

**THE RELIEFS OF RĀMĀYANA AND KṚṢṆA STORY AT LARA JONGGRANG TEMPLE AND REIGN SHIFT OF THE ANCIENT MATARAM IN 9<sup>th</sup> CENTURY AD****RELIEF RĀMĀYANA DAN CERITA KṚṢṆA DI CANDI LARA JONGGRANG DAN PERGANTIAN KEKUASAAN MATARAM KUNA ABAD KE-9 MASEHI**

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Lara Jonggrang merupakan salah satu candi di Jawa yang menarik minat beberapa peneliti dari berbagai disiplin ilmu. Melimpahnya bahasan tentang candi ini tidak serta merta menutup kemungkinan bahasan baru atau hanya sekedar menginterpretasikan kembali permasalahan-permasalahan lama melalui metode pendekatan baru. Adapun salah satu tujuan dari artikel ini adalah membuka kembali wacana lama tentang Percandian Lara Jonggrang yang dianggap telah mencapai tahap final melalui pertanyaan penelitian. Apakah kaitan antara relief cerita Rāmāyana dan Cerita Kṛṣṇa di Percandian Lara Jonggrang dengan pergantian kekuasaan Mataram Kuna Abad IX Masehi? Melalui penelitian yang bersifat deskriptif-analitis, ternyata beberapa hal yang selama ini dianggap telah final masih menyimpan beberapa kejutan interpretasi baru. Melalui artikel ini, ditunjukkan bahwa Rakai Pikatan dan Rakai Kayuwangi berperan sebagai tonggak pembangunan, peresmian, dan pemahatan relief cerita di Percandian Lara Jonggrang. Selain itu, keberadaan kedua relief cerita tersebut juga berkaitan dengan proses pergantian kekuasaan Mataram Kuna Abad ke - 9 Masehi.

**Kata Kunci:** Candi Lara Jonggrang; pergantian kekuasaan; Mataram Kuna; *Rāmāyana*; *Kṛṣṇa*; relief

**ABSTRACT**

Lara Jonggrang is one of the temples in Java that attracts several researchers from various disciplines. The abundance of discussion about this temple does not necessarily close the possibility of new discussion or merely reinterpreting old problems through new approaches. One of the aims of this study is to reopen the old discourse about Lara Jonggrang Temple which is considered to have reached the final stage through research questions, What is the relation between the reliefs of the Rāmāyana story and the Kṛṣṇa story in Lara Jonggrang Temple and the transfer of power in the Ancient Mataram in 9<sup>th</sup> Century AD? Through a descriptive-analytical method, this study found several things that have been considered final have still kept a few surprises from new interpretations. Through this article, it is shown that Rakai Pikatan and Rakai Kayuwangi play a role as a milestone for the construction, inauguration, and carving of story reliefs in Lara Jonggrang Temple. In addition, the existence of the two reliefs is also related to the process of transfer of power in the Ancient Mataram in 9<sup>th</sup> Century AD.

**Keywords:** Lara Jonggrang Temple; reign shift; Ancient Mataram; *Rāmāyana*; *Kṛṣṇa*'s; relief

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## INTRODUCTION

The complex of Lara Jonggrang Temple has at least three different names, i.e. Lara Jonggrang<sup>1</sup>, Prambanan, and Śivagr̥ha. Lara Jonggrang Temple was first mentioned by Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles (1817, pp. 12–16) in his famous book "The History of Java Vol. II". Through a survey inspired by a journal written by Colonel Colin Mackenzie in 1812, Raffles mentions three names related to the temple complex, i.e. *Brambana*, *Jonggrárgan*, and *Chánda Lóro Jónggrang*. The word *Brambana* refers to the name of a region, *Jonggrárgan* is a common Javanese designation for a temple complex, while *Chánda Lóro Jónggrang* is Raffles' designation for the temple complex based on local legend. The name *śivagr̥ha* originates from an inscription displayed in the Indonesian National Museum under the inventory number D.28, which, by Damais (1952, p. 30), is called the Śivagr̥ha Inscription. The inscription says the phrase: "... *huma tumama rikeng śivagr̥ha ...*" meaning: "... a house called śivagr̥ha to be entered by people ..." (Sarkar, 1971, pp. 128–129). In addition to this phrase, this inscription also describes a building which according to de Casparis (1958, pp. 230–330) shows its compatibility with the Lara Jonggrang Temple complex. The name Śivagr̥ha is not a commonly used term. Therefore, this article uses the name Lara Jonggrang. This name is already used by N.J. Krom consistently to reduce ambiguity with the name of the region (Jordaan, 1996, p. 14). There are at least two reasons underlying the mentioning of the temple complex as Lara Jonggrang. First, in line with Krom, it is to reduce ambiguity with a region name and second, it is to preserve local naming.

The reliefs illustrating the *Rāmāyana* and *Kṛṣṇa* epics in Lara Jonggrang Temple is an interesting research object. A story relief carved in a temple contains certain thatngs which are not only limited to the religious-artisti asp aects, but political one. This also becomes a general assumption on which to base this study besides the story reliefs are indeed made at a specific time with a specific purpose and background.

The *Kṛṣṇa* story relief, in the context of this article, is referred to as the *Kṛṣṇa* Story to replace the term *Kṛṣṇayana*, while the story relief narrating the life of Rāma is still referred to as *Rāmāyana*. According to Zoetmulder (1985, p. 491), the story about Krsna's life consists of many episodes, including *Kṛṣṇawijaya*, *Kalayawantaka*, *Kalantaka* or *Kṛṣṇakalantaka*, *Kṛṣṇantaka* and *Kṛṣṇandaka*. The projects to match the reliefs found in Lara Jonggrang Temple with the story scripts have not yet been successful (Lulius Van Goor, 1922, pp. 41–44). Thus, it would be better if the story relief is referred to as the *Kṛṣṇa* story relief only, or *Kṛṣṇacaritra* (Hawley, 1981, p. 74).

The temple where the reliefs of *Rāmāyana* and *Kṛṣṇa* Story are carved is located in Karangasem Village, Bokoharjo Village, Prambanan Sub-district, Sleman Regency, Special Region of Yogyakarta. This complex was built on a low plain on the banks of the Opak River. Overall, the temple complex is divided into three courtyards, including the center, the middle, and the outer. Each courtyard is separated by a fence and connected by doors installed on each side where the main door is in the east. Astronomically, this temple complex is located at 10° 19'

<sup>1</sup> In addition to "lara", some also call it "rara" which means a girl.

23.53" East Longitude and 7° 45' 07.90" South Latitude with an altitude of 153 m above sea level (Haryono, 2004, p. 9). As for the dating of the Lara Jonggrang complex, J. G. de Casparis (1958, pp. 230–330) connects the complex with the Śivagrha Inscription. Based on this inscription, de Casparis believed that the temple complex was inaugurated on Thursday Wagai, dated 11<sup>th</sup> of *Margasirsa* Month in 778 Çaka (856 AD). This assumption is based on the Śivagrha inscription which reads:

*ri kāla nikanang sakā bda wualung gunu<ng> sang wiku  
samārḡgaçiraçuklapakṣa sawēlas ya nā tang tithi /  
wrēhaspati wagai lawan mawurukung ya nā wāra weh  
yatekana tēwēk bhatāra ginawai sinangskāra weh // 24 //*

Translation:

24. In the time of the Saka year 778 (*candra sangkala*), in the bright half of the month Mārḡgaçirca, the eleventh lunar day, on a Thursday, Wagai (of the five days' week) and Wukurung (of the six days' week) ..... that was the date at which the (statue of the) god was finished and inaugurated (de Casparis, 1958, p. 328)

The Rāmāyana reliefs are carved on the balustrade of the Shiva Temple, and partly carved on the Brahma Temple's balustrade. Meanwhile, the Kṛṣṇacaritra reliefs are carved on the balustrade of the Vishnu Temple. The total number of relief panels for Rāmāyana is 54 panels, which are divided into two parts: 24 relief panels in the Shiva Temple and the remaining 30 relief panels in the Brahma Temple. The Kṛṣṇa Story amounts to 30 relief panels, all of which are located in Vishnu Temple.

Concerning with regard to the discussion about the reliefs of Rāmāyana and Kṛṣṇa Story, it cannot be denied that this topic is not new in archeological research. However, this cannot be a reason to close the research discourse on old data. In the context of this study, the problem statement is what is the relation between the Ramayana and Kṛṣṇa reliefs in Prambanan Temple with the transfer of power in Ancient Mataram in the 9<sup>th</sup> century?

This is in line with Shanks and Tilley's (1987, pp. 116–17) argument that material culture should be seen as a resource, a symbolic system in social practice, something formed in certain political relations, and activated and manipulated in an ideological system. In other words, material culture is actively involved and participates in shaping the social world. In this context, the reliefs of Rāmāyana and Kṛṣṇa Story in Lara Jonggrang Temple are made by involving certain interest methods so as to produce a cultural artifact that is loaded with symbols and must be interpreted.

## METHODS

This study used a descriptive-analytical method. The main data was elicited from Siwagrha Inscription, Lara Jonggrang Temple Complex, and the reliefs of Rāmāyana and Kṛṣṇa Story. The description of the temple structure and the reliefs were not performed separately. The temple structure and reliefs were

used to connect and strengthen new interpretation of the Siwagrha Inscription. The data from other contemporaneous inscriptions were also used to lay out the chronological position of the events. The use of several theories was not intended to be matched with the historical events occurring at that time, but rather used as a device to describe events that might occur at the site. In order to make it easier to answer the main problem, a number of minor questions were also raised along with the discussion.

## RESEARCH RESULTS

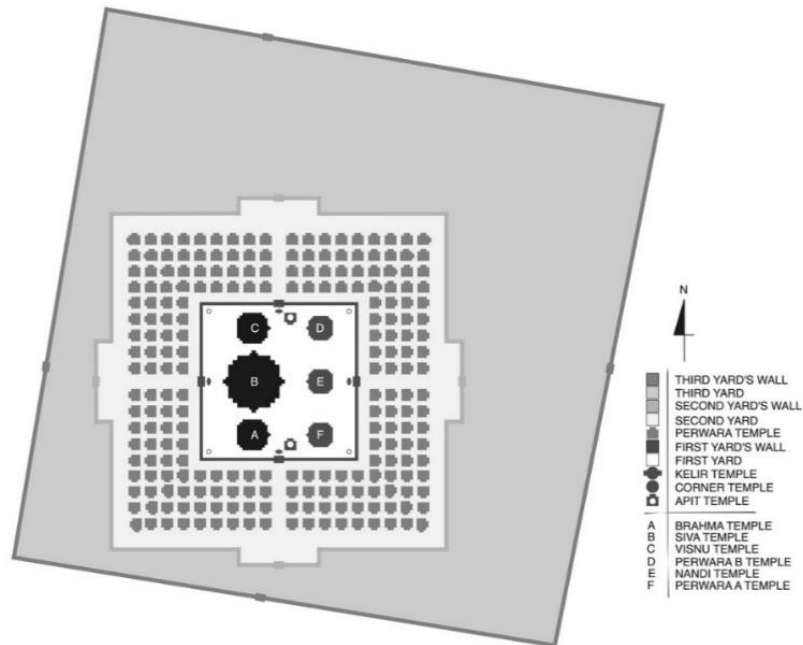
The reliefs of Rāmāyana and Kṛṣṇa Story in Lara Jonggrang Temple are generally considered to be an 'anomaly' on the concept of the temple itself. The 'anomaly' here means that it seems to be a disharmony between the concept of the temple and the carved story reliefs, especially what happened to the Shiva and Brahma Temples, e.g. the sculpture of the Rāmāyana relief found in the Shiva Temple.

The carved relief of the Rāmāyana in the Shiva and Brahma temples is none other than the story of one of *avatāras* of Vishnu, not Shiva. The main concept of Lara Jonggrang Temple is the worship of Shiva, not Vishnu. The first relief panel that starts the story shows Vishnu's might and heroism. In this case, Vishnu is depicted with four arms sitting on a giant snake and accompanied by an eagle that becomes his *vahana*. The contradiction between the concept of Shiva Temple and the description of Vishnu's might tend to be an 'anomaly'. This concept does not refer to a passive, static and final condition, but active and productive. The word 'anomaly' in this context refers to something different, special, and beyond the area of religion.

In an effort to understand the characteristics of Rāmāyana and Kṛṣṇa reliefs in Lara Jonggrang Temple, many things can certainly be discussed. However, not all matters relating to the characteristics of relief such as carving details, characterizations, story lines, and matching efforts with certain texts can be the subject of discussion. In this case, the discussion focuses on the distribution of panel reliefs and the comparison of story themes.

The three main temples located on the central courtyard, i.e. Shiva Temple in the middle which is flanked by Brahma Temple in the south, and Vishnu Temple in the north, are arranged in a row facing east. The three temples are not placed right in the middle of the central courtyard, but rather shifted backwards. In front of the temple there are three smaller temples lining up facing the main temple, i.e. Nandi Temple in the middle, Temple A in the north, and Temple B in the south as shown in Figure 1.

The *Rāmāyana* reliefs totaling 54 panels are distributed in two temples, namely Shiva Temple with 24 relief panels (see Figure 2) and Brahma Temple with 30 relief panels (see Figure 3). The 30 Kṛṣṇacaritra panel reliefs are only carved on the Vishnu Temple (see Figure 4). The relief panels are carved on the inner balustrade which starts from the left side of the entrance. In Shiva, Brahma and Vishnu temples, the way to read the reliefs is clockwise.



**Figure 1.** Constellation of Lara Jonggrang Temple Complex. The Rāmāyana reliefs were carved on the balustrade of the Shiva Temple [B], and continued at the Brahma Temple [A], while the Kṛṣṇacarita reliefs were carved on the Vishnu Temple [C]. The three temples are located on the main courtyard of Lara Jonggrang Temple Complex.

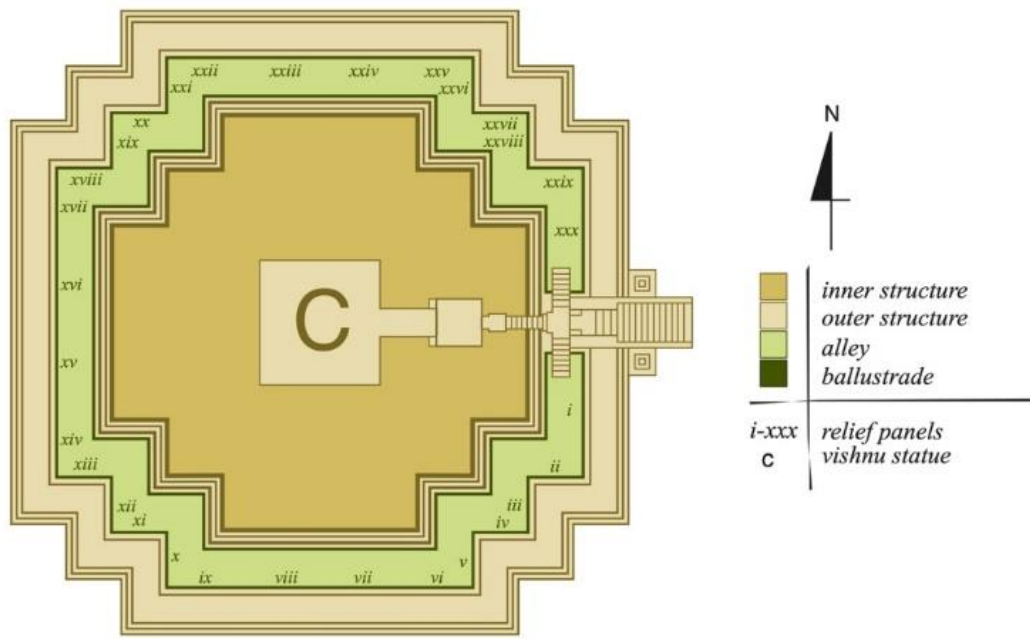
(Source: Jordan, 1996 p. 4, redrawn by Andri Restiyadi with some modification)

The hallway is generally located at the base of the temple body, or just above the temple base which aims as a medium for *pradakṣinā*<sup>2</sup>. In connection with the concept of the temple which is a representation of Meru, Fontein (1972, p. 13) argues that the foot (base) symbolizes the lowest realm of ordinary humans, the body symbolizes a world where humans have left their worldly affairs and in a purified state to meet the gods, while the roof symbolizes the realm of gods. The three realms in Hinduism are called the *bhūrloka* (realm of common creatures), the *bhūvarloka* (realm of purified creatures), and the *svarloka* (realm of gods). According to Sedyawati (1987, p. 364), in Lara Jonggrang Temple, the manifestations of *bhūrloka*, *bhūvarloka*, and *svarloka* are not found in the temple buildings, but in the arrangement of the courtyards. The central courtyard depicts *svarloka*, the second courtyard with the *perwara* temple symbolizes *bhūvarloka*, while the third courtyard symbolizes *bhūrloka*. The entire central courtyard is a representation of god realm as supported by the presence of *Kalpataru* reliefs at the (foot) base of the temple. However, the reliefs of Rāmāyana and Kṛṣṇacarita are carved parallel to the *bhūvarloka*, although they are not carved on the temple body, but rather on the temple balustrade.

The story relief carving on the inner balustrade certainly triggers an interesting discussion. The lay out must be designed beforehand by the artist. One thing that is clear in this regard is that only the person who performs *pradakṣinā* in the balustrade hallway can see the story relief.

<sup>2</sup> Walking around the temple in a clockwise direction





**Figure 4.** Distribution of the Kṛṣṇa's Story Reliefs in the Vishnu Temple  
(Source: Restiyadi, 2017, p. 51, drawn by Andri Restiyadi)

## DISCUSSIONS

In connection with a political event as seen in the carving of the *Rāmāyana* and *Kṛṣṇa* reliefs are believed by some researchers to indicate the transfer of power in the Old Mataram around through various archaeological evidence and arguments. The discussion on the above issue was traced through the Śivagr̥ha inscription, which until now is commonly believed to be one of the inscriptions that can be linked to the Lara Jonggrang Temple<sup>3</sup>. Through this written data, it is hoped that political conditions at the time of construction, inauguration, and relief carving can be understood. A stanza from the inscription that indicates a transfer of power is found in the 9<sup>th</sup> stanza.

*Tlas mañkanoparata sang prabhu jāti ning rat  
rājya ka ratwan=asilih tañanan inangsö  
dyah lokapāla ranujāmata lokapāla  
swastha=ng prajā sacaturāçrama wipramu khya // 9 //*

Translation:

9. After these (deeds), the king of Jātingrat resigned; the kingship and the keraton were handed over to his successor; Dyah Lokapala, who was equal to a younger brother of the (divine) Lokapāla; free were the subjects, divided into the four *āçrama* [castes] with the Brāhmanas ahead (de Casparis, 1956, p. 316, 328)

<sup>3</sup> Although Griffiths (2011) tried to link Lara Jonggrang Temple with some inscriptions found on Ratu Boko hill and Wukiran/Pereng Inscription (863 AD) through the word *lañka* (pura), in my opinion, it still has a mismatch with other historical data.

In this case, there are different opinions regarding the word *jātiningrat* mentioned in the inscription. De Casparis (1958) argues that *jātiningrat* means the title of a king after resignation as interpreted through the word *uparata*, i.e. Rakai Pikatan. In contrast, Aichele, as quoted by Jordaan (1996, p. 54) argues that *jātiningrat* can be interpreted as a metaphor or a subtle expression of the king's death, and not a king title. This opinion is also adopted by Boechari (Boechari, n.d., p. V.33) who argues that the word *uparata* means death. For this reason, it is also necessary to check the list of names of kings written by Rakai Watukura Dyah Balitung in the Mantyasih Inscription (907 AD) and Wanua Tengah III (908 AD) as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** List of the Kings' Names in the Mantyasih (907 AD) and Wanua Tengah III (908 AD) Inscriptions

No.	The Names of Kings in Inscriptions		Dating Conversion		Length of Reign
	Mantyasih 907 Inscription	Wanua Tengah III 908	A <sup>4</sup>	B <sup>5</sup>	
1.	<i>rahyangta rumuhun ri mdang ri poh pitu rakai matarām sang ratu sañjaya</i>	<i>rahyangta ri mdang</i>	717 <sup>6</sup> — 746	—	—
2.	<i>śri mahārāja rakai panangkaran</i>	<i>rakai panangkaran</i>	710/746 — 1/4/784	4/10/746	32 years
3.	<i>śri mahārāja rakai panunggalan</i>	<i>rakai panaraban</i>	1/4/784 — 28/3/803	6/3/784	19 years
4.	<i>śri mahārāja rakai varak</i>	<i>rakai warak dyah manara</i>	28/3/803 — 5/8/827	3/3/803	24 years
5.	—	<i>dyah gula</i>	5/8/827 — 24/1/828	26/7/827	6 years
6.	<i>śri mahārāja rakai garung</i>	<i>rake garung</i>	24/1/828 — 22/2/847	10/1/829	19 years
7.	<i>śri mahārāja rakai pikatan</i>	<i>rake pikatan dyah saladu</i>	22/2/847 — 27/5/855	6/3/847	8 years
8.	<i>śri mahārāja rakai kayuvangi</i>	<i>rake kayuwangi dyah lokapala</i>	27/5/855 — 5/2/885	8/6/855	30 years
9.	—	<i>dyah tagwas</i>	5/2/885 — 27/9/885	17/2/885	8 months
10.	—	<i>rake panumwangan dyah dewendra</i>	27/9/885 — 27/1/887	3/10/885	1 year 4 months

<sup>4</sup> According to Kusen (1994, pp. 82–94)

<sup>5</sup> (Triangga, 1994, pp. 22–26), the same as Boechari's interpretation (2012b, p. 468)

<sup>6</sup> According to L. Ch. Damais in Boechari (2012, p. 469), Sañjaya was enthroned in 716 AD based on the dating of the Taji Gunuñ Inscription (194 Sañjayawarsa / 832 Śaka) and the Timbañan Wungkal Prasassti (196 Sañjayawarsa / 834 Śaka), while based on the dating of Tihañ Inscription which contains two year numbers namely 198 Sañjayawarsa and 836 Śaka, it can be seen that 1 Sañjayawarsa / 834 Śaka), while based on the count of the Tiha Inscription which contains two year



No.	The Names of Kings in Inscriptions		Dating Conversion		Length of Reign
	Mantyasih 907 Inscription	Wanua Tengah III 908	A <sup>4</sup>	B <sup>5</sup>	
11.	_____	<i>rake gurunwangi dyah badhra</i>	27/1/887 — 24/2/887	18/1/887	28 days
Vacuum of reign for 7 years					
12.	<i>śri mahārāja rakai vatuhumalang</i>	<i>rake watuhumalang dyah jbang</i>	27/11/894 — 23/5/898	21/11/894	3 years 6 months
13.	<i>śri mahārāja rakai vatukura dyah dharmmodaya mahāśambhu</i>	<i>rake watukura dyah balitung</i>	23/5/898 — 1/10/908	10/5/898	_____

As shown in Table 1, the inauguration of Lara Jonggrang based on the Sivagrha Inscription is on the yellow mark. At the time of the temple inauguration (856 AD), Rakai Pikatan was no longer reigning, and the Wanua Tengah III Inscription confirms that he died without mentioning the year number. The excerpt from the inscription is shown as follows:

II.A. 1. ... . *ing çaka 768 phalguna māsa pratipada krrsna. Pa ka a. warā. Mangdiri rake pikatan dyah saladu. Sira ta pinduani lumabwur ikanang sima. Pjah rake pikatan ...*

Translation:

II.A.1. in the çaka year 768, month of Phalguna, dated 1<sup>st</sup> of the dark half, Sunday Kliwon Paningron, Rake Pikatan Dyah Saladu was enthroned. He fused into sima for the second time. Rake Pikatan passed away .... (Darmosutopo, 2003, pp. 299-305).

Boechari's statement (2012a, p. 469) that in the Śivagrha Inscription, Rakai Pikatan inaugurated Lara Jonggrang Temple and Subroto's statement (1997, p. 171) that Rakai Pikatan issued the Śivagrha Inscription are inaccurate. This is because at the time the inscription was issued, or the inauguration of Lara Jonggrang Temple was done, Rakai Pikatan had already died. Therefore, the one who issued Śivagastiha Inscription, and inaugurated Lara Jonggrang Temple was the successor to Rakai Pikatan, namely Rakai Kayuwangi Dyah Lokapala. The question is then who built Lara Jonggrang Temple?

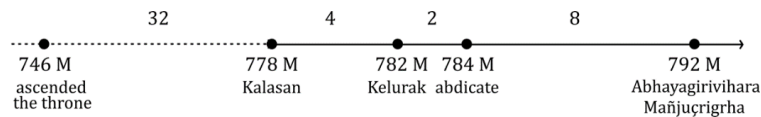
The question cannot be simply answered: the one who built Lara Jonggrang Temple is Rakai Kayuwangi. The difference between Rakai Kayuwangi's enthroned time (855 AD) and the inauguration year as mentioned in Śivagrha Inscription (856 AD) is only one year. In one-year period, it would be too naïve to finish the entire Lara Jonggrang Temple Complex<sup>7</sup>. However, one year is very logical if it is said to complete or perfect the temple building. Dumarçay, as quoted

numbers, 198 Sañjayawarsa and 836 Śaka, it can be seen that 1 Sañjayawarsa was in 638 Śaka or 716 AD.

<sup>7</sup> Jordan (1996: 33) suggests the same impossibility but with different reasons, i.e. one year is calculated from Year 855 AD which was the expulsion of the Sailendra Dynasty and Year 856 as the inauguration of the Lara Jonggrang Temple. In this case, it can be seen that Jordan seems to be a follower of the "theory of two dynasties" as devised by de Casparis.

by Jordaan (1996, p. 33), asserted that the construction of the Lara Jonggrang Temple “undoubtedly began in 832 AD and was finished in 856 AD” so the entire complex of the Temple was finished within 24 years. One thing that can be ascertained in this case is at least the condition of Lara Jonggrang Temple in 856 li e in accordance with the description in the Śivagrha Inscription, i.e. completed with perwara temples, diversion of river flows, and a pond.

The discussion about the construction of the temple begins with examples of some sacred building complexes allegedly erected by Rakai Panangkaran. The textual data confirms that during his reign Rakai Panangkaran erected several sacred buildings, among others, as listed in Kalasan Inscription (778 AD), Kelurak Inscription (782 AD), Abhayagiriwihara Inscription (792 AD)<sup>8</sup> and Mañjuçrigrha Inscription (792 AD), Plaosan Temple (unreadable year number). During 32 years of reign (746-784 AD) plus 8 years of his old age (784-792 AD), Rakai Panangkaran succeeded in erecting four sacred buildings (Kalasan Temple, Sewu Temple Phase 1, Plaosan, and Abhayagiriwihara) plus one expansion of the building complex (Sewu Temple Phase 2).



**Figure 5.** The linkage between several inscriptions narrating temple constructions and the reign of Rakai Panangkaran  
(Source: Restiyadi, 2017, p. 94 drawn by Andri Restiyadi)

By looking at Figure 5 and assuming that the temple construction is performed continuously, it can be seen that the distance between the construction of Kalasan and that of Sewu Temples is only four years, while the Abhayagiriwihara and the expanded Sewu Temple are erected<sup>9</sup> in the same year. This is also a clue that the construction of a temple does not finish for decades.

Based on the discussion above, it is quite logical to say that the builder of Lara Jonggrang Temple was Rakai Pikatan, while Rakai Kayuwangi was the one who continued the construction. There are several reasons related to the allegations above. According to Wanua Tengah III Inscription (908 AD), Rakai Pikatan ascended the throne in 847 AD and died in 855 AD. If calculated since the beginning of his reign, then 8 years is a very sufficient time to build Lara Jonggrang Temple Complex. The inscription mentions the mobilization of workers on stanzas 13, 17, and 23 (De Casparis., 1956, pp. 313, 315, 316, 321, 327):

— — — — — lang sira sawargga anaryya ka baih  
 nijakula mitra bhrētya manujān=inutān=pramukha /  
 prawa <ra> — — — — — lā magawai ya hayu  
 syapa wihañā kaaum mañanumodanumoda gawai // 13 //  
 Nya ...

<sup>8</sup> Regarding the year numbers that do not match the reign of Rakai Panangkaran in the Wanua Tengah III Inscription, see Kusen’s explanation of (1994: 84–85).

<sup>9</sup> No explanation from these inscriptions whether it is erected or inaugurated, but in my opinion, a building is commemorated after a building is completely constructed.

... ..

... ..

*kṣunika samāpta deniṅ=añutus=inatus magawai  
sagupura parhyaṅan agaṅitāṅana tā pacalān // 17 //  
ri diwasa ning wua tthyang nika manghyang uang pamatiḥ  
kuaiḥ=asēsḥk=masö saṅ=adimantri tama tritaya /  
wiku kumarī kumarā kamarā n=mara yan=paguru  
garuti yatann=iñūyana dadanya madanda katah // 23 //*

Translation:

13. ... he, with his servants, all are ordinary people, people of low descendants, (and also) his friends, employees, and people who are placed in important positions; perform well ... making it beautiful: who would be reluctant to agree in bringing gifts? everyone works happily.
17. .... in an instant, the temple with its innumerable gates, immovable female figures, completed by hundreds of workers.
23. That day (be set to) work compulsorily on behalf of gods, people are ordered to perform ceremonies; the crowd came and the workers were in the third row, the *adimantri*, monks, classy young men and women, ... (?); ... (?) there are a lot of guards.

In the seventh stanza (De Casparis, 1956, p. 312, 317), there are some of words that indicate the construction of the temple finishes more quickly, i.e. within one year.

...

*tēpat=tahun=ni lama ning — — — — — /  
— — — — — stala watunn=inatus=yat=unsyan  
... // 7 /*

Translation:

7. ... exactly a year was the time of the... .. stones heaped up by the hundreds for his refuge.

However, because there are some missing words, that makes the context of the sentence ambiguous, the stanza 7 cannot be used to indicate the duration of the temple construction.

Therefore, due to the duration of 8 years or less, hundreds of workers, and sacred buildings donated by the regional authority (*anumoda gawai*)<sup>10</sup>, it is logical to argue that the temple was built during the reign of Rakai Pikatan. Even so, when Rakai Pikatan died in 855 AD, the building was not finished yet and the rest was continued by Rakai Kayuwangi. This also indicates that Rakai Kayuwangi helped his father, Rakai Pikatan, in the construction of Lara Jonggrang Temple Complex, even though he was the youngest (*walaputra*) child. Moreover, his important role in the kingdom administration is apparent when he succeeded in winning the war by defeating Rakai Pikatan.

In relation to the *Rāmāyana* and *Kṛṣṇa* reliefs carved in Lara Jonggrang Temple, the writer's assumption that they are related to Rakai Pikatan's political

<sup>10</sup> De Casparis (1958: 15–18) argues that the word *anumoda gawai* means a gift from the regional authority.

legitimacy (Restiyadi., 2006; Subroto., 1997) apparently cannot be proven through historical data. At the time the Śivagr̥ha inscription was issued, Rakai Pikatan had already died and no longer needed the power legitimacy. The king who needs to be assumed of being involved in carving the Rāmāyana reliefs and Kṛṣṇa Story in Lara Jonggrang Temple is a successor to Rakai Pikatan, i.e. Rakai Kayuwangi.

In Śivagr̥ha Inscription (856 CE), the initial stanzas contain praises to the king. De Casparis's (1956) initial reading and interpretation lead the readers to have a conclusion that the king referred to in this case is Rakai Pikatan.

*ring kāla sang mnang makdhāraṇa lokadhātu // 5 //*  
*Paryyantariṣṭa yuwanātha sarājya — — /*  
*mangrakṣa bhūmi ri jawārjawa jāta — — /*  
*saçri raṇautsawa ratejika lain prasiddha*  
*jetā wirāga maharāja warānurāga // 6 //*  
*Māheçwarā ta sira riçwa ri çūrapatnī*  
*tēpat=tahun=ni lama ning — — — — — /*  
*— — — — — ṣṭala watunn=inatus=yat=unsiyan*  
*hantāwali mwañ=anilā — hi wālaputra // 7 //*  
*nātha prasiddha ri jagat=ni — — — — —*  
*rakṣā ni rowaṅ=atha wīra waruḥ swaçīla /*  
*kālap kalāgunarawi prakulasthanāma*  
*ginlar ri mamratipurastha maḍang kadatwan // 8 //*

#### Translation:

5. Not translated by de Casparis
6. The young prince ... in possession of royal majesty, protected the country of Java, righteous and with ..., majestic in battles and in feasts, full of favour and perfect, victorious but free from passion, a Great King of excellent devotion.
7. He was Çaiwa [Shaivist], in contrast to the queen, the spouse of the hero; exactly a year was the time of the...; ... stones heaped up by the hundreds for his refuge, a killer as fast as the wind ... *walaputra*.
8. A king, perfect in (this) world, ....., a protection for his comrades, indeed a hero who knew the duties of his rank; he adopted a proper name to a family of the honorable Brahmanas (rich in) arts and virtues, and established his *kēraton* at Mēḍang situated in his *Keraton* of Mamrati.

Boechari (Boechari, 2012a, p. 556), translates the fifth stanza (“*ring kāla sang mnang makdhāraṇa lokadhātu*”) into “*at the time of victory having Lokadhātu supporters.*” Moreover, in stanza 7d, in the missing syllable in front of the word *hi*, it is proposed to add the word *nla*, not *mri* as suggested by de Casparis. Thus, the sentence becomes *hantāwali mwañ anilānla hi wālaputra* which means “a killer as fast as the wind (he is) known as the Youngest Child.” Regarding the identity of the Youngest Child, Boechari pointed to information on the 6<sup>th</sup> stanza which reads *paryyantariṣṭa yuwanātha sarājya* which is then interpreted as “desired by all the people as *yuwanātha*,” who is none other than Rakai Kayuwangi Dyah Lokapala.

Through Boechari's correction of the Śivagr̥ha Inscription (856 CE), it is clear that the “war hero” as mentioned in stanzas 7 and 8 refers to Rakai Kayuwangi. Speaking of “war heroes” in Hindu mythology, no one can match the popularity of Rama and Kṛṣṇa as the seventh and eighth *avatāra* of Vishnu. According to

Gopinatha Rao (1914, pp. 186–87), Rāma or Śrī-Rāma in Hinduism is an ideal hero who is always respected from time to time as well as a husband of a perfect female figure (Sītā). Kṛṣṇa, according to (Rao., 1914, p. 200), is a figure of a king and statesman, warrior and hero, friend, philosopher, reformer, and the most noble figure among the other Vishnu's avatāras. Moreover, in Wuatan Tija Inscription (880 AD) in the section of *śapatha* (curse), the name *rāmadevatā* (Lord Rama) is mentioned.

... *ba*

B5. *runa kuvera bāsapava yaksa rāksasa piśāca | rāmadevatā |*

Translation:

5. baruna, kuvera, bāsapava, yaksa, rāksasa, piśāca, lord rāma<sup>11</sup> |

Furthermore, in *Rāmāyana Jawa Kuna*, there is also a number of sentences that indicate the connection and transition between Vishnu's avatāra from Rāma to Kṛṣṇa.

*Sarga XXI*

142. *Riñ Wrēsniwīra kita rakwa delāha Krēsna,*

*Kaśśādidaitya trēnatulya ya patyananta,*

Translation:

142. Among your Wrēsni heroes is Krēsna in the future, who will kill the giant Kaśśa as easily as it is grass.

*Sarga XXIV*

201. *Haywātah kita sañsayé sira muwah sāmpun sśuddhyan sira,*

*dontāt ańdadi dadyakēn tulusakēn kirttinta riñ rāt kabēh,*

*swasthā niñ bhuvanatrayékana iwön nāhan phalantāt jaya,*

*cihnā nyān kita sañ Janārddana dinésañ hyañ dumikṣa í sarāt.*

Translation:

201. Never doubt him after he proves that he is holy. The purpose of your incarnation to earth is to complete the glory of the world, fight for those who are weak in the three worlds. That is truly your victory. Therefore, you will be known as Janārddana<sup>12</sup>, who was ordered by the Supreme Lord to lead the world.

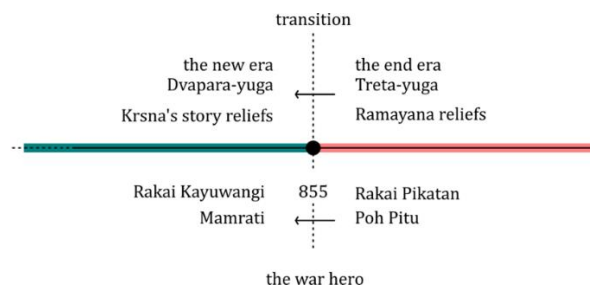
Based on the description above, a new assumption arises regarding the carving of the *Rāmāyana* and *Kṛṣṇacaritra* reliefs in Lara Jonggrang Temple. In this context, it is assumed that the initiator of the relief carving was Rakai Kayuwangi. The idea of carving out the story reliefs arose when political conditions at that time had stabilized, the enemy had been driven out, and the war had been won. In other words, the carving of the two reliefs were done one year therefore inauguration of the Temple, or precisely constructed after Rakai Kayuwangi

<sup>11</sup> *Rāmadeva*, the name that refers to Rāma, is also mentioned in the Old Javanese *Rāmāyana* script in sarga (sections) II.56bd, II.59d, II.63b, II.69a, II.74a, III.2b, IV.3d, IV.14b, VI.148d, VI.151a, IX.64b, XI.16c, XI.18b, XI.23b, XIV.3b, XV.69c, XXI. 127D, XXIV.7a (Santoso 1980: 884)

<sup>12</sup> Janārddana is another name for Vishnu, which is generally used to refer to Kṛṣṇa.

ascended the throne in 855 AD based on the Wanua Tengah III Inscription. This is because the construction of the temple had been underway since the Rakai Pikatan's administration, so to commemorate the victory of the war, Rakai Kayuwangi did not re-conceptualize the construction of the Temple, but rather added an element that could be associated with its heroism, i.e. by carving the reliefs of *Rāmāyana* and *Kṛṣṇa* Story on the balustrade of Lara Jonggrang Temple in the process of the temple's refinement. The linkage between the *Rāmāyana* and *Kṛṣṇa* Story, the concept of Vishnu avatāra, the transfer of the *yuga* period, and the events mentioned in Śivagrha Inscription is shown in Figure 6.

It is a coincidence that the list of names of the kings found in the Tengah III Inscription is indeed the lineage of the ruling kings. Rakai Pikatan is the 7<sup>th</sup> king, while Rakai Kayuwangi is the 8<sup>th</sup> king and this is in line with Rāma as the seventh avatāra of Vishnu and Kṛṣṇa as the eighth one. However, it cannot be used as a basic of thought because it is possible that the list of names of the kings contained may be Wanua Tengah III Inscription is only related to the status of the sima land at the monastery of Pikatan.



**Figure 6.** Linkage between political conditions in Java in the IX-X century AD, the concept of religion with the *Rāmāyana* and *Kṛṣṇacaritra* reliefs  
(Source: Restiyadi, 2017, p. 101 drawn by Andri Restiyadi)

## CONCLUSIONS

Through the reliefs of *Rāmāyana* and *Kṛṣṇa* Story carved on the inner balustrade of Lara Jonggrang Temple, this study reveals interesting political events to be concerned more deeply, especially with regard to the transfer of power from Rakai Pikatan to Rakai Kayuwangi. Despite being underestimated in the narrations about Lara Jonggrang Temple, Rakai Kayuwangi turns out to also play an important role as the one who inaugurated the temple and even participated in the improvement of the temple building by adding the reliefs of *Kṛṣṇa* Story in it.

This is also a convincing evidence that political conditions at that time also influenced the art themes that emerged and developed at the same time. Another conclusion that can also be drawn from this study is that an art is actually the result and medium of a particular event.

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