

Borobudur as Cultural Landscape - 10 years of International Borobudur Field School activities with local initiatives

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Abstract

Last year we published the book 'BOROBUDUR as Cultural Landscape (ISBN: 9784876983650)', which reports the villagers' conservation activities as well as the scientific descriptions of the vast, attractive, surrounding region of Borobudur Temple, Indonesia. Borobudur Temple, listed in world heritages as ancient Buddhism temple separated from Borobudur Sub-District by the park zone, is the very crowded touristic destination, and there happened so many troubles in the surroundings, including a large commercial development plan which appeared in 2003 and cancelled after local communities' disagreement. Then, concern on cultural landscapes of the large agricultural and natural basin shaped with 5 symbolic mountains had emerged among local communities, and we started International Borobudur Field School in 2004 with locals, academics and students until now. During 10 years of this school, 'evolutive conservation' of cultural landscape has been examined, and some activities like village tour, community empowerment of village intangible culture, eco-tourism village enterprise have been developed. We also found recent history of village culture conservation cooperated with various local initiatives. Field School can be effective method to stimulate bottom-up approach for the conservation of cultural landscape toward local sustainability instead of concentrated tourism in the Temple site. **(co-authors: Laretna T. Adishakti, Titin Fatimah)**

Keywords: Cultural Landscape, International Field School, Local communities, local initiatives, Borobudur, Indonesia

Chapter 1 – Introduction: Start of the Borobudur field school with the local initiatives in tourism problems

'Borobudur Temple Compounds' is the world cultural heritage listed in 1991 and very famous touristic destination internationally and domestically. The excess increase of the tourists and its concentrations in the temple site and the surrounding zone has been regarded as one of the problems about Borobudur for recent decades. In 2003, the commercial development plan of the PSJJ (Pasar Seni Jagad Jawa/Art Market Universe of

Java) next to the park area of Borobudur Temple was revealed and this plan triggered the idea that the temples should not be regarded as three isolated sites but as a united landscape that includes vast areas of rural settings, as well as the temples. UNESCO-ICOMOS mission launched the recommendation with quoting the circle-shaped buffer zonings which had been proposed since 1979 (Fig.1). At the same time, many non-profit organizations and local village communities engaged in their own discussion and concluded no large commercial development in the neighbourhood of the park, with the suggestion that

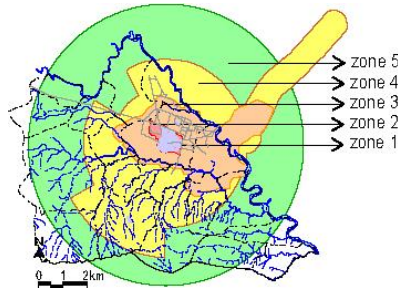


Figure 1: 5 zones idea of buffering the Borobudur Temple and the Borobudur Sub district administration boundary (including river systems) (Titin Fatimah 2004)

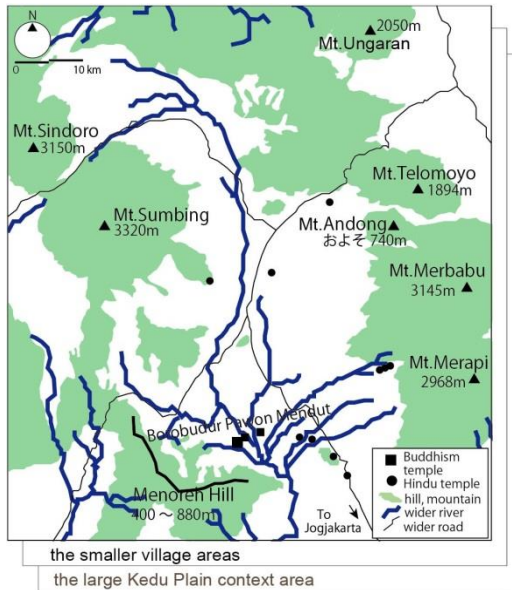


Figure 2: Larger topographic context of Kedu Basin and Location of Borobudur Temple Compounds

Borobudur should be identified in the far larger topographic context with diverse local village characters, namely, cultural landscape as a whole where Borobudur temple compounds are located (Fig.2). Borobudur temple compounds are precious but the outside of the site is not the surroundings. Each places and environments in the far larger Borobudur as cultural landscape have their histories with dynamism of nature. We can find many historic sites and living culture with various co-existing religions. On the other hand, at encountering more and more urbanized and globalized situation, every village and town is trying exploring their sustainability and community development.

Chapter 2 – Borobudur and Tourism: the collective local initiatives for the larger interests in cultural landscape conservation than concentrated interests in the separately closed sites with the limited stake folders

Now Borobudur Temple is located in the paid park which is separated from the villages and towns. When the park was constructed, the village and the inhabitants inside the park area, very next to the temple, were forced to be relocated outside. Some of the relocated people have played the important role to explain the attractive village culture and interesting environment with exploring the alternative village tourism and the empowerment of village activities (Fig.3). In the discussion in 2003 above mentioned, such people also played their important role as non-profit organization named ‘JAKAR’ to stop the commercial development because such concentrated development will result in the village community empowerment, and to try prevail the idea of village attractiveness with eco-tourism.



Figure 3: Village culture and interesting environment (Photos by J.Priyana(JAKAR))

At the almost same time, one agricultural village named Candirejo, located around 5 km southeast from Borobudur Temple, launched their own eco-tourism village program in 2003 after their own history of self-empowerment and establishing the village organization of tourism industry. Since then Candirejo village (Fig.4) become to provides the homestay, village tour with *andong* (horse-driven carriages), experience of traditional industry, local



Figure 4: Candirejo Village and several eco-tourism attractions

foods, dance performance, and so on. Several other villages also started small-scaled collaborations with university students or local non-profit organizations to identify their tangible and intangible characteristics around 2003.

According to these activities by the local initiatives, we could recognize that focusing on cultural landscape with village characters would be closely related to the alternative tourism by local activities. As well known internationally, Borobudur temple compound is rather separated from the locals because of its history of the forced relocation of villages outside the park areas and the situation of sites closed as the paid visitor zones. Nevertheless, local communities and non-profit organizations evaluated and had the detailed knowledges about the temples from many aspects. Thus, we decided to start The International Field School on Borobudur Cultural Landscape Heritage (hereafter, BFS (Borobudur Field School)) collaborating with these local initiatives.

Chapter 3 – Borobudur Field School and Cultural Landscape: Field School as the tool for developing the collective activities as well as the tool for discussing the dynamically authentic ways for the region

In 2004 the first BFS was organized with researchers, non-profit organizations, village communities, university students, local administrations, and several invited guest speakers. The program is 1 week, including lectures, field visits + short surveys, group works with various subjects. Staying mostly in Candirejo village, participants are also various students, locals, administrative officials, non-profit organizations, researchers, including from abroad, but the capacitation is like 20 people (Fig.5). In this program, we invited some persons from time to time as guest speakers, lecture or presentation audience, or participants from time to time. Thus BFS sometimes functioned as connecting among the people. This was meaningful to share the information from local communities to academic researchers or national or regional administrations, for example, in case of master plan works as the national strategic area around 2012. This functioned also very recently, that is mentioned at the end of this paper.

	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Day1	Arrival of participants in Jogjakarta Welcome meeting		
Day2	Lecture at Univ of Gadjah Mada(UGM) in Jogjakarta. - 3-4 lectures by professors	Depart to Borobudur. Check in Candirejo Village	Trail in Candirejo Village, Working Group Discussion
Day3	Lectures in Candirejo Village - 5-6 lectures by professors, local citizen's organization		
Day4	Sunrise Trip (Karangrejo Village)	Borobudur Heritage Trail Supported by the Local citizen's Organization	
Day5	Field Survey and Discussion with Local Community		Working Group Studio
Day6	Field Survey and Discussion with Local Community Working Group Studio		
Day7	Group Presentation at Borobudur Conservation Office		Cultural Activities with Local Community
Day8	Excursion: Kedu Plain Trip Supported by the Local citizen's Organization back to Jogjakarta		



Figure 5: Borobudur Field School's programs

One of the important discussions in BFS is the recognition and evaluation of cultural landscape. Cultural landscape is composed from the inter-relation between nature and humans, so in the agricultural villages cultural landscape is dynamic and to be changed in some manner. Specially here is under developing the new activities such as tourism industry as well as art, performing art, education, various new village production activities and so on. So, as the academic discussion among international interchange of cultural landscape heritage sites we proposed the idea 'Dynamic Authenticity' of cultural landscapes, it means authenticity is sometimes intangible aspect and we can find the authentic transformations in the conserved cultural landscapes. From the first time at BFS, the idea that the large topographic area of Borobudur should be unified as a cultural landscape with close relations with Borobudur temple compounds - Borobudur, Pawon, and Mendut temples. With a few years, participation increased and several images of the Borobudur cultural landscape became recognizable; for example, the characteristics of each village, the places where traditional as well as contemporary artistic activities can be experienced, how local activities are related to the management of the cultural landscape, and so on.

Most basic understanding of context is *Kedu* Basin with 5 mountains, some of them are more than 3000m high (Fig.2). Culturally, many inhabitants have such recognition of their home land and visit some places in the higher location as seasonal event or family event. Geographical analysis shows this basin have characteristic natural system and the river and under water and soil systems related to the cultural landscapes. If focusing on the Borobudur Temple Compounds, we can recognize that Borobudur temple is located in a little higher hill at the crossing point of major river systems. Geological analysis provides that in the very ancient time Borobudur Temple Compounds area used to be the lake. The lake was disappeared in the ancient time but the surrounding area of Borobudur Temple was marshy to be probably favourably cultivated in the paddy field, and this character is closed to the imagination of the temple as the Lotus flower. Landscape management study shows that in each location the villages have their traditional styles of agricultural productions and lifestyles including artistic activities (Fig.6). These scientific, cultural, and sometimes imagination-oriented recognitions guided us to understand the large-scaled cultural landscape of *Kedu* Basin as a whole including various aspects. This recognition means at the same time local-scaled explanation of a certain location can be shown as the multi-aspect explanation (Fig.7). If we can notice these recognitions, we can appreciate the panorama view of the sunrise in the *Kedu* Basin with the imagination of lotus flower in the marshy land as well as the integration of multi-aspects (Fig.8).

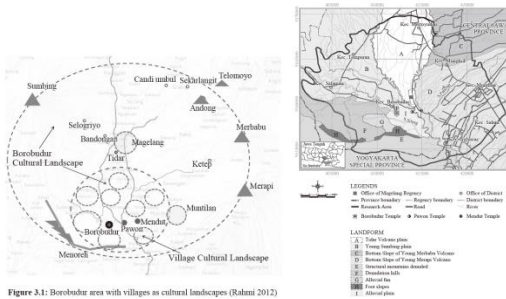


Figure 3.1: Borobudur area with villages as cultural landscapes (Rahmi 2012)

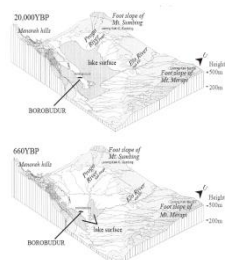


Figure 3.2b: Block diagram of the surface reconstruction of Borobudur lake at 660 YBP (Suharwan et al., 2001)

Figure 6: Evaluations of Kedu basin for larger cultural landscape from various aspects
 <Left:Rahmi.2012&2015, Center:Soeroso.2007, 2012, Right: Mulwanto et al.2001>



Figure 7 : local-scaled explanation of a certain location shown as the multi-aspect explanation
 Left: Agricultural Tradition<Rahmi,2015>, Right: Borobudur Ancient Lake<Mulwanto, 2015>



Figure 8 : Panorama view of sunrise at Mt. Merapi and Borobudur Temple: Image of lotus flower is also perceived

Chapter 4 – Evolutive Cultural Landscape: Scientific idea for the dynamic authenticity of cultural landscapes

As the scientific consideration, I proposed the idea ‘evolutive conservation’ of cultural landscapes. At first, I liked to identify the value systems – the idea that tries to treat the evaluation of cultural landscape according to the relationships and linkage of physical and social/cultural aspects – can have more than one relationship that can be treated as a value system in a certain area. Among several relationships that can be found in a certain area,

some are flexibly substituted in a certain manner, some are strongly continued, and some are newly introduced in a well-examined way – namely every relationship has its own characteristics (Fig.9). It is also possible to describe in this diagram *Kedu* Basin case with each of the aspects as some relationships. In this way, Borobudur Temple Compounds are understood as one of relationships as well as very precious (Fig.9).

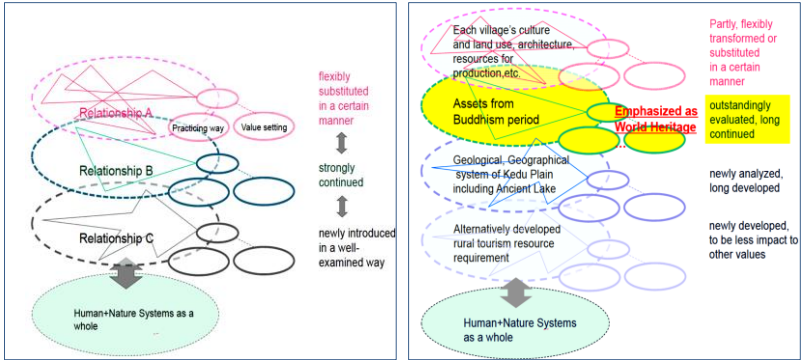


Figure 9: Value systems of cultural landscape including many relationships between nature and humans<left>, and its partial application to Borobudur<right>

With various value systems with different time span history, cultural landscape can be identified according to the value systems as well as the time layer structure. In the villages and towns local communities frequently discuss the near future agenda, and this will be compared and evaluated with such value systems and time layers. Thus we introduces the idea of 4 dimensional scheme to understand the cultural landscape (Fig.10), and propose that the steak folders can illustrate their recognitions in such scheme to expect some relationships will be changed or kept, or introduce a brand new relationship. In this scheme, in which the intention can be examined, the future agenda might be more evolutive, we supposed.

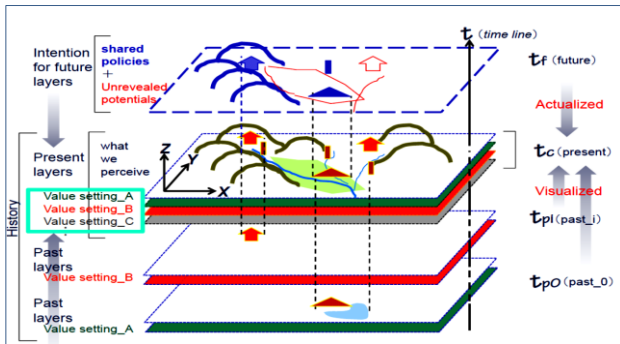


Figure10: Four dimensional scheme for cultural landscape with value systems

Chapter 5 – Conclusion: Ongoing problems and Evolutive conservation of cultural landscapes for the local initiative in tourism development with local empowerment culturally and economically

During these 10 years we became able to describe Borobudur as cultural landscape in the far larger *Kedu* basin context and encouraged the collaborations and activity launching by the involved local initiatives. Around 2012 BFS could be connected to the new National Strategic Area Master Plan of Borobudur, although it is just like Zone3 and part of 4 of Fig.1. Village tourism has been prevailed gradually. But very recently, according to the economic growth of Indonesia, the buyout by external capitals of the hilly locations of the Borobudur Temple view to be developed in the expensive hotels although covered by the green design. The public viewpoints in the hilly area is becoming limited, separated from the locals, and the limited viewpoints became very crowded and also became more like isolated tourism facility. At the same time, several local communities have experienced many kinds of collaboration during 10 years, we can find new artistic activities, or space designs as very familiarly and creatively installed in the villages and towns.

Finally in 2015 we published the book “Borobudur as Cultural Landscape - Local Communities’ Initiatives for the Evolutive Conservation of Pusaka Saujana BOROBUUDUR (Pusaka Saujana = cultural landscape heritage in Indonesian language) – as the summary of 10 years of BFS. It describes in detail about the ideas shortly explained above.

In 2016, we got the newest surprising news, that 10 famous national touristic places will be designated as another huge development project by the government, and Borobudur was listed in those 10 places. This is sudden news and no explanation to the local communities, and gave very few attentions to the idea of cultural landscape of Borobudur. In our latest BFS in March 2016, the participants examined the broadcasted news, held the urgent open lectures with invited speakers and audience. We described Borobudur as Cultural Landscape, the guest speaker described the national strategic area master plan, where among the audience, related scientists, local initiatives, as well as people from several governments from regional to national. We continue to keep our collective activities and will try the next decade problems and potentials.

Summary

Here we explain the idea of Borobudur as Cultural Landscape, that is the understanding the far larger context of *Kedu* basin and Borobudur Temple Compounds in it, not as the concentrated and separated temple sites from villages and towns. This is the results and empowerments of local initiatives to conserve the landscape as well as to find the ways of economically and culturally favourable village development. The local initiatives are also

appreciating and cooperating to conserve the World Heritage sites endangered with excess tourism concentration. 10 years of BFS was the records of such ideas and activities.

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