



Threads of Conservation

Social fabric • Fabric and place • Conserving fabric

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Suriati Ahmad is an academic from Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Perak, Malaysia and currently pursuing her PhD in Landscape Architecture field from Deakin University, Geelong Waterfront Campus, Victoria, Australia. Her PhD research title, 'Cultural Landscape Conservation: Assessment and Benchmarking Kinta Valley Former Mining Landscape, Malaysia' focused on establishing the heritage values that were embedded within the industrial mining landscape in Malaysia. Subsequently, the result of her research will offer benefits to the community on a larger scale as it will enrich the understanding and knowledge of mining cultural landscape and elevates the identity of Perak state as well as the merit of industrial culture heritage interpretation in Malaysia.

Justifying the cultural landscape significance of the Kinta Valley Former Mining Landscape, Malaysia

Paper Abstract

The tin mining industry had a huge transformation upon the physical development and landscape of Malaya (Malaysia) and accordingly colours the Malaysian culture and its histories. Tin was one of the important metal minerals that was found on Peninsular Malaysia, especially on the western part of the Peninsular, and was dominated by production from the Perak state. Among the 10 districts in Perak, Kinta Valley rose to become the most important valley hosting the highest production of tin (Cassiterite SnO₂) from 1889 onwards thereupon resulting in an influx of Chinese whom were brought to Malaya as mining coolies under the British colonial administration for the Perak state from the 1860s. With massive exploration for tin deposits in Kinta Valley, mining activities had directly crafted the physical landscape of this area and a large amount of extant evidence of industrial mining elements and its associated features (imprints of human intervention) remains today.

Through a lens of cultural landscape theory and practice, this paper seeks to assess the cultural significance of Kinta Valley, and its former mining landscape, having regard to comparable world heritage registered cultural landscapes. In order to unravel the cultural significance of this valley, a qualitative research approach has been applied involving documentary research (including site histories, archival records, gazetted government documents, and geospatial data), site visits and observations, and focus group workshop and interviews (expert participants that varied from government officers to private sector representatives that administer and practice within the case study areas) as the selected methods. The result of this culture landscape assessment will assist in comprehending and benchmarking the cultural heritage of the place having regard to integrity and authenticity as well as documenting the embedded values of this industrial mining landscape.