

Architectural Harmony And Hindu-Buddhist Syncretism At The Pura Dalam Balingkang Complex

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ABSTRACT

Pura Dalem Balingkang, located in Pinggan Village, Kintamani District, Bangli Regency, preserves a legacy of Hindu-Buddhist syncretism that is directly reflected in its architectural elements. This study aims to identify the Hindu and Buddhist architectural elements present in the temple complex while analyzing their pattern of harmonization within a single sacred space that remains active today. The method employed is qualitative research utilizing architectural archaeology, field observation, interviews with traditional leaders and priests, as well as a literature review of relevant primary and secondary sources. The results demonstrate that Hindu elements, such as the *candi bentar* (split gate), *kori agung* (main gate), *padmasana* (shrine), and *meru* (tiered shrine), blend with Buddhist elements seen in stupa ornaments, Tantrayana-style *naga* (dragon) reliefs, and the Shiva-Sogata theological concept, which serves as the foundation for this syncretism. The amalgamation of these two traditions is not merely coincidental but rather a product of the Balingkang Kingdom's history from the 11th to the 13th century, which actively integrated cross-cultural influences. These findings assert that syncretism in Bali is a process of creative and meaningful reinterpretation rather than superficial accommodation.

Keyword : Pura Dalam Balingkang, Hindu-Buddhist syncretism, temple architecture, Kintamani, Shiva-Sogata



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1. INTRODUCTION

Discussions about Bali are inextricably linked to its temples. Thousands of temples are scattered from the coastlines to the mountain peaks, each bearing distinct narratives and layers of meaning. Among these numerous temples, one complex consistently invites more intrigue than the rest: Pura Dalem Balingkang. Situated at an altitude of approximately 1,400 meters in Pinggan Village, Kintamani, this temple is not merely a place of worship; it is a historical document written in the language of architecture.

What makes Pura Dalem Balingkang particularly fascinating is the simultaneous presence of elements from two major religious traditions: Hinduism and Buddhism. While these two religions might appear as disparate worlds to some, in Balingkang, they exist side by side in the form of ornaments,

structures, and spatial layouts that can be observed firsthand. In the disciplines of history and anthropology, this phenomenon is referred to as religious syncretism (Sukawati, 2021; Gunawan & Santoso, 2020).

Syncretism in the Balingkang area did not emerge in a vacuum. It is rooted in the long history of the Balingkang Kingdom, which is estimated to have existed between the 11th and 13th centuries CE. This kingdom thrived at the crossroads of ancient local Balinese traditions, the influence of Shivaist Hinduism from India and Java, and the Tantrayana Buddhist sect, which was rapidly expanding across Southeast Asia during that era. Inscriptions discovered in the Kintamani region suggest that the integration of these two traditions had occurred long before the Majapahit influence entered Bali (Yudiantara, 2022; Iswara, 2016).

One of the historical figures most closely associated with this region is King Jayapangus, who is recorded to have ruled Balingkang and married Kang Cing Wie, a woman from mainland China. This cross-cultural marriage was later sanctified in the figure of Ratu Ayu Subandar, whose shrine remains an active site of worship within the temple complex today. This narrative is not merely a myth; it reflects the historical reality that the Balingkang region was indeed a convergence point for various cultural and religious currents (Wirata, 2020; Darma Putra, 2017).

Nevertheless, scientific studies specifically addressing the architectural dimensions as a reflection of syncretism at Pura Dalem Balingkang remain relatively scarce. Most previous research has focused predominantly on the aspects of ritual, epigraphy, or cultural tourism. Architecture, however, is a highly rich medium of expression; every choice of form, ornamentation, and spatial layout reflects the value systems and beliefs held by its builders (Suardana, 2017; Budiana, 2018). This gap in the literature serves as the point of departure for the present study.

Based on the background outlined above, this research formulates two primary questions: first, what architectural elements represent the Hindu and Buddhist traditions in the Pura Dalem Balingkang complex? Second, how does the harmonization process of these two traditions manifest physically, symbolically, and theologically within this temple precinct? In alignment with the research problem, this study has two main objectives. First, to identify and document the architectural elements rooted in both Hindu and Buddhist traditions in the Pura Dalem Balingkang complex. Second, to analyze the patterns and meanings of the harmonization of these elements within a unified sacred space, situating them within a broader historical and cultural context.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a historical research approach, emphasizing the reconstruction of the past based on systematically verifiable sources. According to Sjamsuddin (2016), historical research encompasses four primary stages: heuristics (source collection), source criticism (verification), interpretation, and historiography. These four stages were applied sequentially in this research.

First, a literature review was conducted, serving as the backbone of the entire study. The authors collected and examined various relevant written sources, including books on Balinese history, academic journal articles, archaeological research reports, and manuscripts discussing religious traditions and temple architecture. These sources were subjected to critical evaluation to assess their authenticity, relevance, and credibility prior to being utilized as analytical material.

Second, field observations were carried out. The authors conducted direct visits to Pura Dalem Balingkang to observe the physical condition of the temple complex, spatial layout, architectural ornamentation, and various visual elements that could not be fully captured through written descriptions alone. The observation was conducted in a non-participatory manner; meaning the authors exclusively observed without engaging in ongoing ritual activities, thereby maintaining observational objectivity.

Third, photographic documentation was performed. During the observation, the authors documented the architectural elements and rituals at the temple. This visual data functions as empirical evidence that supports and confirms the analyses derived from the literature sources.

The collected data was subsequently analyzed using an interpretive-hermeneutic approach, which involves interpreting the meaning behind the data with reference to its surrounding historical and cultural contexts. This approach was selected because cultural history research not only describes "what is there" but also seeks to answer "why it occurred" and "what it means to us today." In other words, the analysis does not conclude with an inventory of facts; rather, it proceeds to the interpretation and critical evaluation of those facts within a broader framework.

3. HASIL DAN PEMBAHASAN

Historical Background of Pura Dalem Balingkang

To understand Pura Dalem Balingkang historically, one must return to the reign of King Jayapangus, who is estimated to have ruled from around the 12th century to the early 13th century. The name Jayapangus is recorded in several significant inscriptions, including the Bwahan A and B Inscriptions, as well as the Cempaga Inscription, which describe him as a highly respected and devout ruler (Ardika, Parimarta, & Wirawan, 2017). These inscriptions illustrate that during this period, Bali was under the strong influence of the Hindu-Buddhist traditions of Java (particularly the legacy of Kediri and Singasari), which blended with pre-existing local customs.

What makes Jayapangus exceptional in the context of Balingkang is his marriage to Kang Cing Wei, a woman orally recounted to be from a Chinese merchant community settled in Bali. This story is more than a mere romantic legend. When correlated with historical records concerning the intensity of maritime trade among China, Java, and Bali between the 10th and 13th centuries, the narrative possesses historical roots that cannot be simply disregarded (Dhana, 2019). Chinese merchants had indeed established a presence in the Indonesian archipelago long before the colonial era, and Bali served as a crucial node in this maritime trade network.

This marriage laid the foundation for the syncretism that subsequently materialized at Pura Dalem Balingkang. Following Jayapangus's death, he was deified as a manifestation of *Bhatara* (the divine) within the Balinese Hindu belief system, while Kang Cing Wei was immortalized in a shrine exhibiting nuances of Chinese architecture. This process of deification and acculturation did not occur overnight; it was the result of a protracted process of cultural negotiation between the Balinese Hindu community and the incoming Chinese groups (Kusuma, 2020).

An intriguing historical point is that Pura Dalem Balingkang is situated within the ecosystem of the Bali Aga community, an indigenous Balinese society known for preserving pre-Majapahit customs and traditions more strictly than other Balinese communities. The presence of Chinese elements amidst this conservative community is, in fact, an anomaly that warrants careful examination. How could a community that so rigorously maintains the purity of its traditions simultaneously preserve and celebrate foreign cultural elements within one of its largest temples?

The answer, according to the authors, lies in the nature of the syncretism that developed here, which emerged not as an external imposition but as an internally initiated process of adoption. When the presence of Kang Cing Wei, and likely the accompanying Chinese community, was perceived as bringing economic, social, and spiritual benefits to the local community, cultural integration occurred organically. It did not erase the old; rather, it added a new layer atop the pre-existing foundation. This fundamentally differs from forced acculturation, and this distinction is crucial to comprehending the broader cultural history of Indonesia.

General Overview of the Pura Dalem Balingkang Complex

Before delving into the specific architectural elements, it is necessary to first understand the overall context of the complex. Pura Dalem Balingkang occupies an area of approximately 2.4 hectares, facing Mount Abang to the east. This orientation holds paramount significance in Balinese Hindu cosmology, as the east and the mountains are symbols of sacredness (Kusuma, 2018; Ardhana, 2019). To the west, the temple faces the caldera of Lake Batur, which, in local belief, is the source of holy water (*tirtha*) that serves as the lifeblood for all of Bali.

The spatial layout of the temple follows the *tri mandala* concept common in Balinese temple architecture: *nista mandala* (outer courtyard), *madya mandala* (middle courtyard), and *utama mandala* (the most sacred inner courtyard). However, what is particularly compelling about Balingkang is the presence of micro-zones within this layout, each seemingly responding to different religious traditions.

These zones are not partitioned by walls or fences but are instead demarcated by the arrangement of shrines possessing varying morphologies and iconographies (Iswara, 2016; Subagiasta, 2015).



Figure 1. The *Nista Mandala* of Pura Dalem Balingkang
(Source: The author's personal archives)



Figure 2. The *Madya Mandala* of Pura Dalem Balingkang
(Source: The author's personal archives)



Gambar 3. The *Utama Mandala* of Pura Dalem Balingkang
(Source: The author's personal archives)

Administratively, the management of the temple is in the hands of the *krama desa* (customary village members) of Pinggan, who are organized into several *banjar* (hamlets). Major rituals, such as the *piodalan* (temple anniversary), are still routinely held and involve not only the residents of Pinggan but also pilgrims from across Bali, including members of the Chinese-Balinese community who feel an ancestral connection to the figure of Ratu Ayu Subandar (Wirata, 2020; Triguna, 2019).

Hindu Architectural Elements in Pura Dalem Balingkang

The primary architectural framework of Pura Dalem Balingkang clearly rests on the Balinese Hindu tradition. This is initially evident in the gate system, which serves as a marker of the transition between profane and sacred spaces. The *candi bentar* (a split gate forming two mirrored halves of a pyramid) serves as the first point of welcome for anyone entering the temple complex. In Balinese Hindu cosmology, this split form does not signify a flaw or imperfection; rather, it represents the cosmic dualism that governs the universe: *Purusa-Pradana* (spirit and matter), *Shiva-Shakti* (masculine and feminine energies), and the sacred-profane dichotomy (Ardhana, 2019).



Figure 4. The First *Candi Bentar* Leading to the Nista Mandala
(Source: The author's personal archives)

Further inside lies the *kori agung*, which serves as the gateway to the *utama mandala*. Unlike the open *candi bentar*, the *kori agung* is a closed gate featuring carved wooden doors. Adorning the body of this *kori agung* is the *karang boma* (a sculpture of a giant's face), which functions to ward off negative energies. This motif is one of the most distinctive features of Balinese Hindu iconography and is found in nearly every major temple in Bali. The tendrils and *kala* motifs surrounding the *karang boma* enhance the ornamental richness, altogether reflecting Hindu aesthetics and theology (Budiana, 2018).



Figure 5. The *Candi Bentar* Leading to the *Utama Mandala*
(Source: The author's personal archives)



Figure 6. *Naga* Statue with *Karang Boma*
(Source: The author's personal archives)

The *padmasana*, standing in the northeast corner of the *utama mandala*, is one of the most sacred elements within the complex. This throne-like structure with a lotus (*padma*) base serves as the seat (*stana*) of *Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa* (the Supreme God) or His highest manifestation. At the base of the *padmasana*, there is a relief of *Bedawang Nala* (the cosmic turtle that, in Balinese Hindu cosmology, supports the entire universe), with two dragons (*naga*) entwined on its left and right sides. This iconography is highly characteristic of Balinese Hinduism and rarely exhibits influence from other traditions (Kusuma, 2018; Subagiasta, 2015).



Figure 7. *Pelinggih Padmasana*
(Source: The author's personal archives)

The *meru* structures that stand majestically in the *utama mandala* also constitute strong Hindu elements. In Pura Dalem Balingkang, there are several *meru* with varying numbers of roof tiers: three-tiered, five-tiered, and the most prominent, the eleven-tiered *meru*, which serves as the shrine for the deified ancestors of the Balingkang kings. The philosophy underlying the number of tiers is rooted in Hindu cosmology: every odd number carries its own significance within the hierarchy of deities and deified ancestors. The tallest *meru* signifies the most exalted spiritual status of the venerated entity (Ardana, 2016).



Figure 8. *Pelinggih Meru Tumpang 1, 9, dan 11*
(Sumber: Dokumentasi pribadi penulis)

Beyond these major structural elements, the smaller ornaments scattered throughout the complex are also laden with Hindu iconography: the *kala-makara* motifs on doorways, *garuda* reliefs on several shrines, as well as the *trishula* (trident) and *damaru* (drum) symbols identifying the presence of Shiva as the principal deity. This entire array of Hindu elements forms a coherent and structured iconographic system, reflecting the profound Hindu theological understanding of its builders and guardians (Ardhana, 2019; Darma Putra, 2017).

Traces of Buddhist Architecture within the Temple Precinct

Beneath the dominance of Hindu elements, a discerning eye will discover significant traces of Buddhism present at Pura Dalem Balingkang. These traces are neither hidden nor camouflaged; they are

explicitly visible to anyone familiar with Buddhist iconography, particularly the Tantrayana variant that flourished in Java and Bali between the 9th and 13th centuries CE.

The most apparent element is the presence of stupa-shaped structures on several shrines within the *madya* and *utama mandala* areas. Although smaller in scale compared to monumental stupas such as Borobudur, their defining characteristics remain identifiable: the dome shape (*anda*), the square neck (*harmika*), and the tiered, pointed pinnacle (*chattra*). In the Tantrayana Buddhist tradition, the stupa is not merely a reliquary; it is a representation of the entire Buddhist cosmology and symbolizes the body of the Buddha Himself (Gunawan & Santoso, 2020; Zuhdi, 2016).

The *naga* reliefs found in various parts of the temple also bear distinctive Buddhist markers. Unlike the representation of the *naga* in Hindu iconography, which is generally depicted as a single, cobra-headed creature, several *naga* reliefs at Balingkang exhibit the *naga-dvimukha* (two-headed dragon) style more commonly found in Classical Javanese Tantric Buddhist art. Furthermore, the position and context of these *nagas* (encircling stupa structures or adorning the bases of dome-shaped shrines) are more consistent with their function as protectors in the Buddhist tradition rather than as cosmological symbols in Hinduism (Kusuma, 2018; Yudiantara, 2022).



Figure 9. Stupa-Shaped Elements
(Source: The author's personal archives)

Several artifactual findings around the temple area further corroborate the deeper presence of Buddhist traditions. Fragments of statues displaying the *dhyana mudra* (the characteristic Buddhist meditation hand gesture), as well as several stone fragments ornamented with the *vajra* (a Tantric Buddhist ritual implement resembling a short mace), were discovered by archaeological teams surveying the area over the last decade. These findings indicate that Buddhist practices once had a tangible, institutional presence in this region, rather than merely a vague symbolic influence (Yudiantara, 2022; Gunawan & Santoso, 2020).

Certain shrines visually displaying stupa elements are referred to by the local community as '*linggih Buda*'. These are shrines representing Buddhist aspects, viewed as equal and complementary to the shrines of Hindu deities surrounding them. The fact that the term '*Buda*' is still utilized and positively interpreted suggests that the memory of the Buddhist tradition has not entirely vanished from the oral history of the area (Triguna, 2019; Subagiasta, 2015).

The Concept of Shiva-Sogata in the Hindu-Buddhist Syncretism of Pura Dalem Balingkang

Religious studies in Bali frequently confront a fundamental question: how can divergent religious elements coexist or even merge without negating one another? The answer lies in a profound theological foundation, namely the Shiva-Sogata concept. In essence, Balinese Hinduism is inherently a complex amalgamation of the Shivaist tradition and Tantrayana Buddhism, introduced through the influence of Ancient Java (Supartha, 2019). This concept of Shiva-Buddha as a spiritual unity has taken deep root in Balinese theology, contrasting with Hinduism in India, which tends to maintain stricter sectarian boundaries. The term "Sogata" itself is a local designation in the Ancient Javanese-Balinese tradition for followers of Buddhism, derived from the word *Sugata*, one of the epithets of the Buddha.

Historically, the Shiva-Sogata concept is the product of an intellectual and spiritual tradition that developed in East Java between the 10th and 14th centuries. This idea later disseminated widely to Bali through various channels, such as the migration of priests, the exchange of *lontar* (palm-leaf) manuscripts, and trade contacts (Subagiasta, 2015; Atmaja, 2015). Within this theological framework,

Shiva and Buddha are not viewed as two distinct deities, but rather as two manifestations of the same supreme reality. One of the texts that most clearly expresses this ethos is the *Kakawin Sutasoma*, famous for the phrase '*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*' (Unity in Diversity). Although this text originates from the golden age of the Majapahit Empire, the roots of this syncretic thought actually predate it by a significant margin in the northern regions of Bali, including Balingkang. Balingkang's geographic position and historical network established it as a vital gateway for East Javanese influence prior to the establishment of the Majapahit Empire (Darma Putra, 2017).

The practical implications of the Shiva-Sogata concept are highly palpable, particularly in its architectural dimensions and ritual systems. Because Shiva and Buddha are perceived as two faces of the One, there is no theological imperative to segregate their shrines or to deem one more sacred than the other. The outcome is an inclusive temple spatial layout where stupas and *merus* can stand within the same complex, Tantrayana-style *naga* reliefs embellish shrines bearing Hindu symbols, and both Shaivite rituals and Buddhism-rooted rituals are performed in a single, coherent religious cycle (Kusuma, 2018; Ardhana, 2019). This harmonization also permeates the most foundational layers of the ritual system, such as color symbolism. The *Tridatu* thread (red, black, and white), which symbolizes the Trimurti in Balinese Hinduism, surprisingly shares a symbolic resonance with the colors of the Tantric Buddhist mandala (red, blue, and white), which represent the three aspects of Buddhahood: *Dharmakaya*, *Sambhogakaya*, and *Nirmanakaya* (Subagiasta, 2015; Ni Luh Arjani, 2019).

Atop this deeply rooted foundation of Hindu-Buddhist syncretism, Pura Dalem Balingkang incorporates a unique cultural layer unmatched by other temples: Chinese influence. The manifestation of syncretism in this temple is not superficial but can be tangibly observed across three interrelated dimensions.

The first is the ritual dimension, where this syncretism is manifested vividly and dynamically. Every year, this temple hosts the *Usaba Purnama Kapat*, a major ritual that organically amalgamates elements of Hindu ceremonies with Chinese-style ancestor veneration traditions. In this procession, offerings do not merely consist of typical Balinese Hindu *banten* (offerings) but also include items rooted in Chinese traditions, such as joss paper, spiral-shaped incense, and specific food offerings (Dhana, 2019). Furthermore, the temple's association with the *Barong Landung* dance reinforces this ritual dimension. This ritual performance, featuring a male and female pair of *barong*, serves as a spiritual medium for warding off misfortune and is traditionally linked to the figures of Jayapangus and Kang Cing Wei. The female *barong* figure, known as Jero Luh, is depicted wearing attire that incorporates elements of Chinese clothing, a powerful symbolism of how the Chinese female element is integrated into the sacred unity of Balinese belief, not as an extraneous entity, but as an intrinsic part of the self.

The second is the iconographic dimension, providing concrete evidence of institutionalized syncretism. The presence of statues and *pratima* (effigies) from the Chinese tradition in the main area of the temple are not merely decorative ornaments; rather, they are objects of veneration meticulously cared for and revered by the priests and the surrounding community. This fact illustrates that the syncretism in Balingkang is not merely a form of passive tolerance, but an active integration of Chinese elements into the local Balinese Hindu belief system. There is a fundamental difference between simply allowing something divergent to exist and genuinely accepting and nurturing it as a facet of one's own identity, and Pura Dalem Balingkang unequivocally executes the latter.

The third is the socio-communal dimension. Pura Dalem Balingkang is one of the few religious sites in Bali traditionally visited jointly by Balinese Hindus and the Balinese Chinese Peranakan community. During major festivities, these two communities convene in the same space to conduct their respective rituals side by side. This phenomenon does not stem from formalized, modern, top-down policies of tolerance; rather, it is born from the historical roots that have bound these two communities to the same sacred space for centuries (Kusuma, 2020; Atmaja, 2020).

Gedong Linggih Ratu Ayu Subandar: Layered Syncretism

Among all the existing elements, the shrine of Ratu Ayu Subandar is arguably the most syncretically complex. This figure is historically associated with Kang Cing Wie (the Chinese wife of King Jayapangus) and is venerated as a protector of merchants, sailors, and individuals whose livelihoods revolve around water. Here, three traditional layers converge at a single point: Balinese Hinduism (in the concept of venerating deified ancestors or *dewa-pitara*), Buddhism (in the concept of a protective Bodhisattva,

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equivalent to the figure of Guanyin or Avalokiteshvara in the Chinese tradition), and Chinese folk beliefs themselves (Wirata, 2020; Darma Putra, 2017).



Figure 10. *Gedong – Linggih Ratu Ayu Mas Subandar*
(Source: The author's personal archives)

What is compelling is that the Chinese-Balinese community making pilgrimages to this shrine do not feel "alienated" or as though they are worshipping in a place that does not belong to them. They perceive Ratu Ayu Subandar as an entity they can approach using their own methods and the language of their own beliefs, while Balinese Hindus worship her within their specific cosmological framework. Two differing approaches find a single point of intersection. This phenomenon bolsters the argument that syncretism in Balingkang is not merely an architectural or theological phenomenon, but a living social practice (Triguna, 2019; Sukawati, 2021).

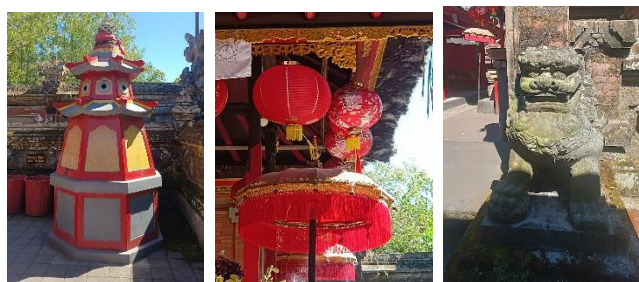




Figure 11. Elements inside the Gedong – Linggih Ratu Ayu Mas Subandar

(Source: The author's personal archives)

Syncretism as a Response to Historical Dynamics

The syncretism at Pura Dalem Balingkang must be interpreted within a broader context: it is the response of a community and a kingdom positioned at the crossroads of various historical currents. The Kintamani region, due to its location in the central-northern highlands of Bali, served as a conduit linking the northern coastal ports (bustling with trade and cultural exchange) with the more customarily conservative inland areas. The Balingkang Kingdom appeared to leverage this position astutely: it absorbed new external influences while maintaining its pre-existing local spiritual foundations (Zuhdi, 2016).

From the perspective of religious history, this process is not unique to Balingkang. In many parts of Southeast Asia, the encounter between Hinduism and Buddhism during the classical era engendered novel religious forms that cannot be entirely categorized as purely 'Hindu' or 'Buddhist'. The Borobudur and Prambanan temples in Java, constructed within close temporal and spatial proximity to each other, stand as the most monumental examples of the coexistence of these two traditions. In Balingkang, the contextual scale is smaller, yet the process similarly reveals extraordinary spiritual creativity and flexibility (Gunawan & Santoso, 2020; Atmaja, 2015).

However, one nuance must be acknowledged frankly: syncretism does not invariably equate to parity. Quantitatively and qualitatively, Hindu elements are far more dominant at Pura Dalem Balingkang than Buddhist elements. This dominance may reflect the historical process wherein Balinese Hinduism gradually consolidated itself as the prevailing religious identity, particularly following the collapse of the Majapahit Empire and the arrival of a massive wave of Javanese-Hindu priests and scholars in Bali during the 15th century. In this process, the Buddhist tradition was not eradicated, but rather gradually subordinated within the broader Hindu framework (Ardhana, 2019; Wiana, 2014).

This is one of the most compelling findings of this study: the harmonization witnessed at Pura Dalem Balingkang is dynamic and continuously evolving, rather than a static condition that has existed unaltered since its inception. This temple acts as a record of a protracted process, and each architectural layer contained within it reflects the distinct stages of that historical journey (Yudiantara, 2022; Sukawati, 2021).

4. CONCLUSION

Pura Dalem Balingkang is much more than a place of worship; it is a historical archive compiled not of paper and ink, but of stone, wood, and carvings. Every element standing within this complex preserves a story about how the people of Balingkang responded to the convergence of two major traditions: Hinduism and Buddhism.

Based on the findings of this study, several critical conclusions can be drawn. First, the Hindu architectural elements at Pura Dalem Balingkang (including the *candi bentar*, *kori agung*, *padmasana* with Bedawang Nala reliefs, and a series of multi-tiered *meru*) form a primary framework that cohesively reflects Balinese Hindu cosmology and theology. The presence of ornamentation such as the *karang boma*, *kala-makara*, and *garuda* motifs reinforces the strong Hindu identity within this complex.

Second, the traces of the Buddhist tradition visible in the stupa structures, Tantrayana-style *naga* reliefs, and the discovery of artifact fragments such as the *vajra* and statues in the *dhyana mudra* posture, provide evidence that Balingkang was once a space where the Buddhist tradition was present not merely

symbolically, but also institutionally. The term '*linggih Buda*', still used in local oral traditions, serves as a marker that the memory of this Buddhist presence has not been entirely effaced.

Third, the harmonization between these two traditions is supported by the theological foundation of Shiva-Sogata, which views Shiva and Buddha as two faces of a single supreme reality. It is this concept that enables the stupa and the *meru*, the Tantrayana *naga* reliefs and the Hindu *karang boma*, as well as worshipers from diverse religious backgrounds, to coexist within a single sacred space without mutually negating one another. Built upon this theological foundation, Balingkang's syncretism evolved into a product that is creative, adaptive, and deeply rooted in the historical and social realities of the region.

This study certainly has limitations that must be acknowledged. A more in-depth investigation into the specific chronology of each architectural element (for instance, through archaeological dating methods) would significantly enrich our understanding. Similarly, comparative studies with other syncretic sites in Bali and East Java should be conducted to validate the patterns discovered here. Nevertheless, it is hoped that this study can serve as a useful preliminary stepping stone for future research on the heritage of Hindu-Buddhist syncretism in the Indonesian archipelago.

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