

Stone stele at Prambanan Temple shows Sita sitting with monkey

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A stone stele at Prambanan Temple shows Sita sitting and talking with a monkey. Realistically portrayed, the monkey at left in this carved bas relief sits cross-legged and gestures his hands forward with the palms turned up. Sita also sits cross-legged facing the monkey but she looks down as if troubled.

Even after being released from her abduction by Ravana and passing the fire ordeal, Sita still faces more troubles. Rama continues to be jealous. Based on another demon trick, Rama begins to suspect that the baby Sita is carrying was not fathered by him, but rather by Ravana during Sita's captivity.

Prambanan is the largest remaining Hindu temple complex on the island of Java in Indonesia. It was built and dedicated to the god Siva during the ninth and tenth centuries CE. There were once hundreds of small temple structures in this vicinity, but most were so damaged before conservation began in 1918 that they cannot be rebuilt.

Among the approximately fifty remaining smaller temple sites at Prambanan are three large temples dedicated to the gods Siva, Vishnu, and Brahma. Scenes from the Ramayana are carved into the these stone temples' walls. For reasons still not fully understood, the Prambanan temples were abandoned soon after their completion. Leading theories include possible natural disasters such as earthquakes, and the gradual ascendance of Muslim kingdoms on Java after the fourteenth century.

Classical Javanese dance performances of the Ramayana usually are held seasonally at Prambanan temple during the evenings. A 2006 earthquake in Central Java, however, caused considerable damage and the temple's temporary closure for repair. Prambanan is a UNESCO World Heritage site.



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