a more general term designating any building where people go to worship, while 'pagoda' more specifically refers to a Hindu or Buddhist temple. Vietnamese also uses two main words “đền” and “chùa” translated respectively as temple and pagoda. These are used as the places of worship by Taoists and Buddhists while they also perform some religious functions and gatherings in these tower structures. Most pagodas were built for sacred usage – as a temple dwelling or place of worship – to draw nearer to their god. The roof height and amount of tiers held significant meaning to them.

There are in Borobudur, 500 Buddha statues with over 2500 relief panels, the largest Buddhist temple built in the 9th century. Located in Central Java, there are over 70 Buddha statues in the central dome, each of them carved inside a stupa. According to legends, the temple took over 70 years to be built but was eventually abandoned, although no one knows the reason. Years later, it was found covered with volcanic ash. I will recommend that you come in here in the wee hours of the morning to watch the sunrise at this UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is an amazing experience to see the first ray of light stroke the temple and the town below. blends the Indonesian indigenous cult of ancestor worship and the Buddhist concept of attaining Nirvana. The temple also demonstrates the influences of Gupta art that reflects India’s influence on the region, yet there are enough indigenous scenes and elements incorporated to make Borobudur uniquely Indonesian. The monument is both a shrine to the Lord Buddha and a place for Buddhist

pilgrimage. The journey for pilgrims begins at the base of the monument and follows a path around the monument and ascends to the top through three levels symbolic of Buddhist cosmology that represent three layers of Buddhist theory: Kamadhatu (the world of desire), Rupadhatu (the world of forms) and Arupadhatu (the world of formlessness which denotes Nirvana or Sunyata).

The monument guides pilgrims through an extensive system of stairways and corridors with narrative relief panels on the walls and the balustrades. Borobudur has the largest and most complete ensemble of Buddhist reliefs in the world. The monument consists of nine stacked platforms, six square and three circulars, topped by a central dome. The temple is decorated with 2,672 relief panels and 504 Buddha statues. 72 Buddha statues, each seated inside a perforated Stupa surround the central dome. From a bird's eye view, the temple is in the shape of a traditional Buddhist Mandala. Central to a great deal of Buddhist and Hindu art, the basic form of Mandala is a square with four entry points and a circular centre point.

Restoration

Evidence suggests Borobudur was constructed in the 9th century and abandoned following the 14th-century due to the decline of Hindu kingdoms in Java and the Javanese conversion to Islam. There is another theory stating that Borobudur was left to the ravages of nature in between the 12th to 14th centuries when the power of Java shifted to the east of the island. The reason for this shift is unknown but it is often speculated that there was a volcanic eruption and the people moved away. There are manuscripts that relate stories of Javanese revisiting the site in the 18th century. But it was the rediscovery by the British Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles (the then British ruler of Java who was advised of its location by native Indonesians) in 1814 that led to greater recognition and also preservation efforts.

In 1815 Raffles commissioned an initial clean up where 200 labourers spent 45 days felling trees and moving earth from the remains. Documentation and interpretation of the reliefs revealed some Sanskrit instructions left for the carvers. Borobudur has since been preserved through several restorations. The Indonesian Government and UNESCO undertook this largest restoration project between 1975 and 1982. Following which, the monument was listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Cinnamon.Route

In 1822, a 21-year-old Englishman named Phillip Beale (former British Royal Navy) was in Indonesia to study traditional ships and marine traditions. When he climbed the Borobudur Temple he found ten panels depicting sea vessels, indicating that the ships of the Borobudur may have been a part of a famous shipping route that linked Indonesia to Africa many centuries ago. The Cinnamon-shipping route took vessels carrying spices from Indonesian waters across the Indian Ocean, past the Seychelles, Madagascar and South Africa to Ghana.

Borobudur is still used for pilgrimage; once a year, Buddhists in Indonesia celebrate “Vesak” (the birth, enlightenment and passing away of Buddha) at the monument. Isn't it wonderful that a culture that was lost is not only restored with great care but also celebrated time and again? When priceless heritage structures are restored to their former glory, it reflects an elevated society and benefits the future generations. 650-1025 CE), Borobudur remains **the world's largest Buddhist temple**. The Buddhists among the Javanese population performed pilgrimages and other rituals at Borobudur until around the 14th and 15th centuries CE when the temple was abandoned as many Javanese converted to Islam. Borobudur, consists of nine gradually receding terraces, three uppermost ones being encircled by rings of stupas, each containing an image of the Buddha within a perforated framework. The five lower terraces are encircled by four successive galleries which contain eleven series of sculptured panels depicting the life of the Buddha and other Buddhist stories. The total number of sculptured panels in the galleries is about 1500.

Not only this massive grandeur but the fine quality of the immense decorations, extensive relief sculptures and the numerous images of the Buddha deeply impress any visitor. The combination of massive quantity and fine quality invests Borobudur with a unique character.



It has hardly any parallel in the world, and it may be truly remarked of its artists that 'they conceived like giants and finished like jewellers'. The life of the Buddha and other Buddhist stories depicted on the sculptures of Barabudur are not the imagination of the artists but based on the imagination of Sarvastivada and Vajrayana schools of Buddhism and are directly related to the ancient texts like Avadanas, Jatakas, Jatakamala, Gandavyuhastura, etc.

A complete explanation of all that is depicted in this most splendid creation of Hindu-Javan culture was, therefore, not very easy, though efforts had been made since the beginning of the present century. It was possible thanks to the interest and enthusiasm of the then Government of the Netherlands. A complete series of photographs of the monument were made between 1907 and 1911. Then Koninklijk Institut vooi de Taat, Land-en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indie was commissioned to publish the archaeological and architectural descriptions of Barabudur. The result of this project was the publication of a monograph in Dutch, in two volumes

Therefore there is no parallel creation of this nature in the Buddhist STUPA domain of India – from the earliest to the most modern. The Hindu temple

architecture is another story and the gigantic temples and intricate carvings can be a huge challenge to the Borobudur.

Who is the architect of Borobudur? They say a man called Gunadharma, Whether he was a Indian or a Indonesian is not well known however considering the Gupta architectural influences, he was able to persuade the King Samaratunga who was the one who built the monument based on inscriptions found on some of the stones of the monument, archaeologists agree that construction of Borobudur was probably begun around 760 AD and completed by about 830, the Golden Age of the Sailendra dynasty, under the reign of King Samaratunga Of the Shailendra Dynasty. Sailendras were of foreign origin, either from South India or from Indo-China, and ruled Sumatra and Java from the 8th through the 13th centuries. Under their rule, the islands were major centers of Buddhist scholarship. The Javanese had been carving stone statues and inscriptions since about 400 AD, but between 700 and 900 AD, many of the Island's greatest shrines were erected.



Javanese society of that time must have been healthy and wealthy enough to support an endeavor such as the building of Borobudur. It would have required plentiful manpower to haul the stone – as much as 45,700 cubic yards taken from nearby streams and rivers, all fitted perfectly together without mortar. Skilled craftsmen would have been needed to carve the images, which were completed after the stones were in place, and abundant agricultural resources to provide food.

By the middle of the 9th century, Borobudur was completed with a large monastery at the southwest foot of the hill. "Today it takes a trained eye to see Borobudur from a distance," says Asian art historian, Jan Fontein.

"But we know that, in ancient times, this stone was covered with a kind of white plaster – called "plaster as hard as diamond" or "vajalaypa" – which may have been a base for colors and just as the pilgrim who went to Chartres saw the cathedral rise up from miles away, so the pilgrim who came to Borobudur may have seen the monument in ancient times, hours before he reached it."



Records from the 9th and 10th centuries show that Borobudur was a center of pilgrimage for about 150 years during a short but intense period of Buddhism. Chinese coins and ceramics found at Borobudur from the 11th to the 15th centuries suggest that pilgrims continued to visit Borobudur during that time.



The Sailendra Dynasty's Borobudur

The alternation of the monsoons blew alternating cultures into Southeast Asia. When the winds blew one way, it would bring the Indian traders and their culture from the West and send the Chinese back home to the East. When it blew the other way it would bring the Chinese and their culture back and send the Indian traders home. This cycle exposed Southeast Asians to both Chinese and Indian culture.

As mentioned, one of these cultural meeting points was at Palembang. It was at this port town that Chinese, Hindu, and local scholars congregated to study Hindu and Buddhist thought. Another place that became a significant spiritual center for both Buddhism and Hinduism was Central Java. The golden age of this region was relatively brief – just the last few centuries of the 1st millennium. But what an impact!

The Kedu Plain, a rolling valley between the Progo and Opak Rivers, is located in Central Java. Because of the volcanic ash that falls regularly from Mount Merapi and other volcanic mountains in the vicinity, the Kedu Plain is one of the most bountiful on earth. As an indication of the abundant fertility of the region, its nickname is ‘the Garden of Java’.

The population of Central Java was centered in the ancient city of Yogyakarta. Due to the agricultural bounty, Yogyakarta became a birthplace of human culture. The kingdoms of Java began and spread from this agricultural center. The guaranteed agricultural surplus from the region provided sustenance to a growing population that eventually became an empire.

The Javanese God-kings - Southeast Asia's first Devarajas

The fertile Kedu Plain was also the birthplace of *devarajas*, the god-kings of Southeast Asia. A Sanskrit inscription from 684 CE commemorates the

building of a park. These stone-etched words are the first clear-cut example of a ruler presenting himself as a divine religious leader. In this King's prayer, he assures the reader that building this park will bring merit to all involved. He goes on to state that while disloyalty to the king brings death that obedience brings eternal bliss. In such a way, these rulers aligned themselves with the gods. If the ruler manifested divine qualities, then those around him were attracted to his court and kingdom. This idea was a foundation of the aforementioned mandala kingdom.

The Javanese were worshippers of Shiva, called Shaivites. It is tempting to suggest that they worshipped the destroyer god presumably because of the many active volcanoes on Java and on the surrounding islands. However Shiva worship was probably more associated with Tantra, which spread from southern India. Shiva, one of the three main gods of Hinduism, was noted for being an ascetic, as well as the god of destruction. To emulate his behavior, the Javanese kings were also ascetics like Shiva.

The Javanese, being of a flexible and supple mind, were also Buddhists. Under the influence of Mahayana Buddhism, this god-king became a Bodhisattva, a divine being who was meant to assist people on their path to enlightenment. Whether on the mainland or the islands, Southeast Asian kings have regularly played the role of the compassionate one, the Bodhisattva. Their intent is to provide the means of personal salvation to others.

Ideally, these *devarajas* attempted to maintain their country as a holy land, by providing an environment where religion could flourish. This was a huge responsibility. It meant keeping the peace, protecting religious sites, encouraging spiritual practices such as purification and scriptural study, and teaching the people about the religious significance of life on the earth. Along these lines, the Bodhisattva Kings were meant to help their subjects along the spiritual path by providing them with opportunities for spiritual advancement and growth. It is certain that human cravings frequently corrupt this ideal. Nevertheless, what a refreshing sentiment!

One such 'opportunity' for spiritual growth was to support the king in the construction of temples. In this way the citizenry could earn religious merit. There are even inscriptions which reveal that local Javanese princes 'cheerfully' participated in these projects, rather than being required to by law.

Borobudur - architectural Buddhism

The rulers of Central Java's Sailendra dynasty manifested the concept of the god-king, *devaraja*, on a grand scale. During their rule, they constructed many religious monuments designed to instruct their people, as well as following generations, to enter the path to enlightenment. The most famous of these monuments is Borobudur, a Buddhist masterpiece of superior grandeur and

beauty. Consisting of 1.3 million stone blocks, it was carved and constructed by 50,000 Javanese over 50 years. At 115 feet tall and sitting atop a 403-foot square, it is still the largest Buddhist *stupa* in the world. To augment the grandeur, the monument is set upon a small plateau that rises 40 feet above the Kedu Plain.

The first written records concerning Java are from 732 CE. In that year, a Hindu noble, Sanjaya, established a kingdom called Mataram (or Medang) on the Kedu Plain. In 775 CE his kingdom began construction on a monument to commemorate the introduction of Hinduism to Java. A plateau created by the confluence of the Progo River and its tributaries provided the temple's site.

Ten years later this Hindu kingdom was replaced by the Buddhist Sailendra dynasty, vassals to the Srivijaya Empire. Accordingly, they shifted the religious focus of the temple from Hinduism to Buddhism. It took 50 more years to complete this architectural monument – called Borobudur.

Borobudur is built in the style of the Indian *tjandis* with a pyramidal structure. However, the Javanese introduced their own innovations. The Indian *tjandis* were meant to house the gods - provide them a home - a resting spot - a sophisticated spirit house. However Borobudur was not just meant as a memorial or shrine of the gods, a place of worship. Instead it was meant to be an architectural representation of Buddhist philosophy. It was designed to represent complex metaphysical theories. At this level, it was completely original. In this manner, Borobudur provided the pattern for Angkor.

The temple mountain at Borobudur, like the Indian *tjandi*, was constructed from a solid mass of stone, 2 million cubic feet around small hill, with little or no interior space - certainly no internal shrines. (In contrast the Khmer temples of Angkor are noted for their vast amount of empty space created by structural pillars.)

Based upon the supreme mystical power of the mandala, Borobudur has 10 stories corresponding with the 10 stages that lead to Buddhist Enlightenment. The first level is the entry level. The next five are associated with the 5 Buddhas. They represent the entire external Universe - the *vajra-dhatu* - the realm of total reality. This group of 5 Buddhas is familiar in the diverse areas of Tibet, Japan, and northeast India. The bottom levels are all squarish, having a zigzag external design on their corners.

The next three levels are all circular terraces with stupas on top. They represent the 3 Buddhas of the esoteric tradition associated with Tantric Buddhism - the *garbha-dhatu* - the womb of innermost secrets. The 10th level is empty, representing the final goal of Enlightenment, the abandonment of attachment to Form. This is the Void of the Vairocana Buddha.

On the walls of each level there are sculptured relief panels, 1500 over all, which represent the trials and traps on the journey to enlightenment. The zigzag corridors and prescribed direction concealed the Buddhist statuary so that the adherent wouldn't be distracted by what lay ahead and could focus upon the lesson at hand. Thus on one level the entire monument is a Buddhist teaching device.

The Sacred Mountain

On another level, the viewer is meant to perceive this enormous pyramid as a sacred mountain. The sacred mountain has many parallels in religion. The most immediate is Mount Meru of Hindu mythology. Frequently, these *tjandis*, upon which Borobudur was based, were meant to be temporal representations of Mount Meru, a mythical mountain in the center of the Universe, which connects god and man.

This merged neatly with native beliefs. As with many early cultures, the Javanese had always worshipped sacred places. Their central plain has 6 active volcanic mountains, ranging in height from 6000 to over 10,000 feet. As such, the Javanese had great respect for mountains. Mount Merabi, an active volcano in the vicinity of Borobudur, had already been dedicated to Shiva - the entire mountain, not just a temple.

In constructing this mountain temple, the king was fulfilling his role as Bodhisattva, one who has devoted his life to assist others attain merit as a means to enlightenment. This public project enabled the king to accomplish his dharma duty on many planes simultaneously. As a Bodhisattva, the king was constructing a teaching device to aid his people's quest for enlightenment. The king was also building this sacred mountain to establish his correspondence with the gods. Finally he was providing an external circumstance where a maximum of his subjects could earn merit towards enlightenment by service to their king.

Borobudur simulates Buddhist Pilgrimage

As a teaching device, Borobudur also simulates the pilgrim's journey to enlightenment. Although many wish to race to the top to see the magnificent vistas, the proper pilgrim style is from the bottom up. Following is our direct experience of a Borobudur pilgrimage.

Soul-mate Laurie and I begin our pilgrimage by examining Borobudur's exposed 'foot' at the base. As mentioned, the bottom levels are square. The standard square base enables the structure to kiss the sky. However, because the planner's vision exceeded the physical possibilities, they had to expand the base at one point. This expansion hid the bas-reliefs at the base - the foot of the temple. Initially, scholars and philosophers assigned mysterious religious

significance to the concealed friezes. Most now believe that the decision to enclose the bottom was ultimately based upon practical considerations.



However, the friezes on what is called Borobudur's 'foot' are of a deliberately different nature than the friezes on the higher levels. The subject matter is supposed to represent the consequences to those who are trapped in the world of illusion. Note the sorrowful looks, the shame, and the sense of fear exhibited by the sculpted figures.

The bas-reliefs of the 'foot' represents those who are still victims of their fears and desires. The friezes of the next 4 layers are meant to represent the world of form. While the pilgrim has escaped the world of desire, he is still trapped in the world of form – the everyday world of thoughts, ideas, and personal life.

Another distinctive feature of Borobudur is the yantra shape of the bottom floors. The yantra is a mystical Hindu mandala that supposedly inspires enlightenment if meditated upon for sufficient duration. In this case, the yantra determines the architectural form of the walls. The aerial view of Borobudur reveals the yantra form of the bottom layers complete with interior circles at the top.

The sharp right angles of the rectangular design prevent one from seeing ahead. Turning a corner, we are greeted with surprise after surprise by the sculpted panels. Regular oohs and aahs accompany our mystic quest upward through the world of form. The many angles also provide an abundance of surface area for the artist to ply their sculptural talents. Just as every square inch of land is covered in agriculture, every square inch of wall is covered in bas-reliefs. The diversity is astounding. There are mythological creatures and voluptuous women.



Buddhas and ancient boats.



Besides the friezes, we also are greeted by Kala's gaping mouth at each doorway and Makaras at the cornices of some of the balustrades.



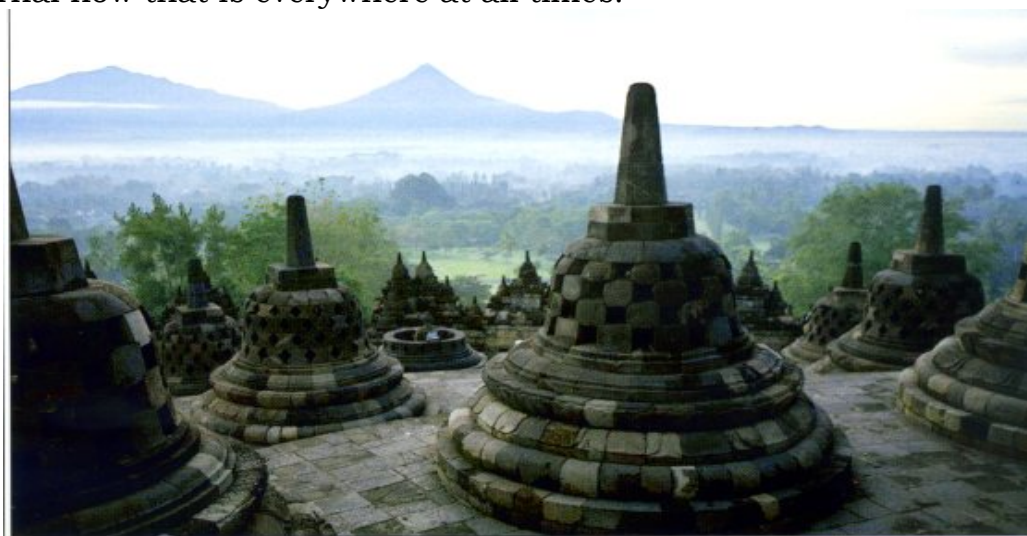
As we head from the bottom level upward, the forms and topics of the friezes become simplified - less village life, more abstract Buddhas. On the bottom levels, tall corridors blocked the vista of the surrounding countryside. Viewing the temple from the outside, these intricate balustrades provide visual interest. On the inside, the walls enclose the pilgrim within the world of form.



Indeed, we are so wrapped up in the gorgeous world of illusion – Maya – that we barely see the omnipresent Buddhas gazing down upon us from the upper ledges.



We finally reach the 7th platform - the first one that is round. We are barely able to see over the wall to gaze out in wonder at the magnificent views. As we mover higher, presumably into the deeper stages of enlightenment, we are able to escape the narrow confines of our petty world to experience the grand picture. Not trapped in the immediacy of the moment, we experience the eternal now that is everywhere at all times.



The omnipresent serene Buddhas are also on the top levels. But now they are enclosed, even hidden, within mini-stupas – individual bell-shaped structures. They watch us and perform their magic from within their little cell.



Having reached enlightenment, we bow down and pray before the magnificence of existence.



As an indication of the importance of this particular location to the Javanese, they also consider it to be the center of the earth. Besides the volcanoes and magnificent vistas, the visitor can also see Magelang, i.e. the Tidal Hill, from Borobudur's top floor. This large mound of earth rises abruptly from the relatively flat valley floor. According to tradition, all islands and

landmasses were wandering at the beginning of time. At one point, the gods nailed Java to the Earth to fix its location. From that point forward, everything else revolved around this fixed spot. The Javanese consider this sharp uplift to be the 'Nail of Java'.

Tantra-inspired Mudras

Let's look at Borobudur in a little more detail. On each level of the structure, there are meditating Buddhas. These Dhyani Buddhas are distinctly different from the historical Buddha. A transcendent eternal savior, the Dhyani Buddha has a dot on his forehead, a symbol of the 3rd all-seeing eye. There are 504 meditating Buddhas at Borobudur. Each are unique, but all are serene.

The bottom level, i.e. the hidden foot, doesn't have any of these peaceful figures, as it represents the corrupted realm of fears and desires. The next 5 square levels symbolize the world of form. These terraces contain 432 Buddhas, with the number decreasing as the visitor moves to the higher floors (104, 104, 88, 72, 64). Each of these meditating figures has its own cubicle located just above the friezes.

The next 3 round floors, representative of the stages of enlightenment, have another 72 Buddhas (32, 24, 16). Each of these is enclosed in its own mini stupa. Although hidden from casual view, they can be viewed through the grates of the bell-shaped stupa.

Each of the Dhyani Buddhas has a specific symbolic hand position – a mudra. These mudras are part of the Vajrayana sect of Mahayana Buddhism – the Tantric branch. The Buddhas have 6 different mudras. On each terrace, the Buddhas have a different hand position.

In each case, the left palm of the meditating Buddha faces upward. It is the right hand that indicates the symbolism. The 4 lower terraces exhibit the same identical 4 mudras. The mudras on these bottom levels are directional. In contrast, the upper terraces exhibit hand positions that are unique to them and are omni-directional. Let's see what this means.

On the first four square levels, all the Buddhas that face east have the same mudra. The Buddha's right palm is outward and points to the earth. This mudra indicates '*right conduct*'. This position derives from one of his prior incarnations, when Buddha appealed to the earth goddess to testify to his right conduct to refute Mara's impeachment of his motives.

For the Buddhas that face north, the right palm faces forward, which is the mudra to '*dispel fear*' or instill '*courage*'. For the westward facing Buddhas, both palms face up and the thumbs touch indicating the importance of '*meditation*'. The hand position of the southward facing Buddhas symbolizes the need for '*charity*'. The right palm faces upward and out, while the fingers face down in a posture that indicates giving.

Each of these mudras is of equal importance as visitors can access the monument from each of the 4 sides.

All the Buddhas on the 5th and final square terrace have the same mudra. It symbolizes '*deliberation*'. The right palm is outward and the forefinger touches the thumb.



The mudra of the 72 Buddhas on the next three round terraces is identical. The complicated interlocking hand position suggests revolution and symbolizes the '*Turning of Dharma Wheel*'. As mentioned, the Buddhas on the square terraces are easily visible in their little cubicles. In contrast, the Buddhas on the round terraces are hidden in little stupas and can only be seen through perforations in the bell-shaped enclosure. Evidently the mudras of the bottom terraces are quite common, while the complicated '*Turning of Dharma Wheel*' mudra is not so widespread.

Visiting Borobudur in 2013, the more complicated mudras haven't survived the ravages of time and need restoration. For instance, there were only a handful of Buddhas on the circular terraces whose hand position was still intact. The three dimensionality of the hand positions that project into space seem to be particularly vulnerable to destruction. In contrast, the mudras of nearly all the Buddhas whose hands were in their laps were intact.

Right conduct, dispel fear, meditation, charity, deliberation, the turning of the Dharma Wheel are the symbolic meanings of the 6 mudras. The hand positions of the meditating Buddhas remind pilgrims of these important virtues as they ascend the monument walking from terrace to terrace.

The Content of the Friezes from Chinese Mahayana

While the employment of mudras suggest the tantric influence, the content of the friezes definitely derives from Mahayana Buddhism. The 6 square bottom terraces are filled with 3 kilometers (approximately 2 miles) of museum quality stone friezes. Of the 2672 friezes, 1460 are narrative and 1212 are decorative. The narrative friezes are devoted to Buddha's biography, primarily his past lives.

Recall that the goal of Mahayana Buddhists is to become a Bodhisattva through multiple incarnations. In this regard, Mahayana de-emphasizes the importance of the historical Buddha and instead focuses upon the events of his past lives that led to Buddhahood. Because Mahayana denies the existence of everything, these past lives are akin to vibrations or emanations of the Buddha

essence rather than being connected to an individual. In similar fashion, the meditating Buddhas with their 6 mudras are perfect abstractions rather than humans with personality accompanied by character flaws.

The hidden 'foot' contains 160 relief panels that indicate the law of karma. Each frieze is a story of cause and effect. In other words, blameworthy deeds lead to retribution. For instance, one panel shows individuals slaughtering and cooking meat and then going to Buddhist hell where they are slaughtered and eaten by demons. Each panel is self contained with no connection to the rest. Although there are pictures of the friezes, the visitor can only see a small fraction of them, as the rest of the foot has been enclosed.

The remainder of the friezes on the next five terraces, i.e. the 'body' of the monument, are primarily representations of stories from Buddha's past and present lives. Most of these derive from 3 Buddhist works – Jataka, Awadana, and Gandavhaya.

The first visible terrace and half of the second are primarily devoted to the legendary life of the historical Buddha, i.e. Gautama Siddhartha, and the Jataka Tales. The friezes on the first level illustrate the entire story of Buddha's life, beginning with his descent from heaven until he achieves enlightenment. As a white elephant with 6 tusks, Buddha enters the womb of Queen Maya. After birth, his life is then experienced as a dream. Prince Siddhartha's father builds 3 palaces to distract him from the spiritual life. However he has 4 encounters, i.e. with the old, the sick, the dead and a monk. These chance encounters introduce him to suffering and the transitory nature of life. After much travail, he attains enlightenment. His life exhibits the possibility of salvation from suffering. Rather than leaving this world, Buddha begins giving sermons regarding the law of Dharma to help individuals on the path to enlightenment. All of these events are illustrated in sequential order on the carved panels.

The Jataka Tales are past life stories, where Buddha is frequently an animal. These animal tales contain a Buddhist message. In this sense they are somewhat akin to Aesop's fables. Borobudur contains depictions of all 34 Jatakas from the Jataka Mala, the primary and traditional collection of these tales.

460 friezes on the 3rd, 4th and half of the 2nd terrace are devoted to the Gandavhaya text. This Mahayana text tells the story of the tireless wandering of Sudhana, one of Buddha's past lives. Sudhana's many experiences are depicted on the walls of Borobudur. He has no less than 30 teachers before he attains Bodhisattvahood. The panels on top level depict Sudhana teaching the Mahayana doctrine post-enlightenment.

The Gandavhaya text is the last chapter and culmination of the Avatamsaka sutra. Popularly known as the Flower Garland Sutra, this sutra is exceptionally important in Eastern Asian Buddhism. This East Asian influence indicates the importance of the Chinese in the transmission of Buddhism to Southeast Asia's islands.

The 40 chapter long sutra is a compilation of many works, some of which are sutras in their own right. Central Asian monks joined the diverse literary

pieces into a single sutra in the late 3rd and early 4th centuries of the Common Era. The entire work was first translated into Chinese during the 5th century. It was one of the many sutras that the Kushan monks employed to successfully convert the Chinese populace to Mahayana Buddhism.

The Flower Garland's 40 chapters are on disparate topics. However there are 2 overarching themes: the interdependency of all phenomena (dharmas) and the Buddhist progression to enlightenment. One of the chapters is devoted to the 10 stages it takes to become a Bodhisattva. East Asians frequently cite this chapter as a sutra in its own right. As an indication of its importance, this, the 10 Stages Sutra, was translated into Chinese in the 3rd century, a few centuries before the larger Flower Garland Sutra.

Sudhana's biography, the last chapter of the sutra, encapsulates these 10 stages in story form. Recall that Borobudur's 10 levels symbolize these same developmental steps. Some scholars even believe that Borobudur means 'Mountain of virtues of 10 stages of the Bodhisattva'. Although others believe the name of the monument derives from the location – 'monastery of Budur', an ancient city, it is apparent that Borobudur's 10 levels are linked with the pilgrim's journey to enlightenment.

Besides architectural similarities and the obvious influence of East Asian Mahayana upon Borobudur, locals claim that the Chinese brought Buddhism to the islands. In these pregnant times, it could be roughly said that Hinduism came to Southeast Asia's islands from India, while it seems that Buddhism was due at least in part to the Chinese influence.

A Stepped Pyramid: Ancestor worship combined with Buddhism

The Buddha's past and present lives are depicted on the friezes. There are countless meditating Buddhas. There are also innumerable mini and medium sized stupas throughout the monument. Plus a tall stupa tops the entire structure. Most consider Borobudur to be the largest Buddhist stupa in the world. But is it really only a stupa?

Although it is tempting to categorize this enormous monument as a stupa, this is stretch. For one, the top is not the dominant feature, as it is in most stupas. Instead the pilgrim/visitor initially experiences Borobudur as an enormous stepped stone pyramid. Only after viewing the enormity of the angular stone fortress does one notice the round stupa at the top. In terms of direct experience, it is probably more accurate to characterize the monument as a stepped pyramid topped by a stupa.

In the Javanese tradition, the *prasada* is a stepped pyramid frequently located in the mountains. The *prasada* is considered to be the abode of the ancestors. Gunung Padang is a stepped pyramid from the Megalithic that is probably associated with ancestor worship. If so, it is the earliest known example of a *prasada*. Not only in Java, but throughout Southeast Asia, the stepped pyramid is associated with ancestor worship.

As mentioned, Southeast Asians, especially the Javanese, never gave up ancestor worship. Instead they blended and continue to blend it with the newer religions, including Buddhism, Hinduism and even Islam. At the time that

Borobudur was built, the Javanese were both ardent Buddhists and worshippers of their forefathers. In this regard, they respected their elders as Bodhisattvas. As such, it makes perfect sense that the Javanese would construct a monument that both honors their ancestors and simultaneously is a stupa, the Buddhist symbol par excellence – an ideal fit with their inclusive temperament.

This interpretation of Borobudur was suggested by no less an authority than Professor Soekmone, the Javanese scholar who was instrumental in the restoration of Borobudur.

Modern History

Some accounts state that Borobudur was lost to history when it was buried by volcanic ash a few centuries after it was completed. However, historical records indicate that Hayam Wuruk, the great ruler of the Majapahit Empire, visited Borobudur in the 1300s. Due to insurmountable problems, i.e. structural damage from water seepage, upkeep halted in the 1500s.

With an enthusiasm for archaeology sweeping Europe, the Englishman Raffles rediscovered Borobudur buried under dirt and hidden by underbrush in 1814. This was during the brief period that England ruled Java after the Napoleonic Wars. The Dutch began a major, although unsuccessful, renovation in 1907.

As soon as Indonesia attained independence in 1948, the government expressed the goal of restoring Borobudur. Why did predominantly Islamic Indonesia commit time, energy and precious resources to the restoration of a Buddhist temple?

The Indonesian word '*candi*' represents the remains of all structures from the Hindu period, which lasted from the 5th century CE to mid 16th century. This is not just the ruins of temples and shrines, but also includes gates and baths, virtually any structure done in classic Hindu style.

A *candi* is also a *pusaka*, an expression of cultural heritage. According to Javanese tradition, a *pusaka* has mystical and magical powers. The *pusaka*'s supra-rational powers tie the past and present together in order to better face the future. In more psychological terms, the Javanese embrace the relics of the past as a form of national pride. Rather than rejecting the past because it was dominated by an alternate religion, they proudly include any part of their history as part of their national heritage.

In 1968, Professor Soekmone of Indonesia began the 'Save Borobudur' campaign. Due in part to his efforts, the global community marshaled the necessary resources and manpower to restore the spectacular Buddhist monument beginning in the last quarter of the 20th century.

Restoration usually implies rebuilding the original monument as it was as before the ravages of time took their toll. Borobudur was different in this regard. Borobudur's original design had some fatal structural flaws that had to be addressed before it could be rebuilt.

First, the weight of the 1.6 million blocks of andesite was simply too heavy for the porous soil of the river plain to support. The entire monument had

problems with sagging before it was even finished. This was one reason the original builders expanded the base and covered the bottom floor. In the decades following completion, the Javanese did what they could to bolster their gorgeous but slumping Buddhist stupa. Yet all attempts were ultimately unsuccessful.

The second problem concerned the abundant rainfall in the region. The individuals responsible for designing the stone pyramid had not taken drainage into account. Water seeped into the structure, adding to the weight and contributing to the structural damage. Weight and water flow were fatal design flaws that doomed the Buddhist monument to degeneration. The Javanese eventually abandoned the upkeep, not because they weren't interested, but because they really didn't know what to do to prevent the innate degradation. Borobudur was simply buckling under its own weight.

Even in modern times, the reconstruction project was plagued with false beginnings. The Dutchman Van Erp came up with a plan for renovating Borobudur in 1907. Those in charge of renovation quickly discovered that the plan was inadequate to the task and abandoned the project.

Once the international community was convinced to commit the funds necessary to both restore and rejuvenate Borobudur, architects and engineers collaborated to devise a permanent and viable plan. Due to the enormity of the task, global cooperation was and is required to marshal the necessary talent, the labor force and sufficient funding. Restoration finally began in 1975. Although the structure is gorgeous, Borobudur is still many years, if not decades, away from completion 40 years later in 2014.

It remains a heterogeneous work due to so many stages and structural difficulties. Before one block of the crumbling monument could be restored to its original position, proper drainage had to be installed in order to avoid the problems associated with water. Further the stone pyramid required additional structural support to bear the enormous weight. To accomplish these daunting tasks, the international work force labored on many fronts simultaneously.

- 1) Carefully dismantling the entire structure
- 2) Cleaning 170,000 stones
- 3) Constructing cement reinforcement and water channels
- 4) Freeing mantel stones of filth

The fun stuff, i.e. replacing the stone blocks, began only after these foundational steps were completed.

As a testament to the enduring nature of its original intent, Borobudur continues to entice millions of visitor/pilgrims every year to have its 'enlightenment' experience. Even the didactic function of the Javanese pyramid persists. The thousands of individuals involved in the reconstruction project required retraining to understand the meanings behind the friezes. In this fashion, Borobudur acts as both an instructional tool and a place of education.

Paraphrasing Professor Soekmone's poetic writing: the training is based upon a wish – a prayer for the salvation of the student/pilgrim. In this way, Borobudur is a 'prayer in stone'. <http://donlehmanjr.com/SEA/SEA6%20Chap/SEA6%20Ch12.htm>



All you wanted to know about the architect of Borobudur

Gunavarma was an Indian monk from Jibin (ancient Gandhara). He traveled to Java from Sri Lanka around the beginning of the 5th century A.D. Not long after his arrival, the Javanese king Po-duo-jia suffered from a foot injury caused by an arrow in a war. Gunavarma healed the king's injury and won his trust and friendship. Showing respect and gratitude to Gunavarma, King Po-duo-jia decided to rule his kingdom with Buddhist belief.

As a Buddhist cakravartin, he gave all his possessions to the poor and the people were ordered to abstain from killing. The people were also instructed to respect Gunavarma and even to receive the 5 precepts from him. The Chinese sources do not say that Gunavarma helped King Po-duo-jia to implement the belief in the descent of Buddharaja Maitreya. However, we may surmise that Gunavarma did this from the fact that he was officially invited to China by Emperor Wen of the Song (424-453) and from his activities in the Song. We describe these below. About 9 years after Faxian had brought the painting of Nagapuspa back to the South, Emperor Wen of the Song decided to implement the belief as his political ideology. In the 9th month of the first year of the Yuanjia reign (424), the monks Huiguan and Huicong persuaded the emperor to send letters to the Javanese king and Gunavarma, respectively, inviting Gunavarma to China. Later, the monks Fachang, Daochong and Daojun etc., were despatched to bring Gunavarma to China.

Gunavarma arrived in China in the year 431. Another Indian monk, Senghavarma also arrived in 433. Both subsequently translated the Suhrleka for the emperor. The Suhrleka was a letter sent by Nagarjuna to King Satavahana persuading him to practice Buddhism and to implement the cakravartinship to rule his kingdom. Gunavarma must have been an expert in promoting the belief in the descent of Buddharaja Maitreya. Otherwise, he would not have been invited by Emperor Wen of the Song to China. Besides translating the Suhrleka for Emperor Wen, Gunavarma was also appointed by him to oversee the ritual of Bodhisattva pratimoksa.

Bodhisattva pratimoksa. is the most important ritual that initiates an emperor to become a cakravartin or a Buddharaja. Soon after his arrival at the capital of the Song, Gunavarma was appointed to perform this ritual. But due to an internal revolt that erupted suddenly, Emperor Wen immediately dropped the idea of becoming a cakravartin/Buddharaja Maitreya.

The Chinese sources tell us that Gunavarma had stayed and preached the Dharma in Sri Lanka for quite a while thus making him an expert in the implementation of the belief and it is likely that he would have helped the Javanese king to promote it. One can surmise that in 2 succession of countries he transmitted the belief i.e. to Java from Sri Lanka



CHAPTER VI

Indian design Influences on Indonesian Stupas



Hindu Culture: By the early centuries of the common era, most of the principalities of Southeast Asia had effectively absorbed defining aspects of Hindu culture, religion and administration. The notion of divine god-kingship was introduced by the concept of Harihara, Sanskrit and other Indian epigraphic systems were declared official, like those of the south Indian Pallava dynasty and Chalukya dynasty. These Indianized Kingdoms, a term coined by George Cœdès in his work *Histoire ancienne des états hindouisés d'Extrême-Orient*, were characterized by surprising resilience, political integrity and administrative stability.

Greater India, or the Indian cultural sphere, is an area composed of many countries and regions in South and Southeast Asia that were historically influenced by Indian culture, which itself formed from the various distinct indigenous cultures of these regions. Specifically Southeast Asian influence on early India had lasting impacts on the formation of Hinduism and Indian mythology. Hinduism itself formed from various distinct folk religions, which merged during the Vedic period and following periods. The term *Greater India* as a reference to the Indian cultural sphere was popularised by a network of Bengali scholars in the 1920s. It is an umbrella term encompassing the Indian subcontinent, and surrounding countries which are culturally linked through a diverse cultural cline. These countries have been transformed to varying degrees by the acceptance and induction of cultural and institutional elements from each other. Since around 500 BCE, Asia's expanding land and maritime trade had resulted in prolonged socio-economic and cultural stimulation and diffusion of Hindu and Buddhist beliefs into the region's cosmology, in particular in Southeast Asia and Sri Lanka. In Central Asia, transmission of ideas were predominantly of a religious nature. The spread of Islam significantly altered the course of the history of Greater India.

Hinduism has historically been a major religious and cultural influence in **Java**. In recent years, it has also been enjoying something of a resurgence, particularly in the eastern part of the island.

Both Java and Sumatra were subject to considerable cultural influence from the India during the first and second millennia of the Common Era. Both Hinduism and Buddhism, which share a common historical background and whose membership may even overlap at times, were widely propagated in the Maritime Southeast Asia.

Hinduism, and the Sanskrit language through which it was transmitted, became highly prestigious in Java. Many Hindu temples were built, including Prambanan near Yogyakarta, which has been designated a World Heritage Site; and Hindu kingdoms flourished, of which the most important was Majapahit.

In the sixth and seventh centuries many maritime kingdoms arose in Sumatra and Java which controlled the waters in the Straits of Malacca and flourished with the increasing sea trade between China and India and beyond. During this time, scholars from India and China visited these kingdoms to translate literary and religious texts.

Majapahit was based in Central Java, from where it ruled a large part of what is now western Indonesia. The remnants of the Majapahit kingdom shifted to Bali during the sixteenth century as Muslim kingdoms in the western part of the island gained influence.

Although Java was substantially converted to Islam during the 15th century and afterwards, substantial elements of Hindu (and pre-Hindu) customs and beliefs persist among ordinary Javanese. Particularly in central and eastern Java, *Abangan* or 'nominal' Muslims are predominant. 'Javanists', who uphold this folk tradition, coexist along with more orthodox Islamicizing elements.

Hinduism or Hindu-animist fusion have been preserved by a number of Javanese communities, many of which claim descent from Majapahit warriors and princes. The Osings in the Banyuwangi Regency of East Java are a community whose religion shows many similarities to that of Bali. The Tenggerese communities at the foot of Mount Bromo are officially Hindu, but their religion includes many elements of Buddhism including the worship of Lord Buddha along with Hindu trinity Shiva, Vishnu, and Brahma. The Badui in Banten have a religion of their own which incorporates Hindu traits. Many Javanese communities still practice *Kejawèn*, consisting of an amalgam of animistic, Buddhist, and Hindu aspects. Yogyakarta is stronghold of *Kejawen*.

It is interesting to study conversion to Hinduism in two close and culturally similar regions, the Yogyakarta region, where only sporadic conversions to Hinduism had taken place, and the Klaten region, which has witnessed the highest percentage of Hindu converts in Java. It has been argued that this dissimilarity was related to the difference in the perception of Islam among the Javanese population in each region. Since the mass killings of 1965–1966 in Klaten had been far more awful than those in Yogyakarta, in Klaten the political landscape had been far more politicized than in Yogyakarta. Because the killers in Klaten were to a large extent identified with Islam, the people in this region did not convert to Islam, but preferred Hinduism (and Christianity). Also there is fear for those who are adherent of Javanism of the purge, in order to hide their practices they converted into Hinduism, though they may not entirely practice the religion. Many of the new "Hindus" in Gunung Lawu and Kediri are example of this.

The existence of Hindu temples in an area sometimes encourages local people to reaffiliate with Hinduism, whether these are archaeological temple sites (*candi*) being reclaimed as places of Hindu worship, or recently built temples (*pura*). The great temple at Prambanan, for example, is also in the Klaten area. An important new Hindu temple in eastern Java is Pura Mandaragiri Sumeru Agung, located on the slope of Mt Semeru, Java's highest mountain. Mass conversions have also occurred in the region around Pura Agung Blambangan, another new temple, built on a site with minor archaeological remnants attributed to the kingdom of Blambangan, the last Hindu polity on Java, and Pura Loka Moksa Jayabaya (in the village of Menang near Kediri), where the Hindu king and prophet Jayabaya is said to have achieved spiritual liberation (*moksa*). Another site is the new Pura Pucak Raung in East Java, which is mentioned in Balinese literature as the place from where Maharishi Markandeya took Hinduism to Bali in the fifth century AD.

An example of resurgence around major archaeological remains of ancient Hindu temple sites was observed in Trowulan near Mojokerto, the capital of the legendary Hindu empire Majapahit. A local Hindu movement is struggling to gain control of a newly excavated temple building which they wish to see restored as a site of active Hindu worship. The temple is to be dedicated to Gajah Mada, the man attributed with transforming the small Hindu kingdom of Majapahit into an empire. Although there has been a more pronounced history of resistance to Islamization in East Java, Hindu communities are also expanding in Central Java near the ancient Hindu monuments of Prambanan.



Southeast Asia was in the Indian sphere of cultural influence from 290 BCE to the 15th century CE, when Hindu-Buddhist influences were incorporated into local political systems. Kingdoms in the southeast coast of the Indian Subcontinent had established trade, cultural and political relations with Southeast Asian kingdoms in Burma, Thailand, Indonesia, Malay Peninsula, Philippines, Cambodia and Champa. This led to the Indianisation and Sanskritisation of Southeast Asia within the Indosphere, Southeast Asian polities were the Indianised Hindu-Buddhist Mandala (polities, city states and confederacies).

Unlike the other kingdoms which existed on the Indian subcontinent, the Pallava empire which ruled the southeastern coast of the Indian peninsula did not impose cultural restrictions on people who wished to cross the sea. The Chola empire, which executed the South-East Asian campaign of Rajendra Chola I and the Chola invasion of Srivijaya, profoundly impacted Southeast Asia. This impact led to more exchanges with Southeast Asia on the sea routes. Whereas Buddhism thrived and became the main religion in many countries of Southeast Asia, it became a minority religion in India.

The peoples of maritime Southeast Asia -present-day Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines - are thought to have migrated southward from South China sometime between 2500 and 1500 BC. The influence of the civilization which existed on the Indian Subcontinent gradually became predominant among them, and it also became predominant among the peoples which lived on the Southeast Asian mainland.

Southern Indian traders, adventurers, teachers and priests continued to be the dominating influences in Southeast Asia until about 1500 CE. Hinduism and Buddhism both spread to these states from India and for many centuries, they existed there with mutual toleration. Eventually the states of the mainland mainly became Buddhist.

The key drivers of the Indianisation of Southeast Asia were Indian maritime trade especially the Spice trade, the emissaries of Ashoka, the Buddhist missions of Emperor Ashoka - the Great,

Indian Navy; The first clear mention of a navy occurs in the mythological epic the *Mahabharata*. Historically, however, the first attested attempt to organise a navy in India, as described by Megasthenes (c. 350—290 BCE), is attributed to Chandragupta Maurya (reign 322—298 BCE). The Mauryan empire (322—185 BCE) navy continued till the times of emperor Ashoka (reign 273—32 BCE), who used it to send massive diplomatic missions to Greece, Syria, Egypt, Cyrene, Macedonia and Epirus. Following nomadic interference in Siberia—one of the sources for India's bullion—India diverted its attention to the Malay peninsula, which became its new source for gold and was soon exposed to the world via a series of maritime trade routes. The period under the Mauryan empire also witnessed various other regions of the world engage increasingly in the Indian Ocean maritime voyages.

Buddhist missions

In the Sri Lankan tradition, Moggaliputta-Tissa – who is patronised by Ashoka – sends out nine Buddhist missions to spread Buddhism in the "border areas" in c. 250 BCE. This tradition does not credit Ashoka directly with sending these missions. Each mission comprises five monks, and is headed by an elder. To Sri Lanka, he sent his own son Mahinda, accompanied by four other Theras – Itthiya, Uttiya, Sambala and Bhaddasala.^[5] Next, with Moggaliputta-Tissa's help, Ashoka sent Buddhist missionaries to distant regions such as Kashmir, Gandhara, Himalayas, the land of the Yonas (Greeks), Maharashtra, Suvannabhumi, and Sri Lanka.

Early Common Era—High Middle Ages



Chola territories during Rajendra Chola I, c. 1030 CE.//Model of a Chola (200—848 CE) ship's hull, built by the ASI, based on a wreck 19 miles off the coast of Poombuhar, displayed in a Museum in Tirunelveli.

During this era, Hindu and Buddhist religious establishments of Southeast Asia came to be associated with economic activity and commerce as patrons entrusted large funds which would later be used to benefit local economy by estate management, craftsmanship and promotion of trading

activities. Buddhism, in particular, travelled alongside the maritime trade, promoting coinage, art and literacy.

1. **Trade from India:** In Java and Borneo, the introduction of Indian culture created a demand for aromatics, and trading posts here later served Chinese and Arab markets. The *Periplus Maris Erythraei* names several Indian ports from where large ships sailed in an easterly direction to *Chryse*. Products from the Maluku Islands that were shipped across the ports of Arabia to the Near East passed through the ports of India and Sri Lanka. After reaching either the Indian or the Sri Lankan ports, products were sometimes shipped to East Africa, where they were used for a variety of purposes including burial rites.
2. **Maritime history of Odisha, known as Kalinga** in ancient times, started before 350 BC according to early sources. The people of this region of eastern India along the coast of the Bay of Bengal sailed up and down the Indian coast, and travelled to Indo China and throughout Maritime Southeast Asia, introducing elements of their culture to the people with whom they traded. The 6th century *Manjusrimulakalpa* mentions the Bay of Bengal as 'Kalingodra' and historically the Bay of Bengal has been called 'Kalinga Sagara' (both Kalingodra and Kalinga Sagara mean Kalinga Sea), indicating the importance of Kalinga in the maritime trade. The old traditions are still celebrated in the annual Bali Jatra, or Boita-Bandana festival held for five days in October / November.
3. **The Chola dynasty (200—1279)** reached the peak of its influence and power during the medieval period.^[19] Emperors Rajaraja Chola I (reigned 985-1014) and Rajendra Chola I (reigned 1012-1044) extended the Chola kingdom beyond the traditional limits. At its peak, the Chola Empire stretched from the island of Sri Lanka in the south to the Godavari basin in the north. The kingdoms along the east coast of India up to the river Ganges acknowledged Chola suzerainty. Chola navies invaded and conquered Srivijaya and Srivijaya was the largest empire in Maritime Southeast Asia. Goods and ideas from India began to play a major role in the "Indianization" of the wider world from this period.
4. **Desinganadu-** Quilon or Kollam in Kerala coast, once called Desinganadu, has had a high commercial reputation since the days of the Phoenicians and Romans. Fed by the Chinese trade, it was mentioned by Ibn Battuta in the 14th century as one of the five Indian ports he had seen in the course of his travels during twenty-four years. The Kollam Port became operational in AD.825. opened Desinganadu's rulers were used to exchange the embassies with Chinese rulers and there was flourishing Chinese settlement at Quilon. The Indian commercial connection with Southeast Asia proved vital to the merchants of Arabia and Persia between the 7th and 8th centuries CE.

5. **The kingdoms of Vijaynagara** and Kalinga established footholds in Malaya, Sumatra and Western Java
6. **The Cholas excelled in foreign** trade and maritime activity, extending their influence overseas to China and Southeast Asia. Towards the end of the 9th century, southern India had developed extensive maritime and commercial activity. The Cholas, being in possession of parts of both the west and the east coasts of peninsular India, were at the forefront of these ventures. The Tang dynasty (618–907) of China, the Srivijaya empire in Maritime Southeast Asia under the Sailendras, and the Abbasid caliphate at Baghdad were the main trading partners.
7. **During the reign of Pandya Parantaka** Nedumjadaiyan (765–790), the Chera dynasty were a close ally of the Pallavas. Pallavamalla Nadivarman defeated the Pandya Varaguna with the help of a Chera king. Cultural contacts between the Pallava court and the Chera country were common. Indian spice exports find mention in the works of Ibn Khurdadhbeh (850), al-Ghafiqi (1150 CE), Ishak bin Imaran (907) and Al Kalkashandi (14th century). Chinese traveler Xuanzang mentions the town of Puri where "merchants depart for distant countries."

INDONESIAN DESIGN Timeline

4,000 BC	Javanese descended from seafarers of China.
6th century BC	Birth of Gautama Buddha.
400 AD	Java becomes sea link between India and China Javanese began carving stone statues and inscriptions.
768-814	Charlemagne rules from northeastern Spain north to the Baltic Sea and east into the Italian peninsula. He is crowned emperor in 800 AD.
800s	Mayans build large cities with tens of thousands of inhabitants under reign of King Samaratunga.
7th and 8th centuries	Monks and holy men make pilgrimages to Java from Asian continent.
8th – 13th centuries	Sailendra dynasty rules Sumatra and Java.
750 to 850	Golden Age of the Sailendra dynasty.
760	Probable beginning of Borobudur construction.
830	Probable completion of Borobudur construction.
700-900	People of Central Java enjoy a high level of cultural development, erecting many grand palaces and religious monuments.

- c.930** Javanese culture and political life move east, away from the lands around Borobudur.
- 13th – 14th centuries** Islam religion comes to Java.
- 1500-1800s** Borobudur is abandoned; volcanic ash fills the galleries; vegetation, including trees, takes root on the buried monument.
- 1709** According to the 18th century chronicle *Babad Tanah Jawi*, the rebel Ki Mas Dana makes a stand at Borobudur in a revolt against the Sultan of Mataram. The monument is besieged and the rebel defeated, brought before the king and sentenced to death.
- 1758** In the *Babad Mataram* (History of the Kingdom of Mataram), a story is told of the crown prince of the Sultanate of Yogyakarta, who disobeyed his father and journeyed to climb "the mountain of a thousand statues." The Sultan sent his men to bring him back, but he became ill and died as soon as he returned to the palace.
- 1811-1816** Java comes under British rule.
- 1814** Sir Thomas Stamford Bingley Raffles, the English Lieutenant Governor of Java, is informed of the existence of a huge monument called Chandi Borobudur. Raffles orders Dutch engineer officer H.C. Cornelius and two hundred villagers to fell trees, burn undergrowth and dig away the earth that covers the monument.
- 1815** **May 18th:** Raffles visits Borobudur.
- 1844** A bamboo teahouse is built on top of the central stupa of the monument.
- 1885** Panels that surround the hidden base of Borobudur are discovered by J.W. Ijzerman, Chairman of the Archeological Society in Yogyakarta, under the processional pathway that has been built around the monument. This discovery brings about renewed efforts to safeguard Borobudur from vandalism and natural threats.
- 1890-1891** The hidden panels are excavated and photographed, then the pathway is replaced.
- 1896** Dutch Colonial officials give the King of Siam eight wagon loads of statues and bas-reliefs from Borobudur, including five of the best Buddhas and two complete stone lions.

- 1911** A Dutch archeologist from Leiden University paints many of the reliefs with ochre to improve his photography. The yellow ochre remains, encouraging the growth of algae, fungus, lichen and moss on the stones themselves.
- 1907-1911** The first major restoration project at Borobudur is begun by Theodor van Erp, a Dutch army engineer officer. He spends the first seven months excavating the grounds around the monument, finding missing Buddha heads and panel stones. Van Erp then dismantles and rebuilds the upper three circular terraces and crumbling stupas. His team cleans many of the sculptures of moss and lichen. However, he is unable to solve the drainage problem which is undercutting the monument. Within fifteen years, the gallery walls are sagging and the reliefs show signs of new cracks and deterioration.
- 1948** The Republic of Indonesia comes into existence.
- 1955** The Indonesian government asks UNESCO for advice on treating the weathered stones of Borobudur.
- 1968** The Indonesian government and the United Nations, working through UNESCO, launch a "Save Borobudur" campaign. A bold plan is proposed to dismantle and rebuild the lower terraces of Borobudur, clean and treat the story panels, and install a new drainage system to stop further erosion.
- 1971** The plan is approved by the Indonesian government and restoration committee.
- 1975** Restoration work begins.
- 1983** Feb. 23: Completion of the project is marked by an inaugural ceremony.
- 1991** Borobudur is included in UNESCO's World Heritage list.

Borobudur represents not only the creativity of Javanese geniuses but also one of the world's greatest constructional and artistic masterpieces. It represents the spirit of the Monastic movement in India as materialised in this structure, with influences from the eastern school of India and the architecture of Bengal. To understand the design elements, we need to focus our opticals on 14 of the following.

1. Buddhist temples and buildings of India
2. Stupas - Buddhist Memorial Monument
3. The Indian prototype- Sanchi Stupa
4. History of Stupas

5. Sanchi: Home of the World's Oldest Stupa
6. Buddhist temples
7. Features
8. Temple Gates
9. Borobudur: the Ultimate Buddhist Temple
10. Indian connect in the history of Borobudur
11. Why it was built
12. Shailendra dynasty
13. The Sailendras and indian buddhism
14. Architectural development in *stūpa* structure



1. Buddhist temples and buildings of India

There are essentially three kinds of Buddhist structures:

- 1) stupas, bell-shaped structures that contain a holy relic or scripture;
- 2) temples, place of worship somewhat similar to a church; and
- 3) monasteries, which contain living quarters and meditation cells for monks.

Stupas are solid structures that typically cannot be entered and were constructed to contain sacred Buddhist relics that are hidden from view (and vandals) in containers buried at their core or in the walls. Temples have an open interior that may be entered and in which are displayed one or more cult images as a focus for worship. Although this simple distinction between Stupa and temple is useful, the distinction is not always clear. There are stupas that have the external form of a stupa but are like a temple with an inner corridor and multiple shrines.

Local temples are essentially self sufficient and rely on their own lands and support from the local lay community to keep going. Property belongs to the community. There is not a hierarchy of priest, bishops and archbishops like there is Christianity.

The word pagoda is sometimes used to collectively describe stupas and temples but generally refers to Japanese- and Chinese style towers inspired by South Asian stupa. The word pagoda is derived from *dagada*, the word used for relic chamber in Sri Lanka. Classic Japanese- and Chinese-style pagodas usually have multiple stories, each with a graceful, tiled Chinese-style roof, and a top roof capped by a spire. The base represents the earth, the spire symbolizes heaven, and the connecting piece symbolizing the cosmic axis, to the Way.



History of Buddhist Temples



Mahabodhi Temple Complex in Bodhgaya, where Buddha experienced his enlightenment

The word for temple in many languages is the same as cave. Many early Buddhist temples were "artificial caves" that attempted to recreate the atmosphere of Buddhist caves in northern India. Describing what they were probably like, the historian Paul Strachen wrote: In his book *Pagan: Art and Architecture of Old Burma* , "the now spartan brick *gu* [temple]" was "cluttered with regal objects and requisites, a clamor of activity as food offerings were shuttled from the kitchens down passageways crowded with chanting devotees, brightly colored wall paintings, gilded furnishings and flapping banners and hangings...the usual plain, seated Buddha image, found in the deserted temples of Pagan today, would have been bathed, perfumed and dresses with the finest and most costly garments."

The architecture of Buddhist temples is influenced by the architecture of country in which they are found and various traditions of Buddhist architecture. Japanese pagodas, for example, have unique Japanese features that are modeled after Chinese-style pagodas, which in turn were modeled after Indian stupas.

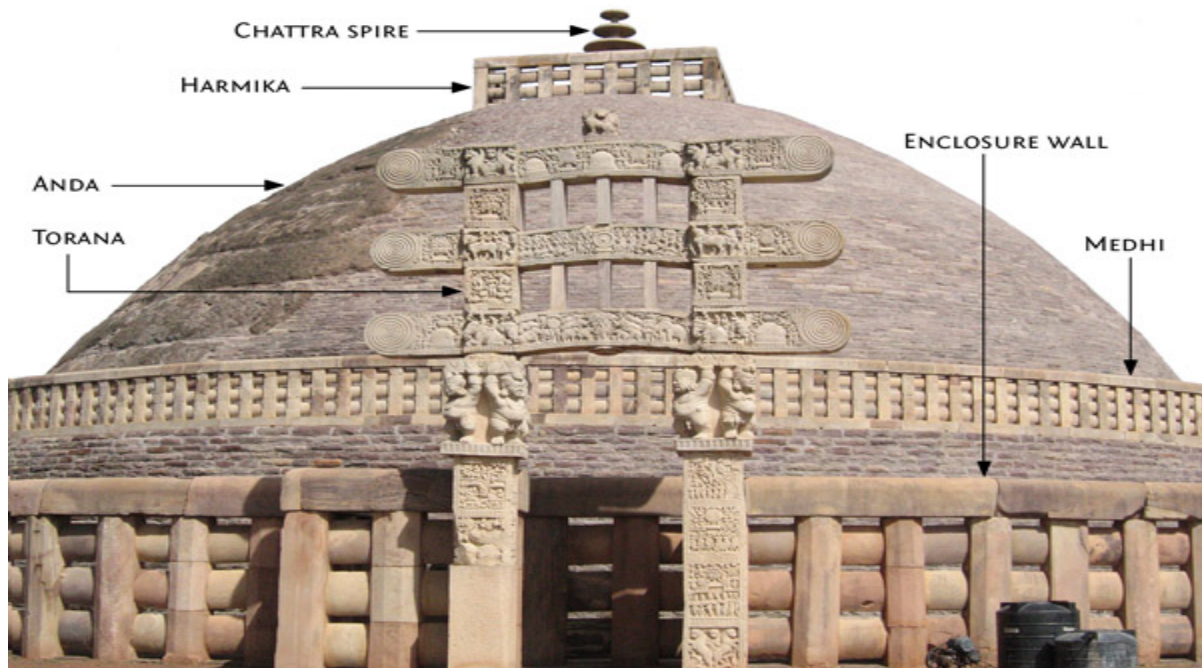
Because ancient wood temples were often destroyed by fire, temples today are usually made of brick and stone with brass and iron ornaments. Chinese pagodas were often built to commemorate important leaders or event or house important artifacts or documents.

Many Buddhist temples are located in the forests and mountains. There are two reasons for their remote locations: first, mountains and forest have always been associated with spiritual purity, and second, Buddhist monks were often persecuted and remote location gave them some safety. In China, Japan and Thailand temples are often in the middle of town.

2. STUPAS -Buddhist Memorial Monument

The first and most fundamental of Buddhist architectural monuments, the **Buddhist stupa** serves as a marker for a sacred space, a **symbolic representation of the Buddha's burial mound**.

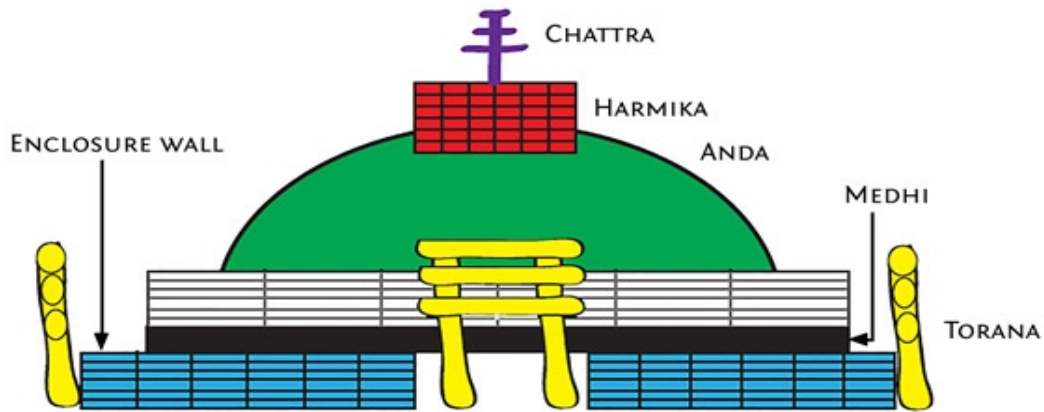
To understand the stupas and pagodas that one will see throughout Asia—including those in Angkor, Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar (Burma), Indonesia, China, Japan—it is helpful to first appreciate the design of the earliest stupas, which can be found in India and Sri Lanka. These stupas exerted great influence on later designs.



Great Stupa, Sanchi, India. forerunner for Bodobodur

3. The Indian Prototype: Sanchi Stupa

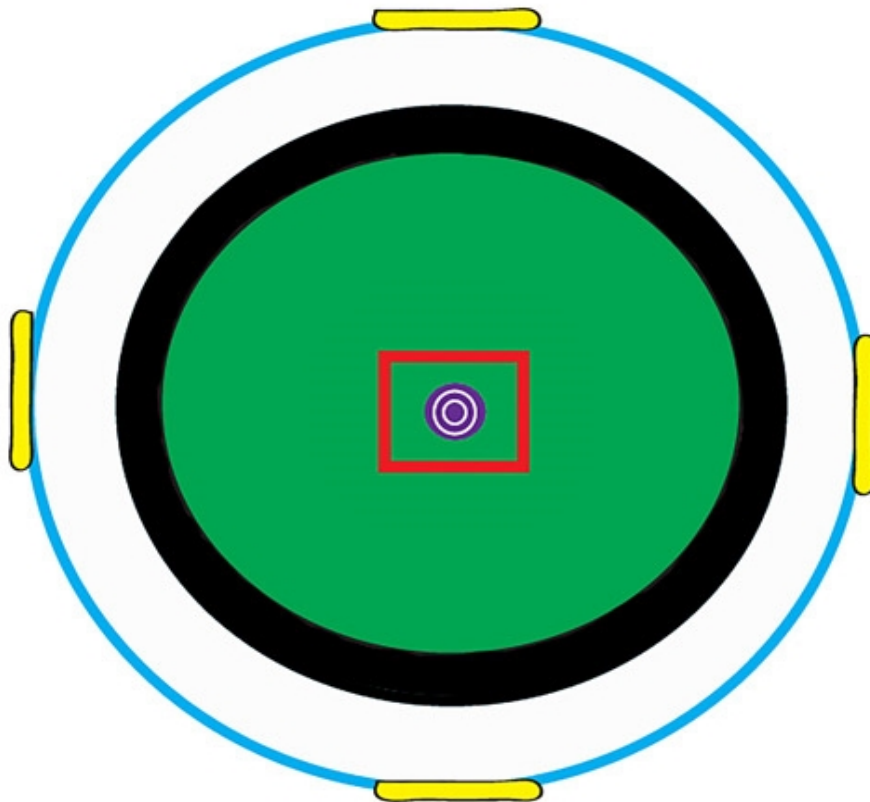
The Great Stupa at Sanchi, in central India, is one of the earliest stupas; it served as an architectural prototype for all others that followed. The world-famous stupa — first constructed by the 3rd century BCE Mauryan ruler Ashoka in brick (the same material as those of Sri Lanka) — was later expanded to twice its original size in stone.



Elevation and plan. Great Stupa, Sanchi, India.

In the most basic sense, as an architectural representation of a sacred burial site, a stupa—no matter where it is located in the world or when it was built—has three fundamental features.

- **A hemispherical mound (anda).** The anda's domed shape (green highlights) recalls a mound of dirt that was used to cover the Buddha's remains. As you might expect, it has a solid core and cannot be entered. Consistent with their symbolic associations, the earliest stupas contained actual relics of the Buddha; the relic chamber, buried deep inside the anda, is called



the

tabena. Over time, this hemispherical mound has taken on an even grander symbolic association: the mountain home of the gods at the center of the universe.

- **A square railing (harmika).** The harmika (red highlights) is inspired by a square railing or fence that surrounded the mound of dirt, marking it as a sacred burial site.
- **A central pillar supporting a triple-umbrella form (chattra).** The chattra, in turn, was derived from umbrellas that were placed over the mound to protect it from the elements (purple highlights). Just as the anda's symbolic value expanded over time, the central pillar that holds the umbrellas has come to represent the pivot of the universe, the axis mundi along which the divine descends from heaven and becomes accessible to humanity. And the three circular umbrella-like disks represent the three Jewels, or Triantha, of Buddhism, which are the keys to a true understanding of the faith: (a) Buddha; (b) dharma (Buddhist teachings or religious law); and (c) sangha (monastic community).

Around these three core building blocks were added secondary features.

- **Enclosure wall with decorated gateways (toranas) at the cardinal directions.** The wall — with its trademark three horizontal stone bars (in the top image) — surrounds the entire structure. The wall is marked in light blue highlights and the toranas in yellow.
- **A circular terrace (medhi).** The terrace—surrounded by a similar three-bar railing—supports the anda and raises it off the ground (black highlights); it likely served as a platform for ritual circumambulation.

4. History of Stupas

After Buddha's death his relics were divided and a number of stupas were built to house them. Although no ancient stupas remain the relics they housed are believed to have been saved and placed in other stupas. Many of the oldest stupas date back to the period of Buddhist expansions during the rule of King Ashoka (268-239 B.C.) The objects inside stupas are often unknown. A gold reliquary excavated from a 2nd century B.C. stupa in Bimaran Afghanistan was decorated with images of Buddha and Hindu gods. The reliquary is believed to have contained the ashes of a revered saint or some object he touched.

Stupa developed in India in the 3rd century B.C. and were general objects of worship for Buddhists before the formation of Buddha imagery, sculpture and painting. Sanchi stupa, built near present-day Bhopal, India, is the oldest. It is shaped like a half sphere and built to allow worship around it. The functions of Buddhist stupas were also diffused, and shapes show a variety of styles in each cultural area.



Great Stupa in Sanchi

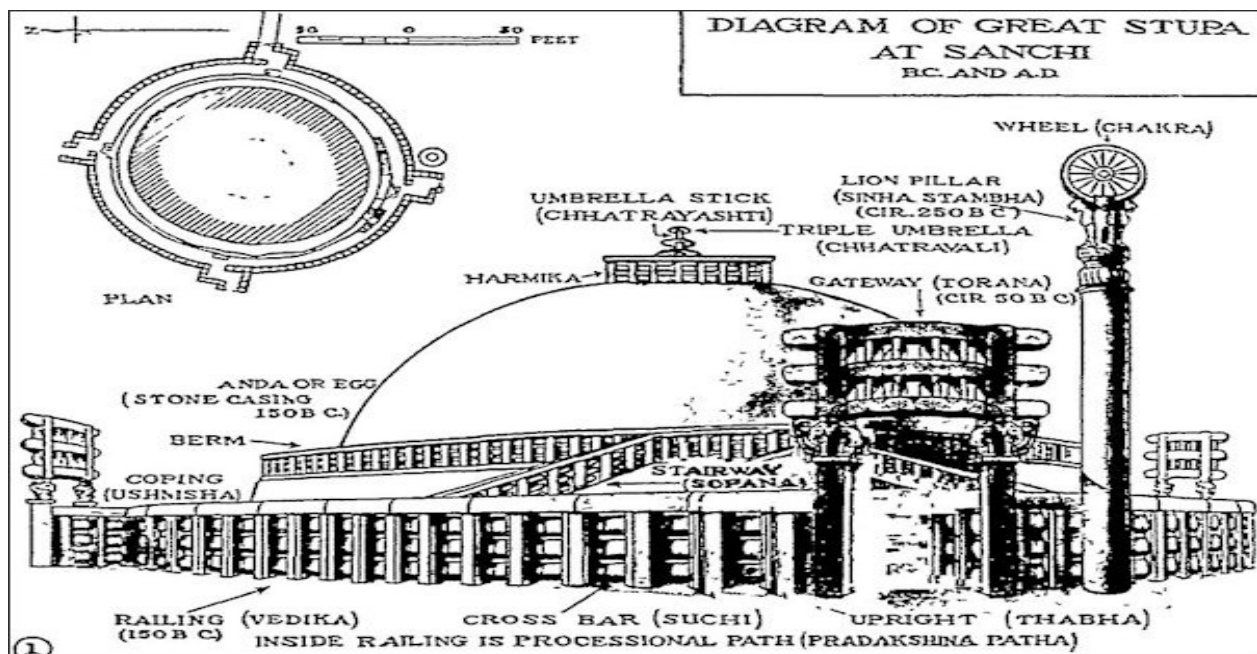
Stupa is a Sanskrit word that literally means “to heap” or “to pile up.” Some scholars believe that stupas predated Buddhism and originally were mounds of dirt or rocks built to honor dead kings. Later, these scholars say, the Buddha imbued them with spiritual meaning. Sylvia Somerville wrote in her book on stupas: “This explanation runs counter to Buddhist tradition, which maintains that because the stupa conveys enlightened qualities, it could only have been revealed by the mind of enlightenment. ...In fact, some stupas, such as the Swayambhunath Stupa in Nepal, are believed to be self-arising expressions of enlightenment.”

Stupas are the oldest Buddhist religious monuments. The first Buddhist ones were simple mounds of mud or clay built to enclose relics of Buddha. In the third century B.C., after his conversion to Buddhism, Emperor Asoka ordered the original stupas opened and the remains were distributed among the several thousand stupas he had built. Stupas at the eight places associated with the life of the Buddha were important before Ashoka and continued to after his death. Over time, stupas changed from being funerary monuments to being objects of veneration. As this occurred they also changed in appearance changed also.

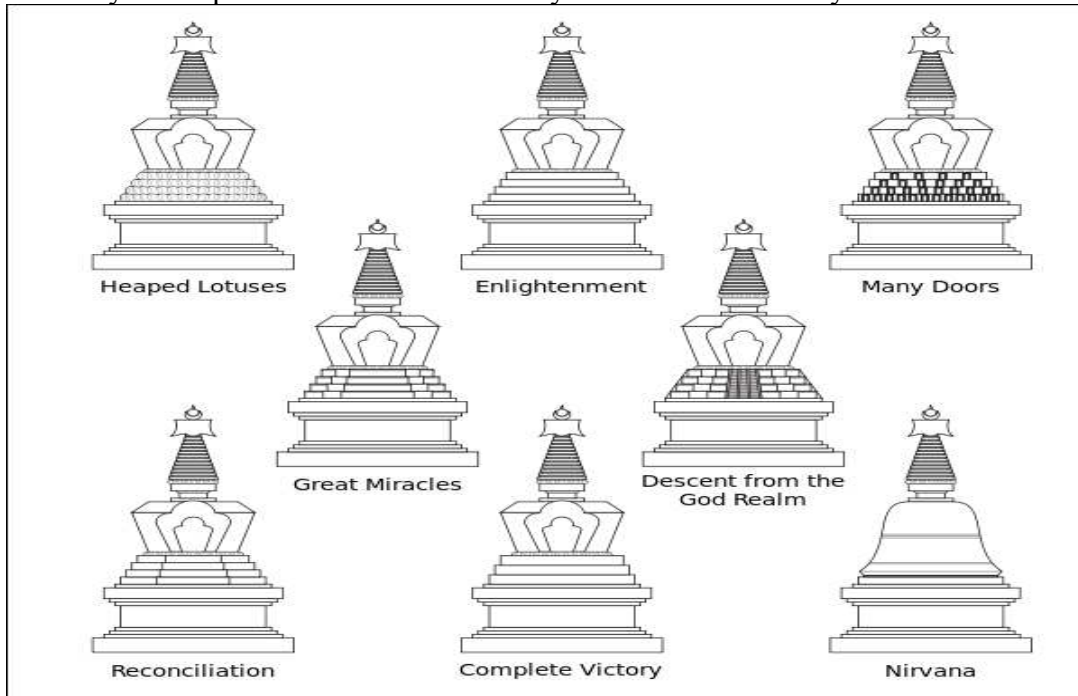
Over the centuries many old stupas became pilgrimage sites. Famous ones became the center of complex ceremonial areas. They were often surrounded by a railing with gateways, through which pilgrims entered the ceremonial ground. Stone lions guarded the entrances. Outside vendors sold food and offerings to pilgrims.

5.Sanchi: Home of the World's Oldest Stupa

Sanchi (30 miles from Bhopal) is a pilgrimage site that attracts worshipers from all over the world who come to see Buddhist art and architecture that dates back to the third century B.C. Designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1989 and regarded as one of the most remarkable archaeological complexes in India, it contains monasteries and the world's oldest stupa.



“Sanchi is the oldest extant Buddhist sanctuary. Although Buddha never visited the site during any of his former lives or during his earthly existence, the religious nature of this shrine is obvious. The chamber of relics of Stupa 1 contained the remains of Shariputra, a disciple of Shakyamuni who died six months before his master; he is especially venerated by the occupants of the 'small vehicle' or Hinayana. Having remained a principal centre of Buddhism in medieval India following the spread of Hinduism, Sanchi bears unique witness as a major Buddhist sanctuary to the period from the 3rd century BC to the 1st century AD.”



Eight Great Stupas

6. Buddhist Temples

A temple is a place of worship as opposed to a shrine, which is a sacred place for praying. It generally contains an image of Buddha and has a place where Buddhists practice devotional activities. Temples attract large crowds during festivals or if they are famous but otherwise a fairly quiet. They are often sought as places for quiet meditation, with most acts of worship and devotion being done in front of an altar at home.

Buddhist temples are generally a cluster of buildings---whose number and size depends on the size of the temple---situated in an enclosed area. Large temples have several halls, where people can pray, and living quarters for monks. Smaller ones have a single hall, a house for a resident monk and a bell. Some have cemeteries.

Temples can be several stories high and often have steeply sloped roofs are often supported by elaborately-decorated and colorfully-painted eaves and brackets. The main shrines often contain a Buddha statue, boxes of sacred scriptures, alters with lit candles, burning incense and other offerings as well as images of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and devas. The central images depends on the sect.

Buddhist temples come in many shapes and sizes. Pagodas found in China and Japan are perhaps the best known. Stupas, stone structure built over Buddhist scriptures or relics of the Buddha or famous holy men, are found throughout the Buddhist world. . Buddhist temples are designed to symbolise the five elements: 1) Fire,

- 2) Air,
- 3) Earth, symbolised by the square base,
- 4) Water, and
- 5) Wisdom, symbolised by the pinnacle at the top of the temple.

All Buddhist temples contain an image or a statue of Buddha. People sometimes donate money to temples and have their names hung on special wooden plaques attached to lanterns of the temple. Generally, the larger the donation, the larger the plaque. Buddha never viewed himself as an object of worship. He probably would not have been very pleased to see his birthday as the object of veneration and merit so crassly exchanged for money.

Many temples are tourist attractions and outing destinations for local people. Souvenir amulets and other offerings are sold in little shops or booths; the names of large contributors are placed in special boxes; and priests are available to perform special rites.



Angkor Wat, a Hindu-Buddhist temple

7.Features of Buddhist Temples

Buddhist temples usually contain numerous Buddha statues. The central Buddha images are often surrounded by burning incense sticks and offerings of fruit and flowers. Some contain the ashes or bone reliquaries of popular holy man. Many Buddhist temples face south and sometimes to the east, but never to the north and west which are regarded as unlucky directions according to Chinese feng shui. Many temples are entered through the left door and exited through the right.

The main hall is usually found at the center of the temple grounds. Inside are images of the Buddha, other Buddhist images, altars and space for monks and worshipers. The main hall is sometimes connected to a lecture hall, where monks gather to study and chant sutras.. Other buildings include a the sutra depositor, a library or place where Buddhist scripture are kept; living, sleeping, and eating areas for monks, and offices. Large temples often have special halls, where treasures are kept and displayed.

Some temples have shrines for making prayers to the dead filled with funerary plaques with photographs of dead relatives. The photographs are often of deceased people whose funeral ceremony was performed at the temple. Some temple feature sets of wooden plaques with the names of large contributors and other sets with afterlife names of deceased people. In the old days the afterlife names were only given only to Buddhist priests but now they are given to lay

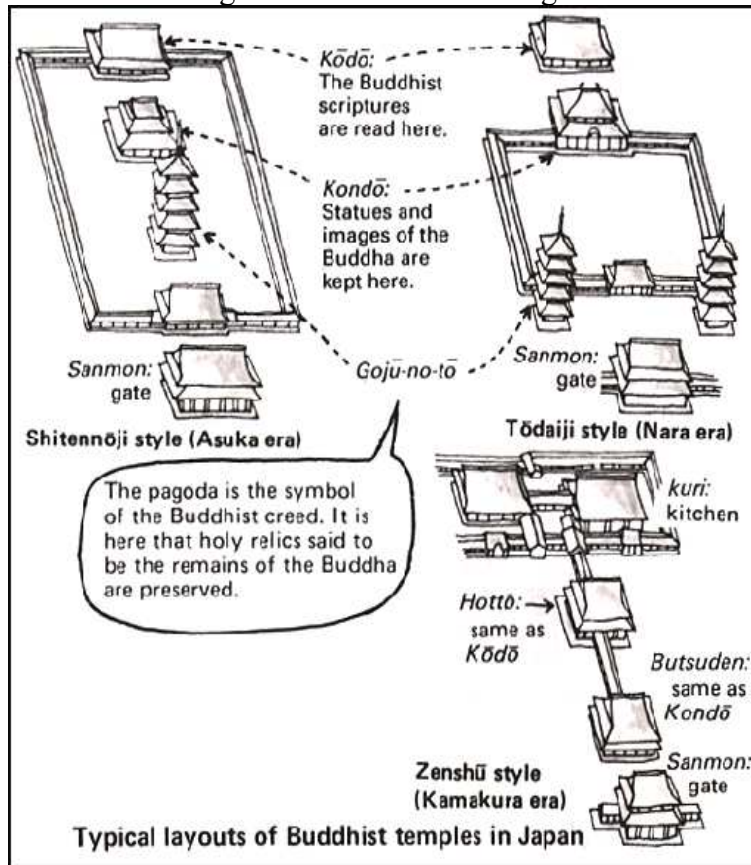
people who paid the right price and now in some places have become a kind of ranking system in the after life based in how much one has contributed..

Many Buddhist temples contain large bells, which are rung during the New Year and to mark other occasions, and cemeteries. The pathway to the temples is often lined with stone or paper lanterns donated by worshipers, or strung with prayer flags. Many temples are filled with small shops selling religious items.

8. Buddhist Temple Gates

Buddhist temples usually have outer gates and inner gates protected by statues or paintings of beasts, fierce gods, or warriors that ward off evil spirits. The gateways are composed of wood, stone, bronze or even concrete. The beasts include Chinese lions and Korean dogs. Fierce guardian gods and warriors on the outer gate sometime have lighting bolts coming out of their nostrils and a serrated swords in their hands. Their duty is to keep demons and evil spirits out of the temple area.

The inner gate at the antechamber to the temple complex is often guarded by four guardian kings, representing the four cardinal directions. The king in the north holds a pagoda representing earth, heaven and cosmic axis. The king in the east holds a sword with the power to evoke a black wind that produces tens of thousands of spears and golden serpents. The king in the west possesses lute. And the king in the south holds a dragon and a wish-fulfilling jewel.



9. Borobudur: the Ultimate Buddhist Temple

Borobudur, was built during over a half century by the Sailendra Dynasty after Mahayana Buddhism was introduced from the Srivijaya Kingdom of South Sumatra in the early half of the 8th century AD. Many Buddhism images and reliefs in Borobudur were made referencing Gandavyuha and Vajrayana/Esoteric Buddhism from Sri Lanka and East India.

The stepped pyramid shape without an inner space as found at Borobudur is found in neither India nor Sri Lanka. And there are no stupas with that similar shape in Southeast Asia prior to Borobudur. Similar shaped monuments are found only in South Sumatra etc. This type of monument, originating from the mountain religions of Megalithic culture that predated the introduction of Buddhism continued through the Historical Age. Borobudur can be seen as a massive monument of this origin, decorated in Buddhism style.



Borobudur in Java

Borobudur is a step pyramid, built around a natural hill, comprised of a broad platforms topped by five walled rectangular terraces, and they in turn are topped by three round terraces. Each terraces is outlined with ornaments and statues and the walls are decorated with bas reliefs. More than two million blocks of volcanic stone were carved during its construction. Pilgrims have traditionally walked around the monument in a clockwise manner moving up each of the five levels, and in process covering five kilometers.

Unlike most temples, Borobudur did not have actual spaces for worship. Instead it has an extensive system of corridors and stairways, which are thought to have been a place for Buddhist ceremonies. Borobudur also has six square courtyards, three circular ones, and a main courtyard within a stupa at the temple's peak. The entire structure is formed in the shape of a giant twirling staircase, a style of architecture from prehistoric Indonesia.

Borobudur is a three-dimensional model of the Mahayana Buddhist universe. The climb to the top of the temple is intended to illustrate the path an individual must take to reach enlightenment.

At the main entrance on the east side, visitors can not even see the top. Scholars believed this was intentional. At the top was the ideal of Buddhist perfection, the World of Formlessness. The architecture and stonework of this temple has no equal. And it was built without using any kind of cement or mortar!

Borobudur resembles a giant stupa, but seen from above it forms a mandala. The great stupa at the top of the temple sits 40 meters above the ground. This main dome is surrounded by 72 Buddha statues seated inside perforated stupa. Five closed square galleries, three open circular inner terraces, and a concentric scheme express the universe geometrically. At the center of the top of the temple is a beautifully shaped stupa which is surrounded by three circles of smaller stupas that have the same shape. There are 72 of these, each with a Buddha statue inside. Touching them is supposed to bring good luck. Unfortunately many had their heads lopped off by 19th century explorers looking for souvenirs. The 72 small latticed stupas look like perforated stone bells. The temple is decorated with stone carvings in bas-relief representing images from the life of Buddha—the largest and most complete ensemble of Buddhist reliefs in the world.,

Borobudur is both a shrine to the Lord Buddha and a place for Buddhist pilgrimage. The ten levels of the temple symbolize the three divisions of the religion's cosmic system. As visitors begin their journey at the base of the temple, they make their way to the top of the monument through the three levels of Buddhist cosmology, Kamadhatu (the world of desire), Rupadhatu (the world of forms) and Arupadhatu (the world of formlessness). As visitors walk to the top the monument guides the pilgrims past 1,460 narrative relief panels on the wall and the balustrades.



Borobudur, northwest view

10. Indian connect in History of Borobudur

Borobudur was built by the Sailendra Dynasty kings in the 8th and 9th centuries, around that time that Charlemagne ruled Europe. When it was completed an epic poet from Ceylon wrote: "Thus are the Buddha incomprehensible, and incomprehensible is the nature of the Buddhas, and incomprehensible is the reward of those who have faith in the incomprehensible."

According to UNESCO: Founded by a king of the Saliendra dynasty, Borobudur was built to honour the glory of both the Buddha and its founder, a true king Bodhisattva. This colossal temple was built between AD 750 and 842: 300 years before Cambodia's Angkor Wat, 400 years before work had begun on the great European cathedrals. Little is known about its early history except that a huge army of workers worked in the tropical heat to shift and carve the 60,000 square meters of stone.

11. Why it was built remains a mystery. There are no written records on the subject. No ancient cities have been found nearby. There is no clear sanctuary as a place of worship and no room to store icons. Many historians and archeologists believe that Borobudur is not a temple but rather a kind of advertisement for Buddhism. According to an expert on the subject, John Mikic, Borobudur was built to “to engage the mind” and to “give a visual aid for teaching a gentle philosophy of life.”

Borobudur was an active religious center until the 10th century when it was abandoned for reasons that are not clear. At the beginning of the 11th century AD, because of the political situation in Central Java, divine monuments in that area, including the Borobudur Temple became completely neglected and given over to decay. According to UNESCO: the Stylistically the art of Borobudur is a tributary of Indian influences (Gupta and post-Gupta styles).

12. The Shailendra dynasty (IAST: *Śailendra* derived from Sanskrit combined words *Śaila* and *Indra*, meaning "King of the Mountain", was the name of a notable Indianised dynasty that emerged in 8th-century Java, whose reign signified a cultural renaissance in the region. The Shailendras were active promoters of Mahayana Buddhism with the glimpses of Hinduism, and covered the Kedu Plain of Central Java with Buddhist monuments, one of which is the colossal stupa of Borobudur. The Shailendras are considered to have been a thalassocracy and ruled vast swathes of maritime Southeast Asia, however they also relied on agricultural pursuits, by way of intensive rice cultivation on the Kedu Plain of Central Java. The dynasty appeared to be the ruling family of both the Medang Kingdom of Central Java, for some period, and the Srivijaya Kingdom in Sumatra.

The inscriptions created by Shailendras use three languages; Old Malay, Old Javanese, and Sanskrit - written either in the Kawi alphabet, or pre-Nāgarī script. The use of Old Malay has sparked speculation of a Sumatran origin, or Srivijayan connection of this family. On the other hand, the use of Old Javanese suggests their firm political establishment on Java. The use of Sanskrit usually indicates the official nature, and/or religious significance, of the event described in any given inscription. After 824, there are no more references to the Shailendra house in the Javanese ephigraphic record. Around 860 the name re-appears in the Nalanda inscription in India. According to the text, the king Devapaladeva of Bengala (Pala Empire) had granted 'Balaputra, the king of Suvarna-dvipa' (Sumatra) the revenues of 5 villages to a Buddhist monastery near Bodh Gaya. Balaputra was styled a descendant from the Shailendra dynasty and grandson of the king of Java.

From Sumatra, the Shailendras also maintained overseas relations with the Chola kingdom in Southern India, as shown by several south Indian inscriptions. An 11th-century inscription mentioned the grant of revenues to a local Buddhist sanctuary, built in 1005 by the king of the Srivijaya. In spite the relations were initially fairly cordial, hostilities had broken out in 1025.

Rajendra Chola I the Emperor of the Chola dynasty conquered some territories of the Shailendra Dynasty in the 11th century. The devastation caused by Chola invasion of Srivijaya in 1025, marked the end of Shailendra family as the ruling dynasty in Sumatra. The last king of Shailendra dynasty — the Maharaja Sangrama Vijayatunggavarman — was imprisoned and taken as hostage. Nevertheless, amity was re-established between the two states, before the end of the 11th century. In 1090 a new charter was granted to the old Buddhist sanctuary, it is the last known inscription with a reference to the Shailendras. With the absence of legitimate successor, Shailendra dynasty seems ceased to rule. Other family within Srivijaya mandala took over the throne

13. The Sailendras and indian buddhism The rise of the pāla dynasty in the 8th century ad brought paradigm shifts in Buddhist text, ritual, and sacred architecture that sent cultural waves across the expanding maritime and land trade routes of Asia. The architectural concepts travelled in the connected Buddhist world between the Ganges valley and Java. A movement of architectural ideas can be seen from studying the corpus of the temples in the Pāla (750–1214 AD) and Śailendra (775–1090 AD) domains of India and Indonesia. This led to a paradigm shift in the design of a *stūpa* architecture at Kesariya (Bihar) that emphasizes the arrangement of deities in the circular maṇḍalic fashion with a certain numerical configuration of life-size Buddha figures placed in the external niches of the monument. This new architectural concept possibly played a key role in the development of a more elaborate structure of Borobudur in Java. The architectural linkages emerge stronger with the central fivefold structure of the temples of the Pālas and Śailendras. In order to make the essential comparison, a quick method of drawing architectural plans is developed that is based on the basic measurements and not archaeological plans.



14. Architectural development in *stūpa* structure: The main archaeological sites of the middle and lower Ganges plain were recorded in the 19th century by Alexander Cunningham, following the travel accounts of the Chinese scholar-pilgrims Faxian (c. 337–422) and Xuanzang (c. 602–64). Northeast India contained not only early Buddhist *stūpas* and monastic complexes, but also a range of *stūpa* structures that advanced from the traditional hemispherical *stūpa* of Sanchi, through the cruciform, terraced *stūpa* structure of Nandangarh to the elaborate *stūpa-maṇḍala* of Kesariya. Most of the Pāla structures that may have served as a model for Central Javanese temples are in dilapidated state today, making it difficult to track the architectural borrowings. But since 1998, the ASI excavations of some parts of Kesariya Stupa in Bihar, India have uncovered striking design similarities with the massive Central Javanese *stūpa* of Borobudur, whose stepped pyramid structure and maṇḍalic arrangement of deities in circular

This article demonstrates how the spread of Buddhism through maritime routes was closely linked with commercial activities, and how these networks were different from overland routes. It also provides a survey on early India–China networks and introduces the activities of Buddhist monks and the importance of Śrīvijayan rulers and their contribution to the maritime spread of Buddhism. In the second part, the article discusses the role of Sri Lanka and the Bay of Bengal networks in the maritime transmission of Buddhism. It shows that Buddhism spread in various forms from one cultural zone of Asia to another. It also demonstrates that the transmission of Buddhist doctrines, images and texts was a complex process that involved itinerant monks, traders and travellers.¹

The Buddhas of Borobudur, for example, resemble in some ways the stone Buddhas of the Pāla Buddhist monastery of Ratnagiri in Odisha. There are unresolved debates about the origin of the Śailendra dynasty⁶⁹ and their sudden rise to power in Central Java in c. 750–1090 that coincided with a massive surge in temple construction that included Borobudur (c. 760–830) and Candi Kalasan.

The construction dates of Buddhist monuments of the Śailendras and the Pālas are close and they have many design features in common. We have already seen how the design ideas for Buddhist art and architecture were circulating from the 5th century. It was the network of monks, artists, and craftsmen that made possible the construction of the huge monuments and ritual centres.

The first record of the association of the Śailendras and Pāla India is dated to the Kelurak inscription of c. 778 and the last inscription found in India referring to Śailendras is the smaller Leiden copperplate inscription of c. 1090. By then, the ties between the two states had been sustained for more than three centuries.²

From an architectural point of view, a monument like Borobudur can only have been the culmination of a long period of artistic gestation. Wolff Schoemaker (1924: 22) suggests three to four centuries of an autochthonous gestation period and argues about the lack of an autonomous development of sculpture in Java. Given the Śailendra–Pāla contacts and the construction of the earlier Śaiva temples on the Dieng plateau, it is not beyond the bounds of possibility in this connected Buddhist world that a breakthrough development in the Pāla domain, which transformed a *stūpa* into a maṇḍala of life-size Buddhas, was enhanced with narrative reliefs at Somapura and Vikramaśīla and reached its ultimate form of expression on Javanese soil. Jordaán has argued that the Śailendras built their monuments in direct cooperation with Indian architects and craftsmen. This seems possible at the high conceptual level of architectural design, but at the level of relief carving and highly innovative *stūpikā* design there is no trace of non-Javanese influences.³



Balinese Hinduism (Indonesian: *Agama Hindu Dharma*; *Agama Tirtha*; *Agama Air Suci*; *Agama Hindu Bali*) is the form of Hinduism practiced by the majority of the population of Bali.^{[1][2]} This is particularly associated with the Balinese people residing on the island, and represents a distinct form of Hindu worship incorporating local animism, ancestor worship or *Pitru Paksha*, and reverence for Buddhist saints or *Bodhisattava*.

The population of Indonesian islands is predominantly Muslim (86%). The island of Bali is an exception where about 87% of its people identify as Hindu (about 1.7% of the total Indonesian population). Upon independence from the Dutch colonial rule, the 1945 Constitution of Indonesia guaranteed freedom of religion to all citizens.^[4] In 1952, states Michel Picard – an anthropologist and scholar of Balinese history and religion, the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs came under the control of Islamists who severely constrained an acceptable definition of a "religion".^[4] To be acceptable as an official Indonesian religion, the ministry defined "religion" as one that is monotheistic, has codified religious law and added a number of requirements. Further, Indonesia denied rights of citizenship (such as the right to vote) to anyone not belonging to an officially recognized monotheistic religion. The minority Balinese Hindus adapted and declared their form of Hinduism to be monotheistic, and presented it in a form to be politically eligible for the status of *agama*. Balinese Hinduism has been formally recognized by the Indonesian government as one of the official religions practised in Bali.



Temple offerings.....Ganapati

Balinese Hinduism includes the Indian trinity concept called Trimurti consisting of:

- Brahma
- Wisnu or Vishnu
- Çiwa or Siwa or Shiva

In Balinese Hindu texts, the alternate tripartite concept of Shiva of Indian Shaivism is also found. This is usually referred in Balinese as "Siwa-Sadasiwa-Paramasiwa", where Shiva is the creator, the maintainer and the destroyer of cyclic existence.

Along with the traditional Hindu trinity, Balinese Hindus worship a range of gods and goddesses (*Hyang, Dewata* and *Batara-Batari*), as well others that are unique and not found in Indian Hinduism. Sang Hyang Widhi literally means "Divine Order", also known as Acintya ("Inconceivable") or Sang Hyang Tunggal ("Divine Oneness"),^[20] is the concept in Balinese tradition of Hinduism that parallels the metaphysical concept of Brahman among Indian Hindus. Ceremonies include an empty high seated chair. It is also found at the top of the *Padmasana* shrine outside houses and temples. This is for Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa. According to Balinese Hindu precepts, there are many manifestations of Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa in the form of gods such as Dewi Sri - the goddess of rice, and many other gods associated with mountains, lakes, and the sea.

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Balinese Vishnu on garuda

CHAPTER VII

THE PATH of the BUDDHA and of the Borobudur temple



Hundreds of studies in several languages have been dedicated to understanding the history, architectural meaning and location of Borobudur in the Kedu plain of south-central Java. In spite of successive phases of excavation and restoration (1907–1911: under the super-vision of Th. Van Erp; 1968–1983: conducted by UNESCO), uncertainty continues to surround the palaeoenvironmental context in which this world-class monument was constructed between ad. 760 – 900 and very few people perhaps know that *1985 Borobudur bombing* occurred on 21 January 1985 when nine bombs detonated at the Borobudur Buddhist temple located in Magelang, Central Java, Indonesia. There were no human casualties in this attack; however, nine stupas on upper rounded terraces of Arupadhatu were badly damaged by the bombs. In 1991, a blind Muslim preacher, Husein Ali Al Habsyi, was sentenced to life imprisonment for masterminding a series of bombings in the mid-1980s including the temple attack. It is believed that the attack was Indonesian Islamist retaliation on Tanjung Priok massacre in 1984. During trial, Habsyi refused to be held responsible on the attack and mentioned Mohammad Jawad, a mysterious figure, as the true mastermind. Mohammad Jawad remains unknown. On 23 March 1999 Habsyi was pardoned and released by the President B. J. Habibie administration.^[4] Two other members of a right-wing extremist group that carried out the bombings were each sentenced to 20 years in 1986 and another man received a 13-year prison term.

On May 29, 2006 Indonesia's Prambanan compound of Hindu temples was damaged in the earthquake that rocked Java, but the nearby Borobudur Buddhist temple complex was left unscathed.



Aerial view of the Borobudur temple, one of UNESCO World Heritage Site in Indonesia

830 (Miksic, 1994)

(9) (PDF) *Borobudur temple stood by a lake: chronostratigraphic evidence and historical:* https://www.researchgate.net/publication/236341703_Borobudur_temple_stood_by_a_lake_chronostratigraphic_evidence_and_historical_implications [accessed Nov 11 2021].

Prambanan, the largest Hindu temple compound in Indonesia, is located about 18 kilometers (10 miles) east of Yogyakarta, the main city in the quake zone... Visitors meanwhile poured into the Borobudur sanctuary, built between 750 and 850 AD, despite the devastation in Yogyakarta 40 kilometers to the southeast, said Suyoto, who works in the monument's administrative offices. This quake toppled intricately carved columns and dislodged numerous massive concrete blocks at Prambanan.

Borobudur, one of the world's major cultural sites, located in Central Java in an area subjected to intense volcanic activity and monsoon rains, is not by modern standards built on good foundations. Indeed the mode of construction, the size of the complex, its age, and its environment all conspire to work against stability. Moreover what is stable in our life time may be far from stable over the eleven or twelve centuries that Borobudur has existed. It is not known exactly how this gigantic-sized temple was built. The construction itself is estimated to take approximately 100 years, based on the observations of archeologists. Formerly this temple had 1 giant stupa around 5 balustrades, which collapsed because the pressure was too heavy and then this stupa was changed to 1 great stupa with 3 levels of stupas around it.

A little while later the governments of the United Kingdom and The Netherlands swapped territories and Java became administered by the Dutch. Hartmann, the Dutch Administrator of the Kedu Region in Java, arranged for further removal of the debris and the cleaning of the galleries, so that by 1835, the entire monument was freed from its last disfiguring cover. In 1885, Yzerman the Chairman of the Archaeological Society in Yogyakarta excavated the broad base and discovered what became known as the "hidden foot" and the series of relief carved around it. Photographs of the relief were taken in 1890-1891 before the "hidden foot" was covered again with the original stones of encasement (Soekmono, 1976).

Yzerman's discovery alerted the Dutch Government to take serious action for safeguarding Candi Borobudur, and early in the 20th century the first major restoration was carried out under the direction of Theodor van Erp, a Dutch engineer. He directed the rebuilding of the crumbling stupas, the relaying of pavement in the terraces, and the removal of lichen and moss from the carvings. This great restoration was completed in 1911 and resulted in the monumental monograph by N.J. Korm and Th. Van Erp (<http://www.rubens.anu.edu.au>), which included photographs of all sculptures and relief, including the hidden foot taken before, during and after restoration. This photographic documentation has been of great value from 1926 when the first study of the stability of the monument was carried out after the restoration (Soekmono, 1976; Voute, 1980).

Paradoxically, Candi Borobudur has suffered more damage after the restoration than over the hundreds of years before. In 1929 Government Commission distinguished three different categories of damage: damage caused by corrosion, by mechanical forces, and by tension. The recommendations of the Commission were highly appreciated by the

Government. However, the world-wide economic depression in 1930 caused the lack of financial support for the Archaeological Survey to do the work and finally the Second World War absorbed the entire attention of the Government.

The problem of safeguarding Candi Borobudur became an international one as soon as the Republic of Indonesia was recognized and joined the United Nations and UNESCO in 1950. Since that time international experts have been sent to Indonesia to study and investigate the temple as a UNESCO mission. In 1968, the Indonesian government and the United Nations, working through UNESCO, launched a campaign for saving Candi Borobudur. Over the next fifteen years, millions of dollars were raised to support the bold plan to dismantle and reconstruct the lower terraces of the monument. This major restoration involved many disciplines: physical sciences such as geophysics, seismology, geology, hydrology, petrography, and meteorology; engineering skill such as foundation engineering, architecture, mechanics and landscape planning; positioning techniques such as surveying and photogrammetry including terrestrial photogrammetry; and other sciences such as chemistry, microbiology, archeology, and conservation technique. It was known that it would be necessary to dismantle and rebuild Borobudur's terraces, to provide adequate drainage, and to clean the most disfigured of its sculptures. It was also known that requirements would be beyond the resources of Indonesia, a developing country with pressing priorities to meet.

An international collaboration was launched under the sponsorship of UNESCO on 6 December 1972. The restoration work carried out by the Badan Pemugaran Candi Borobudur (The Agency for the Restoration of Candi Borobudur), assisted by international experts was mainly concerned with the monument itself. The work involved dismantling (registering, cleaning and treating) the carved stones, restoring of the carved stones, and rebuilding the temple (Soekmono, 1976). The restoration took more than 6 years and employed 600 technicians and laborers including experts from ten countries. By 1982, the restoration work was completed and Candi Borobudur regained its splendor and grandeur.

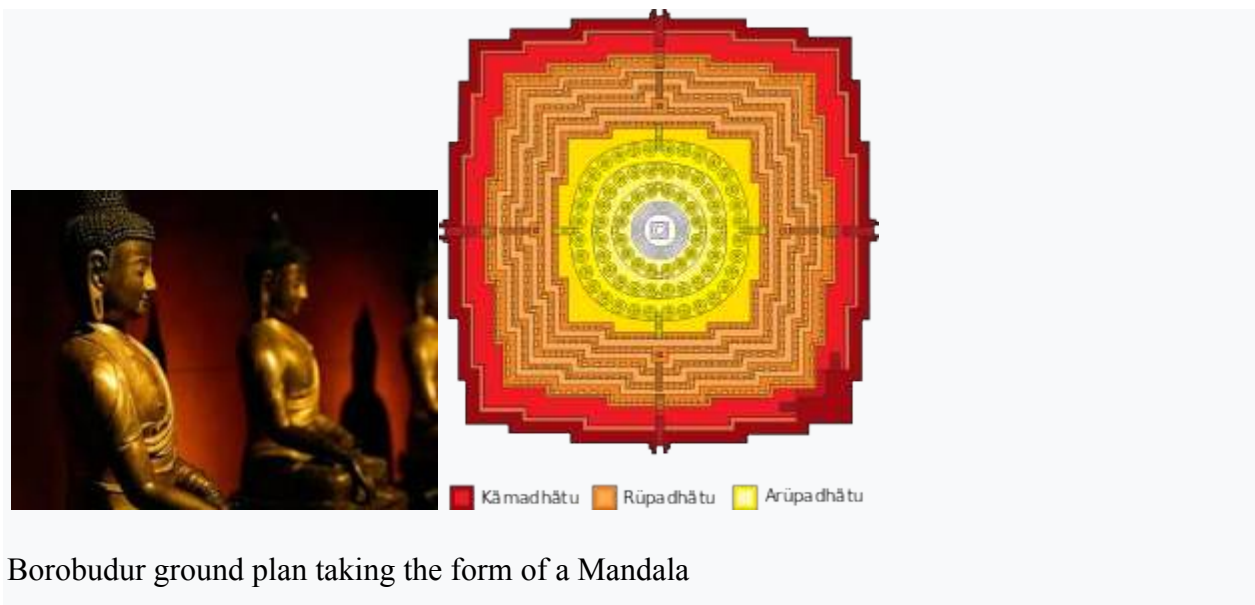
Once the restoration was finished, the gigantic task of preserving the monument for the centuries ahead needed to commence. Since that time significant site maintenance has been undertaken to preserve the monument.

According to historical records, the Borobudur temple was first discovered in 1814 by Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, a British governor general who ruled in Java at that time. Not only about the construction remains a mystery, but there are several other discoveries that are still becoming a big question marks til today. Restoring Borobudur Temple. There is no firm information about how long the temple, formally know as Candi Borobudur, was in active use, when it became a center of Buddhist pilgrimage and when it ceased to be the active center that it was. The general assumption is that the Candi Borobudur and the other nearby temples or *candis* fell into disuse when people were converted to Islam in the fifteenth century. Another possibility is that the temples in Central Java were abandoned as early in the tenth century when Central Java became less important and East Java became the politically dominant region. Regardless of the exact time when the *candi* lost its significance, Borobudur was to be found again only in the

nineteenth century. It was in 1814, that Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, the British Governor of Java, sent H.C. Cornelius, an engineering officer, to clear the temple from the trees, bushes, earth and rubbish under which it had long been buried. This action that now credits Raffles as the modern rescuer of Candi Borobudur from oblivion and the bringing of this wonderful temple to the notice of the present generations of Indonesians.

Sense of grandeur and pride for Indonesians: The aesthetic and technical mastery of Borobudur, and also its sheer size, has evoked the sense of grandeur and pride for Indonesians. Just like Angkor Wat for Cambodia, Borobudur has become a powerful symbol for Indonesia — to testify for its past greatness. Indonesia's first President Sukarno made a point of showing the site to foreign dignitaries. The Suharto regime — realized its important symbolic and economic meanings — diligently embarked on a massive project to restore the monument with the help from UNESCO. Many museums in Indonesia contain a scale model replica of Borobudur. The monument has become almost an icon, grouped with the wayang puppet play and gamelan music into a vague classical Javanese past from which Indonesians are to draw inspiration.

The idea of path is an important concept in Buddhism, and is essential in understanding the meaning and purpose of one of the most remarkable and impressive monuments in the world: Borobudur. According to the Buddha, no one can attain basic sanity or enlightenment without practicing meditation. It is the essential spiritual practice—and nothing else is more important. What is the path to enlightenment in Buddhism?



Borobudur ground plan taking the form of a Mandala

The word Buddha means “enlightened.” The path to enlightenment is attained by **utilizing morality, meditation and wisdom**. Buddhists often meditate because they believe it helps awaken truth. There are many philosophies and interpretations within Buddhism, making it a tolerant and evolving religion

Design

Borobudur is built as a single large stupa and, when viewed from above, takes the form of a giant tantric Buddhist *mandala*, simultaneously representing the Buddhist cosmology and the nature of mind. The original foundation is a square, approximately 118 metres (387 ft) on each

side. It has nine platforms, of which the lower six are square and the upper three are circular. The upper platform contains seventy-two small stupas surrounding one large central stupa. Each stupa is bell-shaped and pierced by numerous decorative openings. Statues of the Buddha sit inside the pierced enclosures.

The design of Borobudur took the form of a step pyramid. Previously, the prehistoric Austronesian megalithic culture in Indonesia had constructed several earth mounds and stone step pyramid structures called *punden berundak* as discovered in Pangguyangan site near Cisolok and in Cipari near Kuningan. The construction of stone pyramids is based on native beliefs that mountains and high places are the abode of ancestral spirits or *hyangs*. The *punden berundak* step pyramid is the basic design in Borobudur,^[78] believed to be the continuation of older megalithic tradition incorporated with Mahayana Buddhist ideas and symbolism.



Aerial view of Borobudur, it took the form of a step pyramid and mandala plan

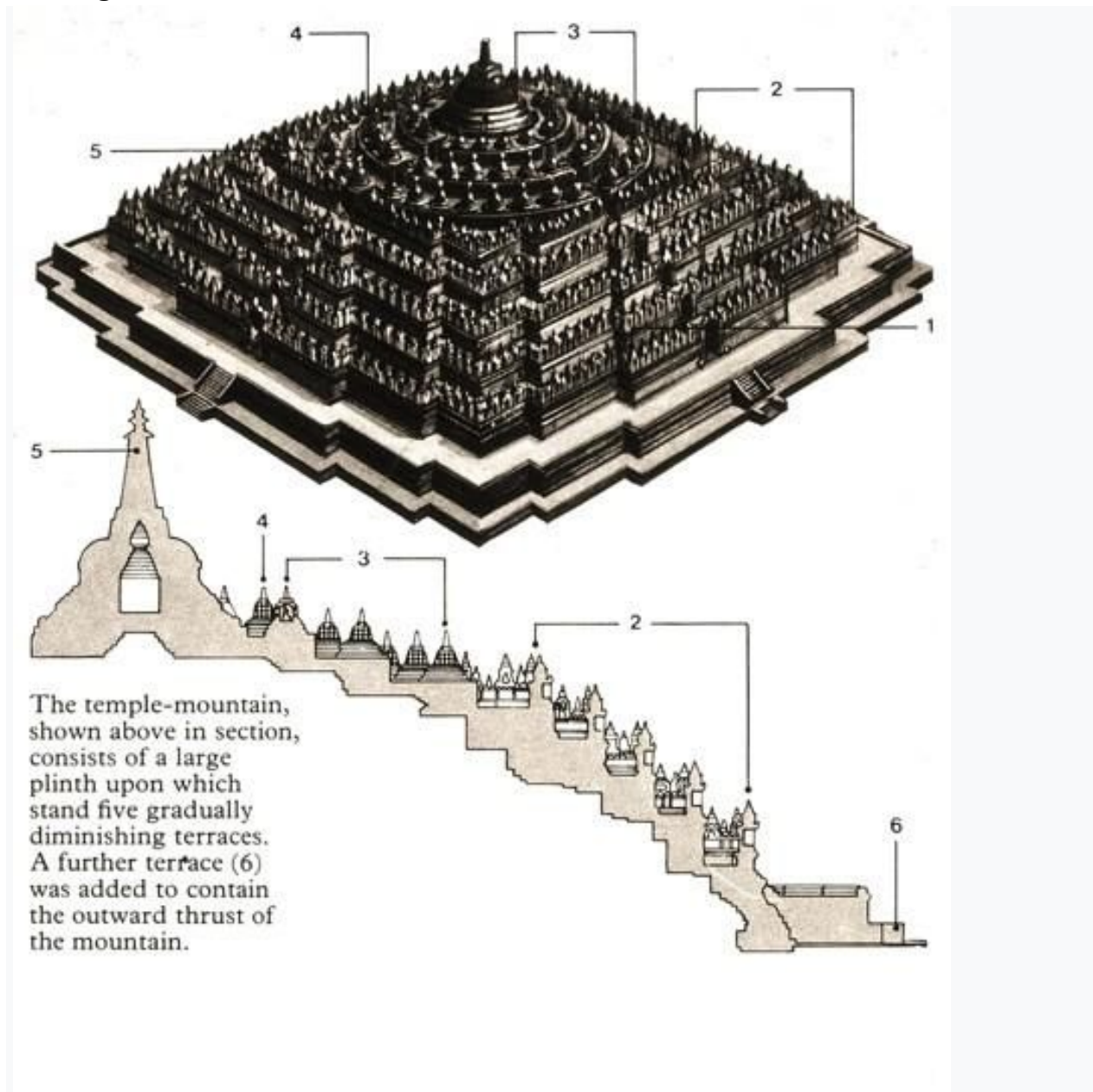
The monument's three divisions symbolize the three "realms" of Buddhist cosmology, namely *Kamadhatu* (the world of desires), *Rupadhatu* (the world of forms), and finally *Arupadhatu* (the formless world). Ordinary sentient beings live out their lives on the lowest level, the realm of desire. Those who have burnt out all desire for continued existence leave the world of desire and live in the world on the level of form alone: they see forms but are not drawn to them. Finally, full Buddhas go beyond even form and experience reality at its purest, most fundamental level, the formless ocean of nirvana. The liberation from the cycle of Samsāra where the enlightened soul had no longer attached to worldly form corresponds to the concept of Śūnyatā, the complete voidness or the nonexistence of the self. *Kāmadhātu* is represented by the base, *Rupadhatu* by the five square platforms (the body), and *Arupadhatu* by the three circular platforms and the large topmost stupa. The architectural features between the three stages have metaphorical differences. For instance, square and detailed decorations in the *Rupadhatu* disappear into plain circular platforms in the *Arupadhatu* to represent how the world of forms—where men are still attached with forms and names—changes into the world of the formless.

Congregational worship in Borobudur is performed in a walking pilgrimage. Pilgrims are guided by the system of staircases and corridors ascending to the top platform. Each platform represents one stage of enlightenment. The path that guides pilgrims was designed to symbolize Buddhist cosmology.

In 1885, a hidden structure under the base was accidentally discovered. The "hidden footing" contains reliefs, 160 of which are narratives describing the real *Kāmadhātu*. The remaining reliefs are panels with short inscriptions that apparently provide instructions for the sculptors,

illustrating the scenes to be carved. The real base is hidden by an encasement base, the purpose of which remains a mystery. It was first thought that the real base had to be covered to prevent a disastrous subsidence of the monument into the hill. There is another theory that the encasement base was added because the original hidden footing was incorrectly designed, according to *Vastu Shastra*, the Indian ancient book about architecture and town planning. Regardless of why it was commissioned, the encasement base was built with detailed and meticulous design and with aesthetic and religious consideration.

Building structure



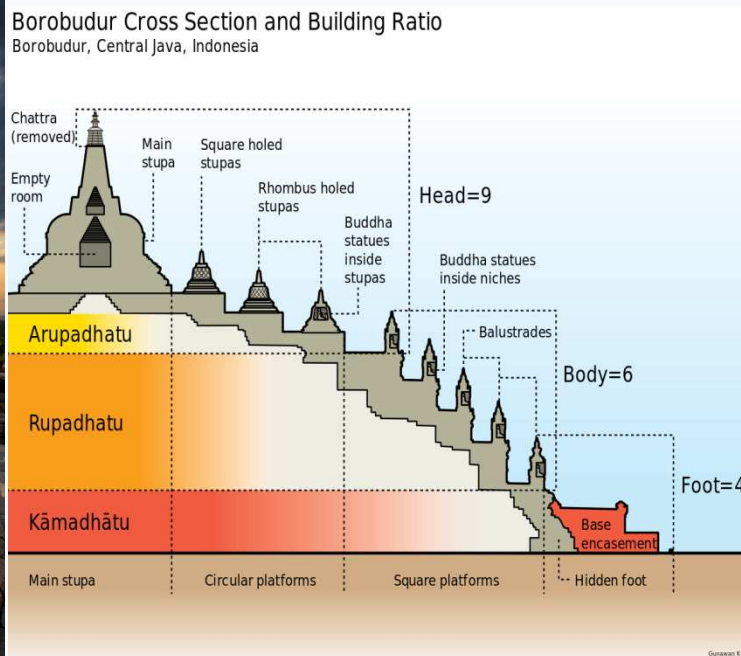
Half cross-section with 4:6:9 height ratio for foot, body and head, respectively

Approximately 55,000 cubic metres (72,000 cu yd) of andesite stones were taken from neighbouring stone quarries to build the monument. The stone was cut to size, transported to the site and laid without mortar. Knobs, indentations and dovetails were used to form joints between stones. The roof of stupas, niches and arched gateways were constructed in corbelling method. Reliefs were created *in situ* after the building had been completed.

The monument is equipped with a good drainage system to cater to the area's high stormwater run-off. To prevent flooding, 100 spouts are installed at each corner, each with a unique carved gargoye in the shape of a giant or makara.



Stairs of Borobudur through arches of Kala/ A narrow corridor with reliefs on the wall



Borobudur differs markedly from the general design of other structures built for this purpose. Instead of being built on a flat surface, Borobudur is built on a natural hill. However, construction technique is similar to other temples in Java. Without the inner spaces seen in other temples, and with a general design similar to the shape of pyramid, Borobudur was first thought more likely to have served as a *stupa*, instead of a temple. A *stupa* is intended as a shrine for the Buddha. Sometimes stupas were built only as devotional symbols of Buddhism. A temple, on the other hand, is used as a house of worship. The meticulous complexity of the monument's design suggests that Borobudur is in fact a temple.

Little is known about Gunadharma, the architect of the complex. His name is recounted from Javanese folk tales rather than from written inscriptions.

The basic unit of measurement used during construction was the *tala*, defined as the length of a human face from the forehead's hairline to the tip of the chin or the distance from the tip of the thumb to the tip of the middle finger when both fingers are stretched at their maximum distance. The unit is thus relative from one individual to the next, but the monument has exact measurements. A survey conducted in 1977 revealed frequent findings of a ratio of 4:6:9 around the monument. The architect had used the formula to lay out the precise dimensions of the fractal and self-similar geometry in Borobudur's design. This ratio is also found in the designs of Pawon and Mendut, nearby Buddhist temples. Archeologists have conjectured that the 4:6:9 ratio and the *tala* have calendrical, astronomical and cosmological significance, as is the case with the temple of Angkor Wat in Cambodia.

The main structure can be divided into three components: base, body, and top. The base is 123 m × 123 m (404 ft × 404 ft) in size with 4 metres (13 ft) walls. The body is composed of five square platforms, each of diminishing height. The first terrace is set back 7 metres (23 ft) from the edge of the base. Each subsequent terrace is set back 2 metres (6.6 ft), leaving a narrow corridor at each stage. The top consists of three circular platforms, with each stage supporting a row of perforated *stupas*, arranged in concentric circles. There is one main dome at the center, the top of which is the highest point of the monument, 35 metres (115 ft) above ground level. Stairways at the center of each of the four sides give access to the top, with a number of arched gates overlooked by 32 lion statues. The gates are adorned with Kala's head carved on top of each and Makaras projecting from each side. This Kala-Makara motif is commonly found on the gates of Javanese temples. The main entrance is on the eastern side, the location of the first narrative reliefs. Stairways on the slopes of the hill also link the monument to the low-lying plain.

R E L I E F S

teaching. The same *vajralepa* plaster can also be found in Sari, Kalasan and Sewu temples. It is likely that the bas-reliefs of Borobudur was originally quite colourful, before centuries of torrential tropical rainfalls peeled-off the colour pigments.

Narrative panels distribution			
Section	Location	Story	No. of panels
hidden foot	wall	Karmavibhanga	160
first gallery	main wall	Lalitavistara	120
		Jataka/Avadana	120
	balustrade	Jataka/Avadana	372
		Jataka/Avadana	128
second gallery	balustrade	Jataka/Avadana	100
	main wall	Gandavyuha	128
third gallery	main wall	Gandavyuha	88
	balustrade	Gandavyuha	88
fourth gallery	main wall	Gandavyuha	84
	balustrade	Gandavyuha	72

Total	1,460
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Borobudur contains approximately 2,670 individual bas reliefs (1,460 narrative and 1,212 decorative panels), which cover the façades and balustrades. The total relief surface is 2,500 square metres (27,000 sq ft), and they are distributed at the hidden foot (*Kāmadhātu*) and the five square platforms (*Rupadhatu*)

The narrative panels, which tell the story of Sudhana and Manohara, are grouped into 11 series that encircle the monument with a total length of 3,000 metres (9,800 ft). The hidden foot contains the first series with 160 narrative panels, and the remaining 10 series are distributed throughout walls and balustrades in four galleries starting from the eastern entrance stairway to the left. Narrative panels on the wall read from right to left, while those on the balustrade read from left to right. This conforms with *pradaksina*, the ritual of circumambulation performed by pilgrims who move in a clockwise direction while keeping the sanctuary to their right.

The hidden foot depicts the workings of karmic law. The walls of the first gallery have two superimposed series of reliefs; each consists of 120 panels. The upper part depicts the biography of Lord Buddha, while the lower part of the wall and also the balustrades in the first and the second galleries tell the story of the Buddha's former lives.^[94] The remaining panels are devoted to Sudhana's further wandering about his search, terminated by his attainment of the Perfect Wisdom.

The law of karma (Karmavibhangga) The Karmavibhangga scene on Borobudur's hidden foot, on the right depicting sinful act of killing and cooking turtles and fishes, on the left those who make living by killing animals will be tortured in hell, by being cooked alive, being cut, or being thrown into a burning house.

The 160 hidden panels do not form a continuous story, but each panel provides one complete illustration of cause and effect. There are depictions of blameworthy activities, from gossip to murder, with their corresponding punishments. There are also praiseworthy activities, that include charity and pilgrimage to sanctuaries, and their subsequent rewards. The pains of hell and the pleasure of heaven are also illustrated. There are scenes of daily life, complete with the full panorama of *samsara* (the endless cycle of birth and death). The encasement base of the Borobudur temple was disassembled to reveal the hidden foot, and the reliefs were photographed by Casijan Chepas in 1890. It is these photographs that are displayed in Borobudur Museum (Karmawibhangga Museum), located just several hundred meters north of the temple. During the restoration, the foot encasement was reinstalled, covering the Karmawibhangga reliefs. Today, only the southeast corner of the hidden foot is revealed and visible for visitors.

The story of Prince Siddhartha and the birth of Buddha (Lalitavistara)



Queen Maya riding horse carriage retreating to Lumbini to give birth to Prince Siddhartha Gautama

The story starts with the descent of the Buddha from the Tushita heaven and ends with his first sermon in the Deer Park near Benares. The relief shows the birth of the Buddha as Prince Siddhartha, son of King Suddhodana and Queen Maya of Kapilavastu (in Nepal).

The story is preceded by 27 panels showing various preparations, in the heavens and on the earth, to welcome the final incarnation of the Bodhisattva.^[96] Before descending from Tushita heaven, the Bodhisattva entrusted his crown to his successor, the future Buddha Maitreya. He descended on earth in the shape of white elephants with six tusks, penetrated to Queen Maya's right womb. Queen Maya had a dream of this event, which was interpreted that his son would become either a sovereign or a Buddha.



Prince Siddhartha Gautama became an ascetic hermit.

While Queen Maya felt that it was the time to give birth, she went to the Lumbini park outside the Kapilavastu city. She stood under a plaksa tree, holding one branch with her right hand, and she gave birth to a son, Prince Siddhartha. The story on the panels continues until the prince becomes the Buddha.

The stories of Buddha's previous life (Jataka) and other legendary people (Avadana)



A relief of Jataka story of giant turtle that saving drowned sailors.

Jatakas are stories about the Buddha before he was born as Prince Siddhartha. They are the stories that tell about the previous lives of the Buddha, in both human and animal form. The future Buddha may appear in them as a king, an outcast, a god, an elephant—but, in whatever form, he exhibits some virtue that the tale thereby inculcates.^[98] Avadanas are similar to jatakas, but the main figure is not the Bodhisattva himself. The saintly deeds in avadanas are attributed to other legendary persons. Jatakas and avadanas are treated in one and the same series in the reliefs of Borobudur.

The first twenty lower panels in the first gallery on the wall depict the *Sudhanakumaravadana*, or the saintly deeds of Sudhana. The first 135 upper panels in the same gallery on the balustrades are devoted to the 34 legends of the *Jatakamala*.^[99] The remaining 237 panels depict stories from other sources, as do the lower series and panels in the second gallery. Some jatakas are depicted twice, for example the story of King Sibhi (Rama's forefather).

Sudhana's search for the ultimate truth (Gandavyuha)



A relief of the Gandavyuha story from Borobudur 2nd level north wall.

Gandavyuha is the story told in the final chapter of the *Avatamsaka Sutra* about Sudhana's tireless wandering in search of the Highest Perfect Wisdom. It covers two galleries (third and fourth) and also half of the second gallery, comprising in total of 460 panels.^[100] The principal figure of the story, the youth Sudhana, son of an extremely rich merchant, appears on the 16th panel. The preceding 15 panels form a prologue to the story of the miracles during Buddha's *samadhi* in the Garden of Jeta at Sravasti.

Sudhana was instructed by Manjusri to meet the monk Megasri, his first spiritual friend. As his journey continues, Sudhana meets 53 teachers, such as Supratisthita, the physician Megha (Spirit of Knowledge), the banker Muktaka, the monk Saradhvaja, the upasika Asa (Spirit of Supreme Enlightenment), Bhismottaranirghosa, the Brahmin Jayosmayatna, Princess Maitrayani, the monk Sudarsana, a boy called Indriyesvara, the upasika Prabhuta, the banker Ratnachuda, King Anala, the god Siva Mahadeva, Queen Maya, Bodhisattva Maitreya and then back to Manjusri. Each spiritual friend gives Sudhana specific teachings, knowledge, and wisdom. These meetings are shown in the third gallery.

After a second meeting with Manjusri, Sudhana went to the residence of Bodhisattva Samantabhadra, depicted in the fourth gallery. The entire series of the fourth gallery is devoted to the teaching of Samantabhadra. The narrative panels finally end with Sudhana's achievement of the Supreme Knowledge and the Ultimate Truth.



A Buddha statue with the hand position of *dharmachakra mudra*

Apart from the story of the **Buddhist cosmology** carved in stone, Borobudur has many statues of various Buddhas. The cross-legged statues are seated in a lotus position and distributed on the five square platforms (the *Rupadhatu* level), as well as on the top platform (the *Arupadhatu* level).

The Buddha statues are in niches at the *Rupadhatu* level, arranged in rows on the outer sides of the balustrades, the number of statues decreasing as platforms progressively diminish to the upper level. The first balustrades have 104 niches, the second 104, the third 88, the fourth 72 and the fifth 64. In total, there are 432 Buddha statues at the *Rupadhatu* level.^[4] At the *Arupadhatu* level (or the three circular platforms), Buddha statues are placed inside perforated stupas. The first circular platform has 32 stupas, the second 24 and the third 16, which adds up to 72 stupas. Of the original 504 Buddha statues, over 300 are damaged (mostly headless), and 43 are missing. Since the monument's discovery, heads have been acquired as collector's items, mostly by Western museums. Some of these Buddha heads are now displayed

in numbers of museums, such as the Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam, Musée Guimet in Paris, and The British Museum in London. Germany has in 2014 returned its collection and funded their reattachment and further conservation of the site.



Head from a Borobudur Buddha statue in Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam.



Headless Buddha statue in Borobudur. Since its discovery, numbers of heads have been stolen and installed in museums abroad.




Lion gate guardian

At first glance, all the Buddha statues appear similar, but there is a subtle difference between them in the *mudras*, or the position of the hands. There are five groups of *mudra*: North, East, South, West and Zenith, which represent the five cardinal compass points according to Mahayana. The first four balustrades have the first four *mudras*: North, East, South and West, of which the Buddha statues that face one compass direction have the corresponding *mudra*.

Buddha statues at the fifth balustrades and inside the 72 stupas on the top platform have the same *mudra*: Zenith. Each *mudra* represents one of the Five Dhyani Buddhas; each has its own symbolism.¹ Following the order of *Pradakshina* (clockwise circumambulation) starting from the East, the *mudras* of the Borobudur buddha statues are:

Statue	Mudra	Symbolic meaning	Dhyani Buddha	Cardinal Point	Location of the Statue
	<i>Bhumisparsa mudra</i>	Calling the Earth to witness	Aksobhya	East	<i>Rupadhatu</i> niches on the first four eastern balustrades
	<i>Vara mudra</i>	Benevolence, alms giving	Ratnasambhava	South	<i>Rupadhatu</i> niches on the first four southern balustrades
	<i>Dhyana mudra</i>	Concentration and meditation	Amitabha	West	<i>Rupadhatu</i> niches on the first four western balustrades
	<i>Abhaya mudra</i>	Courage, fearlessness	Amoghasiddhi	North	<i>Rupadhatu</i> niches on the first four northern balustrades
	<i>Vitarka mudra</i>	Reasoning and virtue	Vairochana	Zenith	<i>Rupadhatu</i> niches in all directions on the fifth (uppermost) balustrade

Statue	Mudra	Symbolic meaning	Dhyani Buddha	Cardinal Point	Location of the Statue
	<i>Dharmachakra mudra</i>	Turning the Wheel of <i>dharma</i> (law)	Vairochana	Zenith	<i>Arupadhatu</i> in 72 perforated stupas on three rounded platforms

The aesthetic and technical mastery of Borobudur, and also its sheer size, has evoked the sense of grandeur and pride for Indonesians. Just like Angkor Wat for Cambodia, Borobudur has become a powerful symbol for Indonesia — to testify for its past greatness. Indonesia's first President Sukarno made a point of showing the site to foreign dignitaries. The Suharto regime — realized its important symbolic and economic meanings — diligently embarked on a massive project to restore the monument with the help from UNESCO. Many museums in Indonesia contain a scale model replica of Borobudur. The monument has become almost an icon, grouped with the wayang puppet play and gamelan music into a vague classical Javanese past from which Indonesians are to draw inspiration.

Several archaeological relics taken from Borobudur or its replica have been displayed in some museums in Indonesia and abroad. Other than Karmawibhangga Museum within Borobudur temple ground, some museums boast to host relics of Borobudur, such as Indonesian National Museum in Jakarta, Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam, British Museum in London, and Thai National Museum in Bangkok. Louvre museum in Paris, Malaysian National Museum in Kuala Lumpur, and Museum of World Religions in New Taipei also displayed the replica of Borobudur. The monument has drawn global attention to the classical Buddhist civilization of ancient Java.

The rediscovery and reconstruction of Borobudur has been hailed by Indonesian Buddhists as the sign of the Buddhist revival in Indonesia. In 1934, Narada Thera, a missionary monk from Sri Lanka, visited Indonesia for the first time as part of his journey to spread the Dharma in Southeast Asia. This opportunity was used by a few local Buddhists to revive Buddhism in Indonesia. A Bodhi Tree planting ceremony was held in Southeastern side of Borobudur on 10 March 1934 under the blessing of Narada Thera, and some Upasakas were ordained as monks. Once a year, thousands of Buddhist from Indonesia and neighboring countries flock to Borobudur to commemorate national Waisak celebration.

The emblem of Central Java province and Magelang Regency bears the image of Borobudur. It has become the symbol of Central Java, and also Indonesia on a wider scale. Borobudur has become the name of several establishments, such as Borobudur University, Borobudur Hotel in Central Jakarta, and several Indonesian restaurants abroad. Borobudur has appeared on Rupiah banknotes and stamps and in numbers of books, publications, documentaries and Indonesian tourism promotion materials. The monument has become one of the main tourism attraction in Indonesia, vital for generating local economy in the region surrounding the temple.

The tourism sector of the city of Yogyakarta for example, flourishes partly because of its proximity to Borobudur and Prambanan temples.

Behind the splendor of the great temple built by Syailendra dynasty on the 8th century AD which is also known as one of the 7 wonders of the world. Till this day, the **Borobudur temple** was still leaves some big question marks about its existence. The temple has been described in a number of ways. Its basic structure resembles that of a pyramid, yet it has been also referred to as a caitya (shrine), a stupa (reliquary), and a sacred mountain. In fact, the name Śailendra literally means “Lord of the Mountain.” While the temple exhibits characteristics of all these architectural configurations, its overall plan is that of a three-dimensional mandala—a diagram of the cosmos used for meditation—and it is in that sense where the richest understanding of the monument occurs.

Moving past the base and through the four galleries, the devotee emerges onto the three upper terraces, encountering 72 stupas each containing a three-dimensional sculpture of a seated Buddha within a stone latticework. At the temple’s apex sits the large central stupa, a symbol of the enlightened mind.^[56]

The experience of meaning

While the sheer size and scope of a mandala structure such as this makes the site worthy of admiration, it is important to understand how the experience of Borobudur relates to the philosophic and spiritual underpinnings of the Buddhist religion it reifies and commemorates. Since its inception, roughly 2500 years ago, Buddhism has directly engaged what it sees as the paradoxical nature of human existence. The most essential tenet the religion promulgates is the impermanent, transient nature of existence. Transcendental wisdom via the Dharma (the Noble Eight-Fold Path) hinges on recognizing that attachment to the idea of a fixed, immutable “self” is a delusion.

Enlightenment entails embracing the concept of “no-self” (*anattā*), understood to be at the heart of eliminating the suffering and dissatisfaction (*dukkha*) of sentient beings. This is the ultimate message expressed in the sacred scriptures that are solidified in artistic magnificence along the stone walls and railings of Borobudur. The physical movement of circumambulating the structure symbolizes the non-physical—or spiritual—path of enlightenment. In a real sense, then, the concept of path within Borobudur monumentalizes the impermanent. Like a river that is never the same from moment to moment, to physically move along the path while meditating on the spiritual message of the sutras is meant to help one fully embrace the Buddha’s paradoxical message of impermanence.



From the Gandavyuha Sutra, Borobudur, photo: Photo Dharma (CC BY 2.0)

From the Gandavyuha Sutra, Borobudur, Indonesia (photo: Photo Dharma, CC BY 2.0)

The texts illustrated on the walls refer to pathways as well. For instance, the Gandavyuha Sutra forms a major segment of the temple's upper galleries. The last chapter of a larger text called the Flower Garland Sutra, it relates the story of Suddhana, a youth who commences a journey to meet fifty-three teachers while seeking the path to enlightenment. The concept of "path" is a central theme in the text. He eventually meets an enlightened being (bodhisattva) named Samantabhadra. Excerpts from the larger sutra illustrate the concepts under discussion:

"I will lead those who have lost their way to the right road. I will be a bright light for those in the dark night, and cause the poor and destitute to uncover hidden treasures. The Bodhisattva impartially benefits all living beings in this manner.

I vow to shut the door to evil destinies and open the right paths of humans, gods and that of Nirvana.

Once any sentient beings see the Buddha, it will cause them to clear away habitual obstructions. And forever abandon devilish actions: This is the path traveled by Illumination.

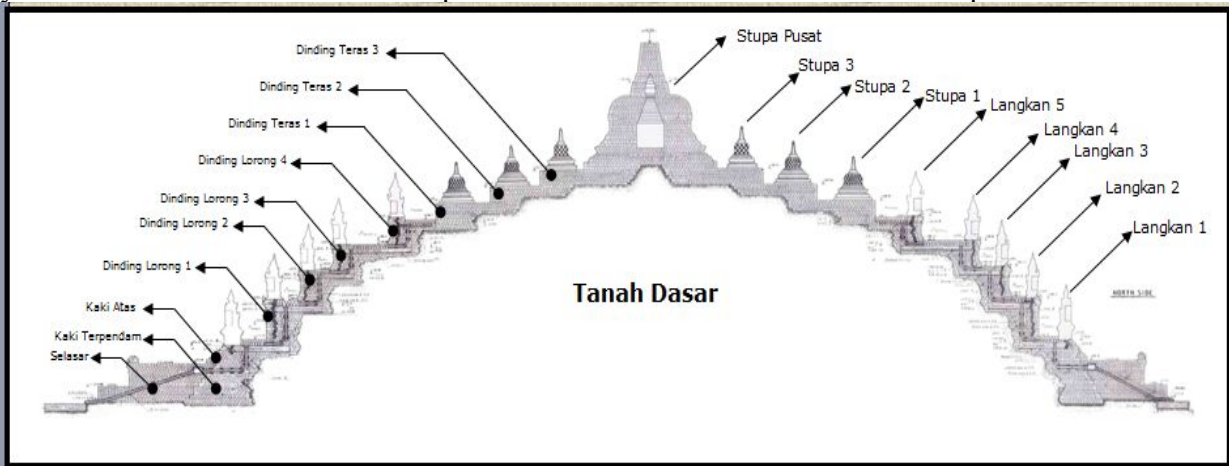
Sentient Beings are blinded by ignorance, always confused; the light of Buddha illuminates the path of safety. To rescue them and cause suffering to be removed.

All sentient beings are on false paths—Buddha shows them the right path, inconceivable, causing all worlds to be vessels of truth..."

The full text is available [here](#).

From darkness into light

The idea of moving from the darkness into the light is the final element of the experience of Borobudur. The temple's pathway takes one from the earthly realm of desire (*kamadhatu*), represented and documented on the hidden narratives of the structure's earthbound base, through the world of forms (*rupadhatu*) as expounded on the narratives carved along the four galleries set at right angles, until one finally emerges into the realm of formlessness (*arupadhatu*) as symbolized and manifested in the open circular terraces crowned with 72 stupas.



Borobudur, photo: Paul Atkinson (CC BY-SA 2.0)

Crowning stupa, Borobudur, Indonesia (photo: Paul Atkinson, CC BY-SA 2.0)

However, the symbolization of enlightenment these stupas represent is not intended to be merely aesthetic. Buddhist stupas and mandalas are understood as “spiritual technologies” that harness spiritual “energies” in the creation of sacred space. The repetition of form and the circumambulatory progress of the pilgrim mimic, and thereby access, the cosmological as a microcosm. The clockwise movement around the cosmic center reproduces the macrocosmic path of the sun. Thus, when one emerges from the dark galleries representing the realms of desire and form into the light of the “formless” circular open air upper walkways, the material effect of light on one’s physical form merges concomitantly with the spiritual enlightenment generated by the metaphysical journey of the sacred path.

Light, in all its paradoxes, is the ultimate goal. The crowning stupa of this sacred mountain is dedicated to the “Great Sun Buddha” Vairocana. The temple sits in cosmic proximity to the nearby volcano Mt. Merapi. During certain times of the year the path of the rising sun in the East seems to emerge out of the mountain to strike the temple’s peak in radiant synergy. Light illuminates the stone in a way that is intended to be more than beautiful. The brilliance of the site can be found in how the Borobudur mandala blends the metaphysical and physical, the symbolic and the material, the cosmological and the earthly within the structure of its physical setting and the framework of spiritual paradox.

The journey

Set high upon a hill vertically enhanced by its builders to achieve a greater elevation, Borobudur consists of a series of open-air passageways that radiate around a central axis mundi (cosmic axis). Devotees circumambulate clockwise along walkways that gradually ascend to its uppermost level. At Borobudur, geometry, geomancy, and theology all instruct adherents toward

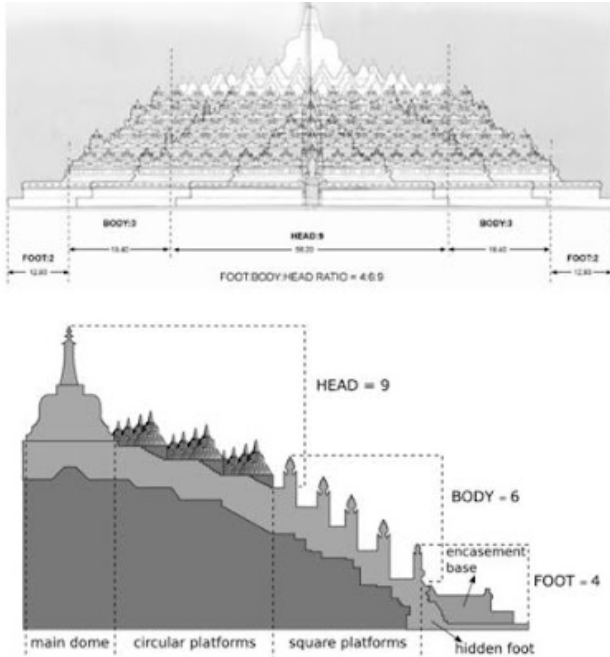
the ultimate goal of enlightenment. Meticulously carved relief sculptures mediate a physical and spiritual journey that guides pilgrims progressively toward higher states of consciousness.

The entire site contains 504 statues of the Buddha. 1460 stone reliefs on the walls and opposite balustrades decorate the first four galleries, with an additional 1212 decorative reliefs augmenting the path. The relief sculptures narrate the Buddha's teachings (the Dharma), depict various events related to his past lives (Jataka tales), and illustrate didactic stories taken from important Buddhist scriptures (sutras). Interestingly, another 160 relief sculptures adorn the base of the monument, but are concealed behind stone buttresses that were added shortly after the building's construction in order to further support the structure's weight. The hidden narrative reliefs were photographed when they were discovered in the late 19th century before the stones were put back to help ensure the temple's stability.

The statue of Kunto Bimo in Dharmachakra position inside a hollow stupa at the Borobudur temple. (Picture from: <http://bit.ly/2mlT7xI>)



The hidden reliefs at the foot of the Borobudur temple, known as Karmawibhanga depicts the sensitive scenes of murder, rape, and another violence activities.



Cross section and building ratio of the Borobudur temple. (Picture from: <http://bit.ly/2mlT7xI>)

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CHAPTER VIII

Who Built BOROBUDUR



Hundreds of temples and stupas lie on the island of **Java**. Known as *candi* in Indonesian, they date from the early classical period of Javanese civilisation, beginning in the first part of the 8th century CE and ending after 900 CE. The majority were built between 780 CE and 860 CE, even though the civilisation that created them existed for many centuries.

The earliest surviving Hindu temples in Java are at the Dieng Plateau and are the island's earliest known standing stone buildings. The structures were built to honour the god-ancestors, Di Hyang, rather than for the convenience of people. Thought to have originally numbered as many as 400, only 8 remain today. The Dieng structures were small and relatively plain, but architecture developed substantially and just 100 years later the second Kingdom of Mataram built the Prambanan complex near Yogyakarta; considered the largest and finest example of Hindu architecture in Java. The World Heritage-listed Buddhist monument Borobudur was built by the Sailendra Dynasty between 750 and 850 AD, but it was abandoned shortly after its completion as a result of the decline of Buddhism and a shift of power to eastern Java. The monument contains a vast number of intricate carvings that tell a story as one moves through to the upper levels, metaphorically reaching enlightenment. With the decline of the Mataram Kingdom, eastern Java became the focus of religious architecture with an exuberant style reflecting Shaivist, Buddhist and Javanese influences; a fusion that was characteristic of religion throughout Java.

The Javanese temple plan and layout was changed from the centralistic, concentric and formal layout of central Javanese period (8th—10th century) to linear, often asymmetric layout following the topography of the site of eastern Java period (11th—15th century). The main temple of central Java temples such as Sewu temple complex, is located in the center of the complex surrounded by perwara temples, while the main temple from eastern Java period, such as Penataran temple complex, is located in the back, furthest from the entrance, and often built on the highest ground of the temple complex. The rules of eastern Javanese temple layout are still followed closely by Balinese temples.

1. “Stupa is a mound-like or hemispherical structure containing relics (such as śarīra – typically the remains of Buddhist monks or nuns) that is used as a place of meditation.”
2. “In Buddhism, circumambulation or pradakhshina has been an important ritual and devotional practice since the earliest times, and stupas always have a pradakhshina path around them.”
3. “Stupas may have originated as pre-Buddhist tumuli in which śramaṇas were buried in a seated position called chaitya.”
4. “Religious buildings in the form of the Buddhist stupa, a dome shaped monument, started to be used in India as commemorative monuments associated with storing sacred relics of the Buddha. After the parinirvana of the Buddha, his remains were cremated and the

ashes divided and buried under eight mounds with two further mounds encasing the urn and the embers.”

5. In the above narratives, the catchword with respect to stupa architecture seems to be “burial mound”, although Buddha’s body had been cremated after his death.
6. Now when we look into the ancient Greco-Roman descriptions of Ancient India which would coincide with Odisha Central of East Coast of India where Buddha was born and where Buddhism sprouted, we come across there certain mentions implying prevalence of the post-mortem culture of “burial mounds” then.
7. An excerpt from “Ancient India as Described by Megasthenes and Arrian”, translated and edited by J. W. McCrindle. Calcutta and Bombay: Thacker, Spink, 1877, 30-174: “[FRAGM. XXVII. Strab. XV. i. 53-56,--pp. 709-10: Of the Manners of the Indians]

Their (ancient Indian’s) tombs are plain, and the mounds raised over the dead lowly.”

8. Another excerpt from the same book that tells us Buddha’s overwhelming religious presence in the territory where this post-mortem culture was prevalent: “[FRAGM. XLIII. Clem. Alex. Strom. I. p. 305, A, B (ed. Colon. 1688): Of the Philosophers of India] ...

Among the Indians are those philosophers also who follow the precepts of Boutta, whom they honor as a god on account of his extraordinary sanctity.”

9. Obviously, the term “Boutta” refers to “Buddha”.
10. Who was Megasthenes who is the original source of this information? “Megasthenes (c. 350 – c. 290 BC) was an ancient Greek historian, diplomat and Indian ethnographer and explorer in the Hellenistic period. He described India in his book ‘Indika’, which is now lost, but has been partially reconstructed from literary fragments found in later authors. Megasthenes visited India sometime between c. 302 and 288 BCE, during the reign of Chandragupta Maurya.”

11. How close in time was the writing of this account to the preceptor Bauta (Buddha) himself?

“The Buddha (also known as Siddhattha Gotama or Siddhārtha Gautama) was a philosopher, mendicant, meditator, spiritual teacher, and religious leader who lived in Ancient India (c. 5th to 4th century BCE).”

12. If Buddha’s presence would be dragged down to 4th century b.c., the account seems to be “fresh” with respect to times of Buddha and emergence of the Stupa Culture.

13. There were three types of Buddhist buildings which were majorly build during ancient India. Chaitya, Vihara and Stupa.

Well, you must be aware that Buddhism is non-theistic religion. It means that Buddhism does not believe in creator god. infact Buddha statue were not part of original Dhamma. It was after 2 centuries(of Buddha’s death) that statues got popularized.

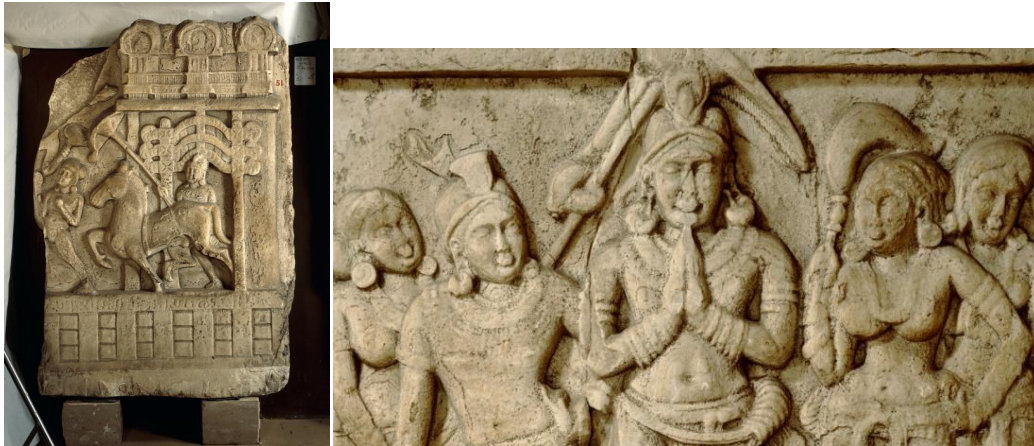
14. So, a religion with no God, no statue, no divine thing to hinge upon. But they needed someone to have moral authority over Sangha or the follower community. From this thought, stupa came into the picture. (Stupas were not unique to Buddhism, but later on became synonymous with Buddhism). Stupa contains the mortal remains of the great teacher which still holds his/her moral authority over the follower.
15. Stupa are constructed in a manner (same way like pyramid, temple) to act as a source of energy. You must have felt a different feeling while standing near a religious site.
16. Stupas are great site to build Chaitya (prayer houses) and to build a whole community around it. The biggest Buddhist communities were the famed Universities of India. Second biggest assembly places were stupa along with Chaitya. And then there were viharas in remote places for meditation/meetings etc.
17. The Stupas are the structures which are built over the mortal remains of a Buddha. They are generally places of worship to Buddhist people and hence can be generally seen around another primary type of the Buddhist Structures called as the Chaityas which are the places where Buddhists Pray and get guidance.
18. In the original form of Buddhism, there exist no God. Infact, if you read the original suttras, then there exist no super-natural beings in Buddhism. Siddhartha Gautam started Sangha to build community of monks. But in absence of God or any book, who holds the moral authority in Buddhism. To answer that, relic of their old teachers were kept in a casket. And a stupa is built around that. Buddhist seeker then do pradakshina around the stupa. Some say that they feel the positive energy while going around the stupa. While other just pay respect to the old teachers and masters.
19. In the due course, chaitya, viharas and university got destroyed due to attacks and negligence. What is left today in some parts of India are half destroyed stupa with caskets or partially intact stupa. The most famous stupa "Amaravati" is famous because it was mostly preserved until British cut that off and carried it away to London Museum.

India: Amaravati, The Asahi Shimbun Gallery, 300 BC–AD 300. Amaravati in south-east India, was one of the most important Buddhist sites in India. View some of the sculptures from this important shrine in Room 33a.

Buddhism originated in north India and spread to other parts of the subcontinent in the third century BC.

The Great Shrine of Amaravati, founded around 200 BC in what is now the state of Andhra Pradesh in the south-east, was one of the oldest, largest and most important Buddhist monuments in ancient India. The shrine, with its solid, domed structure, was a stupa and probably contained a relic – perhaps of a famous teacher. Devotees honoured the enshrined relic by walking around the stupa in a clockwise direction. While doing so, they could also benefit by viewing scenes from the Life of the Buddha sculpted on the railing that surrounded the walkway. Some devotees gave money for the decoration of the stupa and these gifts are recorded in inscriptions.

The shrine is in India, but you can see some of the sculptures, also known as the Amaravati Marbles, at the British Museum. The Amaravati sculptures consist of carved relief panels showing narrative scenes from the life of the Buddha, as well as Buddhist emblems and symbols. They were used to decorate the outside of the stupa.



The Great Departure of Prince Siddhartha RIGHT Dome slab

	<p>Material-Limestone Created-1st century BCE to 8th century CE Discovered-1797-Amaravathi Mahachaitya Present location-British Museum, London</p>
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After the death of Buddha , 9 stupas were erected . The Indian conception of the stupa spread throughout the Buddhist world and evolved into such different-looking monuments as the bell-shaped *dagaba* (“heart of *garbha*”) of Ceylon (Sri Lanka), the terraced temple of Borobudur in Java, the variations in Tibet, and the multistoried pagodas of China, Korea, and Japan. The basic symbolism, in which the central relic is identified with the sacred person or concept commemorated and also with the building itself, is retained. Worship of a stupa consists in walking around the monument in the clockwise direction. Even when the stupa is sheltered by a building, it is always a freestanding monument.



Stupa III and its single gateway, Sanchi, Madhya Pradesh state, India.

Buddhist stupas were originally built to house the earthly remains of the historical Buddha and his associates and are almost invariably found at sites sacred to Buddhism. The concept of a relic was afterward extended to include sacred texts. Miniature stupas and pagodas are also used by Buddhists throughout Asia as votive offerings. Stupas were also built by adherents of Jainism to commemorate their saints.

DEVELOPMENT OF STUPA ARCHITECTURE IN INDIA

The word Stupa is mentioned in the Rigveda, Atharvaveda, Vajasaneyi Samhita, Taittiriya Samhita, in the Panchavimsata Brahmana and the Monier-Williams Sanskrit-English Dictionary 49 which says it a “knot or tuft of hair, the upper part of head, crest, top, summit, a heap or pile of earth or bricks etc.”

Rigveda refers to a Stupa raised by the King Varuna above the forest in a place having no foundation .The word ‘estuka’ is also used in the same sense in Rigveda, probably by then anything raised on the ground like a heap/pile might have been known as Stupa. However the Pali word ‘thupa’ is quite similar to the term ‘Stupa’. Thupa means a conical heap, a pile or a mound or a conical or bell shaped shrinecontaining a relic.

The Stupa is so linked to the Buddhistic life that they were not content to erect monuments alone: sculptors represented them on stones, and we find them abundantly represented on panels on the Stupa monuments itself, on the railings-balustrades surrounding it, on cave walls, structural, monolithic made out of varied material starting from clay, stone, wood, ivory, metals, terracotta etc. the study material is abundant and spreads over time and space.

The studies of the Mahavastu, Divyavadana and Kriyasamgraha have helped to evolve a chronology of the figurative Stupa in India from the second century BCE to fourth century CE, thus enabling us to step ahead in our knowledge of the indispensable monument of Buddhism.

According to M. Sivarammurti Stupa is regarded as a monument for veneration. But as Stupa seems to be associated with votive and commemorative and offering purposes; moreover Stupa was related to the ritualistic and commemorative with sectarian, affiliation with school of philosophical obligatory and was bound by aspects of social- economic life. The Buddhist texts like the Avadana Satakam, Mahavadana and Stupavadanam mentions about the commemorative aspects of the Stupa even the Jaina literature like Raya Pasenaiya Sutta refers to it. Probably in the later period, due to deep desire of the common mass to worship the lord for the sake of salvation, Stupa acquired its votive character as well. Early Stupas were devoid of art maybe since Ashoka’s time Stupa 50 architecture acquired prominence in the socio cultural life of the country and art began to develop around the Stupa structure.

Stupa can be classified into three categories:

1. Religious edifices or Stupa dedicated either to the celestial or the Adi- Buddha or to the

mortal Buddha.

2. Funeral Stupa erected over the relics of mortal Buddha or over his disciples.
3. Stupa for commemorative Buddha.

Satapatha Brahmana (Sanskrit: शतपथब्राह्मण *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, meaning 'Brāhmaṇa of one hundred paths', abbreviated to 'SB') is a commentary on the Śukla (white) Yajurveda. It is written by the Father of the Indian philosophy saint Yajnavalkya. Described as the most complete, systematic, and important of the Brahmanas¹ (commentaries on the Vedas), it contains detailed explanations of Vedic sacrificial rituals, symbolism, and mythology.

It mentions of raising a mound on the burial ground after cremation. The burial mound for the Devata should be square in shape. In the Jaina and Brahmanical texts in some places Stupa is termed as chaitya. In the Vedic, Post Vedic, Epics, Jaina and Buddhist literatures refers to the existence of chaitya-vriksha. These were mostly treated as sacred places but were not necessarily associated with burial. It is doubtful if any Stupas were erected during the life time of Buddha. Since he had declared that it was inappropriate to erect Stupa to enshrine his bodily remains while he was still alive, however the legend says that the Buddha gave a few strands of his hair (kasha asthi) to the merchants Tapassu and Bhallika, who had offered him the first meal after his enlightenment at Bodhgaya. They were said to have erected a Stupa over the hair relic so as to venerate them. Burmese Buddhist claims that these hair relics are enshrined in the Shwedagon Stupa at Yangon, though it is generally believed that the merchants hailed from ancient Kalinga. After the demise of Buddha and his cremation at Kushinagar and later the corporeal relics was distributed among eight Mahajanapadas, initially eight Stupas (Saririka Chaityas) were constructed at eight centres namely, Rajagrihya, Vaishali, Kapilavastu, Allakappa, Ramagrama, Vethadipa, Pava and Kushinara. Drona the Brahmin who initiated the distribution, himself erected a Stupa to enshrine the urn that was used to divide the relics.

The Moriyas arrived too late for a share of the relic and were given the wood ashes from the cremation pyre, and they too built a Stupa in their city of Pippalavana. Thus all together ten Stupas were erected i.e. eight on corporeal relics and two on urn and over wood ashes by Drona and the Moriyas respectively. Jatakas mentions about the existence of Stupa but does not throw any light on the structural details of Stupa. The Sujata Jataka and the Bahiya Sutta describes Stupas as raised earthen mounds to commemorate the deceased. This indicates that most probably prior to Ashoka most of the 51 Stupas were made of clay Even the original Stupa at Sanchi and Bharhut are said to be made of clay. Archaeological excavations and findings proved that during Ashoka's reign use of bricks and stone for constructional purpose became popular. But we cannot deny the fact that the predecessors of Ashoka like Bimbisara and Ajatsatru both had constructed a number of Stupas in honour of the Buddha which contained relics of Buddha.

Stupa architecture can be compared with different stages of man's life. He observes “ putting of the relics in covered casket indicated stage of conception; putting of casket in a stone box indicates birth; covering of the box by a brick structure as infancy; the rise of the structure above the ground (medhi) as childhood; oval shaped (anda) that of adolescence; the

chatravali and in compassing it by a stone railing keeping guard that of youth and coronation; the lion statues guarding the approaches are that of manhood; erection of ornamental archways and completion of sculptural representations that of maturity and victory; the addition of an outer railing and construction of the flights of steps that of decline and old age. After Ashoka none of the Mauryan ruler showed any interest in propagating Buddhism. Then the Sungas gave a new dimension to the Stupa architecture. They ruled over north, central and western India between one hundred and eighty five BCE to 70 BCE. Sunga and Kanva gave ample opportunity to fine art reflected the cultural and traditional life of the larger section of the people in the society i.e. the bas reliefs on the railings of the Stupa at Bharhut. During Sunga and Ekshakus period enlargement and additions were made in the existing Stupas of Sanchi, Bharhut and Amravati.

Sungas were followed by a spate of Yavanas invasions – the Bacterians, Greeks, Saka and Kushana on India. The Sakas took over Saurashtra and probably Taxila and Mathura. The Kushanas extended their empire from Kabul to Kashmir in the north-west to the whole of northern India. Kanishka (78 -120 CE) and Huvishka (120 – 140 CE) contributed significantly to the Buddhist architectural movement. During Kanishka's reign a number of Stupas were constructed at Taxila, rock-cut Stupa architecture was introduced by him. It is recorded that Kanishka erected a Stupa to enshrine a scripture called Vibhasas at the end of the fourth Buddhist council. Gandhara and Mathura art flourished during Kushana period. Both these schools of art introduced iconic representations of the Buddha. There are also Stupas, which do not hold any reliquary object inside. These are commemorative Stupas, which are erected at places associated with Buddha's life or that of his renowned disciple. The architectural movement in the south (Andhra) flourished under Satavahanas (100 BCE – 200 CE). Rock cut architecture of Hinayana sect became more prominent. There is very little information regarding the history of the development of Stupa architecture in north. The Gupta period is considered as the golden age of Indian history. Guptas were Vaishnavites but were tolerant towards Buddhism. It is said that the Stupa at Sarnath was built during the Gupta period. Unfortunately in India all the later structural examples of stupas are in ruins, the upper portions having decayed and disappeared. But a few good specimens belonging to this period still survive in the form of Votive stupas of stone and metal, literature, and specimens in Ceylon and Burma.

Symbolism of the Stupa

The Stupa is one of the ancient symbols of the Buddha because of its association with his Buddha himself and is honoured as such. This devotion is expressed in the Mahavastu Avadana of the Lokuttaravadins "He who having turned his thoughts to the enlightenment for the sake of all living things, reverentially salutes the tope of the saviour of the world, becomes everywhere in all his lives as he fares on the way to enlightenment, mindful, thoughtful, virtuous and assured" Stupa also symbolises Buddha's enlightened mind and his teachings and few Stupas were built to enshrine Buddhist scriptures. Furthermore the architectural elements of a Stupa are symbolic of the doctrine and may vary with tradition. In some Theravada traditions the parts of the Stupa represents the divisions of the noble eight-fold path (ethical conduct, concentration, wisdom and nirvana). The Buddhist Stupas are of three kinds, saririka Stupa raised over the relics of Buddha or Arhants. The existence of such Stupas is archaeologically proven in several places like Sanchi, Taxila, Vaishali, Piprahwa, Bhattiprolu

and Nagarjunikunda. Paribhogika Stupas are the Stupas which enshrine the objects which have been used by the Buddha such as robe, bowl or walking staff. Fa-hsien and Hsuan-tsang the Chinese pilgrims reported seeing Stupas enshrining such relics but archaeologically it has to be proven. Uddesika Stupas were erected just for worshipping and contained no relics or to enshrine scriptures. The Stupa raised by Ashoka in the Lumbini garden visited by the emperor on his twentieth regnal year accompanied by his teacher Upagupta. Another example is when King Kaniska had built a magnificent Stupa to enshrine the Vibhasas (commentaries of the Sarvastivada tradition) at the end of the fourth Buddhist council. The Vajrayana tradition attributes the components of the Stupa to each of the five elements (earth, water, fire, air and space). These elements represent the different stages in the transformation of psycho-spiritual energy in the path to enlightenment. Hence being an object for devotion, the Stupa also became an instrument for meditative visualization.

Evolution of Stupa as seen from Archaeological remains

Amongst all the religious monuments of the world, the stupa has the largest uninterrupted historical development spanning more than 3 millenniums. In India all most all the early structural Stupas were in ruins, most of which were destroyed in due course of time by weather and treasure hunters or have lost its original shape due to subsequent renovations (Whenever an old Stupa was repaired it was renovated according to the style prevalent during that period. For instance, the present form of the great Stupa at Sanchi is after the renovation done in the second century BCE, but within its core are the remains of another Stupa built more than 100 years before i.e. belonging 57 to the Ashoka period. Similar instances are found in the Stupas at Taxila and Nagarjunakonda), making it difficult to describe the shape of the earliest Stupas. For this one has to fall back on sculptural representations of them in order to form a correct idea of their appearance when complete; fortunately there are plenty of materials for this purpose.

The Stupas in ancient India were generally composed of three parts

1. The base or drum.
2. The dome (anda) which resting on the drum, demarcating a terrace called medhi and in Ceylon, pupphaddhana, a Pali word meaning “place for depositing flowers”. The relics are kept in the hollow space in the interior of the dome of a Stupa. The relic casket is generally made of precious metal in the shape of a miniature Stupa.
3. The upper part is made up of a square structure called harmika (meaning Pavilion), into which the shaft (yupa) bearing the umbrellas (chatra) is inserted. The term harmika is not available in the Mahavamsa, and this part of the Stupa is called caturassa-caya meaning quadrangular enclosure. In Ceylon, it is also called devata kotuwa, “citadel of Gods. The Stupa comprising of the above three parts was generally surrounded by a railing, this space was used by the devotees for performing pradikshina, a rite of worship.

The pradikshinapatha (circumambulatory passage) of the Stupa was often paved with stone panels bearing votive inscriptions. In the Mahavamsa this railing is called pada-vedika: railing at the foot or ground railing around the Stupa. The vedika reminds of the ancient wooden railings, it is made up of a plinth (alambana), upright (stambha) in to which cross-bars (suchi) are fitted followed by a coping stone (usnisha). According to Coomarswamy, this part

of the vedika is called usnisha “turban”, it is “due to its relationship to the Stupa which it encircles, like a turban or ribbon encircles the head of the person wearing it”. It is generally cut by one or four doorways. The toranas are built up of two large pillars linked by two or three lintels. Close to the toranas are isolated lat pillars holding various 58 symbols above a capital.

Hiuen-tsang mentions the existence of these columns erected in front of Stupas in his writings. According to him, one was erected to recall the circumstances of the death of the Buddha, another one with inscription, to mark that it was here that the relic was divided. He mentions one more whose surface is polished and where we can constantly see the shadow of the Buddha. Generally the bigger Stupas were constructed of bricks, some smaller ones were made of soap stone or blue schist, etc. The bigger ones were plastered which is mentioned in the texts: for example, in the Mahavastu it is said that a Stupa was built ‘too big nor too small, covered with clay (mrttika) and stucco (sudha)’; the same word is found in the Mahavamsa. Wood was also used in construction; it is thus that a story from the Sutralamkara mentions a tree which was used as a beam for supporting a Stupa.

In the earliest phase the Stupa was always in the shape of a large hemisphere resting on a drum. It is only after the fifth century CE (Intermediate period) that it underwent two important modifications: basement on the one hand, and the crown on the other, concurrently increasing their importance to the detriment of the dome which earlier constituted the entire structure. The later versions in contrast, were tall, often resting on a higher platform with the surmounting structures such as the chatra becoming more elongated (Late period) and spire-shaped.

The early Stupas such as at Sanchi and Bharhut, only the railings were decorated with motives and symbols later doors and domes became covered like them with bas-reliefs representing scenes from the Buddha’s life and from jataka. Hence a Stupa worked like a book in stone offered for mediation to the devotees who came to circumambulate around the Stupa. The images of the masters appeared only in the first century CE till then his presence was represented only as symbols.

The earliest stupa in India Nagarjunakonda

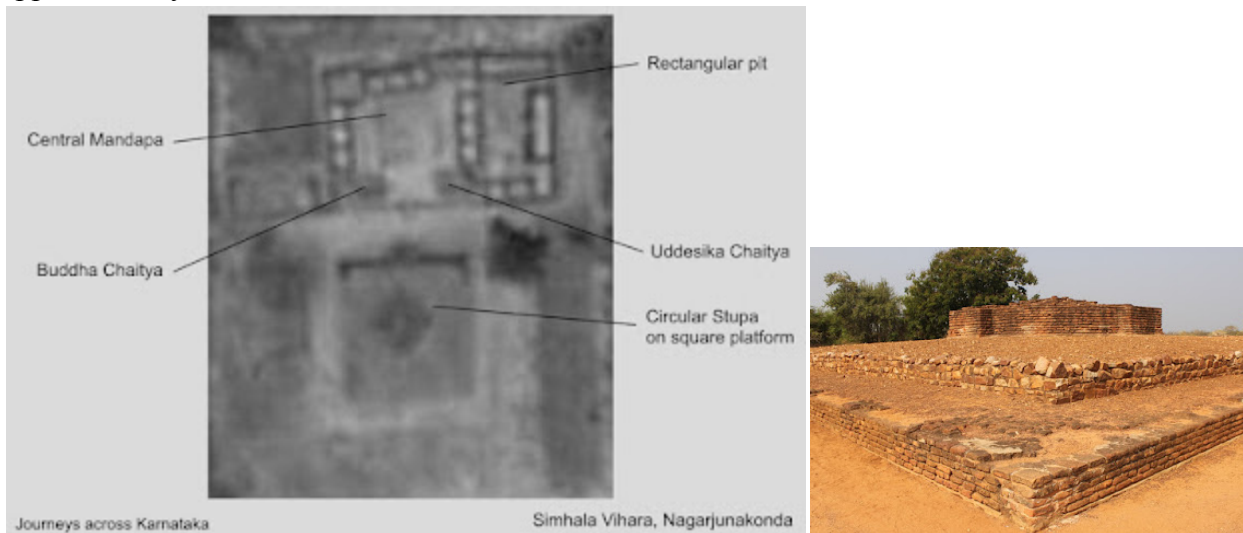
Nagarjunakonda is located in Palnad Taluk of the Guntur district, Andhra Pradesh in South India. It was a secluded valley about 23 sq km in area and was surrounded on three sides by a group of hills which were offshoots of the Nallamalai range. The river Krishna flowed in the northeast associated with the celebrated teacher Nagarjuna of second century CE. A.H. The great Stupa is the oldest and most central sacred monument at Nagarjunakonda. Inscription date the Stupa around 246 CE but archaeologists believed that the Stupa could be older i.e. earlier to 246 CE.

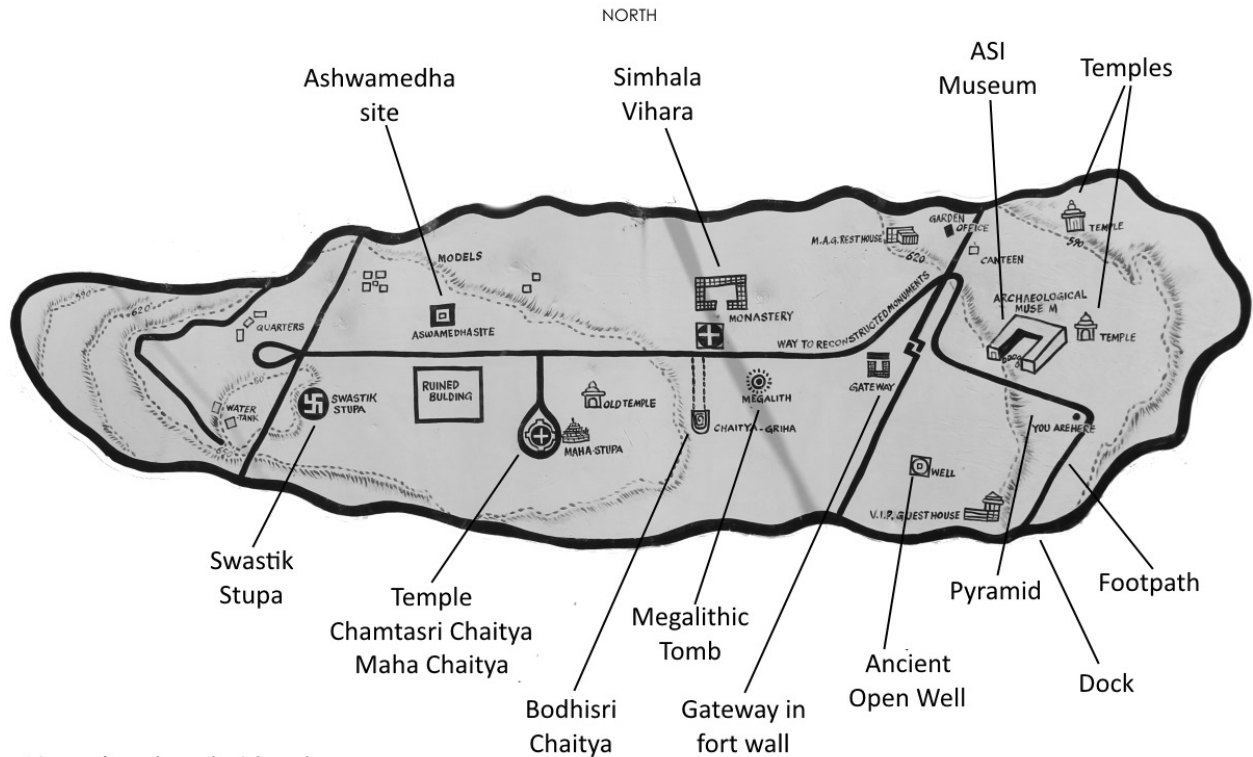
The complex was built by Charntamula, and mother-in-law of the second king Virapurushadatta. The great Stupa is one of the largest structures in the city of Vijayapuri. It has a diameter of 28m but its original height is not known as the upper part of the Stupa had been destroyed. The Stupa is made of bricks and its interior is not solid brick work but

consist of a system of walls arranged in the form of a wheel, with a rim and spoke radiating from a central hub because of its large size, additional support was given by adding two further concentric ring around the central core.

The design of concentric and radial walls forms three rows of cells in the interior of the Stupa (eight in the inner, sixteen each in the middle and outer). The external surface of the Stupa was coated with a plaster of lime. A.H.Longhurt in 1929 made a significant discovery of bone relics paled in a gold reliquary with a few gold flowers, pearls and pieces of garnet and crystal kept inside 65 a silver casket in one of the outer most north- western cells. An inscription at the site states that this is the great Stupa of the blessed one, hence archaeologist infer that the bone relics are those of the Buddha. Both the sets of Buddha's bone relics found from Taxila and Nagarjunakonda were presented by the Director General A.S.I to the Mahabodhi Society in 1931 for their safe custody and veneration and thus enshrined within the newly constructed Mulagan Kuti Vihara at Sarnath, since corporeal relics of the Buddha are highly venerated by the Buddhists as they are seen as symbol of the Buddha's presence.

Now we are at the restored remains of Simhala Vihara, a monastery dedicated to monks from Sri Lanka. This structure seen here is a Stupa, as seen from a corner of its square base. Here's the map of Nagarjunakonda island showing the locations of all monuments. We are approximately at the center.





Nagarjunakonda Island
Nagarjuna Sagar

Journeys across Karnataka

A small board planted by the archaeology department carries this description. Simhala Vihara (Circa 3rd Cent CE). This monastery evidently meant for Ceylonese monks, it is interesting for its two apsidal Chaitya grihas juxtaposed to each other and enshrining an image of Buddha and Uddesika stupa respectively. The moon stone and decorated pillars of the central mandapa are notable features.

The Stupa's north-eastern corner. On its northern face is a pair of staircase positioned opposite to each other (see inset). Tourists are not allowed to climb over it, a very alert security guard makes sure of it. Since these are brick structures they are prone to fast wear and tear.



Behind the Stupa are two more Chaityas, group meditation hall and individual meditation cells. In the foreground are two cells, beyond that is the Uddesika Chaitya and on the right are pillars of the central mantapa i.e. the group meditation hall.

foreground is another long hall. I'm guessing this to be a dormitory.



Another long hall. Outside the hall, along the wall is a platform meant for sitting. I was wondering what this stone lined pit was for. It seems to create by caretakers to let rain water in so that the ground dries faster.



A similar seat along a row of cells is finished with stone slabs. At the end of the long seat is the door to the central area. The entrance is decorated with a half-moon step and flanked by a pair of simple sculptures. Half-moon slab at entrances seems to be a standard design here. In the background, towards the left is the statue of standing Buddha.



The central hall with its remaining pillars. These pillars are referred to as Ayaka pillars. In the foreground is another half-moon stone and the sculpted slabs. Closer look at the arrangement. It seems like a dragon's head with its tongue stretched out and curled. This is the Buddhist version. Hindu temple steps too are flanked by a pair of similar sculptures which are much larger and grander. The tongue actually curls into a deep spiral.



The central area is enclosed by rows of meditation cells, or they could be monks' living quarters. While most of the cells are mud-floored here's one with tiled floor.



Front view of the tiled floor cell. I think the idea behind the half-moon stone is to avoid sharp edges so that one hurts their feet accidentally.



There are 2 apsidal Chaitya Griha. This one is the Uddesika Chaitya. Griha means house.

The Uddesika Stupa. Physically its a cylindrical structure with a domed top. Notice how carefully the individual pieces are assembled to form a circular wall and the dome. At its a base is a white ring with detailed etchings. I think monks go around the Stupa in clockwise direction. Wondering if this Stupa originally was built to rotate on its axis like a huge Buddhist prayer wheel.



Right opposite to the Uddesika Chaitya Griha is the Boudha Chaitya.

The larger than lifesize Buddha is made of white stone, symbolizing peace. Buddha's posture exudes serenity. He seems to be meditating while standing, holding the free end of his clothing with the raised left arm. The detailing of Buddha's robe is amazing. The Chaitya Griha's apsidal design helps focus on the idol i.e. the view converged into Buddha. A square or rectangular chamber's corners could be distracting but a rounded wall has the opposite effect.



The rear-side view of the Boudha Griha. Of all the temples I've seen there's only temple which is apsidal and that's at Halae Mahakoota near Badami.



One last look at the Stupa of Simhala Vihara. This is the only monument with an idol of Buddha on this island.

Bodhisri Chaitya. (3rd Cent CE) This structure is similar to Uddesika Stupa seen at Simhala monastery, a cylinder with a dome enclosed in an apsidal brick wall. The only difference is the missing half-moon stone at the Chaitya entrance. Another thing- this wall is thicker than the ones seem earlier.



A stone tablet describes the monument as follows-

Originally this Chaitya formed part of Chuladharmagiri Vihara. The inscription on the floor slabs registered the gifts by disciple Upasika Bodhisri.

A Stupa (Sanskrit: "heap") is a mound-like or hemispherical structure containing relics (śarīra - typically the remains of Buddhist monks or nuns) that is used as a place of meditation. So Stupas are somewhat like Gaddigae aka Khabar aka tomb. The structure is designed for meditation, especially the rounded end converges the vision unlike sharp corners which seem to distract. At the base of the hemisphere runs a circular channel, no idea what the purpose is. At the base of a cylinder is a white stone ring which depicts a lotus in full bloom. Here we actually go "around" unlike the conventional square paths around Garbhagudi.



A thought- modern day space observatory buildings resemble this structure. Over the dome view of the Stupa. The sculptors skill in creating this 3D assembly is commendable.



There was a Hindu temple which was originally built here. There are two or three other Hindu shrines on this hill on original locations. The temple has a Garbhagudi and a Mukhamantapa without roof, not sure if it was ever completed or if was damaged at some point of time. On the right side of the temple one can see a hemispherical object, that's a Stupa,



The temple's design is similar to temples built during Vijayanagara or Kakatiyas time. Had it been complete, there would be a stepped Shikhara. There's no deity inside, no rituals performed here.



Another Stupa known as Chamtasri Chaitya Griha has a tablet planted here describes the monuments as-

This Chaitya Griha with its votive Stupa was built by queen Chamtasri sister of Vasishthiputra Chantamula for the use of monks living in the adjoining Mahavinaya Seliya Vihara.

Like the stupas at Simhala Vihara and Bodhisri Chaitya this too is apsidal, built of red bricks and grey stone. It looks like every stupa had caretaker monks, it would be their responsibility to maintain and protect it. Also, its a belief that any building should be inhabited lest evil spirits haunt if its vacant.



The white ring symbolizes a lotus. The remains of Buddhist monk or nun enshrined in this Stupa is placed in the Divine flower. Fortunate are those who built this monument.



A close look at one of the slabs on the Stupa. The concentric circles indicate it was turned in a lathe like device. Also, notice the curvature of the slab. All slabs around the Stupas have turn marks on them. This stone is known as Shahabad stone in northern Karnataka.

A stone's throw from Chamtasri Chaitya Griha is the Maha Chaitya. For pious Buddhists, this is the most important monument on this island. In terms of physical size this is the largest Stupa too. In fact Dalai Lama had paid a visit to this monument in 2006.



Description of this monument on a stone tablet planted here-Mahastupa (re-constructed) 3rd Cent CE

This is the principal stupa found in the Krishna valley and referred to in the inscription on the Ayaka pillars as "Maha Chaitya." It contained a sacred bone relic probably of the Lord Buddha himself. Chamtamula built this Mahastupa under the supervision of the reverend Anand, a disciple of Buddha, during the 6th regnal year of the King Sri Virupashadatta of the Ikshvaku line (3rd Century CE) of about 27.5 m marked by ayaka platforms surmounted by ayaka pillars in the four cardinal directions.

Now you know why Maha Stupa's significance, because of the possible physical connection with Gautama Buddha. The white column seen here is the Ayaka pillar at the Northern side.



This wall runs around the Stupa, with entrances at the four cardinal directions.

bird's eye view of Mahastupa. The overall diameter is 43 meters (140') and diameter of the inner Stupa is 26 meters (85'). Overall height is around 10' excluding pillar height.



A close look at the Ayaka platform and pillars marking South. These are the original bricks which have withstood the test of time.



Another view of the southern platform with its share of pillars.



A close look at the Ayaka pillar and its inscription. I'm guessing the text is Brahmi.

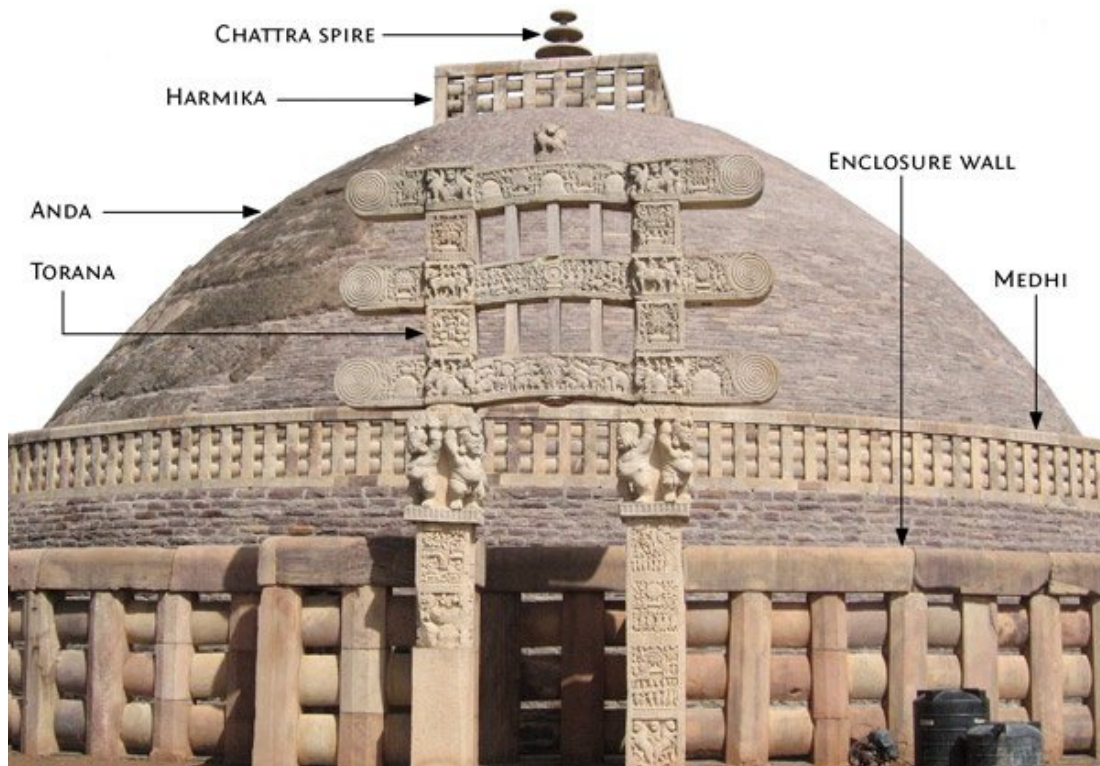


The northern platform, this Ayaka pillar is the tallest remaining pillar on this island. This Peepul tree planted by Dalai Lama on Jan-2-2006. For a 10 year old tree.

STUPA at SANCHI

What is the significance of the Sanchi Stupa?

- (i) The Stupa at Sanchi is the best preserved monument. It is a model of wonderful sculpture.
- (ii) It has been an important centre of Buddhism. Its discovery has changed our perception about the early time of Buddhism.



The Stupa symbolizes the ideals and principles of Buddhism

- **ANDA /GARBHA** : symbolizes the cycle of life and death .
- **Harmika** : was shaped as a fire altars placed above the cycle of life and death (ANDA/GARBHA).
- **Rod Yashi** :is supposed to be a centre of imaginary lines connecting the world of mortals to world of immortals.
- **Chatra** : Above Yashi , there is Chatra (3 circular discs) which represents the Triratna of Buddhism (3 jewels of Buddhism (Buddha , Dhamma and Sangha).
- **Torana** : They are **placed East , West , North and South and contain the motifs and the stories (Jataka) of Buddha's life and other event** . They help the individual to get into the mindset of meditation .
- **Circum ambulatory path** : They are in the **shape of symbolizing the earth's revolution around the sun** .
- **Stupa- Stupa**, Buddhist commemorative monument usually housing sacred relics associated with the Buddha or other saintly persons. Buddhist *stupas* were originally built to house the earthly remains of the historical Buddha and his associates. They contain remains of Buddha or other associate of him.
- **Chaitya**- Its a prayer hall of Buddhist monks to pray here. At one end of Chaitya, mostly Buddha statue or any other associate used be present there.

- **Vihara-** Vihara means dwelling. Its Buddhist monastery usually has living quarters for monks or nuns.

Chaityas or Chaityagriha : This is the word used for

- Temple
- Worship place
- assembly halls with a stupa

Vihara is a place of living for the Buddhist monks.

Viharas were for the purpose of living, Chaityas were assemblies for the purpose of discussions. Further, Chaityas were with Stupas, Viharas did not have stupas.

Both early Chaityas and Viharas were made by woods and later stone-cut Chaityas and Viharas were made. Chaitya was a rectangular prayer hall with a stupa placed in the centre, the purpose was prayer. The Chaitya was divided into three parts, and had an apsidal ending, that is, a semicircular rear end, The central part of the hall (also called the nave) was separated from the two aisles by two rows of pillars, The chaityas also had polished interior walls, semicircular roofs and horse-shoe shaped windows called the Chaitya windows.

Great Stupa, the most noteworthy of the structures at the historic site of Sanchi in Madhya Pradesh state, India. It is one of the oldest Buddhist monuments in the country and the largest stupa at the site.



Great Stupa-The Great Stupa at Sanchi, India.-© [kaetana/stock.adobe.com](https://www.adobe.com/stock/kaetana)

The Great Stupa (also called stupa no. 1) was originally built in the 3rd century BCE by the Mauryan emperor Ashoka and is believed to house ashes of the Buddha. The simple structure was damaged at some point during the 2nd century BCE. It was later repaired and enlarged, and

elements were added; it reached its final form in the 1st century BCE. The building is 120 feet (37 metres) wide and 54 feet (17 metres) high.

The central structure consists of a hemispherical dome (*anda*) on a base, with a relic chamber deep within. The dome symbolizes, among other things, the dome of heaven enclosing the earth. It is surmounted by a squared railing (*harmika*) that can be said to represent the world mountain. A central pillar (*yashti*) symbolizes the cosmic axis and supports a triple umbrella structure (*chattra*), which is held to represent the Three Jewels of Buddhism—the Buddha, the dharma (doctrine), and the sangha (community). A circular terrace (*medhi*), enclosed by a railing, surrounds the dome, on which the faithful are to circumambulate in a clockwise direction. The entire structure is enclosed by a low wall (*vedika*), which is punctuated at the four cardinal points by toranas (ceremonial gateways). The toranas of the Great Stupa are the crowning achievement of Sanchi sculpture. Each gateway is made up of two squared posts topped by capitals of sculptured animals or dwarfs, surmounted by three architraves. All the elements are covered with relief sculpture depicting the events of the Buddha's life, Jataka stories (about the Buddha's previous lives), scenes of early Buddhism, and auspicious symbols. The names of donors are also inscribed, the most notable one being the ivory workers of Vidisha.



north torana (gateway) of the Great Stupa-Architraves of the north torana (gateway) of the Great Stupa at Sanchi, Madhya Pradesh, India.

Sometime after the 12th century CE, Sanchi was abandoned, and its monuments fell into disrepair. In 1818 British Gen. Henry Taylor came upon the site and documented his findings. Restoration work began in 1881 and was completed in 1919 under the supervision of Sir John Hubert Marshall, director general of the Indian Archaeological Survey. The Great Stupa and Sanchi's other Buddhist monuments were collectively designated a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1989.

COMING TO BOROBUDUR

“The Borobudur Temple was built in the 8th and 9th centuries by **Java's Shailendra Dynasty**, when it became a major Buddhist pilgrimage site. The temple is built in three tiers, each individually representing a sphere of the cosmic path to nirvana, while collectively representing the physical journey to achieve it.”

This is how the building of the Borobudur is described in most articles

Borobudur is the world's largest Buddhist monument and a priceless ancient center for pilgrimage and education in Mahayana Buddhism.

What is Borobudur line?



Borobudur Temple Compounds is the World Heritage designation of the area of three Buddhist temples in Central Java, Indonesia. It comprises Borobudur, Mendut, and Pawon. The temples were built during the Shailendra dynasty around the 8th and 9th centuries CE, and fall on a straight line.

Based on inscriptions found on some of the stones of the monument, archaeologists agree that construction of Borobudur was probably begun **around 760 AD and completed by about 830**, the Golden Age of the Sailendra dynasty, under the reign of King Samaratunga. It was King Dharanindra(775—800) his capital was Mataram, Central Java. He also ruled Srivijaya in Sumatra, and could have constructed the Manjusri temple. He is also credited with conceptualizing and starting the construction of Borobudur (c. 770), He ruled the land identified as Ligor in Java and Southern Cambodia (Chenla) (c. 790).

Ligor inscription is an 8th-century stone stele or inscription discovered in Ligor, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Southern Thailand Malay Peninsula. This inscription was written and carved on two sides, the first part is called-

1. Ligor A inscription, or also known as Viang Sa inscription. Ligor A inscription tell about a Srivijayan king named Dharmasetu, the king of kings in the world, who built the *Trisamaya caitya* for *Kajara*. while on the other side is called the -
2. Ligor B inscription written in Kawi script dated 775 CE. This B inscription was probably written by Mahārāja dyāḥ Pañcapaṇa kariyāna Paṇaṃkaraṇa (Panangkaran), king of Shailendra dynasty. This inscription was connected to the kingdom of Srivijaya and the Shailendra dynasty.

While the Ligor B inscription, dated 775 CE, written in Kawi script, contains the information about a king named *Visnu* who holds the title Sri Maharaja, from *Śailendravamśa* (*Wangsa Syailendra*) hailed as *Śesavvārimadavimathana* (the slayer of arrogant enemies without any trace).

The stone inscriptions that point towards the Shailendra Dynasty


According to recovered stone inscriptions from Sumatra, the Shailendra Dynasty may have ruled the Medang Kingdom of Central Java, as well as the Srivijaya Kingdom in Sumatra. The Shailendras created stone inscriptions using three languages: Old Javanese, Old Malay and Sanskrit, in either the Kawi alphabet or pre-Nāgarī script.

This use of different languages has generated speculation of the Shailendras' possible origins. The use of Old Javanese seems to establish them politically in Java, whereas their use of Old Malay seems to place them with Sumatran origin; meanwhile, their use of Sanskrit strongly indicates the official and/or religious nature of the events described on the inscription stones.



Sojomerto inscription (dated 725 CE). [Click to enlarge.](#)

The Sojomerto inscription (c. 725 CE) found in the Batang Regency of Central Java had the names 'Dapunta Selendra' and 'Selendranamah' inscribed. The name 'Selendra', a different spelling of 'Shailendra', suggests that Dapunta Selendra could be the founder of the Shailendras in Central Java. The inscription suggests that the family were originally Hindu Shaivites, a dominant school in the Hindu tradition that worships Shiva as their main deity. This practice took place before their conversion to Mahayana Buddhism.

<p>Kelurak inscription, displayed at National Museum of Indonesia, Jakarta</p> <p>Material-Andesite stone</p> <p>Writing-Pranagari script in Sanskrit</p> <p>Created-700 Saka (778 CE)</p> <p>Discovered-Lumbung temple in Kelurak village, Klaten Regency, located not far north of Prambanan temple, Central Java, Indonesia</p> <p>Present location-National Museum of Indonesia, Jakarta</p> <p>Registration-D.44</p>	
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There are some different interpretations regarding the king mentioned in Ligor B inscription; some suggest that the king mentioned in this inscription was King Panangkaran while other

argues that it was his successor, King Dharanindra- commonly known as **King Indra** was the ruler of the Sailendra dynasty and who also was the Emperor of Central Java and Srivijaya. Dharanindra was the successor of Panangkaran, he ruled the kingdom in the period 775- 800. He was mentioned as a great conqueror and credited for Sailendra's overseas campaign.

He was mentioned in Kelurak inscription dated 782) in his formal reign name Sri Sanggrama Dhananjaya. In this inscription he was hailed as *Wairiwarawiramardana* or "the slayer of courageous enemies". The similar title also found in Ligor B inscription discovered in Southern Thailand Malay Peninsula; *Sarwwarimadawimathana*, which suggest it referred to the same person. Dharanindra seems to be a warlike character, as he embarked on military naval expedition overseas and has brought Sailendras' control on Ligor in Malay Peninsula. After conquering and taking Ligor back from Water Chenla, he also launched raids against Champa in 774 and 770, and conquered Southern Cambodia in Mekong delta in early 9th century. During this time, Jayavarman II from Java (Malay Peninsula), was probably the commander of the Srivijayan army. At the behest of Maharaja Srivijaya (Dharaindra), Jayavarman II was installed as a new Cambodia king and Angkor Dynasty was founded.

King Indra seems to continue the builder tradition of his predecessor. He continued and completed the construction of Manjusri temple, and according to the Karangtengah inscription (dated 824) responsible for the construction of Venuvana temple, connected to Mendut or probably Ngawen temple. He was also probably responsible for the conception, planning and initiate the construction of Borobudur and Pawon temple.

The **Kelurak inscription** is an inscription dated 704 Saka (782 CE), written in Sanskrit with Pranagari script, discovered near Lumbung temple in Kelurak village, Central Java, Indonesia. Lumbung temple is a bit north of Prambanan temple in Yogyakarta. The writings on the inscription were discovered in poor condition with several parts being unclear and unreadable, as a result historians could only translate the main information of the inscription.

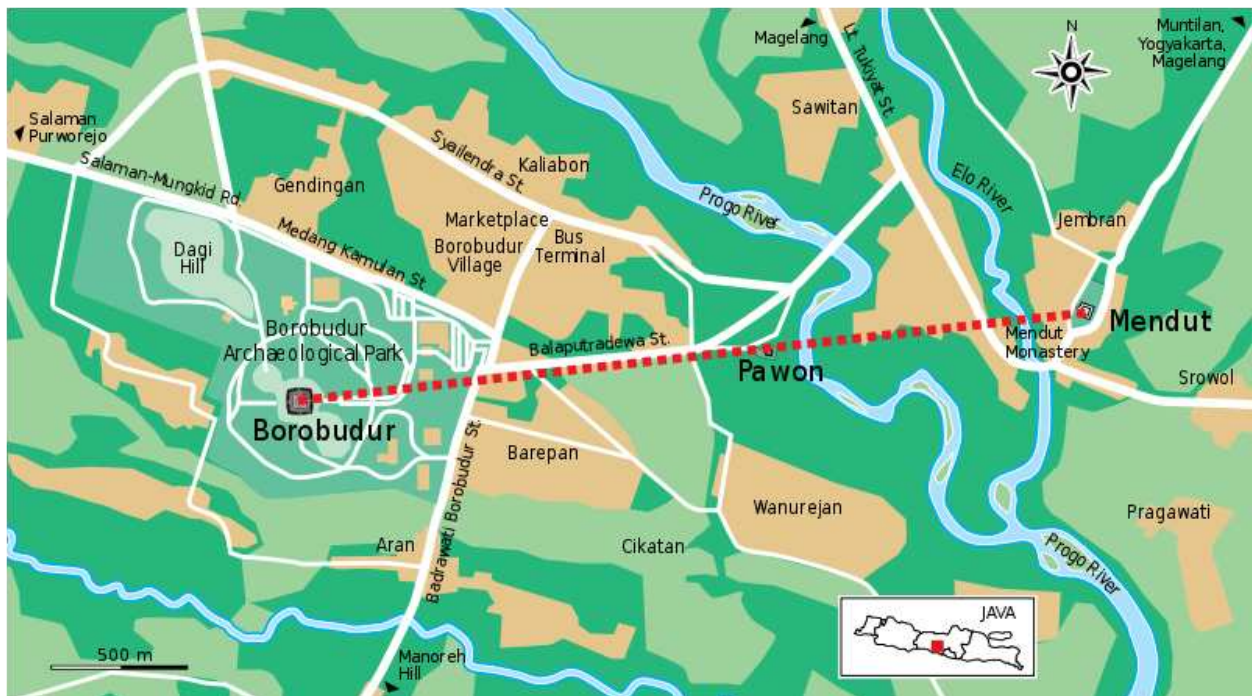
The inscription mentioned the construction of a sacred buddhist building to house the *Manjusri* statue that contains the wisdom of Buddha, dharma, and sangha; the same trinity as Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshvara. The construction of this sacred building was ordered by King Indra, revered in his official name *Sri Sanggramadhananjaya*. The reference to Hindu gods in this Buddhist temple signify the Tantrayana- Vajrayana buddhism influence. The temple dedicated to Manjusri is identified as Sewu temple, located not far north from Prambanan temple. Because of the use of the words KING INDRA it is referred to King Dharanindra.



Ligor Inscription

King Dharanindra. Artists view

The Pawon or Bajranalan Temple



Located between two other Buddhist temples, Borobudur (1.75 km (1.09 mi) to the northeast) and Mendut (1.15 km (0.71 mi) to the southwest), Pawon is connected with the other two temples, all of which were built during the Sailendra dynasty (8th–9th centuries).^[1] Examines the detail and style of its carving this temple is slightly older than Borobudur.

The three temples were located on a straight line, suggesting there was a symbolic meaning that binds these temples.

The Pawon temple is also known as Bajranalan – As part of the sacred ritual ceremony of Vesak, Buddhist pilgrims making a journey on foot from Mendut Temple to the colossal Borobudur Temple will pass a small yet gallant temple: the Temple of Pawon.

While in Javanese Pawon translates as “kitchen”, it is also believed that the name is derived from the word “Per-Awu-an” or a place that contains dust. Dutch archaeologist JG de Casparis claims that the temple is a shrine to keep the ashes of King Indra (782 – 812 AD), father of King Samarrattungga of the Buddhist Syailendra Dynasty. The temple is also known as Bajranalan, taken from the Sanskrit word Vajra meaning Thunderbolt (also a Buddhist ceremonial tool) and Anala meaning fire or flame. Thus, Vajranala or the Flaming Thunderbolt is believed to have been a weapon of King Indra and that the temple was, therefore, the shrine to house it.

The location of the pawon temple

Located on a straight line between Borobudur Temple (1.75 km or 1.09 miles to its northeast) and Mendut Temple (1.15 km or 0.71 miles to its southwest), Pawon Temple forms an inseparable part of these two temples, all of which were built during the Syailendra Dynasty (in the 8th–9th centuries AD.). Professor Purbatjaraka, an expert Indonesian anthropologist even argued that the Pawon Temple was an upa angga (or an integral part of) Borobudur Temple.

While small in size, the Pawon temple still has a lot to offer for anyone interested in architecture and history. Pawon Temple sits on a rectangular platform that rises 1.5 meters from the ground. The edge of the base surface, however, is curved, which makes the surface a 20-cornered platform. The platform’s sides are decorated with sculptures depicting flowers and clinging vines. Unlike other Buddhist temples, the body of Pawon Temple is relatively slim, similar to that of Hindu temples.

The top of the entrance gate is adorned with a carved Kala Makara arch (giant makara) without its lower jaw, a figure commonly found in classic Javanese temples. It is suggested that the missing lower jaw symbolizes the destructive aspect of the Kala Makara as the Cosmic Mother, her wide-open mouth uninterruptedly pulling in the universe. All around the outer walls, visitors are presented with carvings of men and women which symbolizing “Boddhisattvas” and “Taras” – Buddhist names for those who have attained enlightenment.

One of the outer walls of the pawon temple depicts a relief of a “Kalpataru”



relief of a “Kalpataru”

One of the outer walls of the temple depicts a relief of a “Kalpataru”, the Tree of Life that holds divine powers to fulfil wishes. Despite its age, the details on the relief are remarkable. The left

side at the top of the tree depicts an Apsara – a female cloud spirit, while the opposite side depicts a Devata – a Hindu guardian spirit. On both sides of the base of the tree stand Kinnari and Kinnara, mythical creatures, half woman half bird, renowned for dance, song and poetry. She is also a traditional symbol of beauty, grace and accomplishment. By looking carefully at the relief, one can even see the small wings of the Kinnari.

On the front outer wall of the temple, on each side of the entrance, there are niches with carved images of the God Kubera in standing position. Kubera (recognized as Vaisravana in Buddhism) is known as the Lord of wealth and the god-king of the semi-divine Yakshas in Hindu mythology. The existence of the Kubera carvings also suggests that the shrine was , in fact, dedicated to Kubera.

Bodhisattva once resided inside the pawon temple chamber

The inner chamber of Pawon Temple is hollow and is completely empty. However, experts believe that a statue of Bodhisattva once resided inside the temple chamber. The statue was believed to be a token to honor King Indra who was said to have reached the level of Bodhisattva. The inscription on the Karang tengah tablet states that the Bodhisattva statue radiated Vajra or rays, hence the speculation that the Bodhisattva statue was made of bronze.

Confirming its close connection to the Borobudur temple, the roof section of Pawon is covered with five small stupas (or also called Dagoba), with slightly different shape to those found in Borobudur.

Even though it is significantly smaller than its neighboring two temples, Pawon Temple holds its own charm in its architectural beauty and mysterious origins. Historians have even dubbed it as “the jewel of Javanese temple architecture” due to its simplicity, symmetry and harmony.

Pawon Temple is located in Borobudur Village, Borobudur Sub-district, Magelang District, Central Java Province. The temple, which is also called Brajanalan Temple, is 2 kilometers to the north east of Barabudhur Temple, and a kilometer to the south east of Mendut Temple. That Mendut, Pawon and Barabudhur Temples are aligned leads to a speculation that the three Buddhist temples are closely related to each other. Moreover, the three temples show similar sculpture designs on temple bodies. Poerbatjaraka, an expert, even argued that Pawon Temple was an upa angga (an integral part of) Barabudhur Temple.

Casparis claimed that Pawon Temple was a shrine to keep the ashes of King Indra (782 - 812 AD), father of King Samarrattungga of Syailendra Dynasti. Some people believe that the name "Pawon" derived from the word pawuan, which means a place to keep awu (ashes). Experts believe that there was a statue of Bodhisattva inside the temple chamber. The statue was a token to honor King Indra who was believed to have reached a Bodhisattva level. The inscription on Karang tengah stone statue states that Bodhisattva statue radiates wajra (rays). The statement leads to speculation that Bodhisattva statue was made of bronze.

The doorway into temple chamber is on the west side. Above the doorframe, there is a sculpture of Kalamakara without its lower jaw. The outer sides of stone banisters flanking the stairs

leading to the walkway are decorated with etching. The dragon heads sculptured onto the lower end of stone banisters are deteriorated. Although the temple chamber is vacant, there are markings on the floor suggesting that there was a statue inside the chamber.



Pawon Temple sits on a rectangular platform that rises 1.5 meters from the ground. The edge of base surface, however, is curving that makes the surface a 20-cornered platform. The platform sides are decorated with sculptures depicting flowers and clinging vines. Unlike other Buddhist temples, the body of Pawon Temple is slim, similar to that of Hindu temples.

At the front part of the temple, on the outer walls to the left and right of the doorway, there are niches in which an image of standing Kuwera (god of wealth) is sculptured. The sculpture inside

the southern niche, however, is broken and hardly recognizable. All parts of the sculpture inside the northern niche is still complete but the head.

There are similar designs sculptured onto the north and south sides of temple outer walls. The design depicts Kinara and Kinari, a couple of man-headed birds, flanking a Kalpataru tree growing from inside a jug. There are moneybags scattered around the tree. A couple of human beings is seen flowing in the sky above the tree. At the upper part of the wall surface, there are two small ventilation windows. Between the windows, there is a sculpture of kumuda (clinging vines that climb out from inside a rounded jug).

The layered temple roof is rectangular embellished with some small dagobas (dome) kecil at each sides. The roof is topped with a bigger dagoba.¹

[1https://candi.perpusnas.go.id/temples_en/deskripsi-central_java-pawon_38](https://candi.perpusnas.go.id/temples_en/deskripsi-central_java-pawon_38)

The temple slightly faces northwest and stands on a square base. Each sides of the stairs and the top of the gates are adorned with carved Kala-Makara, commonly found in classic Javanese temples. The outer wall of Pawon is carved with reliefs of boddhisattvas and taras. There are also reliefs of kalpataru (tree of life), flanked between Kinnara-Kinnari. The square chamber inside is empty with a square basin in the center of it. Rectangular small windows were found, probably for ventilation.

The roof section of is crowned with five small stupas and four small ratnas. Because of its relative simplicity, symmetry and harmony, the historians dubbed this small temple as "the jewel of Javanese temple architecture", in contrast with tall-slender East Javanese style counterparts as found in later Singhasari and Majapahit period.

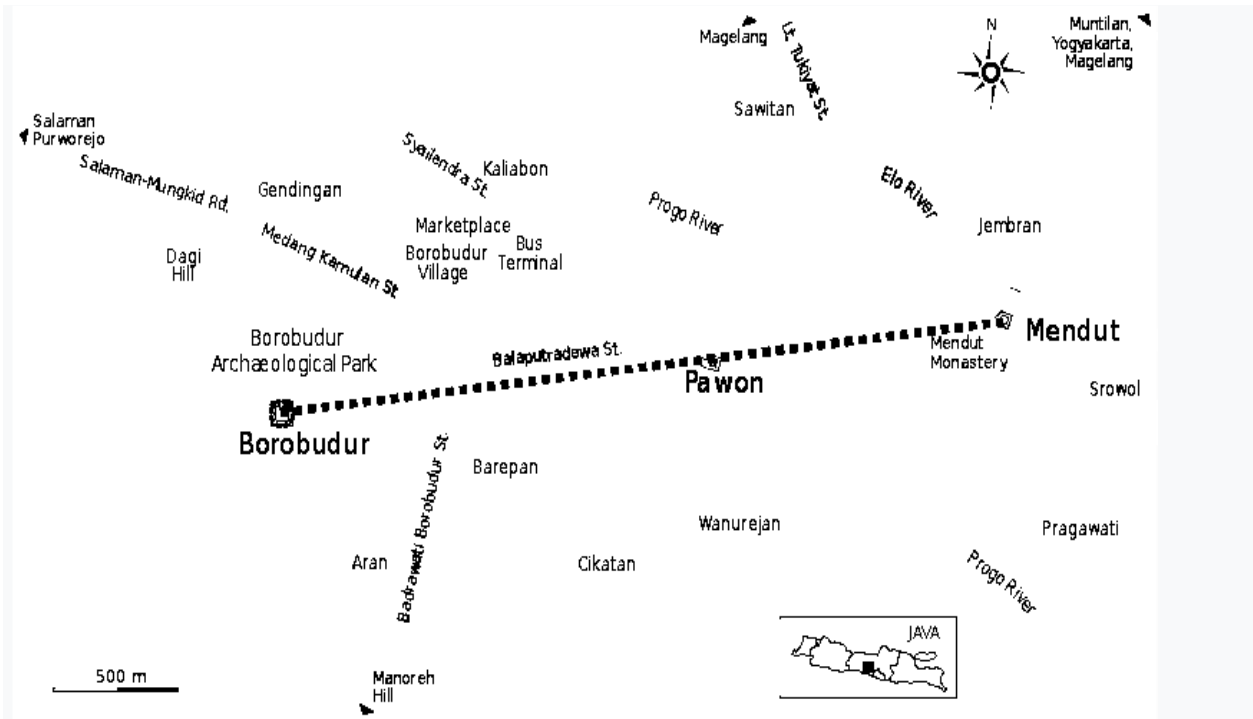
Mendut

Mendut is a ninth-century Buddhist temple, located in Mendut village, Mungkid sub-district, Magelang Regency, Central Java, Indonesia. The temple is located about three kilometres east from Borobudur. Mendut, Borobudur and Pawon, all of which are Buddhist temples, are located in one straight line. There is a mutual religious relationship between the three temples, although the exact ritual process is unknown. Built around early ninth century AD, Mendut is the oldest of the three temples including Pawon and Borobudur. The Karangtengah inscription, the temple was built and finished during the reign of King Indra of Sailendra dynasty the same King whose name also was King Dharanindra(775—800) and who built the Borobudur and we can safely say built the 3 temples in a straight line as described above.

The inscription dated 824 AD mentioned that King Indra of Sailendra Dynasty the same Indra whose name washas built a sacred building named *Venuvana* which means "bamboo forest". Dutch archaeologist JG de Casparis has connected the temple mentioned in Karangtengah inscription with Mendut temple.

In 1836 it was discovered as a ruins covered with bushes. The restoration of this temple was started in 1897 and was finished in 1925. The plan of temple's base is square, and measures 13.7 metre on each side, with the base level 3.7 metre above the ground . The 26.4 metre tall temple is facing northwest. The stairs projecting from the northwest side square elevated base is adorned with Makara statue on each sides, the side of the stairwall carved with bas-relief of Jataka fable narrating the animal story of Buddhist teaching. The square terrace surrounding the body of the temple was meant for *pradakshina* or circumambulating ritual, walking clockwise around the temple. The outer walls is adorned with bas-reliefs of Bodhisattvas (Buddhist divinities), such as Avalokitesvara, Maitreya, Cunda, Ksitigarbha, Samantabhadra, Mahakarunika Avalokitesvara, Vajrapani, Manjusri, Akasagarbha, and Bodhisattvadevi Prajnaparamita among other buddhist figures. Originally the temple had two chambers, a small chamber in the front, and the large main chamber in the center. The roof and some parts of the front chamber walls are missing. The uppermost part of the roof is missing, it supposed to have a stupa pinnacle with size and style probably just like the one in Sojiwan temple. The inner wall of front chamber is adorned with bas-relief of Hariti surrounds by children, Atavaka on the other side, Kalpataru, also groups of devatas divinities flying in heaven.





Location three Buddhist temples, Borobudur-Pawon-Mendut, in one straight line across Progo River.

The main room has three carved large stone statues. The 3 metres tall statue of Dhyani Buddha Vairocana was meant to liberate the devotees from the bodily karma, at the left is statue of Bodhisatva Avalokitesvara to liberate from the karma of speech, at the right is Bodhisatva Vajrapani to liberate from karma of thought.



Architecture: The statue of Dhyani Buddha Vairocana, Avalokitesvara, and Vajrapani inside the Mendut temple. Bas-relief of Hariti on inner northern wall of Mendut (Picture at Right)

During full moon in May or June, Buddhists in Indonesia observe the annual Vesak ritual by walking from Mendut through Pawon to Borobudur. The ritual takes the form of a mass Buddhist prayer and *pradakshina* (circumambulation) around the temple. To followers of traditional *Kejawen* (Javanese mysticism) or Buddhism, praying in the Mendut temple is

believed to fulfill wishes, such as deliverance from sickness. Childless couples, for example, pray at the bas-relief of Hariti for a child, since in traditional Javanese beliefs, Hariti is a symbol of fertility, patroness of motherhood and protector of children.

All you wanted to know about the architect of Borobudur

Gunavarma was an Indian monk from Jibin (ancient Gandhara). He traveled to Java from Sri Lanka around the beginning of the 5th century A.D. Not long after his arrival, the Javanese king Po-duo-jia suffered from a foot injury caused by an arrow in a war. Gunavarma healed the king's injury and won his trust and friendship. Showing respect and gratitude to Gunavarma, King Po-duo-jia decided to rule his kingdom with Buddhist belief.

As a Buddhist cakravartin, he gave all his possessions to the poor and the people were ordered to abstain from killing. The people were also instructed to respect Gunavarma and even to receive the 5 precepts from him. The Chinese sources do not say that Gunavarma helped King Po-duo-jia to implement the belief in the descent of Buddharaja Maitreya. However, we may surmise that Gunavarma did this from the fact that he was officially invited to China by Emperor Wen of the Song (424-453) and from his activities in the Song. We describe these below. About 9 years after Faxian had brought the painting of Nagapuspa back to the South, Emperor Wen of the Song decided to implement the belief as his political ideology. In the 9th month of the first year of the Yuanjia reign (424), the monks Huiguan and Huicong persuaded the emperor to send letters to the Javanese king and Gunavarma, respectively, inviting Gunavarma to China. Later, the monks Fachang, Daochong and Daojun etc., were despatched to bring Gunavarma to China.

Gunavarma arrived in China in the year 431. Another Indian monk, Senghavarma also arrived in 433. Both subsequently translated the Suhrlekha for the emperor. The Suhrlekha was a letter sent by Nagarjuna to King Satavahana persuading him to practice Buddhism and to implement the cakravartinship to rule his kingdom. Gunavarma must have been an expert in promoting the belief in the descent of Buddharaja Maitreya. Otherwise, he would not have been invited by Emperor Wen of the Song to China. Besides translating the Suhrlekha for Emperor Wen, Gunavarma was also appointed by him to oversee the ritual of Bodhisattva pratimoksa.

Bodhisattva pratimoksa. is the most important ritual that initiates an emperor to become a cakravartin or a Buddharaja. Soon after his arrival at the capital of the Song, Gunavarma was appointed to perform this ritual. But due to an internal revolt that erupted suddenly, Emperor Wen immediately dropped the idea of becoming a cakravartin/Buddharaja Maitreya.

The Chinese sources tell us that Gunavarma had stayed and preached the Dharma in Sri Lanka for quite a while thus making him an expert in the implementation of the belief and it is likely that he would have helped the Javanese king to promote it. One can surmise that in 2 succession of countries he transmitted the belief i.e. to Java from Sri Lanka



BOROBUDUR

Waiting for the Maitreya Buddha



Dr Uday Dokras

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