

**July 2018**

ICOMOS Malaysia World Heritage Day Open Debate 2018

# 10 Years into the Inscription of Melaka & George Town as World Heritage Sites: The Good, The Bad & The Unintended

Rapporteur's Report

This report is based on an audio recording transcription of the ICOMOS Malaysia World Heritage Day Open Debate 2018 held at Badan Warisan Malaysia, 2 Jalan Stonor, Kuala Lumpur, on 28 April 2018 (Saturday), from 1400-1600 hrs.

Report prepared by program rapporteur, Shaiful Idzwan Shahidan.

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## ICOMOS Malaysia World Heritage Day Open Debate 2018

*The Historic Cities of the Straits of Malacca, Melaka & George Town, have transformed in so many aspects since their inauguration in 2008 as a World Heritage Site (WHS). Much has been done, but in some cases, perhaps a bit much? How has the listing impact these two towns in the past decade, really? Are these cities on the right track? How has the World Heritage Status helped us?*

An open debate discussing the above matter was held as part of ICOMOS Malaysia's World Heritage Day celebration on 28 April 2018 at Badan Warisan Malaysia. An appointed provocateur, Prof. Dr. Shuhana Shamsuddin instigated the argument, leaving the subject open to the floor for a casual debate, with a short presentation by Rosli Haji Nor, former General Manager of Melaka World Heritage Office, in the middle of the session. 29 people were present at the two-hour event. Participants were informed at the debate that their arguments would be published in a form of a report. They had the option to introduce themselves or remain anonymous in this report before delivering comments or argument.

### In attendance

Moderator: Elizabeth Cardoso  
Provocateur: Prof. Dr. Shuhana binti Shamsuddin  
Invited Presenter: Rosli Haji Nor  
Rapporteur: Shaiful Idzwan Shahidan

Afif bin Azman  
Ar. Ahmad Najib Ariffin  
Aritra  
Dr. A.S. Hardy  
Azli bin Abdullah  
Azlina binti Zainal Abidin  
Choo Heng Huat  
Cheng Sweet Yee  
Diana Mohamad  
Faisal Abd. Rahman  
Gokilan a/l Sathasivam  
Dato' Ar. Hajeedar Abd Majid  
Ar. John Koh  
Kenneth Wong  
Leong Yew Weng  
Muhd Amir Haqim  
Nagathisen  
Ng Chih Piew  
Nurbaidura Salim  
Dr. Rohayah Che Amat  
Safura Ismail  
Sarmistha  
Shaari Mat Saod  
Stephanie Bacon  
Dato' Zahim Albakri

[00:00:01 - 00:03:45] Introduction by Moderator, Elizabeth Cardoso

[00:03:49 - 00:24:16] Provocation by Prof. Dr. Shuhana Shamsuddin

#### Key point 1: The Good

- The cities of George Town (Pulau Pinang) and Melaka entered the world map of historically significant places in the world. It is famous for the right reasons.
- The two cities received assistance from UNESCO & ICOMOS in promoting tourism that helped to boost the local economy.
- Receiving aids and advice from international heritage experts on how to protect the outstanding universal values (OUVs) of the sites.
- Attracting many studies, research and papers on the two World Heritage Site (WHS) due to their significance as part of the world's heritage.
- The status enables a more structured, holistic and integrated planning and management of heritage assets in the two cities as a requirement for inscription.
- Protecting the sense of place and genius loci of the sites for the benefit of the future generation through community engagements on their heritage.
- Ensuring the sustainability of our architectural heritage (tangible) and cultural heritage (intangible) through the world's interest in the two cities.

#### Key point 2: The Bad

- Over patronizing of the two sites by tourists threatens the survival of the local character and identity.
- Overzealous attempts to exploit the tourism potential of the sites by creating artificial and theme-park-like environment that affects the authenticity of the sites' built environment.
- Gentrification of the sites through increased rent and land value, driving local community away, therefore, affecting the outstanding universal values through changing lifestyles, activities and cultural practices.
- Over development of the surrounding areas to exploit on the tourism potential of the two sites such as the sea reclamation of Melaka and the invasion of commercial development in the form of high-density high rise structures towering over the sites.
- Poor design of new buildings that are not in keeping with the architecture of the heritage buildings of the WHS in terms of massing, scale, proportion and details.
- Lack of design coordination between heritage buildings within the WHS and those outside.

### Key point 3: The Unintended

- Turning the sites into theme parks and making them a tourist zoo, resulting in the local residents fleeing the place and therefore changing the activities and character of the place. Gentrification of the worst kind!
- 'Sense of Place' being over ridden by 'Cents of Place' – speculative commercial developments that tried to exploit the tourism potential of the place therefore destroying the local identity and heritage values. In return, we end up promoting unsustainable developments surrounding our world heritage sites.
- The 'giants towering the dwarfs' syndrome and the forced marriage between the 'beauty and the beast' are suffocating the two WHS. An 'architectural and cultural' jewel of the WHS is being trapped and engulfed by the ugly monsters of the new commercial developments. Killing the goose that lays the golden eggs and risking losing the status out of greed.

In conclusion, the provocation argument is “To be or not to be a World Heritage Site?”.

#### [00:25:30] Argument by Stephanie Bacon (Malaysian Nature Society, MNS)

- Whatever that we mention in this session should be relayed back to the politicians.
- Tourism is ok, but over-tourism is a nuisance.
- The history of Melaka is a precious commodity, and it should be protected.
- Once you identify something precious, the world will come to see it, and it will eventually, be destroyed.
- On politicians: Do we need them? How do we get to them? How do we bring them into the picture?
- On tourism: There are good and bad sides to it, but the thing is, how to manage it?

#### [00:27:57] Argument by Semarang Old Town Management Board's representative

- Semarang (in Central Java, Indonesia) is currently on the tentative list of WHS, but there are concerns about it. Recognition is by the year 2020, yet problems already appear.
- Semarang Old Town Management Board recognises that the bad things have started to happen, even when Semarang is not a World Heritage Site yet.
- Asking suggestions on how to avoid these things.

#### [00:29:10] Comments by the Moderator, Elizabeth Cardoso

- Most of the things look like a direct consequence of the listing of WHS, but I suggest that these happened prior to the listing, in the lead-up and in anticipation of the inscription. The question is, when did all of these started?

**[00:30:22] Argument by Gokilan a/l Sathasivam**

Addressing tourism issues:

- There is a different approach taken in Penang and Melaka. In Penang, there is public awareness, people's voice for you like Penang Heritage Trust as an anchor body, while in Melaka, it is more of a government initiative, and people come in to get the benefits such as tourists, workers, etc.
- Heritage awareness in Melaka is still low. However, blaming the State Authority is not rational as no State Government wants to stop tourists from coming in.
- As for the government's role, we must balance it like at the Angkor Wat (Cambodia) - stern approach in managing tourists and conservation by closing it down for two months for the purpose of conservation and protecting the site.
- Tourism is a big contributor to the country's economy; we cannot stop tourists, and we need more of them. We need to balance it more too - more tourists means more business.

**[00:32:10] Comments by the Moderator, Elizabeth Cardoso**

- We need to manage the kind of tourists and their expectations. There's always a divisive opinion about having or not having tourists on site.
- From our perspective, what is the role of government? How far local context or the politics will play a role? There is a question of the will of politician versus the will of people.
- How about top down or bottom up approach? Should we choose one or the other?
- There should be a space to deal with this issue and conflict resolution.

**[00:34:45] Argument by Ph.D. Student from Taylor's College**

- In Melaka, State's engagement is very active and very beneficial to the public.
- Melaka River Cruise is a success in part of revitalising the old canal, and this is an example of how the State Government is very active.
- However, in George Town, there is no tangible result with the tourist attractions.
- Penang Heritage Trust or Penang Heritage Action Group - most of the time opposing Penang State Government's effort and won't reach a consensus.
- After Rent Control Act 1999 - many buildings become dilapidated.
- In reality, the community shall benefit from it. The worst thing is if the community within the WHS dies off.
- Tourism is important but what type of tourists do we want? In George Town - do we need mass tourism or cultured tourists?
- The "sense" of place or "cents" of place - how do we strike a balance? How "much" is a culture commodity? How can it also benefit the community?

**[00:37:53] Argument by Diana Mohamad (Universiti Sains Malaysia, USM)**

- Talking from an urban design perspective, there should be a balance. We rarely see tourism in George Town focusing on tourism that caters for the disabled (blind, short-sighted, etc). 'Universal access' should be provided on the basis of equal opportunities for all kinds of tourists. This is another group that should be accommodated, whatever their needs are. Unfortunately, Malaysians (and the politicians) don't think much about this.
- Tourist dollars do bring in benefits to the National GDP but where do these dollars go? Moreover, what are these dollars being used for? Are there any State initiatives that look at the broader picture?

**[00:40:20 - 00:50:18] Short Presentation by Rosli Haji Nor on the City of Melaka as a World Heritage Site**

- Big food for thought: this is where the Melaka State Government wants to go - to move from being the poorest economically, though perhaps the richest in terms of its history (longest urban historic town in the country), to being a rich mega new Metropolis. The question is how are we going to manage that?

**[00:52:56] Argument by Ar. Ahmad Najib Ariffin**

- Questions touch on our internal psyche on what we want. Individually, we have sincere hopes, requirements, needs and desires but collectively we are all hypocrites. Why? In life we cannot get everything yet we talk as if we want the good of this and that.
- Our favourite past time is blaming the politicians, but a lot of it is very much up to us.
- Developed societies have known all these things much earlier. For example, in Copenhagen, Denmark (or the Danish), they have achieved better balance, and they learn from that. However, we are not Copenhagen, and we are not Danish (since we are a younger nation).
- Each place has got its own problem. We need to try, but not to kick ourselves too much (curse ourselves and worse, curse others). That is not going to take this anywhere.
- Let us look at our priorities as a nation. It is already reflected in our KPI (Key Performance Indicator). When the KPI was announced, do we talk about it? When there is an open forum, do we attend it? However, we are still blaming politicians, and we become a society that keeps on blaming.
- The point is, Semarang can learn from us, not just from George Town and Melaka. We need to let the grassroots understand, what is the implication of being a World Heritage Site. Get the Semarang citizens to learn about the implications, and then you would have a better chance than we had.
- In early 2000, our vision and KPI's are different. People had no inkling of heritage (except for Badan Warisan Malaysia). However, outsiders already see "cents" and the politicians just pander to that.

**[00:58:18] Argument by Gokilan a/I Sathasivam**

- There was an announcement by a politician about Majapahit ruins under the Melaka river mouth. This created many highlights in the newspaper. The question is, what was this strategy about? Are they trying to increase awareness among the public? Since there isn't a politician among us at this debate, it is hard to know the answer.
- It is not just about empowerment among the local communities but how do you get that process, that level of involvement and engagement. It is also about taking ownership of a whole range of one's desires and aspirations, personally as well as a collective body.

**[00:59:54] Questions by Kimberly Ryianne Cheng via email (read out by Moderator)**

"I have an issue I would like to raise. I am deeply concerned about the building conservation issue in Melaka. Melaka and George Town were both inscribed as ONE World Heritage Site and George Town has since been very dedicated in preserving its historic buildings. Why is the building conservation in Melaka not as profound as George Town? As stated in the nomination document, the ownership of properties in Melaka is ~3% government-owned and ~97% privately-owned. As for George Town, ownership of properties are 45% government-owned and 55% privately-owned.

My Master's thesis research on the conservation management of four different buildings located in different municipals in Japan but also inscribed as one World Heritage Site (Tomioka Silk Mill and the Silk Industry Heritage Group) has concluded that efforts and enthusiasm from the local people are the main force behind the conservation and management of the historic sites while working hand in hand with the local government.

In our case, it is obvious that there are unbalanced efforts given by both the cities. Locals and the Penang government take pride in their local heritage, and that invited many conservationists to practice their professionalism in Penang. While most of Melaka's historic buildings are privately-owned, owners do not put in effort nor do they know the importance of preserving them.

I believe educating the local people on this issue is a must. Voices of the local people are vital in rebuilding the city. Local government or related NGOs should work with the locals."

**[01:02:01] Comments by the Moderator, Elizabeth Cardoso**

- So this is an issue, which somehow agrees with some of the points. However, again I will caution that all of these are very broad, very general. There's nothing concrete regarding an example. If we can reach one or two specific case studies by the local or government initiatives that have been held to contribute to the discussion, it would be good.



**[01:03:13] Argument by Kenneth Wong**

- In Taichung City, Taiwan, there is a committee to regulate the tenants who are coming to the historic district. This is something that we could replicate for Jonker Street, Melaka. Local government can control the tenant mix to preserve and give a good impression of the historical aspect of the street.
- Melaka Gateway: There is a developer who is into heritage development. Unfortunately, their interpretation of a new building is but with a "Renaissance" style, which is a bit sad.
- In Dresden, Germany, at the city level, the community decided to withdraw from WHS listing, and this involves discussions - they decided to withdraw because they do not want to comply with the heritage status anymore.

**[01:05:12] Comments by Rosli Haji Nor**

- Quite happy this is a local initiative (referring to the Jonker Walk). When we got that WHS status, many people outside WHS would like to share the benefit of tourist dollars. They propose to set up business activities. However, they do not own shops there because the rental is too high. We allowed them to organise their stall tools on one side of the street, another for emergencies and pedestrians. However, it was so successful that they now occupy both sides. That is what happened.

**[01:06:05] Comments by Kenneth Wong**

- Impression about the souvenir: most of them are imported from Thailand and China and not much of local crafts - Rebutted by Rosli; however, Melaka was an entrepot, and items were coming in from everywhere in Asian. Doesn't this define the character of the place?

**[01:06:39] Comments (indistinct)**

- Question: If indeed we were an entrepot, we do the trade. Money comes in, but the local products should also go out at the same time, not only the one being made from China or Taiwan. We should make it happen with our handicraft.

**[01:07:08] Comments by Rosli Haji Nor**

- For the first few years (of the past ten years) we only serve souvenir items that are made in Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam. There were some sellers who cheated the tagging; the item was made in Indonesia, but tagging was changed to "Made in Melaka".
- Fortunately, now there are many manufacturers. For example, the Malaysian Institute of Art, that produces Melaka paintings and also other gift items.
- Tourists (especially those from China) don't spend their time and money in Melaka. They have their breakfast in KL, stop in Melaka to take pictures, have lunch in Muar and head straight to Singapore.

**[01:08:30] Argument by Stephanie Bacon (Malaysian Nature Society, MNS)**

- We need to go back to the World Heritage Site concept and philosophy. Heritage - does it mean that we have got miles of history and we can continue destroying it all? Heritage means we have to pass it on to the next generation. Same as a rainforest; saving the rainforest is not just for the animals in it but saving it for the next generation of Malaysia. So it is essential that we, the custodians of these two towns at this moment of the time, protect it. There is value in the cultural and historical aspects of these two towns that should actually be calculated. I'm in the process of calculating per square inch of the rainforest because I have to convince the State to stop logging because they take the money out today and there's nothing for tomorrow. So we have to convince the authorities to keep the rainforest for today and the next day for the sake of the following generation. It is the same with the cultural and historical aspects of Malaysia. We protect the value of it for the future generation.

**[01:011:25] Comments by the Moderator, Elizabeth Cardosa**

- Fundamentally nobody disagrees with what anybody said today. The Good, the Bad and the Unintended. What are the next steps? Moreover, how do we make this positive transition? How do you use the positive side of tourists and tourist dollars to push for a better quality of life among the local communities?
- If the local communities are not there because they choose not to be there of their own volition, or they feel they have been driven out because the context within which they want to operate a comfortable life has changed, what will we do as people who are interested in heritage?
- We need to look at the sustainability of heritage by whatever means, including economic and cultural sustainability. We also need to look at all of that regarding the context of what happens and what we then hand on as our responsibility to the next generation. Like what Najib Ariffin has raised, how do we participate and cast your vote in the right place and take responsibility for your own action individually and collectively? Moreover, I think one of the qualities out of all this discussion is, if something like this happens, what are the platforms that exist?
- Do we need a new platform? We have lots of laws and guidelines. Local authorities have their local plans and special area plans. What happened to all of this? Because the good intention is there, you have to believe that and suspend for a minute of your disbelief in the political agenda. However, how can we as a group move forward and how can ICOMOS Malaysia and Badan Warisan Malaysia help enable this? Because it is not just the board, it is not just the individual member, but it is the collective. If you can calculate the cost for logging versus the lost of the rainforest, what kind of calculation can we do which are not "dollars and cents"? (not just financial or economic value but also looking at collective matters such as environmental, cultural or historical aspects of things). How do we move forward?

**[01:13:35] Argument by Kenneth Wong**

- As Rosli said, Melaka ends up to be just like a one-day return trip. Ipoh is also the same. It is up to us to lobby to the Minister of Tourism. Make the tourists overnight there. We want 2+1 kind of package. This is something that can be done at the ministry level - mapping out the roadmap.
- I was with the International Cultural Tourism Committee (ICTC) in India, advising the local government on how to re-enhance the World Heritage Sites and tourism value. If it benefits the locals in the first place, the tourists will benefit as well. It is not the other way around. We should always think about the locals.
- I think that is a point everybody in the cultural field keeps repeating. The question is how do we make that real? How do we convince other people? I think that is indeed the issue and what we all grapple with.

**[01:14:58] Arguments by Rosli Haji Nor**

- The number of tourists to Melaka last year was 16.7 million people. Population in the old town of WHS is only 5,000 people. If you make them stay longer, it would be noisy. If they want to stay longer, can you make them stay in the tertiary zone? It is a question of management.

**[01:15:32] Arguments by Sarmistha**

- Just want to share an initiative by INTACH (Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage) in New Delhi. We started a conservation project in the inner sites of 120 monuments which are not in good condition. However, we also realised that people would just wait so that tourists would come. So we asked, why not make it the other way around? We could have heritage walks for different communities, or for a different type of people. It is not just for students, but we also started targeting aged people who cannot walk by doing a storytelling session.
- We acquired spaces that make the people from that place feel that they are not neglected, or they are only required to cater to the tourists. It is their place, and as much as they need to do something for that space, they want to continue with their regular lifestyle.
- We started providing spaces for the "lost activity", by developing the back lanes as "shop fronts" catering for the tourists. That is when the owner of the house that has moved out and living outside of the city, started feeling for their properties and restoring it. They started doing more initiative, helping us to connect to them. We also got the students (from within the community) involved with the project as an "authority". People know them and listen to them. For example, we ask for the students to help rally the community to the City Square to celebrate a festival. In that sense, tourists become part of it and start respecting the culture, the festival and the lifestyles of the people. This is one of the small initiatives that we do.
- INTACH, through its Delhi chapter, has its own initiative. It is a voluntary work by interested people from various background professionals, with a keen interest in heritage. They volunteered themselves every weekend to contribute, and this has created momentum, such as sketch walks, photographic walks etc. The initiative started in 2005 by Anita Singh. Recently we got a contract of doing conservation work of 18 monuments. What happened with the state government over there is that they give you the money for you to do your conservation and they will lock the monument so that people will not misuse the space.
- What we did is that we have a storytelling session for small children and especially for people who enjoy the heritage but cannot walk long distances. So we are coordinating this. One of the activities is to empower women that come from a low-income group, and they have never been exposed to earn for their family. So they have started their own initiative and are just curious about how they should move ahead. So we invited them - why not come to the heritage site and experience it? Moreover, then we talk on the Heritage site.

*(Details of the project can be accessed at [www.intach.org](http://www.intach.org))*

**[01:21:25] Comments (indistinct)**

- I would like to just add to the Delhi Initiative. I think we have our own George Town Literary Festival (GTLF) that was ongoing for seven years and we did a fantastic job bringing in outsiders, even local tourists. They had many activities going on over three days weekend. Moreover, just two weeks ago, Bernice Chauly and her team for George Town Literary Festival won an award as the top lit fest this year at the London Book Fair. So it speaks volume for Penang and George Town.

**[01:22:27] Comments by Ar. John Koh**

- Well, some good things have happened to Melaka and many bad things also, and certainly the commercialization. The revitalisation of the river is one of the good things, but I have always hoped that there will be a more efficient river transportation taxi system like in Bangkok (Thailand). Moreover, one of the things about Melaka is that you can reduce the number of cars. I think that is the first impact. So it is about alternative transport system; the river is there. Moreover, once you have the traffic, I think a lot more beautification and cleaning up will follow. This will lead to the opening up of different parts of the town.
- The other thing is on the new development at the historic core. We cannot turn the clock backwards. We need to persuade these managers or owners of buildings to conserve historical elements on their site. There should be more landscaping. We know as an architectural student when we are not very happy with the buildings that we design, we put a tree in front. So actually, in reality, Melaka can do with lots of that. Although a lot of wrong things have taken place, at least we can hide it, make it less obvious; all those very discordance forms and shopping centres.
- Certainly, development control is the word that could be reintroduced. Many things are happening in Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia). Residents' associations are fighting for (and suing the mayor) for the implementation of KL Structure Plan 2020. The same fate happened to Melaka. No amount of painting such as painting vermilion colours for example, over the toilet and surau (place of worship for Muslim), will make the place more historic. Without development control, we have rampant commercialization, and this is very sad. However, we got to celebrate the river and the pedestrianization. As a Melakan, I am very proud of it.

**[01:25:29] Comments by the Moderator, Elizabeth Cardoso**

- So we are talking about small wins, and you build up on your small wins. So individually we must take responsibilities for what small wins we can bring to the table. And collectively as a group, we can try to make bigger wins.

**[01:25:48] Comments by Ar. John Koh**

- And advocacy. Everyone should learn how to say either in a group, or say it individually loudly. I think the world is changing. The mood is there. It is being vocal. And I think the wind of change is about to happen.

[01:26:20] Comments by Ar. Dato' Hajeedar Abdul Majid

- The best thing I can say is this - hope is still there, so let's not give up on this Heritage Trail and heritage effort that we have done. Retrospectively, I find that we got a lot of those things in place. The question is how to exploit and to coordinate them to the better interest of the majority rather than the minority.
- If you look at the title of the debate today, it is '10 years since UNESCO listing'. Observations have been made from the time the listing was announced; George Town and Melaka was listed as twin commercial cities in the Straits Settlements for a very good reason. In fact, the criteria were carefully categorized. The rationale for why they won that status is very clear. It is just a question of revisiting it from time to time and asking yourselves, "Are we still working and existing within the same guidelines for which we have earned this status?". Alternatively, "Have we gone bonkers from the sense of space to the 'cents of space'?" Common sense as opposed to nonsense. If it makes sense, accept it. If it does not make sense, it's nonsense. Reject it.
- The question here is, everybody has a role to play. We have been discussing this at ICOMOS Malaysia for quite some time. We must deliver the awareness through talks and visits, either collectively or individually. We have gone and observed on how other cities, areas or countries have sustained their heritage and their value systems. I cannot help but to suggest this and I think it is in our so-called manifesto and our hope in ICOMOS Malaysia that we would like to bring in the people as John mentioned just now. The people must ask for it. I can confirm to John that in KL we have the structure plan and master plan done and approved. But it was never gazetted. This is why residents are very critical towards the authorities. So everybody has a role to play. Unfortunately, the authorities are just authorities. If you look at the Local Government Act, most of the local authorities have the authority but no responsibility. Think about it.
- They have the authority to approve plans, even when they are not fully aware of what you are doing. Yet, they have the authority to decide for you, but not the responsibility when it fails. Case in point, the collapse of Highland Towers 25 years ago where 36 people died in that tragedy. I was one of the investigators. Of course, we have to sign the NDA under the OSA. I am hinting at you that when we investigated, we discovered the most blatant thing was that the local authorities have no responsibility whatsoever when there is a disaster.
- So the matrix of problems that we have in this country is insurmountable: There are many. It is the question of your choice. To be involved and want to fight. Where is your battle? So it is not unusual to have all these problems. So you have to learn to accept the problems and get yourself focused on what you want to do and what you can do for example. This is why with regard to heritage I always believe and I am suggesting, and stressing this now. Better to offer the responsibility back to the stakeholders. Who are the stakeholders? It is the people who live in that area, the State and the people whose family and traditions are there. They should take the lead in these responsibilities.

- Another example is the recent case of Rumah Degil, supposed to be the ancestral home of the Sutan Puasa in Chow Kit, Kuala Lumpur. It took a long time for someone to do something about it. I took issues with the Maindailing clan - if you do not look after your own heritage, you do not expect the Minangkabaus, the Rawas or the Javanese to look after your heritage. The awareness was made. The book by Razak Lubis and the effort of Shiela Majid in the reconstruction of Rumah Degil shows the mood is there. People want to take action and take it upon themselves to protect their own respective heritage and culture.
- Talking about Melaka, I was there two weeks ago for the ICOMOS Malaysia Children Art Competition. The Melaka that I see today is totally different from the Melaka that I used to know in the 1960s. There was Tanjung Keling where "Mandi Safar" was performed (which is now prohibited). I thought it was only on Saturday nights that there is one night market in the historic core of Jonker Street, but now I am told that it is now three nights a week. That cuts out the whole lifestyle and identity of that area. Today H&M and Hard Rock Cafe is what you see first. Is that compatible with the historic core?
- To me we have lost touch as to the purpose of all this. So I do not know how we are going to face this. Meantime we are destroying our living heritage. We have all the laws, in fact, we have been adding on more laws, such as the National Heritage Act, which focuses on our built heritage. Unfortunately, the rate of destruction of our historic buildings is greater. It is all driven by greed because the economy influences the decisions. This is why at one of our sessions we have suggested that education and re-education are important. Educate the young which is what we are doing through the children art competition, and hope that when they go to the universities, they will be interested in topics of conservation and adaptive reuse.
- When you get into a position where you can demonstrate and function, go ahead and do it because you are duly qualified to speak, and speak up to the authorities. This is why in one of our sessions I suggested that sometimes, people in the authority needs to be reminded of their obligations. It is not easy, I have tried this. And it can cost you your job if you talk too much. To me it is not just an issue of declaring the site as a historic area. The main question is, do we want it or not? If we want it, then comply and sustain it. Otherwise, forget about it.
- Bandung (Indonesia) is a good example, suffering the same kind of fate. Within the historic core, they have high-rise glass towers. All we need to do is to look back and ask, how did we get to that level? Fundamentally, it is always the 'cents' that decides. Money and economy is not everything in life. There is more than that to life. In fact your valued appreciation on heritage is priceless.
- I do not know how much more I can say and share my frustrations. The matrix for sustainability is there. There are options, connections and reasons as to why it fails and shall never succeed. I am very pessimistic about the threat on our culture.
- Maybe the only thing that we can control is our intangible cultural values on in life. Maybe that's the only thing that we can be salvaged and sustained, while the tangibles are dominated by greed and money.

**[01:41:45] Closing remarks by the Moderator, Elizabeth Cardoso**

- To be a World Heritage Site or not to be a World Heritage site, that is the question that will come up perhaps not just for Melaka and George Town but for all the other World Heritage Sites in the country. And for the site that maybe wants to be a World Heritage Site, those were some of the issues that have been raised that have to be tackled before you get into it. So, the question is that sometimes you explore a particular path, and then you want to give it up or you don't want to give it up.
- I think the point was raised by Rosli, the yellow card analogy is very apt. If you want to play football, you must play by the set of rules; if you don't want to play by that set of rules, do not play footballs. At the end of the day, it is the decision by the state governments, the local stakeholders, the people who live in those areas - they must make a decision ultimately, about what "game" so to speak are they playing.

**[01:43:14] Conclusion by the Provocateur - Prof. Dr. Shuhana Shamsuddin**

- We chose to become a World Heritage Site. Now that we got the status, we are looking for something else. We are not looking at the culture, the heritage, but we are looking at how much money we can make from this deal. We must play the game well. Otherwise, we have to just forget about it.
- Public voice is very important. I have had enough of guidelines. I think for the past 20 years when I was in the University, I've been doing guidelines. There are so many guidelines all over the place but what do we do with the guidelines? What is the purpose of guidelines if you do not want to be guided? It is a waste of money and a very unsustainable way of doing something. We don't need guidelines, we need commitments and we need actions. We need to walk the talk.
- There is so much political intervention, in the way decisions have been made. But how do you tackle the Politicians? I received good advice from the Durham City Council (UK) when I was researching on this matter - they said that in the UK, they get to conserve all their buildings because they work with the public. Members of the public are the ones putting pressure on the Politicians to make the decision that is of interest to the public and the heritage.
- I think our problem is that we put so much trust into our politicians. If we don't say anything that means we are trusting them to make decisions on our behalf. However, this is not the case in a developed country. The people are the ones telling the politician to make a decision. There is a need for a paradigm shift in this matter. If we just sit down and just watch, one by one of our heritage being eroded, we are the one to blame.

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End