

Aśwamedha Yajña As A Legitimation Legitimation Hegemony Based On Dharma

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Abstract

Writing this article aims to interpret the legitimacy of classical era leadership in the story of Aśwamedhika Parwa. The method used in this study is descriptive qualitative with an interpretive analysis model. This type of research is classified as library research with a study of humanities based on a hermeneutic approach. In general, Aśwamedha Yajña is a symbolic ceremony to strengthen the legitimacy of leadership. Even though there is such an assumption, understanding the importance of symbolic legitimacy has illustrated that Aśwamedha Yajña is an ancient ritual tradition that was commonly carried out by kings in ancient times. To obtain legal legitimacy, there are three ways that can be taken, namely symbolic, procedural and material. Symbolically, legitimacy can be obtained by using values and traditions in society. Procedurally, legitimacy can be obtained through general elections. Materially, legitimacy is carried out by providing material to gain support. Of the three ways, Aśwamedha Yajña belongs to the symbolic and material categories. In the Anugīta Parwa section there is a fable of a golden weasel attending the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony. The fable is a revolutionary interpolation containing criticism of the large-scale yajña practices. The philosophy of Tri Guṇa Yajña also contributes to providing a narrative about the implementation of yajña which is both abstract and real in religious activities.

Keywords: *Itihāsa; Mahābhārata; Aśwamedha Yajña*

Introduction

Talking about Mahābhārata cannot be separated from the epic story of Bhāratayuddha in Kurukṣetra. In general the Mahābhārata is known as part of the Upaveda in the codification of the Veda Smṛti. Based on its codification, the Upaveda as the second Smṛti book after the Wedāṅga consists of 6 parts, namely Itihāsa, Purāṇa, Arthasastra, Āyurveda, Gāndharwa Weda and Kāmasastra. One part of the Upaveda group of books that will be discussed in this study is the Itihāsa Mahābhārata as a Hindu literary work which contains stories of heroic epics in the past. Itihāsa Mahābhārata as part of the Veda Smṛti has a very important position for human life. This is because the storyline in Itihāsa Mahābhārata provides a lot of inspiration for human life, especially the philosophy of Dharma which has always been the main basis for realizing the noble values of the Vedic teachings. In fact, Itihāsa Mahābhārata is important to study as a basis for understanding the essence of the noble teachings that originate from the sacred book of the Vedas. Studying the Vedas is not enough just to understand the mantras but can also be done by storytelling. Through this storytelling method, one can explore the meaning contained in it. It is believed that conveying the noble values in the Sacred Vedas through storytelling is also believed to make it easier for Hindus to understand various essences of the teachings of the philosophy of life. Mahārṣi Wyāsa's Itihāsa

Mahābhārata is actually based on a historical background which contains the values of Vedic teachings. Therefore Itihāsa Mahābhārata is known as pūrwawṛtta which means events in ancient times.

Etymologically, Itihāsa comes from three syllables, namely Iti-ha-asa. Iti means this (like this), ha means that (so) and asa means it has happened. Thus Itihāsa can be interpreted that this event has indeed happened like that. The general view regarding Itihāsa Mahābhārata is that the series of stories contained in it contain many elements of fantasy, romance, heroic action and are also decorated with philosophical teachings and religious mythology. This is what gives the feel or characteristic of Itihāsa Mahābhārata as a work of spiritual literature. As a work of Hindu religious literature, Itihāsa Mahābhārata contains a variety of complex life values such as dialogues on philosophy of life, social politics, ideology and leadership theory, aesthetics, sociology, history, culture, morality and theology (Divinity) which can be used as guidelines or life guide. Itihāsa Mahābhārata was finally recognized as a representative thought idea from philosophical teachings as outlined in literary works. Overall Itihāsa Mahābhārata is a collection of encyclopedias which contain the essence of the sacred book of the Veda and is poured out through a story. Each generation that added ideas, knowledge, experience and narrated the story of the Mahābhārata in their own way has done much to popularize the Mahābhārata as we inherit it today. Ṛṣi Ugraśrāwa in Anukramaṇikā Parwa said in his beautiful verses: “No story on this earth can match the majesty of Mahābhārata. Whatever is in the Mahābhārata, is everywhere, present in life. Whatever is not in the Mahābhārata cannot be found anywhere.”

There are 18 parwa in Itihāsa Mahābhārata which are called Asta Daśa Parwa. One part of Asta Daśa Parwa which is the focus of study in this research is Aśwamedhika Parwa. Aśwamedhika Parwa is the fourteenth series of Asta Daśa Parwa which as a whole tells about the horse sacrifice ceremony (Aśwamedha Yajña) after the end of Bhāratayuddha in Kurukṣētra. Aśwamedhika Parwa itself consists of 2 sub-sections (Upaparwa), namely Aśwamedha Parwa and Anugīta Parwa. Aśwamedha Parwa tells about Yudhiṣṭhira who organizes the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony on the full moon day of Chaitra while Anugīta Parwa tells the fable story of a golden weasel. In Aśwamedha Parwa's story, the legitimacy of leadership based on Dharma has taught a leader that peace, prosperity and people's welfare must be prioritized without prioritizing personal interests. That is the Dharma for a leader which is widely described in the story of Aśwamedha Parwa. Legitimacy (recognition) to show hegemony (leadership domination) and instill power based on Dharma principles is the main obligation of a king in politics and government. Hegemony and leadership legitimacy essentially aims to gain public support so that a leader will easily establish the authority of his power. To realize this, Yudhiṣṭhira always adheres to the philosophy of Catur Puruṣārtha teachings (four goals in life) by realizing Artha, Kāma and Mokṣa based on Dharma. Artha is the worldly goal (wealth) for satisfying desires (Kāma) and sense gratification. Dharma is the absolute duty or path of truth to gain Artha and Kāma whereas Mokṣa (eternal liberation) will be the final spiritual goal of life.

It is true that the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony was the greatest event in the ancient life history of the Kṣatriyas. Broadly speaking, there are two main motives that are the goal of carrying out the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony, especially in the story of Aśwamedha Parwa, namely: (1) to show Yudhiṣṭhira's sovereign supremacy through expansion or territorial expansion, (2) to obtain legal recognition as well as to confirm Yudhiṣṭhira's position as Mahārāja in Hastinapura. After expanding the territory and getting recognition from other kings, the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony was only a symbolic means to declare and confirm Yudhiṣṭhira's position as Mahārāja in

Hastināpura. In this case it can be said that the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony was a symbolic means for Yudhiṣṭhira to declare the legitimacy of his leadership throughout Bhāratawaṛṣa. Although broadly speaking there are two main motives in carrying out the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony, Yudhiṣṭhira has another big agenda. Apart from establishing himself as a Cakravartin (world ruler), Yudhiṣṭhira also has a mission to spread Dharma throughout Bhāratawaṛṣa. In this case the opposing kings will be subdued first and for the kings who are willing to legally acknowledge Yudhiṣṭhira's sovereignty they will certainly be invited to join forces to build diplomatic or consolidated relations. In this regard, the following śloka texts describe support for the efforts made by Yudhiṣṭhira.

*yadi na praṇayed rājā daṇḍaṃ daṇḍyeṣvatandritaḥ
śūle matsyānivāpakṣyan durbalān balavattarāḥ* (Mānawadharmasastra VII.20)

Translation :

If the king does not pass judgment on those who deserve it, then the stronger ones will devour the weak like fish in a jar (Pudja & Sudharta, 2013).

*eṣo'nupaskṛtaḥ prokto yodhadharmaḥ sanātanaḥ
asmād dharmāna cyaveta kṣatriyo ghnan raṇe ripūn* (Mānawadharmasastra VII.98)

Translation :

Thus has been stated in the law of the blameless soldier; Kṣatriya had to attack his enemy in battle, that would not deviate from this law (Pudja & Sudharta, 2013).

The śloka quote explicitly indicates that the responsibility of a king is very large in terms of maintaining the legitimacy of the sovereignty of the kingdom he leads. The main goal is to create peace, prosperity and well-being for all people. To strengthen the legitimacy of his leadership throughout Bhāratawaṛṣa, Yudhiṣṭhira also carried out a magnificent and lively Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony. After the end of the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony, the story continues with Anugīta Parwa. Broadly speaking, Anugīta Parwa is an interpolation story (insertion) of narrators (narrators) who try to enrich the contents of the Mahābhārata by inserting additional stories in their own way. In Anugīta Parwa it is told that a weasel with golden fur came to the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony held by Yudhiṣṭhira. The golden mongoose later denounced the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony saying that the ritual was nothing more than symbolic and meaningless. It is true according to tradition in Ancient India that the Aśwamedha Yajña was a symbolic ceremony to establish the legitimacy of a ruler as Mahārāja. Even though there is such an assumption, an understanding of the importance of symbolic legitimacy is felt to be very important to explain. The philosophy of Tri Guṇa Yajña in this case has a very important role in narrating the implementation of the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony. With the narrative that has been described, it is necessary to emphasize that the focus of the studies to be discussed in this study are (1) how is the interpretation of the hegemony of leadership legitimacy in the story of Aśwamedha Parwa? (2) what is the relationship between legitimacy symbolically and the philosophy of Tri Guṇa Yajña in Anugīta Parwa's story?

Method

The object of study in this study is the story Aśwamedhika Parwa which consists of two episodes, namely Aśwamedha Parwa and Anugīta Parwa. The method used in this study is descriptive qualitative with an interpretive analysis model. This type of research is included in the literature study (library research) with the study of humanities studies. The approach used in this study is a hermeneutic approach, namely the interpretation of meanings or language. According to Ricoeur (2006, p.57)

hermeneutics is a theory for interpreting a text or literary work. This opinion is in line with Ahmad's statement (2018, p.13) which defines hermeutics as a method of interpretation including language analysis, context analysis and taking meaning from understanding and interpretation of text studies. Interpretation always appears when each subject looks at an object with various paradigms. Data analysis in this study includes several stages, namely observation, collection of literature sources, recording and interpretation. Primary data sources in this study are Mahābhārata books, especially the Aśwamedhika Parwa section, while secondary data sources include reference books, scientific journals, articles, e-books, websites and other sources relevant to the research.

The stages that serve as guidelines in the descriptive qualitative research method with interpretive analysis models include reduction, classification, data display, interpretation to drawing a conclusion. In the reduction stage, the data obtained during the research is first sorted and classified. Furthermore, at the classification stage, the data that has been sorted is then used to answer several problem objects. The data display stage is used to present information that has been analyzed based on problem classification. Interpretation stages are used to interpret the object of study in Aśwamedhika Parwa's story. The last stage is drawing a conclusion objectively and systematically. During the research, the researcher's activity is to observe and read various references carefully and make important notes regarding the issues raised in this article.

Results and Discussion

1. Hegemony Legitimacy of Leadership in Aśwamedha Parwa's Story

Aśwamedhika Parwa is the fourteenth series of Asta Daśa Parwa in the Mahābhārata story which as a whole tells about the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony. Yudhiṣṭhira performed the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony with the aim of purifying the Kurukṣētra after the end of Bhāratayuddha. The Aśwamedha Yajña organized by Yudhiṣṭhira is also coupled with other ceremonial rituals such as the Rājaśūya Yajña (offering into the sacred fire to establish the status of a king), Vājapeya Yajña (offering to the gods to invoke the blessings of eternal happiness or Mokṣa), Atirātra (doṣa redemption, worship and nocturnal offerings to the gods), Jyotiṣṭoma (great offering to obtain merit in Heaven) and Sarwamedha Yajña (ceremony to invoke the salvation of the universe). Right on the full moon day of Chaitra, the first stage of the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony was held with great fanfare. On instructions from Mahārṣi Wyāsa, Yudhiṣṭhira released a horse and Arjuna and the Hastināpura troops were assigned to guard the horse while traveling around the world. For a year the horse was released and followed by troops led by Arjuna with the mission of spreading Dharma throughout Bhāratavarṣa as well as conquering cruel (tyrannical) rulers. In accordance with the provisions in the Vedic scriptures, the horse will be released and allowed to roam for one year. The horse is free to go anywhere it wants, roaming the land or crossing the sea to prove Yudhiṣṭhira's greatness as Mahārāja. Of course, any area traversed by the horse will become the territory of Hastināpura under the reign of Yudhiṣṭhira.

The Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony actually had a motive to show Yudhiṣṭhira's hegemony (dominance of power) as a Mahārāja. In addition to expanding the territory of power, the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony has a symbolic function to strengthen the legitimacy (recognition) of Yudhiṣṭhira's leadership and sovereignty. Hegemony legitimacy of leadership has an important role to strengthen the position or position of a king in terms of instilling the influence of his power. A leader who has high legitimacy power has a tendency to influence his subordinates. This is because the legitimacy of a leader is absolute and must be followed by his followers or supporters. The trust of

followers in the leader is a measure to determine the legitimacy of leadership legally in the eyes of the law. This statement is in line with the opinion of Soekarso and Putong (2015) which states that legitimacy is a form of recognition, confirmation or validation of a leader's position. By having institutional and personal legitimacy, a leader with a position or authority will be able to influence his followers. Simply put, legitimacy can be interpreted as recognition and support from followers to a leader. Dharma-based leadership legitimacy carried out by Yudhiṣṭhira aims to build a government order by prioritizing the interests of the people above self-interest. It is undeniable that legitimacy is a form of recognition and support from followers to a leader. This also indicates that legitimacy is the main factor that determines the position or position of a leader.

The supporting factor for legitimacy is accountability, namely the level of trust of followers in a leader. Accountability seems to be a moral obligation for leaders who have received legal recognition from their followers. The belief of followers or supporters in the accountability of a leader will definitely be followed by the level of compliance as a form of public support. If a leader loses the trust and support of his followers, legitimacy will definitely not go well. This will certainly have an impact on the structure of government and the sovereignty of a state institution. Stable leadership will only occur if legitimacy is fully supported by accountability based on legal provisions. To gain legitimacy from followers, Surbakti (1992) states that there are three ways that can be taken, namely symbolic, procedural and material. In line with this statement, Hermawan (2001) argues regarding the three ways to gain legal legitimacy. Symbolically, legitimacy can be obtained by using symbols to influence others based on values and traditions in society. Procedural is a way to gain legitimacy through legitimate general elections. Materially, legitimacy can be obtained by providing material or promising welfare to the people. Of the three ways specifically for discussing the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony, the researcher classifies them into symbolic and material categories. This statement is supported by the following narration of Aśwamedha Parwa's story.

It is said that Yudhiṣṭhira is still hit by feelings of deep sorrow after the end of the Bhāratayuddha tragedy in Kurukṣētra. Bitter memories of the past war tragedies kept haunting his mind. In the midst of Yudhiṣṭhira's grief, Mahārṣi Wyāsa suddenly came to visit Hastināpura. Pāṇḍawa also welcomed Mahārṣi Wyāsa by offering Ārghya (holy water) and washing his feet. After offering the Ārghya, Yudhiṣṭhira said to Mahārṣi Wyāsa: “Mahāguru, I wish I could do penance and go to the forest to become an ascetic (Sanyāsin). What is the use of me being king over bloodshed? The doṣas during the war at Kurukṣētra kept clouding my mind and I felt unhappy after the victory.” Mahārṣi Wyāsa tried to reassure Yudhiṣṭhira by saying that everyone can purify themselves from sins through the performance of Tapa, Bratha and Yajña supported by dhāna puṇya offerings. According to Mahārṣi Wyāsa, it is better if Yudhiṣṭhira performs the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony which is coupled with the Rājaśūya Yajña, Vājapeya Yajña, Atirātra, Jyotiṣṭoma ceremonies and closes with the performance of Sarwamedha Yajña. The yajña ceremony is very important to be performed to get the blessings of the gods. Yudhiṣṭhira also believes that the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony can purify the Kurukṣētra realm after the occurrence of Bhāratayuddha. The Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony will be a means of penance due to the killings that occur between brothers and sisters. The problem Yudhiṣṭhira faced was that he was unable to perform the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony let alone offer dhāna puṇya even in a small amount. Hastināpura's royal treasury remained empty and without any wealth after the end of Bhāratayuddha. Yudhiṣṭhira certainly did not have the heart to ask the kings in other

kingdoms who were his friends for help. They are all still grieving after the end of the great war at Kurukṣētra.

To overcome this problem Mahārṣi Wyāsa then presented the story of Bhagawān Paraśurāma and Rāja Māruta (a descendant of the Ikṣwāku dynasty). Mahārṣi Wyāsa told Yudhiṣṭhira that on the top of the Himālaya mountain there is a very large amount of gold. The gold had been abandoned and abandoned by the Brahmins. Previously, Bhagawān Paraśurāma once performed the Tulapūruṣa ceremony on the top of the Himālaya mountain. Bhagawān Paraśurāma offered immense amounts of gold to the Brahmins. But the Brahmins took only what was needed, while the rest was left there. Besides Bhagawān Paraśurāma, formerly King Māruta also performed Mahāyajña at the top of the Himālaya mountain and left many treasures. Mahārṣi Wyāsa also advised Yudhiṣṭhira to go to the Himālaya mountain and look for the treasures needed to fill the royal treasury as well as perform the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony. Hearing this, Yudhiṣṭhira and his brothers decided to go to the Himalayas on a treasure-seeking mission. Before leaving for the Himālaya mountain, Pāṇḍawa and the Hastināpura troop first worshiped Lord Śiwa to ask for the gift of salvation on the way to find treasure.

With the blessing of Lord Śiwa, Pāṇḍawa also excavated and found countless kinds of treasures. After getting the treasure, Yudhiṣṭhira and his entourage returned to the palace and their arrival was greeted with great joy by all the people of Hastināpura. A few days after Pāṇḍawa returned from the Himālaya mountain, Yudhiṣṭhira asked Mahārṣi Wyāsa for instructions to perform the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony. Mahārṣi Wyāsa wisely told Yudhiṣṭhira that the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony is one of the great ceremonies that can purify all sins. There is no doubt that by worshiping the gods and performing the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony, all the Pāṣa-doṣas of the Pāṇḍawa during the war would be forgiven. Those doṣas will be sanctified by the light of the gods who will bless the entire universe. Mahārṣi Wyāsa also advised Yudhiṣṭhira to prepare all the ceremonial facilities and equipment properly and ordered a Sūta (horse expert) to choose the best horse. In accordance with the provisions in the Vedic scriptures, the horse will be released and allowed to wander for one year. The horse is free to go wherever it wants and any territory it traverses will become the domain of Yudhiṣṭhira. This was done to prove Yudhiṣṭhira's sovereignty as Mahārāja.

Right on the full moon day of Chaitra, the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony was held with great fanfare. Mahārṣi Wyāsa, Mahārṣi Yajñawalkya and Mahārṣi Pulaha were honored to preside over the ceremonial rituals of the Aśwamedha Yajña. After completing the worship, Mahārṣi Wyāsa asked Yudhiṣṭhira to release the sacrificial horse. On instructions from Mahārṣi Wyāsa, Arjuna was given the task of guarding the sacrificed horse during his journey around the world. For a year the horse was released and followed by troops led by Arjuna with the mission of spreading Dharma throughout Bhāratavarṣa as well as conquering cruel (tyrannical) rulers. First the horse moved to explore the northern and eastern regions. One by one foreign kingdoms were bypassed and conquered such as Senāwindu, Modāpura, Susānkula, Uraga, Rocamāna, Kumārapura, Śumāla, Bāhlīka, Lohaṇapura, Niṣkuṭa, Kokanadā, Hariwarṣa, Pārasīka, Abhisārī, Bahiriri, Puṇḍra, Simhala, Suhma and ṆanṚan. When he entered the territory of the Trigarta kingdom, Arjuna encountered resistance from the descendants of Raja Suśārma, who was an ally of the Kauravas when Bhāratayuddha occurred. In a battle, Arjuna managed to conquer the Trigarta kingdom and continued his journey to the Pragjyotiśa kingdom. In the Pragjyotiśa kingdom, Arjuna again encountered resistance from Rāja Bajradatta (an ally of the Kurawas). After going through a long battle for four days, King Bajradatta finally surrendered and agreed to acknowledge Yudhiṣṭhira's sovereignty.

In the next journey the horse followed by Arjuna entered the territory of the Sindhu kingdom. In the Sindhu kingdom, Arjuna succeeded in defeating the Saindhawa forces who were once allies of the Kauravas. Next the horse entered the territory of the kingdom of Mañipūra which was ruled by Babruwāhana, son of Arjuna and Goddess Citrāngadā. After passing through the kingdom of Mañipūra, the horse passed through the kingdom of Rājagraha and Arjuna succeeded in defeating King Meghasandhi. From the kingdom of Rājagraha, the horse continued its journey through the lands of Yawana, Bānggala (Bānglades), Pundrapura and Kosala. In that region Arjuna subdued many foreign kings as well as the Mlecchas. The horse then entered the territory of the Chedi kingdom and Arjuna succeeded in conquering King Sarabha. Then after leaving the Chedi kingdom, the horse entered the kingdoms of Dārada, Kaśmīra, Kinnara, Kāśi, Khaśa, Parada Aṅga, Tanggaṇa and Rṣika. The kings in the kingdom were all conquered by Arjuna. On his way back to Hastināpura, Arjuna conquered the notorious kingdoms of Dasarṇa, Niṣāda, Andhra and Mahiśaka. The horse then continued on to the kingdoms of Śūrasena, Gokarṇā, Prabhāsa and Dwārakā until it finally arrived in the region known as the land of the five rivers (Pañcanada or Punjab). From Punjab, the horse continued its journey to the Gandhāra kingdom. It was in this region of the Gandhāra kingdom that a fierce battle took place between Arjuna and King Wiprachitti, son of Śakuni. Arjuna finally won the battle and King Wiprachitti also offered Ārghya as a token of friendship to Yudhiṣṭhira.

From the Gandhāra kingdom, the horse resumed its journey towards Hastināpura. Arjuna with the sacrificed horse returned to Hastinapura and his arrival was greeted with great joy. Finally, on the appointed day, the full moon of Chaitra, Yudhiṣṭhira performed a self-purification ritual and held the Aśwamedha Yajña and Rājaśūya Yajña ceremonies. The sacrificial horse that had been wandering throughout the country was finally sacrificed and its meat was poured into the sacred fire. In the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony besides sacrificing horses as the main means of offering, Yudhiṣṭhira also sacrificed as many as 300 types of animals and plants. The various types of animals offered in the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony consist of animals that live in water, land and air. Horses of the most important types, selected bulls, buffaloes, aquatic animals, wild animals, birds, reptiles, insects to all kinds of plants that live in the lowlands as well as in the forests and mountains. Various kinds of food were specially prepared for the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony to entertain 100,000 Brāhmaṇa people. The Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony is marked by the offering of dhāna puṇya and the giving of abundant food accompanied by prayers and hopes to invoke the reward for the welfare of the universe. Mahārṣi Wyāsa, Kṛṣṇa and Pāṇḍawa closed the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony with the Sarwamedha Yajña ritual to pray for the welfare of all mankind as well as purify the land of Kurukṣetra after the Bhāratayuddha tragedy. The Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony is also marked by dakṣhiṇā (offerings) in the form of an abundance of gold. Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, Waiśyas and Śūdras also get dakṣhiṇā according to their share.

Based on the description of the story, it can be concluded that Yudhiṣṭhira was supposed to carry out Dharma Kṣatriya as a leader. To show the hegemonic legitimacy of leadership based on Dharma, the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony was a valid symbol at that time. In today's modern era, the way to legitimize leadership with the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony has never been done again. Therefore, it is important to convey the legitimacy of leadership in Aśwamedha Parwa's story so that people can understand it. The way of legitimating leadership in the modern era is of course different from the way of legitimacy in the classical (ancient) era. Establishing diplomatic and multilateral relations that cover political, social, economic and cultural affairs between countries is a

way of legitimizing leadership in the modern era. The legitimacy of leadership in the classical era, which was full of symbolic legitimacy, was increasingly unknown or even abandoned. This is because legitimacy in the modern era does not allow a leader to carry out large ceremonies such as the Aśwamedha Yajña. The legitimacy of leadership in the modern era is more likely to be carried out procedurally and materially, causing a crisis of trust in society. In this day and age the legitimacy of modern leadership seems to be packaged in a perfectional way, but in fact the actions taken lead to personal interests. Seeing the phenomena that have occurred recently, it is important for a moment to flashback to the legitimacy efforts that have been carried out by previous Hindu kings.

The Itihāsa Mahābhārata section of Aśwamedha Parwa has inspired mankind a lot that hegemonic leadership based on Dharma is not just symbolizing but focuses on the teachings of morality. Yudhiṣṭhira has organized the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony three times with campaigns to spread Dharma teachings throughout Bhāratawaṛṣa. Although the Aśwamedha Yajña leads to expansion of territory, Yudhiṣṭhira does not have greedy motives to demonstrate his supremacy. Yudhiṣṭhira never even forced other kings to recognize his sovereignty. One of the excerpts of the dialogue in the story Aśwamedha Parwa which describes the characteristics of the King of Dharma in Yudhiṣṭhira is found in chapter 72. Yudhiṣṭhira says to Arjuna: "My brother Arjuna, you must guard and protect that horse during his wandering. Only you are capable of this task. Whoever among the kings all over the world who tries to grab this horse and block its way, try not to fight. If the kings put up a fight, try diplomacy first. Fighting is the last resort if diplomacy cannot be attempted. After they acknowledge your superiority and the sovereignty of our kingdom, invite them to participate in the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony that I will organize. Thus my brother Arjuna, go ahead with the spirit of struggle with the mission of spreading the Dharma. But always remember my message, don't cause hostility. As much as possible with the Kṣatriya soul, cultivate friendship with kings all over the world."

The dialogue excerpt between Yudhiṣṭhira and Arjuna can be interpreted that Yudhiṣṭhira wants to show hegemony (dominance) of his power through two ways, namely diplomacy and battle. To gain leadership legitimacy, Yudhiṣṭhira did it symbolically through the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony. The legitimacy of leadership hegemony in Aśwamedha Parwa's story does not always emphasize the power to force others to acknowledge the sovereignty of a king. Yudhiṣṭhira seeks to symbolically and materially demonstrate the hegemonic legitimacy of leadership based on Dharma by holding the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony. A horse released by Yudhiṣṭhira symbolizes the power whereby the horse is allowed to roam freely around the world for one full year. Every area that the horse passes through will become the domain of Yudhiṣṭhira as the organizer of the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony. The kings who tried to block the horse's march were opponents of Yudhiṣṭhira's sovereignty. The kings who oppose Yudhiṣṭhira will be invited to diplomacy or even subdued through a battle. After Yudhiṣṭhira received recognition from other kings, the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony was a symbol of his legitimacy as a Mahārāja. Materially Yudhiṣṭhira has offered a lot of food and gold in abundance as dhāna puṇya for the invited guests attending the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony. The hegemony of leadership legitimacy based on Dharma has made Yudhiṣṭhira a Cakravartin (world ruler) who has full authority in every decision-making. However, Yudhiṣṭhira as the King of Dharma still gives independent rights to other kings with the consideration that these kings are not slaves who can be governed arbitrarily.

Yudhiṣṭhira even invited the kings throughout Bhāratawaṛṣa to jointly strengthen solidarity and adhere to the teachings of the Dharma by upholding morality and integrity for the welfare of the people. The efforts to legitimize leadership carried out by Yudhiṣṭhira besides aiming to strengthen the legitimacy of his position as a king also aim to build cross-social community consolidation. This was done by Yudhiṣṭhira to minimize the potential for conflict that might occur between the leader and his followers. After the end of the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony, Yudhiṣṭhira also built cross-social community consolidation as a support for the legitimacy of leadership based on Dharma. The researcher's interpretation of cross-social community consolidation tends to lead to classic ways which at that time were still considered to have effectiveness in their application. By implementing cross-social consolidation, Yudhiṣṭhira's community has been able to close the gaps in conflicts that could lead to conflict. Classic ways that are commonly used in implementing cross-social community consolidation as supporting the legitimacy of leadership based on Dharma are as follows.

- a. Strengthen, reinforce and unite the solidarity of relations between social communities. In this case the king and the people are expected to be able to build a harmonization to realize certain similarities.
- b. Uniting every element of the social community into the same vision and mission so as to produce support from various parties.
- c. Strengthening social sociology aspects by placing the people above the personal interests of the king. This is based on the premise that without the support of the people, leaders will mean nothing.
- d. Ensuring prosperity and peace to avoid war conflicts that result in the instability of the government system.
- e. In the political field, consolidation can be used as an effort to review all policies that have been taken. Consolidation can also be used as a means of diplomacy to prevent internal and external conflicts.

Legitimacy of leadership through cross-social consolidation of the community has an important role in the government system which functions as a deterrent to conflicts and disagreements that may occur between leaders and their followers. In line with the implementation of cross-social consolidation, leaders (Yudhiṣṭhira) will be faced with institutional legitimacy capabilities or personal legitimacy abilities. In terms of institutional legitimacy, Yudhiṣṭhira has tried to adapt himself according to the expectations of the people to create good governance based on Dharma. Yudhiṣṭhira has also prioritized the interests of his people regardless of social status. This was one way to convince the people that Yudhiṣṭhira was a leader worthy of support. In terms of personal legitimacy ability, Yudhiṣṭhira has shown his wisdom as a leader. This ability is needed as an effort to instill influence on the people and other kings so that they are willing to voluntarily follow whatever Yudhiṣṭhira's ideas are. Of course, Yudhiṣṭhira's leadership which is based on Dharma has been able to collectively influence and invite others to participate in glorifying Dharma as the main aspect of human life. To exercise his political authority and leadership, Yudhiṣṭhira carries a very heavy moral responsibility with the aim of maintaining the continuity of the relationship between the king and his people. After the completion of the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony, Yudhiṣṭhira even swore in the name of the gods and ancestors of the Bhārata dynasty that he was ready to serve himself above the interests of the people.

Thus the symbolization of the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony can be said as an effort to legitimize spiritually and personally. When the people and other kings support Yudhiṣṭhira, at the same time Yudhiṣṭhira will carry out his duties as a leader on behalf

of the gods and ancestors of the Bhāraṭa dynasty. This can be interpreted as a relation between vertical and horizontal lines in personal legitimacy. The vertical lines symbolize that Yudhiṣṭhira has spiritual responsibility to the gods and ancestors of the Bhāraṭa dynasty. While the horizontal line symbolizes that Yudhiṣṭhira has a moral responsibility to the people and his supporters. Without strong institutional and personal legitimacy, Yudhiṣṭhira's leadership will have an impact on weakening government stability. Weak government stability is certain to occur due to the failure of a leader to carry out a consensus (agreement) of political legitimacy.

2. Symbolic Relationship between Legitimacy and Tri Guṇa Yajña Philosophy in Anugīta Parwa's Story

In the Aśwamedha Parwa section, it has been told in detail that Yudhiṣṭhira held the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony in a luxurious and festive manner. Symbolically the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony aims to confirm or legitimize the legitimacy of Yudhiṣṭhira's leadership throughout Bhāratawaṛṣa. In the Anugīta Parwa section there is a fable of a golden weasel who attended the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony. It is said that after the completion of the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony, a weasel with golden fur suddenly appeared. His appearance was accompanied by a roar in the sky. The golden-furred weasel cried out: "O Brahmins and kings, this great ceremony is nothing compared to the great yajña that I witnessed some time ago at Kurukṣētra!" Hearing the cry of the miraculous mongoose, one of the Brahmins approached him and asked: "O golden mongoose, where did you come from? Why do you denounce the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony of the virtuous and beneficent Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira? Do you have deep knowledge of the yajña ceremony?" We have never once heard of a yajña ceremony at Kurukṣētra, let alone a great yajña that surpasses the splendor and majesty of the Aśwamedha Yajña." The golden weasel then replied: "O noble Brahmins, what I say is true. Truly this ceremony cannot match the blessings that the Brāhmaṇa Uñchāwṛtti family had received who had offered one prastha of wheat flour."

The golden weasel then related that some time ago in Kurukṣētra there were four poor Brāhmaṇas. The four Brāhmaṇas strictly adhered to the Uñchāwṛtti vow, namely to live like doves, looking for food by picking up leftover wheat or corn from people's fields. Brāhmaṇa Uñchāwṛtti lived together with his wife, son and daughter-in-law. Their meal times are fixed, which is only six hours a day. If within six hours they do not get food, they will continue to fast all day. They will eat the next day within six hours and so on. One day in the month of Jyeṣṭhā, the sun's heat was at its peak. As usual Brāhmaṇa Uñchāwṛtti and his family were picking grain in a field. They were hot, hungry and very tired from a hard day's work collecting grain scraps. The Brahmins had spent the first six hours eating. The next six hours they finally managed to collect one wheat prastha. The wheat is then finely ground into flour and cooked into a gruel which is then divided equally. After saying the prayers and pouring the offering into the sacred fire, Brāhmaṇa Uñchāwṛtti divided the oatmeal into four equal parts. Each of them gets a share of one kuḍawa (the size of two palms). When they were about to eat wheat porridge, suddenly came a hermit who looked exhausted and hungry.

Brāhmaṇa Uñchāwṛtti welcomed the ascetic by offering Ārghya (holy water) and washing his feet. After offering the Ārghya to his guest, Brāhmaṇa Uñchāwṛtti then offered a food offering of one kuḍawa of barley gruel. The hermit immediately ate it with gusto and after finishing one kuḍawa of oatmeal, he said that he was still hungry and his hunger had not been satisfied. The Brāhmaṇa Uñchāwṛtti family (his wife, son and daughter-in-law) sincerely offered his food to the ascetic. The ascetic accepted the food offering with pleasure and was satisfied with the service of the Brāhmaṇa Uñchāwṛtti

family. After finishing eating the food, the hermit suddenly disappeared from sight. The ascetic was actually an incarnation of Lord Yamā who had come to test the steadfastness of the Dharma of the Brāhmaṇa Uñchāwṛtti family. Lord Yamā also showed his form and bestowed the blessing of residing in the Heaven realm on Brāhmaṇa Uñchāwṛtti and his family. After Brāhmaṇa Uñchāwṛtti with his wife, son and daughter-in-law departed for the Heaven realm, a weasel came out of his hiding hole. The weasel then entered the Brāhmaṇa Uñchāwṛtti's hut in search of food. Suddenly the weasel's head turned golden after smelling the smoke of wheat porridge coming from the fireplace. Part of the weasel's body was also exposed to drops of Ārghya (Sacred water) provided by Brāhmaṇa Uñchāwṛtti for his guest (Lord Yamā). The remnants of wheat flour added to the power of tapa bratha from Brāhmaṇa Uñchāwṛtti made part of the weasel's body turn golden.

After telling the story, the golden weasel said: “See the blessing of Brāhmaṇa Uñchāwṛtti's offering at Kurukṣētra. Part of the servant's body has turned golden in color. So that my whole body is golden, I never stop visiting every yajña ceremony held by kings from various countries. However, the color of the servant's body did not change in the slightest. Recently I heard the news that Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira was conducting the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony. I came to this place with the hope of getting a blessing so that my whole body can be golden. The unfortunate thing is that until the end of this ceremony, the servant's body color has not changed. That is why I presumptuously say that this Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony is not comparable to Brāhmaṇa Uñchāwṛtti's offering of one wheat flour prastha at Kurukṣētra. With the offering of one prastha of wheat flour, parts of my body have turned golden. Such a grand and splendid ceremony is nothing compared to Brāhmaṇa Uñchāwṛtti's offering of one wheat flour prastha at Kurukṣētra.” After saying these words, the golden fur fox disappeared from sight.

The incident of the emergence of the golden furry weasel finally sparked debate among philosophers. There are those who claim that such sacrificial methods are incorrect and deviate from the Vedas. There are also those who argue that carrying out the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony with the intention of obtaining noble merits is proof that Yudhiṣṭhira has not fully understood the philosophy and essence of yajña. Philosophers also argue that there is no teaching that justifies the killing of animals during the yajña ceremony. The Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony performed by Yudhiṣṭhira has drained a lot of animal blood and all its blessings have become imperfect. With such killings, the ceremony has deviated from the truth. The killing of animals cannot be said to be an act of Dharma. Some other Brāhmaṇas are of the opinion that yajña according to Dharma injunctions is worship accompanied by offerings of leaves, flowers, fruits or seeds and holy water. It is such a ceremony that will produce glorious rewards because it comes from acts of righteousness as the following śloka quote.

*patraṃ puṣpaṃ phalaṃ toyam
yo me bhaktyā prayacchati
tad ahaṃ bhaktyupahṛtam
aśnāmi prayatātmanah*
(Bhagawadgītā IX.26)

Translation :

Anyone who sincerely offers Me; leaves, flowers, fruits or water, offerings out of love and coming from a sacred heart, I accept (Mantra, 1997)

Overall, the interpretation of the golden weasel fable in Anugīta Parwa is closely related to the story of interpolation (insertion) whose content is similar to the Purāṇa mythology. Various manuscripts about the Mahābhārata found in India in the early 7th

century AD to the mid-19th century AD show inconsistencies in the story so that historians doubt and question the authenticity of the text (Ganguli, 2012, p. 110). Anugīta Parwa with the fable of the golden weasel is a work of revolutionary interpolation which outlines a critique of the idea of performing yajña on a large scale. This is in line with the thoughts of Śrī Śaṅkarācārya, the founder of the Advaita school of philosophy (absolute monotheism) who strongly opposed the ritual system of performing yajña and tried to replace it with the Vedanta philosophy. Advaita philosophy massively from Śrī Śaṅkarācārya began to spread in India in the 7th century AD to the 12th century AD. When examined from various points of view, in essence yajña can be performed in various forms according to one's abilities. Using animals and plants as a means of offering yajña, both are justified because nature has provided everything to sustain life.

Simple offerings and gifts based on sincerity, have the same value as high-level Tapa Bratha. Service, compassion for fellow beings, living the Brahmāchārya life, being selfless and sincere, speaking only the truth, being generous, having firm faith, forgiving, these are the foundations of truth in yajña performance. An offering made by a foolish and sinful person, even though the offering is of high value in terms of value and amount, will certainly be meaningless. The offerings made by sinners will not result in any glorious merits either in this world or in the hereafter. Ignorant people who want to get noble merits by performing yajña ceremonies, using the wealth acquired through deceit, then such people will never get noble rewards. The majesty of the yajña in the form of offerings is not measured by the size and splendor of the ceremony, but what is most important is the purity and sincerity of the people performing the yajña. The location of the majesty of yajna is in sincerity, not in its splendor or greatness. When viewed from the nature of its implementation, the quality of yajña is actually influenced by the characteristics of the Tri Guṇa, including the following.

- a. Sāttwika Yajña is an offering or yajña based on a sincere and selfless feeling in accordance with the instructions of religious literature.

*aphalākāṅkṣibhir yajño
viddhi-dṛṣṭe ya ijjate
yaṣṭavyam ece' ti manaḥ
samādhāya sa sāttvikaḥ
(Bhagawadgītā XVII.11)*

Translation :

Yajñas that are given according to the literature, by those who do not expect anything in return and firmly believe that it is their duty to give yajñas are Sāttwika, whether (Mantra, 1997).

- b. Rājasika Yajña is an offering or yajña performed solely for the purpose of showing off wealth and bound to obtain its results.

*abhisamdhāya tu phālaṁ
dambhārtham api cai va yat
ijjate bhārata-śreṣṭha
tam yajñam viddhi rājasam
(Bhagawadgītā XVII.12)*

Translation :

But what is given with the expectation of a return or to show off; know O Bhārata (Arjuna), that yajña is Rājasika, passionate (Mantra, 1997).

- c. Tāmasika Yajña is an offering or yajña that is performed without guidance from religious literature and is based on self-interest and not based on sincere belief.

*viddhihinam asṛṣṭānnam
mantrahinam adakṣiṇām
śraddhāviraḥitam yajñam
tāmasam paricakṣate*
(Bhagawadgītā XVII.13)

Translation :

Yajñas that are not according to instructions, with no food distributed, no mantras, verses chanted, and no dhāna puṇya dakṣiṇā given, without faith, they call yajñas which are Tāmasika, foolish (Mantra, 1997).

The story of the golden weasel in Anuḡita Parwa seems to provide a kind of criticism and awareness to the public so that they do not boast or boast about the majesty of the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony which Yudhiṣṭhira held on a large scale. Brāhmaṇa Uñchāwṛtti's offering clearly differs substantially from Yudhiṣṭhira's offering during the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony. Brāhmaṇa Uñchāwṛtti routinely performs abstract yajñas such as Tapa, Bratha and Upawāsa to purify his soul from sensual desires. Unlike the case with Yudhiṣṭhira who routinely performs real yajñas such as Rājaśūya Yajña, Vājapeya Yajña Atirātra, Jyotiṣṭoma, Aśwamedha Yajña and Sarwamedha Yajña. In actual implementation of yajña, Yudhiṣṭhira always offers dhāna puṇya with the aim of developing a sense of sincerity which will lead him to Wairāgya (detachment). Essentially yajña which is both abstract and real both emphasize sincerity but substantially both have different goals. Yajña which is abstract in nature aims to purify oneself and obtain a noble reward while yajña which is real like the Aśwamedha Yajña aims to make Yudhiṣṭhira gain recognition (legitimacy) for his hegemony of power. The priority of the Aśwamedha Yajña is the celebration with the offering of dhāna puṇya which confirms that there is some element of importance to the ceremony.

Holistically, legitimacy has a close relationship with the implementation of yajña. Even though the meaning is only symbolic, religious life cannot be separated from the implementation of yajña. According to the Hindu tradition in India, every form of ritual certainly has a philosophical meaning in it. Almost all symbols and mythologies are implemented in religious ceremonial rituals. At first glance, it seems difficult to distinguish between the realm of religion and the realm of mythology which has merged into a tradition. One of the forms of ceremonial rituals that had to be carried out by kings in ancient India was Aśwamedha Yajña by pursuing worldly happiness while in power. The horse sacrifice in the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony is a kind of prestigious symbol of a king. The use of horses as a means of offering has deep roots since Vedic times because it was believed that the horse is one of the sacred animals. The horse is the symbol of a noble ruler, strength, intelligence, free spirit and freedom. The use of horses in the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony is a form of respect both spiritually and abstractly. From time to time, respect is given to a king and in an abstract way, respect is given to the gods. In this case there is a kind of interaction between politics (legitimacy) and religion through the implementation of the Aśwamedha Yajña ritual. Politics and religion cannot be separated, as explained in the following śloka.

*rājapraiṣyam kṛṣidhanam jīvanam ca vanijyayā
kauṭilyam kaulaṭeyam ca kusīdam ca vivarjayet*
(Śānṭhi Parwa 12.63.3)

Translation :

If politics has disappeared, religious knowledge will also have disappeared, all the rules of life will be destroyed, all human obligations will be neglected. Politics is a haven for all. Only politics can bring about all actions, only politics can unite all knowledge, only politics can unite the whole world (Ganguli, 2021).

When viewed from a political perspective, the legitimacy wrapped in the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony is a symbol to show the greatness of a king as a world ruler. When the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony is connected with the philosophy of the Tri Guṇa Yajña, of course, it gives rise to various interpretations. The researcher interprets the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony with the Tri Guṇa Yajña philosophy based on the analysis of the story study as follows.

a. Sāttwika Yajña

Yudhiṣṭhira has carried out the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony with sincerity and selflessness according to the instructions of religious literature. The preparations for the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony were carried out as carefully as possible in accordance with the instructions of the sacred scriptures. Worship to the gods, pouring offerings into the sacred fire accompanied by the chanting of Vedic mantras and dakṣhiṇā which have also been offered with sincerity and humility is a form of implementation of Sāttwika Yajña.

b. Rājasika Yajña

The Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony is marked by great celebration, fanfare and luxury with abundant offerings of dhāna puṇya. All of that is seen as a form of imagery to gain popularity by showing off the excitement and luxury of the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony.

c. Tāmasika Yajña

Mahārṣi Wyāsa provides views regarding the debate among philosophers about the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony which is considered contrary to the Dharma. With great wisdom Mahārṣi Wyāsa said: “A fool who wants to earn great merit by performing rituals, using wealth acquired through deceitful acts, such a person will never enjoy the blessings of yajña. Ignorant and sinful people who hypocritically use the Dharma veil and then make offerings to the Brahmins, they have actually been able to deceive the people around them. It is as if they are seen to have put the truth into practice, that is Tāmasika Yajña.”

Conclusion

Many believe that Aśwamedhika Parwa is a collection of narrative stories that are interpolated with various stories, one of which is the fable of the golden weasel. This is what makes Aśwamedhika Parwa's story line irrelevant to the original Mahābhārata story. There are many Manuscripts about Aśwamedhika Parwa that differ from generation to generation. Overall Aśwamedhika Parwa tells about the implementation of the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony organized by Yudhiṣṭhira to strengthen the hegemony of Dharma-based leadership legitimacy throughout Bhāratawarṣa. To obtain legal legitimacy, there are three ways that can be taken, namely symbolic, procedural and material. the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony itself falls into the category of symbolic and material. Symbolically the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony aims to gain legitimacy (recognition) of Yudhiṣṭhira's leadership and sovereignty. Materially the Aśwamedha Yajña ceremony is marked by the offering of dhāna puṇya in the form of gold and an abundance of food. The hegemony of leadership legitimacy based on Dharma has made Yudhiṣṭhira a Mahārāja who has full authority over kings who are willing to acknowledge his sovereignty. Even so, Yudhiṣṭhira as the King of Dharma still gives independent rights to other kings based on democratic principles, not based on the desire to colonize. Yudhiṣṭhira in this case wants to invite the kings all over Bhāratawarṣa to hold firmly to the teachings of the Dharma by upholding morality and integrity for the welfare of the people.

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