Exploring Buddhism Values at Sari Temple: An Investigation in a Buddhist Tourism Destination

Arina Afiyati Shadikah*1
1Sekolah Tinggi Agama Buddha Negeri Raden Wijaya Wonogiri, Wonogiri, Indonesia
*Corresponding author: arina.jurnal@gmail.com

Abstrak

Kata Kunci: Nilai Buddhis, Sejarah, Relief.

Abstract
Religious tourism has now become one of the favorite destinations for tourists. However, there are still many temples that are not widely known by tourists. Even though many temples, such as Sari Temple, have a certain charm, such as the shape of the temple which is like a house complete with doors and windows. However, there is still minimal information regarding the history and meaning of the temple reliefs. This research was carried out at the Sari temple which is located in Uang Istimewa Yogyakarta. This research aims to analyze the Buddhist values at Sari Temple based on the history of this temple. This research uses a qualitative research design where the research object is Sari Temple itself. There are three techniques used to collect data, namely interviews, literature study, and documentation. The data collected was then analyzed qualitatively through four stages, namely data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and verification or drawing conclusions. The results of the research show that there are three Buddhist values that can be found based on the history of Sari temple, namely samma sankappa (right thoughts) , samma kamanta (right action) and samma vaca (right speech). Each of these Buddhist values has moral values in it.

Keywords: Buddhist values, History, Reliefs

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is an archipelago country that has hidden beauty in the field of tourism. There are many unknown tourism objects which are located in some inland areas such as waterfalls, beaches, lakes, and others (Singgalen et al., 2019; Surya Suamba et al., 2022). Those are categorized as natural tourism objects. However, there are other tourism destinations related to religious tourism places. Indonesia is popular as a moderation country which has six religions embraced by Indonesian people namely Islam, Christian, Catholic, Hindu, Buddha, and Konghucu (Dodi et al., 2021; Hoon, 2017; Prasetiawan, 2017). All of those religions have their own places for worship. Moreover, many of them have become a tourism object for society as well. Nowadays, religious tourism has become one of favorite destinations for tourists. There are many international and domestic tourists decide to visit religious tourism objects such as Islamic, Hindus, Christian or other religious destinations. One of the most favorite religious objects is temple (Fitriani & Fibriana, 2020; Lu & Wu, 2020). It is one of Buddhist tourism object that has many visitors for international, local,
regional visitors. One of the most popular Buddhist tourism destination is Borobudur temple (Damanik & Yusuf, 2022; Metusala et al., 2020). Previous study displayed the numbers of visitors at the Borobudur temple reached 185,497 visitors in 2022 that include 131,561 domestic visitors and 53,936 international visitors (Hasanah et al., 2020). It meant that this type of tourism object becomes one of favorite places to be visited. Besides Borobudur temple, there are many other Buddhist tourism destinations located in Java. For instance, some Buddhist monasteries and some temples, namely Mendud Temple, Plaosan Temple, Sojiwan Temple, and Sari temple (Febrianto, R., & Idris, 2016; Istanto, 2018). Sari temple is much smaller than Borobudur temple. However, the temple has certain attraction such as the shape of the temple is like a house completed with doors and windows. This temple is not well-known yet among society because it is not as magnificent as the Borobudur temple (Fortuna et al., 2022; Munandar, 2016; Wirasanti, 2023). However, the Sari temple is worth a visit to get new vibes about heritage. Besides, it is near to the main road so the visitors can reach the place easily.

As the Buddhist temple in Indonesia, there are not many researchers that have studied the Sari temple. This causes people lack of information about the temple. Whereas, temples have values that can be learned both from the history and the building themselves (Hasanah et al., 2020; Madyukova, 2021). So does the Sari temple that there are lack of information about the history and reliefs meaning of the temple. As a Buddhist temple, the Sari temple should have Buddhist nuance whether values or story based on the relief sculpted at the temple. Although Sari Temple is a Buddhist temple, the values behind this temple is not only for Buddhists but also non-Buddhist. Based on the background of the study above, the researcher intended to find out the history of the Sari Temple. Therefore this study is to analyze the Buddhist values identified based on the history of this temple.

2. METHODS

This study carried out a descriptive qualitative in conducting research. Descriptive qualitative research is a method of inquiry that aims to provide a detailed, in-depth understanding of a phenomenon, rather than focusing on numerical measurements or statistical analysis (Trisliatanto, 2020). This approach is often used when researchers seek to explore the complexities of a situation, gain insights into the experiences of individuals, or understand the meaning people ascribe to certain events. This study is research produces findings which cannot be reached by using statistical procedures or other quantitative ways. Hence, the data collected are in the form of words or sentences or pictures. This research was about Buddhist values found based on the history of the Sari Temple. Therefore, the recent study applies historical research. The historical study contains opinion and theoretical views towards historical documents by doing analysis and synthesis (Sutoyo, 2018). The researcher collected the data about the history of The Sari Temple and then analyzed the Buddhist values based on the history. The data were collected through the interview, documentation, and literature review.

The researcher adopted the technique of analyzing data. They suggested four steps in analyzing the data namely 1.) Collecting data, this is the initial phase where researchers gather data from various sources. 2.) Reducing data, after data collection, researchers face a large volume of information that needs to be manageable for analysis. Reducing data involves condensing, organizing, and summarizing the collected material. 3.) Displaying data, this step helps to make patterns and insights more apparent and facilitates the development of a coherent narrative. 4.) Concluding or verifying, researchers draw conclusions based on the patterns and insights identified during the analysis. They may address the research questions, discuss implications, and offer interpretations (Miles & Huberman, 2014).
3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The researcher found out about the history of Sari temple based on interview done with one of Archaeologists at The Cultural Preservation Institute for Region X. He stated that there was not enough information about this matter. However, the history of Sari temple has strong relationship to Kalasan Temple. It was sculpted at Kalasan Temple’s inscription. “Sari Temple has very little information about the history. But, the temple is closely related to Kalasan temple. So, if we can relate it based on Kalasan inscription about the establishment of a holy place to worship Goddess Tara.” The interview statement above was also in accordance with the maharaja documentation from a blog of the National Museum of Indonesia accessed on 26 July 2023. It was named Kalasan because it was reported to be found between Kalasan and Prambanan in 1886. Figure 1 shows the Kalasan inscription.

![Figure 1. The Kalasan Inscription](image)

Figure 1 show the oldest inscription written in the form of stone and written in Siddham or Pranagari script and in the form of a Sanskrit couplet. The inscription was begun with homage to Goddess Tara (tārābhavanam). It was stated that teachers of Sailendra family proposed a desire to a Maharaja to have a holy place built with a view to worship Goddess Tara. Then, King Dyah Pañcaṇa Kariyāṇa Paṇāmkaraṇaḥ (Rakai Panangkaran) ordered to build the holy place for a glorification to the Goddess Tara in 778 AD or 779 AD. This information was also stated in the interview as state: “...so, the Kalasan temple was as a worshipping place and the place for living as a dormitory for the monks to learn Buddhist teaching was the Sari temple. It has close relation to the Kalasan inscription in the 8th Century. It was 700 years or 778 AD (AN, an interview, 10 July 2023)”

The King also gave additional present, namely land in Kalasan Village for maintaining the temple. This important moment was immortalized in the inscription witnessed by royal officials such as Pangkur, Tawan, and Tirip. The place built for worshiping the Goddess Tara was Kalasan Temple. While the place for the monks to stay was Sari Temple. It was built dedicated to the monks who gathered and studied about Buddhist Religion. In other words, it became a dormitory or a living place for them. It was the story of the Sari Temple establishment. The layanan budayahistory about this temple also still continued until the temple was found. Based on the documentation of Dinas Kebudayaan Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta (Cultural Authorities of the Special Region of Yogyakarta), The Sari temple was firstly found at the beginning of the 20th Century in a very damaged condition. It was stated that the recent form of Sari Temple was the result of restoration done
by The Ancient Agency in 1929-1930. The restoration of The Sari Temple was done by the Ancient Agency named ODE (Oudheidkundige Dienst). It was led by an archaeologist from the Netherlands named A.J. Bernet Kempers. After the restoration, the Sari Temple was not complete yet because there were some missing parts, especially the parts not made of woods. As the documentation of Institute for Preservation of Cultural Heritage Yogyakarta’s website presented that the restoration was imperfect because there were many missing temple stones. Those were at the foot part or alley surrounding the temple, display booth jutting out from the front wall, and some roof stupas, carvings or decorations. Therefore, the original stones which were not found had to be replace by plain stones.

![Figure 2. Bodhisattvas’ reliefs](image)

The condition above made the restorer get much difficulties in restoring the Sari Temple. He wanted to complete all the missing stones by adding with others. However, he had to eliminate all of his fantasy so that people who saw it, see it, and will see it never get deceived by the temple shaper restored by his desire. So, he only put the parts he truly knew that they had to be placed in that place not in other location. It was still possible if he wanted to give additional part as long as he did not change the real construction of the temple. There should be no mistake in restoring the temple so that it would not be fake in figure. This problem required the restorer to meet some very difficult requirements towards the beauty, responsibility, and experience in restoration. The Sari temple had been cultivated to have closely similar construction to the original one. This was done by the new decoration parts which was considered as important parts such as antefixes. However, these parts were only manifested and the carvings were only drawn in a grainy way. Therefore, there were still antefixes undone because of the condition. It was not because the Sari temple was incomplete yet in decoration but the way the restorer in restoring the temple did. As The Ancient Agency believed that the restorer had to be careful to avoid falsification of the temple’s shape. The next term the researcher identified in this study was the reliefs of The Sari Temple. Based on the data collected from the interview and documentation, there are four types of reliefs existed at this temple. Those reliefs are carved at every niche of the temple. Those reliefs are Bodhisattvas, *suluran*, *kumuda*, and *kinara-kinari*. Most of the reliefs shapes are statues. The first relief is Bodhisattvas. Bodhisattvas are Buddhist’s Gods. There are many reliefs shaped as Bodhisatva’s figures. There are 36 Bodhisattva’s reliefs seen at the Sari Temple. They are sculpted as dancers. They look so beautiful because they are looked so gracefully. Those Bodhisattvas reliefs are divided into some forms. Based on the document, the first form was
about a bearded dancing man. The second one were more than one big Bodhisattva reliefs. There was also a relief of a man having five snakes in his head. The last one was a relief of a woman which was known as God Kwan Yin for Buddhists. The most interesting one was that all of those Bodhisattva reliefs are acting *tribhangga*. It is a stance which is used in traditional Indian fine arts and classical Indian dance. In brief, all of the reliefs whether those are man statues or woman statues reliefs represent the Buddhist Gods named Bodhisattvas. Here is the view of Bodhisattvas’ reliefs as show in Figure 2.

The second relief is called *Suluran*. It is in Bahasa Indonesia. It is called tendrils in English. The Sari Temple also has this form of reliefs. It is about creeping plant with a repeating curl pattern alternating directions. These reliefs are sculpted at the upper part of each side of the temple. They are common decoration at every temple in Indonesia. They are used to beautify the temple itself. The next relief is called *Kumuda*. another relief existed at The Sari Temple is named *kumuda*. This relief is about plant motifs of buds’ lotus form coming out of the pot. The documentation result showed that this *kumuda* relief was considered to symbolize purity or chastity. It also had symbolized meaning to give additional sacred values of The Sari Temple. The last relief is *Kinara-Kinari*. These reliefs are formed half human and half bird. Their heads were formed human and their body were formed bird. Those reliefs were carved at the temple’s wall and beautify it. As a heavenly creature, the finding was also in line with the documentation found. These reliefs were about two relief shapes, *kinara* and *kinari* which symbolized faithfulness. Kinara kinari relief is show in Figure 2. Based on the history and reliefs of The Sari temple, the researcher identified three Buddhist values about *sila* found in them. Based on the research findings above, it could be summarized the Buddhist values found based on the Sari Temple’s history and reliefs on the Table 1.

**Table 1. Buddhist Values Identified**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Samma Sankappa (Right Mind)</th>
<th>Samma Kammanta (Right Action)</th>
<th>Samma Vaca (Right Words)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compassion</td>
<td>Faithfulness</td>
<td>Honesty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolerance</td>
<td>Well organized</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Harmony</td>
<td>Cooperativeness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Base on Table 1, The first *sila* found from this Sari Temple was about the right mind. It is called *samma sankappa* in Pali language. There are two values found of this Buddhist values namely compassion and tolerance. 1.) Compassion, the right action found was about compassion. The history of the Sari temple told about Buddhism it means that this religion
taught about love and compassion. This value was from the Bodhisattva statue reliefs which gave this lesson for human being. It means that the Bodhisattva reliefs told a Buddhist value about affection and compassion. 2.) Tolerance/ Religious Harmony, another Buddhist values about right mind found at The Sari temple was religious harmony or tolerance. The Sari Temple as a Buddhist temple is located near to Prambanan temple which is a Hindu Temple. Based on this fact, the value we can get was about religious harmony or tolerance. This data was gathered from the interview done by the interview. The Buddhist values found from the reliefs temple was *samma kammanta* or right action. There are some values belong to this Buddhist values. 1.) Faithfulness, the value belongs to this Buddhist values was faithfulness. It was identified on the reliefs at the Sari Temple. It was faithfulness coming from *kinara kinari* reliefs. These reliefs told about fidelity. Faithfulness belongs to Buddhist values because it belongs to right action. The right minds of people who built the Sari Temple lead them to have right actions. 2.) Well organized, here is another right action we get from the history of the temple. It was called well-planned or well-organized. It was found when the societies built the temple. They need to plan and organize how to build the temple so that it would be as strong as we can enjoy at present. 3.) Cooperativeness, another Buddhist value found at The Sari Temple was named cooperativeness. It also belongs to *samma kammanta* or right action. When The King asked his people to build a sacred building, they work together to make what their King asked. In constructing an enormous building must need many people to cooperate. 4.) Unit, Buddhist value is not far from unity. So the value found at the Sari Temple also contained unity. It was found in the process of building the temple. The interviewee said that unity also identified. The informant believed that in the past, people make what their King told as a dharma or duty for them. The last Buddhist values found based on the history and reliefs of the Sari Temple was *samma vaca* in Pali language or can be called right words in English. The writer only found a value for the *samma vaca* namely honesty. The value was identified in the process of The Sari Temple’s restoration. Although it did not include to the history of The Sari Temple building, it took history part of the discovery and the restoration process. When restorers did their work in restoring this temple, they need to be honest in reconstructing the form of the temple. As we know that The Sari Temple’s condition was very damaged and collapse when it was discovered, so there needed some restorers to rebuilt the temple so that it could be as similar as the original form of this temple. The interview result showed the right words value about honesty.

**Discussion**

The findings described previously will be discussed in this section compared to the relevant theories dealing with Buddhist values based at the Sari Temple. Those are *samma sankappa* (right mind), *samma kammanta* (right action), and *samma vaca* (right words). There were not much information or data described the history of The Sari Temple. However, the certain thing found that this temple was built at the same time with Kalasan Temple’s construction in the 8th Century of the reign of Syailendra Dynasty by the King Rakai Panangkaran’s request to build a sacred place to worship God Tara and a monastery for Buddhist monks. This information was encouraged by a documentation from previous study. Hence, the construction of the Sari Temple had a strong relation with the construction of The Kalasan Temple (Siswanto et al., 2020). It is because the Sari temple was built to be the place for monks and The Kalasan Temple was the sacred place to worship God. Based on the history and reliefs above, there are three Buddhist values found. Those are as follows:
**Samma Sankappa (Right Mind)**

There are two values belong to the *samma sankappa* values namely compassion and tolerance or religious harmony. Compassion is someone’s action where she or he can feel what other people feel. This value is found at the history and relief of the Sari Temple. It belongs to right mind or *samma sankappa*. Previous studies believed that when someone has such minds with no will to endanger others and always help others to avoid suffering is called *samma sankappa* (Endraswara, 2013; Subandi, 2018). The explanation leads compassion to be one of Buddhist value named the right mind since it is about someone’s feeling to keep others safe. The second value belongs to the right mind is tolerance. Tolerance or religious harmony also includes to Buddhist value namely *samma sankappa* or the right mind. As the compassion belongs to the same Buddhist values, so as the tolerance does. It is because this value also the result of minds in understanding all of the things. As other study stated that right mind means free from greed, hatred, inner surrender, lust, bad will, and cruelty that could be embodied by developing compassion to all creatures (Yatno, 2020). Therefore, by having tolerance to other religions, those prohibitions can be avoided.

**Samma Kammanta (Right Action)**

There are four values belong to *samma kammanta*. The first one is faithfulness. It was got from the symbol of kinara and kinari. Previous study believes that this relief is about a pair of character told to be the Gods’ entertainers in heaven and symbolizes harmony and faith (Setiawan, 2019). This value belongs to Buddhist value because it is one of good deed by not hurting and harming self or other creatures. Hence, faithfulness belongs to *samma kammanta* or right action. The next one is well organized. It is arranged and organized in a unity. This value belongs to Buddhist value named the right action or *samma kammanta*. Since well-organized is one of action done well before doing something, so it belongs to one of Buddhist values called *samma kammanta*. The last value is cooperativeness. Previous study in their journal stated that cooperativeness is a joint effort between someone with someone else or a group to achieve the same goals (Yulmi et al., 2017). Cooperativeness belongs to Buddhist values namely *samma kammanta* or the right action. Other study stated that a good determination should end on the right action and does not stop at the right words (Arimbawa, 2022). Since cooperativeness is an action, this can be categorized as the right action which belongs to Buddhist values called *samma kammanta*. The last value is unity, as state by previous study believed that unity refers to an agreement to unite and work together in achieving a same goal which includes self-sacrifice for the sake of the common interest and prioritize public interest over personal interest (Riyanto, 2017). This value can include to one of Buddhist value namely *samma kammanta* or the right action since people in constructing The Sari Temple implemented unity value to complete its construction.

**Samma Vaca (Right Words)**

The last Buddhist value found at the Sari Temple is called *samma vaca* in Pali language or the right words in English. One value belongs to this Buddhist value is honesty. It is about telling the truth and giving information which really happens. This honesty is also in line with other study stated at his journal in which said that the right words reflect determination to refrain from telling lies (musâvâdâ); slandering (pisunâvâcâ) which can cause hatred, disunity, and disharmony among people or groups; rude remarks, rough, impolite, wicked, and scorn (pharusavâcâ); useless and vain conversation and gossip (samphappalâpâ) (Julia & Ati, 2019; Toharuddin, 2016). Hence, the honesty includes to the Buddhist value namely the right words or *samma vaca*. The implications of this research can
make an important contribution to the understanding of how Buddhist values influence and are infused in Buddhist tourism destinations. The research results can be a valuable source of information for researchers in the field of religious tourism studies. Additionally this research can help in identifying ways in which Buddhist values can support sustainable development in the tourism context. This can include more environmentally friendly tourism practices, ethics in tourist interactions, and protection of cultural heritage. However, this research may face difficulties in measuring and interpreting Buddhist values, as interpretations can be subjective and vary among participants, researchers, and tourists. In addition, this research may not fully explore the impact of tourism on environmental and cultural sustainability at Candi Sari. Therefore, further research is necessary to investigate these aspects in more detail.

4. CONCLUSION

The Sari Temple has four reliefs existed at the Sari Temple namely Bodhisattvas, suluran or plant ornaments, kinara-kinari reliefs. All of those reliefs are sculpted at the body of The Sari temple. Each relief existed at The Sari Temple has certain meaning. The Bodhisattvas reliefs represent Buddhists’ Gods. Suluran or plant ornaments are common decoration reliefs at every temple in Indonesia which are used to beautify the temple itself. The next one is kumuda which symbolizes purity or chastity and also has symbolized meaning to give additional sacred values of The Sari Temple. The last relief is kinara-kinari which symbolizes faithfulness between two creatures. In addition, there are three Buddhist values found at The Sari Temple, especially based on the history and reliefs of the temple. The first value is called samma sankappa (right mind), samma kammanta (right action), and samma vaca (right words). There are two values belong to samma sankappa, namely compassion and religious harmony. There are four values belong to samma kammanta, they are faithfulness, well organized, cooperativeness, and unity. The last one is samma vaca which has one value namely honesty.

5. REFERENCES


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