

**Arts of Asia Lecture Series Fall 2015**  
**Asia's Storied Traditions**  
*Sponsored by The Society for Asian Art*

“Reading” the Ramayana Through Javanese Temple Reliefs  
October 16, 2015 Natasha Reichle

**Places:**

Candi (pronounced chan-dee) Prambanan also known as Candi Loro Jonggrang  
Near Yogyakarta, Central Java

Candi Panataran  
near Blitar, East Java

**Texts:**

Valmiki's *Ramayana*  
Sanskrit

Kalidasa's *Raghuvamsam*  
Sanskrit 5<sup>th</sup> century CE

Bhatti's *Bhattikavya*  
Sanskrit 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> c CE

*Ramayana Kakawin*

Kakawin – narrative poem written in Old Javanese but using meter from Sanskrit literature  
Old Javanese; mid 9<sup>th</sup> – early 10<sup>th</sup> c

*Hikayat Seri Rama*

Malay; 13-17<sup>th</sup> c

**Key characters in order of appearance:**

Garuda, Vishnu's bird mount

Vishnu, Hindu god with ten avatars

Dasharatha, Rama's father, king of Ayodhya

Vishvamitra, Sage who serves as teacher to the young Rama and Lakshmana

Rama, Heroic and righteous prince; a god, as an incarnation of Vishnu

Lakshmana, Rama's devoted brother

Tataka, princess turned demoness

Sita, Faithful and virtuous wife of Rama; a goddess, associated with Lakshmi

Parashurama, the 6<sup>th</sup> avatar of Vishnu

Kaikeyi, Dasharatha's 2<sup>nd</sup> (?) wife

Bharata, One of Rama's brothers, Kaikeyi's son, who rules Ayodhya as Rama's regent

Kausalya, Dasharatha's wife and Rama's mother

Shurpanakha, Demoness who makes advances to Rama and Lakshmana and is rebuffed. She threatens Sita;  
Lakshmana, cuts off her nose and ears.

Maricha, Demon whom Ravana orders to take the form of a golden deer to lure Rama away from Sita Ravana,  
Demon king of Lanka and abductor of Sita

Jatayus, Vulture king who tries to prevent Ravana from abducting Sita and is dealt a mortal blow

Hanuman, Brave and wise monkey ally of Rama; a god in his own right

Sugriva, Monkey king assisted in taking the throne by Rama in exchange for his help in recovering Sita

Valin, Monkey king killed by Rama to enable Sugriva to reclaim the throne

Vibhishana, Principled brother of Ravana who goes over to Rama's side

Indrajit, Ravana's most prominent son, a mighty and treacherous warrior

Kumbhakarna, Giant demon, brother of Ravana

Shatrughna, Lakshmana's twin (the brother you don't hear about)

Kusha and Lava, Rama's sons

**For further reading:**

Acri, Andrea, et al. ed. *The Ramayana in the Literature and Visual Arts of Indonesia*. (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2011).

Levin, Cecile. *The Ramayana at Loro Jonggrang: Indian Antecedents and Javanese Impetus*. (PhD. Dissertation, Institute of Fine Art, NYU, 1999).

Saran, Malini and Vinod Khanna. *The Ramayana in Indonesia*. (Delhi: Ravi Dayal Publisher, 2004).

Stutterheim, Willem, *Rama-Legends and Rama-Reliefs in Indonesia*. (New Delhi: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, 1989).

Totton, Mary-Louise. *Weaving Flesh and Blood into Sacred Architecture*. (PhD. Dissertation, University of Michigan, 2002).