

EDITORIAL

Indonesians commemorate R.A. Kartini day which falls on every 21st April. On that day, school children of Kindergarten, as well as students from elementary school to high school levels are often required to dress in traditional costumes. However, they never hear an explanation about the significance of wearing traditional costume on that day as a way of showing our appreciation for R.A. Kartini's contribution to the country. R.A. Kartini is known as an advocate of woman emancipation –equality of rights between man and woman. Sutrisno (1992:xvi) asserts:

'The desire of parents who began to see the importance of sending their children to school and married women to pursue education together with younger children shall be seen as the beginning of a good awareness inspired by RA Kartini's idea. She is proud of having successfully removed the obstacles that the past customs posed in which no women of her status were allowed to make progress both for themselves and the nation.'

This statement shows her significant contribution to the equality of rights between man and woman to make progress in various field, especially in education. For this reason, the idea to ask students to dress in traditional costumes, or to

hold cooking contest or other similar contests on Kartini Day as a form of tribute to her is, in fact, irrelevant with her genuine ideal.

Another national commemoration is the National Education day which falls on 2nd May, which coincides with the birth date of Ki Hadjar Dewantara. Indonesians observe this day by holding a raising flag ceremony in schools and universities. Nuh (2012:v) argues that the National education Day is to remember Ki Hadjar Dewantara's contribution to this country:

"Ki Hadjar Dewantara's thought and idea is exemplary. Despite his visionary idea, he is strongly faithful to his identity. Identity is the driving force for Indonesia to move forward to reach a better future for the country."

It is clear from the above quotes that both R.A. Kartini and Ki Hadjar Dewantara have meaningful contribution to the nation and the Republic of Indonesia. The emancipation (in education) for women that R.A. Kartini fought for during her short life has produced wonderful results. Similarly, the statement of Tamansiswa (Ki Hadjar Dewantara) that "Indonesia is thirsty for education and learning" (Soekarno, 2012:27) is now instilled in the heart of every Indonesian. Therefore, it is an over simplification if we merely hold raising flag ceremonies during R.A. Kartini Day and the National Education Day to commemorate their meaningful contribution to the country. (TM)

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