

MODULE THREE:

REFLECTION ON THEORY AND PRACTICE



Module 3 comprised of two days of reflection on the theory and practice gained during the workshop. Participants were divided into groups, including graduate students of the University of Tsukuba, to work on an assessment using the case study of Mount Fuji. Participants were invited to reflect on both the natural and cultural values of the site visited during the field trip. Finally, each of the groups gave a presentation.

The structure of the presentations included firstly, a group reflection based on the following points:

- Mapping values and the interrelations of nature-culture in Mount Fuji
- Draft a Statement of Significance for Mount Fuji
- Assessment of the management of the site concerning:
 - Nature-Culture
 - Visitors and interpretation
 - Top-down/Bottom-up approaches
- Lessons learned and recommendations

Secondly, each of the participants was required to give an individual reflection about the lessons learned that could potentially be applied in their home country or heritage site. The final reports were delivered as 20 minutes presentations followed by discussions with other groups, resource persons of the workshop, and guest speakers of the international symposium.

Group 1

Members:

Laze Deqing, China
 Wanda Listiani, Indonesia
 Joshua Mwankunda, Tanzania
 Yadav Uprety, Nepal
 Wenchao Deng, China
 Lorena Oliveira, Brazil

Mapping values

The group started by enumerating the identified values of Mount Fuji. First, they referred to the aesthetic values. They noted that natural beauty is based on its majestic form as a solitary strata-volcano. Moreover, they mentioned that Mount Fuji is widely known as the symbol of 'Oriental Japan.' Secondly, they mentioned the spiritual values of Mount Fuji related to the religious: a sacred place and object of worship, the deep adoration, and inspiration for Shugendo, the religious practice linking Shintoism and Buddhism. They recalled that Shugendo is a combination of traditional Japanese mountain worship synchronized with Buddhism. Thirdly, they mentioned the artistic value as a source of inspiration to artists such as Katsushika Hokusai, and the literary works which depict Mount Fuji and the life connected to the mountain. They added that Mount Fuji also inspired Western modern art. Next, they identified the interrelation between nature and culture in Mount Fuji, starting by explaining the historical interactions between people and the mountain. They mentioned that according to Shinto beliefs, the deity Asama no Okami, god of fire, resides in the summit of the mountain, in the crater. People believed that the repeated eruptions represented the anger of the deity, and in order to placate it, they started to worship the deity from afar - not climbing. Later on, shrines

were built in the foothills to pacify the deity living in the mountain. Finally, people started a pilgrimage to the mountain, purifying in their lakes and springs, and developing spiritual powers through the climbing of the mountain. This practice developed, routes were established, more shrines built, Buddhist facilities, and temples, as well as Oshi houses for the pilgrims. They concluded that this development resulted in the component parts of the serial Mount Fuji World Heritage site.

Statement of significance

Mount Fuji is a sacred, majestic, solitary, stratovolcano mountain, rich in biodiversity, as well as an object of worship and manifesting harmonious and interdependent existence of people, culture, and nature located in Honshu, Japan.

Important heritage values are its majestic form, widely known as a symbol of Japan, and a sacred place of deep adoration and source of artistic inspiration.

The character-defining Mount Fuji is that people and nature coexist through the realms of religious belief and art.

Management assessment and lessons learned

The group identified 5 points:

1. Different legislation, institutions, or levels of management effectively working together in tight collaboration: Yamanashi and Shizuoka prefectures, National Parks, Research centers, information centers, museums, local communities, and private owners. They were wondering why this is possible and why they can collaborate so well. They had three hypotheses: the Japanese system, the culture of discipline, and the culture of following the rules.
2. How they tell the story: a proper identification combined with the utilization of the history and right experts, its importance for their culture and tradition.
3. Proper allocation and utilization of resources, such as the proper use of volunteers and financial resources in projects.
4. Management of values: active monitoring and restoration; engagement of religious people and organizations; keeping and engaging all the stakeholders close to the values (ex. hoteliers).
5. Visitors and Interpretation: the architecture speaks about the value (especially in the Shizuoka World Heritage Visitors centre).

Recommendations

1. Presentation and interpretation of the values (culture and nature) should be made simultaneously (full understanding of how everything is connected).
2. Review proper orientation of some exhibits.
3. Limit the number of visitors per day (e.g., through a registration system for the maximum number allowed per day/time slot). The group noticed that too many visitors during the climbing season works against spirituality.
4. Video instructions: make them shorter and more available in different channels (e.g.outdoors, safety instructions).
5. Enhance resources-sharing and coordination.



Yadav Uprety (Nepal), Wanda Listiani (Indonesia), Laze Deqing (China), Wenchao Deng (China), Lorena Oliveira (Brazil), and Joshua Mwankunda (Tanzania) taking notes during the preparations for the presentation.

Group 2

Members:

- Eulalie Dulnuan, Philippines
- Le Hoang Lien, Vietnam
- Anuranjan Roy, India
- Kimberley Wilson, Australia
- Yue Cao, China
- Congcong Liu, China
- Ami Masuichi, Japan

Mapping values

The group identified the following values and respective attributes:

- Unique Flora and Fauna: vegetation banding, atypical fauna
- Geological and Geomorphological: volcanic, lakes and spring
- Research monitoring: biodiversity, geodiversity, evolution, cultural diversity
- Scenic beauty: views from afar
- Recreation: leisure and exercise
- Sacredness and Spiritual: pilgrimage, nature worship
- Symbolism: Japanese identity
- Artistic inspiration: works literature, poetry, and fine art
- Economy: tourism, ecosystem services

Statement of significance

The Mount Fuji cultural landscape is an iconic mountain, and the surrounding area in the central region of Japan is of natural and cultural significance to local, national, and international communities.

Mount Fuji has been praised as an object of worship and beauty since ancient times and is renowned worldwide as a symbol of Japan. The mountain is Japan's highest (3,776 m.) and was formed by many subsequent volcanic eruptions that have occurred over millions of years. The stratovolcano was actively erupting until about 1,000 years ago, leading to its worship from afar. As eruptions became less frequent, a traditional pilgrimage towards the summit began.

The altitudinal zones and unique volcanic environment enables various types of vegetation and wildlife, which have adapted in the conditions that each band presents. This vertical distribution of flora and fauna across deciduous broad-leaved, evergreen conifers, and volcanic desert zones, also carries cultural significance in that the highest alpine zone is considered to be the Kusayama - the grass mountain and source of waters, the evergreen conifer zone is considered to be the Kiyama-the tree mountain and the region of the woods, and the barren zone is considered to be Yakeyama - the burned mountain and abode of the gods.

There are many significant geological and geomorphological features within this volcanic landscape, including tree lava molds, scoria, lava tunnels, evidence of lava flow, lakes, hot springs, and waterfalls. Culturally for Mount Fuji worship communities, the lava tree molds were considered to represent 'blood vessels,' and the journey through them has come to signify a process of rebirth. The lakes and surrounding springs are known to as the 'eight oceans of Mount Fuji,' and some have historically served points on the journey up the mountain where pilgrims would cleanse and purify their bodies before continuing.

Mount Fuji and the surrounding areas are important for scientists and researchers who monitor and study the biological, geological, evolutionary, and cultural diversity of the unique cultural landscape. A range of museums and research centers provide information, films, data, and educational resources that enable the community to learn about the natural and cultural heritage of the area. Continuing scientific monitoring is undertaken by experts and citizens, particularly concerning biodiversity and seismic activity, and this information aids in evidence-based decision-making around disaster risk preparedness and sustainable management.

The scenic beauty of the mountain and surrounding area is of direct value to Japanese communities who enjoy views of it from afar. The imposing and picturesque landscape has shaped the aesthetic consciousness and beauty standards held by Japanese people and international visitors.

The mountain and surrounding area are used recreationally for leisure and exercise activities, including water activities, trail walking, and forest bathing.

Mount Fuji is a deeply sacred and spiritual place for Japanese people and continues to be worshipped through the practice of 'Fujiko,' which has foundations in Shinto and Buddhist beliefs. Pilgrims continue to ascend the mountain - following sacred routes, visiting the shrines, bathing in the lakes and springs, staying in 'Oshi' lodging houses, participating in festivals, and watching the sunrise from the summit. The journey ascending the mountain is understood to be worship and meditative practice in itself.

Mount Fuji has become an iconic symbol of Japan that has been transmitted globally. The mountain is an important part of Japanese identity and is believed to be the home of deities, including the god Ohoyamatsumi and goddess Konohanasakuyahime.

An important source of artistic inspiration, Mount Fuji, has been the subject of many famous poems, paintings, written work, and photographs throughout history including 'Manyoshu' (poem), 'Ukiyo-e' (woodblock printing as seen in Hokusai's paintings), and theatre (Noh and Kabuki). These works have been central to the development of the style of Japanism, and have promoted universal respect for this natural subject matter.

Management assessment

For the assessment, the group focused on two areas: Visitors' experience and Community engagement.

From the point of view of the Visitors' experience, they concluded that:

1. The number of visitors during the peak season affects sacredness: Yamanashi prefecture has a number of excellent visitor management strategies, such as, avoid crowded days (weekends), avoid crowded hours and avoid crowded areas; organize a range of different activities to diffuse the crowds while still understanding the values of Mount Fuji.

2. Responsive research:
 - How many visitors seek sacredness? Purpose of visit: education, fresh air, exercise, recreation.
 - What is the carrying capacity of certain spaces? Physical carrying capacity, social car-cap.
3. Responsive monitoring:
 - Safety: excellent documentaries, voluntary orientation.
 - Products: ethical consumerism (who regulates?); canned Mount Fuji air, Myths/Stories/Narratives.
 - Limits of acceptable change.
4. Visitor Interpretation:
 - Museum exhibits use innovative ways of engaging.
 - Management has engaged with the public and among prefectures for research and monitoring.
 - A shortage of non-Japanese content in displays.

In terms of Community engagement, they concluded that:

1. Bottom-up: Citizen science; Voluntary cleaning of Mount Fuji; Donation campaign; local community and private owners consultation on the development plan.
2. Volunteer guides, Information Center and Safety control center: local people; local knowledge; well-trained; abundant information and communication material.
3. Top-down: The different approaches of Yamanashi and Shizuoka prefectures and inter-prefectural cooperation.
4. Adaptive management: volcanic sediment counter and erosion counter structure; adaptive infrastructures, more suitable for the environment.
5. Lack of input from different perspectives on museum displays and communication materials.

Recommendations

Theoretical:

- Reflection changes made to World Heritage criteria
- Consider going back to 1992?

Pragmatic:

- Use a passport system to get visitors to go to the whole property, and its 25 components in order to help distribute the visitors and lessen overcrowding, and increase appreciation of the values of the property.
- Require the bus companies to display documentaries regarding Mount Fuji in order to promote the values of Mount Fuji, to provide safety measures/lessen accidents, and to improve visitors' behavior.



Congcong Liu (China), Yue Cao (China), Kimberley Wilson (Australia), Anuranjan Roy (India), Eulalie Dulnuan (Philippines), and Le Hoang Lien (Vietnam) discussing their ideas for the presentation.

Group 3

Members:

Bina Gandhi Deori, India
 Sonila Kora, Albania
 Warong Wonglangka, Thailand
 Ziyang Yang, China
 Jermphiphat Natnitcha, Thailand
 Daisuke Sato, Japan
 Philip Semaha, Ghana

Mapping values

The group identified the following values:

- Symbolic: Shape of Mount Fuji; Perfect cone shape, highest, symmetry, view from the mountain; Mount Fuji is an iconic symbol of Japanese identity
- Spiritual: Mount Fuji is the place of god in Japanese culture, an epitome of sacredness
- Aesthetic: The beauty of Mount Fuji is the perennial source of joy and inspiration. Stunning setting, great scenery, and historic routes
- Artistic: the solitary, often snow-capped Mount Fuji, rising above villages and tree-fringed sea and lakes becomes a source of art inspiration
- Biodiversity: The forest around Mount Fuji can boost ecosystem productivity that can ensure the natural sustainability of the environment and illustration of the important natural habitat. Number of species +2,000/ Vertical distribution
- Geological: Mount Fuji has a significant volcanic geology surrounded by ongoing processes in the development of landforms. Plate movement/Volcano eruption/accumulation
- Education: Numerous cultural and natural evidence around the mountain can transmit the knowledge by generation to generation of humanity. The special environment around the mountain
- Historical: The history of Mount Fuji can allow us to understand the past, turn to understand the present of Japan. Route for pilgrimage and traveler/Japanese samurai training base/archaeological remain

Statement of significance

Mount Fuji is an important component of Japanese culture deeply rooted in people's souls, fostering Japanese identity as reflected in the spiritual culture, traditions, arts, and creativity since prehistoric times. Geological occurrences over centuries and its rich flora and fauna have shaped the Japanese culture and enriched humankind, inspiring spirituality and creativity that transcended physical boundaries as reflected in Japanese religious practices, traditions, and artistic expressions through different mediums worldwide such as paintings, literature, printing, poems, folklore, and crafts. Mount Fuji holds a special place of reverence in the hearts and minds of the Japanese community. It is an epitome of sacredness and has spiritual values, represented by natural formations like lakes (Fuji Five Lakes) and lava tree molds, monuments like numerous shrines and temples scattered over the landscape, lodging and pilgrimage routes.

Mount Fuji, apart from being an object of worship for the pilgrims and source of inspiration for artists, has also been the means of sustenance for life in all living forms. Water from its springs, lakeland waterfalls have nurtured plants and animals and is channelized for cultivation, supporting the livelihood of the local communities through centuries. The pilgrim ascetics and believers are also using it for cleansing their bodies before their spiritual quest.

A water tank is located in every shrine, where devotees clean their hands and mouth as an act of purifying themselves before entering the shrine. Donning a white garb by the pilgrims during the journey is a constant reminder of life, death, and rebirth.

The spiritual connection with Mount Fuji continues and is celebrated through festivals such as Yoshida Fire Festival, folk dances, songs, and performances.

Management assessment and Recommendations

The group divided the assessment under three different categories: people, place, and system.

For the people, they analyzed the current situation, the problem, and gave recommendations as follows:

1. The tour guides focused more on the nature component of Fuji (almost no reference to culture in climbing Fuji). The problem identified was a lack of linkage in nature-culture meaning. They found it affected the educational value. They recommended integrating cultural and natural aspects of Mount Fuji in the explanations.
2. The museums did not showcase much about lives and stories around Mount Fuji. They found the problem was that the experience of visiting the museums is not compelling enough and that the archaeological linkage is missing. They recommended displaying archaeological and historical artifacts in the museums—for example, real houses, real environments in Fuji, and not just the museum experience.

For the place, they analyzed the current situation, the problem, and gave recommendations as follows:

1. The Yoshida trails are used by 80% of tourists. They found that the problem is that some important areas around Mount Fuji might be overlooked. They recommended encouraging people to visit other routes.
2. The information building location is “hidden” compared to the souvenir shop. They found that some visitors feel no obligation to visit the information desk and can have dire consequences. They recommended that the information desk be the first point for all visitors. Visitors should be able to access relevant information online before embarking.

Finally, for the system, they analyzed the current situation, the problem, and gave recommendations as follows:

1. Visitor control during open and closed periods on Mount Fuji is useful management for holding capacity on Fuji to protect the integrity of nature-culture. They found that it was difficult to manage the climbers effectively. There was a loss of the sense of sacredness due to crowdedness and loss of the solemnity needed in climbing. They recommended using the physical and social capacity to manage visitors at Mount Fuji.
2. The souvenirs of Mount Fuji are the same everywhere. They found that it is monotonous, and there is no meaning of difference in the place around Mount Fuji, bringing a loss in the significance of the experience. They recommended that the souvenirs should be unique to each site (different stations with unique items), not the same from the bus station, the museums, the different stations, and trails. For example, different animals, tree types, snow mountain, the mushrooms, the landscape, etc
3. Top-down is used to manage the development plan of Mount Fuji. They found that the top-down approach may not sufficiently represent local interest (but it gets things done quickly). They recommended to comprehensively integrate the top-down and bottom-up approaches.
4. The structure of governance in Mount Fuji relating to cultural and natural heritage representation is centralized (by the prefectural government). They found that local people have less influence on preserving. They recommended that local people decide what the museum should showcase as their way of life, in order to make it more authentic for the visitors. Introduce local routes used by the local people for the daily life, local food served in traditional-styled restaurants with local recipes unique to Mount Fuji.



Philip Semaha (Ghana), Daisuke Sato (Japan), Bina Gandhi Deori (India), Ziyang Yang (China), Warong Wonglangka (Thailand), Sonila Kora (Albania) and Jermphiphat Natnitcha (Thailand) preparing their presentation and discussing ideas with Dr. Gamini Wijesuriya.



Group photo of participants and resource persons after they received their Certificate of Completion of the Workshop.

