

ŚRĪWIJAYA FOR OUR NATION*

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Abstrak. Śrīwijaya Bagi Bangsa Kita. Kerajaan Śrīwijaya yang berpusat di Sumatera bagian selatan dan berkembang pada abad ke-7-13 M. merupakan salah satu puncak budaya Nusantara. Menguasai jalur perdagangan di Selat Malaka dan Selat Sunda; menjalin hubungan dagang dengan Cina, India, Arab, Persia, dan Madagaskar; membangun kawasan-kawasan strategis sebagai pangkalan armada untuk kepentingan dagang dan menjaga wilayah kedaulatan; membangun pusat pendidikan agama Budha dan bahasa Sanskerta; serta membina toleransi beragama, merupakan capaian-capaian sekaligus nilai-nilai yang menjadikannya negara maritim yang besar dan sangat berpengaruh di kawasan regional Asia Tenggara pada zamannya. Śrīwijaya bukan sekedar pengetahuan masa lampau, tetapi hendaknya bermanfaat bagi masyarakat dan bangsa Indonesia. Aktualisasi semangat, kebesaran, serta nilai-nilai sejarah dan budaya yang dimilikinya hendaknya menjiwai, menginspirasi, dan memotivasi kita dalam membangun bangsa kepulauan yang besar. Caranya mewariskan pengetahuan tentang Śrīwijaya beserta nilai-nilai yang dimilikinya melalui pendidikan formal dan informal, berbagai kegiatan pemasyarakatan, kegiatan olah raga, seni, dan budaya. Cara lain yang sangat strategis adalah membangun “Rumah Peradaban Śrīwijaya”, sebuah kompleks yang mewadahi pusat penelitian dan informasi, museum sebagai sarana edukasi dan pemasyarakatan, serta ruang publik.

Kata kunci: Śrīwijaya, Sumatera, Puncak Budaya, Kerajaan Maritim, Rumah Peradaban.

Abstract. Śrīvijaya Kingdom that centered in South Sumatera is one of the highest peak of culture in the Indonesian Archipelago. The kingdom evolved from 7th to 13th Century AD. Several achievements that made Śrīvijaya Kingdom become a great maritime country and very influential in South East region are as follows, commanded the trade route in Malaka Strait and Sunda Strait; had a trade relations with China, India, Arab, Persia, and Madagascar; built a strategic area as a maritime base for commercial interest and sovereignty protection; built a Buddhist and Sanskrit center; and also built tolerance to religions in society. Śrīvijaya is not just a knowledge from the past, it should bring benefits to Indonesia as a nation. The spirit of actualization, the greatness, and the culture and historical values should inspire and motivate Indonesian people to build a great archipelagic nation. The knowledge of Śrīvijaya could be inherited through formal and informal education, and social activities such as sports activities, arts activities, and cultural activities. Another strategic way is to build “Rumah Peradaban Śrīwijaya” (House of Śrīvijaya Civilization). Rumah Peradaban Śrīvijaya is a building complex that embodies a research and information center, museum as an educational and social facility, and also public space.

Keywords: Śrīvijaya, Sumatera, Peak of Culture, Maritime Kingdom, House of Civilization.

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1. Introduction

This paper will specially discuss to what extent did Śrīvijaya in its time, with its historical and cultural values, is worthy to Indonesia. The principle of archaeology focuses not only for the sake of the past but, more importantly, for the sake of present time and the future. Reconstruction of the past has to enrich our knowledge, which is beneficial to people's life today. That is also the case with the Śrīvijaya Kingdom, which flourished in Sumatera in around 7th – 13th Centuries AD; its knowledge and the actualization of its historical and cultural values will be very beneficial to our nation. Beneficial in the sense that its grandeur and values can be actualized in the life of our people, and inspire and motivate us to develop our civilization.

In reality the Śrīvijaya values have not yet really embedded in the development of our national culture, despite the fact that the kingdom is one of the archipelagic cultural peaks (*Puncak-Puncak Budaya Nusantara*) in the past. Thus far Śrīvijaya is more considered as a pride. We are proud of a great maritime kingdom, which controlled the trade route in the Melaka Strait and Sunda Strait and maintained contacts with China, India, Arab, Persia, and Madagascar; dominated and build strategic areas as the bases of its fleets; controlled and protected trade ships; collected excise tax; and guarded its sovereignty areas in Southeast Asia (Pramono 2005; Munoz 2006). We are also proud of its Buddhism and Sanskrit Study Centre, where even bhiksus from abroad studied (Utomo 2012). In this relation, we are full of pride because it maintained good relation with the Buddhism centre in Nālandā, India, so that disciples from Śrīvijaya could learn more thoroughly about Buddhism in that center.

There are many other things to be proud of, but merely being proud is not enough. Śrīvijaya with all its achievements has to be of benefit to our civilization. But now we see that the actualization of Śrīvijaya is still

limited in the use of the name for institutions or public domains. We have for instance: the University of Śrīvijaya, Śrīvijaya stadium, Śrīvijaya Post daily newspaper, Śrīvijaya Park, and many others (Manguin 2008). Recently the local government of South Sumatera carried out an annual event called Festival Śrīvijaya in Palembang. In national scale, Śrīvijaya Street can be found in big cities, and there is an airline company named Śrīvijaya Air (and I thought, why not use Śrīvijaya for maritime devices (passenger sea company, navy, port, or warship?). The list shows that the use of Śrīvijaya to name things or events is mostly limited to South Sumatera and only a few in national scales. The government and people of South Sumatera seem to want to legitimate the location of Śrīvijaya Kingdom in their province. They used the name to express their pride, with a hope that the positive values of Śrīvijaya will inspire and improve the people's lives.

2. Discussion

Actualization in form of pride could have been further developed, so that Śrīvijaya and its values can really benefit to the South Sumatera people. And as a *Puncak Budaya Nusantara*, the actualization should be not only in local scope but to be more important, in national scope. In this context I note some important values to be actualized for the sake of our nation's advancement.

First, Śrīvijaya as a Great Kingdom. It is an achievement that can motivate us to build a "Great Indonesia". Inscriptions, foreign records, and archaeological evidences have at least shown a number of factors, which contributed to Śrīvijaya's greatness, among others the vision to build a just and prosperous country, appreciation to pluralism, good achievements in the fields of education and religious teachings, mastering of maritime technology and trade route, all of which are precious cultural values that need to be

implemented and developed to create a great nation.

Second, International Networks. As a big kingdom, Śrīvijaya had excellent international networks in various different fields. Besides controlling the trade hegemony in the waters of Southeast Asia, its trade networks include China, India, Persia, etc. Śrīvijaya even had diplomatic relations in the fields of culture, politics, science, and religion. In this context, Śrīvijaya built Temple Site 1 at the Nālandā Vihara complex in India, a temple in Ligor, and Tao Temple in Guangdong (China) (Budi Utomo, pers. com.). Those achievements have to inspire and motivate us to establish international relations in the fields of culture, science, economy, etc. According to Samuel Huntington (2005) and Ali Khamenei (2005), now it is high time to make a Cultural Diplomacy, not Cannon-Ship Diplomacy. The diplomacy or cooperation in culture, followed by other diplomacies, will create harmonious civilizations, which will bring prosperity to people in the world.

Third, Maritime Supremacy. This is a high precious value that can inspire us to restore Indonesia – the largest archipelago state in the world – to become a strong and prosperous maritime state. The sea that comprises seventy-five percent of our territory, very rich resources, is a priceless asset. A maritime based oriented development, which relies on the sea as our strength, will re-establish the superiority of Indonesia in maritime affairs. The well protected and wise management of the marine resources will bring prosperity and progress to our nation.

Fourth, Education Śrīvijaya. can also inspire us to develop our human resources. The kingdom had an internationally well-known Study Centre of Buddhism and Sanskrit Language, where foreign bhiksus came to study, teach, or as translators of Buddhist holy scripts. The study center was something to be proud of, and proves that education is very important to

develop a nation. It should motivate us to build leading study centers of various fields of science and technology so that we will be a leading nation that is respected globally.

Fifth, Tolerance. The Śrīvijaya Kingdom respected pluralism and multiculturalism, particularly in religious life. Although the state religion was Mahāyāna Buddhism, archaeological evidences like Ganeś a (10th CenturyAD) and Siwa statues in Palembang and Hindu-Tantrism temple complex of Bumiayu, Lematang reveal the existence of Hindu and Tantris communities, and even Moslems, that lived harmoniously with the Buddhist majority (private communication with Bambang Budi Utomo). It is a very important value to our life as a nation nowadays. The fact that the Indonesian archipelago has had diversity characteristic since many centuries ago should be our basis to maintain and even develop it.

The question now is how to make the values applicable in our nation's daily life? The answer is: through concrete actions in local, national, and international scopes. For instance, formal education with updated material on Śrīvijaya, scientific discussions, exhibitions, publications, festivals, as well as sport, art, and cultural events. Some of those activities have been carried out, but still in limited scale and need to be further conceptualized and intensified.

Another strategic and fundamental instrument is to build "**Rumah Peradaban Śrīvijaya**" (the House of Śrīvijaya Civilization), a complex of buildings for research, education, socialization, and recreation. We need an international-level complex with: (1) Śrīvijaya Study and Information Center, to provide opportunities to carry out researches; (2) a thematic museum to reconstruct and display the emergence, growth, and fall of Śrīvijaya and its grandeur; and (3) supporting facilities like laboratory, storage, and public space. By building this complex, the management of Śrīvijaya cultural heritage will

be conceptualized and more integrated from research to use.

Regarding Śrīvijaya Study Centre, it will be very strategic considering the fact that there are still many issues to be discussed and elaborated. I will provide several examples. First, the location of Śrīvijaya is still in debates (Cœdès 1989; Boechari 1986; Sartono 1981; Soekmono 1981; Utomo 2012; Manguin 2008; Munoz 2006). Although evidences tend to lead to Palembang and later Jambi, more thorough research is still needed. Second, the process of establishment of Śrīvijaya to be a kingdom. Was it related to increased regional-global interactions which opened an opportunity to spread Buddhism in Sumatera? And who was Dapunta Hyang, and where is the location of Mināñ a tamwan (the meet of rivers)?

The third issue is related to the factors that support the growth of Śrīvijaya to become a great maritime kingdom. In my view, it should be related to internal and external supports. So far there have been some opinions proposed, eg. local conditions (communication networks, information and material exchanges) that have been well established (Miksic 1994), complexity of society to accept and absorb outside influence (Simanjuntak 2012), the ability to adapt to global process at that time (Tanudirjo 2009: 2014), and a vision of just and prosperous people (Kedukan Bukit and Talang Tuo inscriptions), but a synthesis is needed to get a comprehensive knowledge for educational material and inspiration to build a great civilization. Fourth, the causes of Śrīvijaya's fall. Attacks from Chōla and Kediri kingdoms, as well as the emergence of Islamic kingdoms along the coast of Sumatera have been said to be the cause of its fall (Utomo 2012). There are also those who relate it to the environmental factors such as the estuary that became shallow and thus hampered big ships to enter Śrīvijaya and lessen income from excise tax (Sucipto 2009), as well as pirate attacks that threaten the sailing and trade activities.

How about weak leadership or not oriented toward people's benefit; could it be the most fundamental cause?

3. Conclusion

The issues presented above show that there are still a lot of challenges in making Śrīvijaya a useful asset for our nation. This is where research is important, because through research we can obtain knowledge as the basis of use to actualize the cultural values of our past to encourage the spirit of nationalism and patriotism. This is what I mean by a Cultural Strategy to build a civilization with Indonesian spirit (*Peradaban yang Berkeindonesiaan*) – a civilization built from the values rooted in the Indonesian archipelago and enriched by compatible aspects of culture from abroad. Facts have proven that nations built on their own culture and supported by the ability to response global conditions emerge as leading strong nations in the world. I believe Indonesia can reach that state, among others by using Śrīvijaya's historical and cultural values to enrich and strengthen the building of our national civilization now and in the future.

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Situs Karangagung Sumatera Selatan



Sumber: Balai Arkeologi Palembang

Sisa tiang di Situs Karangagung