

Lingga Yoni site in Tasikmalaya: Overlooked Educational Potential Amidst the Threat of Exploitation of Nature

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Abstract

The Lingga Yoni Indihiang site in Tasikmalaya is a cultural remnant of the Hindu-Buddhist period that has high historical, spiritual, and archaeological value. Based on the results of excavations and carbon tests, the site is estimated to date back to the 7th century AD. This research is motivated by a number of problems, including the threat of environmental exploitation due to sand and asphalt mining activities adjacent to the site, the problem of access to land controlled by the private sector, and the low use of the site as a medium for learning history. These problems are exacerbated by the lack of publications, the lack of supporting facilities, ownership conflicts, and differences in religious views of the surrounding community. This study uses a descriptive qualitative method with a case study approach. Data collection techniques are carried out through field observations, interviews with stakeholders (site managers, surrounding communities, and related agencies), and documentation studies of relevant literature and archives. The research location focuses on the Lingga Yoni site area in the Indihiang District, Tasikmalaya City. The results of the discussion show that although there have been physical preservation measures, such as the installation of fences, these efforts have not addressed the structural challenges faced by the site. A participatory-based preservation strategy is needed that involves the active role of the community, educational institutions, and the government collaboratively. The conclusion of this study emphasises the importance of integrated site management so that Lingga Yoni Indihiang can function optimally as a protected cultural heritage as well as a means of education and local identity of Tasikmalaya. encouraging students to think critically and gain a deeper understanding of history.

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Introduction

The Lingga Yoni site in Tasikmalaya is one of the cultural heritages that has high historical and artistic value. The site consists of two symbolic forms, Lingga and Yoni, which depict the spiritual beliefs of the people during the Hindu-Buddhist period. As part of the Hindu-Buddhist history in Indonesia, this site is an essential evidence of the civilisation that once flourished in the region. The existence of this site stores stories about beliefs, culture, and the development of society in an era far from us. The Lingga Yoni site is located in Sukamaju Village, Kidul, Indihiang District, Tasikmalaya City. The Lingga Yoni Tasikmalaya site is located at the top of Kabuyutan hill. Access to the Lingga Yoni site is about 500m south of the gate of the sand mining company PT: Trimukti Pratama Putra and the asphalt company PT. Laksana Dharma Putra. The archaeological remains found at this site are on flat land measuring 7.30m x 7.20m with an altitude of ± 420 meters above sea level (Widyastuti, 2017). This site has been fenced by the West Java Province Antiquity, Historical, and Traditional Values Management Centre. The Lingga Yoni site in Tasikmalaya has flat stones, menhirs, round stones and phallus yoni. Based on the results of excavations in 2013 and dating analysis through carbon testing using the Radiocarbon Dating (14C) method by the National Nuclear Energy Agency in 2014, this yoni phallus site dates back to around the 7th century AD. (Widyastuti, 2017). Then the Lingga Yoni Tasikmalaya site has been managed by Dinas Kebudayaan dan Pariwisata Kota Tasikmalaya dan Balai Pelestarian Kebudayaan Wilayah IX.

The government and related parties have managed the Lingga Yoni site. However, several problems were still found by the author after making initial observations on March 15, 2024, on the Lingga Yoni Tasikmalaya site. One of the obstacles and problems is the location of the site in the sand mining environment owned by PT. Trimukti Pratama Putra and the asphalt company PT. Laksana Dharma Putra. This company is considered concerning because the sand mining area and asphalt company area that are close to the Lingga Yoni site area and also the access road to the Lingga Yoni site are still owned by the private sector so that access to the Lingga Yoni site has become a polemic that occurs in the field and the site management has also tried its best by coordinating with related parties, both local governments and associated agencies. Still, there is no bright spot to overcome these problems.

Regarding the location of the Lingga Yoni Tasikmalaya site which is adjacent to the sand and asphalt mining area, it is contrary to Law Number 11 of 2010 concerning Cultural Heritage, in the Law it is explained that cultural heritage buildings have a zone, namely the core zone which is the main protection area to protect the most critical part of the Cultural Heritage, the buffer zone is an area that protects the core zone, Development zones are areas intended for the development of cultural heritage potential for recreational purposes, natural environment conservation areas, cultural landscapes, traditional cultural life, religion, and tourism and supporting zones or areas intended for supporting facilities and infrastructure as well as for commercial and general recreational activities (Undang - Undang No 11 Tahun 2010). In direct observation at the location of the Lingga Yoni Tasikmalaya site, which is a cultural heritage building, some of these zones were not found because the location of the sand and asphalt mining area was less than 50 meters from the Lingga Yoni site area. Then, in the Cultural Heritage Law, it is contrary to the maintenance of cultural heritage sites because mining activities in the area affect the sustainability of the Lingga Yoni site, in line with the results of interviews with site managers who complained about the increasing activities of sand and asphalt mining and noise pollution caused by mining machines and several hill dredging that could trigger landslides around the Lingga Yoni site area.

Another problem is that the Lingga Yoni Tasikmalaya site is not well known by history teachers and students. The author found this after conducting interviews with several history teachers and students in schools around the Lingga Yoni site, namely at SMA Negeri 2, SMA Negeri 6 and MA Badrussalam. The lack of recognition of the Lingga Yoni Tasikmalaya site is because some of these

schools have never used the Lingga Yoni Tasikmalaya site as a learning resource for both classroom learning and in the form of visits to the site (Gracia, 2024; Hidayat, 2024; Irfan, 2024; Maulana, 2024; Mubarak, 2024; Thalita, 2024; Zarah, 2024). In addition to the lack of use of the Lingga Yoni Tasikmalaya site as a learning resource, the lack of recognition of the Lingga Yoni site is due to the lack of publications about the site. The author only found several publications that explain the Lingga Yoni site in Tasikmalaya, namely, Research by Widyastuti (2017) through an archaeological excavation report conducted by the Balai Arkeologi Bandung, which examines the architectural structure and artefacts found at the Indihiang site, including the Lingga Yoni complex. The results of this research confirmed that the site is an important relic of the Hindu-Buddhist period, dating from around the 7th century AD, based on the results of carbon testing by BATAN. Widyastuti also emphasised the importance of preserving this site as part of Tasikmalaya's local historical identity (Widyastuti, 2013, 2017).

Saparudin et al (2022) examined the traditional *Nyapu Kabuyutan* ritual procession that is still practised by the local community around the Lingga Yoni site. This research focuses more on anthropological aspects and local spirituality, as well as how the community maintains the intangible cultural heritage that is closely related to the site. This research shows that there is still an emotional and spiritual connection between the community and the Lingga Yoni site. However, from an institutional and educational perspective, it has not been maximised. However, the two studies have not specifically addressed the problem of site neglect in the context of education and the influence of the surrounding environment, which is now dominated by mining and asphalt industry activities. This research is here to fill this gap by examining the Lingga Yoni Site from the perspective of historical education and the threat of exploitation that is contrary to the principle of cultural heritage preservation.

Research Methods

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study method to explore in depth the actual condition of the Lingga Yoni Tasikmalaya Site, both from the aspect of education and the exploitation of the surrounding space. This method was chosen because it is able to comprehensively reveal the dynamics that occur in the field through the process of interpreting narrative and contextual data. The location of the research was carried out at the Lingga Yoni Indihiang site and several secondary schools around the area, namely SMAN 2 Tasikmalaya, SMAN 6 Tasikmalaya and MA Badrussalam. The data collection technique uses several techniques, namely: The author's direct observations of the location of the Lingga Yoni Tasikmalaya Site to document the physical condition of the site, accessibility, influence of the surrounding environment, and supporting infrastructure. Observations are also carried out on mining and industrial activities in the vicinity of the site to identify potential threats to the sustainability of the site. Then, interviews were conducted with various related parties, including site managers, local community leaders, history teachers, and local school students. These interviews were carried out with various related parties, including site managers, local community leaders, history teachers, students of surrounding schools, as well as representatives from Dinas Kebudayaan dan Balai Pelestarian Kebudayaan Wilayah IX.

The purpose of this interview is to obtain diverse perspectives on the use of sites as educational media and the problems that arise due to the industrial activities around them. The purpose of this interview is to obtain diverse perspectives on the use of sites as educational media and the problems that arise due to the industrial activities around them. It is equipped with documentation that examines official documents such as excavation reports, area maps, and regulations related to cultural heritage, including Law Number 11 of 2010 concerning Cultural Heritage. In addition, previous academic literature is also used as a conceptual and comparative basis. (Creswell, 2018; Moleong, 2019; Sugiyono, 2017) After the data is collected, the three data sets are then triangulated to test their validity and consistency. Then the data that has been tested for validity is followed by data analysis

with the interactive model of Miles & Huberman (2014), namely data reduction, data presentation and conclusion drawing

All the data obtained were synthesized to answer the two main focuses of the research, namely (1) The Utilization of the Lingga Yoni Site as a Source of Historical Education, this focus aims to examine the extent to which the site is used as a medium for learning history, especially by educational institutions around the location, as well as how the community and educators understand the historical and cultural value of the site., and (2) The Threat of Exploitation to the Preservation of the Lingga Yoni Site, This focus highlights the impact of industrial activities around the site, such as sand mining and asphalt production, on the physical sustainability and cultural heritage value of the site. Also included in this focus is a study of the policies and the role of related parties in efforts to preserve the site.

Result

Collection Variety and Condition of Lingga Yoni Sites and the Impact of Environmental Exploitation

The Lingga Yoni site of Tasikmalaya City is located at Jl. Letnan Harun, Sukamajukidul, Indihiang District, Tasikmalaya City, West Java. The Lingga yoni site is right on *Kabuyutan* hill with an altitude of about 420 meters above sea level. Bukit Kebuyutan is a place that is sacred and revered by the local community (Rusliana & Henliyeni, 2024). The location of the Lingga Yoni site is on top of *Kabuyutan Hill*, and to the south of the Lingga Yoni site is an area of sand mining companies and asphalt companies, namely PT. Trimukti Pratama Putra and PT. Laksana Dharma Putra. The Lingga Yoni Indihiang site is located at the top of the *Kabuyutan* hill, where, when viewed from above, to the southwest, there is the *Ciloseh* River. To the west of the site, several stairs are used to climb to the site. If observed further when climbing the stairs, there is a stepped hill that resembles a stepped punden, indicating that the mountain is part of an architecture similar to a temple.

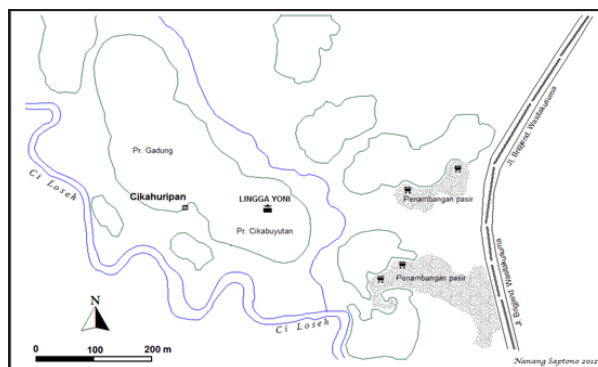


Figure 3. Map of the situation of the Lingga Yoni Indihiang site
Source: (Dokumen Balai Arkeologi Bandung, 2012)

The Lingga Yoni on this site is the main collection. The phallus is made of andesite rock material and is cylindrical in shape with a blunt end. This phallus is a symbol of Shiva and a representative of masculine or male energy. In Hinduism, Lingga is often used as an object of worship that represents the creation of the universe. Then, Yoni is a couple from Lingga, and it is also an essential collection on this site. Yoni is made of the same stone and has the shape of a container with an indentation in the middle, which is designed to accommodate Lingga. Yoni symbolises the feminine aspect of nature's energy, which is associated with Parwati, the wife of Shiva. In religious rituals, Yoni often depicts fertility and is a symbol of the power of nature that gives life (Andaka, 2023; Suta, 2018; Wibowo, 2016).



Figure 1. Lingga and Yoni at the Lingga Yoni Indihiang Site
Source(s): Personal Documentation.

In addition to Lingga and Yoni, this site also houses chunks of ancient buildings found around the site area. This stone block is part of a temple or other place of worship that once stood there. Although many of them have been damaged or lost, these remains still provide valuable information about the architecture and construction techniques of the period. But for this part, there are only a few that can be seen around Lingga and Yoni. Other building blocks are only in the form of photos of documentation of excavation activities owned by the site manager, because the stone blocks are reburied to facilitate further excavation and anticipate damage and theft of artefacts (Rusliana & Henliyani, 2024; Widyastuti, 2013).



Figure 2. Stone blocks from excavations in 2012, 2013 and 2017 were found at the Lingga Yoni Indihiang site
Source(s): (Dokumentasi Balai Arkeologi Bandung, 2013)

Next, the location of the Lingga Loni Indihiang site, which is right in the middle of a sand and asphalt mining company, makes it difficult to access the historical site. According to the site manager interviewed by the researcher, there are problems related to several facilities on the site, including access to the Lingga Yoni Indihiang site, which still passes through the company's road, which makes the access unfriendly for visitors, because there is a lot of traffic of company vehicles and heavy equipment that are active in the place. Then another problem that the researcher found was the ownership of land at the Lingga Yoni Indihiang site, the majority of which is the hill, where Lingga Yoni Indihiang is located, is still controversial, because the surrounding community and the company still own the land around the site. The government's role is only to buy and claim a land area of only 7x7 m2 at the Lingga Yoni site. Such limited involvement is very concerning for the preservation of the

site because, according to the site manager, there are several lands owned by the surrounding community that will be sold (Rusliana & Henlienyeni, 2024). If these problems are left unchecked and there is no response from the government and related agencies, the site may not be clear and more and more people will not know about the existence of the historical site.

The next problem related to the nature around the Lingga Yoni Indihiang site is the existence of sand and asphalt companies in the area around the Lingga Yoni Indihiang site. During the field research, the researcher found that there were several things of concern in the area around the site, namely, sand and asphalt mining activities in the site area are very close to the Lingga Yoni site, and there is dust from the results of sand and asphalt mining activities. Such a condition is considered disturbing and dangerous for visitors who visit the Lingga Yoni site; besides that, it also endangers the sustainability of Lingga Yoni on the site. With the material of Lingga Yoni from andesite rocks and dust from sand and asphalt mining products, the Lingga Yoni at the site will gradually be weathered if there is no handling from several related parties. Here is some documentation of access and the area around the Lingga Yoni Indihiang site (A. Kriswandhono, 2010).



Figure 3. Outdoor Area and Entrance Access to the Lingga Yoni Indihiang Site
Source(s): Personal Documentation

Based on the facts in the field that show the existence of sand and asphalt mining activities around the Lingga Yoni site area is contrary to Law Number 11 of 2010 concerning Cultural Heritage, in the Law it is explained that cultural heritage buildings have a zone, namely the core zone which is the main protection area to protect the most critical part of the Cultural Heritage, Buffer zones are areas that protect the core zone, development zones are areas intended for the development of Cultural Heritage potential for recreational purposes, natural environment conservation areas, cultural landscapes, traditional cultural, religious, and tourism life and supporting zones or areas intended for supporting facilities and infrastructure as well as for commercial and public recreational activities (Undang Undang No 11 Tahun 2010). In direct observation at the location of the Lingga Yoni Tasikmalaya site, which is a cultural heritage building, some of these zones were not found because the location of the sand and asphalt mining area was less than 50 meters from the Lingga Yoni site area. Then, in the Cultural Heritage Law, it is contrary to the maintenance of cultural heritage sites because mining activities in the area affect the sustainability of the Lingga Yoni site, in line with the results of interviews with site managers who complained about the increasing activities of sand and asphalt mining and noise pollution caused by mining machines and several hill dredging that could trigger landslides around the Lingga Yoni site area.

Suboptimal Utilization of Sites as Educational Media and its Problems

Based on interviews with history teachers from several schools around the site, such as SMA Negeri 2, SMA Negeri 6, and MA Badrussalam, it shows that this site has never been used as a medium for learning history. Students and teachers do not have access to sufficient information about the existence, historical value, and educational potential of the Lingga Yoni site (Hartati, 2020).

History learning at SMA Negeri 2, SMA Negeri 6, and MA Badrussalam Tasikmalaya is carried out in accordance with the applicable curriculum, namely the Independent Curriculum for classes X and XI, and the 2013 Curriculum for class XII. Although the Lingga Yoni site is close to the school's location, some of these schools have not taken advantage of it. History teachers at these schools argue that visits to the Lingga Yoni site are very relevant to the learning material, especially related to the theory of Hindu-Buddhist entry, Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms, and Hindu-Buddhist relics.

However, visits to the site have not been carried out regularly. The teacher suggested that the Lingga Yoni site be used as a learning resource through direct visits, noting the need for improved facilities and support from the government, both in terms of site maintenance and the provision of supporting facilities. Students also hope that this site will become an educational tourist attraction that can deepen their understanding of history. Teachers at MA Badrussalam suggested learning media such as virtual tours to facilitate access to the site without the need to visit physically. Overall, the Lingga Yoni site is very relevant to be used as a source of history learning. Still, it needs more support in terms of facilities and the role of the government to optimise its maintenance and improve accessibility for the community and students.

Other findings related to low public awareness of the historical value of the Lingga Yoni Tasikmalaya site based on interviews with the manager and the community around the site stated that some of the surrounding community knew the existence of the site, but only saw it as a sacred place or the location of annual traditional ceremonies such as "Nyapu Kabuyutan" (Rusliana & Henlienyi, 2024). Interviews show that the public's understanding of the archaeological and historical value of sites is still low, and their active role in preservation is also limited. The findings in several corners of the Lingga Yoni in Tasikmalaya began to erode because several people believed that the stone was used as a talisman. The action that occurred due to the lack of public awareness was supposed to protect, but instead damaged the heritage site of the Hindu-Buddhist period.

Then, related to site management, which is currently still limited to physical preservation efforts such as fencing, carried out by the Region IX Cultural Preservation Centre and the Tasikmalaya City Cultural Office. In an interview with the manager of the Lingga site, Yoni Tasikmalaya said that coordination efforts with companies around the location have not resulted in solutions related to road access and environmental impacts. Then the problem of land ownership in Mount Kebuyutan is still unclear, and several parties will sell it. Then there are complaints from local scholars who consider the cultural activities at the Lingga Yoni site to deviate from Islamic teachings, but this is only a misunderstanding between those who carry out artistic activities at the site and the surrounding scholars (Rusliana & Henlienyi, 2024).

Discussion

The Yoni Lingga site contains the main collection in the form of *phallus* and *yoni* artifacts both made of andesite as well as fragments of punden stones and excavated temple blocks. Within the framework of Material Culture Theory, these artifacts not only display architectural aesthetics, but also embody the religious and social values of Hindu-Buddhist society (Miller, 1987). The phallus which symbolizes the masculine principle (Shiva) and Yoni as the feminine symbol (Parwati) reflects the cosmological duality that is important to understand in the study of the history of religion in the archipelago.

The Lingga Yoni Indihiang Site in Tasikmalaya City presents significant archaeological value as a relic of the Hindu-Buddhist cultural phase in West Java. The main collection consists of a pair of *lingga* and *yoni* made of andesite stone, representing the duality of masculine and feminine energies in Hindu cosmology. This dual symbolism not only reflects religious values but also reveals the cultural adaptation of Hindu beliefs in the local Sundanese context. The presence of remaining architectural stone blocks found around the site further strengthens the assumption that Kabuyutan Hill was once a sacred complex or a temple (*punden berundak*) structure, which is typical of pre-Islamic religious architecture in Java (Widyastuti, 2017).

However, the physical condition of these collections is highly vulnerable. Several stones were reburied for preservation purposes, indicating the fragility of the artifacts and the limited capacity for on-site protection. The absence of permanent shelters, combined with the surrounding industrial environment, increases the risk of degradation due to weathering and pollution. This highlights the urgent need for systematic conservation, especially since the Lingga Yoni materials andesite are susceptible to erosion from prolonged exposure to industrial dust and vibrations.

Although it has been fenced by Balai Pelestarian Kebudayaan Wilayah IX and Dinas Kebudayaan Kota Tasikmalaya, the physical condition of the artifacts is threatened by chemical and mechanical abrasion due to mining dust and heavy machine vibrations. This shows the lack of implementation of Conservation Ethics which emphasizes the need for layered protection (buffer zones) around cultural heritage sites (Jokilehto, 2017). Without core zoning and buffers, the material value and historical context of the site is at risk of being lost before it is thoroughly explored.

Sand and asphalt mining activities by PT. Trimukti Pratama Putra and PT. Laksana Dharma Putra, which is <50 m from the site, causes dust and noise pollution as well as the potential for hill dredging that triggers landslides. According to Heritage Zoning Theory (Wiley & Ashworth., 1996), the presence of industry in the core zone or buffer of the site creates a "cultural dissonance" that undermines the harmony between cultural heritage and economic activity.

From the perspective of Landscape Archaeology, the unity between artifacts and the natural environment is an integral part of the meaning of a site (Cosgrove, 1985). The fine dust that adheres to the andesite surface accelerates chemical weathering, while continuous vibration can cause micro-cracks in the rock structure. Without zoning enforcement and impact mitigation as recommended in UU No. 11/2010, the ecological and cultural viability of this site is threatened.

Despite its archaeological significance, the Lingga Yoni Indihiang site remains underutilized as an educational resource. Interviews with history teachers from SMA Negeri 2, SMA Negeri 6, and MA Badrussalam reveal that the site has never been integrated into the formal learning process, even though it provides direct contextualization for topics on Hindu-Buddhist civilization in Indonesia. Teachers acknowledge the relevance of site visits but cite poor access and lack of facilities as major obstacles. Suggestions such as virtual tours and guided field visits could serve as effective alternatives to integrate heritage education into the curriculum (Karima et al., 2024).

Low public awareness also contributes to the inadequate protection of the site. For many local residents, the Lingga Yoni complex is perceived merely as a sacred site associated with the traditional *Nyapu Kabuyutan* ritual, without understanding its broader archaeological and historical significance. Misconceptions, such as using fragments of the *lingga* as talismans, reflect the lack of community engagement in heritage education. Strengthening local awareness through outreach, community-based tourism, and participatory conservation could bridge this knowledge gap and promote sustainable preservation.

Contextual Learning Theory (Hidayati, 2017) emphasizes the importance of real context—such as field trips—in deepening students' understanding of history. However, the access conditions that pass through the mining area and the lack of facilities make the educational use of this site not optimal. To realize this theory, it is necessary to build special visitor paths, artifact protection shelters, and

interpretation media (e.g. information panels) that are in accordance with the principles of *heritage interpretation* (Poria et al., 2013).

Multi-stakeholder collaboration between the Cultural Office, the spatial planning office, mining companies, and educational institutions is needed to implement Integrated Heritage Management (Suprpta, 2016). The first step can be in the form of expanding the purchase of site land, determining the core/buffer zone in accordance with UU No. 11/2010, and installing dust shields on artifacts. Thus, the Lingga Yoni site is not only physically preserved, but can also function as an educational space that enriches understanding of local history and culture.

The challenges faced by the Lingga Yoni Indihiang site reflect broader systemic issues in heritage management in Indonesia particularly the tension between cultural preservation and economic exploitation. The government's limited acquisition of the core area and minimal enforcement of zoning regulations indicate an urgent need for policy reform and integrated management planning. In line with the Cultural Heritage Law, the establishment of a clear *protection zone*, environmental control measures, and educational collaborations with schools are essential steps to ensure the site's sustainability.

Furthermore, the integration of the Lingga Yoni site into heritage-based tourism programs could serve a dual function supporting local economic growth while increasing public appreciation of the cultural landscape. Collaborative strategies involving the Cultural Heritage Preservation Center, local education institutions, and community leaders are required to transform the Lingga Yoni Indihiang site into both a protected heritage and a living learning space for future generations.

Conclusion

Lingga Yoni Indihiang is a cultural site that is a relic of the Hindu-Buddhist period that has high historical, spiritual, and archaeological value in Tasikmalaya. Based on the results of excavations and carbon tests, the site is estimated to date back to the 7th century AD. However, its existence is currently facing various serious challenges, especially related to environmental exploitation due to sand and asphalt mining activities that are very close to the site, as well as access problems controlled by the private sector.

Another problem is that the use of the site as a source of historical learning has not been optimal, both by surrounding educational institutions and the general public. The lack of publications, the absence of adequate supporting facilities, and the low public awareness of the historical value of this site have also worsened this condition. In addition, conflicts over land ownership and local religious views are also challenges in conservation efforts.

Despite efforts from the government and site managers, such as fencing and physical preservation, these actions still do not touch the root of the problem. Therefore, more serious and collaborative involvement is needed between the government, the community, and the world of education to make the Lingga Yoni site not only a protected historical heritage, but also a medium of education and pride of Tasikmalaya's local identity.

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