



Rogoselo Site: Traces of Local Religion During The Hindu-Buddha Period in Pekalongan

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Abstract. In the historiography of Nusantara, the 5th to 15th century AD is often seen as the period in which Hindu-Buddhist influences entered and developed in Nusantara, including Pekalongan. This influence was not accepted for granted, but had gone through a selection process known as local genius, namely the acceptance of Indian culture which caused elements of Indian culture to change their form, nature, and concept to be adjusted to the acceptance of the local community. So, the Hindu religion that developed in the archipelago grew on the original beliefs of the local community. The gods in Hinduism can be accepted, but they (the local population) do not abandon their belief in ancestral spirits and the rulers of nature. The data was obtained through archaeological surveys at the Rogoselo site, Pekalongan. Only relevant data will be analyzed to answer questions regarding the status of local religions that influence the forms of Hindu worship in Pekalongan. The research results indicate that the shape of stone terrace buildings has been equated in their status with temple structures known for worshipping Hindu deities. Mountains are sacred places for local society, which intersects with the concept of Hinduism that considers Mount Mahameru to be the abode of gods, manifested in temple structures as replicas of mountains. This indirectly suggests that the concept of mountain sanctity from the pre-Indian era continued to persist when Hindu-Buddhist influences arrived in Nusantara.

Keywords: Rogoselo, Local religions, Hindu-Buddhist, Local genius, Mountain

1. Introduction

Pekalongan Regency is one of several regencies located in the northern coastal area of Central Java. Geographically, it is located at coordinates 6° 60' 23" to 6° 70' 23" South Latitude and between 109° 40' 19" to 110° 03' 06" East Longitude. Pekalongan Regency borders Pemalang Regency at the west (Comal River), Batang Regency at the east (Kupang/Warungasem River), and Banjarnegara and Wonosobo Regencies at the south. The Pekalongan area is divided into six sub-districts with very contrasting landscapes, bordering the Java Sea at the north; the land surface contour becomes higher at the north, where the northernmost area enters the Serayu mountain area with a height of 2500 m above sea level.

Archaeological surveys of Hindu-Buddhist remains in the Pekalongan Regency area as part of the North Coast of Central Java are still limited. After a survey of Hindu-Buddhist archaeological remains in the Batang, Pekalongan and Kendal areas in 1976, research in the Pekalongan area was only carried out again around the 2000s by the National Research Center For Archaeology (Pusat Penelitian Arkeologi Nasional/ Puslit Arkenas) and the Yogyakarta Archaeological Center (Balai Arkeologi Yogyakarta) on a limited scale. In 2014, Puslit Arkenas, in collaboration with EFEO-France, again surveyed this area and

successfully tracked and identified around 28 Hindu-Buddhist sites [1]. Among the sites, one that is quite interesting is the Rogoselo Site because it shows the existence of a local cultural form (stone terraces), but the remains of the artifacts are Hindu. The purpose of this study is to discuss the Rogoselo Site, which is in the form of stone terraces but is Hindu. In contrast, Hindu archaeological remains are usually found in temples, bathing places, or caves of worship. The target of the study is material culture and its environment, including stone terraces, statues, and ceramics.



Fig. 1. Map of Pekalongan Regency.
Source: Sejarah negara.com

If we look further, this can be found on several sites in the archipelago, such as the Pugung Raharjo Site in Lampung. This site is known to have 13 terraced punden; on the easternmost punden, a Boddhisattva statue was found [2]. In the article by R. Soekmono [3] The Batu Bedil site, which is a Menhir complex, contains the Batu Bedil inscription containing a Buddhist mantra from the 10th century [4]. This phenomenon is interesting to study, as it is related to the acceptance of local communities towards entering foreign elements into their religious practices. Including what was found at the Rogoselo site in the form of terraced punden with Hindu archaeological remains. The research targets material culture and its environment, including terraced punden and statues.

2. Literature Review

Some people view the entry of Hindu-Buddhist influence in Nusantara as a process of Indianization. George Coedes said that what is meant by Indianization is the spread of an organized culture based on the Indian concept of kingdom, the characteristic of which is the Hindu-Buddhist religion (2). Not all researchers agree with the term "Indianization." According to J.C. Van Leur, Southeast Asia societies were no longer passive spectators but true actors in creating new, Indianized states. To legitimize their position, local kings themselves invited Indian Brahmin to come to Southeast Asia to become their political advisors and ritual specialists. Veronique Degroot prefers the term "Hindu-Buddhist" to Indianization, although this adjective emphasizes the role of imported religions to the detriment of local beliefs [6].

The entry and spread of Hinduism and Buddhism into Nusantara was one of the impacts of the increasing trade relations through the sea route through the Strait of Malacca around the beginning of the first millennium. Immigrants from India had been present and existed in Java, as evidenced by the discovery of several graves and arikamedu pottery dating from around the 1st century BC at the Batujaya Site. [7], [8]. With the arrival of Indian people who travelled back and forth, and products and technologies were transferred across this broad interaction sphere from time to time gave a positive impact on local communities, where the relationship that occurs is not just an exchange of trade commodities but develops into an exchange of new ideas and practices between the two nations and of course a process of cultural acculturation occurs, where the culture of the local community is influenced by foreign culture. [9].



Fig. 2. Dwarapala statue at the Rogoselo site.
Source: Indradjaja

H.G. Quaritch Wales developed two concepts related to acculturation, namely extreme acculturation and local genius. The concept of extreme acculturation refers to the near-complete adoption of Indian cultural elements. The concept of local genius is the acceptance of Indian culture, which causes elements of Indian culture to experience changes in form, characteristics, and concept. [10]. Related to the term local genius, according to F.D.K. Bosch, the process of acculturation that occurred between Indonesian, Chinese and Indian cultures was based on the way humans who carried the elements of art interacted with each other. Initially, Indian influence was brought by scholars and religious figures from India to China and Southeast Asia, including Indonesia. In the next stage, many Indonesians went to India to study. According to Bosch, they were the ones who developed Indonesian-Hindu culture in concrete terms. [10]. Therefore, local genius can be interpreted as the ability to learn, appreciate, and then manage it again and formulate it as a new concept.

Hindu-Buddhist civilization was originally owned by the elite. W.F. Stutterheim argues that Hinduism, both in the past and present, has always been an upper-class culture and has never been a popular culture bound to Nusantara animism and worship [5]. However, in the life of society, both in the royal environment and outside the palace, the Hindu-Buddhist religion did not completely replace the belief in ancestral spirits. This can be found in the Southeast Asian region; the Hindu-Buddhist religion is carried out without abandoning its original religion, such as animism, worship of ancestral spirits, and sanctifying high places such as mountains as places where ancestral spirits reside [11].

Many inscriptions with the theme of *sima* (*perdikan* land) during the Ancient Mataram period have been found in Central Java. The contents of the inscriptions relate to the inauguration ceremony of a piece of land, rice fields, gardens, swamps and others that became *perdikan* (autonomous). Although the beginning of the inscription always mentions the highest god who is worshiped, namely Śiva, the sections of inscriptions that contain oaths, curses, and denunciations aimed at consecrating events are always concluded with invocations to ancestral spirits and the deified spirits of previous kings [12]. The spirits of the ancestors are believed to protect them all directly. In the Sugih Manek inscription dated 837 Śaka (915 AD), it is mentioned that in addition to the determination of *sima*, there is also an obligation to offer *caru* to the *bhatāra* every day. *Bhatāra* must be interpreted as a spirit that has been deified [13]. The call to local gods as witnesses to legitimize all aspects and movements of life shows that the ancient Javanese people did not abandon their ancestral religion when Hinduism-Buddhism became their official religion. The *lumpang* stone and *gandik* as tools used in the *sima* inauguration ceremony symbolize Sanghyang Watukulumpang and Sanghyang Teas. The word "Sanghyang" is a term for the ancestral spirits worshiped.

3. Methodology

The research method begins with collecting information through a literature review of literature related to the study of archaeological findings in the research area in the form of books, proceedings, journal articles, and magazines. Next, information from related agencies, such as the local Culture Service and Museum, and interviews with community figures who knew about Hindu-Buddhist archaeological remains in the area are also sought.

The data collection technique uses survey and excavation methods, namely collecting data related to past cultural remains and the physical environment of humans who support the culture. The survey was conducted to collect information about archaeological findings' distribution, density, and context. The survey methods used were in-depth interviews and observations.

This article is based on research data in the Pekalongan area, which was conducted in several stages:

1. Data sources: Data sources in research are subject sources from which data can be obtained. At this level, data sources are obtained from field survey results. In addition to artifactual data, data collection is also carried out by conducting

literature searches related to the study of artifactual data in the form of books, proceedings and other articles/papers.

2. **Data:** All archaeological findings obtained through surveys and excavations are processed into data by describing the findings, followed by analysis. There are two types of analysis, namely special analysis and contextual analysis. Special analysis is an analysis that emphasizes the physical characteristics of artifacts. Contextual analysis emphasizes the relationship between archaeological data. According to K.R. Dark, every artifact or structure (finding) can be considered archaeological data. However, the data only contains information about its existence and does not become archaeological evidence. New archaeological data becomes archaeological evidence after being included in the interpretation framework. [14].
3. **Evidence:** the findings are placed in archaeology at this stage. The context in archaeology consists of several elements: the matrix, which is the physical media that supports archaeological objects; provenience, which is the vertical and horizontal placement of archaeological objects in the matrix; and association, which is the relationship between archaeological objects in the same matrix. The context in archaeology consists of primary context and secondary context. Primary context if the condition of the matrix, provenience and association have not changed since the initial deposition until an archaeologist discovered it. Secondary context if the condition of the matrix, provenience and association have been disturbed due to human behavior or nature [15].
4. **Interpretation:** At this stage, comparisons and analogies are also made with other archaeological data, which is hoped to help explain the existence of the artifacts found.

4. Result and Discussion

4.1 Survey Results

The Rogoselo site is administratively located in Rogoselo Village, Doro District, Pekalongan Regency, and astronomically is located at coordinates 07° 04' 08.8" South Latitude and 109° 40' 12.0" East Longitude. This site is located on a small hill on the banks of the Rogoselo River, which is made into terraces. Each terrace is reinforced with a 10-20 cm andesite rock formation. The source of the rocks to make the barrier was obtained from the Rogoselo River, about 10 meters wide. In the dry season, the river water discharge is relatively low, although it never dries up. In contrast, in the rainy season, this river has a fairly heavy water discharge because it is located at the upstream. This small hill has several terraces, which are planted with industrial plants. On the lowest terrace, a natural stone measuring 38 cm high and 85 cm in diameter was found; on the upper surface, there is a hole with a diameter of 28 cm. It is evident that this stone is a mortar stone with one hole in the middle.

The second terrace is slightly higher and it is reinforced with stone arrangements. Two large *dwārāpala* statues and upright stones (*menhirs*) were found on this terrace. These upright stones are irregular in shape, with a height of around 60-76 cm and a diameter of around 30-40 cm. Both *dwārāpala* statues are made of very rough volcanic breccia rock. The statues are depicted with large, round eyeballs, very large teeth and fangs. The sculptures resemble the art style of *dwārāpala* statues in the Majapahit period (13th-14th centuries AD). The largest statue is 1.4 meters high with a body diameter of 1.3 meters, while the smallest is 95 cm high, with part of its body still buried in the ground. In addition, a Chinese ceramic bowl was also found in a slightly damaged condition on the edge of the 2nd terrace and a fragment of a crushed stone that only has half of it left. On the highest terrace, a *yonis* measuring 75 x 75 x 69 cm was found, the top of which was worn away, and two rectangular stones measuring 63 x 63 cm and 60 x 60 cm, respectively.



Fig. 3. Rogoselo site on the banks of the Rogoselo River

Source: Puslit Arkenas

In addition to the findings of two *dwārāpala* and *yonis* statues that can still be seen at the site, several other artifacts have been found, such as a statue of a figure standing on two snakes and a *jaladwara* decorated with a female figure in a sitting position at the front of the *jaladwara* (Figures 4 & 5). According to Den Hamer (1893) [16], both artifacts come from Rogoselo (possibly from Baron Skeber), which were then taken to Kaso, Doro and are now in the Ronggowarsito Museum, Semarang. [17].

In N.J. Krom's report (1914) about the Rogoselo Site, it was stated that apart from remains from the Hindu-Buddhist period, three graves from the Islamic period were also found. The "Kjai Matas Angin" is the top grave (4.9 x 3 m). Two flat, upright stones mark this grave as headstones. About 500 meters from the first grave, there is the "Panggerang Dipan" or "Gara Manik" grave, laid out using river stones. About 50 meters from the second grave, it is known by the community as "Pangerang Sling Singan". A modern inscription made of stone with medieval Javanese letters was also found at this place. The inscription is now in the Jakarta National Museum (with inventory number D.24). This inscription is dated to around 1571 Śaka (1659 AD) [18].



Fig. 4. Statue of a figure (left), Source: Puslit Arkenas



Fig. 5. Yoni (right); Source: Puslit Arkenas

The Rogoselo site was popular around the 13th-15th century AD because this site is mentioned in the Bujangga Manik Travel Manuscript, a manuscript in Old Sundanese written in the late XV century AD or early XVI century AD. Bujangga Manik was a Sundanese religious figure who traveled eastward to deepen his knowledge of Hindu teachings. Bujangga Manik left the Sunda land to undertake a religious journey that took him all the way to Majapahit. When crossing the southern region of Pekalongan, this Sundanese traveler did not stop at Rogoselo, but he mentioned the name of this place in his manuscript. As a result, we can find the ancient name of the place, Arega Sela, which means 'stone mountain'. This name may refer to the rocks that protrude in many places around Rogoselo [19].

4.2 Discussion

Judging from the terraced environmental layout, it is clear that the Rogoselo Site can be categorized as a site of worship in the form of stone terraced. This site has three levels, each marked by a natural stone arrangement. This form of terraced worship is generally known as a stone terraced building, a building of worship from prehistoric times or prehistoric traditions. The presence of a pair of large dwārāpala statues marks the indication of Hinduism at this site. The two dwārāpala statues were deliberately placed on the second level, while on the third terrace, the highest terrace, one yoni was found as an object of worship. Dwārāpala comes from the Sanskrit word 'dvar', which means entrance/gate, and 'pala' means guard, so overall, it means the guard of the gate or entrance. Dwārāpala is depicted in a standing, sitting or squatting position and is usually placed as door guards for sacred buildings/places. The existence of dwārāpala in the temple complex is related to the view that the temple is a replica of Mount Meru, the residence of the gods, demi-gods, and their guards. Dwārāpala is the protectors of the god's residence, whose position is between the sacred and profane areas or is on the border of the less sacred area to the sacred [20].

Dwārāpala statues as guardian statues are usually found in sacred Hindu and Buddhist places such as temples, bathing places or caves of worship. Dwārāpala in Hindu temples has

almost the same variation in form as *dwārāpala* in Buddhist worship. Therefore, the discovery of *dwārāpala* cannot identify a temple as Hindu or Buddhist except in the form of a pair of *dwārāpala* *Mahākāla-Nandiśvara*, which are marked by the attributes of a mace for *mahākāla* and a trisula for *nandiśvara*. In the *Agni-Purana* and *Śilpasāstra* manuscripts, it is mentioned that *nandiśvara* is the guardian of Śiva's place of worship. In the *Ramayana*, *nandiśvara* is mentioned as the guardian of Mount Kailasa, the abode of Śiva, guarding the mountain with his trident to ward off Ravana, who disguises himself as a monkey. *Mahākāla* is not mentioned as the consort of *Nandiśvara* but as an independent figure. The figure of *Mahākāla-nandiśvara* as the guardian of the temple entrance in Java first appeared in the 8th century AD [20].

The uniqueness of the *dwārāpala* statue from the Rogoselo Site is that this statue is not placed to guard a temple, a bathing place, or a sacred building commonly known in Hindu-Buddhist religions. However, this statue is placed to guard a stone terrace. This condition has not been found anywhere else because usually stone terraces were used as a means of worship in prehistoric times or at least are a continuing tradition of ancestor worship. At the top of the stone terrace, menhirs are usually found, but this condition is different from that found at the Rogoselo Site. At the top level, one *yoni* was seen as the center of worship.

Hindu places of worship in the form of stone terraces were not only found at the Rogoselo Site, Pekalongan, but were also found in the Batang area, namely at the Batur Site, which is geographically located at the foot of Mount Kendalisodo and administratively located in Silurah Village, Wonotunggal District, Batang Regency. This site is shaped like a stone terrace consisting of three earthen steps/terraces whose retaining walls are reinforced with river stone arrangements. In the northeast corner of the second terrace, a *yoni*, several profiled stones, and a small Ganesha statue were found in a very damaged condition and without a head.

Another *punden* site, *Punden Wali Ajar Pendek*, located in Batur Village, is a multi-story building built from river stone arrangements. At the top of the *punden* there are fragments of the finial, but there are no traces of fragments of statues originating from the Hindu-Buddhist period [21]. These two sites are located in the southern Batang region, which has a hilly contour and is located at the foot of the mountain, like the Rogoselo Site, which is located in the region of south Pekalongan. This southern region is known as the Rogojembangan Hills region.

The findings at the Rogoselo Site and other sites around Pekalongan are reminiscent of N.J. Krom's opinion in his book entitled *"Inleiding tot de Hindoe Javaansche Kunst"* (1919). Based on the remains found, he divided Central Javanese art into two major categories. First, the intensive Hindu influence in Central Javanese art especially around the Dieng Plateau, Kedu, Yogyakarta, Surakarta, and Semarang areas. Second, the area further west where Hindu-Javanese art grew later with the character by a lack of statue findings, and a lack of temple remains. (19). Local cultural arts are more prominent in this area, as shown in Polynesian-style sculptures, especially in Pekalongan and Tegal. This is possible because the location is closer to West Java, where the 5th century Tarumanagara Kingdom once existed, so it is not surprising that West Java influenced the art of the people of the north coast of Java. [23]. For additional information, West Java in Quaritch Wales' view is one of three peripheral cultures where Indian influence is too weak and is defeated by the rise of Pre-Indian culture (local culture). [24].

Thus, it is clear that this stone terrace has been used by Hindus in Pekalongan as a place of worship. This phenomenon cannot be seen as a decline in the field of temple design

art in the 13th-14th century AD. On the contrary, this phenomenon can be seen as strengthening local elements in Hindu temple design. As is known, before Hinduism and Buddhism came and had a wide influence in Java, the Nusantara community was not an atheist society. In the minds of local people, they believe in life after death, so their graves are given burial provisions for a new life in the spirit world. They believe that the place where these ancestral spirits live is sometimes on a mountain peak or across the ocean. They also believe that their relationship with these ancestral spirits also influences the good and bad of their lives. Therefore, to maintain a good relationship with these spirits, rituals are conducted to worship the ancestral spirits. As a medium, they made stone terrace buildings as a replica of a mountain and menhirs as objects of worship, placed on the top of the terraced punden building.

After the entry of Hindu-Buddhist influence, the notion of mountains as the abode of ancestral spirits still exists; in addition to that, mountains are also considered as *sthana* for the gods. Therefore, the temple buildings that were built also still show aspects of stone terraced buildings, such as Borobudur Temple, which has 10 steps, Sukuh Temple and Ceto Temple, which show a terraced building pattern. [25].

The idea that mountain peaks are the abode of ancestral spirits in Indonesian society is universal. In Bali, Mount Agung is believed to be the abode of Sanghyang To Langkir (the highest ancestral spirit). Likewise, Mount Siberut, Mentawai, is considered to be the abode of the spirits of the deceased. [26]. In Java and Bali, the position of this spirit is neither higher nor lower than the Hindu gods. Likewise, Mount Penanggungan, according to the Tantu Pangelaran manuscript, is known as Mount Pawitra, a fragment of Mount Himalaya. This mountain is believed not only to be the residence of the Hindu gods but also to be the place where the spirits of the Javanese people's ancestors reside. The Nāgarakrētāgama manuscript mentions that at the foot of this mountain, there is a *karṣyan*, the residence of the ascetics (*rṣi group*) who worship Śrīparwatarajadewa (the mountain king god). According to Supartha, Śrī Parwatarajadewa is the same as Śrī Parwatanatha, the tutelary deity of Mpu Prapanca. The mention of Parwatarajadewa or parwatanatha in ancient Javanese literary works refers to the God Śiva. Thus, even though these ascetics worship the God Śiva, in practice, they also worship the spirits of their ancestors at the same time [27].

The view that mountains are sacred places meets the concept in Hinduism, which views Mount Mahameru as the abode of the gods, manifested in the form of temple buildings that are replicas of mountains. This also applies to the ancient Pekalongan community, which is only reflected in a different form from the Borobudur Temple or Sukuh and Ceto Temples. This means that at that time, the ancient Pekalongan community saw temple buildings as replicas of mountains, which had the same concept as stone terrace buildings, which were miniatures of mountains. With this perspective, it seems that the "creativity" to create temples by taking the stone terraced building model (in the form of actual stone terraced buildings) can be understood because both represent a mountain as the abode of the gods as well as the abode of ancestral spirits. The emphasis that stone terraces are the same as a temple is marked by a yoni at the top and a pair of *dwārāpala* at the bottom.

The strengthening of local influence at the Rogoselo Site is also marked by the presence of an unknown figure in the iconography art of Hindu-Buddhist statues. This figure is depicted with four hands representing divinity. The two backhands carry a bird and a bowl, while the two front hands are joined at the chest with the two thumbs. The figure stands on a pair of horned, crowned dragons with open jaws. The unfinished prabhamandala is intended to depict the halo of divinity (Halo/Sirascakra), an important attribute of Majapahit period statues. Traces of ancestral statues are visible from his body gestures, hand positions, and

head coverings. This figure cannot be identified as a deity figure, therefore it must be seen as a local or ancestral figure [19] (Figure 4). At this point, we can see the local genius of the ancient Pekalongan people in the past who "modified" something that came from outside (Hinduism-Buddhism) to suit their culture at that time.

5. Conclusion

The spread of Hinduism and Buddhism in the Indonesian archipelago, especially in Java, did not immediately replace the entire order of the concept of activities and religious ceremonial tools that already existed and grew before the Hindu and Buddhist eras. It can be said that the Hindu-Buddhist religious system was only strictly implemented around the central area of power. Whereas, its influence usually decreases further away from the center of power.

It can also be said that the Hindu-Buddhist religion that entered and was accepted in Indonesia grew from the original beliefs of the local people towards two aspects, namely the worship of ancestral spirits and the belief that nature has power. Therefore, although the gods in the Hindu-Buddhist religion were accepted, they (the local people) did not abandon their beliefs in ancestral spirits and the rulers of nature.

Pekalongan in the 13th-15th century AD, was far from the center of power at that time (Majapahit), so Hindu religious practices were increasingly loose and influenced by local beliefs that never died. The stone terraced building used as a place of worship for Pekalongan Hindus is evidence of how the process of "adaptation" according to the mindset of the Pekalongan Hindu community resulted in a form like the one at the Rogoselo Site. Finally, reflecting on the Rogoselo Site, only some stone terrace buildings are directly associated with people from prehistoric times. Still, it is better to return it to the context of its findings first.

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