

TERMS OF REFERENCE
REFLECTIONS ON THE MEANING OF THE THREE ISSUES GANDHIAN
IN INTERPRETING THE PRACTICES OF RELIGIOUS LIFE IN THE COMMUNITY
(*non-violence, the environment and education*)
(inspirations and concrete examples from the late Gedong Bagoes Oka: concepts and praxis)
TALK SHOW SERIES IN CELEBRATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF
PEACE 21 SEPTEMBER 2021
AND THE 153RD ANNIVERSARY OF GANDHI JAYANTI
AND THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF MS GEDONG BAGOES OKA.
Saturday, 2 October; Friday 8 October and Friday, 15 October 2021
14:00-16:00 WIB/15:00-17:00 WITA/16:00-18:00 WIT

CONTEXT

Amid insecurity during the covid-19 pandemic, where several different variants have emerged and have caused many human victims in different parts of the world, not least in Indonesia, there is still optimism and hope to continue the journey of life into the future.

Indeed, from the data from March 2020 until the end of September 2021, victims of covid-19 in Indonesia amounted to 140,954 people¹. Fantastic figures, which forces us to practice counting the daily death curve. Then, the question is whether there is still life to be carried on by those remaining on earth? What life activities would there be, and what would its contents, type and form be like in response to all the experience and lessons learned during the pandemic 2020-2021?

This is, from the experience of almost two years with this pandemic, are there any positive, constructive, reflective and optimistic lessons in every person, as individuals and social groups: family, religious institutions (the religious leaders, figures and followers, communities/groups), government, education environment, the business and tourism world, civil society organisations, and others, to organise the future of family, societal, and national life in the name of religious life? The answer, of course, is there is still! That means that concrete praxis from critical and positive lessons or reflections is needed and very important to fill the space of hope and expectation in the life of religion and beliefs amidst the life of the society and nation in Indonesia. Thus, such lessons become the motivation and "compass" of our future journey with attitudes, activities, and strategies that are positive and beneficial to all and the universe, no exception. Some examples include changing the mindset and lifestyle, including

¹ Data from the COVID 19 TASK FORCE of the Government of INDONESIA as of 23 September 2021

respecting one's own life, family and community, so that it is meaningful to others who are different and solidarity with anyone who needs help, humanitarian solidarity. This change also includes respecting and seriously being willing to take care of nature, the surrounding environment, water, forests, which have been increasingly exploited due to human selfishness and greed who do not care about living together.

Everyone needs to be aware to practice the purpose of life, which requires each other to quicken each other, not destroy and kill for any reason and in any way. That is the way of human life that appreciates and is grateful for the great work of the Creator.

Every 21 September, the world, including Indonesia, celebrates "International Day of Peace," especially among interfaith youth groups in various regions, which is important and interesting. It is a good "sign" that PEACE is still expected in Indonesia and needs to be prayed for and fought for. Why? "Peace" and "reconciliation" are not synonymous with "independence". Peace and reconciliation are very dependent on the circumstances and the existence of living and people's lives in a country that already has INDEPENDENCE. In other words, even though it has attained "Independence" but life is not peaceful among its citizens, horizontally or vertically, that "Independence" is not beneficial to the lives of its citizens, the lives of its people, the life of the nation as a whole, only a "symbolisation" of history.

Then, the question is, what is the relationship between this International Day of Peace and Reflection on the significance of Gandhian philosophy in celebration of 153 years of Gandhi Jayanti and 100 years of Ms Gedong Bagoes Oka Jayanti in being religious amidst social and national life in Indonesia in the present and future context?

THREE LEARNING ISSUES

One of the essential and concrete things from Mahatma Gandhi's exemplary life is about the importance of making changes utilising "non-violence", which he later elaborates into what he calls "seven social sins": a) Wealth without work; b) Pleasure without conscience; c) Education without character; d) Commerce without morality; e) Science without humanity; f) Worship without sacrifice; g) Politics without principle.² These seven things can be said to be pre-requisites for creating a peaceful social and national life for peace. Everything is a reflection of the practice of living together without violence. Preferably, these seven things are also positive criticisms of all religious actors, from religious leaders and figures to religious followers, including in the public elite in any institution in this country (executive, legislative, judicial) and investors and people in business, tourism developers.

² Gedong Gandhi Ashram activity book notes, Candi Dasa.

In Indonesia, Mrs. Gedong Bagoes Oka was a Balinese Hindu woman who was consistent with her commitment and integrity to voice and practice these things in and through her life. Since getting to know Mahatma Gandhi's thoughts, Ms Gedong thought it appropriate to practice it, among other things, with her Gandhi Ashram, which she founded in 1976 at Candi Dasa, Karangasem Bali. She was one of the president council members of the World Conference of Religions and Peace (WCRP, now Religions for Peace/RfP International) and later honorary president of the same institution. She attended the ACRP inauguration in Tokyo in 1976.

Everything was for PEACE: peace among human beings, between man and the universe and man and the Creator. Not only in the form of concepts, mantras, rituals, religious texts memorisations, from the Veda and the Bible and wise words and quotes but and even especially in the concrete praxis of life in living together with other people, whatever their background, especially the poor, the oppressed, victims of injustice; also live together with the natural environment, even to the point of prioritising the use of various natural health essentials, living simply and independently. By appreciating healthy life and revitalising each other like that, everyone learns not to act violently to anyone and anything. That is part of the basic educational process: educating oneself for the big goal, namely a peaceful life together.

In celebration of International Day of Peace and Reflection on 153 years of Gandhi Jayanti and 100 years of Ms Gedong Bagoes Oka, we chose 3 (three) issues from several Gandhian main issues: non-violence, environment and education. They are relevant, based on reflections on experiences during the pandemic, the reality of the social and national life dynamics in this Republic. A Republic that still needs a "compass" to direct the thoughts, conscience, and attitude of every citizen, religious institutions, government, educational institutions, business people, tourism actors/ developers, and society in general, including the political elites. Therefore, it is essential to discuss in this 3 (three) talk show series

First: non-violence.

Non-violence is not only related to physical violence, conflicts and killings. In a broader sense, it relates to discrimination because of the "majority vs minority". It relates to discrimination by exploiting others because their gender, lack of education, and economy make them exploitable (human trafficking). It also includes using politics as a tool for power – the disparage and oppression of the dignity of humanity and the nation's civilisation. There is no reluctance to use anything in and through "religious institutions" (individuals, symbols, teachings, masses) to achieve the political interests of a person or group of people, carrying out intolerant acts in the name of religion (of the majority).

Moreover, the political atmosphere in Indonesia has experienced an increase in tension ahead of the 2024 political year. More or less the same with the situation of violence in the Land of Papua, due to stigmatisation, exploitation of natural resources, to weapons contact. All because of the logic of it all, the sensitivity of conscience that occurs is on par with the ability to create hoaxes, fake news and the like, which are concrete evidence of the low quality of personality, mentality and the significance of religious life of the perpetrators who are Indonesian citizens.

The question is whether such means have (already) become the "characteristics" of the nation of Indonesia in building national zeal, the Indonesian spirit? Is this how the religious life of Indonesia is manifested amidst the diversity of the community? Why is this happening continuously? How do we grow and foster awareness to choose proper, civilised, peaceful, and humane methods? What should be done?

Second, the Natural environment

During her work with Ashram and her Bali Canti Sena Foundation, Ms Gedong was at the forefront of campaigning the importance of taking good care of the natural environment and being responsible. For example, about plastic. In 1975, Ms Gedong started collecting plastic scattered on the streets or in certain places in Bali. For Ms Gedong, plastic was very harmful to the health of humans and animals, especially for fishes in the sea. Also air pollution. Therefore, in the ashram, having or using plastic for any purpose was not allowed. Ms Gedong was very critical of the increasing development of tourism in Bali, which interfered with the healthy life in nature that is no longer able to give oxygen to the human, and in addition, tended to create an economic dependence mentality on the Balinese people. At the same time, their land, the source of the health of the society, culture and economy, eroded. Not only that, for Ms Gedong, all this was associated with the greed and selfishness of humans. This was also a violent practice against nature and a threat to the life to come. This almost two-year covid-19 pandemic is a concrete example of how the natural environment requires time and space that is wholesome to help all life forms on this earth remain and always be healthy: physically and spiritually, healthy in body and soul. The citizens of Bali is experiencing the impact of this pandemic: socially, environmentally, culturally and economically.

How do we make everyone aware and have concern for this issue, not only in concept but also practice, including various policies from all levels of the government? Aside from that, how do we make it that construction development, though necessary, does not become a reason to sacrifice the people and nature?

Third, Education

There are two social groups that Ms Gedong emphasised concerning education: a) education for children (ECD) and b) education for women. This was important to Ms Gedong. Children need proper education because they're in the growth phase (physic, psychomotor, and psychological). Therefore, in the ashram, there was a Gandhi Kindergarten. Since young, the children are given materials and educational practices ala Gandhi: non-violence, vegetarian, swadeshi (independence), simple life, and others. Girls are taught not to be easily exploited by anyone, including men. But, the choice of focus on the two social groups does not mean ignoring education on the other groups or general education. The principle for Ms Gedong was that education is vital.

As we all know, one of the "seven social sins" of Mahatma Gandhi is "education without character". Meaning education is not just to acquire knowledge and improve one's social and economic status. It is also imperative to form one's character, personality, and mentality. Moreover, now education is focused on materials and methods that are relevant and needed in the era of "high technology", which is essential, and the technical, mechanistic, science are considered necessary. The need for social-economic status, rank, position increases, while things related to the formation of the personality of the students, from nursery, primary education, secondary to Higher Education, even in non-formal education spaces (religious and other spaces), are being left behind, and even are not getting attention. Individuals increasingly become isolated because of the variety of technology addiction while neglecting the formation of character, strengthening of mentality, and spirituality and ethics of living together with others and with nature. This is not only among students but also among teachers and lecturers. This is among religious leaders and among their followers who are also States officials, public elites, and all strata of personnel of all levels. And not only the heads of companies, but also the workers, tourism actors. By no means does this indicate that education or science and technology is not needed. It is undoubtedly necessary and needed. The question is, shouldn't there be a balance? Is it enough to produce human beings that are knowledgeable and persevering in using technology but weak and not critical and does not have character, manners, and mentality of the praxis of life: politeness, respect for others, having ethics and strong social sensitivity?

In short, what Ms Gedong did at that time (perhaps even today) was a way and attitude "against the current". If she heard such "comments", Ms Gedong would only say: "only he who can stand tall in the current, can live above himself".³

Question. Are the models and forms of education currently running in schools and universities: their structures, materials, content, methods and strategies relevant as needed by this nation to face the future? Where is and how to balance science and technology with the education of character, personality, mentality, and manners? Where and what is the importance and

³I Nyoman Sadra, *Ms Gedong bagoes Oka and Ashram Gandhi Canti Dasa*, p. 20 in "Identitas dan Kedaulatan", *Kabar dari Pulau Dewata. 77 tahun Gedong bagoes Oka*, Interfidei 1998.

relevance of religious education in formal and informal schools/campuses? What kind of interdisciplinary pattern of education needs to be developed so that Indonesian people from various levels of education can adapt to the development of science and technology with supporting skills? How can they also adapt mentally and sensitively to social life and the natural environment and be aware of adhering to the principles of living together, growing and having a strong, mature and capable personality that is vivifying?

It is crucial to hold this talk show to think about and discuss the things mentioned above, to constantly remind ourselves of these critical things in strengthening life together in the future as a nation.

OBJECTIVE

- 1) This talk show series aims to raise awareness and remind more and more people of the importance of these three things to be concerned about and practice in the life of society and the nation.
- 2) That non-violence, the environment and education are three things that are interrelated with one another and require concrete praxis in peace for peace.

EXPECTATIONS

1. Optimism awakens, that future actions are carried out together for the benefit of living together peacefully.
2. Religious life amidst Indonesian people and nation must emphasise the praxis and meaning of values and quality, not quantity and merely institutional matters.

IMPLEMENTATION

Event form: TALKSHOW

This activity is carried out jointly by the Gedong Gandhi Ashram, Institut DIAN/Interfidei and the Indonesian Interfaith Network.

Person in charge :

1. I Nyoman Sadra (Leader Of Gedong Gandhi Ashram)
2. Elga Sarapung (Director of Institut DIAN/Interfidei)
3. Miriam Nainggolan (JAI team members)

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2. Wayan Suweta

3. Nyoman Sukma Arida

Media Division : - Annisa Zuhra

- Cornelius Selan

- Gusde

EVENT AGENDA :

1. Saturday, 2 October 2021

Time : 14:00-16:00 WIB/15:00-17:00 WITA/16:00-18:00 WIT

Theme : "Non-Violence"

Speakers :

1. Father Frans Magnis Suseno (STFT Driyarkara)
2. Kamala Chandrakirana Soedjatmoko (KKPK)
3. I Nyoman Sadra (Leader Of Gedong Gandhi Ashram)

Moderator : Dr. I Nyoman Sukma Arida (UDAYANA)

2. Friday, 8 October 2021

Time : 14:00-16:00 WIB/15:00-17:00 WITA/16:00-18:00 WIT

Theme : "The Environment"

Speakers :

1. Rev. Dr Ni Luh Suartini (Pastor of the Protestant Church in Bali/GKPB)
2. I Made Suarnatha (Vishnu Foundation, Bali)
3. I Nyoman Sadra (Leader of Gedong Gandhi Ashram)

Moderator : Dr. Pande Made Kutanegara (Lecturer of Fac. Anthropology UGM, Yogyakarta)

4. Friday, 15 October 2021

Time : 14:00-16:00 WIB/15:00-17:00 WITA/16:00-18:00 WIT

Theme : "Education"

Speakers :

1. Henny Supolo (Cahaya Guru Foundation)
2. Dr I Gde Sutarya (Head of IHDN Hindu Communication Masters Study Program, Denpasar, Author of the PUSPANJI 80 tahun Ibu Gedong Bagoes Oka: "Membangun Peradaban Baru")

3. I Nyoman Sadra (Leader of Gedong Gandhi Ashram)

Moderator : Isyana Bagoes Oka

CLOSING

Hopefully, with this TALKSHOW event, the issues discussed can be more widely disseminated to think of together, what and how to do concrete things in society. Hopefully, everything goes smoothly and gives the expected output and outcome in the future..***