



PRAMBANAN

UNESCO World Heritage Site

Candi Perwara, Bokoharjo, Prambanan,
Kabupaten Sleman, Daerah Istimewa
Yogyakarta 57454 Indonesia

PRAMBANAN

THE LEGEND

The astonishing temples of Prambanan, believed to be the proof of love from Bandung Bondowoso to Princess Loro Jonggrang, are the best remaining examples of Java's extended period of Hindu culture. Located 17 kilometers northeast of Yogyakarta, the temples boast of a wealth of sculptural detail and are considered to be one of Indonesia's most phenomenal examples of Hindu art. Legend says that there were once a thousand temples standing in the area, but due to a great earthquake in the 16th century, accelerated by the treasure hunters and locals searching for building material, many of the temples are gone now. Initiatives to restore the temples have been conducted to some extent, though many stand in ruin today.

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*The UNESCO World Heritage Site of
the Prambanan Temple Compounds.*

PHOTO BY MICHAEL TURTLE





A restored temple among the ruins of many. PHOTO BY MICHAEL TURTLE

CONSTRUCTION

The Prambanan temple is the largest Hindu temple of ancient Java, and the first building was completed in the mid-9th century. It was likely started by Rakai Pikatan as the Hindu Sanjaya Dynasty's answer to the Buddhist Sailendra Dynasty's Borobudur and Sewu temples nearby. Historians suggest that the construction of Prambanan probably was meant to mark the return of the Hindu Sanjaya Dynasty to power in Central Java after almost a century of Buddhist Sailendra Dynasty domination. The construction of this massive Hindu temple signifies that the Medang court had shifted its patronage from Mahayana Buddhism to Shaivite Hinduism.

A temple was first built at the site around 850 CE by Rakai Pikatan and expanded extensively by King Lokapala and Balitung Maha Sambu the Sanjaya king of the Mataram Kingdom. According to the Shivagrha inscription of 856 CE, the temple was built to honor Lord Shiva, and its original name was *Shiva-grha* (the House of Shiva) or *Shiva-laya* (the Realm of Shiva). According to the Shivagrha inscription, a public water project to change the course of a river near Shivagrha Temple was undertaken during the construction of the temple. The river, identified as the Opak River, now runs north to south on the western side of the Prambanan temple compound. Historians suggest that originally the river was curved further to the east and was deemed too near to the main temple. The project was done by cutting the river along a north to south axis along the outer wall of the Shivagrha Temple compound. The former river course was filled in and made level to create a wider space for the temple expansion and the rows of perwara (complementary) temples.

Some archaeologists propose that the statue of Shiva in the *garbhagriha* (central chamber) of the main temple was modelled after King Balitung, serving as a depiction of his deified self after death.



The iconic skyline of Prambanan.
PHOTO BY JAKE CJERCITO

The temple compound was expanded by successive Mataram kings, such as Daksa and Tulodong, with the addition of hundreds of perwara temples around the chief temple. Prambanan served as the royal temple of the Kingdom of Mataram, with most of the state's religious ceremonies and sacrifices being conducted there. At the height of the kingdom, scholars estimate that hundreds of brahmins with their disciples lived within the outer wall of the temple compound. The urban center and the court of Mataram were located nearby, somewhere in the Prambanan Plain.

ABANDONMENT

In the 930s, the court was shifted to East Java by Mpu Sindok, who established the Isyana Dynasty. This shift was likely caused by either an eruption of Mount Merapi volcano, located north of Prambanan in central Java, or a power struggle. That marked the beginning of the decline of the temple. It was soon abandoned and began to deteriorate.

The temples collapsed during a major earthquake in the 16th century. Although the temple ceased to be an important center of worship, the ruins scattered around the area were still recognizable and known to the local Javanese people in later times. The statues and the ruins became the theme and the inspiration for the Loro Jonggrang folktale. After the division of the Mataram Sultanate in 1755, the temple ruins and the Opak River were used to demarcate the boundary between the Yogyakarta and Surakarta (Solo) Sultanates, which was adopted as the current border between Yogyakarta and the province of Central Java.

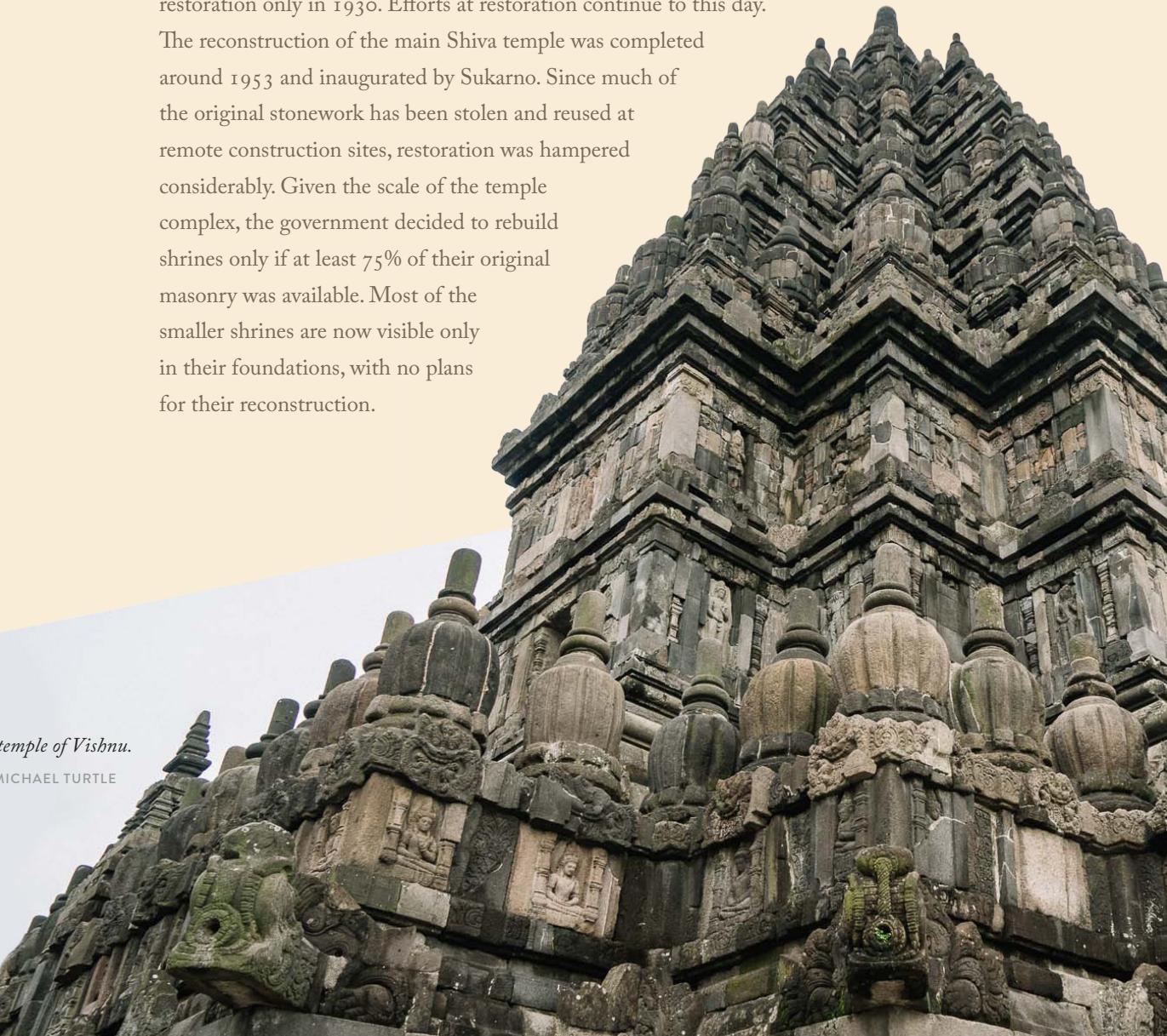
REDISCOVERY

The Javanese locals in the surrounding villages knew about the temple ruins before formal rediscovery, but they did not know about its historical background, which kingdoms ruled, or which king commissioned the construction of the monuments. As a result, the locals developed tales and legends to explain the origin of temples, infused with myths of giants and a cursed princess. They gave Prambanan and Sewu a wondrous origin; in the Loro Jonggrang legend, these were said to have been created by a multitude of demons under the order of Bandung Bondowoso.

The temple attracted international attention early in the 19th century. In 1811, during Britain's short-lived occupation of the Dutch East Indies, Colin Mackenzie, a surveyor in the service of Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles,

came upon the temples by chance. Although Sir Thomas subsequently commissioned a full survey of the ruins, they remained neglected for decades. Dutch residents carried off sculptures as garden ornaments and native villagers used the foundation stones for construction material.

Half-hearted excavations by archaeologists in the 1880s facilitated looting. In 1918, the Dutch began reconstruction of the compound and proper restoration only in 1930. Efforts at restoration continue to this day. The reconstruction of the main Shiva temple was completed around 1953 and inaugurated by Sukarno. Since much of the original stonework has been stolen and reused at remote construction sites, restoration was hampered considerably. Given the scale of the temple complex, the government decided to rebuild shrines only if at least 75% of their original masonry was available. Most of the smaller shrines are now visible only in their foundations, with no plans for their reconstruction.



The proud temple of Vishnu.

PHOTO BY MICHAEL TURTLE



The temple compound in the late afternoon. PHOTO BY JON AGUIRRE

CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

In the early 1990s, the government removed the market that had sprung up near the temple and redeveloped the surrounding villages and rice paddies as an archaeological park. The park covers a large area, from Yogyakarta-Solo main road in the south, encompassing the whole Prambanan complex, the ruins of Lumbung and Bubrah temples, and as far as the Sewu temple compound in the north. In 1992, the Indonesian government created a State-owned Limited Liability Enterprise (PERSERO), named "PT Taman Wisata Candi Borobudur, Prambanan, dan Ratu Boko." This enterprise is the authority for the park management of Borobudur Prambanan Ratu Boko and the surrounding region. Prambanan is one of the most visited tourist attraction in Indonesia.

The Trimurti open-air and indoor stages on the west side of the temple, across the Opak River, were built to stage the ballet of the traditional Ramayana epic. This traditional Javanese dance is the centuries-old dance of the Javanese court. Since the 1960s, it has been performed every full moon night in the Prambanan temple. Since then, Prambanan has become one of the major archaeological and cultural tourism attractions in Indonesia.

Since the reconstruction of the main temples in the 1990s, Prambanan has been reclaimed as an important religious center for Hindu rituals and ceremonies in Java. Balinese and Javanese Hindu communities in Yogyakarta and Central Java revived their practices of annually performing their sacred ceremonies in Prambanan, such as Galungan, Tawur Kesanga, and Nyepi.

The temple was damaged during the 2006 Yogyakarta earthquake. Early photos suggested that although the complex was structurally intact, the damage was significant. Large pieces of debris, including carvings, were scattered over the ground. The temple was closed to visitors until the damage could be fully assessed. Eventually, the head of Yogyakarta

Archaeological Conservation Agency stated that it would take months to identify the full extent of the damage. Some weeks later in 2006, the site was re-opened for visitors.

There is great interest in the site. In 2008, 856,029 Indonesian visitors and 114,951 foreign visitors visited Prambanan. On January 6, 2009 the reconstruction of the Nandi temple finished. As of 2009, the interior of most of the temples remains off-limits for safety reasons.

Since the 1960s, the traditional Ramayana ballet has been performed every full moon night in the Prambanan temple.

On February 14, 2014, major tourist attractions in Yogyakarta and Central Java (including Borobudur, Prambanan, and Ratu Boko) were closed to visitors after being severely affected by the volcanic ash from the eruption of Kelud volcano in East Java, located about 200 kilometers east of Yogyakarta. The Kelud volcano erupted on February 13, 2014 with explosions heard as far away as Yogyakarta. Four years earlier, Prambanan was spared from the 2010 Merapi volcanic ash and eruption since the wind and ashfall were directed westward and affected Borobudur instead.

In 2012, the Balai Pelestarian Peninggalan Purbakala Jawa Tengah (BP3) or Central Java Heritage Preservation Authority suggested that the area in and around Prambanan should be treated as sanctuary area. The proposed area is located in Prambanan Plain and measured 30 square kilometers spanning across Sleman and Klaten Regency, which includes major temples in the area such as Prambanan, Ratu Boko, Kalasan, Sari and Plaosan temples.¹

WORLD HERITAGE CONVENTION

MISSION STATEMENT

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) seeks to encourage the identification, protection, and preservation of *cultural* and *natural heritage* around the world considered to be of outstanding value to humanity. This is embodied in an international treaty called the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, adopted by UNESCO in 1972.

Cultural heritage refers to monuments, groups of buildings, and sites with historical, aesthetic, archaeological, scientific, ethnological, or anthropological value. *Natural heritage* refers to outstanding physical, biological, and geological formations, habitats of threatened species of animals and plants, and areas with scientific, conservation or aesthetic value.

*The UNESCO World Heritage Site
of Petra, Jordan. PHOTO BY AUDLEY
TRAVEL*



A BRIEF HISTORY

1959

UNESCO launches an international campaign and collects \$80 million (USD) to save the Abu Simbel temples in the Nile valley. A draft of the convention on the protection of cultural heritage is prepared.

1962

UNESCO presents its *Recommendation on the Safeguarding of the Beauty and Character of Landscapes and Sites*. This recommendation covers the preservation and restoration of the aspect of natural, rural and urban landscapes and sites, whether natural or man-made, which have a cultural or aesthetic interest or form typical natural surroundings.

1965

A White House Conference in Washington, D.C. called for a 'World Heritage Trust' to protect 'natural and scenic areas and historic sites.'

1966

UNESCO spearheads an international campaign to save Venice after disastrous floods threatened the city.



The Santa Maria della Salute church in Venice, Italy. PHOTO FROM MIRIADNA.COM

1968

IUCN develops a proposal similar to the 'World Heritage Trust' for its members.



The south side of the Aachen Cathedral, Germany, around 1900. PHOTO FROM THE US LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

1972

Following a United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1972 and the work of expert groups involving IUCN, ICOMOS and UNESCO, all the proposals came together in the Convention concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage, which was adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO in Paris on November 16, 1972.

1978

First twelve sites are inscribed on the World Heritage List:

- L'Anse aux Meadows National Historic Park Canada
- Nahanni National Park Canada
- Galapagos Islands Ecuador
- City of Quito Ecuador
- Simien National Park Ethiopia
- Rock-Hewn Churches Ethiopia

- Aachen Cathedral Germany
- Krakow's Historic Center Poland
- Wieliczka and Bochnia Salt Mines Poland
- Island of Goree Senegal
- Mesa Verde National Park USA
- Yellowstone National Park USA

1992

The 20th Anniversary of the World Heritage Convention, the creation of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, and the adoption of the cultural landscapes category by the World Heritage Committee, making the World Heritage Convention the first international legal instrument to recognize and protect cultural landscapes.

1994

The Global Strategy for a Balanced and Representative World Heritage List is adopted by the World Heritage Committee with the goal of achieving better regional balance and greater thematic diversity in the World Heritage List. It encourages the nomination of sites in underrepresented parts of the world and especially in categories which are not yet fully represented on the List.

1994

UNESCO launches the Young People's participation in World Heritage Preservation and Promotion Project with the aim to develop new educational approaches to mobilize young people in becoming involved in the protection and promotion of heritage.

2002

The United Nations proclaims 2002 the International Year for Cultural Heritage.

2002

To mark the 30th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention, UNESCO, with the help of the Italian Government, organizes in Venice the International Congress *World Heritage: Shared Legacy, Common Responsibility*, with the objective to assess the past 30 years of implementation of the World Heritage Convention and to strengthen partnerships for World Heritage conservation.

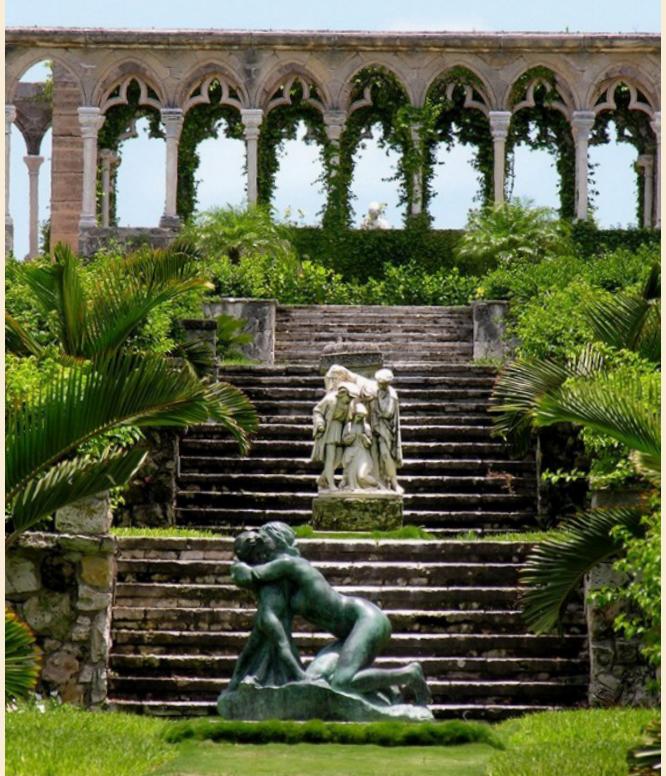


One of The Great Living Chola Temples in southern India. PHOTO BY K. SAHASRANAMAN

Monuments and heritage sites are the rich essence of diversity and reflection of our culture.

THE WORLD HERITAGE MISSION

- To encourage countries to sign the World Heritage Convention and to ensure the protection of their natural and cultural heritage;
- encourage States Parties to the Convention to nominate sites within their national territory for inclusion on the World Heritage List;
- encourage States Parties to establish management plans and set up reporting systems on the state of conservation of their World Heritage sites;
- assist States Parties in safeguarding World Heritage sites by providing technical assistance and professional training;
- provide emergency assistance for World Heritage sites in immediate danger;
- support States Parties' public awareness-building activities for World Heritage conservation;
- encourage participation of the local population in the preservation of their cultural and natural heritage;
- encourage international cooperation in the conservation of our world's cultural and natural heritage.



Sculptures in Versailles, France.

PHOTO BY IMGCLUSTER.CO

THE NOMINATION PROCESS

Only countries that have signed the World Heritage Convention, pledging to protect their natural and cultural heritage, can submit nomination proposals for properties on their territory to be considered for inclusion in UNESCO's World Heritage List.

THE CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

To be included on the World Heritage List, sites must be of outstanding universal value and meet at least one out of ten selection criteria. These criteria are explained in the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention which, besides the text of the Convention, is the main working tool on World Heritage. The criteria are regularly revised by the Committee to reflect the evolution of the World Heritage concept itself.

Until the end of 2004, World Heritage sites were selected on the basis of six cultural and four natural criteria.

With the adoption of the revised Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, only one set of ten criteria exists.

The protection, management, authenticity and integrity of properties are also important considerations.

Since 1992, significant interactions between people and the natural environment have been recognized as cultural landscapes.

SELECTION CRITERIA

- i. represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;
- ii. exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, townplanning, or landscape design;
- iii. bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;
- iv. be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;
- v. be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;
- vi. be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance. (*The Committee considers that this criterion should preferably be used in conjunction with other criteria*);
- vii. contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance;
- viii. be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features;
- ix. be outstanding examples representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals;
- x. contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation.



The historic town of Zabid, Yemen,
which lies on the Silk Road. PHOTO
BY STEFAN SCHINNING

LIST OF WORLD HERITAGE SITES IN DANGER

Armed conflict and war, earthquakes and other natural disasters, pollution, poaching, uncontrolled urbanization and unchecked tourist development pose major problems to World Heritage sites. These can threaten the very characteristics for which a site was originally inscribed on the World Heritage List. Dangers can be 'ascertained', referring to specific and proven imminent threats, or 'potential', when a property is faced with threats which could have negative effects on its World Heritage values.

Some illustrative cases of sites inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger:

City of Bam in the Islamic Republic of Iran The ancient Citadel and surrounding cultural landscape of the Iranian city of Bam, where 26,000 people lost their lives in the earthquake of December 2003, was simultaneously inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List and on the List of World Heritage in Danger in 2004. Important international efforts are mobilized to salvage the cultural heritage of this devastated city.

Bamiyan Valley in Afghanistan This cultural landscape was inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger in 2003 simultaneously with its inscription on the World Heritage List. The property is in a fragile state of conservation considering that it has suffered from abandonment, military action and dynamite explosions. Parts of the site are inaccessible due to the presence of antipersonnel mines. UNESCO, at the request of the Afghan Government, coordinates all international efforts to safeguard and enhance Afghanistan's cultural heritage, notably in Bamiyan.

Kathmandu Valley in Nepal The exceptional urban and architectural heritage of Kathmandu, Patan, and Bhaktapur has been severely affected by uncontrolled urban development. The property is composed of seven Monument Zones, which, since the time of inscription in 1979, have unfortunately been seriously altered, resulting in a general loss of authenticity and integrity of the property as a whole. For these reasons the site was inscribed on the List of World

Heritage in Danger in 2003. UNESCO is working with the Nepalese authorities to help them develop a long-term management plan to conserve the remaining World Heritage values of the property and adopt corrective measures to address illegal building activities.

Walled City of Baku in Azerbaijan Representing an outstanding and rare example of medieval architecture at the crossroad of the many different cultures in the region, the Walled City of Baku sustained significant damage during the earthquake of November 2000 and has been increasingly affected by the pressure of urban development, the absence of conservation policies, and by questionable restoration efforts. For these reasons, it was inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger in 2003. Since then, UNESCO has been working with the State Party and the Advisory Bodies to set up a plan of action to address the conservation issues as well as with stakeholders to coordinate the implementation of safeguarding measures.

Historic Town of Zabid in Yemen The outstanding archaeological and historical heritage of Zabid has seriously deteriorated in recent years. Indeed, 40% of its original houses have been replaced by concrete buildings. In 2000, at the request of the State Party, the Historic Town of Zabid was inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger. UNESCO is helping the local authorities to develop an urban conservation plan and to adopt a strategic approach for the preservation of this World Heritage site.

Rio Platano Biosphere Reserve in Honduras Commercial and agricultural intrusions into the site threaten the World Heritage values for which it had been inscribed in 1982. The advancing agricultural frontier at the west side of the reserve, pushed by small farmers and cattle ranchers, is already reducing the Reserve's forest area. The southern and western zones of the Reserve are subject to massive extraction of precious wood such as the caoba. The site was thus inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger in 1996. An eleven-point corrective action plan has been elaborated and the management plan for Rio Platano is being carried out with a World Heritage Fund contribution.

National Parks of Garamba, Kahuzi-Biega, Salonga, Virunga and the Okapi Wildlife Reserve in the Democratic Republic of the Congo Since 1994, all five World Heritage sites of the DRC were inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger as a result of the impact of the war and civil conflicts in the Great Lakes region. In 1999, an international safeguarding campaign was launched by UNESCO together with a number of international conservation NGOs to protect the habitat of endangered species such as the mountain gorilla, the northern white rhino and the okapi. This resulted in a 4-year \$3.5 million (USD) emergency program to save the five sites, funded by the United Nations Foundation and the Government of Belgium. In 2004, international donors, non-governmental organizations and the governments of Belgium and Japan pledged an additional \$50 million (USD) to help the Democratic Republic of the Congo rehabilitate these World Heritage parks.

SUCCESS STORIES

The World Heritage Convention is not only ‘words on paper’ but is above all a useful instrument for concrete action in preserving threatened sites and endangered species. By recognizing the outstanding universal value of a site, States Parties commit to its preservation and strive to find solutions for its protection.

If a site is inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger, the World Heritage Committee can take immediate action to address the situation, which has led to many successful restorations. The World Heritage Convention is also a very powerful tool to rally international attention and action through international safeguarding campaigns.

Photo: UNESCO/J. H. D. VAN DER HORST

FINDING SOLUTIONS

Often, the World Heritage Committee and the States Parties, with the assistance of UNESCO experts and other partners, find solutions before a given situation deteriorates to an extent that would damage the site.

Giza Pyramids in Egypt These pyramids were threatened in 1995 by a highway project near Cairo which would have seriously damaged the values of this archaeological site. Negotiations with the Egyptian Government resulted in a number of alternative solutions which replaced the disputed project.

Royal Chitwan National Park in Nepal This Park provides refuge for about 400 greater one-horned rhinoceros characteristic of South Asia. The World Heritage Committee, in the early 1990s, questioned the findings of the environmental impact assessment of the proposed Rapti River Diversion Project. The Asian Development Bank and the Government of Nepal revised the assessment and found that the River Diversion project would threaten riparian habitats critical to the rhino inside Royal Chitwan. The project was thus abandoned and this World Heritage site was saved for the benefit of future generations.

Archaeological Site of Delphi in Greece At the time of its nomination in 1987, plans were underway to build an aluminium plant nearby the site. The Greek Government was invited to find another location for the plant, which it did, and Delphi took its rightful place on the World Heritage List.

Whale Sanctuary of El Vizcaino in Mexico In 1999, the World Heritage community campaigned against a plan for enlarging an existing salt factory to commercial scale in Laguna San Ignacio in El Vizcaino Bay, the last pristine reproduction lagoon for the Pacific grey whale. The World Heritage Committee forewarned the Mexican Government of the threats posed to the marine and terrestrial ecosystems, the grey whales as key species as well as the overall integrity of this World Heritage site by locating saltworks inside the Sanctuary. As a result, the Mexican Government refused permission for the saltworks in March 2000.

Mount Kenya National Park/Natural Forest in Kenya The nomination of this site was first referred back to the State Party on the basis of findings during the evaluation that suggested there were serious threats to the site, primarily illegal logging and marijuana cultivation inside the Park. The State Party responded with an action plan which included provision of additional vehicles, increased patrols, community awareness projects, training of forest guards and a review of the policy affecting the adjacent forest reserve. Based on these assurances, the Committee inscribed the site in 1997. Today, some threats still remain but there has been significant progress in the management of the site.



Mount Kenya peers through the clouds. PHOTO BY DAVE BEERE

SUCCESSFUL RESTORATIONS

Angkor in Cambodia One of the most important archaeological sites in South-East Asia, Angkor Archaeological Park contains the magnificent remains of the different capitals of the Khmer Empire, from the 9th to the 15th century. In 1993, UNESCO embarked upon an ambitious plan to safeguard and develop the historical site carried out by the Division of Cultural Heritage in close cooperation with the World Heritage Centre. Illicit excavation, pillaging of archaeological sites and landmines were the main problems. The World Heritage Committee, having noted that these threats to the site no longer existed and that the numerous conservation and restoration activities coordinated by UNESCO were successful, removed the site from the List of World Heritage in Danger in 2004.

Old City of Dubrovnik in Croatia The 'pearl of the Adriatic', dotted with beautiful Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque buildings had withstood the passage of centuries and survived several earthquakes. In November and December 1991, when seriously damaged by artillery fire, the city was immediately included on the List of World Heritage in Danger. With UNESCO providing technical advice and financial assistance, the Croatian Government restored the facades of the Franciscan and Dominican cloisters, repaired roofs and rebuilt palaces. As a result, in December 1998, it became possible to remove the city from the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Wieliczka Salt Mine in Poland This property was inscribed in 1978 as one of the first twelve World Heritage sites. This great mine has been actively worked since the 13th century. Its 300 kilometres of galleries contain famous works of art with altars and statues sculpted in salt, all of which were seriously threatened by humidity due to the introduction of artificial ventilation at the end of the nineteenth century. The site was placed on the List of World Heritage in Danger in 1989. During nine years of joint efforts by both Poland and the international community, an efficient dehumidifying system was installed, and the Committee, at its session in December 1998, had the satisfaction of removing the site from the List of World Heritage in Danger.

Ngorongoro Conservation Area in the United Republic of Tanzania This huge crater with the largest concentration of wild animals in the world was listed as an endangered site in 1984 because of the overall deterioration of the site due to the lack of management. By 1989, thanks to continuous monitoring and technical cooperation projects, the situation had improved and the site was removed from the List of World Heritage in Danger.

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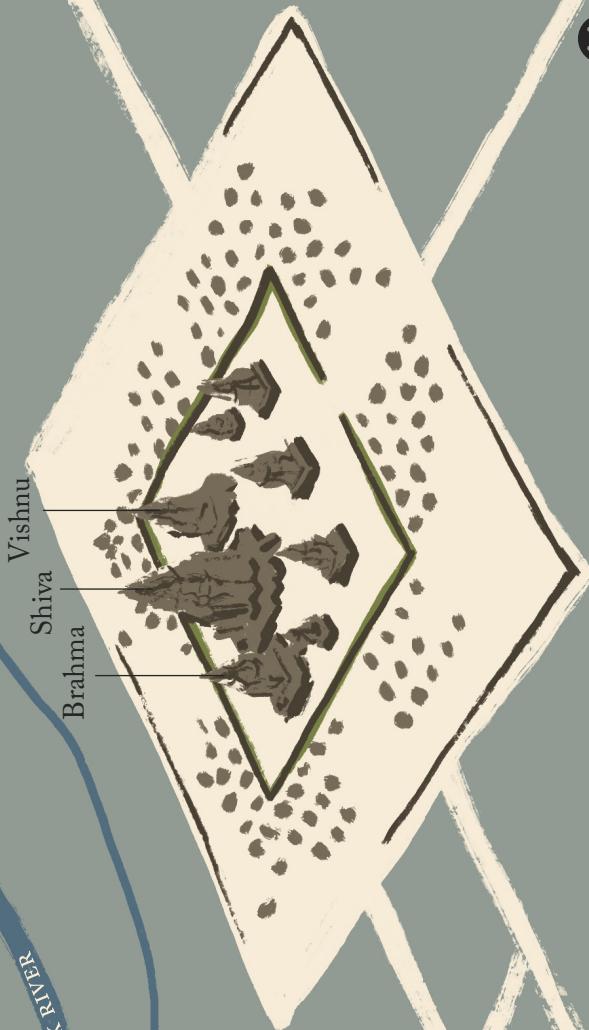
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Vishnu

Shiva

Brahma

OPAK RIVER

Visitor's
Center

Parking



TO YOGYAKARTA