

Research Article

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Making Borobudur a Buddhist Religious Tourist Destination: an Effort to Preserve Buddhist Temples in Indonesia

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Abstract: Borobudur Temple is designated as one of the new excellent destinations by the government in an effort to increase foreign exchange. In line with the increasing number of visitors to the Borobudur Temple, it also increased the threat to the sustainability of the site. This research is conducted to provide alternative solutions for the management of Borobudur temple that pay attention to its sustainability. Data used are from various published and unpublished research results. Content analysis with interpretive approach is used to analyze the research data. The change of management paradigm of Borobudur Temple becomes a must. The paradigm of sustainable tourism is an appropriate alternative if applied in the largest Buddhist temple in the world. Changing the theme of heritage tourism destinations into heritage tourism destinations, spiritual and religious will help the sustainability of Borobudur Temple. As a site related to Buddhism, its sustainability is a shared responsibility of Buddhists.

Keywords: Buddhist Religious Tourist Destination, Spirituality of Tourist Destinations, Sustainable Tourism, Spiritual Tourism, Religious Tourism

Introduction

The tourism sector is a mainstay for foreign exchange earnings in many countries (Tribunnews.com 2016). Foreign tourists view tourist destinations as one of the

main attractions of tourism. To remain a world tourist destination, the Indonesian government continues to develop several new tourist destinations besides Bali (Ibo 2015; indopos.com 2015; Ruli 2015; tempo.co 2015). Increasing the number of foreign tourist visits is the main goal of developing tourism destinations. The Indonesian government targets 20 million inbound tourists by the end of 2019 (Widianto 2016).

Borobudur Temple is a very extraordinary religious site owned by Indonesia. As the largest Buddhist temple in the world, the site should be managed specifically. However, until now the site has been managed like an ordinary historical tourist destination. The Government of Indonesia has included Borobudur Temple into 15 excellence tourist destinations. This should be a serious concern of Buddhists, especially Buddhists in Indonesia. This very valuable temple site is very vulnerable. Visitors who increase over time are not always in line with site maintenance. The main focus is the preservation of Buddhist sites that are more than a thousand years old. For example, the process of making a Red Bull drink advertisement that has stepped on the Stupa, has become one of the threats of sustainability of the Buddhist site (Fitriana 2016a, 2016b; Fizriyani 2016). Another case that has been considered commonplace is trying to touch the hands of one of the Buddha statues inside the stupa. This erroneous myth has prompted many visitors to touch it (solopos.com 2016).

Tourism, when only focused on the number of visitors, will ignore the sustainability of tourist destinations. One of the negative impacts of tourism especially for heritage tourism is the damage caused by overcapacity. The data in Table 1 shows an increase in the number of tourists visiting Borobudur temple from 2009 to 2016 and it shows the Borobudur Temple is managed as a mass tourism destination.

Borobudur Temple was even proposed to be a Mecca of Buddhists by Rizal Ramli who at that time served as coordinating minister (Antara 2015; Oni 2015). Borobudur

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Table 1. Number of Tourists by Tourism Object and Tourist Origin

Year	Tourists Type	Borobudur Temple	Mendut and Pawon Temple
2009	Domestic	2368196	5444
	Foreign	146975	49784
2010	Domestic	2261081	4008
	Foreign	147372	49567
2011	Domestic	1957711	3133
	Foreign	228570	53328
2012	Domestic	2827837	2504
	Foreign	186256	65147
2013	Domestic	3145800	1291
	Foreign	217963	82731
2014	Domestic	3157166	944
	Foreign	241814	77197
2015	Domestic	3392993	674
	Foreign	185394	66377
2016	Domestic	3594684	1492
	Foreign	200616	73676

Source: Badan Pusat Statistik (2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016).

Temple is even proposed to be reused as a Buddhist temple for 3 days a week (viva.co.id 2015). The offer was a government stimulus to increase the number of visitors. Borobudur Temple is expected to be a special attraction for Buddhists, to be able to carry out religious activities on sacred and magnificent sites.

Exploitation of excessive Borobudur Temple becomes a serious concern. The purpose of this study is to provide a study of the development of Borobudur Temple as a tourist destination associated with spiritual and religious tourism.

Methods

This research is based on a literature review. The literature reviewed in this study includes published research results and which are not widely publicized. Data is collected by making in-depth observations on the main themes.

Results

Tourism and Philosophy of Tourism

From a philosophical point of view, tourism can be said to be an interrelated process and supports the movement of tourists. The process includes efforts to fulfill the

expectations of tourists through various community activities that have multiplier effects on society, the environment and the sustainability of tourism itself (Azahari 2017). Tourism certainly can be defined in various ways from a philosophical point of view. Goeldner and Ritchie (2012 p. 5) defines tourism as a process that involves activities, the results of relationships and interactions of various parties such as tourism suppliers, host stakeholders, tourists, and the surrounding environment related to activities to attract and accommodate visitors. The time limit for living outside of the ordinary territory and other activities other than vacation destinations can be said to be another definition of tourism (Goeldner & Ritchie 2012).

At first tourism is only intended for the fulfillment of human pleasure without limit. The number of tourists visiting becomes a very important factor in measuring the success of tourism activities. Human control over nature is so dominant in mass tourism. Activities undertaken as an effort to increase tourist attraction sometimes exploit nature and other social environment. This stage is mostly based on natural tourism.

Saturation led to a major shift in the pattern of tourist consumption. Creative tourism becomes an alternative choice of tourists to meet the needs of tourism. Shopping, creative events, festivals and other activities transition from tangible tourism that focuses primarily on nature's

5's (Sun, Sex, Sights, Savings, and Servility) to the 3's intangible tourism (Spirituality, Serenity, Sustainability) (Azahari 2015; Bowler 2014; Crick 1989). The 3's no longer count the number of tourists as in the stage of mass tourism. This stage makes tourism more "classy" and "premium". Tourists also contribute greatly in the New 3's so it can be said as participatory-based tourism. Shifting the needs of tourists in traveling, from seekers of pleasure to seekers of tranquility has made humans increasingly in tune with nature.

Spiritual Tourism, Religious Tourism, Pilgrimage Tourism

Religious tourism and pilgrimage tours are often considered the same as spiritual tourism. In fact, these three types of spiritual and religious tourism have fundamental differences. Religious tourism deals with religion, to increase one's faith (*srada*) and sometimes has a relationship with a religious ritual. For example religious tourism such as people who visit the place of worship only for sightseeing or coupled with worship. While the pilgrimage is a journey of worship as written in the holy book of a religion such as *Tipitaka* scriptures, Koran and other. Pilgrimage involves a more fundamental and essential faith belief. It is also regarded as the fulfillment of the inner needs associated with one's religion. Visiting Bodhgaya for Buddhists and Hajj for Muslims is an example of a pilgrimage activity. Spiritual tourism has a very broad scope, even including pilgrimage tours, religious tours, and various other religious activities. Spiritual tourism contributes to the sustainability of heritage tourism such as promoting beautiful places and protecting religion. In addition, spiritual tourism enhances exchange and socio-economic development (Azahari 2015).

Spiritual Tourism, Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage Tourism cannot be separated because each has an interconnected area. But the main concept can be distinguished on the intentions of tourists who visit. Vesak celebrations in Bodhgaya can be classified as pilgrimage tourism for Buddhists. But for non-Buddhist travelers, who come only to witness the ritual of the procession even for a photography work, Vesak celebrations in Bodhgaya can be classified as mere spiritual tourism. Buddhist tourists with the motivation of just sightseeing and praying without understanding what to do in that place according to scripture can be classified as religious tourist.

The characteristics of spiritual and religious tourist destinations are very unique and different from other tourist destinations. Tourist intentions to visit spiritual tourism destinations are influenced by other factors such

as references from spiritual teachers (Poria et al. 2003). This will be closely related to the knowledge of tourists about the spirituality itself. Buddhists have two perspectives in viewing a situation that is a worldly perspective and a Buddhist perspective. The worldly perspective can be said to be a way of understanding social phenomena by using the construction of a person's cognitive reality in ordinary social situations. The Buddhist perspective is the way a Buddhist sees and understands the world from the Buddhist viewpoint (Karmapa 2008).

Cohen (2003) divides tourists into four's classifications based on the purpose of visiting tourist and religious destinations, namely: (1) seekers, tourists who intend to visit spiritual and religious destinations and secular tourist destinations; (2) lotus-eaters, tourists who only intend to visit secular tourist destinations; (3) pilgrims, tourists who only intend to visit spiritual and religious destinations; and (4) accidental tourists, tourists who happen to visit spiritual and religious destinations and secular tourist destinations.

The image of spiritual and religious tourism destinations is very important and concern for tourists in the classification of seekers and pilgrims. However, lotus-eating and accidental tourists still consider the image of a spiritual and religious tourist destination is important. Spiritual and religious tourists can simultaneously enjoy other tourist attractions that become one package or even just as a complement.

Nevertheless, fulfillment spiritual needs with spiritual activities and religious rituals can be said to be one of the unique spiritual and religious tourist destinations. A spiritual and religious tourism destination usually has its own peculiarity compared to other destinations. For example in Buddhism, the activity which is said to be a spiritual journey to places considered sacred (*Dharma Yatra*) has been started since the Buddha *Mahaparinirvana*.

Hermawan *et al.* (Hermawan et al. 2016) proves the spirituality of tourist destinations will be able to increase the intention of visiting tourists on spiritual and religious tourism destinations. Tourists will have a high intention to visit a spiritual tourism destination when their judgment on the spirituality of the destination is as expected (Hermawan et al. 2017). The intention to visit Borobudur Temple tourism destination will be greater if tourists have the assessment or perception that the spiritual tourism destination has a high spiritual value.

Several previous studies have shown that spiritual and religious motives are not the only reasons tourists visit spiritual and religious tourism destinations (Hughes et al. 2013; Kartal et al. 2015; Shackley 1998; Timothy & Olsen 2006; Vukonic 1998). Borobudur Temple is not only

a spiritual tourist destination but also an educational tourist destination. Tourists, of course, can get additional benefits such as knowledge related to the temple. A study conducted by Choe, Blazey and Mitas (2013) shows that tourists can get the opportunity to learn about various Buddhist cultures and lifestyles by visiting Buddhist religious sites. In line with the new paradigm in tourism that provides added value in the form of sensations, more personal experiences and more special. Merging spiritual and religious tours with other types of tourism becomes an alternative to increase the intention of visiting foreign tourists to spiritual and religious tourism destinations. Poria, Butler, and Airey (2003) stating that the pattern of tourist visits will be related to the religious beliefs of tourists and their religious affiliations. Spirituality of the Travel Destination is perceived to provide a great stimulus to the desire to visit the spiritual and religious tourism destinations.

Borobudur Temple as Spiritual and Religious Tourist Destination

Buddhists make spiritual and religious journeys to destinations with connections to Buddha's and spiritual teachers are another form to strengthen their relationship with the Buddha himself (Naquin & Yu 1992). Sites such as the Borobudur Temple can be regarded as a sacred site or as a sacred place and a goal to travel important spiritual and religious journeys for Buddhists.

Gupta (1999) declared that the worship of the spiritual and religious travel of Buddhists is no different from ordinary tourists. The results are the main reason because the spiritual and Buddhist spiritual tourists consume the same tourist facilities while in a place of worship. A good image of a spiritual and religious tourism destination such as the Borobudur Temple becomes indispensable.

The image of Borobudur Temple as a heritage tourist destination is still inherent in the minds of domestic and foreign tourists. Positioning that has been done by the Indonesian government, that Borobudur Temple is a relic of the Buddhist kingdom in the past. Borobudur Temple was first used as a venue for vocations on May 22, 1953 (2497 BE). The activities are initiated and led by Anagarika Tee Boan An and Khoe Soe Kiam, and it becomes the starting point of Borobudur Temple as a spiritual and religious tourism destination. Until now, the national-scale Vesak ceremony is always held at the largest Buddhist temple in the world. The activities of national ceremonies certainly have an impact on the image of Borobudur temple. Borobudur Temple image shifted from heritage tourism destinations to heritage, spiritual and religious tourism

destinations. Borobudur temple can be aligned with some spiritual and religious sites of Buddhism considered sacred.

Tourism destinations related to spiritual and religious became the focus for many tourists around the world (Terzidou, 2010). Borobudur Temple has been declared a spiritual and religious tourist destination by various online media (Anne Wisman, 2017; Bernama, 2017; Zhang Dongmiao, 2017). Even the Victoria and Albert Museum (2016) entered the Borobudur temple on one of the Buddhist pilgrimage sites in the world. The recognition was obtained by the Borobudur Temple because it was considered to have provided many spiritual benefits for Buddhists (Hall, 2006).

Borobudur Temple has only been included into the category of heritage tourist destinations with buildings or places that have religious meaning, historic and artistic dimension. The distinctive feature of Buddhism inherent in the temple shows only that the kingdom which at that time reigned was a Buddhist kingdom. The majority of tourists still enjoy the beauty of Borobudur Temple from the artistic side of the physical splendor and the beauty of the art of the statue. Another attraction of Borobudur tourism destination can be seen from the Buddhology point of view, which is enjoying Borobudur Temple from the side of its religious background (Magetsari, 2016).

The surrounding community still considers the sacred and keep the Borobudur Temple as sacred, although it has not been used for worship for a long time. Community support for the celebration of Vesak Day which takes place at Borobudur Temple is another proof of proximity to Buddhism. Hindu-Buddha values are deeply rooted in the communities around Borobudur, despite being Muslim (Mu'tasim et al. 2013). Vesak Day celebration became part of the tradition for the people around Borobudur Temple without seeing the difference of religion. The community was actively involved when the Vesak procession was done by walking from Mendut Temple to Borobudur Temple. This corroborates the evidence that the Borobudur Temple is a spiritual and religious object.

There is still much debate about the sacred of a place to be said to be a spiritual and religious tourism destination of Buddhism. Some people view Buddhist temples as sacred sites even though they have become tourist destinations. On the other hand, some still believe that Buddhist spiritual and religious tourism destinations are only those listed in the *Mahaparinibbana Sutta* as part of the *Tipitaka* scriptures. A Buddhist is expected to be able to visit 4 (four) major places in Buddhism once in a lifetime. These places are related to four major events in Buddhism. These places are where the Tathagata was

born, where the Tathagata attained enlightenment, where the Tathagata first turned the wheel of dharma, and where Tathagata realized Mahaparinirvana. In its development, a place considered a Buddhist or sacred spiritual and religious tourism destination, in addition to 4 (four) places spelled out in *Tipitaka* scriptures, is another place that has the *sāriira-dhatu* of the Buddha. Borobudur temple is currently being used as a place to perform Buddhist rituals. Another event in addition to the National Vesak is *Kagyud Monlam* Indonesia. In 2015 the Tipitaka Chanting at Asalha Puja became another annual agenda.

Hall (2006) trying to compile a hierarchy of spiritual and religious destinations in Buddhism. This hierarchy is related to the potential for tourist visits and pilgrimages on Buddhist religious sites. Different hierarchies have different elements with relative significance and will differ in each of the different Buddhist traditions. Based on Hall's hierarchy, the Borobudur Temple fulfills the criteria to be used as a spiritual and religious purpose for Buddhism. This will support the development of Borobudur tourism destination as a spiritual and religious destination of Buddhism in Indonesia.

Consecration of Borobudur Temple

The basic characteristics of a tourist destination should be used as a reference to make a policy of developing a tourist destination. For example, Bali, which is thick with spiritual nuances, still prioritizes alternative tourism destinations such as spiritual tourism (Suluhbali.co 2014). One of the things that are considered important in developing a site to be considered sacred in Buddhism is to do consecration. Borobudur temple according to the history of the past is a royal mandala building and used as a center for long religious activities (Magetsari 2016). Consecration is an attempt to reinvigorate spiritual sites in Buddhism in order to be used as a sacred place. There is a time lag that the site is not used for spiritual activities, even for a long time the religious site becomes ruined and abandoned. This effort will distinguish Borobudur Temple tourism destinations with Angkor Wat, and establish the Borobudur Temple as a spiritual destination of Buddhism.

Foreign tourists visiting Borobudur Temple connect the meaning of the visit by individual social affirmations. Religious tourists will understand places such as

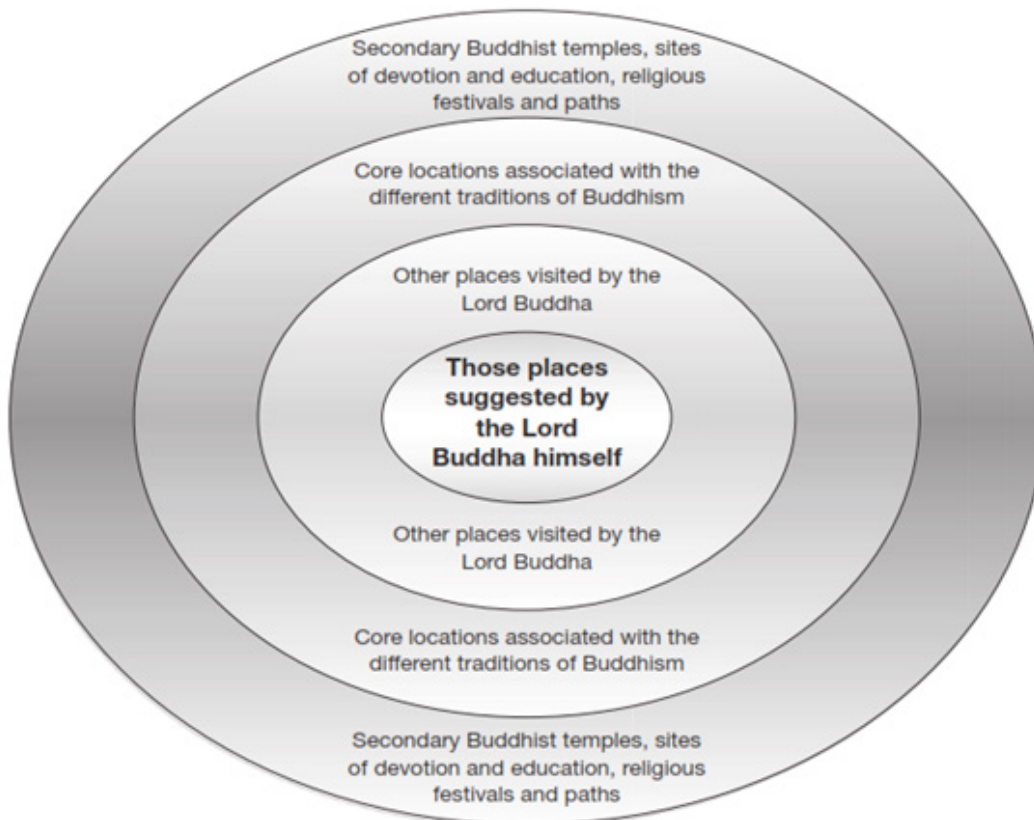


Figure 1. The Hierarchy of Spiritual and Religious Destinations in Buddhism. Source: Hall (2006)

Borobudur Temple or other sacred places according to their own affirmations and religious communities. Tourists who are not affiliated with any religious community, will differ in viewing the meaning of the tourist destinations of Borobudur Temple (Bremer 2006).

Borobudur Temple has been over utilized as a tourist destination, and it will threaten the sustainability of the site. The Indonesian government must pay attention to aspects of physical and cultural carrying capacity. Although currently Borobudur Temple is included in the development of excellent tourist destinations (Gumelar 2017; Prodjo 2017). Excessive visitors at certain times become unfavorable for temple conditions that are over 1000 years old. Borobudur managers have only been exploring and “selling” Borobudur Temple as a tourism product without any other innovation. This is an empirical picture that the management of Borobudur Temple has been done only by offering the attraction as it is without regard to the sustainability of the site. Borobudur Temple tourist destination will get added value when included into the package of Buddhist pilgrimage tours in Indonesia.

Discussion

The results of this study as a whole try to give an illustration that the management of cultural tourism destinations containing spiritual values and religion needs a more in-depth review. The shift in the tourism paradigm should be followed by changes in temple governance. If it refers to the new paradigm of tourism, Borobudur Temple should be managed like a spiritual tourist destination. It takes the government seriousness to realize the desire to make the Borobudur Temple into one of Buddhist spiritual and religious destinations. The change of concept requires commitment and hard work of many parties to rearrange Borobudur Temple.

The arrangement is not easy to implement and certainly has many consequences. For Buddhists, the sacredness of a spiritual and religious tourism destination is the main reason why to visit the place (Hermawan et al. 2016). Bringing out the side of Buddhist spirituality and religion in Borobudur Temple is a necessity. Certainly in line with efforts to improve the quality of visits from tourists.

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