

**SANG DAŚARATHA AS A ROLE MODEL
OF THE HINDU'S IDEAL LEADERSHIP
(Textual Analysis of Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa Sargah I Pada 3)**

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ABSTRACT

The Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa itself is an Old Javanese literary work adapted from the Sanskrit epic Rāmāyaṇa by Valmiki. This work not only serves as entertainment but also as a source of moral and ethical teachings for the Old Javanese society. In the Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa, the character of Sang Daśaratha is described in depth, especially in Sargah (chapter) I Pada (stanza) 3. This research focuses on the effort to elaborate in detail the leadership patterns of Sang Daśaratha using a qualitative research method with a textual analysis approach. In the process, several results were obtained: a Hindu leader who applies the ideal leadership principles in Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa Sargah I Pada 3 must be oriented towards a typical leader who understands the concept of the Vedic teachings. This can be explored through fundamental principles that include dharma, sattva, karma, self-knowledge and awareness, vasudhaiva kutumbakam, integrity and ethical leadership, as well as interconnectedness and holistic vision. It is also important for a Hindu leader to always devote themselves to the Gods. In the principles shown in Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa Sargah I Pada 3, at least three deities are shown to be central entities that must be worshiped, namely Lord Brahma, Lord Vishnu, and Lord Shiva, as well as Lord Agni. In addition, a leader must also have a soul of love for their family and people and never forget their ancestors, because all of that is a source of strength and inspiration.

Keyword: Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa, Leadership, Sang Daśaratha

I. INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a crucial aspect of human civilization, playing a central role in determining the direction and progress of a society. In the Hindu context, the concept of leadership encompasses not only managerial skills, but also profound spiritual and ethical dimensions. Hindu scriptures, such as the Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa, contain many teachings on ideal leadership that can be used as guidelines to this day. One of the prominent figures in the Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa is Sang Daśaratha of Ayodhya. Sang Daśaratha is a figure known as a wise, just, and compassionate leader. His leadership is an example for kings and other leaders in the Hindu tradition. However, amidst the complexity of modern leadership challenges, the relevance of Sang Daśaratha's leadership teachings is often overlooked.

Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa itself is an Old Javanese literary work adapted from the Sanskrit epic Rāmāyaṇa by Valmiki. This work not only functions as entertainment, but also as a source of moral and ethical teachings for the people of Ancient Java. In Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa, the character of Sang Daśaratha is described in depth, especially in Sargah (chapter) I Pada (verse) 3, which is the main focus of this study. In Sargah I Pada 3, there is a detailed description of the ideal leadership traits of Sang Daśaratha. This verse explains how Sang Daśaratha leads his kingdom with full responsibility, prioritizes the welfare of the people, and upholds dharma (truth). Textual analysis of

this verse is expected to reveal Hindu leadership values that are relevant to the current context.

This research has high relevance and urgency in the context of modern leadership. In the midst of a leadership crisis marked by corruption, injustice, and lack of integrity, *Sang Daśaratha's* leadership teachings can be an alternative solution. Values such as honesty, justice, and devotion to the people exemplified by *Sang Daśaratha* are very relevant to be applied in today's leadership. In addition, this research is also important to preserve and promote Hindu cultural heritage. *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa* is one of the classical literary works that contains noble values. By analyzing *Sang Daśaratha's* leadership teachings, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the richness of Hindu culture. Based on the background that has been described, there are several problem formulations that can be described in this research, including those related to How to form a Hindu leader who is established in the knowledge of the *Vedas*, How to form a Hindu leader who is devoted to the Gods, and How to form a Hindu leader who always remembers his ancestors and loves his family and people so much.

II. METHOD

Through the formulation of the problem that has been determined, in fact all activities in writing this scientific paper aim to describe the nature of *Sang Daśaratha's* leadership as stated in *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa Sargah I Pada 3*, identify the leadership values that can be internalized from *Sang Daśaratha's* leadership in *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa Sargah I Pada 3*, and analyze the relevance of *Sang Daśaratha's* leadership in *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa Sargah I Pada 3* as an ideal Hindu leadership model in the context of modern leadership. In order to support the writing of this scientific paper to produce credible results, a research model is applied that is in accordance with this paper. This study uses a qualitative research method with a textual analysis approach. The data used is the text of *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa Sargah I Pada 3*. The analysis was carried out by interpreting the meaning of the text and linking it to the concepts of Hindu leadership. So based on this, the results of this study are expected to provide benefits, namely providing a deeper understanding of the concept of ideal Hindu leadership, becoming a reference for leaders and prospective leaders in internalizing Hindu leadership values, and contributing to the preservation and promotion of Hindu cultural heritage. Thus, this study is expected to provide as well as provide significant contributions to the development of science, especially in the field of leadership and Hindu cultural studies.

III. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Leadership in the Hindu tradition is not merely the ability to manage power, but rather a sacred duty that includes spiritual, ethical, and social responsibility dimensions. *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa*, as one of the classical works of Old Javanese literature, presents an ideal portrait of leadership through the figure of *Sang Daśaratha* of Ayodhya. In *Sargah I Pada 3*, the depiction of *Sang Daśaratha* provides deep insight into the characteristics of an ideal Hindu leader. As described in the following text:

Original Text in Old Javanese:

*Guṇamānta sañ Daśaratha, wruh sira riñ Wéda bhakti riñ déwa, tar
malupén pitrēpūja, māsih ta sirén swagotra kabéh.*
(*Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa sargah I pada 3*)

The meaning:

Sang Daśaratha was full of moral excellence, he knew the Wédas, he was devoted to the Gods, never forgot to worship his ancetors, and loved all the members of his family (Santoso, 1980: 37).

This study aims to analyze the verse textually, revealing leadership values that are relevant to the modern context. Three main points to be discussed are: (1) Hindu leaders must understand the Vedas, as the foundation of wisdom and justice; (2) Hindu leaders must be devoted to the Gods, as a manifestation of obedience to dharma and a source of moral inspiration; and (3) Hindu leaders must always remember their ancestors and love their families, as a symbol of responsibility and continuity of tradition. Through this analysis, it is hoped that the relevance of Sang Daśaratha's leadership teachings can be found as a model that can be internalized in contemporary leadership..

2.1 Hindu Leaders Must Understand the Vedas

In the Hindu tradition, the concept of leadership has deep and complex roots, originating from the ancient teachings of the Vedas and elaborated in various sacred and literary texts. One of the literary works that provides deep insights into Hindu leadership is the *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa*, an Old Javanese adaptation of the Sanskrit epic *Rāmāyaṇa*. Although it does not have a direct translation of *Sargah I Pada 3* of the *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa*, an analysis can still be done by exploring the principles of Hindu leadership reflected in this work and their relevance to the understanding of the Vedas.

Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa is an Old Javanese poem written around the 9th century, during the reign of Mpu Sindok in the Mataram Kingdom. It is a creative adaptation of the Sanskrit epic *Rāmāyaṇa* into the Old Javanese literary tradition, written in the kakawin form, a poetic form that reflects the *Sanskrit kāvya* style. *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa* is not simply a translation, but rather a creative re-elaboration that reflects the cultural and religious environment of ancient Java. The significance of *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa* in Indonesian Hindu literature cannot be overstated. It is considered the oldest Old Javanese epic text in Indic meter and has become a vital part of Indonesia's literary heritage (Acri, Creese, & Griffiths, 2010). Its influence extends beyond literature to the visual arts and performing arts such as wayang kulit. The *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa* is evidence of the rich cultural exchange between India and Indonesia, reflecting a unique blend of Sanskrit literary traditions and Javanese cultural elements.

Being a leader and understanding the Vedas well is an obligation for a Hindu. So it is necessary to put forward some fundamental principles, both in the perspective of the *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa* and in the perspective of the Vedas, it is necessary to explore some fundamental principles: *First, Dharma* (Righteousness and Duty), *dharma* is a central concept in *Vedic* philosophy, which represents the moral and ethical obligations that guide human behavior. For leaders, this principle emphasizes the importance of integrity, ethical behavior, and social responsibility. In the *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa*, the character of *Sang Daśaratha* is often depicted as the embodiment of *dharma*, showing how a leader should act in accordance with the highest moral principles, even in the face of personal difficulties. Through this, Hindu leaders must always prioritize the values of *dharma* in carrying out their leadership activities.

Second, Sattva (Balance and Harmony), *sattva* refers to the qualities of balance, purity, and harmony. In the context of leadership, it encourages leaders to maintain a balance between material success and spiritual fulfillment. The *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa* describes how *Sang Daśaratha*, as an ideal leader, is able to maintain this balance, demonstrating wisdom in his governance while still adhering to spiritual values. This should be a reflection for every Hindu who will dedicate himself to the world of

leadership.

Third, Karma (Action and Consequence), the principle of karma emphasizes that every action has a consequence. Leaders are encouraged to consider the long-term impact of their decisions and adopt a sustainable approach to growth and development. In the *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa*, the consequences of actions on character are often important lessons about wise leadership. This is a logical consideration that Hindu leaders must always hold, especially in determining policies that will involve many people or the community they lead.

Fourth, self-knowledge and awareness, Vedic leadership emphasizes the importance of self-knowledge and the development of one's awareness. Leaders are encouraged to engage in self-reflection and meditation to gain a deeper understanding of themselves and their environment (Maheshwari & Gupta, 2018). The *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa* describes the spiritual journey of *Sang Daśaratha*, reflecting the importance of self-knowledge in effective leadership. It is very important for Hindu leaders today to understand themselves in order to be able to determine strategic steps based on self-contemplation and peace of mind so that they are full of pure values of awareness.

Fifth, vasudhaiva kutumbakam (universal brotherhood), this *Vedic* principle is translated as "the world is one family," promoting the idea of global unity and cooperation (Maheshwari & Gupta, 2018). In the *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa*, this concept is reflected in *Sang Daśaratha's* ability to unite various groups and individuals in his mission, demonstrating the power of inclusive leadership. As an ideal leader, it is important to have a pure awareness that all people are brothers without exception. There should be no attempt to build a hierarchy in leadership, but rather an attitude of embracing like brothers or family.

Sixth, integrity and ethical leadership, the *Vedic* teachings emphasize the importance of leading with integrity and adhering to high ethical standards. The *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa* describes *Sang Daśaratha* as a leader who always upholds truth and justice, setting a positive example for others to follow. Integrity is something that should not be left out of the ideal standards of a Hindu leader. The values of integrity must be the fundamental foundation that every Hindu leader ethically refers to..

Seventh, holistic interconnectedness and vision, Vedic leadership is basically holistic, recognizing the interconnectedness of all aspects of life (Maheshwari & Gupta, 2018). *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa* describes how *Sang Daśaratha*, as a leader, considers various perspectives and knowledge to achieve a comprehensive and inclusive vision. Hindu leaders must base themselves on their attachment to responsibility for the people they lead, thus giving birth to a figure who has a vision for progress, not regression. The vision that is proclaimed must be holistic and beneficial for all groups, not only referring to certain groups like the current type of leadership that is rampant. Only oriented towards power without any effort to build a better civilization. All of these principles, if used as a foundation by every leader, will certainly give birth to a harmonious life in leadership. This is because these principles are based on the knowledge of *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa* which is synthesized from the sacred literature of the *Vedas*.

Based on these principles, this actually confirms that *Sang Daśaratha* has directly thought ahead that by studying the *Vedas*, he will not fade in the times. Because the teachings of the *Vedas* are flexible and always relevant to the dynamics of the times. The noble attitude as shown by *Sang Daśaratha* is what should be studied

and reflected by today's leaders or prospective leaders. Studying the Vedas will not make someone an enemy or shunned, studying the *Vedas* will not make someone stupid, because the Vedas are present as a guide to find a path of devotion that is oriented towards *dharma*, both religious *dharma* (dharma agama) and state *dharma* (dharma negara). A leader must and is able to carry out obligations that are oriented towards religious dharma and state dharma (Adnyana, 2022).

2.2 Hindu Leaders Must Be Devoted to the god

In the Hindu tradition, the concept of leadership does not only encompass worldly aspects, but also has a deep spiritual dimension. One important aspect of Hindu leadership is bhakti or devotion to the gods. *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa*, an Old Javanese adaptation of the Sanskrit epic *Rāmāyaṇa*, provides valuable insight into how Hindu leaders should relate to the gods. Bhakti, etymologically derived from the Sanskrit word meaning "devotion", is a central concept in Hinduism that emphasizes a personal and emotional connection with Brahman. In the context of leadership, bhakti is not only a personal spiritual practice, but also a guide that encourages the principles of leaders to act with humility, integrity, and a sense of devotion to others. *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa*, as a literary work that reflects Hindu values in the Old Javanese context, is very likely to emphasize the importance of bhakti for leaders. In this epic, the character of *Sang Daśaratha* is often depicted as an ideal transformation of a leader who has strong devotion to the gods.

Bhakti plays a major role in shaping leaders who are always obedient to religious teachings through devotion or devotion to the Gods. This is very important in shaping an ideal leader. The significance of bhakti in shaping an ideal leader is very necessary because it is affiliated with the theological and practical axioms that underlie the importance of bhakti in Hindu leadership. Bhakti becomes a moral and ethical guide, bhakti provides a moral and ethical framework for leaders. By aligning themselves with the divine qualities of the gods, leaders are better equipped to uphold dharma (sacred obligations) in governance, ensuring justice and moral integrity. This legitimizes that holding sincere devotion to the gods will bring leaders to a noble condition of ethical and moral values.

Devotion to the gods is also a form of spiritual guidance. Devotion to the gods is believed to provide spiritual guidance and support to leaders. Through devotion, leaders can receive sacred insight and wisdom, which are essential for making sound and ethical decisions. Because through good spiritual stability, a leader will be able to resolve all problems calmly and on target, thus minimizing the possibility of biased decisions and causing misery to the people. Decisions based on good spirituality will have a positive impact on the lives of the people and the country. Through sincere devotion to the gods, the prospective leader has actually prepared an ideal power system for himself. This legitimizes his power over himself. In the Hindu tradition, the relationship between a leader and the gods is not only personal but also public. Devotion legitimizes the authority of the leader and connects temporal power with the divine order. This will end in a condition called cosmic balance, where leaders who are devoted to the gods are considered to play a role in maintaining cosmic balance. The rituals and devotion carried out by leaders are believed to have a positive impact not only on their government but also on the welfare of the entire universe. Thus, a leader who devotes all his devotion or devotion to the gods will be able to be an example for the community. Because a leader who shows strong devotion becomes

an example for his community. This encourages social cohesion and spiritual values.

Bhakti carried out sincerely to the gods as carried out by *Sang Daśaratha* is clearly stated in the *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa*. In the *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa*, several gods are described as the center of *bhakti*, such as: Lord Vishnu as the protector and preserver god, Lord Vishnu represents the ideal qualities of a leader such as truth, protection, and maintenance of the cosmic order (dharma). Leaders are encouraged to emulate these qualities to ensure justice and prosperity in their government. In addition to Lord Vishnu, there is also Lord Shiva, although the main focus of the *Rāmāyaṇa* is on Lord Vishnu, Lord Shiva also has an important place in Hindu worship. Lord Shiva represents transformation and destruction, which are necessary for renewal and growth. Leaders who worship Lord Shiva are reminded of the importance of adaptability and the ability to bring about necessary change (Wijnyanawati & Wardani, 2024). And no less important is Lord Brahma, as the creator god, Lord Brahma emphasizes the importance of innovation and creativity in leadership. By asking for the guidance of Lord Brahma, the leader can seek guidance in creating new opportunities and fostering growth in their domain. Then the last is Lord Agni as the god of fire. Lord Agni, is often invoked for his purifying qualities. In the *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa*, the fierce nature of Lord Agni is a metaphor for the destruction of evil and the purification of the soul. Leaders who worship Lord Agni are encouraged to maintain the purity of their intentions and actions, ensuring that their leadership is free from corruption and deceit.

Bhakti to the gods carried out by *Sang Daśaratha* can be practiced in the life of leadership in the modern era like today in several ways, for example through the practice of *pūjā* (worship) where leaders can perform *pūjā*, which involves giving offerings to the gods and asking for their blessings. This practice can be done at home or in a temple and is considered a way to maintain a connection with Brahman (Idler, 2013). Then it can also be through mantras, where mantras are believed to have transformative powers and are used to focus the mind and summon the presence of *Brahman*. In addition, there is also *sevā* (service), leaders who are involved in service to others are a form of devotion that reflects the leader's commitment to welfare. This practice is in line with the concept of servant leadership, which emphasizes prioritizing the needs of others (Idler, 2013). Then meditation and self-reflection, many modern Hindu leaders incorporate the practice of meditation and self-reflection into their daily routines in leading as a way to connect with *Brahman* and gain spiritual insight. And the last is participation in rituals, a leader often participates in religious rituals and communal rituals as a way to show devotion and connect with his spiritual tradition. In addition to the Daśaratha as an example of an ideal leader in terms of devotion to the gods, there are several historical examples of Hindu leaders who were devoted to the gods, including: 1) Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, the founder of the Maratha Empire in western India was a devout follower of the Hindu goddess Bhavani. His Sraddha is said to have inspired a sense of justice, fairness, and protection of his subjects, which became key elements in his reign; 2) Raja Raja Chola I, one of the greatest rulers of the Chola dynasty was renowned for his devotion to Lord Shiva. His reign is marked by the construction of the Brihadeeswarar Temple in Thanjavur, which is a testament to his devotion and reflects how his devotion influenced his leadership and contributed to the prosperity of his kingdom; and 3) Krishnadevaraya, the Emperor of the Vijayanagara Empire was a devout follower of Lord Venkateswara. His devotion is reflected in the many temples he built and the religious rituals he supported. Krishnadevaraya's leadership was marked by a combination of military prowess and cultural patronage, with his devotion to

Venkateswara guiding his efforts to maintain peace and prosperity in his kingdom.

Through the above description, it is important for leaders who want to reflect the values of God or the devotion of Sang Daśaratha in leading to really understand the concept of Hindu God. This aims to ensure that leaders can be firm in every stance, especially in their concept of God. So that the dark history of the collapse of Hindu kingdoms due to the inability of their kings to engage in theological dialogue does not happen again. This is due to the lack of understanding of the concepts of God in Hinduism. (Donder, 2006).

2.3 Hindu Leader Must Always Remember Ancestors and Love Family

Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa is one of the Old Javanese literary works adapted from the epic *Rāmāyaṇa* by Maharsi Vālmīki. This work is not only a source of spiritual and moral inspiration, but also provides guidance on how a leader should act and lead. In this context, *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa* emphasizes the importance of a leader to always remember their ancestors and love their family. This is reflected in various parts of the text, including in *Sargah I Pada 3*. Through the analysis of this text, we can understand the values of Hindu leadership that are relevant to the present day.

In Hindu tradition, a leader is considered as the embodiment of dharma (truth) and must be a role model for his people. Therefore, the values contained in the *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa* are very relevant to understanding the concept of leadership from a Hindu perspective. Leadership in Hinduism is not only about power or strength, but also about responsibility, wisdom, and devotion. A leader must be able to maintain a balance between his duties as a ruler and his responsibilities as a family member. This is reflected in the life of *Sang Daśaratha*, who always remembers his ancestors and loves his family.

In Hindu tradition, ancestors play a very important role. They are considered as a source of wisdom, strength, and protection. A good leader must always remember and respect his ancestors, because this will give him spiritual and moral strength in carrying out his duties. In the *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa*, *Sang Daśaratha* is described as a figure who always remembers and respects his ancestors. This is reflected in various parts of the text, including in *Sargah I Pada 3*. Rama not only leads with physical strength, but also with the wisdom inherited from his ancestors. By remembering his ancestors, *Sang Daśaratha* is able to make fair and wise decisions, even in the most difficult situations. Remembering ancestors also means respecting the values and traditions that have been passed down. A good leader must be able to maintain and preserve these values, because this is part of dharma. In this context, the *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa* teaches that a leader must not forget his roots and origins, because this will give him strength and inspiration in carrying out his duties.

In addition to remembering ancestors, a Hindu leader must also love his family. The family is the smallest unit in society, and a good leader must be able to maintain the harmony and welfare of his family. In the *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa*, *Sang Daśaratha* is described as a figure who loves his family very much, including his people who are part of the family in his views and strong principles. *Sang Daśaratha* not only loves his family emotionally, but is also responsible for their welfare and security. This is reflected in various parts of the text, including in *Sargah I Pada 3*. Loving one's family also means appreciating and respecting each member of the family. A good leader must be able to understand the needs and feelings of his family, and make fair and wise decisions for the

common good. In this context, the *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa* teaches that a leader should not sacrifice his family for the sake of power or personal interests. Moreover, the family in question is also oriented towards his people.

The depiction of *Sang Daśaratha* who always remembers his ancestors and loves his family and people so much provides new insights that become a fundamental foundation for the mental development of Hindu leaders today. This is certainly closely related to the relevance factor. The values contained in the *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa*, especially in *Sargah I Pada 3*, are still relevant today. In the modern world, a leader is often faced with various challenges and pressures that can test his integrity and wisdom. In this context, values such as remembering ancestors and loving family can be a source of strength and inspiration for a leader. Remembering ancestors means respecting the values and traditions that have been inherited. A good modern leader must be able to maintain and preserve these values, because this is part of his responsibility as a leader. By remembering ancestors, a leader can make fair and wise decisions, and maintain a balance between his duties as a ruler and his responsibilities as a family member. Loving family is also a very important value in modern leadership. A good leader must be able to maintain the harmony and well-being of his family, because this will give him strength and inspiration in carrying out his duties. By loving his family, a leader can maintain a balance between his personal and professional life, and make fair and wise decisions for the common good.

IV. CONCLUSION

Hindu leaders who apply the principles of ideal leadership in *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa Sargah I Pada 3* must be oriented towards the typical leader who understands the concept of Vedic teachings, this can be explored through fundamental principles including dharma, sattva, karma, self-knowledge and awareness, *vasudhaiva kutumbakam*, integrity and ethical leadership, and holistic interconnectedness and vision. It is also important for a Hindu leader to always be devoted to the Gods, in the principles presented in *Kakawin Rāmāyaṇa Sargah I Pada 3* at least three gods are shown as central entities that must be worshiped, namely Lord Brahma, Lord Vishnu, and Lord Shiva and Lord Agni. In addition, it is also important for a leader to have a soul of love for his family and people and never forget his ancestors, because all of them are sources of strength and inspiration..

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