

ROMANTICA OF THEOSOPHY IN INDONESIAN HISTORY (Educate the Nation Towards Humanist Society)

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ABSTRACT

Theosophy is one part of Indonesian history that is not widely known by the Indonesian people today. Its existence is like a puzzle missing from its frame. This study aims to reveal the theosophical romance as part of Indonesian history and explain how it affects to educate the Indonesian people to become a democratic and prosperous nation. The method used in this research is the literature study method. The results showed that theosophy had a significant influence on the history of the Indonesian people, both in the political, social, and educational fields. In the political field, theosophy has inspired many movement leaders in the effort to voice independence, then in the social field theosophy contributes to the efforts to save ancient literacy by storing it or translating it so that it can be read later by future generations. The widija-poestaka organization (shaded by theosophy) it was accommodated. In the field of education, the contribution made by theosophy is by establishing several schools under the auspices of the NIATWUV organization. This is to help the indigenous community escape from the chains of ignorance. So it can be concluded that the thesis has a remarkable story in the history of Indonesia, not a few contributions made even though forgotten, but traces can still be felt.

KEYWORDS: Humanis, Romantica, Arjuna School, Teosofi.

INTRODUCTION

The term humanity becomes an interesting topic to discuss because it is directly related to human social life. The condition of an area is one of the essential factors in determining the social behavior of the people in that region. In Indonesia, diversity is one of the factors in the emergence of various kinds of conflicts, which indeed leads to intolerant attitudes. In other words, it can lead a person or group to take action without mercy, which eliminates humanity in the human being.

Education is the best tool in the effort to build human character, which is a good character for life, both intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually. The purpose of teaching history in schools refers to the national education goals listed in pasal 3 of UU RI No.20 of 2003 concerning SISDIKNAS, namely to develop the potential of students to become faithful human beings and to be devoted to God, the one who has a supreme, noble character, healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and be a democratic and responsible citizen. The purpose of teaching history is that the

next generation of young people can take lessons and lessons from the experience of their ancestors (Supardi, 2014: 94).

Furthermore, about education that teaches about the values of example and nationalism to realize a humanist society, authentic learning is one of the lessons that have an essential role in making it happen. History learning according to its function is to make students aware of the process of change and development of society in the dimension of time and to build historical perspectives and awareness in discovering, understanding and explaining the national identity in the past, present, and future amidst world changes, other than that as a future reference for developing national development. Further understanding of history is also related to humanitarian issues and a theatre where humans become character players, based on existing knowledge, experience, and role models. Historical learning contains exemplary values, including scientific values, informative values, educational values, ethical values, cultural values, political values, work values, and nationalism values. The various values should be able to be actualized in the life of the community by students as the next generation of the nation because the younger generation is an essential part of society and has the same responsibility to advance the life of the Indonesian nation (Kochhar, 2008: 56).

Theosophy in conventional history learning has never been taught. Like a puzzle missing from its frame, as if it had never existed in the history of the Indonesian people. His significant contribution to the efforts of this nation's independence made discussion of this theosophy necessary. Apart from being a mystical movement, theosophy is also a philosophy that contains human values and moral teachings. All religions can universally implement the concept of tolerance promoted by theosophy, thus it is suitable if applied in Indonesia, which is known as a nation that is rich in differences. In a previous study by Media Zainul Bahri also stated that theosophy established many organizations to embody the spirit of brotherhood as expressed in the main objectives of theosophy and spread theosophical teachings, in order to improve the quality of society through education and develop the quality of Eastern morality (Bahri, Media Zainul, 2017: 143). Furthermore, the gait of theosophy to help educate the Indonesian people will become an important subject that will be discussed in this article.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a literature study method. The literature study research method is a series of activities relating to the method of collecting library data, reading and recording and processing research materials (Mestika Zed, 2004: 3). Research using the literature study method is research conducted by collecting some books, magazines/newspapers, and journals relating to the problem and research objectives. Books are used as sources of data, which are then processed and analyzed, usually carried out by researchers in history, literature, and language (Danial A.R, 2009: 80). Literature research is usually done by examining and comparing literature sources to obtain analytical data. The advantage of research using a literature study is that researchers can obtain

information about conventional research techniques so that research results do not constitute duplication.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

History of Theosophy in Indonesia

It can be identified that theosophy is thought to have first appeared in the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia before independence) in 1881 in Pekalongan, Central Java, as a movement in Indonesia. If traced the origin of the term theosophy comes from the 3rd century AD was introduced by Ammonius Saccas and his students, which is the development of various philosophies. Theosophy is interpreted as Divine Wisdom. Theosophy comes from the Greek word teos, meaning a god, one of the divine beings who are not God. Theosophy is not "God's wisdom," as some people translate, but "divine wisdom" as possessed by the gods. (Blavatsky, 1981: 3). The main aim of theosophy is to reconcile all religions, sects, and nations under a comprehensive ethical system, based on eternal truth and instilling moral values or noble character.

Furthermore, theosophy emerged as a movement on the American Continent precisely in New York United States, the theosophical movement or theosophy society was founded on November 17, 1875, by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky and Henry Steel Olcott (Nugraha, Iskandar P., 2011: 5). Theosophy became one of the world organizations which then developed rapidly in Adyar Madras India. Theosophy is a non-sectarian or impartial body and consists of members who seek Truth / Waarheid and promote fraternity that continues to strive to serve humanity. The three goals of theosophical meetings are:

First, to promote the core of brotherhood among fellow human beings by not looking at the nation, beliefs, sex, people, or skin color.

Second, advancing the study of finding equality in religion, philosophy, and science.

Third, investigate the natural laws that cannot be explained and the forces within humans that are still hidden. (PERWATHIN Member Card).

Indeed, specifically, theosophists have highlighted the existence of theological aspects or problems of religion and beliefs as one of the main factors triggering conflict in society, especially people who have diverse cultures such as in Indonesia. (Bahri, Media Zainul., 2013: 414-415). In Indonesia, whether people realize it or not, they are increasingly showing prejudiced attitudes that lead to negative attitudes and views with a feeling of superiority in certain religions over other religions. The snobby attitude will not only cause disunity among humanity.

Seeing the condition of Indonesia at that time, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky was optimistic that theosophy could live and flourish in Indonesia. Especially in the Java region, this is due to the

Javanese cultural style that embraces mysticism, making the teachings of theosophy easily acceptable to Javanese people. The term that is often spoken to refer to such culture is kejawen (Geertz, 1960: 5). Theosophy was also thought to be a movement that inspired the birth of nationalism in Indonesia. That is because theosophy emerged in Indonesia during the movement. In a meeting of the administrators of the Indian theosophical association which was attended on January 19, 1909, with the support of some Boedi Oetomo members, Labberton in his speech delivered the vision of the theosophical association related to the national revival of society in Java (Nagazumi, 1988: 120-122). This is also reinforced by the statement of M.C. Ricklefs in his book entitled *Modern Indonesian History*, which said that theosophy was one of the movements that we can unite the Javanese elite, the Indo-Europeans, and the Dutch at that time and had a considerable influence on the Boedi Oetomo organization. (Ricklefs, 2007: 250).

The influence of theosophy in Indonesia and the world has been getting stronger since the teaching center was moved to Adyar (India) led by Annie Besant. Theosophy is successful, and its influence is increasingly widespread. This is evidenced by the increasing number of membership from day to day, week to week, month to the moon, and year after year as described in the work of Iskandar P. Nugraha which states that theosophy experienced a glorious period in 1928 with a total membership of 1,589 people in the Dutch East Indies and 39,311 people in the world. Membership declined in 1933 to become 1,279 people in the Dutch East Indies and 30,936 people in the world (Nugraha, Iskandar P., 2011: 21).

The existence of theosophy was fading, and this is evidenced by the issuance of Decree of the Minister of Justice No. J.A./146/23/ dated President Soekarno froze 30 November 1963 concerning the prohibition of the activities of theosophical organizations in Indonesia, the theosophical organizations, because this was considered to be able to hamper the completion of the Indonesian Revolution. However, after ten years had passed, finally, on January 7, 1972, the theosophical organization was allowed to return to realize its vision and mission in Indonesia through Decree No. J.A. 5/203/5 B.N. No.2 of 1972 TBN No.2. This organization also changed its name to PERWATHIN (Indonesian Theosophical Association). However, the return of the theosophical movement is not as exotic as it used to be; its existence is now less known by the public (Berita P.B. Perwathin, 1973: 79-80).

Contribution of Theosophy in Efforts to Educate the Nation Towards a Humanist Society

The construction of schools by the theosophical movement during the Dutch colonial period helped many indigenous people in getting free education. Like other organizations in the Dutch East Indies theosophical movement, its members are divided into three divisions or fields that have a different focus. The three divisions or fields include mysticism, social and teaching, or education. This is supported by statements in the *Perwarta Teosofi* (1912: 10) "... to advance the intelligence, kindness, and safety of native brothers so that they are close to the West, Theosophy in the Dutch East Indies established *Widija-Poestaka, Indonesische Deukkerij en Translaatbureau, various Associate van*

Oost en West schools, priaji courses, langenswara association, mimpitoe (M7) Pardamean sedoenia, Bintang Timoer, Ati Soetji ... "

Activities in the field of education and teaching by theosophy are the tasks of the organizational division of the NIATWUV (Nederlandsche-Indische Wereld Afdeling Theosofische Wereld Universiteit Vereeniging), which is the Association of the Theosophical World University of the Netherlands Indies Branch. His main task was to establish schools and support the establishment of educational institutions in the Dutch East Indies. The central vision of the establishment of NIATWUV is to realize the ideals of the theosophical movement in the field of teaching and education (Nugraha, Iskandar P., 2011: 55). Subsequently, on 2 April 1920 in Surakarta, the NITBOO (de Nederlandsch Indische Theosofische Bond Voor Opvoeding en Onderwijs) was a Dutch East Indies Theosophical Society for Education and Teaching. In its development, NITBOO initiated the establishment of schools in the Dutch East Indies, especially in the Java region, which was named the Arjuna school. Arjuna schools were established in several places, namely in Surakarta, Bogor, Bandung, and Batavia (now Jakarta). The center of the Arjuna school is in Prambanan, Central Java.

Not many people know that actually, this Arjuna school is older than the Taman Siswa school founded by Ki Hadjar Dewantara. Taman Siswa School was founded in 1922, which is two years after the founding of arjuna schools. The two schools certainly have similarities and differences in the style of teaching. It was evident that the Taman Siswa school refers to local indigenous culture-based teaching to foster a sense of nationalism in its students. In contrast, the Arjuna school places more emphasis on teaching that uses paternalistic principles while still upholding local indigenous culture. The difference that is very visible in the two schools is in principle. Taman Siswa embraces self-help understanding and a high desire to realize physical and spiritual independence, while the Arjuna school is cooperative and only wants to make an evolutionary change in indigenous communities. The methods and curriculum applied at Taman Siswa school and Arjuna school are both sourced and refer to the Montessori and Rabindranath Tagore models. The main goal to be achieved by both of them is that both want to form educated humans and have noble character (Nugraha, Iskandar P., 2011: 57-58).

Another fact states that the Taman Siswa school was much influenced by theosophy, this was confirmed by Abdurrahman Surjomiharjo's statement in his work that Ki Hadjar Dewantara and Taman Siswa mentioned that a famous person who was said to have an essential role in Taman Siswa namely Ki Sarmidi Mangoensarkoro was a graduate Arjuna school, that is what makes Taman Siswa have ideas beyond Western ideas (Surjomiharjo, Abdurrachman, 1986: 116-128).

Theosophy became one of the movements that contributed to the establishment of schools for pribumi without discriminating their social status. It was different from schools established by the government at that time. Not a few also often assist in the form of scholarships to students who are

unable but intelligent and have the adequate moral capacity. The learning taught by Arjuna school is slightly different from other schools in general. In addition to learning Dutch, English, and local languages at the Arjuna school are also teach various kinds of learning about the primacy of the nation (cultuur-kenis) such as batik, history, natural science, and not to miss the science of religion. The supporting activities, or currently known as extracurricular activities, are regional dance, music, and scouting. In Arjuna school, the plus point that obtained is the opportunity to get love learning towards one's own culture and nation, and this is supported by the existence of a leerplan containing nationality (Nugraha, Iskandar P., 2011: 62-63). It is undeniable that the development of the Arjuna school, which was initiated by the theosophical movement has influenced the mindset of the children who studied there to be a patriot and love the motherland and be proud of the native culture of their people.

In addition to Arjuna's school, there is also a Goenoengsari Teacher's school in Weltevreden (Batavia) owned by Associate van Oost en West (East and West Association), of course, still under the auspices of the theosophical movement. The school was founded on October 22, 1923, with a status similar to the government-owned teacher school (Government Kweekschoolen) and received an official diploma from the government equivalent to the 3-year diploma Hind and diploma (3-year diploma Hoogere Burger School) or MULO (Meer Uitgereid Lager Onderwijs)). The Goenoengsari Teacher's School was used as an alternative school for pribumi to get a higher education. The Goenoengsari Teacher's School was excellent for the natives at that time. It was informed of the Goenoengsari Teacher's school was moved to Lembang (Bandung), and the name was later changed to Hollandsch Inlandsche-Kweekschool (HIK) which later became the forerunner to the Teaching and Education Institute (IKIP) which has now changed its name to the Indonesian Education University (UPI).

CONCLUSION

The aim of the theosophical movement in pursuing the education that leads to the creation of a humanist society has been implemented in the form of mystical, social as well as improving the quality of teaching and education. Although it is not as easy as turning the palm, the noble goal can be realized in the form of Arjuna school teaching. His ban on this movement during Soekarno's administration certainly surprised many people. Mainly everyone knew that Sukarno's father was a member of theosophy, and Soekarno learned a lot by accessing books in the theosophical library. Even in the process of formulating the Pancasila and UUD 1945, the influence of theosophical thought at the BPUPK and PPKI session was powerful; inevitably, the Indonesian ideology influenced by theosophical thought. During the prohibition of the main seasons brought up by Sukarno, it was feared that the philosophy could hinder the process of the revolution in Indonesia because it was an organization that mixed Western and Eastern philosophies.

It is genuinely the romance of a journey that is very important to be known by the general public. The existence of a pseudo-thesis like a shadow is slightly enlightened by the existence of the

evidence of its heritage in the form of science. As the old saying goes that wealth can be used up, but useful knowledge will never run out if appropriately practiced, so also with theosophy when viewed from a positive perspective, there is much actual knowledge that we can learn from it. Although its existence is now not as exotic as before, its services need to be remembered in Indonesian historical records.

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