



SPEAKER 3: MR MUKHTAR HADI

PADMASANA: "THE INNER EYE AS EXCAVATION TOOLS" MUARA JAMBI – SUMATRA –
INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

The conjunction of archaeological excavations and Chinese and Tibetan manuscripts seems to indicate that the huge site of Muara Jambi, spanning on more than 2,600 acres along the Batanghari, the longest river in Sumatra, has been from the 7th to 13th century the largest centre of Buddhist knowledge from Southeast Asia. This archaeological site has been inscribed by the Indonesian government as national cultural heritage and on the tentative list of candidates for UNESCO World Heritage.

Today, in the heart of Muara Jambi, along the Batanghari river, stands a village on stilts whose inhabitants are Muslims. Several young villagers occasionally work on excavations alongside archaeologists. They know how to talk to each stone, each tree in the forest where their parents still have small huts to watch at night the fall of the durian fruits. They feel deeply infused by the ancient knowledge alive among the ruins. They've founded a green school, Saramuja, and a community centre, the Padmasana foundation to professionalise their research and share it more widely. They're both guardians of the site and explorers of its past. Among their many notable works and actions are:

- nursery and plantation of trees and plant of endangered species,
- gathering in the bed of the Batanghari river over 6,000 ancient Chinese coins dating back as far as the first century BC and their classification according to their respective dynasties,
- preservation of mantras in old Malay, Javanese and Sanskrit engraved on metal plates and informal cooperation work with Arlo Griffiths (EFEO)
- collecting *seloka* (a traditional form of 4-verse poetry about local wisdom) and knowledge told by their grandparents: local legends, medicinal plants...
- revival of local dances, music, and crafts,
- in progress: a book about the past and present of Muara Jambi in 4 languages (Indonesian, Chinese, English and French)
- a "Muara Jambi-Indonesia" dictionary
- in progress: "Pondok Menapo", a training centre for the villagers about micro-economy, health, environment, historical researches in cooperation with national and international academics, interfaith and cross-cultural dialogues.

Mukhtar Hadi, co-founder of Saramuja and Padmasana

BIODATA

Mukhtar Hadi usually called Borju, was born on October 5, 1983 in Muara Jambi village. He finished his last education at the Islamic Institute of Jambi. After graduating from his study in 2008 he went back to the village and formed organizations involved in the conservation and preservation local art and culture that still exists around the Muara Jambi temple area. He also became a teacher in formal school in Muara Jambi village and tour guide in the Muara Jambitemple area. In 2010 he founded a free school which was named the Universe Muara Jambi School. It aims to provide education and understanding to the public about the conservation of Muara Jambi temple compound site and the environment.

CONFERENCE PAPER

AREA CONSERVATION CAMPAIGN: MUARA JAMBI TEMPLE

Mukhtar Hadi and the Padmasana Community

PADMASANA PROFILE AS STAKEHOLDERS *IN SITU* IN MUARA JAMBI TEMPLE AREA

Padmasana is Muara Jambi's youth association. It is a non-profit organization which aims at preserving the heritage of Muara Jambi Temple and area as well as improving the living conditions of rural communities in a sustainable way. Literally, Padmasana is a Sanskrit term for the structure of the lotus-shaped stone used as a foundation for a statue found in the Muara Jambi temple site. Padmasana are the only stakeholders domiciled in the Muara Jambi Temple area, and the villagers are members of the organization. As a stakeholder *in situ*, Padmasana's mission is to function as a campaign agent, an intermediary and advocate during conflicts between stakeholders and the public. Padmasana is also an observatory platform that monitors, activities or developments on a daily basis that occur in the region. It is also an agent of movement with creative efforts in the village.

Padmasana Community is a consortium/fusion of four associations in Muara Jambi village namely:

1. Saramuja: an abbreviation of Sekolah Alam Raya Muara Jambi (Grand Nature School of Muara Jambi), was established in 2010. It is a non-formal educational institution that aims to enhance knowledge about the preservation of culture, history and local knowledge. It is conducted through research on history and public archaeology.
2. Dwarapalamuja stands for Dwarapala Muara Jambi. It was established in 2010. Dwarapala is a statue of a temple guard, a symbol of effort to protect and preserve Muara Jambi temple area from destruction/vandalism. It was named dwarapala because a unique dwarapala statue found in the area, with a smiling expression (smiling dwarapala), bearing the idea that this area should be protected with civilized manners without coercion. Dwarapalamuja activities include the organization of independent businesses such as souvenirs craftsmen, street vendors around the area (bike rentals and food stalls), regional advocacy on mining companies' activity (coal and oil) and oil palm plantations (a potential threat in the area). Besides, our activities cover tours and provide local guides for the Muara Jambi Temple area.
3. Pemuda Peduli Lingkungan (PPL) founded in 2014 is the Youth Movement for the Environment in Muara Jambi village, aimed at maintaining the cleanliness of Muara Jambi's touristic area. It rests on a youth task force that controls trash and conducts a reforestation programme in the area and in the outskirts of the Batanghari River, an area immediately adjacent to the region.
4. Macro Film International (MFI) established in 2011. Its name was initially Micro Film Indonesia and in 2012 became Macro Film International. MFI as a business unit of the digital creative cinematography is a local self-supported organization in Muara Jambi with a spirit of independent entrepreneur. As an indie production house, MFI produced many works including documentaries of travel profile in Jambi province, folk songs video, major national video, and ads for local commercial and personal branding. In 2014, MFI won a national competition organized by the Indonesian Ministry

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of Tourism (www.indonesia.travel). It was showcased in an event called Indonesia Kaya Rasa. The video was titled "Jambi the Epic Wonder of Suvarnadvipa". In Jambi, MFI is also known as a producer of adventure, wildlife and cultural video. On top of cinema and broadcast, MFI expanded through graphic design and 3D modelling.

These four non-formal organizations joined in a single association called Padmasana. In the beginning, in 2011, it was formed by only three institutions (Saramuja, Dwarapalamuja and MFI) joined in 2014 by Pemuda Peduli Lingkungan.

Padmasana is a non-government organization. It is funded by cross subsidies units of local businesses ran by the four stakeholders (incomes from package tour and guide, making video and graphic designs, souvenir sales and events such as folk festivals organization in the Muara Jambi Temple area). This association was able to survive despite its limitations for over four years, thanks to a spirit of self-reliance, self-containing, and self-sustainability. Its main vision is cultural preservation.

Specifically, Padmasana is trying to build in the long run a separate area entirely dedicated to the society. Given the complexity of the problem among stakeholders, most the stakeholders expected to run the regional conservation programmes are only found among the local community. These are individuals who have daily contacts with the region. They act to save ancient remains, stone structures (menapo) temple, list and document history evidence and publish them via social media or seminars. All activities are done on a voluntary basis and use independent business incomes. This need for independence was a response to the fact that until today not a single stakeholder or outside party acted systematically to maintain the integrity of the region.

OVERVIEW OF MUARA JAMBI TEMPLE AREA

The site or Muara Jambi Temple area is a shrine complex located approximately 40 kilometres from the Jambi city or 30 kilometres from the capital of Muara Jambi. It is situated at 103 22' E to 103 45' E and 1 24' S to 1 33' S. This location is longitudinal along 8 kilometres with an average height of 8 to 12 meters above sea level. (Diarni et al, 2007: 23).

In geomorphological area, based on SLAR (Side Looking Airborne) image interpretation, almost all the area is at the former primeval delta which is an alluvial plain in the East coast of South Sumatra consisting of three recent natural levee (embankment), a swamp and another recent natural levee located sequentially along the Batang Hari river bank (BAKOSURTANAL 1985: II.3).

Muara Jambi Temple complex is the site of the ancient kingdom of Malayu and the kingdom of Sriwijaya, which was a Buddhist religious centre in the 7th-13th c. The kingdoms of Malayu and Sriwijaya are known to have been very influential, not only in the archipelago but also in mainland Southeast Asia such as Malaysia and Thailand. Those kingdoms played a significant role in the international political and economic arena as a link between India and China at the time (Director General of Culture, 2014).

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Archaeological excavations and ancient texts in Chinese and Tibetan indicate that Muara Jambi, spanning more than 3,981 acres along the Batanghari (the longest river in Sumatra), had become the largest Buddhism learning centre in Southeast Asia. The site was a "knowledge meeting place" where Indians and Chinese came to study or trade by sailing through the "sea route of Buddhism". Although it was not as famous as the Silk Road – it could also be called the "Route of Gold" as traders from all over Asia came here in search of this precious metal. This is how Suvarnadwipa was named. In Sanskrit, it means 'Golden Island', and used to refer to the island now called Sumatra (Inandiak, 2014).

Muara Jambi was first mentioned in 1820 by a British officer named S.C. Crooke (Anderson, 1971: 398 in Widjaja, 2008). Crooke found the ruins of buildings and statues of Buddha in Muara Jambi. T. Adam's published an article in the "Oudheidkundig Verslag" in 1921 that strengthened the evidence of Muara Jambi as an ancient heritage site. It featured informative and good quality photographs. F.M. Schnitger, a German researcher who visited Muara Jambi in 1937, also reported the existence of ruins of an ancient palace area and collated names of temples such as Astano, Gumpung, Tinggi, Gudang Garem, Gedong I, Gedong II and Bukit Perak. According to Schnitger, the archaeological remains in Muara Jambi are remnants of an imperial capital with buildings made of brick/stone (Schnitger, 1964: 57).

Later when Indonesia reached Independence, a survey team was formed in 1954. The team, led by R. Soekmono, aimed to identify the location of the remains of ancient Muara Jambi. It reported the existence of ruins of the Astano and Gumpung, Tinggi Temples and the remains of old buildings covered by vegetation. In 1976, the Directorate of History and Archaeology, as well as the National Archaeological Research Center, began a process of reconstruction and restoration that is still ongoing (Purwanti, 2011).

This area is acknowledged as a cultural heritage area by a decree of the Minister of Education and Culture (number 259/M/2013). It stipulated that the Muara Jambi geographic area is a National Heritage zone. By definition, this area covers an area of 3,981 hectares, spread over two districts (Marosebo and Tamanrajo) and eight villages (Director General of Culture, 2014). It can be concluded that this area is the largest archaeological complex in Southeast Asia (twenty times the total area of Borobudur or twice the size of the region of Angkor Wat Cambodia).

On October 6, 2009, Muara Jambi geographical area was proposed as a World Cultural Heritage Site. It was recorded on the UNESCO tentative list, number 5465 (Director General of Culture, 2014).

This cultural heritage area consists of archaeological remains in the form of:

1. Ten main buildings of the temple namely Koto Mahligai, Kedaton, Gedong I, Gedong II, Gumpung, Tinggi I, Tinggi II, Kembar Batu, Astano, Telago Rajo. The main temple characteristic is the brick fence surrounding the temple.
2. Eighty two menapo. Menapo is a term in the local language to designate a mound containing brick ruins. Until 2010 at least 33 brick structures and 82 menapo have been found (Utomo, 2011: 82). The other 70 menapo are still being excavated.

3. Various types of pottery, ceramics, artefacts, beads, stone statues, inscriptions and building structures such as stupa, Chinese coins, glazed tiles fragments, gold plates, pedestal and mortar-shaped andesite stones are scattered in several locations of the site.
4. Seventeen canals connecting the temple complex landscapes with one another are seen as possible transportation infrastructure and drainage systems. It is also seen as being inspired by cosmology.
5. Nine pool/ancient artificial lake were found.
6. An artificial hill (Bukit Perak) is considered to have been the embodiment of the cosmological centre of the universe.

Similar characteristics appear while comparing the archaeological site of Muara Jambi and Buddhist archaeological buildings of the classical period. Both provide allegations of Buddhism as the dominant influence on the civilization of Muara Jambi at that period. Characteristics of Buddhist buildings in the classical period are as follows:

1. Smaller buildings surround the main building
2. Pradaksina Patha floors are relatively wide and its edges have balustrade (Vedika)
3. The body of the temple has holes for ventilation, and niches in its outer wall.
4. They bear a few building features such as the stupa, especially on the roof part
5. They have Buddha statues.
6. The temple chamber has an altar with a statue on the back wall.
7. No cistern was found like those of Hindu temples
8. For several large buildings, the courtyard was paved with an overlay of stone blocks (Munandar, 2011: 15-16).

Therefore, this Muara Jambi Temple complex is considered paramount for the disclosure of the history of one of the Buddhist world's most important civilization. Many remains are still buried in the ground and in the riverbed and have not yet been excavated.

ANALYSIS OF DEVELOPMENTS AND ISSUES THAT OCCURRED IN THE MUARA JAMBI TEMPLE AREA

Integrity of Muara Jambi temple area is being threatened by:

1. Human activity: many industries in the region are a threat to menapo forest such as: stockpiles of coal on the river bank, factories and CPO (crude palm oil) refineries near the river bank, trespassing the archaeological site boundaries, and last seismic activity for oil and gas exploration operating very close to the excavation site. These corporations and industries are owned by autonomous stakeholders from Muara Jambi district who allows the use of land of cultural heritage for short-term economic priorities. Land use has an adverse impact on both archaeology and ecology.

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2. The number of visitors is concentrated on the main temple area, endangering the structural integrity of the brick temple. Thousands of visitors on holiday climb the temple. This is due to the absence of relocation management by the stakeholders, the Cultural Heritage Preservation Agency BPCB (Badan Pelestarian Cagar Budaya) and to the concentration of visitors and traders. Being on the UNESCO World Heritage Tentative List (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/5465/>), the area should be free of industrial activity and the core zone of the main temple should be free of visitors and merchants.
3. The high number of visitors in the core area brings new problems in waste management. The volume of waste as well as the small awareness of visitors and traders to dispose of waste doesn't allow janitors paid by the BPCB to clean all the garbage. Besides, there is no waste disposal. Piles of garbage can thus not be processed or burned and are littered into the Batanghari river area.
4. Ecological degradation: the rate of Batanghari river watershed damage is getting worse. The erosion of the river embankment, which was transformed into residential and industrial areas is narrowing the area of the site and increasing cases of loss/runoff of riverside temple structures before they could be registered and excavated in 2011. Besides, yearly floods in Muara Jambi, at the height of the rainy season, are responsible for the flooding of a part of the site, due to poor management of the drainage system.
5. The loss of archaeological objects sold or smuggled to collectors outside Jambi. The mode of operation is mostly through sand excavation (Excavation Permit C) in the Batanghari River. This is the cheapest and most convenient way of extracting: by dredging the river bottom, allowed by the Excavation Permit C. This sand excavation of the river happens because territorial waters of the river aren't included in the protected core zone, as the river is considered a means of public transport,

Reasons for the weakness of cultural preservation in the area include:

1. Poor coordination among stakeholders who each claim and create overlapping policies and absence of a regional plan/master plan for development involving all stakeholders. On one side, the district government adheres to local autonomy; it feels fully entitled to the management of the area to get income in a quick and easy way. On the other hand, the Cultural Heritage Preservation Agency (BPCB) as a vertical agency doesn't feel any responsibility to give answers to the autonomous regional government and doesn't feel the need to negotiate with other stakeholders. As a result, each party works separately. Both disobey the authorities, but when problems arise in the region, each stakeholder tends to throw off the responsibility and points at the other party as the source of the problem.
2. Small attention from the central government towards the preservation area especially when there is no solution or intervention to overcome the impasse between stakeholders. As a result, the problems become more complicated and protracted.
3. "Ex-situ" stakeholders involved in the preservation area tend to be active at their own level but very rarely do they conduct organized approaches at a grass-roots level. Public participation outside the protected area hasn't been very active yet as a factor of change. Attempts to attract more supports have not been effective as they were not well-targeted.

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4. "In-situ" stakeholders are slow to grow because of limited support facilities, financial assistance and network. Long-term operational preservation cannot be implemented systematically/integrated and even tend to be too sporadic.
5. The Cultural Heritage Preservation Agency (BPCB) in Jambi as the most technically competent institution in the core zone does not have sufficient budget and resources to cover the whole Muara Jambi coverage area. Many of the non-site archaeological remains found by local communities are not registered or compensated.

However, some factors continuously motivate attempts for preservation, namely:

1. The legal force of Muara Jambi temple area which was finally established as a national heritage zone. This area is the largest archaeological remains in Southeast Asia, 3,981 hectares. This is twenty times the total area of Borobudur or twice the size of the region of Angkor Wat Cambodia.
2. The high number of annual visitors (nearly 150,000 visitors purchased tickets in 2014) is a potential market capable of providing a steady income to the local community through the tourism services sector.
3. The process of nomination as a world heritage site, which is on UNESCO's tentative list, requires a paradigm shift between the previous management and the old approach (BCB and sites). It requires a new approach (Region Cultural Landscape) covering the tangible and intangible remains, the human and natural environment. This World Heritage approach provides a very broad mandate to the people around the area to be involved in the management and increase protection attempts on an international scale.
4. The establishment of Muara Jambi Tourism Village (*Desa Wisata*) through the initiative of local citizens in March 2015 to increase public awareness about the potential of the area. The public would live in symbiosis in the area to reach sustainability.

The anticipated challenges in the preservation of this area include:

1. Management of the region in an integrated manner involving all stakeholders. Beginning with a joint master plan.
2. Advocacy attempts towards policy changes to prevent the issuing of new permits for industrial land use and relocate the industries that have depleted permission out of the area.
3. Zoning or crowd control management through of a buffer area that would be large and empty enough to reduce the concentration of visitors and traders in the core zone of the main temple.
4. Management of Tourism Village pilot project should be followed by improvement of supporting facilities such as Home Stay, Tourism Information Centre, strengthening the group of souvenir craftsmen, a group of cultural attractions, as well as increasing the capacity of stakeholders and local guides.

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5. Attempts to increase in situ local citizens' awareness and ability to save the temple area and its remains by involving them in public archaeology program and the development of community-managed village museum.

Padmasana programs in The Preservation of Muara Jambi Temple Area

Broadly speaking, Padmasana programmes that support the preservation of Muara Jambi Temple area are:

1. Research and preservation of archaeological remains. The programs include several activities, namely:

1.1. Data collection and building a catalogue of the ancient non-site remains found and collected by the community. Through persuasion, people are willing to hand over the remains of ancient objects to Padmasana with the assurance that the ownership of these objects remain with the person who found it and will not be given to anyone without the permission of the owner before the completion of the village museum. Padmasana would retain the items. Those will be documented and classified based on the shape, dimensions/size, location and approximate age. Examples of the remains are:

- Chinese Coins. More than 2000 coins were collected. 1293 copies of 41 reigns have been identified. The biggest number of coins are from the reign of Kao Tsu Tang (618-686 AD) with 141 pieces. The oldest one was one coin from the Han dynasty (186-182 BC Western Han).
- Manuscripts in the form of slabs/rolls of tin. 51 slabs use Grantha and Old Malay script. Two slabs have been newly identified through the aid of EFEO (École Française d'Extrême-Orient) researchers: Prof. Pierre Yves Manguin and Dr. Arlo Griffiths.
- Denomination of ceramics and glazed pottery with various motifs/décor.
- A variety of artefacts made of metal and stone.

1.2. Correction of spatial distribution maps and digitization based on Google earth/maps. This activity is done because a lot of coordinate position by the previous BPCB were inaccurate. This database is converted into an XML format that will be used on the platform of Google Earth/Map.

2. Revitalization of Arts, Culture and Local Wisdom

2.1. A thorough historical research and reshaping of performing theatre art teams: Tonel. Tonel or in Dutch toneel, is the art of Malay drama and the main story is Dul Muluk. The show is performed at night with a concept similar to Ketoprak in Java, but using Malay language, Malay music instruments and Malay traditional costumes. This art was almost extinct but was then revitalized through performances organized on important days or during folk festivals in the Muara Jambi village.

2.2. Malay art groups training such as Hadroh Tambourine, Siam Tambourine, mask dance art groups as parts of the cultural performances to welcome foreign tourists.

3. Education and Participatory Training

3.1. The establishment of Sekolah Alam Raya Muara Jambi aims to conduct learning activities for children using non-formal methods in the temple area (outdoor). Content include local knowledge, Muara Jambi history, preservation of archaeological remains and of the environment.

3.2. Souvenir craftsmen training includes T-shirt making (screen printing and printing), pin, woven souvenir made of pandan making.

3.3. Local tour guide training includes the ethics of tourist services, coordinating tourist groups, preparation of homestay accommodation, foreign language services.

3.4. Digital multimedia training includes

- Videography: Introducing camera, lighting, sound, non-linear editing, motion control, colour grading and visual effects (Adobe Premiere, After Effects)
- Graphic Design: Introducing vector editing applications, raster, blending & retouch, digital printing, colour separation, offset printing (Adobe Photoshop, Lightroom, Corel Draw)
- 3D modelling: Introducing 3D applications, object tracking (3dsmax, Maxon Cinema 4D, Google Sketch-up, Element 3D)
- Web development: Introducing Joomla and WordPress platform

4. Independent Creative Business Unit

Commercially, it is oriented towards the sustainability of funding programs in Padmasana.

4.1. MFI Indie production house business unit, the products include:

- Video documentary of region profile and the company
- TVC Ad
- Personal branding
- Video clip
- Wedding documentation
- 3D modelling simulation

4.2. Package tour and local guide, consultancy services and assistance to regional tourism program

4.3. Event organization: festivals, exhibitions, folk entertainment stage, cinema around the village (layar tancap)

4.4. Souvenirs sale: T-shirts, pins, region's profile DVD and folk songs, woven handicraft made of pandan.

Padmasana Roles in The Preservation of Muara Jambi Temple Area

As an *in situ* stakeholder of Muara Jambi Temple area, Padmasana is an agent of regional conservation campaign, a persuasive intermediary in conflicts between citizens and stakeholders, as well as an observer who monitors the daily activities or developments that occur in the region. The existence of Padmasana is needed in areas such as:

1. Disseminating stakeholders' policies in the region. Many regulations relating to changes in the site area should be known to the villagers in the buffer zone. Dissemination of Law regulating ownership of cultural heritage objects found by citizens.
2. Centre for sociological information. Padmasana members are *in situ* citizens providing broad latitude in monitoring the development of community interaction and region.
3. Agent of field advocacy directly related to the area boundary violations by many large industries and estates. Padmasana is able to perform more accurate monitoring and to gather more violation evidence.
4. Preservation campaign. Padmasana has the resources to perform more efficient and professional documentation and publication. By using multimedia and multiplatform basis, the range of publications is global and accessible instantly.
5. Applying participatory approach with *in situ* citizens as actors. This approach is in accordance with the new paradigm of World Heritage cultural heritage area management promoted by UNESCO.
6. The need for adequate manpower. The total number of members is reaching 40 (forty) young people and sympathizers from residents. Building public archaeology group, requires field workers who work alternately in the long term, who are settled and concentrated.
7. Tracking the smuggling of archaeological non-site remains. Excavation activities done by local citizens both on land and in the river are known only by internal rural communities. Information about the findings is immediately collected by Padmasana and answered using a persuasive approach, which consists in giving an appropriate compensation. Artefact « diggers » are often willing to hand over their findings to Padmasana. However if diggers do not get an immediate response, artefacts indeed can be sold to collectors.

Thank You