

BOROBUDUR'S CHANGING CULTURAL LANDSCAPE AND GENIUS LOCI

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Abstract *Cultural landscape is produced socially through space and time. Cultural landscape also refers to cultural heritage that is only focused on the cultural object but also on a wider context where it is placed. This is a qualitative descriptive study which observes historical data through the conceptual framework of genius loci. Data is collected through bibliography study with the focus on how political institutions observed and built the environmental image of the place. Political institutions define how the relationship between the natural and human-made environment is sought to exist. Worldviews that have changed from the inception of Borobudur cultural landscape to the present day were influencing ongoing shifts of values, beliefs and cultural relationship towards the place.*

Keyword:

Cultural landscape, genius loci, Borobudur, environmental image

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1. Introduction

The present time carries a constant and ongoing burden of human connection to its environment. Environmental crisis which is happening because of ever changing society values has come to the point that wherever we turn ourselves to, there is a confusion of how to approach and guide our lifestyles. One of the things that influenced this ever-present situation is globalization of the values and systems of belief – spiritual, mental, emotional, environmental, societal. One of the names, for this phenomenon, are capitalism and commodity. Capitalistic frame of thought has in its basis single use and temporal fueling of the desires and sensation of wanting more of everything at all times.

Now, people are moving and changing environment more than ever, rushing to see all the places that are popularized online without even knowing where they are going. Not only that there is no interest of the background where they are heading, they do not know where they are coming from. Indeed, the nature of human being is one of a 'wonderer' (Norberg-Schultz, 1979), however, not being able to identify more than on esthetic level, the human is lost. Yes, they can find the unifying symbols and languages everywhere, one of characteristics of globalization, but cannot know how to connect with the environment that is surrounding them. Sense of belonging is lost. This paper takes Borobudur cultural landscape as a case study of how the atmosphere of place developed by governing institutions and their worldviews has been influencing the environmental image of a place throughout history.

Borobudur is the largest Buddhist temple in the world and it was built around 824 AD

during the Shailendra Dynasty (Hermawan et al, 2019). Borobudur temple and its cultural landscape underwent different phases during history and were valued differently at different times. The temple is situated in Central Java, which was the center of Indonesian history in the eighth to tenth centuries when Hindu-oriented kingdoms were established and Hindu and Buddhist cultures flourished (Nagaoka, 2016). At that time the Borobudur cultural landscape was a cosmologically organized space with the temple being the center of the place. After the tenth century, the temple and the place itself went through a long period of relinquishment. It was rediscovered in the seventeenth century when Indonesia was colonized and the Borobudur temple then became an important archeological finding. After Indonesia gained independence from colonial rule in 1945, Borobudur temple gained special importance as it played a major role in the development of identity politics, during the process of decolonization, both locally and internationally. In the end of 20th century it was listed in the UNESCO's list as a World Heritage Site and throughout 21st century it became major touristic center.

Traditionally, the term 'cultural landscape' was used to map the physical expression of culture in the landscape. However, the term evolved and it denotes landscape not only as a physical product but also as socially produced in time and space which is seen as a specific "way of seeing the world", within which symbolic and ideological codes are embedded (Munns in Robertson & Richards, 2003). Moreover, early religions and civilizations were influenced by geographic features, and the land transformed into landscape is a form of strategy for organizing civilization and settlement. Robertson & Richards (2003) argue that landscape is never purely aesthetics it is also ideological. Therefore, landscape is highly complex term. Landscapes can be physical, iconological, ideological. Meaning, they represent the processes of how they emerged. Therefore, they carry in itself human values, meanings and symbols (Robertson & Richards, 2003).

2. Methods

The methodology used in this study intend to investigate and explore transformation of environmental image of Borobudur cultural landscape. This is a qualitative descriptive study that sourced data from the bibliography research. Question of particular focus is how political institutions observed and built environmental image of the place. This study observes data through the conceptual framework of *genius loci*.

Conceptual framework of *genius loci* or sense of place is used to understand the atmosphere that is produced through the governing worldviews and how it affected the existence of the lived place. What is recognized is that the ability to comprehend and recognize the *genius loci* of a place depends on understanding its cultural landscape. *Genius loci* or spirit of a place is made by physicality of place, the tangible structure, however in the case of any destruction of the tangible dimension, *genius loci* can still persist in memory at individual or collective level (Vecco 2020). The concept of *genius loci* is an ancient Roman concept denoting a guardian spirit of the place. Therefore, the traditional societies were aware that the layout of their settlements needs to give a security to people by symbolizing an eternal environmental order. Hence, the *genius loci* have been considered as the concrete reality that human faces in everyday life. While the space indicates the three-dimensional organization of the elements that make up the place, the 'character' denotes the general 'atmosphere' (Norberg-Schultz 1979). According to Vecco (2020), the place can be defined as a concrete entity that is at the same time intangible, with a multidimensional character based on geographical, historical, cultural, architectural, economic and social coherence.

The study presented is divided in two major parts – premodern and modern period of Borobudur cultural landscape with the related results and discussion.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. Premodern Period of Borobudur's Cultural Landscape

Early settlements of the island world of Southeast Asia – syncretizing the indigenous landscape

The island world of Southeast Asia is characterized by numerous river systems that flow from interior highlands into the ocean which had significant impact on the spatial organization of the settlements (Hall, 2011). In order to control river streams early Southeast Asian kingdoms were concentrated around the delta regions at river mouths where the centers of the populations were placed. As the rulers of the kingdoms at the time were Hindu and Buddhist patrons, the geographical patterns, that of mountains and rivers, were guiding orientation within the environment as they correspond with the cosmological symbolism of the Indianized kingdoms. It is important to note that the Hindu period in Southeast Asia was not brought about by force, there was no conquest or colonization as with the European countries in the nineteenth century (Dumarçay, 1986). As Dumarçay (1986) writes, the Hindu penetration was bought about by cultural and especially religious circumstances, by the use of Sanskrit for inscriptions and the adoption of a complete and coherent Hindu or Buddhist mythology.

Furthermore, indigenous traditions were aware of the importance of the landscape features and natural phenomena which they honored as the home of their ancestor's spirits. Their traditional conceptions of divinity and power were then combined with the Hindu and Buddhist cosmological worldview imposed by kingdoms through a combination of top-down and bottom-up networked syncretism (Hall, 2011). To embody the environmental image based on cosmological symbols into material form, Early Southeast Asian kingdoms were structuring the landscape through topological forms and building the religious architecture. In another words, cosmological principles were fused with topological formulas also known as *mandalas*. Mandala as such is a sacred diagram of the cosmos and a design tool for the organization of the space in Early Southeast Asian societies. Hence, apart from natural centers – rivers mouths, mountains, plains; the religious architecture – temples, were human-made centers which represented an embodiment of *dharma* or cosmic order and served as an explanation of the surrounding environment.

Central Java from 7th to 9th century – Borobudur temple, center of the Buddhist world

Java Island, particularly Central Java was dominated by Hindu and Buddhist kingdoms from the seventh century CE. By mid-eight century CE, Shailendra dynasty, patrons of Mahayana Buddhism were paramount monarchs of the time. The kingdom settled in the center of the Java Island around the natural center, a river mouth of Elo and Progo in Kedu plain. Elo river flows from Merbabu volcano and Andong river, and Progo from Sumbing volcano. They flow almost parallel to each other from north to south where near the slope of Menoreh hills merge into one river which flows into the sea as Progo river, dividing island of Java on half. Because it is heavily watered, the Kedu Plain is also referred to as the 'Garden of Java' resembling its great fertility (UNESCO, 2005).

The plain is surrounded by the amphitheater of the volcanic peaks which was favorable position both form cosmological and strategic point of view. Hence, in the midst of the Kedu

plain Shailendra dynasty made its own center in the form of Borobudur temple. Borobudur temple was representing the center of the mandala and architectural embodiment of the surrounding environment and vertical axis mundi, the sacred dimension of space where connection between earth and sky is accomplished. Hence, the Borobudur temple is also referred to as a *Mahameru* or 'cosmic mountain' which symbolized the Shailendra's world order. The Borobudur temple was symbol of political power of Shailendra dynasty and the spatial layout of the surrounding landscape served as a guide of the values that that political system imposed through cosmological believes. Moreover, due to their international recognition, Shailendra's court attracted Buddhist scholars from afar and was acclaimed internationally as a major center of Buddhist pilgrimage and learning (Miksic, 1993-1994 in Hall, 2011).

The Borobudur temple was part of the Triad of temples – Borobudur-Pawon-Mendut which are seeming to be connected by an imaginary straight line. Viewed collectively, the Triad's spatial arrangement, the three temples together reflect one entity and represent one religious concept. Three monuments are, therefore, centers of the wider web of mandala spatial organization. Apart from interconnected monuments, landscape features represent equally important symbols in environmental image, which are domesticated and understood through web of the cosmological connections and reflection of Buddhist belief system.

Abandonment Era 10th – 16th century

The Shailendra dynasty ceased to rule over Central Java in the middle of the ninth century, and a century later all political and cultural activities had moved from Central to East Java (UNESCO 2005). The sources still question the reason for this drastic change, but it is still unknown today. However, they suspect that at that time Borobudur was buried with volcanic ashes after a series of eruptions from nearby Mt. Merapi (Salazar, 2014). Thus, Borobudur was buried and forgotten for about nine centuries. In the sixteenth century Islam, which came mainly via India, won acceptance and gained ground in Java which contributed to further decline of Buddhism and losing the memory of once flourishing Shailendra kingdom. The Java island was thus under the rule of the Islamic kingdom, with the majority of population which was converted to Islam.

3.1.1. Relationship of Natural and Human-made Place

Studying the settlement of Borobudur cultural landscape, it has to be considered in relation to its natural environment within the historical context of Early Southeast Asian settlements. The definition of the settlement implies that to settle in a landscape means to delimit an area, a place (Norberg-Schultz, 1985). Thereafter it is created the inside and outside. Interior of delimited area consists of gathering of the surrounding world and it becomes a center where environment is explained. Every landscape has a certain character and spatial structure and therefore suggests the naturally formed centers which invite human to dwell. Those naturally formed centers are the deciding point in choosing the area of the settlement. As Norberg-Schultz (1985) indicates natural center is a place where earth and sky are interrelated to form a clearly visible totality. When settlement is localized using the natural center as a main orientation point, architecture serves to show and embody the qualities that are already present in its surrounding environment.

Genius loci or spirit of a place, exists in the relationship between natural place and human-made environment. According to Norberg-Schultz (1979) the identity of place apart from the previously mentioned relationship is also marked by its structure and character. The place is a

qualitative, 'total' phenomenon and as such is given a character or atmosphere. Different environmental conditions differently influence construction and the atmosphere of a place. Hence, place means something more than location, it is a complex phenomenon. To put in Norberg-Schultz (1979) words:

"Nature forms an extended comprehensive totality, a 'place' which according to local circumstances has a particular identity. This identity, or 'spirit', may be described by means of concrete 'qualitative' terms." (Norberg-Schultz, 1979)

Landscape is the most comprehensive part of the natural environment, whereas settlement is the most comprehensive part of the human-made environment. Settlements together with other elements transform nature into cultural landscape. Norberg-Schultz (1979) addresses that in order to analyze a place we have to know how the landscape and settlement are formed, and to know the character or atmosphere of place we need to see how everyday life is lived in particular place.

What we can see through representation of place of Borobudur's cultural landscape through eras is that by continuous changing of political-cultural-religious structures the perception and the values of spatial elements (both natural and human-made) was also changing. In the time before the erection of Borobudur temple the indigenous people's value of the natural environment, the landscape, was on the level of animistic believe system. All the natural centers were sacred places which were resident areas of the ancestor spirits. Norberg-Schultz (1979) argues that sacred places function as 'centers', they serve as objects of humans orientation and identification, and constitute a spatial structure.

With coming of Indianized kingdoms to the land of Southeast Asia, in order to settle they needed to understand the natural environment. Understanding here doesn't mean scientific knowledge – it rather means an existential concept which denotes experience of meanings (Norberg-Schultz, 1979). The natural centers, which were already worshiped by indigenous people, were indication of how the landscape is structured and formed – where are the centers and what are the natural borders of the area where the settlement is going to be placed. Hence, indigenous understanding or experience of meanings of natural environment was corresponding with the Hindu and Buddhist cosmological thought.

A landscape is a horizontal place priced with vertical axis. That is how Kedu plain (Central Java) is surrounded by natural vertical axis or volcanos. In the midst of it Shailendra dynasty made its on human-made center, Borobudur temple, which was resembling a human-made sacred mountain. The monument is also sited at the junction of two rivers, the Elo and the Progo, undoubtedly to evoke the most sacred confluence of all, that of Ganga (Ganges) and the Yamuna (Jumna) (Stutterheim, 1929 in Dumarçay, 1986). The area where both rivers meet is regarded as a very special sacred place in ancient times, which is evident from the fact that a large number of temples in Kedu Plain are found in that area (Joesoef, 2016). So, Borobudur temple was architectural embodiment of the surrounding environment, it served as a center of the place and vertical connection between earth and sky. Borobudur temple was not the only concretization of the natural environment in the Kedu plain, apart from it there are two smaller temples – Pawon and Mendut. In the opinion of Norberg-Schulz (1979) the single temple may be understood as an individual member of a 'family', just as the gods formed a family symbolized the various roles and interactions of man on earth. Wirasanti et al (2015) identified in their research, that there is a difference in elevation (topography) of each temple. Starting with Mendut which is 230 meter above sea level, Pawon 240 meter and Borobudur 296 meter. This placement indicates religious messages in relation to the spiritual journey of human to achieve spiritual perfection and their purpose was to be preparatory stages in encountering the "center

of the world”, a vertical axis, the Borobudur temple.

Furthermore, traditional societies, made their settlements with the principle of the central place attachment which is often expressed by the archetype of mandala. The central point of the settlement would usually be the temple, cathedral or a pyramidal structure which would become the common acceptance of the symbolic center. *Mandala* in Sanskrit has a meaning of center and circle. The concept of mandala as a geometrical form shows that the center of any circle is knotted to its boundary and the boundary is determined by the center. Hence it refers to the sense of wholeness created by the circular forms. The archetypal theme of the mandala, in urban context, relates to social cohesion, integration and transcendence to a sense of place by expression of a hierarchical system of space importance, climaxing in the city center (Woodward, 1982). The symbol of a center – the Cosmic Mountain, the World Tree or central Pillar – a Center of the World, is a widely distributed concept (Eliade, 1952). Historically, urban symbolism dramatized the polarities of existence (Woodward, 1982), this is what Norberg-Schultz (1979) addresses as a three-dimensional ‘cosmos’ was thus defined within the given chaos. Thus, architecture of early civilizations may be interpreted as a concretization of the understanding of nature (Norberg-Schultz, 1979).

The *genius loci* of Borobudur cultural landscape as a combination of natural and human-made environment embodied meanings of the cosmic order and its structure was signifying Buddhist worldview. The human-made center was representing power of Shailendra dynasty, center of social cohesion of the kingdom but also international cosmopolitan center of the Buddhist pilgrimage and learning. Borobudur stands as a testament to an era in which the Javanese kingdom held a prominent place in a vibrant cosmopolitan ‘integral Buddhist world’ (Gifford, 2011). Though the meaning of the monument is not only multiple in its actual physical appearance but also historical, which makes an interpretation of the architecture even more complex because what can be seen today is only an adaptation of a new idea superimposed on the concrete expression of older concepts (Dumarçay, 1986).

Nevertheless, the meaning of Borobudur’s cultural landscape is essentially Buddhist, and more particularly linked to Mahayanism (Dumarçay, 1986) and was represented in space through Mahayana Buddhist visual culture (Gifford, 2011). The architects of Borobudur designed a visual world in which the Buddha appeared in a variety of forms – they presented a version of classical Mahayana that foregrounds the importance of the visual in relation to Buddhist philosophy, cosmology, soteriology, meditation, devotion and ritual (Gifford, 2011).

However, the glorious days of harmonious realm of Shailendra’s dynasty did not last long. From tenth century Borobudur was buried under the volcanic ashes and was abandoned for about nine centuries. What even more influenced further decline of the memory of the place was acceptance of the Islam and the rule of the Islamized Javanese kingdoms. The dominance of the religious and thus cosmological principles of observing the spatial structures (both natural and architectural) have therefore shifted from sixteenth century. In Norberg-Schultz’s (1979) opinion this kind of phenomenon - alienation is happening due to loss of identification with the natural and human-made things that constitute environment.

Monotheistic, Islamic religion, do not recognize polytheism which was reflected in the identification with the landscape features of Hindu and Buddhist cosmology. From once sacred land of Java, the perception has shifted towards the Arabic desert known from Al Quran. So, the center of the world and the attention of the Islamic believers’ points towards Mecca, a holy city in Saudi Arabia. As a result, perception of the environment, of the ruling kingdom, and its experience of meanings was changed from syncretized ancestor's worship with Hindu and Buddhist polytheism towards monotheism. The landscape features and their

interconnectedness with the settlement interpreted through cosmology lost its meanings and therefore importance. The arrival of Islam not only changed the perception of the environment but also set the beginning of the new settlement.

3.2. Modern Period of Borobudur's Cultural Landscape

Rediscovery and Colonial Era 17th – 20th century

A century later, after arriving of Islam, Indonesian archipelago was colonized by Netherlands in the beginning of seventeenth century. The ruins of Borobudur temple were rediscovered under the brief British presence in Java island during the nineteenth century. At that time the full survey of the temple was appointed. Then, the first large-scale restoration of Borobudur temple, in the beginning of twentieth century (1907-1911) was commissioned and sustained for many years by Dutch East Indies government. Thus, after a long period of relinquishment, Borobudur temple and its cultural landscape became the subject of archeological surveys during colonial times.

Borobudur temple is only one of the sites discovered during colonial times. The sculptures from those sites were frequently taken as ornaments by colonial residents (Salazar, 2014) and the colonial leaders used their involvement to demonstrate and justify its own presence and position themselves as preservers of Indonesian cultural heritage. Therefore, the Dutch East Indies government founded and developed the institutions for archeological research and preservation of monuments. In 1901, the Committee for Archaeological Research on Java and Madura was founded and later on in 1931, an ordinance on monuments (*Monumenten Ordonnantie*) was established, with the aim of preserving historical monuments, mainly within the colonial domain (Salazar 2014).

During the Second World War (1942-1945), The Empire of Japan occupied the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia). Japanese also had great interest in the discovered sites, especially Borobudur and they continued archeological activities that had been initiated and institutionalized by the Dutch.

Indonesian independence – Borobudur temple as representation of a glorious past – 20th century

Indonesia gained independence from colonial rule in 1945. Previously mentioned institutions for archeological research founded by Dutch East Indies, were then taken over by Indonesian government in 1949 by which Republic of Indonesia declared sovereignty over its national patrimony (Salazar, 2014). National Heritage sites were one of the ways to show up on the international stage and present the Indonesian culture and nation. Borobudur archeological site became an object of interest of multiple national, international and transnational institutions and organizations. Hence, only few years after independence, in 1951 UNESCO established office in Jakarta. Despite the fact that this office was covering wider Southeast Asia region, the main purpose was to bring Indonesian cultural heritage a global attention.

The presence of UNESCO at that point of time was very important for the political climate after independence. The first president of Indonesia, Sukarno (1945-1966), whose political regime was known as *Orde Lama* (Old Order), due to transition, was facing economic instability and at the same time building of a new nation. During his presidency, Borobudur Conservation Project was established. After Sukarno was removed from power, new political regime, *Orde Baru* (New Order), have started under the President Suharto (1967-1998). He continued to work with UNESCO and later on, in 1972, UNESCO launched a 25 million USD safeguarding campaign

to restore Borobudur (Salazar, 2014). Therefore, second restoration project of Borobudur temple was successfully conducted from 1973-1983, which was coordinated by UNESCO and involved international community as part of an international awareness effort to safeguard World Heritage (UNESCO, 2005).

The memorial stone at Borobudur lists 28 countries and eight private organization that supported Borobudur's restoration (Bloembergen & Eickhoff, 2015). However, it must be noted that the postcolonial involvement of the Netherlands and Japan in this collaborative international project of the restoration of Borobudur was standing out. Apart from the financial support, Netherlands had technical and advisory role in the project. On the other hand, Japanese developed JIKA Master Plan for the post-construction phase which was 20-year plan for the zoning system and construction of the archeological park.

The Borobudur cultural landscape became a political landscape and a subject of national and international politics of Indonesia. That culminated in 1990, when Borobudur Temple Compound (consisted of the temples: Mendut, Pawon and Borobudur) was nominated as an outstanding example of a masterpiece of Buddhist architecture and monumental arts (Nagaoka 2016) and in 1991 it was inscribed in the World Heritage List.

International attention was drawn to Borobudur as part of Indonesian political propaganda to convey the rich history of Indonesian land and what they were fighting for. However, internally Borobudur temple was a representative of the pre-Islamic Javanese period that is quite different than the Islam itself and the majority of the population, being Muslims, were not identifying with it. In 1985, Muslim fundamentalists who viewed Borobudur as a symbol of Indonesia's pre-Islamic past bombed nine stupas on the upper terrace (Salazar, 2014). Government of that time, under the President Suharto proclaimed that all temples in Java are not regarded as a spiritual, religious sites where ritual activities are held, but that all of them are regarded as heritage monuments. Therefore, with the growing religious tensions, inside of the temple complex it is build *mushola*, a prayer room for Muslims who come to visit Borobudur at the time of the prayer. Even though the original temple function in past was serving as the religious center for both the Buddhist and Hindus alike, which are still existing minority in Indonesia, the free access to temples around Java was not available anymore. This governmental decision was not aligning with the Indonesia's official state policy – Pancasila, that promotes religious freedom.

Even though JIKA Master Plan, attempted to holistically include human-made and natural elements of the space as well incorporate Javanese ideas of the landscape, Borobudur was inscribed into the World Heritage List in 1991 as a monument only rather than as a cultural landscape. This separation of the site from its wider cultural landscape concept has caused a number of issues including separating people from the site, as well as creating a lack of awareness of the meaning of the place in connection with nature, religion and ongoing Javanese philosophy and cultural practices (Nagaoka, 2016).

Reformation era – buffering the international and local

Under the New Order regime all the crucial decisions have been made, regarded management practices and development of the heritage conservation institutions. Thus, when inscribed in the World Heritage list, Borobudur temple compound was not inscribed and protected as a cultural landscape, but as a monument only. That decision immensely reflected on the management and perception of the visitors and everyday experience of local residents. Instead of being named Borobudur's National archaeological park it is named *Taman Wisata Borobudur* (Borobudur Touristic Park) which is profit oriented corporation. The management

of Borobudur, together with the Pawon and Mendut temple was managed by five institutional bodies. Therefore, the general approach and the strategy undertaken was tourism-oriented with the restricted access of the local residents. That series of decisions generated ongoing conflicts between residents and management bodies of Borobudur compound.

After in 1998, when New Order regime has ended, there was a possibility to shift attention of the governmental decision making towards the local residents. Hence, local residents finally got the chance to voice out their needs. However, the repercussions of the decisions made before 1998 have remained. In 2002 Government was attempting to build shopping mall called The Spirit World of Java Art Mall in close proximity to the temple. This resulted in nation-wide protests. This ongoing turmoil between local residents and the management bodies influenced UNESCO to organize together, with the other institutional bodies, meetings regarded to situation. They recommended the policy of temple compound preservation should not only focus on the Borobudur temples but should embrace the wider cultural context of the monuments (Engelhardt et al. 2003, Adhisakti 2003, Tanudirjo 2013). However, again, in the practice this recommendation did not have fruitful results, the institutional bodies were hard to monitor and therefore they lacked implementation of the strategic involvement of the local residents.

Throughout the years Borobudur became a mass tourist place. As some researches indicate, agenda of the Indonesian government of placing Borobudur temple as one of the excellent destinations to increase foreign exchange have become serious threat for the sustainability of the site. Hence, focusing only on number of visitors, the negative impacts of mass tourism is not seen through (Hermawan et al, 2019). In response to the increasing demands of tourism destinations, the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy under the mandate from the Indonesian President in 2016 has initiated a mega project called "Ten New Bali" (Tunggono, 2016; Lee & Syah, 2018). The first of the 'top ten priority destination' for touristic development, Borobudur being the first one. This project influenced huge infrastructure projects – building the new international airport near Yogyakarta and a high way. Moreover, between 2014 and 2018, there was simultaneous increase in number of both foreign and domestic visitors to the site, from 3.4 million in 2014 and 3.5 million in 2015, to 5.01 million in 2019 (Damanik & Yusuf, 2021). However, majority of visitors of Borobudur temple are first-time sightseers, but very few decide to return to the site.

Borobudur cultural landscape is mostly rural area where agriculture and tourism are the main economic activities. Due to the out brake of Covid-19 pandemic tourist activities all over Indonesia stopped which affected huge number of the population. Following government regulation for the closure of tourist destinations, Borobudur Temple had been periodically closed since March 2020 until the beginning of 2022.

Indonesia opened its borders in the aftermath of the Covid-19 out brake in 2022 in a vary theatrical way. Indonesia was the host of the G20 Bali Leaders' Declaration. The final G20 Senior Official Meeting and Culture Minister Meeting was held in Borobudur Temple Compounds in September 2022. The cultural program following the meeting was the festival Indonesia Bertutur – where cultural organizations representing art and culture of the area of Borobudur's cultural landscape where involved. The cultural landscape of Borobudur once again became a stage for international cultural diplomacy.

3.2.1. Rethinking, Protection and Transmission of the *genius loci*

The meaning of a place is what Norberg-Schultz (1979) refers to as, psychic function. According to him, the meaning of a place depends on identification and implies a sense of 'belonging' (Norberg-Schultz, 1979). The loss of identification and therefore meaning of a place that has been seen in the case of the Borobudur's cultural landscape has lasted almost one thousand years. Bloembergen and Eickhoff (2015) recognized that the fear of loss is an important motive in the politics of cultural heritage formation. According to them, both the decay of a cherished site of the past and the feeling of having lost a (privileged) connection to it can be strong emotional and moral devices to stimulate people and governments to engage in plans to restore the site in order to conserve it for the future (Bloembergen & Eickhoff, 2015). The discovery of Borobudur temple in the era of colonization meant the beginning of rediscovery of the history of meanings of the cultural landscape that continued into decolonization period of independent Indonesia. Those meanings were reinterpreted through four dominant worldviews – Dutch and Japanese, as successive colonizers, Indonesian, and UNESCO's being the representative of the 'universal' worldview. As the interpretation was guided by multiple worldviews, the fear of loss was also having multiple significance and utter motives.

In pre-modern times, Borobudur temple and the spatial structure of its cultural landscape have served as an embodiment of the natural environment. New settlements formed on Java island did not adhere to the presence of the previously existing ones and even then, new ones were subjected to different influences. The awareness and importance of the past in Indonesia was going hand in hand with the international awareness of the heritage value of the past after the Second World War. At that time, the representative of global heritage politics, UNESCO, developed the discourse of the World Heritage Sites which was based on Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) which stands for "cultural (and/or natural) significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity" (UNESCO, 2008; Taylor, 2014). The main focus of UNESCO were famous monuments and sites usually placed in the former colonies. Hence, the second large-scale intervention of UNESCO globally and the first in Southeast Asia was the restoration of the Borobudur temple.

UNESCO was an umbrella organization that provided a platform for international exchange of knowledge and developing a plan for restoring and maintaining the site of Borobudur with the initiation of the Indonesian government. The Borobudur temple and its cultural landscape, its *genius loci*, became a subject of the threefold process – rethinking, protecting and transmitting. Vecco (2020) recognizes that this threefold movement is not linear and it depends on which ways the *genius loci* is recognized and in which ways its value is interpreted. The reconstruction of places in sustainable forms requires active, conscious citizenship, capable of combining contextual knowledge with expert knowledge through forms of participatory democracy where local self-sustainable development, based on the recognition and enhancement of the identity, must, first of all, be led and developed by local society (Vecco, 2020).

The rethinking process of the reconstruction, management, and communications of the values of the Borobudur cultural landscape in the 20th century was primarily led by, before mentioned, four different actors whose worldviews influenced the construction of the place. Discovered by Europeans, the Borobudur temple represented significant archeological findings and a source of antiquities. Dutch conducted first restoration project of Borobudur temple at the beginning of 1900. Conservation and restoration were part of the moral duty of the colonial state and justification for their presence on Indonesian land. Western or European perception of the

environment is experienced as separation of nature and human-made objects. Taylor (2014) points out that the Western point of view is based on a hegemony where cultural heritage is raised mainly in great monuments and sites and natural heritage in scientific ideas of nature and wilderness as something separate from people (Taylor, 2014). Dutch restoration project viewed Borobudur as a cultural object isolated from its environment. Therefore, the temple was observed separately from the context of its surroundings.

On the other hand, the Japanese were governing institutions of archeological research founded by the Dutch, and later on after independence their involvement with the development of the JICA Master Plan for the post-restoration management of the Borobudur cultural landscape was very much affectionate and reflected the Pan-Asian frame of thinking, as Bloembergen and Eickhoff (2015) address. The master plan was connecting both tangible and intangible features of the Borobudur cultural landscape. Hence, the European and Asian approach to the idea of heritage value differs. Asian cultures have a spiritual view of what is culturally valuable from the past (Taylor, 2004; Nagaoka, 2016) including both the landscape features and human-made monuments, while, the European perspective views heritage through a monument-centered approach.

The independence era was marked by the need of the Indonesian government to position itself on the global stage and form a national and international identity. To present itself as a democracy the government developed the official, foundational political philosophy – *Pancasila* (five principles). This philosophy aimed to embrace and include a diversity of all people living in Indonesia and promote religious freedom, in other words, it aimed to unify multicultural society and develop pluralism. Therefore, the Indonesian government embraced the archeological finding of the Borobudur temple and used it as a tool to develop a national, cultural and political identity. However, the government needed to align itself with transnational organizations such as UNESCO to be able to carry on the reconstruction of Borobudur temple and to inscribe it in the World Heritage List. That meant that government of Indonesia had to comply with the inscription procedures which are in accordance with the European heritage framework. The concept of cultural landscapes had not yet entered the World Heritage system (Nagaoka, 2015) and therefore, the proposed JICA Master Plan of the conservation management for the wider landscape was not implemented.

With the inscription into the World Heritage List, Borobudur became internationally recognized. However, what is appreciated internationally, doesn't have to be valued locally (Taylor, 2014). Hence, as Borobudur temple internationally represented the glorious past of the Shailendra kingdom whose environmental image was in accordance with the human-made and natural environment, but locally the imposition of the management procedures and dominant worldview of the majority of the population was not embracing the Buddhist heritage, the heritage of religious minority. The plurality that was promoted internationally was not reflected in the experience on the local level. Evidently, the temple remained to be perceived as a dead monument in accordance with the European frame of thought, which was also benefitting Islamic religious structures. Therefore, even though the government was Indonesian, its politics on the local level resembled a neocolonial approach and autocratic religious imposition of power.

What has been seen in the twentieth century is that rethinking, protecting and transmitting the *genius loci* was not conducted by the local society, it has been done by international actors and political elites of Indonesia. Moving on to the reformation era, this approach led to transmitting the value of the *genius loci* of the Borobudur cultural landscape as a touristic site and destination. Therefore, Indonesia indeed utilized Borobudur as a capitalistic resource which

has attracted millions of visitors yearly. Thus, the Borobudur cultural landscape became a subject of major touristic development.

As recognized by Vecco (2020) preserving the *genius loci* as the cultural, architectural identity of a place, ensuring its permanence in the collective memory and transmissibility over time, means fully understanding the functional, typological, stylistic and constructive reasons from which a place originates. Borobudur has been conserved as a tourist site and that imposed structuring of its environment for those purposes and thereby affecting everyday life of local citizens. Tourism, as a main economical source generated huge infrastructure projects to accommodate mass tourism that affects this cultural landscape. Hence, Borobudur in the 21st century is an object inside the landscape which is located within the new settlement with the predominant Islamic worldview. This means that its *genius loci* have been maintained and perceived politically and as a touristic resource. Its significance as the 'center of the Buddhist world' and intrinsic connection with the natural environment has been changed into a major 'touristic center', a commodity and a stage for cultural diplomatic relations.

4. Conclusion

Early Southeast Asian settlements were placed inside of the landscape of island world which had two dominant patterns – highlands and numerous river streams. Position of those natural phenomena were orientating factors in delimiting an area where the centers of the settlements are going to be placed in accordance to their cosmological belief systems. Borobudur temple as a figure in a landscape served as an embodiment of environment but also a representation of political power of Shailendra dynasty. Buddhistic worldview was the means of explanation of the landscape features and its connection to human world. Cosmological principles were therefore embodied into temples and whole environment was positioned as a space of worship. Many centuries had passed from that kind of environmental experience, Borobudur temple was buried and forgotten and new settlement was created. The place was lost.

With the rediscovery of the temple began the rediscovery of its meanings. Meanings interpreted later on throughout twentieth century had culminated with the perception of Borobudur as a dead monument. Political structures, both foreign and domestic had influenced perception and lived experience of the cultural landscape as heritage tourism site, in the full custody of the government very much divided from the local society.

The restoration of past identity seems to be only a mask for political aspirations. It is clear enough that the storytelling about Borobudur as 'center of the world' is used as commodity feature of the cultural landscape. It is obvious that temple is perceived as dead monument, JIKA Master Plan never implemented and value of the cultural landscape never officially acknowledged.

Therefore, the Borobudur cultural landscape and its *genius loci* today seems to be isolated from its socio-cultural environment and that the epistemological value is not perceived. Even the name indicates the intention and perceived value of the site. Instead of developing the Borobudur National Archaeological Park, it is developed Borobudur Tourism Park. Therefore, the vertical axis mundi or the 'center of the world', the Borobudur, is transformed to be a commodity and without public purpose.

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