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Interpretation of Symbols, Veneration and Divine Attributes in Dieng Temple Complex, Central Java

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Abstract

This study aims to discuss the divine symbols and attributes used as a medium of worship in the Dieng Plateau. The research was phased in according to Wallace's empirical cycle and was conducted in the Dieng Plateau, Central Java, Indonesia, a spiritual centre in ancient Java. The discovery of the Śiva Triśirah statue in the Dieng Temple Complex reveals new things in the past Hindu Nusantara Theology construction. Several divine symbols and attributes are served as a medium of worship at the Temple Complex in the Dieng Plateau. The concept of Deity in the Dieng Plateau is Śivaistic in character with the worship of Lord Śiva Triśirah, that is, Śiva with three faces and four hands, as the Supreme Deity. However, some divine symbols and attributes also serve as a medium of worship and connected to divinity. In Hinduism, the sacred symbols and attributes of God are inseparable. Divine attributes generally define God. In the discussion of theology, God is described with various excellent attributes. The central divine attributes found are as follows: Omnipotence, Creatorship, Omniscience, Eternity and Omnipresence, Personhood, Goodness⁄ Perfection, Non-Physicality, Necessary, Existence, Simplicity, Immutability and Impassibility. These divine attributes are depicted in various forms of sacred symbols found in the Dieng Plateau.

Keywords: Dieng; Theology; Śiva Triśirah; Symbols; Divine Attributes; Central Java

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Introduction

This study foregrounds the findings in the form of divine symbols and attributes that became a medium of worship in the Dieng Plateau. These divine symbols and attributes are used as a medium to connect between the human realm and gods. It is also used to train human consciousness as a form of ancient Javanese Hindu religious life. The Dieng Plateau, known as the Land of the Gods, the Land of Heaven (*Kahyangan*), and the Land beyond the Clouds, is a prominent region in ancient Javanese Hindu civilisation. Dieng Plateau is considered the first and foremost holy point on the islands of Java and Nusantara. Some experts call Dieng the World Axis, the Cosmic Axis, which has many divinity signs (Surpi, 2019). In its long history, Dieng is even considered a central point of Hindu civilisation, where the *Ṛṣi* devoted their lives to knowledge, invoking the welfare of the Hindu Kings at various eras in the Land of Java and Nusantara. One important reason that cannot be ignored regarding Dieng's historical dimension is the ancient site or its temples. The temples in the Dieng Plateau are named after figures in *Māhābharata* and Javanese puppets. This naming holds a historical significance that both *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Māhābharata* Epics had a profound effect on the life of Nusantara people in the past. Moreover, it is also used as a medium for the spread of Hinduism.

Dieng comes from Sanskrit, namely *Di*, a high place or mountain, and *Hyang*, which means *Kahyangan* or heaven. From the combination of these words, it can be interpreted that *Dieng* is an upper region in the form of mountains where the gods and goddesses reside, which should be an ideal paradise. Comprehensively, *Di* means a high place or mountain and *Hyang*, which means *ancestral spirit* or *gods* or something believed to be a God, ancestral spirit, even God or Divine Creatures in general. Hyang is also often interpreted as kahyangan, nirvana, or heaven, where the ancestral spirits, gods or goddesses, Gods or Divine creatures live (Sukatno, 2004). Moreover, Dieng can also be traced to the meaning of the *Kawi* language. The word *Di* comes from the phrase *hadi* or *adi,* which means glorious, gorgeous, beautiful, which contains the definition of all-round, the most, and other excellent qualities. The highest or highest peak, mysterious, transcendent, or everything that means completely perfect or ultimate, and the mystery of the perfection of order and faith. Thus Dieng is also an important place in the cosmology of the Land of Java. In addition,' Dieng's position, which is located right in the middle of the island of Java, makes it has a special place for ancient Javanese spirituality.

The Dieng temple complex is a silent witness to Hinduism's rapid development in Java in the past. The Dieng Temple Complex is an ancient temple, which is believed to have been built during the 7th and 8th Centuries. However, several experts argue that it is even older (Harriyadi, 2020). Some records estimated this complex was still used as a Hindu worship complex during the 14th Century, even to the 19th Century. So this temple complex is thought to be one of the oldest temples in Java. It is estimated that this temple was built by order from the Kings of the Sanjaya Dynasty. The construction of this temple complex is divided into two stages. The first phase includes Arjuna Temple, Semar Temple, Srikandi Temple, and Gatotkaca Temple (Sedyawati et al., 2013). The second stage is a continuation of the first stage. An inscription is written in ancient Javanese dating from 808 AD, and a statue of Shiva is also discovered in this temple complex. These artefacts are now stored in the National Museum in Jakarta. Interestingly, the temples in the Dieng complex use the names of *Māhābharata*. This phenomenon shows how *Māhābharata* literature greatly influenced the ancient Javanese Hindu concept.

In the Dieng Plateau, initially, there were very many temples and worship shrines. It was also estimated that the Dieng temple originally numbered 400 units, but now only 8 Temple complex remains (Sukatno, 2004). However, the eight temple complexes are adequate to be studied to reconstruct Hindu Theology in Ancient Java and interpret the message left from the past

to the next generation. Many other fascinating things in Dieng Plateau, such as the existence of *Anak Gembel*, a child with dreads. Munandar (2016) stated that this phenomenon is a mystical communication along time, through the past, present, and future. Several Hindu rituals are still being held in the Dieng Plateau. For example, the ceremony of salvation shaves the dreads hair of *Anak Gembel*, the tradition of *Malam Satu Suro,* or the first night on *Suro* Month in the Javanese Calendar and "*Ruwatan Desa*" or a ceremony that held to purify the village. Local people realise that this tradition is a relic of the Hindu tradition, but it must still be carried out as a form of respect for their ancestors.

The study of historical relics, such as historical buildings or temples, is significant to understand the religious situation, including the theological concepts that developed at that time. Ancient Javanese theology is essential to be explored to understand the system of Hindu Nusantara Theology (Surpi, 2020). The most important discovery in the Dieng plateau is the statue of Lord *Śiva Triśirah*. The statue of Lord *Śiva* with three faces and four hands is classified as an old Hindu relics in Nusantara. The worship of *Śiva Triśirah* is not much expressed in the history of Hindu civilisation in the archipelago. The statue of *Śiva Triśirah* and the statue of *Nandisawahanamurti* are considered to be characteristic of Dieng. Likewise, other divine symbols and depictions of divine attributes that were part of Ancient Hindu Theology concepts in the Land of Java were also found in Dieng.

The study begins with a discussion of the research method deployed for this study. Following this, the results are critically discussed in the section 'results and discussion'.

Research Method

This study is based on qualitative research accomplished by collecting data via observation, interviews, Focus Group Discussion (FGD), and literature studies. Observations were made with sightings in the Dieng Plateau (including surveys of all the temple complexes, historical sites, and the Dieng Kailasa museum), Prambanan Temple Complex, Prambanan Museum, and the Indonesian National Museum in Jakarta. The research process is based on Wallace's empirical cycle (1978). Wallace's empirical cycle is a scientific process developed by Walter L. Wallace in his book *The Logic of Science in Sociology* (2017). This empirical cycle model describes the relationship of components in social research more clearly and in detail. This cycle explicitly explains social research components' association and is directly relevant to empirical research to achieve our study's research objectives (Wallace, 2017) correctly. Wallace's empirical cycle's scientific process includes 1. theory; 2. hypothesis; 3. observation; and 4. empirical generalisation. The four components of scientific information can be changed from one element to another by one of the methodological features: 1. the logical deduction, 2. interpretation, the arrangement of instruments, 3. measurement, simplification of information, and parameter estimation, 4. formulation of concepts and propositions, 5. hypothesis testing, and 6. logical inference (Wallace, 1978). As stated above, the research process of *Śiva Triśirah's* theology was carried out based on Wallace's empirical cycle, which had been adapted for theological research. Here, the study begins with a problem and then looks for the right theory used in this research. After that, through logical deduction, it tries to draw a hypothesis. Following this, observations and generalisations are made followed by variable analysis and correlation to achieve research direction, which is outlined below:

- First, they are classifying the *Śiva Triśirah* statues based on their characteristics and each statue's size.
- Second, they are formulating the attributes of each class of *Śiva Triśirah* statues.
- Third, they are making a comparison of the characteristics between *Śiva Triśirah* statues in Indonesia with the other iconography of *Śiva Triśirah* statues founded in India. For example, Tri Mukhi Temple, Amarkantak, Madhya Pradesh; *Triśirah* found in a sacred Guaiva cave on Elepantha Island, east of Mumbai; and Ellora Caves, which is famous for Kailasa Temple.

- Fourth, the result of the comparison in the third step is a working hypothesis. A working hypothesis is a hypothesis formulation in such a way that the theoretical concepts used are operational. In this case, the hypothesis used is the working hypothesis. Dieng's statue of *Śiva Triśirah* is the highest worship medium in its era, a sacred attribute, and has conformity and or deviation to similar statues in India.
- Fifth, the working hypothesis's verification is carried out concerning the next stage, namely, stage six.
- In stage six, data processing and interpretation are carried out following Hindu theology's understanding.
- In the last stage, stage seven, namely drawing conclusions. Data analysis uses Ethnographic Content Analysis (ECA). The research approach was based on the Hindu Theology approach, which has diverse views among other religions. The results of the study are discussed in the following sections.

Results and Discussion

Dieng Temple Complex and Its Calendar Making in Dieng Plateau

The Dieng Kailasa Museum data states that the Dieng Temple complex was allegedly founded in the 8th Century (Surpi, 2019). However, other views state that this temple was built long before that century. In his book, *Pengantar Sejarah Kebudayaan Indonesia 1*, Soekmono (1979) stated that the earliest temples were built in the 'Old Dieng Style' between 650 and 730 AD. Meanwhile, Sukatno (2004), in his book entitled Dieng Poros Dunia, examines several written sources in the form of fibres and their relation to local stories and reckons that the temple's existence is older than what these experts' estimated. Until the 13th Century, Dieng was still a spiritual centre in Java. Located on the caldera at the southern foot of Mount Prahu and the western slopes of Mount Ungaran, Dieng, or *Di-Hyang* in old Javanese, means *residence* of the Gods. The Dieng Plateau is a religious centre marked by numerous temples, built from the mid-7th to the early 13th Century. However, currently there remain only eight stone temples, including the five temples in the temple complex of Arjuna and three other temples located in the vicinity, namely Bima Temple, Temple Davaravati, and Temple Ghatotkaca.

The temple at Dieng was rediscovered in 1814 by a British soldier travelling to the area (Chapman, 2013). He saw a cluster of temples submerged in lake water. In 1956, Van Kinsbergen, a Dutch-Flemish sculptor interested in photography, arrived in the Dutch East Indies (now Jakarta) in 1851 (Sedyawati et al., 2013). He led the effort to drain the lake where the temple was discovered. He took the first archaeological and cultural photographs in Java during the Dutch East Indies period in the 19th Century, working under the Batavia Society of Arts and Sciences. Their main interests were in archaeological research and conservation (Surpi, 2019). The cleaning effort was continued by the Dutch East Indies government in 1864, followed by recording and shooting by Van Kinsbergen (Sedyawati et al., 2013).

The temples in the Dieng plateau are the centre of pilgrimage (Figure 1). A place located in the foothills around the Lake of Telaga Warna were the ascetics settled and made a small meditation cave. Experts believe that the Dieng Plateau may have been a site of ancestor worship in ancient times, where most of them think that the mountain is home to the gods. Dieng is called a holy mountain in an inscription that originated from the 919th Century AD. In the inscription, Dieng is referred to as the city of priests. Its location can be accessed via stairs that lead from Pekalongan plain to the north and Bagelen to the south. A ladder made of igneous rock was found in these two areas between 1860 and 1870 (Sedyawati et al., 2013).

Figure 1: The Map of Dieng Plateau Source: Asienreisender, 2014 (http://www.asienreisender.de/dieng.html)

Based on previous research, the Dieng Plateau, used as a place of worship for centuries, was left abandoned and forgotten due to various factors, such as natural disaster and religious changes in the community around Dieng (Harriyadi, 2020). This area is inhabited again around 1830, and after that, many remains of the temple were excavated. Evidence that says Dieng, a hub of around 400 temples, was obtained by discovering inscriptions dating from the 9th to the 13th Centuries (Sukatno, 2004). At present, the Dieng plateau is an agricultural centre with terraced agricultural land along valleys and foothills. Farmers reclaimed most of the land in the 19th Century and transported the remaining majority of the stones that make up the temple for other buildings. Some Dutch sources claim that the temple stones which have been damaged have been used to make the road base (Sukatno, 2004). Meanwhile, the remaining eight temples are given character names in the Javanese version of the Mahābhārata.

Soekmono (1979) argued that the earliest temples were built in the 'Old Dieng Style' between 650 and 730 AD. Canggal temple, located near Borobudur on Mount Wukir (Mount Wukir), is the earliest temple associated with the inscription dated 732 AD; however, only its foundation survives. So the temple at Dieng is the earliest stone monument available for further study. Soekmono (1979) also believed that Dieng temples' construction had been completed before the Canggal temple was built. Temples classified using the old Dieng style include Arjuna temple, Semar temple, Srikandi temple, and Ghatotkaca temple. The second stage of building the new Dieng style was between 730 AD and 800 AD. Temples classified into the new Dieng style include Puntadeva

temple, Sembadra temple, and Bima temple. Gedong Songo temple is the closest dating period to the second phase of the Dieng temple building date. Meanwhile, the Badut temple was the only temple made in this period in East Java.

The temples that still exist are scattered in four different locations. The most preserved / reconstructed site is widely known as the Arjuna Group (Figure 2). It contains five extant temples and several others, occupying a flat valley in the Plateau's centre, near Dieng's current village. The closest temple site is on the southern edge of the valley, the Ghatotkaca temple site, a temple that still exists accompanied by the remains of five other temples. At the northern edge of the valley is the Davaravati temple, again a single temple with the remains of three different temples. Finally, at the foot of the Highlands' southern side is the Bima Temple, which appears to be a single building. While each of the eight temples left in Dieng is the *cella*, small stones with a single interior space represent various approaches to building type and altar of worship.

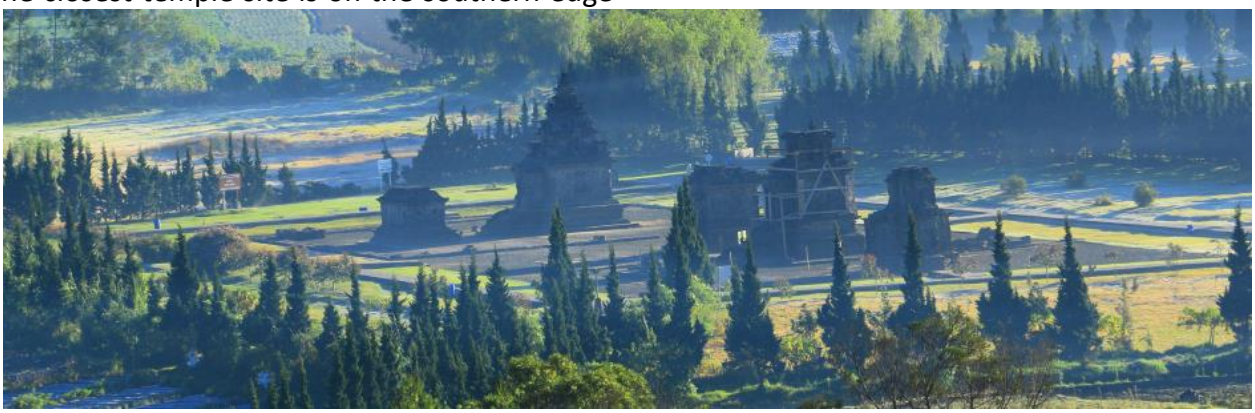

Figure 2: Arjuna Temple Complex
Source: https://diengplateau.com/

The Veneration of Symbol and Divine Attributes in Dieng Temple Complex

Hindu religious systems cannot be separated from divine symbols and attributes because it is related to the Hindu theology's typology. The typology allows the community to build a complex of worship and its essential part of divine attributes. Donder et al. (2020) asserted that in *Saguna Brahman* Hindu Theology's typology, God has a form of Devas, incarnations, or saints who teach the truth to humans. The divine symbols or forms emerge from this typology and are used as a worship medium by the public. The divine symbols and attributes found in the Dieng temple complex include the following:

Śiva Triśirah

Śiva is one of the Supreme Devas in Hindu theology that Śivaistik characterises. *Śiva Triśirah* is a fascinating and distinctive statue found on the Dieng Plateau. The *Śiva* statue, which is now housed in the Dieng Kailasa Museum, has three heads, so it is called *Tri Śirah* or Trimukha. *Śiva Triśirah* is considered to have unique features in Dieng considering the discovery of the statue of *Śiva Triśirah* is quite rare in Indonesia. Furthermore, this statue is thought to be an ancient statue in the worship of *Śiva*. There are two statues of *Śiva Triśirah* of different sizes at the Dieng Kailasa Museum. The prominent *Śiva Triśirah* statue, having a large scale, is accompanied by three faces in different directions and four hands, as shown in Figure 3.

The *Śiva Triśirah* statue is massive, sitting elegantly in the lotus (*padmāsana*) position, with the right foot above the left foot. According to ancient yoga knowledge, the right hand is above his left hand in a *Dhyana Mudra* stance in the front hands. This gesture is a form of meditation in ancient Hinduism and is also used in Buddhist and Jain traditions. *Śiva* is known as a God who always remains in a meditative position. Therefore, His statue is commonly depicted in a meditating posture. The *Śiva's* body statue appears in an upright position with eyes that

appear closed and calm. Although it is not maintained as the procedure for treating statues in Hindu temples in hundreds of years, this *Śiva Triśirah* still shows His *prabava* as an incredible ancient statue. In addition to this *Śiva Triśirah* statue, there is also a smaller statue but a more fragile/weathered condition. The two front hands appear to be incomplete, and the front and rear of the left face are time-worn.

Figure 3 : *Śiva Triśirah* Statue Dieng in Dieng Kailasa Museum, Central Java
Source: Researchers' Documentation in Dieng Kailasa Museum 2019

In Hindu iconography, *Śiva* has many forms, including *Mahesa Mūrti,* whose form is depicted as having one or three heads, having a third eye, with a headdress in the form of *jatamakuta* (Rao, 1968). Apart from *Mahesa Mūrti*, *Śiva Triśirah* can also be described as an embodiment of *Sadaśiva Mūrti*. According to the Uttara Kamikagama Book, *Sadaśiva Mūrti* can be characterised as having three to five heads and ten hands. When depicted as having ten heads, the five heads are the embodiment of *Pancabrahma*, namely *Sadyojata*, *Tatpurusa*, *Vamadeva*, *Aghora,* and *Sadaśiva* (*Isana*). All of them wearing *jatamakuta*. *Sadaśiva Mūrti* generally carries some *laksana* such as *sula*, *sakt*i, *katvanga*, and *bhujanga*, with his hands in *Abhaya hasta prasadamudra* postures. *Sadaśiva* is sometimes depicted as having four heads, where the head's position is adjusted to the compass's direction. Only three are highlighted between these four heads. The faces expressions of two *santa* and one *ugra* (Rao, 1968). Similarly, Maulana (2002) stated that in Indonesia, especially Java, *Śiva Triśirah* is depicted as having a three-headed face with two *santa's* facial expressions and one *ugra.* He is described as having four arms. Each is carrying one of the *laksana* (attributes), such as *camara* (a fan made of peacock feathers), *aksamala* (prayer beads), *pustaka* (a book made of palm leaves), and *nilotpal*a (blue lotus buds), in the posture of *Yogamudra*, *varada,* or *vyakhyanahasta*. The *Śiva Triśirah* found in Dieng is depicted sitting in the *Yogamudra* pose.

Śiva is a statue commonly found in various places of worship since ancient times in India and Indonesia. Referring to different research results, in both Indonesia and India, *Śiva,* as the supreme deity, is known for its five aspects. These five aspects are called *pancamuka*, which consists of *Sadyojata, Vamadeva, Aghora, Tatpurusa,* and *Isana*. *Śiva* is also known for its nine-aspect group consisting of *Śiva, Isvara, Rudra, Brahma, Mahesvara,* or *Mahesa Mūrti*, *Mahadeva*, *Sankara, Viṣṇu,* and *Sambhu* (Sedyawati, 1979). Seemingly, Maulana (2002)

argued about the existence of *Śiva Triśirah*. First, Maulana (2002) argued *Śiva Triśirah* as the embodiment of *Śiva Tri Mūrti* (a god associated with creation, preservation, and demolition). Second, *Śiva Triśirah* as the embodiment of *Sadaśiva Mūrti*. In Uttara Kamikagama, the iconographic features of *Sadaśiva Mūrti* are depicted as having five heads and ten hands. The five heads are aspects of the manifestation of *Pancabrahma*. Namely *Sadyojata* (this face of Śiva will give both happiness and sadness to all creatures)*, Tatpurusa* (it represents the structure of soul)*, Vamedeva* (this face of Śiva has special powers to heal both mentally and physically of any creature)*, Aghora* (this face of Śiva is *Buddhi rūpa* or intellect)*,* and *Sadaśiva* (*Isana*) (represents the Citta Śaktī of Śiva, represents space), all wearing *jatamakuta* (crown). *Sadaśiva Mūrti* is generally depicted with *laksana* (attributes) in the form of *sula, shakti, khatvanga*, and *bhujangga*, with the *Abhaya*, *Hasta,* and *Prasada's* hand-posture (Rao, 1914). Besides being five-headed, *Sadaśivamūrti* can also be described as being four-headed. The head position is adjusted to the compass's direction, and among these four heads, only three are highlighted. The facial expressions depicted— two *santa* and one *ugra* (Sharma, 1976). The third form is *Śiva Triśirah,* as the embodiment of *Mahesamūrti*. *Mahesamūrti* is described as having three heads, with facial expressions of two *santa* and one *ugra* (Rao, 1968). The left head depicts santa's facial expression as the face of *Aghora Mūrti*, the middle head, which represents the *ugra* facial expression. Indeed Gopitha Rao's (1968) opinion is endorsed by Kramrisch (1976), which argues that the left head depicts *Aghora-Bhairawa*. The middle head depicts *Śiva Mahadeva,* a manifestation of *Śiva* as *Tatpurusa*, and the right head depicts *Vamadeva-Uma*, the *sakti* of *Śiva.*

Taking the views of scholars— Rao (1968) and Kramrisch (1954), Maulana (2002) buttresses *Śiva* as the embodiment of *Mahesamūrti*. This idea is evidenced by the forms of *Śiva Triśirah* statues in Java, which are generally depicted as having three heads with two facial expressions of *santa* and one *ugra*. *Śiva* is portrayed sitting in the posture of *yogasana* or *paryankasana* on the *padmasana*. All three heads are wearing *jatamakuta. Śiva Triśirah* is depicted as having four arms, both front hands, in the posture of *yogamudra* or *varadahasta* and *vyakyanahasta*. The two backhands carry *camara* (a fan made of peacock feathers), *aksamala* (prayer beads), *Pustaka* (a book made of palm leaves), and *nilotpal*a (blue lotus buds) or *the Padma*. The middle head with the *ugra* facial expression is the embodiment of *Sadyojata*. The left head with *santa*'s facial expression is the embodiment of *Aghora Mūrti*. The right head with the *santa*'s facial expression that Gopinatha Rao has not expressed is thought to be the head of *Śiva Mahadeva*, as expected (Kramrisch, 1954). Likewise, the three *jatamakuta* (crown) of *Śiva Triśirah* decorations do not show three strands of gems like the statue of *Śiva Triśirah* in India, but rather a rosette and flower decoration and one or two strands of jewels.

One of the revered manifestations is *Śiva Triśira* or in Old Javanese *Triśirah* (three heads). *Śiva,* with three faces embodiment, otherwise known as *Tri Mukhi Trishira*, is the embodiment of *Śiva* that is classified as rare. In India, *Śiva* with three faces is found in Tri Mukhi Temple, Amarkantak, Madhya Pradesh India, a famous ancient holy temple. Furthermore, a large statue of *Triśirah* is located in the sacred cave of *Śiva* on Elepantha Island, east of Mumbai. This monolithic temple is a UNESCO World Heritage site. The statue of *Śiva Triśirah* is also found in Ellora caves, Aurangabad district of Maharashtra, India, famous for Kailasa temple. This site is a very ancient temple complex of *Śiva,* which also belongs to a world heritage site.

We believe that *Śiva Triśirah* is not a combination or manifestation of *Tri Mūrti*, but represents the three forces of creation, preservation, and demolition or full power in one embodiment of *Śiva*. Besides, *Śiva* represents three manifestations of time, namely the past, present, and future. Representation of the object of eternal worship and His transcendence of three natural influences, *Sattva*, *Rajas*, and *Tamas*. Thus, these three faces represent a supreme power, Supreme Deity. *Sadaśiva* or *Parabrahman*

himself is worshipped at all times, in all circumstances, beyond time. These three faces are the representation of all the highest power, strength, and omnipotence of God.

Nandisavahanamūrti

Another fascinating statue found in the Dieng Temple Complex is *Nandisavahanamūrti*, *Nandi,* the sacred bull, carrying the God *Śiva* on his shoulder. Nandi is depicted sitting in an *asana* (sitting in meditation pose), with both hands supporting *Śiva's* legs. *Śiva* seemed to be sitting upright and calm (Figure 4). However, unfortunately, this statue is not intact. The head and neck of Siva no longer exist. Besides, part of his hands is imperfect.

In Hindu mythology, *Nandi* is a vehicle for Lord *Śiva*. *Nandi* is usually depicted in the form of a sacred bull in a crouch position. However, Nandi's statue in the Dieng temple complex is portrayed as a bull-headed human, in a cross-legged sitting position, and holding the Lord *Śiva* on his shoulder. The way *Nandi* carried Lord *Śiva* was also unique, like someone who is riding a horse. Such depictions of statues, until now, have only been found in the Dieng Plateau region (Asianto, 2015).

This statue seemed to leave a message that a devotee must diligently meditate by holding *Śiva*, his idol god, on his shoulders. The whole body supports *Śiva*. Theologically, it can be interpreted that in meditation for a worshiper, the Revered God is not far away but is upheld on the shoulders in the form of divine awareness. This interpretation is what distinguishes the typology of Hindu theology from other religions. Hindus consider God very close. Even the spirit entity must be His servant by upholding Thee.

Figure 4: Statue of Nandisavahanamūrti
Source: Researchers' Documentation, 2019

Śiva Mahadeva, Parvati and Liṅga

In Dieng Plateau, besides the *Śiva Triśirah* statue, many other statues of *Śiva,* both large and small, are found either in a sitting position in meditation or a standing position. A large statue of *Śiva* sitting in a meditation position is now placed in the Dieng Museum. The *Śiva* statue is in a damaged condition. The head is lost; some parts of his body are also damaged. *Śiva* seemed to be sitting in a meditative position on a lotus flower. Titib (2003) argues that the word *Śiva* means the one who gives good luck (*karahayuan*), kind, friendly, forgiving, pleasing, giving much hope, being calm, happy, and so forth. In moving the law of omnipotence *Sang Hyang Śiva* is supported by His *Śakti, Durgā* or *Pārvati.* The statue of Śiva Mahadeva, Parvati, and Liṅga, are shown in Figure 5.

As already stated, besides the large statue, there is also a smaller statue of *Śiva* in the standing

position. The statue is still intact, believed to be the statue of *Śiva* because of the characteristics of the crown of braided hair (*jatamakuta*), *kalasa* (jug), *trisula* (Lord Shiva's spear with three points), and *camara* (a fan made of peacock feathers). Information about the certainty of the temple site where the discovery of this statue is still unfunded. It is because, in ancient times, temples were scattered in this Plateau with extraordinary natural scenery.

In the Dieng Plateau, as the oldest holy point on the island of Java, also found worship media in the form of *liṅga*. *Liṅga* is the medium of worship of *Śiv*a, also known as *Śivaliṅga*, a significant symbol, which is usually complemented by yoni. Another unique thing is the discovery of a medium-sized *Śiva-Parvati* statue. This statue is impressive because it is very rarely found in Indonesia, *Śiva-Parvati* in one stone statue. *Śiva-Parvati* is in a standing position, with some parts, especially the face, in a damaged condition.

Figure 5: Statue of *Śiva Mahadeva, Parvati,* and *Liṅga*
Source: Researchers' documentation, 2019

Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardhinī

In the Dieng temple complex, the statue of *Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardhinī* was also found (Figure 6). This discovery became an indication of the worship of feminine aspects (*Śakti*) at Dieng. This *Durgā* statue has eight hands. Each of the statue's arms holds a weapon and stands on the bull of *Mahisasura*, which she defeated. Just like most of the other statues, the condition of this statue is in a damaged condition. Part of the face is not perfect; some of her legs and hands have been broken or even lost.

The Vedic literature, mainly in the epics and purāṇas, notes popular myths and legends. One of them is about *Śiva* and *Durgā*. Where the Goddess *Durgā* is described as the *Śakti* of God *Śiva.* Mother Goddess *Durgā* has various forms for different purposes. One that stands out is the Buffalo-trampler (*Mahiṣā Mardhinī*), highly glorified and worshipped in Devī *Māhātmya,* which is part of the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* (Aiyar, 1997). Indonesia, which is part of the great Vedic civilisation, has traces of *Devi* worship. The worship of *Durgā Devi* in the form of *Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardhinī* is one of the most famous. Also, the evidence of the worship for *Śri Devi,* the *Śakti* of *Śri Visṇu* were found. Goddesses *Śrī Lakṣmī* is worshipped as the Goddess of Prosperity.

Ganesha

In the Hindu tradition, *Ganesha* is the first deity to be worshipped first in every worship. Also, Lord *Ganesha* is worshipped in the first temple. Following the concept of Hindu theology, *Ganesha* is a God who destroys all hurdles and obstacles and confer *Sidhi* and *Budhi* (power and intellect). Besides, *Ganesha* was the earliest deity worshipped before worshipping *Śiva*, who was His father.

The characters in *Māhābharata* and even Hindu deities evolved and were earthed in Nusantara in a wayang character. In the Purwa puppet,

Dewa Ganesha, called *Batara Gana* (Figure 7)*,* is the name of an elephant-headed deity who is the son of *Batara Guru* and *Umaranti Batari*. He has another name that is *Ganapati*, *Ganesha*, and *Wigneswara*. When getting a human head to replace the elephant head, *Batara Gana* also changed its name to *Batara Mahadewa*. It is said that because *Umayi Devi* turned into *Batara Durga*, *Batara Guru* then married *Parwati Devi,* and from that marriage, *Ganesha* was born.

Figure 6: Statue of *Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardhinī*

Figure 7: Statue of *Ganesha*

Source: Researchers' documentation, 2019

Batara Gana, or often called *Sang Hyang Ganesha,* is a God who mastered science. For this reason, *Ganesha* became a symbol of institutional knowledge in Indonesia. *Batara Gana's* form is unique; it has a large body, while its head is like an elephant's head. *Batara Gana* lives in the *Glugutinatar Kahyangan*, a magnificent palace in the *Jonggringsaloka* region. The castle itself is shaped in a silver sheen that is colourful by the sun's rays.

When heaven (*Kahyangan*) was attacked by a giant army led by King *Nilaudraka* from *Gluguginantar state*, who wanted the seven most beautiful angels in heaven, the army of the devatas were unable to match it. *Parwati Devi*, who was pregnant, had to evacuate with other angles to avoid the tantrum of King *Nilaudraka,* who devastated the entire heaven, so *Batara Indra* had to fight it with his white elephant.

Unexpectedly, *Parwati Devi,* who witnessed the course of the battle with a face full of fear, had fallen. Her womb collided so that later, she gave birth to a baby *devata*, but with a giant face, an elephant's head. The miraculous baby was then treated with *gege* water, known as *Tirtha Amerta Kamandalu*, by the *Batara Guru*. This water is causing the baby to overgrow to become large. After that, the miraculous baby boy was later appointed as the devatas' champion to rival *King Nilaudraka* and finally succeeded in killing the heavenly intruders' leader. After that, *Batara Gana* grew up to be a smart kid and very smart in science.

Viṣṇu-Śakti and Hari Hara

In the Dieng temple complex, the statue *Viṣṇu* and *Śakti* are also found. This statue is unique because of its unusual posture. This statue seems to hug each other. *Viṣṇu* is depicted in half crouched position, while *Śakti* is in a kneeling posture. *Śakti* leaned His head on *Viṣṇu* in a position to hug *Viṣṇu* (Figure 8). *Viṣṇu*'s left hand appears to be around His waist. However, unfortunately, this unique statue is in a condition that is not intact, so it seems not too

clear. This statue can be a message for *grhasta* (householders), how *Viṣṇu* the Preserver and *Laksmi* must work together to realise life on earth that is good and prosperous. This statue is classified as very unique, considering that it is infrequent for *Viṣṇu* and His *Śakti* to embrace each other. The Dieng Kailasa Museum's explanation, allegedly, is ancient, so it is already in worn condition. The attributes used or brought to this statue is not clear.

Another statue is the statue of *Hari Hara* (Figure 8). This statue depicts *Śiva* and *Viṣṇu* in one character. This statue is worshipped by Hindus who worship *Śiva* (*Śivaistik*), as well as *Viṣṇu* worshippers, known as *Vaisnava*. Various literary sources and inscriptions tell several names of these types of images, such as *Hari-Sankara*, *Śiva-Kesava*, *Sankara-Narayana*, *Murariswara*-Ardhasauriswa*ra*. The *Śiva-Viṣṇu* statue found in Dieng is known as *Hari-Hara*.

Figure 8: Statue of *Viṣṇu* – *Śakti* and *Hari Hara*
Source: Researchers' documentation, 2019

Agastya Guru

The *Agastya* statue is also found in the Dieng Plateau. Like the *Agastya* statue in Indonesia, this statue is described as having a beard and a protruding belly with his hand holding a pot of *tirta kamandalu* (holy water of eternity) (figure 9). When viewed from the meaning of theology, *Agastya* brought *tirta kamandalu* as a representation of his task, carrying a *tirta* (holy water) of eternity. This representation can have a profound sense: to bring spiritual, sacred knowledge capable of giving humans immortality. *Agastya* has been the *Adi Guru,* who has guided the Nusantara people since ancient times, today, and in the future, through His Holy teachings.

Poerbatjaraka (1992), in his book entitled: *Agastya di Nusantara*, tells the arrival of Agastya in Java coherently. The *Maha Ṛṣi* appears in sacred tales, and he hiddenly appeared in the *Canggal* inscription. The holy person who later appeared in the statues of bearded older men, with a fat belly and holding a jug and *aksamala* (prayer beads), was an inseparable part of the central figures who occupied the niches of *Śiva* temple in many places (Poerbatjaraka, 1992).

The teacher's role is indeed significant in achieving enlightenment and awareness. Teacher worship is a prevalent tradition because the teacher is considered as a guide to attain realisation. The teacher is seen as a means of learning divinity and attaining supreme awareness. *Agastya,* in various texts, is known as *Bhaṭṭāra-Guru*. *Agastya Parwa* (Sura, 2002) stated that *Bhagawan Agastya* was very famous in Sanskrit literature as a *Bhagavan* who spread Hinduism to South India until he reached

Nusantara. He was a wandering *Bhagavan* who did not return home. According to *Agastya Parwa*, Bhagawan Agastya was not merely a legendary figure, but he was considered a great guiding teacher. Thus, it can be proven by the Agastya statue's position in the *Prambanan* temple, which is in one temple together with the other *Śiva* s family.

Figure 9: Statue of *Agastya Guru*
Source: Researchers' documentation, 2019

The Wheel of Dharma

The Wheel of Dharma artefact is fascinating in Dieng Plateau, which is now stored in the Indonesian National Museum. The Wheel of Dharma looks very simple but holds a million meanings (figure 10). Not yet found an explanation from experts about the discovery of the Wheel of Dharma. However, as is customary in temples, *ashrams,* or *Dharmasala*, the possibility of the Wheel of Dharma is a meaningful decoration and message on a wall or fence. The Wheel of Dharma is a common thing related to the Knights' three obligations as taught in *Māhābharata*. The *Māhābharata* teachings are deeply rooted until today in the Dieng Plateau.

The relics that exist on Dieng are usually labelled after the names that related to the world of *wayang* (the epic *Māhābharata*, and *Rāmāyaṇa*) which are in Nusantara, especially Java, later known as *Wayang Purwa*. However, according to Sukatno, the naming of particular places, objects, and areas in Dieng related to the world of *wayang* or shadow puppets turned out to have nothing to do with the buildings' function.

The name is a new name (Renville estimates since the beginning of the 19th Century AD). However, according to hermeneutics, the name is associated with several text premises. Furthermore, it also represents a symbolic map, which is related to the world of meaning (rational thinking) and the world of feelings (esoteric) (Sukatno, 2004). This perception is still challenging and remains to be verified. Still, it is contrary to the local communities belief, which states that the naming has occurred since ancient times and is inherited from generation to generation.

Figure 10: The Wheel of Dharma Statue
Source: Researchers' documentation, 2019

The Interpretation of Divine Attributes Founded in Dieng Plateau

In Hinduism, God's divine symbols and attributes cannot be separated. The divine attributes generally define God. In discussing theology, God is portrayed with a variety of fascinating attributes. For instance, (Everitt, 2010) stated that the main divine attributes include: omnipotence, creatorship, omniscience, eternity and omnipresence, personhood, goodness⁄ perfection, non-physicality, necessary, existence, simplicity, immutability, and impassibility. In Western theism, these divine attributes are widely discussed. Even it become points that must be solved both theologically and philosophically. There is no theological doctrine that is more general than divine attributes (Holmes, 2009). Divine attributes are frequently debated in the discussion of the theology of religions.

Scholars like Rosenkrantz & Wierenga (1991) provide precise, subtle, and exciting defences of the following controversial claims:

- There are things that even an omnipotent agent cannot do, but omnipotence can be adequately defined in a manner consonant with this.
- Omniscience is knowledge of all truths, including truths involving the haecceities of persons and times and truths about what a person would freely do (in the libertarian sense) in various circumstances.
- Divine foreknowledge of human actions is compatible with human freedom.
- Divine eternity, timelessness, and immutability are compatible with divine omniscience and action.
- God is impeccable and essentially good.
- The divine command theory of morality is viable (Rosenkrantz & Wierenga, 1991). These points are also essential topics in Hindu divinity philosophy. In this context, (Surpi et al., 2020) states that the divine concept is translated and understood in various ways in Hinduism. This divinity is depicted in various sacred

symbols to be worshipped as concrete manifestations to generate sense

Omnipotence is the most talked-about divine attribute. Nevertheless, in the context of Hindu theology, the translation is different. Omnipotence is translated that God can manifest in various forms and even incarnate because of unlimited abilities and power. The aim is to teach kindness and encourage humanity to realise its higher divinity and purpose. In this context, the ancient Javanese people in Dieng also translated divine attributes into various omnipotence forms. Śiva Triśirah is a manifestation of God the almighty that encompasses omnipotence, creatorship, omniscience, eternity and omnipresence, personhood, goodness⁄perfection, existence. Three faces also describe three past, present, and future times. Non-physicality in Hinduism is called Acintya. Nevertheless, even though it is unthinkable, indescribable, humans still make their form even though it will be drawn by transcending duality—not humans, not animals, not men, not women.

Dieng's local community considers God as a supreme being who deserves to be worshipped. Thus, the divine attributes attached to him are described in various ways. These descriptions would lead to high admiration, love, and spiritual emotions for the worshiper. The divine attribute presents some interesting philosophical problems. Attributes and symbols provide new meaning in the world of theology. In the Dieng Plateau, we find symbols and divine attributes worthy of worship both in form and spirit and knowledge. The symbols that have been found express various sacred attributes imposed on him so that he deserves to be worshipped, honoured, and believed in providing a good over human life. Taking the arguments from the research Barrett (1998), cognitive perspectives also play an essential role in describing God's divine attributes. Humans try to understand through

the cognitive function to reach the divine aspect. The concept of divine attributes found in Dieng is more appropriate with divinity from a historical perspective. Many primitive religions are hartartism. That is, they imply that every type of object has supernatural powers. It was common in ancient times to believe in the plurality of the gods. There was no clear consensus about whether the gods were material or spiritual in nature (Holmes, 2009). However, in discussing God's attributes, it is emphasised whether God cannot be spoken in human language and cannot be known by the human mind. These two things are still an ongoing discussion. Therefore, the effort to find the right words to describe the debate about God's attributes is a task that still needs to be carried out.

Conclusion

The Dieng Plateau is widely identified as a spiritual centre and gathering place for ancient saints in the Land of Java. Therefore, the worship of various divine symbols and attributes is founded in this place. Various sacred forms are found in Dieng, namely Śiva Triśirah, Nandisavahanamūrti, Śiva Mahadeva, Parvati, and Liṅga Durgā Mahiṣāsuramardhinī, Ganesha, Viṣṇu Śakti, Hari-Hara, Agastya Guru and The Dharma Wheel Artifacts. This divine attribute is manifested as a means of worship and to induce adoration, respect, and love in devotees' hearts. In Hinduism, God's symbols and divine attributes cannot be separated and exist simultaneously in physical and non-physical forms in the form of sense and understanding.

The highest medium of worship, namely Śiva Triśirah, that is, Śiva with three faces, is Supreme Lord representing the three powers of creation, maintenance and dissolution or full power in one manifestation. Moreover, Śiva represents the three-time, namely past, present and future or as an object of eternal worship. It is a representation of all the supreme power and omnipotence of God. God's divine attributes depicted in the Dieng temple complex relate to Natural Theology discussions. Namely omnipotence, creatorship, omniscience, eternity and omnipresence, personhood, goodness⁄ perfection, non-physicality, necessary, existence, simplicity, immutability and impassibility. This attribute is reflected in various sacred symbols found in the temple complex on the Dieng Plateau.

Hindu researchers and scholars should do more scientific research on Hindu theology in Nusantara. So far, the number of writings found is minimal. The scientific standards of theological research must also be studied carefully. Also, Hindus of the world should create more intellectuals and stimulate books writings regarding the development of philosophy and theology. Furthermore, the Hindu concepts that Western scientists have misinterpreted should be comprehensively improved.

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