

## EARLY BUDDHISM IN BALI, INDONESIA

### Abstract

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Bali is known as the only island in Indonesia and in Southeast Asia which majority of its people are Hindu. Hindu philosophies, ethics and rituals are still being practised in Bali today.

Apart from Hinduism, archaeological evidence indicates that Buddhism also appeared in Bali around the 8<sup>th</sup> century AD. Votive stupas of clay, stone, Buddhist mantras and building of stupa were found in the island.

My visit to the sites of Ratnagiri and Udayagiri in October 2016 was inspiring this paper. There are similarities in terms of forms of the votive stupas at Ratnagiri to the votive stupas found at Pegulingan temple and other sites in Bali. The Bodhisatwa at Udayagiri are also similar to the specimen from Pagulingan in terms of forms and the way how to place them in the stupa.

The similarities of forms and decorations of votive stupas and Buddhist statues found at Ratnagiri and Udayagiri with the specimen from Bali might have indicated the contact between India and Bali around the eight century AD. Bali seems to be part of the spread of the world of Buddhism in the mid 9<sup>th</sup> century AD. Hundred of clays votive stupas as well as Buddhist monuments and statues of Buddhism were found in Bali.

In addition to votive stupas, statues, and Buddhist monuments, Balinese inscriptions dated from the 9<sup>th</sup> up to the 11<sup>th</sup> century also mentioned several Indian places names such as Waranasi, Nalanda and Amarawati. These places are associated to the Buddhist centres in India. The appearance of early Buddhism in Bali will be explained in this paper.

Key words: Votive stupas, Buddhism, Ratnagiri, Udayagiri, and Pagulingan

## Introduction

Archaeological evidence indicate that contacts between Bali and India might have been already occurred at the beginning of our century. The initial contacts between Bali and India were probably associated with exchange of goods or trade. Several Indian rouletted wares and beads of glass and carnelian were found at Sembiran, Pacung, and other burial sites in Bali. Indian artifacts seem to be functioned as status symbols in the Balinese society, since they were discovered in association with burials contexts. Ranked society might have already existed in Bali during the beginning of contact between Bali and India. Bali seems to be located on a strategic place connecting eastern and western part of Indonesia, where Indian traders searching for spices and aromatic woods such as cloves and sandalwoods.

Contacts between Bali and India might have continous to the later period when Buddhism spread to Indonesia and Bali in particular. My visit to Ratnagiri and Udayagiri sites in November 2016 was inspiring this paper. There are similarities in terms of forms and decoration of votive stupas at Ratnagiri to the specimen found at Pagulingan temple in Gianyar, Bali (see fig. 1 & 2). In addition, there are hundreds of votive clay stupas were found at Pejeng and Kalibukbuk or Lovina sites in Bali. The discoveries of votive stupas with Buddhist mantras in Bali indicate the spread of Buddhism in Bali, Indonesia and Southeast Asia in general. This paper will explore the early of Buddhism in Bali.



Figure 1. Votive stupas at Ratmagiri



Figure 2. Votive stupas (left) from Ratmagiri and Pagulingan temple. (middle and right) Gianyar, Bali

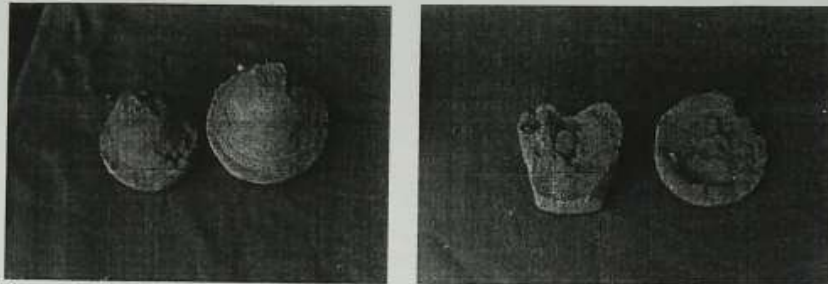


Figure 3. Clay votive stupas, *Ye te* mantras and image of Dhyani Buddha in side of them

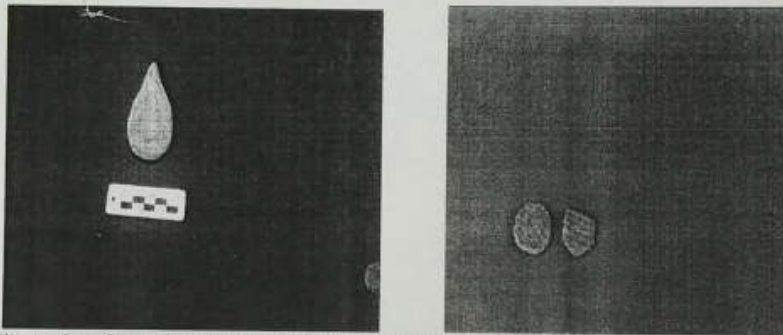


Figure 4. A Stupa image and *Ye te* mantras in side the clay votives.

The similarities of votive stupas at Ratnagiri and Pagulingan temple in Bali might have indicated contact between these sites (fig. 2). Seal of Buddhist *mantras* or formulas were also discovered at the temple of Pagulingan, Tampaksiring, Gianyar regency in central Bali. About 62 broken seals with 2- 4 cm in diameter were found at Pagulingan temple during the restoration of foundation a structure. The foundation of the structure is octagonal in shape which is similar to the votive or miniature of stupa discovered at the temple during the restoration process (Astawa, 2007: 33-34, see fig.4). The archaeological service of Bali restored the stupa at Pagulingan temple with octagonal based or foundation (see figure 5).

Clay stupas and seals were also discovered during the construction of swimming pool of Hotel Angsoka, at the village of Kalibukbuk, Buleleng regency, North Bali in 1991. The Hotel Angsoka is located about 100 m from the beach of the northern coast of Bali. The number of clay stupas were found at the Hotel Angsoka 90.

In 1994, archaeological excavation was conducted by the Branch Office of Archaeological Research Centre Denpasar at the land belong to Mr. Ngurah Sentanu. About 42 complete and several fragments of clay stupas were found inside a hole of the real stupa with ground plan 2,60 x 2,60 m which is made of bricks at Kalibukbuk. The excavation is not far from the Hotel Angsoka and about 600 m from the beach (Astawa, 2007: 30-31). In addition, two figures of stupas were also discovered inside the clay stupas of Kalibukbuk, Buleleng, North Bali (see figure 4). The discoveries of a real brick stupa and clay stupas at Kalibukbuk indicate that the spread of Buddhism in Bali might have been started from the northern coast to the inland sites of Pejeng and Pegulingan in central Bali.

The seals are stamped with a well known recitation of faith, so called *ye-te* formula (figure 3 and 4). Similar clay seals and stupas were also discovered near Borobudur in Central Java (Kempers, 1991: 95-96).

The texts on seals are in *Siddhamatrkā* script. On the basis of palaeography, the date of the seal is estimated from 800 to 1000 AD (Griffiths, 2014: 183; fig. 12). Two pieces of gold foils, a silver foil bearing a few *aksaras* were discovered during the preparation for reconstruction of Pura Pagulingan, at Tampak Siring, Gianyar regency.

The appearance of *dharanis* and *mantras* in Bali suggests that the island is an integral part of the ancient Buddhist world. Griffiths (2014: 186) argues that the text used in this part of Buddhist world must have been quite similar to the text that were used in other Buddhist countries.

It should be noted that the way to put the Bodhisattwa image at Udayagiri stupa in India is similar to the one at Pagulingan temple (see fig. 5 and 6). This phenomena might have also indicated contacts between Bali and India during the spread of Buddhism in Indonesia.



Figure 5. Reconstructed Stupa and Boddhisattwa at Pagulingan Temple

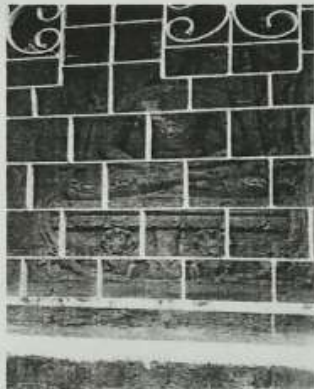


Figure 6. Images of Boddhisattwa at Udayagiri stupa (left) and Pagulingan Temple (right)

The relief of stupa inside the clay stupas found at Kalibukbuk are very similar to the miniature of stupa at Pagulingan temple and the relief of stupa at the ravine of Petanu (Kempers, 1991: 125: fig. 90, see figure 4). Based on the similarity of the shape of the relief of stupa at the ravine of Petanu and the lotus cushion-crowned of Blanjong inscription, Bernet Kempers (1991: 126) believes that the date of these objects are contemporary, namely from the early 10<sup>th</sup> century AD. However, Stutterheim suggests that the relief of stupa and the Buddhist statues which were

found at Goa Gajah contemporaries of Borobudur, in Central Java dated from mid 9<sup>th</sup> century AD (Kempers, 1991: 126-127, fig. 91; see fig. 7 and 8).



Figure 7. Relief of stupa at the Petanu ravine and its reconstruction (Kempers, 1991, fig. 89 and 90)

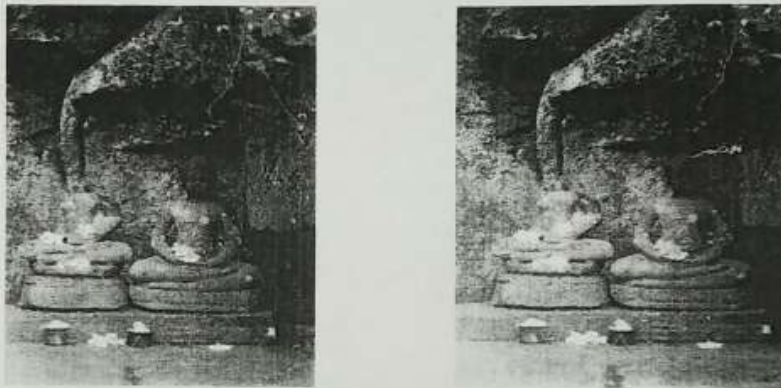


Figure 8. Buddha images at Goa Gajah (Bernet Kempers, 1991: 126, fig. 91)

There are 43 fragments of votive tablets were found at Blandongan, Batujaya in West Java (Utomo, 2012: 4-5). This site also produced Indian rouletted wares. This phenomenon is similar to Bali, where the appearance of the Indian rouletted wares representing the first Indian contact with Bali, and it was followed by the discovery of clay stupas suggesting the second waves of the contact between India and Bali.

#### **The Inscriptional Data**

It is interesting to note that the Balinese inscriptions dated from the late 10<sup>th</sup> up to 11<sup>th</sup> century mentioned several place's names in India such as Waranasi, Nalanda, and Amarawati. These place's names were associated with court of justice.

high functionary, the residence of Buddhist priests, and the name of a shrine or a sacred place.

The inscription of Sembiran B dated from Saka 873 or AD 951 states III.2. ...*da dikara di panglapuan di waranasi tuha dara* (Goris, 1954: 72-73; Ardika and Beratha, 1996: 106). It is translated as follows: the honorable *Dhikara* (functionary) of court of justice at Baranasi/Waranasi is Tuha Dara. The inscription of Gobleg, Pura Desa II dated from Saka 905 or AD 983 mentioned lib.2. ...*da senapati waranasi tuha neko*,... (Goris, 1954: 79; Ardika and Beratha, 1996: 123). Translation: the high functionary or army commander (*Senapati*) at Waranasi is Tuha Neko.

The term Nalanda was first mentioned in the inscription of Serai All, dated from Saka 915 or AD 993. The inscription stated as follows: Va. 5. ...*mpungku di nalanda dang upadhyaya dhanawan* or the Buddhist priest at Nalanda (Nalanda) was Dang Upadhyaya (*honorefic* teacher) Dhanawan (Goris, 1954: 83; Ardika and Beratha, 1996: 135-136). It is interesting to note that Tuha Gato was mentioned as *Senapati* at Waranasi in this inscription. On the basis of the inscription of Gobleg, Pura Desa II dated from AD 983 and the inscription of Serai All, dated from AD 993 that Tuha Neko was replaced by Tuha Gato as *Senapati* (army-commander or high functionary) at Waranasi.

The inscription of Bwahan A dated from Saka 916 or AD 994 noted that the Buddhist priest at Nalanda was Dang Upadhyaya Dhanawan and the Buddhist priest at Waranasi was Dangacaryya Sucandra (Goris, 1954: 86; Ardika and Beratha, 1998: 35). This inscription indicates that Nalanda and Waranasi were residence of Buddhist priests. In addition, the inscription also mentioned Brahmanical priests (*kasaiwan*) as well as Buddhist priests (*kasoghatan*) were members of court functionaries.

The inscription of Tengkulak A dated from Saka 945 or AD 1023 mentioned the hermitage (*katyagan*) at Pakerisan river called Amarawati (Ginarsa, 1961: 4-8; Ardika and Beratha, 1998: 86; see fig. 9). The Balinese inscriptions indicate that the Indian place's names such as Waranasi, Nalanda, and Amarawati were transferred to the local place in Bali. These places are associated with the centre of Buddhism in India. Amarawati was the Buddhist influence site in the lower Krishna valley under the Mauryas (Ray, 1994: 140). However, it is still not clear whether the Balinese might have gone to the Buddhist centres such as Waranasi, Nalanda, and



Amarawati and other places in India or they knew the places cognitively? New data from India or Bali are needed for further studies.



Figure 9. The Gunung Kawi rock arts named Amarawati

### Conclusion

The beginning of contact between India and Bali might have already existed at the late second century BC. Bali seem to have been located on the spices trade routes that connecting the eastern and western Indonesia.

The second waves of contact between India and Bali might have occurred around the 8<sup>th</sup> century AD. The discoveries of clay stupas, seal of Buddhist mantras, the relief of stupa, the Buddhist stupas and the images of Buddha indicate that Bali was part of the world of Buddhism around 8<sup>th</sup> century AD.

Inscriptional data from the early 10<sup>th</sup> century AD suggest that Buddhism and Hinduism became the official religions in Bali. Priests of Buddhism and Hinduism were members of the court functionaries in ancient Bali. At the same time, the Buddhist centres in India such as Waranasi, Nalanda, and Amarawati were transformed to the local places in Bali

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