

# THE ASSEMBLAGE OF INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE AND TOURISM: Buddhist-Muslim Relation at a Hindu-Majapahit Site in Trowulan, Indonesia

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## Abstract

*Touristic place provides discourses that are worth examining as to which how the management of the site, its internal contestation and development, as well as experiences of its visitors. Examining a heritage of the ancient Majapahit kingdom in Java, this article discusses the assemblage of tourism and religious sites and the extent the site serves as a reservoir for interreligious dialog in contemporary Indonesia. It tries to point out how interreligious dialogue is at work in this site and how surrounding communities participate and respond to the perseverance of the site. Finally, accentuating Swidler's theory of dialogues, this paper looks at the practice of interreligious dialogue at a touristic site and how religious harmony is negotiated by Buddhist and Muslim through the site and the construction of "the other" by both religious communities.*

*[Artikel ini secara spesifik mengkaji tentang dialog antaragama dalam konteks wisata. Isu pertama dalam artikel ini memotret bagaimana berbagai komunitas menarik yang eksis dengan identitas agama yang berbeda-beda. Kemudian dilanjutkan dengan bagaimana relasi antaragama yang tercipta di tempat wisata dengan menggunakan pendekatan teori Swidler tentang definisi dialog, khususnya "dialogue of hand," tentang bagaimana mencari sisi baik dari sebuah relasi. Pembahasan terakhir dalam*



*artikel ini cenderung pada relasi yang lebih spesifik secara praktis di situs Majapahit di Trowulan, Mojokerto, Jawa Timur. Bagian ini mengkaji tentang relasi yang dihasilkan oleh komunitas di situs tersebut berdasarkan identitas mereka (Buddha-Muslim) dan perspektif dalam melihat “yang lain,” serta menemukan situasi saling memahami.]*

**Keyword:** *Interreligious, Dialogue, Buddhist, Muslim*

## **Introduction**

Indonesia is well known for its Muslim majority rather than other religions such as Hindu-Buddhism that had experienced its civilization peak through some kingdoms existing in the past. Majapahit known as the last Hindu-Buddhism kingdom which ever existed in Indonesia around twelfth and fifteenth century era. Historically, this Trowulan site is located surroundings Soko, Moojo, and Mojoagung subdistricts in Jombang and Mojokerto, East Java.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, the civilization peak of the Majapahit kingdom happened in fourteenth century which is demonstrated through archeological findings, such as temples, tombs, gates of place, ceramics and the Hindu-Buddha archaic stone. The main history started with Stamford Raffles's finding about the several Hindu-Buddha building pattern in Trowulan district at 1815 year.<sup>2</sup> The history of Majapahit has that Raden Wijaya or Siti Inggil is the first Majapahit King and his successor Hayam Wuruk who led the kingdom in the fourteenth century is the most successful king.<sup>3</sup>

The tombs of these two kings are apparently found in at Trowulan as a memonic site for the glory of the kingdom. Other mnemonic sites of the Majapahit are also present at Trowulan, such as Brahu temple,

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<sup>1</sup> Rochtri Agung Bawono, “Zonasi Kerawanan terhadap Kerusakan dan Upaya Konservasi situs Trowulan di Mojokerto Jawa Timur,” *Master Thesis*, Yogyakarta: Universitas Gadjah Mada, 2003, p. 30.

<sup>2</sup> Adrian Perkasa, “Dalam Bayangan Kebesaran Masa Lalu: Transformasi Pemaknaan dan Pemanfaatan Warisan Majapahit dari Pra-Kolonial hingga Pasca Colonial di Indonesia,” *Master Thesis*, Universitas Gadjah Mada, 2015, p. 15.

<sup>3</sup> M.C. Ricklef, *History of Modern Indonesia since c.1300* (UK: MacMillan University Press, 2003).

Gentong temple, Tikus temple, Ratu Bajang temple, Wringin Lawang temple and also *pendapa* of the Majapahit Kingdom.

In order to commemorate the glory of Majapahit, Bikkhu Virayanadi Mahatera planned to build a Buddhist Center “Mahavihara Majapahit” around the site in 1982. Nevertheless, surrounding communities who are Muslims refused the plan due to the issue of proselytization of the Buddhism religion.<sup>4</sup> It is said that

the community around the area are Muslims and no one has Buddhism religion, become the other argument of rejection that had been stated but the negotiation was opened where the local government, Bikkhu Virayanadi, and regent of Mojokerto try to negotiate this place as *Tenger*, or in Javanese language interpreted as the signed place, of the Majapahit glory era in this place. So as those reasons, the local inhabitant agreed with the Mahavihara Majapahit existences due to the in memory of Hindu-Buddha lasts kingdom in Java. By the time, the construction is bigger and more developed which signed with the larger area and Mahavihara building facilitation. One of them is the “Sleeping Buddha” statue around 1987s which known as the third biggest in the world after Tibetan and Thailand “Sleeping Buddha” statue.

Hence, with this labeled status, Mahavihara Majapahit becomes well known with its statue of Buddha and the architectural building which become the other tractions of this Buddhist Center. The visitors of the site not only for praying of the Buddhism but also for “refreshing” mind or tourism aims in order to non-Buddhist followers. It was like the classical theory of the Turner that he stated social “anti-structure” as a basic principle of the tourism.

Based on the interview with the “Sleeping Buddha” statue visitors, the tourist who came to the site actually want to spend their leisure time and holiday. The reason why they come to the place not merely about

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<sup>4</sup> Interview with Agus, one of the Mahavihara Majapahit management, April 9, 2016.

religious site of the Hindu-Buddha kingdom in Java, but about the labelling of the big “Sleeping Buddha” and the beautiful architecture of the statue. Moreover, when the author tried to ask about the place that they visited on the Trowulan site, they also visited some temples in this last Majapahit kingdom only for enjoying the beauty of the building and taking pictures of these archeological remains.

A little bit more about the tourism discourses, it could be found some particular idea about how the tourism created and effected to the social construction community. As like theory of “tourist gaze” by John Urry where the gazing is about the “discursive determination” who want to come out from the “scopic regime”.<sup>5</sup> So resonance from the tourist gaze here influenced to the site, the relationship among tourist and industrialization could be happened here. The service that has been provided to the tourist is depended what they are produced which prominent about service providers such as waiter, facilitation and other social interaction tended to the tourist satisfaction. The root of the gaze also includes “romantic and collective” of the tourism where the social interaction among the societies influenced to the cultural changes socially or physically in order to reconstruct the friendly” environment” for the tourism.<sup>6</sup>

Through the ethnographical method, this article deals with how interreligious relations occur in (religious) tourism place. Influences of the tourism are so substantial to the social change of the community around the site, especially in creating interrelation that is unconsciously considered which started from economical, attitude, ethic, and religious perspective. Besides, the communication between the management of the tourism place with the local inhabitant in avoiding clash and managing a peace situation with the different backgrounds to be another focus in the context of interreligious issues.

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<sup>5</sup> John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze: Theory, Culture and Society* (California: Sage Publisher, 2002), p. 2.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

As stated in beginning of the article, the situation that faced by Mahavihara Majapahit is around the Muslim majority environment. Indeed, there were no local parish of the Vihara that existed in this site. Moreover, the interviewed people actually said that there were the two widow Buddhist follower around Vihara but they have been converted to the Islam and seldom to come to the shrine. Therefore, this Buddhist Center would be crowded by Buddhism adherent only on the big day of the Buddha as like Vesak day. The fact added with the existence of the two influential Muslim tombs in Trowulan area: *Syekh* Jumadil Kubro and *Mbah* Sulaiman Cemetery. This complicated situation was faced by the Buddhism followers in the surrounding Vihara. However how they involve, communicate and interact with local inhabitant here should be underlined in creating peaceful neighborhood with the differ identity and background. This article argued that the interreligious dialogue happened here. Thus, to examine this interrelationship between Buddhist-Muslim, this article will explicate the kind of the dialogue in the site based on the Swidler's theory of dialogues.

### **Swidler's Theory of Interreligious Dialogue: "Dialogue of Hand"**

Before going further, defining the dialogue is needed here how it is applied in this Trowulan Site because the dialogue is the interaction among peoples who communicate in finding and learning the more truth of the other view of the subject which should be no superiority one who controls and monopolizes the other side.<sup>7</sup> Doing dialogue means that is not ignore "the other" who has divergent culture and custom which has different view of our side in the name of cosmic often judging "wrong" side of the other arrogantly which contradicts with the essence of the dialogue so the violence or egocentric arrogance is the opposite of cosmic dance of the dialogue because it can be make a destruction

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<sup>7</sup> Leonard Swidler, "Understanding Dialogue" in R.K. Mays, *Interfaith Dialogue at the Grass Roots* (Pennsylvania: Ecumenical Press, ), p. 8.

of the view.<sup>8</sup> If we see the case of Mahavihara, the interaction of the people here still on the tourism discourse. The passive social interaction happened because based on the interview and observation of the place tended to the position of no doctrinal perspective that questionable, the dialogue is particularly on cultural sustainability and interpersonal relationship as a neighbor.

Moreover, Swidler also divides the dimension of the dialogue that would be corresponded to the humanity process engaging to this kind of the interaction. The first dimension is “Dialogue of Head” which is tend to the cognitive and intellectual matter and see the other as a different view that would be rise an understanding the world determines who act in the world. The “Dialogue of Hand” emphasize on how ethical or illative playing a role in contacting with the other means that rising understanding to interact and create a better place in a world although it was separated with different background. Receiving beauty of the other is the next dimension of the dialogue affectively or aesthetically in the name of “Dialogue of Heart” which engaging bodily-spiritual expression through music, song, art, architecture or poetry. The last dimension is “Dialogue of (W)holiness” which assumes we cannot life in the divided life or seeing the “oneness” with the other and tries to “get it all together”.<sup>9</sup>

Based on those dimensions of the dialogue, the author tries to divide those four dimensions into two categorizations which are tended to the practical and doctrinal perspective. It can be said practical, the applied dialogue that have been done by the people, is emphasized on the practice at the starting point unconsciously. This dialogue is more inclining to the dialogue of hand which ethically see a good thing of the case. For the example of the Mahavihara Majapahit, economic resources of the tourism, cultural and historical conservation, and social humanity.

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

## Seeking a Good Thing in Economical View

Ulrich Duchrow, argue that religions truly ambivalent which they maintain to the response of the civilization. Political and economic interest used religions to gathering the power that has a potential thing increasing to the injustice and violence. That why we should engage “self-critique” to the role of the religions to implement the new vision and praxis of life-giving culture.<sup>10</sup>

Furthermore, Duchrow also mentions about the “perfect society” is not the end of rationality where flexibility of diversity is a below concept. He takes the Immanuel Kant’s word “regulative idea” of the religion is still utopist: “The vision of a society in which all have a place in harmony with nature emerges out of the real-life conditions of people and their struggles, and continues to move ahead with every step of its implementation. Therefore, the key task is to mobilize as many people, groups, and movements as possible to engage in the emancipatory struggle to be waged in solidarity with humanity, the earth, and future generations”.

The connectivity between religion and economy is still arguable. Escalating religion as the main resource of the injustice and violence is more often, the blurring of the religion role, not religion itself, in society can be criticize. The emphasize on the solidarity and emancipation of the Humanity, earth and the future life should be maintained here. The prison of the people minds on the “perfect society” and “regulative idea” with ignoring harmony can divisively break relationship on the various community. The absoluteness of the religious rule sometimes should consider the good side of case because every people has its own identity and his own right side. In case of Mahavihara management, it can be seen how the economical view does not make a break of the relationship. For example, based on the interview with one of Mahavihara board, they

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<sup>10</sup> Ulrich Duchrow & Franz J. Hinkelammert, *Transcending Greedy Money: Interreligious Solidarity for Just Relations* (US: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 205.

did not problematize the parking area and shopping around the site that have been operate by local people to support their economy and keep the relationship among them. Although the land, that had been used by them, is basically the land of the Mahavihara site. The other case happen how they receive the employee of the Mahavihara for cleaning the shrine or craftsman who repair the “Sleeping Buddha” area by preferring local people although they have different background of the religion.

Describing about the heritage definition, it was no far with how the history, site and power of the citizenship talk more here. In his Book “sites, body and stories: Imagining Indonesian History”, Susan Legene et al point out that heritage make a remembering the past to the present which direction is unpredictable and uneasy relationship among society.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, for Indonesian people, the emergence and popularity of various ethnic organizations can be assumed as the basic need in the term of “traditional Community” which lost because of the modernity.<sup>12</sup>

Majapahit kingdom form a part of some ancient Indonesian kingdoms, the finding of the archeological remains in Trowulan become a pride of the Indonesian. From the building, it can tell some the glory of the Indonesian kingdom before the colonial era. How the manage the city, build a temple, and other fascinating the ancient civilization. Therefore, the sense of the citizenship and nationality to keep a relic rise among society. This case can be seen when the author interview about local inhabitant care about the Trowulan site by keeping and conserving the relic of Hindu-Buddha temple that have been found archeological expert, they are reluctant to help them dig and found other archeological remains. This case absolutely like interreligious relation and efforts at the reconstruction of the destroyed buildings. Because their reconstruction remains central to the reconciliation process. A plaque attests to this

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<sup>11</sup> Susan Legene, Bambang Purwanto & Henk Schulte Nordolt, *Sites, Bodies and Stories: Imagining Indonesian History* (Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2015), p. 24.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.



exemplary practice in interreligious cooperation for reconciliation through reconstruction of a religious building.<sup>13</sup> This condition was strengthened with the role of the local inhabitant to preserve the Hindu-Buddha history kingdom by the willing to build “Rumah Khas Majapahit” or the Majapahit Home Pattern in front of their house although it was service from the government to build it due to the pride of glory of the Indonesian ancient kingdom.

The next is how the Mahavihara management provide “sanggar budaya” or cultural studio inside the shrine then local inhabitant join in this musical dialogue as a preserving musical culture of the Javanese and keeping the diversity in their relationship. In building a peace, a verbal process has a significant role to conduct a dialogue due to those activities can mobilize the peacebuilding aims.<sup>14</sup> It was different with nonverbal communication which emphasizes on the speech in negotiating a peaceful condition. In his paper, Pruitt examines that a music as a verbal communication can create new dialogue for peace and encouraging the formation of peaceful culture through engaging a group or personal in community as an alternative to communicate and understand each other. Moreover, a music and other verbal communications can an alternative to create more inclusive communication because it included sharing, expressing, and also creating meaning with nonviolent ways.<sup>15</sup> Hence, the difference between verbal and nonverbal dialogue, such as music, approaches located in the way how it more inclusive yet it engaged and contacted evidently not only just on the speech or word entanglement but on the more deeply nonviolent approach and understanding rhythm to create a fascinating resonance from the balancing each other performance as a “sharing meaning” in communication which also provide how they

<sup>13</sup> Ina Merdjanov & Patrice Brodeur, *Religion as a Conversation Starter: Interreligious Dialogue for Peacebuilding in the Balkans* (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2009), p. 91.

<sup>14</sup> L. Pruitt, “Creating a Musical Dialogue for Peace,” *International Journal of Peace Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 1, 2011, pp. 81.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 84.

try to conserve the traditional music through this kind of activity in *sanggar budaya* inside Vihara.

The last role is how the youth participation in conserving Majapahit cultural heritage through internet media. The interviewed people show to the author one of the Facebook page that created by local inhabitant to introduce and preserving Majapahit archeological remain named “Save Situs Trowulan” which this page contain of the agenda of cultural ceremony, the photos, and the explanation of relics. The idea of “simultaneous environment” had explicated by Kong where it describes the chronological process of “participatory feeling” for the user of the cyber-ritual internet in involving interaction. She mentioned that the “spiritual connection” networks with spiritual friends, and the notion of that the connections are not coincidental but reflect God’s hand.<sup>16</sup> The difference approach happened in the case of Trowulan site where the significance in joining the Facebook page community. Tending to conserve the ancestor of building history is the main concern of the participatory which it was caused between Buddhist and Muslim has different view in encouraging the religious view. Coincidental view is not suitable for the case; hence it has a purpose to conserving the building as a living ancient cultural heritage proudly.

### **Modalities for Interreligious Dialogue and Harmony**

The different approach of the model has been explored in the term of theologies of religion where the replacement model initiated with “exclusivism”, the fulfillment as an “absolutism” but the Mutuality is more “modest” than the absolutist follower because mutuality model emphasizes on the God’s universal love and existence comes to the other religions.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, the difference can be seen at this model engaging in authentic dialogue to see the other as a potential partner

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<sup>16</sup> Lily Kong, “Religion and Technology: Refiguring Place, Space, Identity and Community,” *Area*, Vol. 33, No. 4, 2001, pp. 409.

<sup>17</sup> Paul F. Knitter, *Introducing Theologies of Religion* (US: Orbis Books, ), p. 109.

dialogue, preserving the differences and diversity to encourage “special relationship”, and throwing up the doctrinal obstacles into the ethical obligation.

So practically to do the Mutuality model, Knitter offers to the different kinds of bridge that could be advocated this approach. Philosophical-Historical bridge considers the concept of “God” that has been used by “Abrahamic religion” as a center of belief and Buddhism acknowledge those concepts of God so in order to see that conceptualization its prefer see as a cultural expression, means that difference place has difference experience, conceiving and living in term of Self-centeredness and other-centeredness.<sup>18</sup> The religious-mystical bridge stress on the how human define in unity based on the its alive, grow and change and its different with ethical-practical bridge where it focused on how not only see the differences but practicing the global responsibility which taking acting as a better talking.

In the Mahavihara site, the mutuality model had been practiced to both of them from local inhabitant or Buddhist management in the shrine. Most of local inhabitant said they seldom come to the Vihara or never indeed, they did not know what kind of the activity that have been done by its Vihara. Most of them said that tried not disturb when the Buddhist pray or organize a Buddhism day ceremony. This situation also strengthens with the Buddhist said that they never problematize about the Muslim ceremony around them, or engage with their religious session. Indeed, they only know one people that often come and help them when they have a religious agenda. The feeling of not to disturb and appreciate other believe because it has own variety without questioning the doctrinal view of the other is basic point of ethical attitude response.

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 117.

## **Engaging Buddhist-Muslim Perspective in Interreligious Dialogue**

The Buddhist view on the interreligious dialogue can be mentioned into 3 level of involvements based on the Masao Abe: historical to see the other, doctrinal and practical to involve interreligious dialogue, and his own perspective or attitude as a Buddhist. Talking about historical of the Buddha, it would be found in the story of Mahavira in the book of *Upasira* explained about when he questioned about his *karma* of the second life to the Buddha. He answered the concept of the *dharma* which means it was universal deliverance, it can be seen how the spread of the Buddha teaching to the other proved that *dharma* can be delivered to the other.<sup>19</sup>

Second, doctrinally Buddhism does not recognize the absoluteness from relative concept. The “dependent origination” emphasizes on the idea of relativity to see other religion so practically Buddhist should not be exclusively to the other religion by practicing his word carefully and wisely. Thus, this attitude can be accepted by the other adherents as a critic for them to be more compassion. The last in the way of Buddhist, the belief that the future Buddha is practicing interreligious dialogue to awake the truth of the Buddha teaching for the other. The advanced question about seeing, analyzing, knowing and exploring make the rise of the question “what is religion?” due to the reveal of the pure qualities of the Buddha teaching.<sup>20</sup>

From those explanation, it points out altruistic and modesty as a Buddhism adherent. Spreading their dharma around their environment although with the different religion become their starting point of the Buddhist missionary softly and critics for being exclusive with the other. The strong belief of the Buddha teaching truth strengthens their own view the renaissance of the future as the right one.

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<sup>19</sup> Masao Abe, *Buddhism and Interreligious Dialogue* (Hawaii: Hawaii University Press, p. 130.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132-133.

When Buddhism does not recognize pluralism but emphasize on self-affirmation, Islam more promote on the pluralistic approach in religion. Aslan mentioned about the ‘innate religious disposition’ religious pluralism”. He points out that the existence of the religion in every place and age as an innate religion which if everyone condemns with the same common religiosity then the diversity of religion is not essential but an accidental.<sup>21</sup> So, when we observe the Mahavihara adherents and Muslim response with the other existence is the practical expression of the self-affirmation as the Buddhist follower and Islam response with the pluralistic attitude which assumes the with different place, background, and age also influenced to the which religion should be followed. But the passive hopes to acknowledged their own perspective of the religion is always rise in their mind. As Abu Nimer said That “Dialogue is a very dangerous business”. Why it is dangerous? Misunderstanding and misinterpretation could be rise in the surface because of bad preparation and unappropriated possibility in the dialogue that make worse in the relationship during the dialogue process. Moreover, he also mentioned religion not only legitimated as a potential source the violence or the war but also has a significant role in making a peace situation.<sup>22</sup> From those explanation, Abu Nimer admonishes us about the danger of the dialogue a dialogue especially in term of the religion that often assumed as a source of riots but considering a religion as a media of peacemaker.

Argon mentioned that the interreligious dialogue can be promote an opening of mutual understanding and leading a trust building among communities. The establishment of security also provide in this interaction, the minority and majority will find mutual acceptance due to finding the greater truth of understanding and also trust building for

<sup>21</sup> A. Aslan, “The Need for a Pluralistic Approach in Religion” in *Religious Pluralism in Christian and Islamic Philosophy: The Thought of John Hick and Sayyed Hossein Nasr* (London: Routledge Curzon, 1994), p. 102.

<sup>22</sup> M. Abu-Nimer, “The Miracle of Transformation through Interfaith Dialogue” in Smock D.R. *Interfaith Dialogue and Peace Building* (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2000), p. 30.

a better relation.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, as Muslim, Quran is the basic orientation of the Islamic believer as the scriptural direction. The word *rahmat lil 'alamin*, a blessing to the universe, and *hablum minan naas*, the relation with the other human, can be as the core principle in pluralistic interaction dialogue. Dialogue is a new terrain on which we must live our respective religious commitments and We have the responsibility of greatness thrust upon us, that of letting the world see that we can live and work together, that religion need not be a source of conflict and war.<sup>24</sup> Thus, Michel mentioned about the “dialogue of civilization” which articulated the condition of the life in nowadays. The problem of different understanding of each religious identity can be solved by the dialogue as like doctrine of Islam often assume as the source of conflict and war. Whereas, Islam recognized about the concept of “*rahmat lil 'alamin*” and “*hablum minan naas*” to involve and has a responsibility with the other.

## Conclusion

Tourism place provides human interrelation not only on social problem and phenomena but also specifically on the religious discourse. The relation among each other religious follower, in this case Buddhist and Muslim, cannot be avoided. Majapahit kingdom site in Trowulan, Mojokerto, and Jombang explicates that kind of the study case. The archeological remain with the Hindu-Buddha pattern is available which starting from the temple, archaic, stone and also tombs. Based on those reason, Build Mahavihara as a sign of the Hindu-Buddha glory in the past era.

Interestingly, majority of the Trowulan site citizen is Muslim but there were a lot of the Buddhist archeological remain. The building of

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<sup>23</sup> Kemal Argon, “Strategies for Interreligious and Inter-Muslim Dialogue: A Proposed Methodology,” *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, Vol. 29, No. 3, 2009, pp. 364.

<sup>24</sup> Thomas Michel, *Where to Now? Ways forward for Interreligious Dialogue: Images of Abraham as Models of Interreligious Encounter* (UK: Hartford Seminary, Blackwell Publishing, 2010), p. 533.

the Mahavihara Majapahit in Trowulan causes the interreligious dialogue based on Swidler's theory which it represents how Buddhist and Muslim reaction with tourism discourses among them not only about economic affairs but also on the concept of conserving site and the religious social relationship that have been practiced by them. Therefore, tourism is not only place of healing but also the "locus" of the religious harmony created. Most people assume vihara as the sacred place for the buddhism but what happen in the site practically secular exegesis aslike economic and social as basic point of the interreligious mutualistic diversity.

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