



get to know

Borobudur

our ancestor's legacy, now the world's heritage

By its architectural majesty, technical mastery and sheer size, Borobudur always evokes awe and grandeur and as a World Heritage Site, Borobudur is renowned and admired in Indonesia and throughout the world.

BREATHTAKING LANDSCAPE

The landscape of Borobudur is indeed naturally breathtaking. Borobudur was built in the 8th and 9th century in Kedu Plain, in Magelang Regency in Central Java. Flanked by a long chain of lush Menoreh Hills and distant majestic volcanoes, intersected by two main rivers and their tributaries. It is surrounded by natural forests, rice fields and plantations.



MAGNIFICENT MONUMENT

Borobudur is the world's single biggest Buddhist monument, but it is not a solitary monument in the landscape.

It is believed that once, more than 2,000 '*candis*' or temple monuments graced the plains and beyond.

Recent research has currently identified the existence of at least 288 Hindu and Buddhist temple remains in Central Java and Yogyakarta Special Region alone.

Preservation and research efforts have been active since the 19th Century, with most probably over a thousand of archaeological, scientific or academic papers and dissertations have been written about Borobudur.

Externally, the visible part of this colossal monument comprises five ascending stepped square-terraces surmounted by three circular terraces bearing 72 stupas and dominated by a great central stupa.

One of the key features of the monument is the balustrades that run along the outer perimeter of each of the square-terraces, which together with the walls of the next elevated terrace on the other side, form a relatively narrow open corridor.

These walls and balustrades are decorated with 1,460 narrative and 1,212 decorative carved reliefs, totalling 2,672 individual panels, covering a total surface area of 2,500 square meters. The narrative panels have a total length of 3,000m.



Each side of the square-terrace faces each of the four main cardinal directions and the tops of the balustrades are decorated with outward-facing carved niches, each with a Buddha statue with a specific *mudra* or hand gesture.

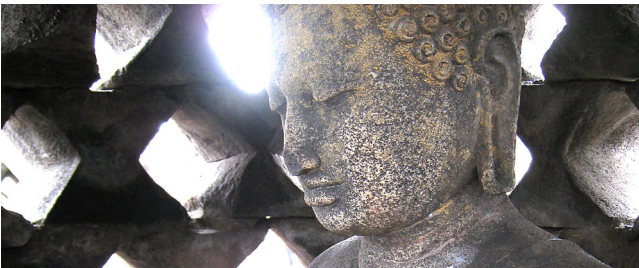
On the balustrades of the first terrace there are 104 niches with 104 statues, the second 104, the third 88, the fourth 72 and the fifth 64, making a total of 432 niches with 432 large cross-legged Buddha statues.



The three circular terraces are open with no balustrade.



On the first and second circular terraces there are 32 and 24 hollow stupas respectively with diamond-shape perforations (***Stupa Jala***), again each housing a Buddha statue. On the third terrace, there are 16 stupas housing Buddha statues with a checkerboard perforation (***Stupa Stapada***). In total, there are 72 stupas with 72 life-size Buddha statues.



The great central stupa (***Stupa Dharmakaya***) with a base diameter of 10m is built at the top of this magnificent monument.



Borobudur's base footprint covers an area of 123m X 123m, with the highest point of the monument measure 35m above the ground level.

BOROBUDUR AS *PIWULANG*: AS EDUCATIONAL INSTRUCTIONS, TEACHINGS OR LESSONS

Borobudur's external appearance is not the only nor the most remarkable aspect about it.

A decade ago, *Bumi Borobudur*, a local team of researchers in Indonesia, commenced an intensive study of Borobudur, focused on its features, values and teachings.

Almost all of the 1,460 narrative reliefs have now been successfully identified and matched with the relevant texts and *sutras*.

As a result of this process of identification, perhaps for the first time in recent history, we can now recognize and understand Borobudur more fully in terms of its values and teachings.

Borobudur's physical manuscript which was originally used as a design blueprint to build the monument may have perished or been lost because historically most manuscripts were written on palm leaves.



However, this identification allowed confirmation that all of the reliefs of Borobudur are in fact the real and genuine *Borobudur Manuscript*, ‘written’ and engraved in stone.

There are many relevant texts and sutras still extant now, in various languages around the world, which are the ‘parallel’ or derivative manuscripts identifiable with Borobudur reliefs.

It is therefore clear that all of the narrative reliefs of Borobudur are actually a series of various Buddhist sutras and texts presented using carved stone as media.

These reliefs, together with the statues and stupas of Borobudur were chosen, designed and carved deliberately, intentionally and sequentially created following specific order, in stages with specific purposes.

On the ground floor, there are 160 reliefs of ‘*Karmavibhanga*’ which are now mostly covered by encircling platform of stone wall buttress. They are the teachings on ‘*Ngunduh wohing pakarti*’ – You reap what you sow.



The 54 sections show an exposition of the causality between actions and their consequences. Laying the foundation for a skilful and intelligent life, morally and ethically disciplined way of life without harming others.



On the next levels, the *Jataka* and *Avadana* on the first floor with 620 reliefs and on the second floor with 100 reliefs, featuring teachings on ‘*Migunani tumpraping liyan*’ – Way of living to benefit others.



With caring and altruistic attitude, to live with motivation and determination to always be better, developing a meaningful way of life so that it can bring more benefit for others.



The *Lalitavistara Sutra* on the first-floor, 120 reliefs. Presentation of this single Sutra on this floor is about ‘*Kiprah Pamungkas*’ – The finale to the extensive deeds. Showing the manifestations of the result and fulfilment of a vast array of beneficial activities, culminating in the turning of the wheel of Teaching.



The largest sutra chosen in the teachings of Borobudur is the ***Gandavyuha Sutra***, carved in total of 460 reliefs, showing practices to achieve perfection of wisdom and liberating skills which make it possible to realize the highest potential of human life.

Carved on the second-floor in 128 reliefs, are carvings of the opening chapter and the chapters of ***Gandavyuha Sutra*** on '***Kalyanamitra – Mitra Andalan***' – Reliable friends.



On the third-floor, 176 reliefs and on the fourth-floor balustrade, 84 panels, form the main body of ***Gandavyuha Sutra*** with a purpose: '***Memayu hayuning bawana***' – Cultivating the enabling conditions to experience the ultimate reality of peaceful awakening.



And the final chapter of ***Gandavyuha Sutra*** is carved on the fourth floor in 72 reliefs, known as '***Bhadracarya-pranidhana***' – Aspirations to live in accord with universal goodness.



Borobudur was built to benefit the community at large by showing teachings to be used as a guide and to provide direction to life. Promoting the cultivation of family and society that is ethical, tolerant, harmonious and respectful to each other. A skilled way of living: a life full of sensitivity towards others by fostering a caring, meaningful and of benefit to others. And thus, realizing the opportunity to reach the highest potential of human life, perfecting the ability to know what really exists and ultimately experiencing peaceful and fully awakened existence.



BOROBUDUR IS A COMPLETE MAP TO REACH THE HIGHEST POTENTIAL OF HUMAN LIFE.





experience Borobudur discover more

Central Java is one of Indonesia's cultural heartlands, where art in all its forms have been an integral part of the community's way of life and tradition for centuries. Ancient ceremonies, celebrations and festivals with traditional music and dancing are still regularly conducted in local villages.

Traditional and contemporary arts and crafts abound, from stone carvings to indigo batik, paintings, sculptures, stained-glass arts to mention just a few.

Many hiking trails are available with spectacular views of nature interspersed with glimpses of local life in the traditional Javanese villages.

Other activities, such as river rafting or tubing on River Elo, touring on off-road Jeep, open-top car, or even horse-drawn 'delman' are popular.

The surrounding villages of Borobudur are always welcoming to visitors, sharing their delicious fresh food or showing their traditional crafts like making clay pots or bean curds. Various type of rural retreats are on offer, ranging from homestays to forest resorts.

Traditional local culinary delicacies are worth tasting. It is quintessentially traditional Javanese cooking which is always tasty and fresh.

Borobudur is particularly spectacular during sunrise or sunset. There are many accommodation options located near Borobudur, from the most luxurious 5-star hotels, to boutique villas, traditional hotels, inns, or friendly homestays.