

# Lived Experience of Minority Buddhist Communities in Indonesia (Study of Buddhist Communities in Palembang Sumatera and Boyolali Java)

## Abstract

The study investigates the lived experience of diverse Buddhists as a minority in Islamic Indonesia. The study is designed to better understand the distinct historical, cultural, and religious lives of Buddhists within the contemporary social and political fabric of a predominantly Muslim Indonesia. Since this study is situated in a context where negative perceptions of cultural and religious 'differences' are part of the current discourse of Buddhist-Muslim relations in Indonesia, the research is in the interest of promoting intercultural and interreligious understanding. The research questions are designed to reveal Buddhist conceptions of their beliefs cultural practices and identity as the minority, and conceptions of their Buddhist future in Indonesia. The study engenders an interpretive ontology and is conducted from the perspective of phenomenography. A qualitative epistemology engages the methods of interview and observation for data collection. This study interviews 16 Buddhist participants. The analysis uses a phenomenographic perspective that focuses on the referential and structural aspects of conceptions (Marton & Pong, 2005) and the meaning and context of material culture (Reischauer, 2015). As a case study, this analysis aims to understand the variation in the understanding of the social lived experiences of minority Buddhist communities and the description of diverse material culture in Palembang, Sumatra, and Boyolali, Java. The findings contribute a contemporary description of Buddhist experiences in Indonesia and may interest future research investigation of intercultural and interreligious realities beyond Indonesia