

# Among the Ruined Temples of Java



ONE OF THE BUDDHAS ON BORO BOEDOEER.

(Copyright, 1901, by Frank G. Carpenter.)  
**D**JKJAKARTA, Java, Oct. 14.—(Special Correspondence of The Bee.)—Away out here in the heart of Java, in the midst of the Indian ocean and five degrees below the equator, are some of the most wonderful ruins upon earth. I have just returned from a visit of exploration to them and my pen halts as I try to describe them. I have seen the Parthenon at Athens, the Forum of old Rome, the myriad ruins of India and the pyramids of Egypt, but nowhere anything like the remains of the old temples of Java. They are scattered over a vast territory. Some of them cover many acres and some are miles in extent. The most wonderful of all lies within a few miles of Djokjakarta. It is known as the Temple of Boro Boedoeer.

This temple is the greatest monument ever erected to Buddha. It surpasses the temples of Siam and the giant Buddhas of Bangkok. It is more wonderful than the Japanese creations in bronze and stone and larger than any Buddhist monument in China. Some of you have seen the pyramids. The greatest of them is that of Ghizeh, which covers thirteen acres and upon which several hundred thousand men are said to have worked for twenty years. If that be so the temple of Boro Boedoeer must represent the labor of more than 500,000. It is not quite so large as the great pyramid, but the labor upon it was infinitely greater. I have climbed the pyramid of Ghizeh and have explored its interior by the light of magnesium wire. It is a huge mass of stones laid up in terraces in pyramid shape. There is no decoration, no carving—nothing but great blocks of stone.

### Three Miles of Carvings.

This so-called Temple of Boro Boedoeer is also pyramidal, but it is one mass of carving and statues. It is built upon a vast stone platform rising terrace by terrace to a gigantic cupola more than 100 feet above the base. At the bottom it is 500 feet square and it covers, I judge, from eight to ten acres of ground. All the terraces are decorated with statues and their walls with bas-reliefs of wonderful carvings. There are, it has been found by actual measure, more than three miles of carved figures, some two or three feet in height, some no longer than your finger, and all as exquisitely cut as though picked out with a knife by some patient Chinese. I counted in places eight different figures in a space a yard square, and such figures continue right along around and around the terraces, so that the length is about three miles. Every figure must have taken weeks to make. When it is remembered that the work is that of an artist you can see that a vast population must have been engaged upon it. Altogether thousands of lives are bottled up in these carvings—the lives of the past telling the story of their times to the present. Some of the figures are wonderfully lifelike. Every face has a different expression and some smile and frown as though alive.

### Life in Java 1,000 Years Ago.

I can't give you the number of statues of Buddha. There are 500 large ones representing him in a sitting posture in the different positions he held when he prophesied, taught and thought before he was translated to the Nirvana. There are figures representing the life of the court and common people of this island a thousand years ago. I went by miles of elephants, peacocks and monkeys. I saw all the vegetables and fruits of the tropics portrayed in stone. Stone peasants drove stone buffaloes as they dragged stone plows through



GENERAL VIEW OF THE TEMPLE OF BORO BOEDOEER.

the stone fields. There were stone men carrying stone rice upon their shoulders and stone women bearing water jars on their heads as they did in the days of the Scriptures. There were dancing elephants and elephants carrying fans and state umbrellas. The life of the sea, as well as the land, is depicted upon the temple. There are ships and boats in action, and, indeed, all the figures and scenes of the life of these people a thousand years ago.

Yes, I mean a thousand years ago! For it is estimated that these ruins are at least 1,000 or 1,200 years old. The temples were constructed when Buddhism was at its height on this island. This beautiful carving was done when our ancestors in the wilds of England and Germany were eating with their fingers, living in huts and sleeping on skins and at least 600 years before America was discovered and that many years before the people of Europe knew that Java existed.

But why did the temples not fall to pieces long ago? They lie in the heart of the tropics, on the edge of the equator, and they are washed by the most terrible rains on earth. They have lasted largely through their wonderful workmanship and also because they have been buried from sight under forest and earth. They are laid without mortar or cement. The stones are joined as closely as the finest mosaic and though many of them are exceedingly small they still hold together.

When the Buddhist religion was overthrown in Java hundreds of years ago it is supposed that the people who owned the temples buried them. In time trees grew upon them and for 600 years they were as unknown to the natives of this part of the world as were the ruins of Pompeii to the Italians. The Dutch took possession of the island and kept it for several generations and did not discover them. Then the English conquered the Dutch and during their short rule in Java found these temples. Sir Stamford Raffles kept 200 men busy for forty-five days digging out one of them and since then, the Dutch having again taken possession of the island, have made further excavations.

### From Djokja to Boro Boedoeer.

But let me describe my trip to Boro Boedoeer. I went a half hour by rail and then took a carriage hauled by four ponies. I had a coachman and footman and the duty of the latter was to jump from his perch on the rear of the carriage and thrash the ponies into a gallop at every long hill. He sometimes allowed the team to walk on the level, but never when going up or down grade, and we went almost on the gallop over one hill after another until at last we came into a beautiful valley surrounded by mighty volcanoes. We dashed through a village of bamboo huts, stopping outside to see the statue of Mendoeit, and then went on through the valley until we came to the great hill upon which the temple stands. The hill is about 150 feet above the plain. It is just about large enough to hold the temple and the government rest house and it looks as though it were erected for the temple by the hands of man. The only stopping place is at the rest house. There are but few travelers who get so far into the interior and as no one was expected, the manager of the rest house was absent. I found half a dozen servants, however, and finally managed to scare up a bed and a dinner of rice, fried eggs and coffee.

I drove around and around the hill going up it, and got my first sight of the monument from the steps of the rest house.

There is a wide avenue of kanari trees leading from the hotel to the temple. The trees overhang, making a great arbor reaching perhaps half a mile to where the temple begins. Between the trees all along this wide avenue are gigantic stone Buddhas sitting cross-legged, with their feet lying on their knees, and I looked past their peaceful faces through the trees at what seemed in the dusk of the early evening a might pyramid of carved greenish-gray

stone. As it stood out against the blue sky it appeared to be cut from one solid block, its ruined and broken condition being lost in the distance.

### Moonlight on Boro Boedoeer.

My visit to the temple was made in company with a Dutch civil engineer who went with me from Djokja. After dinner we sat and smoked until the moon rose, and then strolled down through the avenue and took our first view of the great temple by moonlight. We had the full moon of the tropics, under which everything about the temple was plainly visible, but softened and mellowed by its rays. We had to walk carefully for fear of stepping on poisonous cobras, and we looked fearfully into the darker shadows before entering the terraces, expecting that we might see the fierce eyes of a tiger staring at us.

We stopped a moment at the steps of the pyramid to admire the giant statue of Buddha which sits there. Its beautiful features were life-like and peaceful in the moonlight. It seemed as pure and fresh as though it had been carved yesterday, and we could not realize its age.

Passing up the steps we climbed from terrace to terrace to one gallery after another, tracing the carvings by the light of the moon, and at last reached the platform covering perhaps five acres, upon which are great cones or mounds of stones, in each of which was a sitting Buddha. We mounted higher and higher up rough stone steps, and finally stopped on the very top, with the vast monument below us.

What a place for a temple or a tomb! We were on a hill in the center of a great plateau surrounded by mountains, in an amphitheater of the gods, on the very top of the greatest monument ever made to the gods. At one side of us were two volcanoes, and all about were cloud-capped mountains, the plain at their feet extending around the little hill upon which the temple stands.

As we stood there the full moon was just overhead. Clear and beautiful, it seemed to me that it looked down pityingly on that mighty work of man once so splendid, but now fast falling to ruins. It touched the rough outlines with tender hands and apparently smoothed them out and made the great pile new again. Under its rays the Buddhas became life-like. The lines of carvings were vivified and the whole was much more grand than when we saw it on the following day in the glarish light of the tropical sun.

The scene was strangely peaceful, the air was as soft as that of an Ohio June and the night breezes from the volcanic ranges about us whispered stories of the past as they swept over the ruins. We could hear the chirping of the crickets, the chattering of the lizards and now and then the beat, beat, beat of the policemen on their wooden drums marking the hours.

### Wilderness of Broken Statues.

Coming down from the summit we walked for miles about the carvings, studying the various characters and looking at the peace-loving Buddhas in their niches above us. Everywhere we went we saw the work of the iconoclast. There were hundreds of beautiful statues without heads. Here a great sitting figure was overthrown, there was one with its arm broken, and farther on another which had lost its toes and fingers, in order that some relic hunter might add to his collection. For generations both natives and foreigners have been robbing the monument. The lawns of some of the Dutch have been decorated with its statues, and the foreign soldiers have amused themselves by decapitating the Buddhas and carrying their heads away to use for target practice with rifles and pistols. I found a beautiful hand lying on the top of the structure, and had I wished I could easily have carried it off without discovery.

My next view of the mighty monument

was at daybreak. We had the servants call us at 5 o'clock, and, after a cup of coffee as black as ink and as thick as molasses, we walked down to the temple. The day was just breaking, and the huge pile looked ghost-like in the light of the early morning. It seemed half fort, half palace, and had I been in China I should have imagined myself in front of some mighty city.

I climbed to the top to watch the sun rise. As I stood there I could see it reddening the clouds upon the volcano of Merapi. Its rays struck the steam rising out of the volcano and turned it to gold. As I looked the mighty mountain spouted up a great jet of vapor which in the sun became a fountain of gold. At the same time the clouds behind the mountain took on a roseate hue, and a moment later the great round silver disk of the sun jumped up, as it were, into the sky and flooded the world with light.

### Early Morning in Java.

The scenes of early morning in Java are unlike those of our country. I am here in the atmosphere of the tropics, where the heavens lie close to the earth, where the moon appears larger, where the stars shed a light almost equal to that of the moon and where the sun is always dazzling. On the dome of the temple, surrounded by a thousand Buddhas, I seemed to be on a great stone island floating upon a sea of vapor. The vapor covered the plain in a thick fog, banking up in billows at the foot of the mountain, making the whole plateau a sea of fleecy white spotted with islands where the coconut trees rose out of the fog. This lasted until the sun rose, when, as though by a wand, his majesty of the heavens cleared the clouds away.

As I watched this spectacular extravaganza operated by Mother Nature as manager, the orchestra burst forth with its morning concert. The musicians were hundreds upon hundreds of birds, some no larger than canaries, others as big as robins and others still larger. I could see the pigeons flying about us, making a whistling noise through the wooden pipes attached to their tails, thus scaring off the great crow-like birds and vultures hovering about. The birds flew through the monuments of the old temple, hopping from statue to statue, resting now and then on the nose or hand of a Buddha, while they sang away with all their might.

As the sun rose higher the concert grew louder and mingled with it came the busy hum that is always heard throughout the daytime in this island hives inhabited by 25,000,000 human bees. I could see the workmen going out into the fields, looking like ants on the landscape. Some of them drove along buffaloes, which in the distance seemed no larger than dogs, and gradually the green fields were spotted with little patches of white, the men and women who were working in the fields.

### Vast Ruins of Brambanan.

The temple of Boro Boedoeer, however, is but one of the great ruins of Java. There are others scattered over the country. There are the remains of 150 temples lying between Djokja and Solo, and about twenty miles from here are the vast ruins of Brambanan and not far away from them the site of the Chandi Sewu or the thousand temples.

I have spent a long time in wandering about through this region. Brambanan is only about twenty miles from Djokja and it can be reached by rail. From the station it is but a short walk to the ruined temples and I had no difficulty in finding them without a guide. The ruins cover an area greater than the ground floor of the capitol at Washington. They are surrounded by a grove of coconut and breadfruit trees, in which the birds sang as I walked from one stone building to another and photographed the statues. I mounted the steps of one great pile of volcanic rock. The stone was cut into blocks and carefully fitted, its sides



A GIANT GUARD OF THE THOUSAND TEMPLES.

being profusely carved. This building was, I judge, about forty feet high and at the top was a great stone chamber whose roof was the sky.

### Goddess With the Beautiful Hips.

In the back of this chamber, upon a pedestal just as high as my shoulder, was a most beautiful statue representing a maiden standing and looking down with sleepy eyes. The statue was at least twenty feet high and it made me think of some which had been brought from Egypt and Nineveh to the British museum. The face was beautiful and evidently taken from life. The figure was one of almost perfect proportions, save that it was narrow at the hips, from which fact it is called by the people here "The goddess with the beautiful hips." The name of the goddess is Lara Jongran. I sat down at her feet and rested, looking up into her sleepy eyes and hardly realizing that the ardent glance I was getting was the same that those eyes had given for more than 1,000 years.

I next examined the bas-reliefs on the stones outside. They are not unlike those of the Boro Boedoeer, although they favor more of the Hindoo gods, Brahma and Siva, than of Buddha. In the chambers below I found a great stone god with the body of a man and the head of an elephant. It was in a sitting posture, the feet being so arranged that the soles came together. The carving was excellent, but the face of the fat old god frowned, it seemed to me, as I looked at him through the ground glass of my camera.

### Thousand Temples.

Leaving this mass of ruins I walked a couple of miles to the site of the Thousand Temples. The most of these have disappeared, but there is a vast stone platform reached by long walks, guarded by gigantic stone figures on every side. There are four entrances to the temple and two of these mighty figures at each entrance. Each figure rests upon its knee. It holds a great club in one hand and a snake in the other, while another great snake is wrapped around over its shoulders. The figures are each carved out of one solid block of volcanic rock and although kneeling they are nine feet in height. I climbed up on the knees of one of them and from there got to the shoulders and with my tape line took the dimensions of the head. It measured just two feet two inches. A line across from shoulder to shoulder was forty-six inches and the pedestal on which the giant knelt was fifteen inches. The figures were very grotesque, but still wonderfully lifelike. They have eyes about as big around as a base ball and so made that they seem to be popping out of their heads. They apparently wear wigs, but whether this is an evidence of the woolly hair sometimes seen in the south seas or a representation of false hair I do not know.

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### Reflections of a Bachelor

New York Press: The man who doesn't fail isn't always a success by a long shot.

Any sensible woman would rather win an argument than be right.

We win to try again and lose; we lose to try again for the same thing.

The difference between men and women who lie is that the women don't mean to; the men do.

A slide down hill seems ten times as swift and fast when you are on it as when the other fellow is.

When women are going to have a club meeting to debate an important question their first preparation for it concerns the lunch and floral decorations.