

Etnozoological study of green peacock (*Pavo muticus*) on Jātaka Relief at Candi Borobudur, Magelang, Indonesia

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Abstract. *Prajoko S, Sukmawati I, Hastuari FA. 2025. Etnozoological study of green peacock (Pavo muticus) on Jātaka Relief at Candi Borobudur, Magelang, Indonesia. Asian J Ethnobiol 8: 141-148.* The green peacock (*Pavo muticus* Linnaeus, 1766) is one of the animals frequently depicted in the Jātaka Reliefs at Borobudur Temple, Magelang District, Central Java, Indonesia; however, scientific research on the ethnozoology aspects remains limited. As a symbol of culture and spirituality in ancient Javanese Society, the presence of this bird in the reliefs has a deep philosophical meaning. This study aims to examine the representation of the green peacock in the Jātaka Reliefs through morphological, morphometric, and cultural symbolism analysis. This study employed a qualitative approach with visual ethnographic methods, including direct observation, photographic documentation, and interviews with cultural and zoological experts. These interviews were crucial in gaining insights into the cultural and religious meanings of the peacock, as well as its role in ancient Javanese Society. Observations of the reliefs were conducted at Borobudur Temple, while comparative morphology was assessed through observations of live green peacocks at the Jagatsatwa Nusantara Bird Park in TMII. The results revealed 9 relief panels depicting green peacocks and 7 panels featuring peacock feather fans, with a dominant representation of males. Morphometric analysis revealed a 99.85% similarity in body proportions, indicating a high level of anatomical accuracy achieved by the ancient sculptors. Additionally, these findings suggest that peacocks were not merely decorative elements but served as symbols of spiritual transformation, purity, and protection within Buddhist teachings.

Keywords: Borobudur Temple, ethnozoology, green peafowl, Jātaka Reliefs, morphometry

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has a rich cultural heritage and biodiversity, one of which is Borobudur Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1991 (Ulfahira 2024). As the largest Buddhist monument, Borobudur contains thousands of reliefs representing religious teachings, moral values, and the flora and fauna of the Ancient Mataram period (Munandar 2020). The Jātaka reliefs depict the life of the Buddha in the form of animals as symbols of moral messages, including the green peacock (*Pavo muticus*), which stands out for its beauty and philosophical significance (Gusti 2020).

In Buddhist teachings, the peacock symbolizes spiritual transformation and majesty, believed to be able to neutralize poison as an allegory of enlightenment (Sugianto 2019). Although it dominates Jātaka reliefs, its ethnozoological study remains limited. The peacock serves not merely as an aesthetic element but also as a cultural, mythological, and spiritual symbol in Buddhist narratives and Javanese culture (Raihani 2023). Ethnozoology views fauna as cultural entities rich in meaning, not merely biological creatures.

Human interaction with peacocks during the Ancient Mataram period is reflected in the reliefs and decorative art of Borobudur, indicating a strong social and spiritual role (Susanti et al. 2025). These birds were kept by the elite as symbols of status and were associated with the vāhana of

Bodhisattva Mahamayuri, protector from poison (Ānandajoti 2020). Today, their population is threatened by hunting, land conversion, and illegal trade, while their spiritual significance has diminished to a decorative symbol in popular culture (Septianti 2020).

The selection of animals or plants in relief art is influenced by symbolic values, such as courage or wisdom (Santayana and Gouinlock 2015), geographical and ecological conditions that make local species more familiar (Weston 2017), and social-spiritual roles in religious rituals (Simanungkalit et al. 2025). Classical narratives like the Jātaka tales also serve as sources of inspiration (Appleton 2016), while beautiful and striking forms, such as peacocks, enhance visual appeal (Dahlstrom 2025).

Ethnozoological and ethnobiological studies at Borobudur Temple remain limited and fragmented to date. Some existing research includes Febrianto and Idris (2016), who studied the fauna depicted on Borobudur's reliefs from an archaeozoological perspective, identifying species and their connections to the subsistence of the Mataram society. However, the cultural and symbolic dimensions have not been explored in depth. Arfan and Fitri (2024) studied the ethnobotany of the reliefs, revealing the meanings of flora such as bananas and banyan trees, but did not focus on fauna. Mikkelsen (2025) compiled a catalog of fauna from the Jātaka reliefs for local character education, but their approach remained descriptive without morphometric or symbolic analysis. However, this research remains

descriptive and has not analyzed morphometric aspects or further cultural-ecological relationships.

Borobudur Temple, built in the 9th century CE by Mahayana Buddhists during the Syailendra Dynasty, is one of the architectural and religious wonders of Southeast Asia (Nabilla dan Samadi 2024). Its walls are covered with narrative reliefs from the Kamadhatu to the Rupadhatu levels, divided into four main panels: Karmawibhangga, Lalitavistara, Jātaka-Avadāna, and Gandawyuha, totaling 1,460 panels (Setyawan et al. 2017). In Borobudur's culture and spirituality, the peacock symbolizes wisdom, beauty, and virtue, in line with the Jātaka teachings about the Buddha's life before enlightenment. Its presence reflects noble values and the preservation of local culture and ecology.

The Jātaka and Avadāna reliefs at Borobudur Temple are visual narratives rich in moral messages and character building, located on the third level with 500 main panels and 120 additional panels (Defandra 2018). Based on the Jātakamālā tales by Aryasura from the 4th century CE, these reliefs teach values such as kindness, sacrifice, and mutual aid through fables featuring animals as the main characters (Maskur et al. 2020).

Ethnozoological studies of green peacocks in Jātaka reliefs are important for understanding the representation of fauna in the social-spiritual context of ancient societies. This research strengthens cultural and ecological literacy and has the potential to become a source of learning based on local wisdom (Amelia 2022). The symbolism of the peacock also underscores its role as an endangered species and cultural heritage, opening opportunities for conservation based on local values and the preservation of ancestral visual art.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study area

The research area is located within the Borobudur Temple complex in Borobudur Village, Borobudur Sub-district,

Magelang District, Central Java Province, Indonesia (Figure 1), at coordinates 7°36'28.6"S and 110°12'13.5"E. Built during the Syailendra Dynasty in the 8th century CE, Borobudur Temple is famous for its intricate relief panels that visually convey Buddhist teachings and narratives. This study focuses on the Jātaka narrative panels located on the Kamadhatu and Rupadhatu levels of the temple, which illustrate the previous lives of the Buddha through detailed visual storytelling. Among the fauna depicted, the green peacock (*P. muticus*) emerges as a prominent figure, forming the core of this ethnozoological analysis. This temple was selected as the research site due to its historical depth and symbolic representation of animals reflecting the cosmology, philosophy, and moral values of ancient Javanese society (Yatno 2022).

The research area is located in the Borobudur Temple complex, a Buddhist temple complex in Magelang, Central Java. The main focus of this research is on the balustrades, which consist of stepped corridors surrounding the body of the temple and filled with hundreds of narrative relief panels. One of the most important parts of these reliefs is the Jātaka panels, which depict the stories of the rebirths (reincarnations) of the Bodhisattva before achieving enlightenment as Buddha. It is on these panels that representations of the green peacock (*P. muticus*) are found, which is the main subject of this study. The peacock reliefs are not merely decorative elements but also symbols with deep cultural and religious meanings, reflecting moral values, spirituality, and the relationship between humans and nature in the context of Buddhist teachings. Therefore, observing these reliefs is crucial for uncovering how fauna, particularly the green peacock, is represented and interpreted within the visual and narrative structure of Borobudur Temple.

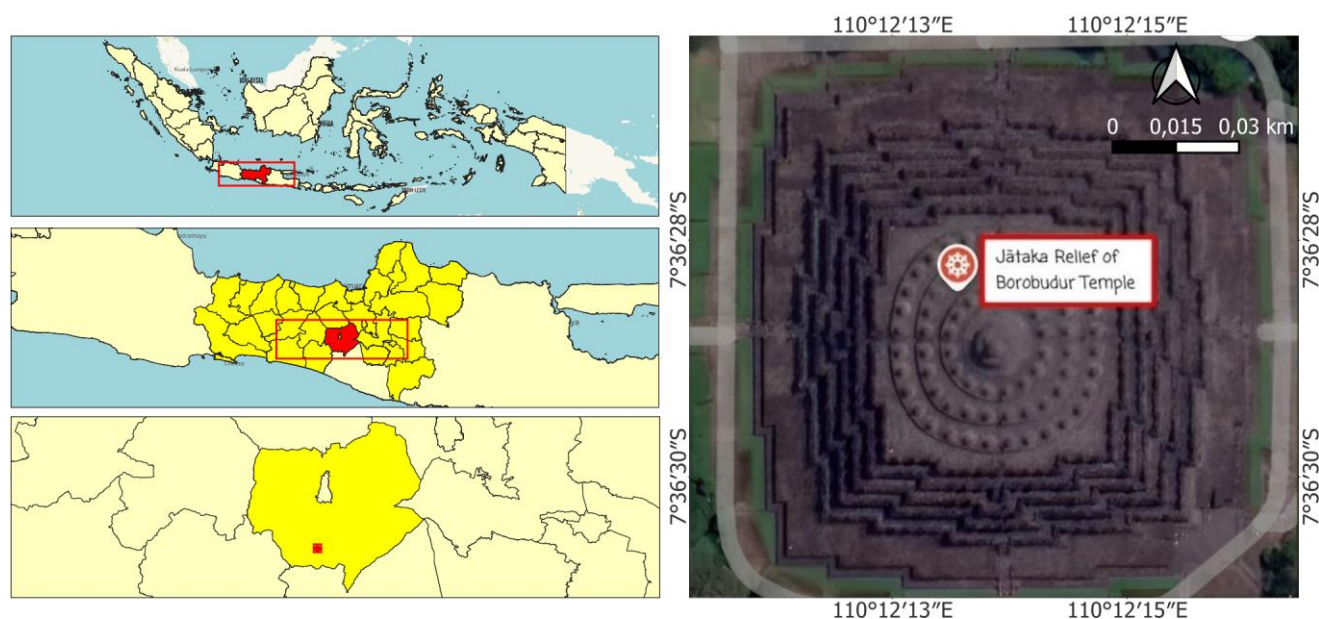


Figure 1. Map of the research area in the relief of the Jātaka Temple at Borobudur, Magelang, Central Java, Indonesia

Instruments

The instruments used in this exploratory ethnozoological research were observation guidelines and identification sheets for green peacocks (*P. muticus*) on reliefs. Each observation session uses guidelines and structured observation sheets. The relief observation instruments emphasized narrative, symbolic, and visual anatomical aspects of peacocks. Meanwhile, the observation instruments at the zoo focused on direct observation of the behavior, physical characteristics, and habitat conditions of the peacock. The observation instrument grids for reliefs and native peacocks can be seen in Tables 1 and 2.

Data collection

An ethnographic research design was used to examine and describe the object of study, namely the use of fauna in the Jātaka Reliefs at Borobudur Temple (Table 3). In this design, the study is based on written and oral findings from the community group being studied. The ethnographic research data instruments used are observation sheets, interview sheets, and documentation. The flow of ethnographic research can be seen in Figure 2.

This research design uses a qualitative ethnographic approach, which aims to understand the symbolic meaning

of the peacock (*P. muticus*) in the Jātaka Reliefs at Borobudur Temple through the lens of culture, spirituality, and human-animal relations in the context of ancient Javanese Society. The ethnographic approach was chosen because it is capable of exploring in depth the relationship between cultural artifacts (reliefs), belief systems, and local values internalized in animal representations (Semuel et al. 2022).

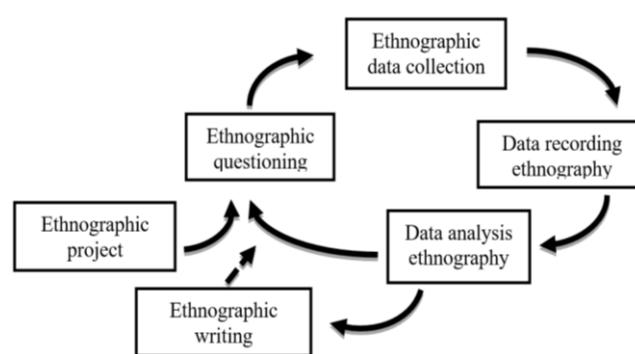


Figure 2. An ethnographic research scheme (Source: Fadila dan Yulifar 2023)

Table 1. Observation instrument grid for identifying peacocks on the Jātaka Reliefs of Borobudur Temple

Aspects observed	Criteria
Panel data relief	Panel number and location, position in row and temple plane
Physical description of peacock	Body shape, body position, visible body parts, tail and crest characteristics
Gender identification	Based on body proportions and secondary sexual characteristics such as tail length
Narrative context	Scenes in reliefs involving peacocks, such as interactions with human figures or other animals
Symbolic meaning	Symbolic interpretations of the peacock in a Buddhist context, such as fertility, protection, and wisdom
Additional information	Artistic information, relief conditions, or field companion interpretation

Table 2. Lattice of live peacock observation instrument at Jagatsatwa Nusantara Bird Park TMII

Aspects observed	Criteria
Peacock species	Taxonomic identification (e.g., <i>Pavo cristatus</i> , <i>Pavo muticus</i> Linnaeus, 1766)
Physical traits	Coat color, body size, tail length, crest shape, male and female differences
Behavior	Feeding activity, vocalizations, territory defense, and mating dance
Environmental conditions	Habitat types, vegetation, water sources, and interactions with the environment
Gender differences	Direct observation of sexual dimorphism
Ecological role	The function of peacocks in ecosystems, such as seed dispersers or environmental indicators
Additional information	Conservation status, human interaction, symbolic or cultural value

Table 3. Methodology for exploring peacocks in the Jātaka Reliefs of Borobudur Temple

Data type	Data collection methods
Exploratory descriptive research	This study was conducted to explore and identify Jātaka relief panels depicting animals at Borobudur Temple
Material analysis	Analyze relief panels featuring animals through field observations using observation sheets and photo documentation
Animal data analysis	The data obtained were further analyzed, including morphological character analysis, taxonomic analysis for species identification, story analysis in the context of Jātaka, and morphometric analysis of relief images
Data validation	The data from animal identification and analysis were validated using validation sheets with relevant experts to ensure the accuracy of interpretation
Profile preparation	Based on the data and validation results, a profile of the peacock in the Jātaka relief was compiled, covering biological, cultural, and artistic aspects

This study focuses on Jātaka panels depicting peacocks using different approaches. Panels 45, 79, 87, 95, 96, 136, 137, 138, and 317 are the main subjects of visual observation and field documentation conducted at the Borobudur Temple site. The objective is to understand the details of the peacock ornaments, carving styles, and narrative context of these panels within the Jātaka story. This visual data is then contextualized with the narrative of the Jātaka story, Buddhist mythology, and the conservation and virtue values represented by the peacock in tradition.

Within an interdisciplinary ethnographic framework, this study not only describes visual forms but also interprets the peacock's symbolism as a cultural entity representing virtue, wisdom, and the sacred relationship between humans and nature. We also use supporting literature from Buddhist texts and iconographic studies to reinforce the cultural interpretation of the research object (Fakhruddin et al. 2019).

Data analysis

This study uses a qualitative design with an ethnographic approach, which aims to reveal the symbolic meanings and cultural values contained in the representation of peacocks (*P. muticus*) in the Jātaka Reliefs at Borobudur Temple. The ethnographic approach was chosen because it allows us to understand the perspectives and cultural wisdom of past societies through visual artifacts rich in meaning, in this case the reliefs depicting peacocks as symbols of wisdom, beauty, and protection in Buddhist teachings (Trisnayanti 2015).

This study focuses on Jātaka Relief panels depicting peacocks metaphorically and symbolically, such as panels numbered 45, 79, 87, 95, 96, 136, 137, 138, and 317, as well as panels depicting peacock feather fans, such as panels 170, 200, 206, 276, 292, 367, and 369. Observations were conducted directly at the Borobudur Temple site by documenting the visual forms, narrative contexts, and artistic styles of the sculptures.

In the context of visual ethnography, this design not only explores the aspects of form and composition of the relief but also links the symbolism of fauna with the moral values, spirituality, and ecological relationships of the ancient Javanese Society. This study combines field observations, narrative interpretations, and cultural literature reviews to form a holistic and in-depth understanding of peacock symbolism in the context of Jātaka Reliefs (Sasongko and Susanti 2021).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Visual identification results

Nine relief panels depicting green peacocks (*P. muticus*) and seven panels depicting peacock feather fans were found. These reliefs are scattered on the outer side of the Jātaka cornice, and their distribution is shown in Table 4.

Each relief panel depicting peacocks at Borobudur Temple implies different behaviors and symbolic meanings through the birds' body positions and narrative contexts. In panel 79, peacocks standing upright near a rain scene symbolize vigilance and their spiritual role as bringers of

fertility and renewal. On panel 317, the peacocks perched on a tree show an observing behavior from above, reflecting spiritual protection and the connection between the earthly and divine realms. In panel 96, the peacocks above, with elements such as fans, show vigilance and surveillance from the spiritual realm as if they are wise observers of actions on earth; this role adds an interesting layer to their symbolism. Panel 45 shows a peacock sitting calmly on the temple wall, signifying appreciation for beauty and noble values in spirituality.

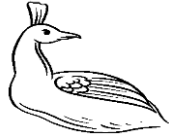
Panel 136 shows a female peacock perched naturally on a tree, symbolizing harmony and peace in the balance of the ecosystem. In panel 137, a male peacock is at the center of interactions between fauna, highlighting their role as a focal point and spiritual symbol in the dynamics of the forest. Meanwhile, panel 138 shows a peacock among the trees, expressing unity between fauna and the environment. Panel 87 depicts a peacock perched gracefully on a tree branch, reflecting freedom, observation, and spirituality in the transitional space of the forest.

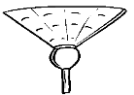
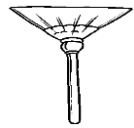
Panel 95 features a peacock observing from atop a tree, reinforcing the symbol of gentle dominance and balance amidst the diversity of wildlife. Panels depicting peacock feather fans, such as Panels 367, 369, 170, 200, 206, 276, and 292, depict symbolic attributes resembling the peacock's position when spreading its tail, signifying grandeur, spiritual protection, and wisdom upheld in Buddhist teachings, as well as a balanced ecosystem integrated into the temple landscape.

The royal fan sketch was chosen as the focus of analysis because it has a deep symbolic meaning in the cultural and religious context depicted in the reliefs of Borobudur Temple. The royal fan is an attribute that symbolizes status, power, and protection and is often associated with the greatness and glory embodied by important figures, including the peacock symbol (Brown 2025). The distinctive and easily recognizable shape of the fan also facilitates iconographic analysis, providing a clear visual focus for examining the symbolic relationship between the peacock motif and royal attributes (Santosa and Noorwatha 2025). Therefore, sketches of royal fans were prioritized over other parts of the relief.

The higher frequency of male peacocks in reliefs compared to female peacocks can be explained from several perspectives. Biologically, male peacocks do have more beautiful and striking feathers than females, making them more attractive to be depicted as symbols of beauty and grandeur in relief art (Godfrey 2025). From a cultural and social perspective, in Javanese tradition and Buddhism, male figures are often associated with symbols of dominance, strength, and high status. This explains why male peacocks are more often chosen as representations (Deming 2025). Additionally, in religious and social contexts, the depiction of male peacocks with their magnificent tail feathers serves as a metaphor for purity, spiritual rebirth, and royal protection (Dahlstrom 2025). Therefore, this difference in frequency is more closely related to the symbolic and aesthetic values associated with male peacocks in cultural and religious traditions, rather than simply because there are more male peacocks than female peacocks in nature (Mackay 2025).

Table 4. The presence of peacocks and peacock feathers in the Jātaka Reliefs at Borobudur Temple

Gender of aves	Panel no.	Relief Image	Sketch
Male	79		
Female	317		
Male	96		
Male	45		
Female	136		
Male	137		
Female	138		
Male	87		
Male	95		
Royal fan	367		

Royal fan	369		
Royal fan	170		
Royal fan	200		
Royal fan	206		
Royal fan	276		
Royal fan	292		

In the entire relief panels of Borobudur Temple featuring peacocks or peacock feather fan motifs, the visual position of the bird or symbol is always placed within an interconnected ecological and narrative context. Peacocks never appear as isolated elements but are present alongside important elements such as trees, water, other animals, humans, and spiritual figures. In Relief Panel 45, the peacock is depicted sitting on the temple wall on the left side of the panel alongside a worshipper paying homage. This signifies the peacock as a guardian of the sacred space and a bridge between the human world and spiritual architecture. In relief panel 79, the peacock is placed at the bottom right, near a scene of refreshing rain falling on the ground after the sacrifice of a rabbit. This position reinforces the peacock's meaning as a symbol of fertility, renewal, and regeneration, closely related to the element of water.

Furthermore, panel relief 87 depicts a peacock perched on a large tree in a forest landscape, close to the hand of a peeping monkey. This scene reflects the transition between the wild forest and the outside world, with the peacock as the guardian of ecological and spiritual harmony. In relief panel 95, the peacock is placed at the top of the panel, among the trees, alongside various fauna such as elephants, deer, buffalo, and wild boars. This underscores the peacock's role as part of a harmonious ecological community within the tropical forest. A similar position is found in relief

panel 96, where the peacock is depicted above, flanked by fan-shaped elements connected to the bird's head, with a river in the background. In this context, the peacock represents a higher spiritual consciousness, acting as an observer of good deeds from above.

In relief panel 136, a peacock perches on a tree above a scene of the Bodhisattva facing a lioness in her den, reinforcing the peacock's role as guardian of the balance between spiritual and animal forces. In relief panel 137, a monkey is seen holding a peacock's tail in the center of the panel while a wolf stands on the other side. This interaction reveals the dynamics between wild forest creatures and birds with transcendental meaning. Moving on to relief panel 138, although part of the relief is damaged, the peacock is still visible among the trees, close to the fish in the river, emphasizing its role in the web of life in the terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems.

Panel relief 317 also depicts a peacock perched on a tree above five women who appear to be discussing something. The peacock in this position conveys a sense of spiritual supervision from above, symbolizing rebirth and contemplation. Meanwhile, in a series of panels featuring peacock feather fan motifs, such as panels 367, 369, 170, 200, 206, 276, and 292, these fans are usually positioned above or near the main figures, such as Bodhisattvas, kings, or figures engaged in discussion or receiving offerings. These fans are often positioned above the head or in the center of the composition as symbols of spiritual protection, majesty, or wisdom. For example, in panels 367 and 369, fans are held by figures in social and spiritual contexts, symbolizing status and honor. In panels 170 and 206, the position of the fan above the figure emphasizes the meaning of spiritual protection and the attainment of wisdom.

The results of the analysis of the table show that green peacocks, especially males, have a higher frequency of appearance than female peacocks on the Jātaka Relief panels at Borobudur Temple. In addition, the representation of peacock feathers, which are characteristic of male peacocks, is scattered across seven different panels.

Morphometric analysis of peacocks

The proportions of the peacock's body part in the Jātaka Relief compared to their actual size show a significant difference in scale. The results of the size comparison are shown in Table 5. After determining the size comparison of peacocks, the level of similarity that has accumulated can be determined. The results of the analysis of the similarity level of the body proportions of peacocks in the Jātaka Relief with their actual size is 99.85%. Similar results can be seen in Table 6.

The percentage of similarity was calculated based on the difference between the proportion values (ratio of body part length to total body length) of the relief and the actual specimen, which included a comparison of the body length ratio in the relief and the actual length of the green peacock specimen. The formula used to calculate the percentage of similarity is as follows (Dasore et al. 2022):

Similarity presentation = 100% - (Difference between relief and real proportion)

This formula is important to show the extent to which the visualization of peacocks in relief can represent anatomically accurate proportions. An average similarity value of 99.85% indicates that the representation of peacocks in relief is quite accurate when compared to their original form, even though they are created in an artistic and symbolic context.

Discussion

The green peacock (*P. muticus*) in the Jātaka Reliefs at Borobudur Temple, an important subject in the fields of art history and archaeology, is consistently depicted with a high degree of morphological accuracy. Observations show that the morphological details of this bird are depicted in great detail, both in male and female peacocks. The male peacock is characterized by an upright posture, a long tail that is not always spread out, and a fan-shaped crest on its head (Susanti et al. 2025). This level of accuracy indicates that the sculptors of that time did not rely solely on artistic imagination but had a deep understanding of the physical characteristics of the animals they depicted (Wulandari 2022). Despite the limitations of stone as a medium, the body shape, perching position, and proportions of the birds are depicted with great detail (Febrianto and Idris 2016).

Table 6. Percentage of similarity in the proportions of peacock body parts in Jātaka Reliefs and actual size, with reference to Ravindran (2025)

Body parts	Formula	Similarity percentage
Head	(100% - 0.13%)	99.87%
Beak	(100% - 0.2%)	99.8%
Wings	(100% - 0.25%)	99.75%
Cervical vertebrae	(100% - 0.05%)	99.95%
Tarsus	(100% - 0.1%)	99.9%
Average		99.85%

Table 5. Comparison of the proportions of peacock body parts in Jātaka Reliefs with actual sizes, with reference to Arjun et al. (2025)

Body parts	Long		Body measurement section	Total length		Ratio	
	Relief	Real		Relief	Real	Relief	Real
Head	4.4 cm	4 cm	Headbill (beak-head)	6.6 cm	8.5 cm	1 : 1.5	1 : 2.1
Beak	2.2 cm	4.5 cm	Headbill (beak-head)	6.6 cm	8.5 cm	1 : 3	1 : 1.8
Wings	11.8 cm	43.5 cm	Head-body	17.5 cm	104 cm	1 : 1.5	1 : 2.3
Cervical vertebrae	7.8 cm	41 cm	Total body-tail length (x) head	17.5 cm	10 cm	1 : 2.2	1 : 2.5
Tarsus	5.2 cm	18.5 cm	Total toe-foot length	10.5 cm	30 cm	1 : 2.01	1 : 1.6

The distribution of peacocks in the reliefs also shows a non-random pattern. Out of the nine identified panels, six depict male peacocks, while only three feature female peacocks. Additionally, the fan-shaped tail feathers of male peacocks appear in seven different panels. This suggests that male peacocks, which are more visually striking, were more frequently chosen as the main subject in the visual narrative. This representation not only emphasizes aesthetic value but also reinforces symbolic meanings such as grandeur, beauty, and spiritual value in the context of Buddhist teachings (Handayaningsih 2018). This visual dominance indicates that the depiction of fauna in reliefs was not done arbitrarily but was rooted in a strong narrative and philosophical foundation (Davidson 2018).

Quantitatively, morphometric analysis of the five parts of the peacock depicted in the relief, namely, the head, beak, wings, neck bones (*vertebrae servikalis*), and tarsus, shows a very high degree of similarity to the proportions of living peacocks. The average similarity score reached 99.85%, with the neck bones showing the highest level of similarity (99.95%) and the wings the lowest (99.75%). These findings indicate that ancient artists not only considered visual and aesthetic aspects but also paid attention to biological accuracy in representing animals (Roy et al. 2025).

Such precision indicates the integration of local zoological knowledge with traditional artistic practices. Minimal adjustments to proportions were likely made for artistic composition and the conveyance of visual symbols within the limitations of stone as a medium (Wahyudi et al. 2025). The discovery of seven panels depicting peacock tail fans also indicates the symbolic importance of this body part. Not all peacocks are depicted in their entirety, but the separately depicted tail feathers highlight their significance as symbols of majesty, protection, or even rebirth, aligning with Buddhist values. These visual elements serve as nonverbal narrative markers that reinforce the moral messages in the Jātaka stories carved on the reliefs (Nagamine 2025).

In the context of modern society, the green peacock also plays an important ecological and cultural role. As a species currently classified as endangered by the IUCN, the green peacock serves as an indicator of the health of tropical forest and savanna ecosystems, its natural habitat (Patil and Vijay 2024). Its presence reflects relatively intact environmental conditions, as this bird is highly sensitive to habitat disturbance and illegal hunting. Beyond its ecological functions, the peacock also holds contemporary symbolic value as a representation of conservation, natural beauty, and cultural heritage (Dhiman 2024). In various regions of Southeast Asia, including Indonesia, peacocks are often used as icons in environmental conservation campaigns and are an important subject in culture-based ecological education (Ciptandi et al. 2025). Thus, the visual heritage of the Jātaka Reliefs not only reflects past understanding but is also relevant in promoting public awareness of the importance of conserving this species in the present.

This study concludes that the green peacocks depicted in the Jātaka Reliefs at Borobudur Temple are not merely decorative elements, but have complex representational functions. These reliefs not only depict the morphology of

the birds with precision, but also predominantly feature male subjects to reinforce aesthetic and symbolic values. The strategic placement of peacocks and their body parts in various panels indicates that this fauna plays an important role in conveying the moral, spiritual, and philosophical messages that form the core of the Jātaka narrative. In addition, this visual heritage can serve as a reminder and reinforcement of ecological conservation values amid the challenges of biodiversity sustainability today.

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