

Silver Carving in Kotagede is in Danger of Extinction


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Silver carving in Kotagede, Yogyakarta is in danger of extinction. This was caused by a lack of craftsmen who have the expertise in silver sculpture of high quality. Whereas, in Kotagede the custom experienced the golden age in the 1910s when many of the Dutch people made orders. In fact, at least 800 items of Kotagede's collection of silver product design are still kept intact at the Tropen Museum, Rotterdam. "I think the market for silver is still present, but we fear the custom of silver carving is in danger of extinction," said Drs. Priyo J. Salim, owner of Salim Silver, Kota Gede, at the activity entitled Independent Rural Tourism Development Based on SMEs' Potential in Basen Village, Kotagede, Wednesday (27/7) evening. The activity is initiated by students of unit 61 of KKN PPM UGM in the neighbourhood of Purbayan Village, Kota Gede Sub-District, Yogyakarta.

Priyo J. Salim, who is also an alumnus of the Faculty of Geography in 1987, mentions some silver products that are stored in the Netherlands are in the form of cooking utensils, ink dryer, boxes, vases, whiskey bottles, and antique gourd. "Kotagede's Antique silver products have very beautiful design; probably that back then the silver handicraft was made with their whole soul while currently it is made just to meet orders," he said.

According to Priyo, the lack of silver carving order in the previously mentioned form has led the Kotagede's silver design to have less artistic value compared to the antique silver product design at the beginning of the 20th century. Besides the lack of silversmith generation, the implementation of the VAT tax of 10 percent for the price of silver products make the price of silver more expensive than the products of other countries in foreign markets. "With a VAT of 10 percent, it actually kills off a particular culture, one of them is the culture of silver," he said.

Therefore, he proposed the need for applying the silver carving in other forms, such as jewelry, and acknowledgment for the silver handicraft workers as well as revocation of 10 percent tax for silver products in order to stimulate silver craft in Kotagede and Indonesia.



Nisa Agistiani Rachman, one of the student participants, said that her party had launched the independent development of rural tourism based on SMEs' potential in the village of Basen, Kotagede. One of them is by encouraging 69 silver craftsmen in the village to put their efforts in the art of silver craft that had been abandoned due to lack of orders from abroad. "We're also trying to help through marketing via the website," she said.

Waris Sumarwoto, Chief of Purbayan neighbourhood, welcomed the initiative of students in rural tourism development. He conveys the Basen Village has recently been established as a tourist village. "The North Basen can be highlighted for its culinary and silver. While in the south, there are relics of the kingdom of Mataram, thus this area can be made a reliable tourist village," he said.

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