

FOLKLORE AND CULTURAL MEMORY: AN EXAMINATION OF PRAMBANAN TEMPLE NARRATIVES

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ABSTRACT

Indonesia is a nation rich in orally transmitted folktales that have been preserved across generations. One of the most renowned folktales is the legend of Roro Jonggrang, which is believed to underpin the existence of the largest Hindu temple in Southeast Asia, the Prambanan Temple. The story of Roro Jonggrang embodies local wisdom passed down from ancestors. Since folktales are traditionally conveyed orally, there inevitably exist differing perspectives that challenge the authenticity of the Roro Jonggrang narrative. This skepticism arises as scholars have uncovered evidence pertaining to the historical facts of Prambanan Temple. This study employs a qualitative descriptive research method, which is well-suited for systematically exploring and interpreting complex cultural phenomena. The findings reveal a comparative analysis between the folktale and historical accounts, demonstrating that the folktale is more widely accepted within the community. This acceptance is attributed to the folktale's capacity to convey religious values, cultural heritage, ethical principles, and social norms associated with Prambanan Temple.

Keywords : *Foklore, Myth, Prambanan Temple*

1. Background Research

In essence, folklore is a compound form of two words, namely folk and lore. Alan Dundes explained that folk is defined as the characteristics of physical, social, and cultural recognition that are recognized by a certain group and have been passed down from generation to generation, while lore is the folk tradition itself which is specifically passed down through oral traditions, gestures, or reminders (Pudentia, 2015). hence, in short, folklore is customs and knowledge about the people, which can be in the form of costumes, customs, beliefs, tools, as well as the arts, which are passed down from generation to generation and developed among the people.

Folklore can be classified into three groups, namely (1) verbal folklore such as folk speech, which can be detailed in the form of myths, folk songs, legends, folk questions, sayings, dialects, epithets, sayings, sentences traditional, and so on. (2) partly verbal folklore such as folk beliefs, customs, parties, and folk games. (3) non-verbal folklore, such as material folklore, craft arts, architecture, clothing, toys, and others. These folklores are compressed into three forms: (1) in oral and verbal form (mentifacts), (2) kinesiological (in the form of habits and sociofacts), and (3) material (artifacts) (Endraswara, 2009).

To distinguish it from universal culture, folklore has the following characteristics: a) is traditional; b)

distribution and inheritance are oral; c) shared (collective); d) is anonymous; e) has a function in their collective life; f) usually has the form of a formula; g) is paralogical; h) exists in different versions and even variants; and i) are generally innocent (Wiradharma et al., 2022).

Folktale is one part of folklore. Folktale is a part of folklore which is verbal folklore or oral folklore. Several forms of oral folklore that are studied by folklorists are folk songs, myths, and folktales. Not passed down from one generation to another by word of mouth. Folktale in general has declined to be conveyed to the people of Indonesia (Sims & Stephens, 2011).

In Indonesian folklore research books (the science of gossip, fairy tales, and others) it has been stated that the division of fairy tales is divided into three major categories, namely myths (mites), legends, and fairy tales (falkto) (Danandjaja, 1984). The following is the explanation:

- Mite is a folk prose story that is considered to have really happened after being considered sacred by the owner. Mites are represented by gods or demigods. The events took place in another world or not in the world as we know it today and happened in the past.
- Legend is folk prose that has characteristics similar to myths, which are considered to have actually happened but are not considered sacred. In contrast to myths, legends are characterized by humans, although sometimes they have extraordinary properties and are often assisted by magical creatures. It takes place in the world we know and where it happened not so long ago.
- Fairy tales are folk prose that those who own them really think of. Stories and fairy tales are not related to time or place (Danandjaja, 1984).

Hence, folklore is part of literary works in the form of fairy tales or other forms of stories that develop among certain

communities and are disseminated orally using their respective regional languages. Because folklore is part of a literary work, then in culture the story is included in one of the elements of culture. Folklore is one of the manifestations or thoughts of supporting community groups. Folklore is a powerful tool for learning about their cultural heritage, people's beliefs, customs, and traditions. Folklore is also used by the community to convey messages to the younger generation (Mashudi & Thoyib, 2019).

One of the well-known folktales in Indonesia is the legend of Roro Jonggrang which underlies the formation of the Prambanan Temple. Prambanan Temple is one that has elements of the story of the moral value that is well known to foreign countries (Raharjo et al., 2020). The following will be explained in detail. Main Question:

1. Located of Prambanan Temple
2. Folklore in Prambanan Temple

A. Located Prambanan Temple

The Prambanan Temple complex is located in Karangasem village, Bokoharjo sub-district, Prambanan sub-district, Sleman Regency, Special Region of Yogyakarta, which is located to the east of Yogyakarta, which has become very famous as a tourist spot (Ibrahim, 1996). The Prambanan Temple Complex is currently located in an area of the Prambanan Temple Tourism Park which covers almost 80 ha. Inside the park beside the Brahma Temple, Shiva Temple, and Wishnu Temple, there are also three temples in front of these temples which are usually referred to as Wabana temples, as well as several other small temples. Apart from these temples, the Prambanan Temple Tourism Park also includes the Lumbung, Bubrah, and Sewu temples. Adjacent to these temples around Prambanan there are still Plaosan Temple, Canqi Ratu Boko, Sari Temple, Kalasan Temple, Sojiwan Temple, and others. One of the advantages

of these temples is that each shows the characteristics of a Buddhist temple and a Hindu temple. The location of these temples which are close to each other shows a reflection of "religious harmony" which has been very prominent since the past and has become one of the characteristics of the Indonesian nation to this day (Ibrahim, 1996).

This temple has a height of 47 meters and consists of 3 complex buildings. The main temple has 3 shrines (altars) dedicated to God Trimurti. The Shiva temple is located in the center, Vishnu is to the south, and Brahma temple is to the north. It is called Shiva Temple because in the chamber of the main temple there is a statue of Lord Shiva (God of Destruction). Likewise in the Brahma and Vishnu Temples, wherein each temple there are statues of Lord Brahma (God of Guardians) and Lord Vishnu (God of Creation). All three face east. In front of each temple stands other smaller temples, called Wahana Temples, each facing west. It is called the Wahana Temple because inside the chambers of these temples there are statues of animals that are usually used as mounts/vehicles or rides for these gods. The ox Nandi is Shiva's ride, the Garuda

3. Result

A. Folktale of Roro Jonggrang

Roro Jonggrang is a legend or popular folktale originating from Central Java and Yogyakarta in Indonesia. This story tells of the love of a prince for a princess which ended with the princess being cursed due to a trick she did. This tale also explains the miraculous origin of the Sewu Temple, Prambanan Temple, Ratu Baka Palace, and the statue of Goddess Durga which was found in the Prambanan temple. Roro Jonggrang means "daughter".

It is said that in Central Java there were two warring kingdoms, namely the

bird is Vishnu's ride, and the Swan is Brahma's ride. The Prambanan Temple has reliefs carved on the balustrades. If you enter the main temple from the north, you will find a statue of a very beautiful princess, Roro Jonggrang. This statue is closely related to the story or legend that is believed by the people, which is the background to the establishment of Prambanan Temple or Roro Jonggrang Temple (Ibrahim, 1996).

2. Method

This study utilizes a qualitative descriptive research method, which is well-suited for systematically exploring and interpreting complex cultural phenomena. Specifically, this approach facilitates an in-depth analysis of both mythical elements and historical narratives contained within the folklore of the Prambanan temple. By employing this method, the research aims to uncover the underlying meanings, social functions, and cultural significance of these stories, thereby contributing to a richer understanding of the temple's heritage and its role in shaping local identity.

Pengging Kingdom and the Baka Kingdom (Some sources mention the Prambanan Kingdom). Pengging is a fertile and prosperous kingdom, led by Prabu Damar Maya. The king had a son named Raden Joko Bandung who was brave and powerful. It is said that his supernatural powers increased after he defeated a giant named Bandawasa. Upon his defeat, the giant voluntarily served Joko Bandung. Bandawasa's magical power enters Joko Bandung's body so that his supernatural powers are multiplied and he is able to rule over the jinn. After that incident, Joko Bandung's name changed to Bandung Bandawasa (Riyani, 2015).

Meanwhile, the Baka kingdom was led by a man-eating giant named Prabu

Baka. He was assisted by a governor named Gupala. Even though he came from a race of giants, King Baka had a beautiful daughter named Roro Jonggrang. To expand the kingdom, King Baka called for war on the Pengging kingdom. Battle broke out in the Pengging kingdom. As a result, many Pengging people died, suffered from hunger, and lost their property.

In order to end the war, Prabu Damar Maya sent his son to face Prabu Baka. Thanks to his supernatural powers, Bandung Bondowoso managed to defeat and kill Prabu Baka. When Patih Gupala heard the news of his lord's death, he immediately fled, returning to the Baka Kingdom. When the patih arrived at the Baka Palace, he immediately reported the news of Prabu Baka's death to Princess Roro Jonggrang. The princess also mourned the death of her father (Riyani, 2015).

After the Baka kingdom fell under Pengging rule, Prince Bandung Bondowoso invaded the Baka Palace. At his first meeting with Princess Roro Jonggrang, Bandung Bondowoso was immediately captivated by the beauty of the princess. He fell in love and proposed to the princess, but his proposal was rejected because the princess did not want to marry his father's killer and colonizer of his country. Because Bandung Bondowoso kept persuading and forcing, finally the princess agreed to be married, but with two conditions that were impossible to grant. The first requirement is the construction of a well called the Jalatunda well. The second condition is the construction of a thousand temples in just one night. Bandung Bondowoso agreed to these two conditions.

The prince succeeded in completing the Jalatunda well thanks to his supernatural powers. After the well was finished, Roro Jonggrang tried to trick the prince into going down into the well and examining it. After Bandung Bondowoso came down, the princess ordered Gupala to

close and fill up the well with stones. However, Bandung Bondowoso managed to get out by breaking into a pile of rocks thanks to his supernatural powers. Bondowoso was angry but soon calmed down because of the beauty and persuasion of the princess. To fulfill the second condition, the prince summoned spirits, jinns, demons, and ghosts from the bowels of the Earth. With the help of these spirits, the prince managed to complete 999 temples (Riyani, 2015).

When Roro Jonggrang heard that a thousand temples were almost finished, the princess tried to thwart Bondowoso's task. Roro Jonggrang, assisted by Aunt Emban (the head of the palace maid), immediately woke up the palace ladies and women from the village to start pounding rice while hitting the pestle on the mortar so that the roosters would crow so that people would think that morning had come. He also ordered that the mounds of straw be burned on the east side to make it look like the dawn. Thinking that morning has arrived and soon the sun will rise, the spirits run in fear and hide back into the bowels of the Earth.

They left before completing one more temple. As a result, only 999 temples were successfully built and the Bandung Bondowoso effort failed. Bandung Bandawasa was suspicious when he saw the dawn on the eastern horizon, which gradually got darker. With the strength he had, he went to the east of Prambanan. There, Bandung Bandawasa saw the youths burning wood and haystacks. After learning that all of this was the result of deception and deception, Roro Jonggrang waved her arm at the dozens of young men in front of her so they fell and died.

Then Bandung Bandawasa went to the temple building, which was less than one in number, to complete his task. But when I got there it was already morning. Bandung Bandawasa stood straight in front of Roro Jonggrang, his teeth grinding with anger. With his anger he cursed Roro

Jonggrang to turn into stone. The princess turns into the most beautiful statue to complete the final temple (Widhi Astuti, 2021).

B. Analysis Original History

The naming of the cluster of temples in Prambanan is mentioned by various names. Starting from the word that is commonly known, namely 'Prambanan', then 'Rara Jonggrang' whose name is based on a legend that is known to the public. And the last is 'Siwagraha' or 'Siwalaya'. This is a naming based on an Old Javanese inscription that dates to 778 Saka. However, the three names all still refer to one building, namely the Prambanan Temple building (Pramumijoyo et al., 2009).

The naming of a temple building is known in at least three ways, namely based on the naming found in the inscriptions, naming based on the location of the findings, and naming based on the mention by the local community. In early times - possibly from a spelling mistake - European travelers referred to it as Brambanam or sometimes Brambanang (Pramumijoyo et al., 2009).

The naming of 'Prambanan' has yet to receive a satisfactory explanation. Groneman called it Parambanan which comes from the word ramban which means to collect leaves (Sparavigna, 2017). Meanwhile, J. Crawford said that this word comes from the word parabrahmana which means the place where the Brahmins live. But the explanation so far remains in doubt (Florisan & Jordan, 2009).

Another opinion that seems more acceptable is that of Soekarno based on the contents of the Poh inscription. In the inscription, there is mention of a villager around Wanua Poh named Dhanada. He comes from Wanua Pangramwan and belongs to the Wadihati sima. The Poh inscription contains a number of ancient toponyms around Prambanan in 827 Saka.

This inscription was found in the Plembonese hamlet, Prambanan. The name Pangramwan is then thought to be the forerunner of the name Prambanan with the addition of the suffix -an. Considering that in the area around Prambanan there are still a number of ancient toponyms that are relatively in accordance with current conditions. Such as Kelurak (Kalumwarak), Cepit (Hinapit), Taji (Tajigunung), Ijo (Hijo) and many others (Resiyani, 2010). Interestingly the word Pangramwan is a word that comes from the word ramwan which means raft boat (Zoetmulder, 1983).

The mention of the name Rara Jonggrang is even more famous because of the writings of J.W I Jzerman and Thomas Sir Raffles who adopted it from a legend that developed in the area around Prambanan in the result that it is widely known among European antiquarians. Like N.J. Krom, who often uses the term Rara Jonggrang in his various writings. Basically, the use of the name Rara Jonggrang is more based on the exoticism in the legend. The female character named Rara Jonggrang in this legend is transformed into the last of the thousand temples required for Bandung Bondowoso (Pramumijoyo et al., 2009).

It is not known who laid the first stone for the construction of this temple. Based on the descriptive description in the Siwagraha inscription, it is now stored in the Jakarta National Museum with no. inventory D 28, implicitly shows that the building was completed or at least completely complete when it was inaugurated in 778 Saka (856 AD). Seeing the size of the temple complex raises an argument that Prambanan Temple was built long before 856 AD. Even Dumarcay believes that Prambanan Temple was built within 24 years, namely between 832 AD and completion in 856 AD. Although this opinion is still doubtful (Dumarcay & Smithies, 1991).

An in-depth description of the Siwagraha inscription is obtained in the writings of Casparis, a Dutch historian. J.G. Casparis divides the contents of the Siwagraha inscription into two important parts. First, is the part related to the construction of temple buildings (dharma) which is found in verses 11 to 23. Second, is the part related to the inauguration and determination of the sima land which took place on Thursday Wage, the 11th of the month Margasira, 778 Saka at the same time the inauguration of the god area (de Casparis, 1956).

Casparis also describes three points that support the chronology of the history of the Prambanan temple in the inscription, namely:

- The language is an example of the oldest inscriptions dated, in ancient Javanese.
- It contains very important historical materials or events from the mid-IX century AD. '
- The inscription also mentions in detail the "temple cluster" (de Casparis, 1956).

Based on the description of the temple, Prambanan Temple was built around the middle of the 9th century AD at the same time that there was a power struggle between the Sailendra dynasty, namely Balaputra Dewa, and the revival of the Sanjaya Dynasty by Rakai Pikatan, the son-in-law of King Samaratungga (Florisan & Jordan, 2009). The battle took place on the Ratu Boko plateau. Balaputra was utterly defeated and fled to Sumatra. The consolidation of the Rakai Pikatan family then became the beginning of a new era. To commemorate this, it is necessary to inaugurate it with the construction of a large group of temples. Unfortunately, the description of the construction of the temple as mentioned is not clear. Furthermore, Casparis tried to divide it into two parts, namely the part related to the construction of these buildings and the part related to the inauguration and the determination of the fiefdom. In the inscription, it is stated that after a state of

peace the king ordered to build of dharma. This dharma probably means the whole cluster of temples, according to Casparis's interpretation (Ibrahim, 1996).

Regarding the term Sanjaya dynasty, it was first introduced by a historian named Dr. Bosch in his book entitled "Sriwijaya, de Syailendrawamsa en de Sanjayawamsa (1952). He mentioned the existence of two ruling dynasties in the Medang kingdom, namely the Sanjaya dynasty and the Sailendra dynasty (Dwinanto, 2015).

C. Analysis The Value of Folktale

Folktale is one example of a culture that has been passed down from the ancestors of the Indonesian nation. However, there are some folktales that are more predominately believed by the public than the original history. This happens because folktales are more often told by the public. For example the folktale Roro Jonggrang, the story of the formation of the Prambanan temple, people are more familiar with the fairy tale. While it's history, only a handful of people know. This can lead to the death of an expert, because when people who know the original history talk about the real story, people will experience confusion between folktale and origin history.

However, it cannot be denied that folktale has an important role in society. Such as first is to provide education to the people and a note of discipline to the very young children. These provide morals to ridicule laziness, rebelliousness snobbishness. The second function is that it serves to validate culture and justify its rituals and institutions to those who perform and observe them. The third function is, there are in every cultural word the social norms and customs have been highlighted altogether. The fourth function is, it keeps social solidarity and social interaction in the entire community (Bhattacharjee et al., 2016).

In history, folklore, and folktale oral traditions can be an aided source in reconstructing a society with scarce written evidence. The equal value of the oral source of history with written records. The sources encode vast knowledge about the past (Vansina, 1965). Folklore is a tradition or practice that is shared orally or through speech- usually handed down from generation to generation and eventually written down, to tell about the society and the people who originated someplace and allowed history to be kept and shared by groups who do or did not have writing (Vijayakumari, 2018).

Folktales must be accompanied by original history because both are important. Folklore was subjected to reflection and reinterpretation where it was religious and philosophical in nature and to verification and experimentation where it dealt with more mundane problems. In the process, it often got transformed. Memorization is important. Legends and myths regarding supernatural and natural phenomena also emanated from the oral tradition (Dube, 1988). Oral traditions contain cultural information about the past carefully preserved and handed down from generation to generation within a tribe. Oral tradition has been a universal form of

historical consciousness, which usually operated alongside writing (Vijayakumari, 2018).

3. Conclusion

Based on the foregoing discussion, it can be concluded that:

1. The narrative of Roro Jonggrang, associated with the construction of Prambanan Temple, constitutes a folktale that embodies the collective memory of the community. This story continues to be preserved and transmitted across generations due to the moral values it imparts, which serve to enhance societal awareness regarding virtuous conduct.
2. The historical evidence indicates that Prambanan Temple was constructed around the mid-9th century AD, during a period characterized by a political power struggle between the Sailendra dynasty, represented by Balaputra Dewa, and the revival of the Sanjaya dynasty under Rakai Pikatan, the son-in-law of King Samaratungga.

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