The Creative Communities Around Candi Borobudur

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I. INTRODUCTION

Twenty five years have passed since Borobudur temple was restored and became part of Borobudur Tourism Park (Taman Wisata Borobudur), which was opened for public in 1984. In its early years the management of the Tourism Park had successfully built an impression that the government had made the right decision in turning Bo-robudur temple and its surrounding areas into a Tourism Park consisting of three layers of zones with different functions. Some parts of these areas were formerly villages whose inhabitants had been moved to other areas not far from Borobudur with a lot of difficulties, due to some disagreements between the villagers and the government on some issues. Although the Tourism Park plan could eventually be realized and has become a nation's pride, the resentment, the disappointment among the villagers did not die, and had become one of the most difficult obstacles to overcome for establishing peaceful relation between the Park and some groups of people in Borobudur, in the last few years.

Aside from that not-yet-achieved peaceful relation between some local peoples and the Park managers, some developments did take place in the areas around Borobudur Tourism Park, especially the economy. It cannot be denied that the local economy had improved significantly since the operation of the Tourism Park. The local social system had developed

into the positive direction, which was reflected in the developments of various groups trying to minimize conflicts. Local arts - especially the performing art- had developed and were quite active, due to the increasing opportunities for their per-formances. Nevertheless, these developments did not really reflect all the relations between Borobudur Tourism Park and the people caught in the nets of these developments. In this article attempts are made to show these relations.

The questions addressed are: (a) what are the relations between Borobudur temple, especially The Borobudur Tourism Park, and the creative communities in its surroundings?; (b) how will these relations be in the future?; (c) what kinds of improvement can be done to make the relations beneficial to both sides (i.e. to the Borobudur temple and to the people living around it).

II. CREATIVE ECONOMY AND CREATIVE COMMUNITY

Discussion on "creative communities" in Indonesia is better started by first understanding its relations to "creative economy", because it was the latter which appeared earlier, and had become one of the most popular terms in Indonesia in the last three years. Although its meaning may differ from one circle to another, the term had spread quickly among the people, especially among the bureaucrats, the politicians, the

econo-mists, the social scientists, the public intellectuals, the cultural commentators, as well as the NGOs. The term has of course elements of attractions, which lead to its uncritical uses in different contexts and discourses.

There is actually no economy which is not creative, for every economy always involves some activities of production, of making or creating something which can be sold or exchanged. It always involves producing commodities which always need some cre-ativity. Yet, the word "creative" is added to "economy", which means that there must be something different. There must be some ideas which cannot be contained within the word "economy" that made the word "creative" to be added to it. Thus, a "creative" eco-nomy must be an economy which is regarded as different from the "conventional" eco-nomy. What kind of economy is it?

Since it is a "different economy", and was seen as an alternative to the established, conventional economy, it is no less than the Department of Industry and Commerce that proposed a definition of "creative economy" in Indonesian context. The Department has of course great interest in this economy, for its strong development might give significant contribution to the national economy, and if the Department could develop appropriate policies and systematic programs to develop that economy it would give the

Department a good reputation. The creative economy according to the Department involves among others fashion, mass media, handicraft.

Like "creative economy", the term "creative community" contains actually some misunderstandings as well, because there is no community whatsoever which is not creative. Every community is always creative. It must have some creativities to live. Either social or cultural. It has to create and develop something in order to survive; at least some tools, some social networks, some knowledge, based on their observations of things in their environment. The term "creative community" is thus redundant. Nevertheless, its popularity compels us to give a particular meaning to the term, and that should be related to the "creative economy".

What is meant by the creative communities here are the communities that have developed creative economies, or most of its members depend on the creative economies for their survival. From our observations, it was clear that the main creative economies in Borobudur are the production of souvenirs and the performing art. The discussion here is focussed on these two creative groups.

From our survey on economic activities in the villages around Borobudur in 2003, it was clear that in Desa Borobudur the local economy was the most active due to the presence of tourism in the area. Some of these activities were directly related to tourism in Borobudur, some are indirect. There are about 16 kinds of trading activities, while service economies

activities were of 23 kinds (such as guide, parking, car washing, toilet rental, umbrella rental, telephone, money changer, banking, etc)

The significant increase took place in stall business. The lesehan stalls and food stalls had increased significantly. There were 15 food stalls before restoration, which became 25 stalls after the restoration, and then 60, 70, and finally reached 80 in 1990. The same thing happened on lesehan stalls, which was only 10 stalls before restoration, and became 15 after the restoration, 45 stalls in 1991, and reached 83 stalls in 1999. The significant increase can also be seen in tourism commodities sold in Borobudur. Their number and kinds as well as their sellers had increased, and these were related to some changes within the rural communities around Borobudur (such as Desa Wringinputih, Desa Wanurejo, Desa Taksongo). Creative communities had emerged in these villages, which produce mostly souvenirs for Borobudur visitors.

III. CREATIVE COMMUNITIES AROUND BOROBUDUR

Wandering through the villagers' houses, coconut trees and various tropical trees in the villages around Borobudur temple, we will see some activities or signs that more or less reflect the relation between the local people and the tourism developed in Borobudur. Most villagers here are agriculturalists who plant rice twice a year on their irrigated sawahs, or plant cassavas, sweet potatoes, on their dry lands (tegal). Some of them are civil servants working in the local government offices, or

teachers of the local schools; some are agricultural workers or workers in local small industries, some others are petty traders.

Two villages located near the Borobudur (Desa Borobudur and Desa Taksongo), five other villages are about 4 kilometers from the temple. Inhabitants of each village (that is Desa Borobudur, Desa Wanurejo, Desa Candirejo, Desa Majakingsi, Desa Taksongo, Desa Wringinputih, dan Desa Tegal Arum) are between 2000-7000. The highest number of population is in Desa Borobudur (about 7300), the lowest is in Desa Tegal Arum (about 2000). There are good transportation and communication networks in these villages, which make people easily go to other villages, to the Temple or to the nearest town (Magelang). Most villagers use bikes and Japanese or Chinese motorcycles for personal transportation. Some rich families have their own cars

Most local people are Javanese Moslems, either of the traditional variant or of the modern one. Some people are Christians, but Buddhists are few. Those who come to Borobudur to celebrate Waisak each year in Borobudur are mostly people from outside. It is not surprising then that the relation between the local people and the Temple is quite weak. Moreover, as a Buddhist temple Borobudur had actually been abandoned many centuries ago, when the old Mataram civilization -the civilization that built Borobudur dan Prambanan temples- collapsed in 10th century due to the Merapi volcano explosion (Boechari, 19 ..).

Borobudur temple was restored by the government in 1970s as part of the national

attempt to preserve cultural heritages in Indonesia. For several years Borobudur was closed for visitors. When it was finally reopened, the socio-cultural situation in Borobudur and its surroundings had changed radically. Some local people, as well as outsiders coming to work in restoration project, opened up new businesses around Borobudur, such as small restaurants (warungs), room rentals (pondokan), and small shops. The changes were made faster by the increase of tourists -domestic and foreign-, coming to Borobudur.

1. Borobudur Creative Communities

Tourism have made significant impacts on local economy, with the involvement of local people in creative economy activities, i.e. the production of souvenirs and art performance. The most obvious impacts were on the economy of the local villagers living closest to the Tourism Park, i.e. in Desa Borobudur, followed by Desa Wanurejo and Wringinputih (second rank in terms of the impacts) and then by Desa Tegal Arum, Desa Majakdingi, Desa Teksongo and Desa Candirejo (third rank)

Many creative communities which did not exist in 1980s can now be found in Borobudur. Most of them are involved in production of souvenirs which are mostly wanted by Borobudur visitors. Although not all of them will be discussed here, the discussion will not only be limited to them either, since the creative community here include the performing art groups, traditional food producers, as well as cloth producers.

a. Performing Art Groups

Performing art groups are not new in Borobudur. Long before the restoration, the people were already involved in some artistic activities, especially in traditional performing art or traditional theatre. Before 1965, the most active local traditional artists organization was Lekra, which was under the Indonesian Communist Party. The political conflicts in 1965 which resulted in the abolition of the Indonesian Communist Party had made many local traditional artists stopped their activities. They were afraid of being charged as communist. The local art activities started again slowly after 1965, when the political situation was more stable and the socio-cultural atmosphere was better for the local artists. Several local performing art groups were active again after 1970.

Jathilan. Long before the restoration, jathilan as a folk Javanese performing art was already known and performed by the local people. Reorganization of the local performing group had been made several times in the past to make it more active. It was said that in 1957 - 1958 improvements were made in the organization, with the aims to: (a) enable the local people to develop and express their artskill; (b) strengthen the social solidarity of the local people; (c) preserve local arts and cultures; (d) entertain the people, but it stopped in 1965. In 1968 some people attempted to revitalize this performing art, which declined again in 1984

when some villagers were resettled in new areas due to the establishment of the Tourism Park.

After the economy crisis in 1997, the jathilan group reorganized itself. There was a demand for local performing art. Members were then gathered and they started to practice the performance regularly. They have to be more professional, because the demand on them increased. Since 1998 the jathilan group, consisting of about 20 members, had performed in some 4-star hotels in Yogyakarta. It is also scheduled to perform in local 5-star hotel (Hotel Aman Jiwo) regularly. The opportunities to perform in these hotels had made members of the group become more serious in their effort to improve their performance. Costumes were renewed and rehearsals were conducted more regularly. Their income had increased since then.

Kubrosiswo. This is a traditional performing art in Magelang area which appeared, according to informants, after 1965 in Desa Candirejo. It was set up as an attempt to help the local artists to express their artskills under the new circumstances after the political upheaval in 1965. It was not surprising that the artists used some Islamic symbols in their performance, especially in its music, lyrics and dances. There is actually no limit in the number of the performers of this performing art, but in most cases the members are between 20-30. They usually perform on special occasions, such as celebration of Independence

Day, art festivals, celebration of important events, etc.

Topeng Hitam. Topeng hitam or Black Mask is a local performing art which appeared in 1930s, known initially as "Dayakan". It was started in Desa Wanurejo, and was meant for wedding ceremony. They were the pager betis i.e. the young boys who were standing in two rows, on the right and the left side of the path which the bride, the groom and their family members have to go through when they enter the hall for the wedding ceremony. Later on, it was improved to become a performing art as the performers -which number may reach 50- were eager and ready to do that.

The development of this performing art was uneven. It declined and disappeared from Desa Wanurejo in 1950s, as young boys left the village to work in the towns. Then a new group was formed in Desa Taksongo in 1958, and was developed to become a performing art group. Since then, they created their new dances, songs with lyrics for the dakwah (spreading Islam). This made Desa Taksongo known as the place of origin of Topeng Hitam, rather than Desa Wanurejo. The emergence of the Topeng Hitam in Desa Taksongo was later followed by other villages such as Bojong Mendut, Ngaran II, Kelon, Kurahan, enz. Today, the costumes had been improved as they had more opportunities to perform in various events, including the regional ones.

Gatoloco. This is also a

traditional performing art which has some similarities with Topeng Hitam, especially in the way they stand in two rows when they perform. The difference is that young boys and girls can participate here, and their costume are mostly white and they wear black eyeglasses. Their number is around 20.

Discussion. It is clear that creative communities in performing art had appeared in Borobudur long before the restoration. But, as Borobudur and its surroundings were changed into a Tourism Park, more visitors are coming, and tourism developed rapidly, new opportunities were opened for the local artists to perform. This led to the development of some performing art groups in Borobudur, which members are between 20- 50. The restoration of Borobudur and the development of tourism had thus become the basis for the emergence of some creative communities in performing art.

Similar development can also be seen on creative communities that produce souvenirs. The basis of its flourish is also tourism. Souvenir maker is the biggest creative community in Borobudur. This is not a peculiar phenomenon for Borobudur of course. Visitors of Borobudur -especially the domestic ones- are interested in local souvenirs as reminders of their visit to Borobudur. They are mostly Indonesian students of junior and senior high schools who come in groups during school holidays. The souvenirs found in Borobudur are bamboocrafts, images of

Buddha, miniature of Borobudur, postcard, cloth hats, bamboo hats, etc.

b. Souvenir Producers

The story began in 1984 when a lot of vendors from Yogyakarta came to Borobudur to sell souvenirs. The local people joined them, selling souvenirs. But, some creative individuals were not satisfied. They also wanted to produce the souvenirs. It was these individuals who started to build local creative economy. Two kinds of creative communities are discussed here, i.e. the bamboocraft producers and the image producers.

Bamboo Creative Communities. Bamboo creative communities are the communities that made bamboo souvenirs. They were new communities in Borobudur. Before 1985, there were no bamboocraft production in Borobudur. The bamboocrafts came mainly from Yogyakarta, together with small statues or figurines. They were wall hangings made of smoothed thin bamboos tied together, on which paintings can be made, or on which picture of Borobudur, natural scenery or Qur'anic phrases were grafted.

The local peoples saw that these souvenirs were bought by Borobudur visitors, but they were not quite interested, or perhaps they did not know how to make this kind of product, until a university student doing fieldwork there in 1987 taught some local peoples how to make those bamboocrafts. Since then many local people were

involved in bamboocraft production, for it was not difficult for them to make bamboo souvenirs. Some said that within a day or two, one can learn to make a bamboocraft with a good quality. Today, almost all vendors of these products in Borobudur are also the producers. They did not buy the bamboocraft from Yogyakarta anymore.

So easy is the production of the bamboo souvenirs that in Desa Teksongo for instance bamboocraft production has become the main earnings of the villagers. The bamboos can easily be found in the villages. Some producers buy them from the villagers, some cut them from their own bamboo garden. Almost every household here is involved in bamboocraft production. However, most if not all of bamboocraft makers are young male.

Stone Image Producers. The first producer of images in Borobudur is Pak Puji from Barepan. He has some local workers to help him. In the beginning he produced images made of stone and gypsum, then he also produced images made of fibreglass. This product, a transparent pyramid with a miniature of stupa or Borobudur temple inside, is his innovation. Today he only produced gypsum images which is cheaper and needs smaller capital and less workers. Many of his workers have left him to become producers on their own.

Two kinds of stone images are sold by vendors in Borobudur Tourism Park. One

is gray, rather coarse, but of better quality, and the other is black and smooth. The first is mostly for foreign visitors or rich domestic tourists. These images are not produced by the local people. They are from Yogyakarta. The second is from Borobudur and is sold in many kios (stall) near the Candi. The models of these images are the same. Only the miniature of Borobudur is the special. It is not produced in Yogyakarta.

Local producers make refine (smooth) stone images for the domestic visitors. There are three producers of these images in Borobudur. One in Salaman, two others are in Dusun Kretek, Karangrejo. They admitted that their products are not as good as the products from Yogyakarta, for theirs are the imitations of the Yogyakarta products. These producers called themselves the murid (student) of Pak Puji. They were workers of Pak Puji. When Pak Puji stopped producing the images in 1997, they then started their own. They used to make images from gypsum and fiber, but now they stopped it because they did not have enough time to pay their attention to different processes of productions. They now focus on producing the stone images which they think is the most feasible.

Four kinds of images of different size are made by the local producers, i.e. Buddha in a sitting position, head of Buddha, Ganesha image, and the miniature of Borobudur. In addition to that there are also miniatures of particular reliefs or ornaments of Borobudur

walls within a frame. The materials of these products are bought in Pasar Ngasem in Yogyakarta. The local people cannot produce them.

Gypsum Image Producers. The gypsum images were initially brought to Borobudur by vendors from Yogyakarta. They were just white and simple. They were not images of things in Borobudur but images of women bringing a basket on their back. They came to Borobudur in 1984-1985 together with stone images. The local people then tried to imitate these products. Today there are about 7 local producers of gypsum images in Borobudur. Each producer creates their own special stamps on their products, which make the products more variative.

The gypsum images are products of household industries. The father or adult males usually do the molding while the mother and small children do the paintings. If the members have long experiences in the production the household can produce about 120-150 small images a day. The wet images are dried in the sun and are painted one day or two before they are sold.

These products are sold in Borobudur through vendors or stalls. A producer usually have about 10-16 vendors as their sellers, who are not always active everyday. Many vendors work only during holidays when there are a lot of tourists coming to Borobudur. There is no permanent relation between the producers and the vendors. Vendors can take souvenirs from different producers in

different times. To "tie" these vendors to them, some producers sometimes lend the money to these vendors or save some money for them to be given on certain occasion, such as before the Lebaran (Idul Fitri). In this way these vendors will always take products (souvenirs) from the same producer.

Discussion. If the performing art communities in Borobudur today have as their origins the performing art groups in the past, the creative communities of souvenirs appeared as results of the encounters between the local people and the outsiders, especially traders and vendors, who came to Borobudur to sell souvenirs. In other case it was also a result of the contact between some local people and the university students who did community service as part of their educational program.

Compared to the performing art communities, these creative communities include more people and have looser and wider networks. Members of these communities do not only produce souvenirs, but many of them - especially bamboocraft makers - are also vendors selling their own products. They also have more freedom because each individual is not always connected permanently to other members, and they do not set up groups which would have some controls on their activities. They also work individually, while members of the performing art groups can perform only in group.

Nevertheless, the arenas of the performing communities are larger. They are not confined only to Borobudur. As performing art groups they have participated in

various events outside Borobudur. They also perform in hotels outside Borobudur. In such a way these communities have popularized the performing art of Borobudur, and bring a good reputation for their people.

III. CONCLUSION

The discussion above shows that there is no direct relation between Candi Borobudur (the temple) and its surrounding creative communities except through tourism. The communities produce souvenirs for Borobudur visitors. The performing art group also perform their dances for them. The Candi has no real connection to the activities of the creative communities in its surroundings. Up to now -as far as we know- no NGOs or indigenous organizations that have great concern for the preservation of Borobudur Temple have appeared in its surroundings.

From our discussion above several conclusion can be made. First, the creative communities in Borobudur were mostly involved in souvenir production, some were in art performance. The quality of the products of the souvenir communities are not yet as good as those produced in Yogyakarta, the capital city of Yogyakarta Special Province. However, the local performing art groups have their own characteristics and had made some innovations, which made them look more creative than the souvenir communities

Secondly, the products of these creative communities are mostly for domestic visitors, who do not really care about the quality of the products. There seems to be no significant development in the quality of the souvenirs produced by the

creative communities in Borobudur since their emergence in 1980s. Some innovations did take place, but its more significant impacts is not yet to be seen

Thirdly, better development can be seen in performing art communities. They did make some improvements on their performances and costumes and had participated in various events inside as well as outside Borobudur area, which led to their popularity today. In this respect they are more popular than the souvenir creative communities

Fourthly, no creative communities that have direct relations with Borobudur Temple have emerged from the local communities. This means that creative communities having greater concern for and are more focussed on the preservation of Borobudur Temple need to be established among the local people. This will make the relation between Borobudur Temple and the local people living in its surrounding closer and stronger on which a more participative or community based preservation program can be built.

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