Heritage and Tourism in Yogyakarta and Central Java:
An Archaeological Perspective

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In Indonesia, visiting historic and heritage sites is one of the popular tourist activities to day. Families, Students, groups, and even foreign visitors frequently take visitations to heritage sites. As the popularity of heritage tourism increases, many heritage sites want to be established as tourist destinations too. This situations creates an interaction between site –as protected heritage- and tourism –as a profitable activity- which sometimes causes negative impacts for the conservation of the heritage itself.

My paper will discuss interactions between heritages and tourism in Yogyakarta and Central Java. It will be focused on archaeological problems faced by Borobudur Temple Compound and Prambanan Temple Compound as cultural heritage tourism destinations.

Borobudur Temple Compound and Prambanan Temple Compound are two of World Heritage sites in Indonesia. Borobudur Temple Compound is located near Magelang, Central Java, and Prambanan Temple Compound is near the city of Yogyakarta.
At the present, both of the temple compounds are being operated as cultural heritage tourism by PT. Taman Wisata Candi Borobudur, Prambanan dan Ratu Boko (hereinafter referred to as “PT Taman Wisata”), a profit company established by Indonesian government in 1980.

The establishment of the company has planned to combine a profit company and a conserved heritage site. That’s why the company has goals (Wiyono 2003, 1):

1. create a park which can reduce the pressure of overburdening of the temple by too many visitors at certain time by distributing the visitors spread out the park.
2. provide the visitors with information about Borobudur and Prambanan Temple Compound: their cultural aspects, history, architectural aspects, etc.
3. provide facilities for the comfort and convenience of visitors
4. get benefits for funding the company in managing the cultural tourism of the sites.

The facilities in the park are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Borobudur</th>
<th>Prambanan</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The office of Taman Wisata Borobudur</td>
<td>The office of Taman Wisata Prambanan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information Centre</td>
<td>Information Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Toilets</td>
<td>Toilets</td>
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<td>Tickets Boxes, First Aid Centre, Deposit Places</td>
<td>Tickets Boxes, First Aid Centre, Deposit Places</td>
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<td>Souvenir Shops</td>
<td>Souvenir Shops</td>
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<td>Ticket Booth for parking</td>
<td>Ticket Booth for parking</td>
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<td>Parking area for cars, buses, and motor cycles</td>
<td>Parking area for cars, buses, and motor cycles</td>
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<td>Restaurants</td>
<td>Restaurants</td>
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<td>Musholla (praying hall)</td>
<td>Musholla (praying hall)</td>
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<td>Excibition hall</td>
<td>Excibition hall</td>
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<td>Park maintenance</td>
<td>Park maintenance</td>
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<td>Nursery</td>
<td>Nursery</td>
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<td>Guard house and posts</td>
<td>Guard house and posts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shelters</td>
<td>Shelters</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weather station</td>
<td>Weather station</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elephant Stall</td>
<td>Children Playground</td>
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<td>Vendor relocation area</td>
<td>Open Air Ramayana Theatre</td>
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<td>Audio Visual Room</td>
<td>Audio Visual</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children Playground</td>
<td>Children Playground</td>
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<td>Manohara Hotel</td>
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<td>Borobudur Study and Conservation Office</td>
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<td>MURI – Indonesian Record Museum</td>
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<td>Borobudur Bird Park</td>
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All the facilities are in Zone II (Archaeological Park Zone) and it is exclusively managed by PT Taman Wisata. Zoning system in Borobudur and Prambanan was planned by JICA. The zoning system divides the whole site into several areas which is meant to preserve the monuments and their other archaeological remains. The unit areas have their own main purposes. In Borobudur, JICA proposed five zones, but only three of them have been implemented (zone I, II, & III). The five zones are: zone I as sanctuary area; zone II as archeological park; zone III as land use regulation area; zone IV as historical scenery preservation area; and zones IV national archaeological park area (Mundardjito 2003, 2).

Since PT Taman Wisata was established, there have been many problems to be faced by the company due to bad heritage management of the sites. The company has got increasing economic benefit, but not in a “real and well managed heritage tourism industry” way. I will show some negative impacts of the tourism industry on the heritage sites in Borobudur and Prambanan. Some of them, especially from Borobudur Temple Compound, have been identified by Unesco-ICOMOS Reactive Monitoring Mission to the World Heritage List of Borobudur Temple Compound (Engelhardt et al. 2003) and Brooks (2003).

Focused merely on displaying the physical appearance of the heritage.

Either in Borobudur or Prambanan, PT Taman Wisata makes the both heritage as the main “display” of the park and it is in the centre of the park. What they deliver to visitors, however, is merely the tangible culture of the heritage. Actually, as we all know, the real heritage which was inheritaged by our ancestors is also the intangible aspects of the heritage itself. As if then the park company has buried our real heritage deeply.

This kind of “display” makes the visitors only know the tangible aspects of the heritage. What they see in the sites is only buildings from 8th and 9th century AD. In Borobudur the visitors have only experiences in climbing the monument to the top, or in Prambanan their only experience is merely going in and out the chambers of the temple. That is why the visitors think that their visit to Borobudur and Prambanan as only a recreational journey, not a more worthy journey than that.
Zoning system which can not accommodate the conservation needs of the heritage.

As I wrote above, the whole site (either Borobudur or Prambanan) is divided into five zones. The two inner zones which are main tourism attraction areas have no coordination at all. The Zone 1 is managed by “Borobudur Study and Conservation Bureau” for Borobudur Temple Compound and “Archaeological Remains Conservation Bureau –institutions under supervised by the Minister of Culture and Tourism, whereas the Zone 2 is managed by PT Taman Wisata –a government owned company under supervision of the Ministry of Finance. Because of the separation, PT Taman Wisata assumes that the company is only responsible to the Zone 2, whereas in fact the company earns big money from site entry and other tourism revenue and most of it is contributed by the monument attraction in Zone 1. The problem arises when there is only very little money made directly available for the conservation of the monument.

In fact, the visitors’ presence and behaviour contributes to the degradation of the monument quality. Some of the destructive acts and behaviours are: the visitors bring trash
to the monuments; they do vandalism (graffity or picking a temple stone for souvenir); their sole of shoes brings sands which scour the stone stairs of the monument; and they climb the monument for having good pose for photos.

As the parkland established, the government relocated local communities who had lived there since hundred years ago. Furthermore, PT Taman Wisata built a fence enclosing the parkland and separating it from the surrounding areas. Consequently, the monuments were cut off from their cultural contexts. Since then the parkland has no direct interaction with its cultural environment anymore

Remove the monuments from their cultural context.

Trash on the upper terrace of Borobudur brought by visitors. Photo by Didik S.

Hawkers sell their goods near the monument although there is a sign forbiding selling goods on the area. Photo by Didik S.
Becoming a “monocultural” heritage tourism.

If we compare the two parklands –Borobudur and Prambanan- we will see that there is nothing different in structure and spatial patterns of the parklands. Except the monuments, the overall parklands are in uniformity. In fact, each monument has specific features, values and significance which differentiate with another monument. Because of these uniformities then Borobudur and Prambanan have vanished their specific features, values,and significance. It seems like what Julius Bryant (2002) said as “monoculture”: replications or standardization of places which cause the places become identical. In other words, there is an abolition of cultural richness potentials, which actually can be interpreted and presented to the visitors. Sometimes, even, the visitors feel disoriented and can not find “a sense of place”.
The National Trust for Historic and Cultural Sites defines heritage tourism as “traveling to experience the places, artifacts and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present. It includes cultural, historic, and natural resources”. In Australia it is defined as “Activities and services which provide visitors with the opportunity to experience, understand and enjoy the special values of Australia’s natural and cultural heritage” (Australian Heritage Commission n.d.).

Comparing some concepts above with what has been done in Borobudur and Prambanan, it seems to me that there are many things to be carried out to restore the whole unprofessional conducts of the Borobudur and Prambanan heritage management. The heritage tourism management, even, can not embrace the definition of a cultural heritage tourism. In other words, activities and services provided by PT Taman Wisata are not a real heritage tourism or it is just a general tourism with an monument in it.

The definition of Heritage Tourism also reflects that heritage tourism involved various stakeholders. “Successful Tourism at Heritage Places. A Guide for Tourism Operators, Heritage Managers and Communities” – a book which was published by Australian Heritage Commission and Department of Industry, Science and Resources with the assistance of the Cooperative Research Centre for Sustainable Tourism states that at least there are three stakeholders involved in heritage tourism: Tourism Operators, Heritage Managers and Community. This diagram below shows a relationship of the three parties.

In the case of Borobudur and Prambanan heritage tourism, interaction among stakeholders has not operated as shown by the diagram above. Collaboration among stakeholders of Borobudur and Prambanan Heritage Tourism, however, is very weak. PT. Taman Wisata as Tourism Industry, Borobudur Study and Conservation Bureau and BP3 (Archeological Remains Conservation Bureau) as Heritage Managers, and Local Communities can not create partnership in managing the heritage tourism of Borobudur and Prambanan.
Taylor (2003a) states –refers to Relph 1976- that identity of place is comprised of three interrelated components, each irreducible to the others –physical features or appearance, observable activities and functions, and meaning or symbols.

Moreover, Taylor explicates that both of tangible and intangible identity interact with the existence of human experience and uniqueness. The interaction unify in place meaning and significance for people. The concept of place identity is relevant to my topic of discussion in a way it explained that place identity is comprised of tangible and intangible identity. So, intangible identity can not be separated or even eliminated from any aspects of place identity.

Borobudur and Prambanan heritage tourism do not explore the intangible aspects. While, the intangible identity is very essential in giving visitors experiences and distinctiveness of heritage sites which can not be shown by the tangible identity.


- That one of the major reasons for understanding any form of conservation is to make the significance of the place accessible to visitors and the host community, in a well managed manner.
- That both the conservation community and the tourism industry must work cooperatively together to protect and present the world’s cultural and natural heritage, given their mutual respect for it and concern for the fragility of the resource.
The principles of the charter are very helpful in handling or managing heritage tourism and it can be implemented for managing Borobudur and Prambanan Heritage Tourism. At least, now first we can use it as evaluation framework to assess both heritage tourism managements.

Evaluation using the charter principles to PT Taman Wisata in operating the heritage tourism reveals more unprofessional manners of Borobudur and Prambanan heritage management. What they have done to the Borobudur and Prambanan heritage tourism does not go well with the principles. For example, they can not carry out the principle 1 because in fact visitors do not get any experience and understand the culture and uniqueness of the heritages, and host community (villagers of Borobudur and Prambanan) do not have opportunities in participating to interpret their own culture.

Conclusion

From the facts about Borobudur and Prambanan heritage tourism and problems faced by the managers and communities, I encourage some strategies and actions to be done:

- Back to the basic objectives of the parkland establishment, i.e. combining a profit company and a conserved heritage site.
- Eliminate any tourism programs which will make degradation of heritage qualities.
- Create a new and unique heritage brand for each Borobudur and Prambanan heritage tourism in which it become a guideline for developing the overall heritage tourism in the sites.
• Introducing more educational programs in arising conservation awareness of visitors. The programs should provide unique opportunities to inform visitors on the importance of preserving and protecting the heritage.
• Create multicultural education programs to enhance the spirit of multicultural awareness of the visitors
• Maximizing interpretation of the heritage via signage, information center desk, brochure, leaflet, and guides.
• Explore intangible culture of the heritage and inform it to visitors
• Create programs which accommodate local community participations.
• PT Taman Wisata should contribute more money on heritage conservation.

At last, I will cite Richard Engelhardt’s statement about heritage and tourism (as referred by Taylor, 2003a: I-16):

... to preserve heritage only because you want to sell it to some foreign visitors is completely, completely the wrong strategy – it will never work. It will only lead to the simple deterioration and falsification of the heritage and everyone will end up unhappy and poorer for it.

My opinion is that the preservation of heritage and culture has nothing whatever to do with tourism. If you are preserving heritage as a tourism product, this is not the preservation of heritage, this is the development of a tourism product; and perhaps you would be more well advised to develop a theme park from scratch out of concrete.

References


