Borobudur: A Center of Worship for Buddhist Pilgrims

Indonesian film promotes Buddhist pilgrimage in world's largest Muslim-majority nation

"Borobudur is a civilizational wonder that belongs to all humanity. We pray that Buddhists throughout the world will visit this great temple for pilgrimage and worship"

~ Minister of Religious Affairs H. Yaqut Cholil Qoumas

BOROBUDUR, Indonesia, 13 March 2023 — The government of the world's most populous Muslim-majority nation and democracy has released a 16-minute film (above) inviting Buddhist pilgrims throughout the world to visit Borobudur Temple, one of the religion's most sacred and historic sites.

The 9th century Buddhist temple — the largest on earth — is located on the heavily populated island of Java, which constitutes the geographic, political, cultural, and economic center of Indonesia, and is the heartland of the world's largest Muslim organization, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU).

The film — titled *Borobudur: A Center of Worship for Buddhists in Indonesia and Throughout the World* — highlights a government-backed campaign to "re-enliven the spirit of Borobudur, so that the temple may once again benefit humanity as a place of Buddhist worship" and thereby "breathe the essence of Borobudur Temple into public life and the world at large."

Prof. Dr. Philip K. Wijaya, Chairman of the Indonesian Buddhist Association, emphasized Borobudur's status as the common heritage of all Indonesians and humanity at large:

> *Borobudur is not an inert pile of rocks. Rather, it is a sacred temple whose history and story continue to unfold. We want to breathe the essence of Borobudur Temple itself into public life and the world at large. This is our responsibility. We want Borobudur Temple to be alive and to have a spirit that can permeate our lives not only in terms of religion, but other aspects as well.*

The Chairman of Gerakan Pemuda Ansor, NU's 8-million-member young adults movement and Indonesia's Minister of Religious Affairs, the Honorable Yaqut Cholil Qoumas, played a key role in the government's decision to re-open Borobudur Temple to Buddhist worship. The initiative is linked to a wider effort by leaders of Nahdlatul Ulama and the Center for Shared Civilizational Values — which serves as the Permanent Secretariat for the G20 Religion Forum (R20) — to advance reform across confessional lines and thereby help ensure that religion functions as a genuine and dynamic source of solutions, rather than problems, in the 21st century.

View the 16-minute government-sponsored video, with Chinese and English subtitles.