

## Beyond the Spotlight

### Ganjuran Church

by: Wahyu PY



The Jesus' Sacred Heart Church, more commonly known as Ganjuran Church, is a rare and perhaps unique example of cultural assimilation and hybridization between Roman Catholic Christianity and Javanese local tradition and imagery, which is highly influenced by Hindu-Buddhist culture.

The church is located in Ganjuran, around 20km south of Jogjakarta, in *Kabupaten*<sup>1</sup> Bantul. The church was built around 90 years ago (16 April 1924) by two Dutch brothers (Joseph and Julius Schmutzer) who owned a sugar factory around the area.

The church underwent major renovation after being heavily damaged during an earthquake in 2006, but the post-earthquake reconstruction strengthened its local aspects. The main building has been designed in the style of Joglo house (a traditional house of Javanese people) as seen in the picture. There is also some symbolism associated with the architectural aspect: the four main columns supporting the middle area of the hall are said to represent the four Gospels in the Bible. Some of the Mass are also delivered in Javanese language and accompanied by gamelan music.

<sup>1</sup> *Kabupaten* is an administrative level below a *Provinsi* (Province), which is usually translated in English simply as "Regency".



On entering the building, we can see very interesting depictions of angels that look like characters from *wayang orang* in the main altar. The hand gesture is in *anjali mudra*, where both palms are pressed together and the head is slightly bowed, signifying a gesture of reverence. In the center you can see the Cross with a depiction of dove and flame on a banner hanging above, most likely symbolizing the Holy Spirit. The banner is ornamented with floral patterns, which reminded me of *batik*.





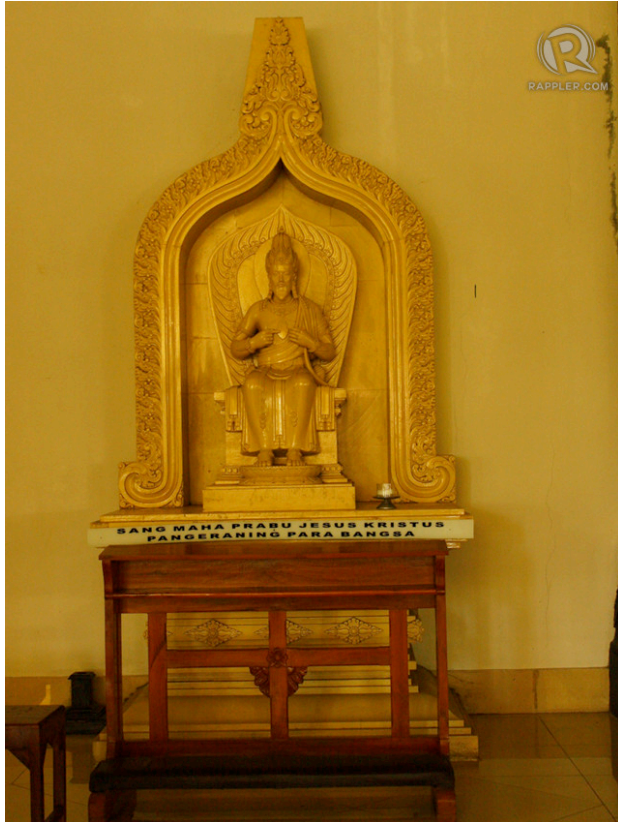


Outside, in the church complex, you will be able to see a *candi* which was built in 1927 using stones from the Northern slope of Mount Merapi. Known as *Candi Hati Kudus Yesus* (Temple of the Sacred Heart of Jesus), the structure is probably inspired by the *candi* in Prambanan Temple.

The *candi* is 9 meters tall, and has 9 steps on the ladder. Ornamental lotus relief can be seen on the surface of the *candi* and a Javanese style Jesus is placed at the center of the *candi* facing South and used for devotional purpose.

A natural spring containing high levels of minerals was found in 1998 below the *candi* structure. The water is believed to be sacred and has the power to heal sickness. It was being channeled to nine water taps and referred to as *Tirta Perwitasari* by locals, in reference to water of life mentioned in Mahabharata.





The sculpture of Jesus in the center of the *candi* is depicted in Javanese style, with title of "*Sang Maha Prabu Jesus Kristus Pangeraning Para Bangsa*", which roughly translates to "The Great King Jesus Christ, Lord of All Nations". In the depiction, Jesus' feet are stepping on a fully bloomed lotus, and his hand pointing towards his heart, in reference to the name of *Hati Kudus Yesus* (Sacred Heart of Jesus).





Beside the sculpture of Jesus, we can also see the sculpture of "Madonna and Child". It is highly ornamented with Javanese clothing and headdress, depicting Jesus and Mother Mary in striking resemblance to Ganesha and Parvati. Under the sculpture we see the writing "*Dyah Maria Ibu Ganjuran Nyuwun Pangestu Dalem*", which roughly can be translated as "Mother Mary of Ganjuran, [we are] asking for your blessing". Pilgrims go to this place to pray to Mother Mary for her intercession.

A recent addition to the Church is the relief depiction of Stations of the Cross, in the set of fifteen. It was initially planned by the Schmutzer family, but was added only after 1995.



In conclusion, Ganjuran Church is a rare and perhaps unique example of cultural amalgamation beyond the spotlight which you may not find anywhere else. That alone probably warrants the Church a chance for your visit. And while you are there, don't forget to sip some of the water of life too.

Resources:

[http://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gereja\\_Ganjuran](http://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gereja_Ganjuran)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ganjuran\\_Church](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ganjuran_Church)

[http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Josef\\_Ignaz\\_Julius\\_Maria\\_Schmutzer](http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Josef_Ignaz_Julius_Maria_Schmutzer)

<http://jogjacityparadise.com/ganjuran-sacred-heart-church-celebrate-christmas-java-language.html/gereja-ganjuran-18-jogjacityparadise>

[http://jesusisnotalone.blogspot.sg/2011\\_01\\_31\\_archive.html](http://jesusisnotalone.blogspot.sg/2011_01_31_archive.html)

<http://yesustaksendirian.blogspot.sg/2010/02/yesus-kristus-sebagai-sampeyan-dalem.html>

<http://www.rappler.com/life-and-style/travel/32315-javanese-church-jogja>

<http://www.wonderfuljogja.com/ganjuran-church-and-mary-grotto/>