

Political Biography of Raden Usman Dung: The Dedication of an Ulama in Muara Bungo Tebo, Jambi

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Abstract

This research aims to find out Usman Dung. Biography of Usman Dung: Family, Career, Religion, Politics. The problem raised in this research is Usman Dung's Biography: Family, Career, Religion, Politics, which includes Usman Dung's family background, Usman Dung's figure, as well as Usman Dung's career in the religious and political fields. The author uses historical methods. In this method there are four stages including heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and historical writing. To make writing easier, the author uses social role theory and biographical theory. The results of this research are that Usman Dung comes from a family that is able to support him in terms of freedom in continuing his education, he also builds his own family accompanied by a wife who also supports his work by not forgetting to educate his children, in the course of Usman Dung's religious and political career. has gone through many various positions and positions, of course based on the religious knowledge he has, with many career paths starting from being an Educator at a Madrasah then becoming Chairman of the MUI (Indonesian Ulema Council) Bungo - Tebo, and becoming Deputy Chairman of the DPRD-GR (Regional People's Representative Council - Mutual Cooperation) Bungo-Tebo, until he became a Member of the DPRD (Regional People's Representative Council) Bungo Tebo for two terms.

Keywords: *Biography; Family; Politic Career.*

Introduction

Raden Usman Dung was born in Muara Tebo, Jambi Province. On March 14, 1928 he was born in Muara Tebo in the Sungai Alai area, he came from a well-off family who had the title of Raden. Raden Usman Dung was born to a married couple, Raden Demen and Rts. Halimah Binti R. Kasim who used to live in the Kenali Besar area of Jambi City (now) which then moved to the Sungai Alai area, a village in the Central

Tebo sub-district, Tebo Regency. When the end of the Jambi Sultanate period Raden Demen changed the flow in terms of finding a source of livelihood by farming rubber plantations by moving to the area in Sungai Alai village, Central Tebo. With the proceeds from rubber farming, Demen was able to provide proper education to his children (R. S. Alfarisi, personal communication, Mei 2023).

Raden Usman Dung is a figure who is exemplified and elders by the people of Bungo, a figure who is dedicated to what is entrusted to him, seen from when K.H. Raden Usman Dung, who at that time was 81 years old, was still tough to carry out his duties without any complaints, at that time he served as chairman of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) of Bungo Regency, his dedication was for the good of the Bungo people. Even though he was no longer young, thoughts about the benefit of the people continued to emerge. K.H. Raden Usman Dung is a figure who always straightens and corrects all behaviors and teachings that are considered to have deviated from the foundation of Islam, namely the Qur'an and Hadith (Hj. R. Nurafrida, personal communication, April 2023).

During his lifetime Usman Dung was very active in both education and politics. He was once the principal of Tarbiyah Islamiyah for 6 years and the head of the KUA in Central Tebo for 5 years. In fact, he tried his luck as a member of the DPRD and even became deputy chairman of the Bungo Tebo Regency DPRD-GR for 4 years and was active in other political activities. Not only active in the field of religion and politics. Usman also became a community leader and was respected by the community (Syarkawi, 2009).

Seeing his dedication and the important role of Usman Dung will certainly not be separated from the process of him becoming such a figure. Questions interesting to uncover are 1) how did Usman Dung's family background and childhood shape his identity? 2) how was Usman Dung's career in the religious and political fields.

Research Method

The method used by the author in compiling this article is the historical method. Data or historical material, or historical evidence. Historical sources can be oral, written, visual (objects) that can be used to find the truth. So the sources or data obtained from Usman Dung's personal archives stored at his residence in Muara Bungo, documents such as Usman Dung's birth certificate documents, as well as news articles published in the Bute Radar Newspaper by Syafi'i in 2009, Usman Dung's diary is the source of his family tree from his parents to his children and grandchildren written in 2017 and the Report on the Results of the Working Visit of Group I of Bungo Tebo Level II DPRD Members 1991, containing the activities of group I chaired by Raden Usman Dung related to visits to the Tebo Ilir, Central Tebo, and Sumay areas. Personal interviews were also conducted by the author with the children-in-law of KH Raden Usman Dung and friends of KH Raden Usman Dung.

The final stage in the historical method, historiography, involves writing, presenting, or reporting the results of historical research. After collecting sources, criticizing sources, and analyzing the data obtained, the next step is to compile a systematic writing about "Usman Dung's Biography: Family, Career, Religion, Politics". In each section, efforts are made to present the theme systematically and chronologically by using qualitative questions to the data that has been collected, creating the characteristics of historical works that distinguish them from other writings.

To examine the topic raised, the author uses the help of a biographical approach. This approach aims to dive into and explore in-depth information about KH. Raden Usman Dung and the history of his career in religious and political institutions which is carried out based on the background of the socio-cultural environment where the figure came from, how his journey, his influence on the people around Bungo and the concept of social roles, which can explain the norms of behavior or patterns expected of individuals who occupy certain positions in the social structure (Riski, 2020).

In this study, a biographical approach is used to examine in depth the career history of KH Raden Usman Dung in the fields of religion and politics. This approach allowed the researcher to explore Usman Dung's origins, journey and influence in Bungo society as well as his concept of role in the social context. By referring to Kuntowijoyo's view of biography, this research will highlight four main aspects, namely the personality of the figure, social support, historical context, and the factors of luck and opportunity that shaped Usman Dung's career (Kuntowijoyo, 2003).

Discussion

Family Origin

Raden Usman Dung was born on Wednesday, March 14, 1928 AD coinciding with the 21st of Ramadan 1346 Hijriah, in the village of Sungai Alai, Central Tebo District, Tebo Regency (now) Jambi (*Akta Kelahiran Raden Usman Dung.*, 2018). His father named Raden Demen a rubber farmer and his mother named Rts. Halimah Binti R. Kasim whose daily work as a housewife takes care of her husband and children. His family life is enough to fulfill his daily needs and to pay for his son's education out of Jambi. Raden Usman Dung has a sibling named Ratumas Siti Rahmah who died in 2010. Usman Dung has the title Raden in front of his name, the term Raden name is given to noble descendants during the Jambi sultanate where it is said that his great-grandfather was once a hulubalang during the reign of the Jambi sultanate (Hj. R. Nurafrida, personal communication, April 2023).

Usman Dung grew up in a family that practiced the principle of deliberation, where his children's opinions were listened to and respected. This reflected the freedom for Usman Dung to choose his own path, especially in matters of education. Although his parents could have asked Usman Dung to help them in the rubber plantation, he was given support to continue his education. This is evidence of the openness in a family that respects the desires and potential of its children (R. S. Alfarisi, personal communication, Mei 2023).



Figure 1. Usman Dung is a member of the Golkar party and is in the Advisory Council

Raden Usman Dung began his education at the Goebernemen Folk School (SR) in 1939 in Jambi. Subsequently, he continued his education at the Indonesisch Nederlandse School (INS) Kayu Tanam in 1943, which was a private secondary education institution known for its work school education concept. Usman Dung also studied at Madrasah Raudlatul Islam for one year before continuing for 10 years at Pesantren Nurul Iman across the city of Jambi. Madrasah Nurul Iman is one of the oldest madrasahs in the area and initially focused on basic Islamic religious knowledge. However, over time, the institution underwent changes to adapt to the development of the community and the need for general education. Usman Dung's Islamic-based education became the foundation for his role in religious institutions (Syarkawi, 2009).

Usman Dung's domesticity began with a meeting between Usman Dung and Siti Zubaidah when he was a teacher at MTs. Muara Tebo. Their marriage was held on April 10, 1955 after their first meeting on June 22, 1954. She was like a woman who in the family had an important role as a wife and mother. Her role was not limited to that of a housewife, but also included social and organizational activities (R. S. Alfarisi, personal communication, Mei 2023).

The family had eight children, including five sons and three daughters, and Siti Zubaidah participated in educating her children, teaching them good values and helping them achieve in their fields. Usman Dung applied the teachings and upbringing he had learned from his parents to his children. Although Siti Zubaidah was given full rights to take care of and educate the children, which in religion is considered the first madrasah in children's education, Usman Dung still participated in educating and monitoring their development. He understood that his wife's role in educating the children was important, but he was also active in providing guidance and good values to his children. This approach created a harmonious family environment that supported the development of their children (R. S. Alfarisi, personal communication, Mei 2023).

The relationship between him and his children was harmonious by always establishing communication wherever his children and himself were, some examples of communication that were established were one of them, namely when his youngest son manifested good communication in the relationship between parents and children in Usman Dung's family life, revealed in a letter written by his youngest son (Firdaus), in the letter it is written about news from Firdaus who continued his education in Bogor on June 17, 1991, in the letter he informed him of his situation in finding a place to stay while studying in the city. Accompanied by his brother he was looking for a place to live closest to the campus where he was studying, in detail he explained the conditions of the neighborhood he would live in along with the cost of living for the next few months (Firdaus, 1991).

Usman Dung during his lifetime also often communicated with his children who were far from him using conventional telephones (landline phones) and cellphones, as seen from the notes he wrote in his diary which read about how to send messages and how to check codes in sending messages, with his old self having to keep learning again in using technological developments to use cell phones, so as not to inconvenience his children who lived with him, if he wanted to call then he could do it himself by using the cellphone he had recorded in the diary (Dung, 2016).

On August 21, 2021, KH Raden Usman Dung passed away at the Hanafie Hajj Hospital due to illness, also including exposure to COVID-19. Previously, he had been ill for a long time due to his advanced age and deteriorating health condition. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic restricting his activities, in his old age Usman Dung still received visits from several politicians and played an active role in Malay traditional institutions, giving advice. At the end of his life, he was buried with special COVID-19 procedures at the Muara Tebo public cemetery, Tebo Regency, with a procession that could be followed virtually through Zoom Meeting (Hj. R. Zuhaida, personal communication, Mei 2023).

Raden Usman Dung Career Path

a. In Religious Field

Usman Dung was involved in religion and education from the beginning of his career. In 1954, he became a teacher at Madrasah Tarbiyah Islamiyah Muara Tebo, where he also served as Principal for two years. During this period, Usman Dung became familiar with Islamic organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Masyumi while studying at Madrasah Nurul Iman (R. S. Alfarisi, personal communication, Mei 2023).

Education also remained his focus when he was appointed Deputy Head of the Junior High School in 1956, and at the same time, became a civil servant. Usman Dung continued to be active in education, filling the position of Principal in various places, such as Sungai Keruh from 1956 to 1964. Usman Dung's devotion to religion also grew. From 1964 to 1967, he served as Head of the Religious Affairs Office in Central Tebo Sub-district. After his term ended, Usman Dung moved into politics and became Deputy Chairman of the DPRD-GR from 1967 to 1971 (Syarkawi, 2009).

Subsequently, Usman Dung continued to contribute to the Department of Religious Affairs, where he was appointed Head of the Bungo-Tebo Department of Religious Affairs Office from 1974 to 1980. In 1981-1982, after retiring as a civil servant, he also served as Principal of a Private Madrasah Aliyah in Bungo-Tebo District.

However, despite his retirement, Usman Dung remained active in politics and was elected to the Bungo-Tebo District Parliament for two terms, ending in 1992. In addition to his roles in education and politics, Usman Dung was also actively involved in the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) in Bungo-Tebo District. He held various important positions within the MUI, such as Vice Chairman and Chairman, from 1975 to 2017. In 2008 Usman Dung also contributed to the development of local qori-qoriah, supporting Quran readers in understanding and reciting the holy verses properly (Syarkawi, 2009; Rapat Kerja Daerah (RAKERDA), 2008).

All of these contributions reflect Usman Dung's dedication to religion, education and community development in Bungo-Tebo District. His role in leading the LPTQ and safeguarding the culture of Quranic recitation demonstrates his appreciation for religious and cultural heritage, as well as his efforts in promoting excellence in Quranic recitation in the region.

Then in his role as an *ulama* and *kyai* he on several occasions often filled in studies as stated in his khutbah notes, the note contained a sermon on eclipse prayers on June 18, 1983 AD, at the Great Mosque of Muara Bungo City, that eclipse prayers were held, which are also called Kusuf prayers or Khusuf prayers. KH Raden Usman Dung delivered his Khutbah and explained that eclipses are natural events that can be explained scientifically and are related to the position of the Sun, Earth and Moon. Usman Dung emphasized that mythical beliefs about eclipses, such as those related to the death of important people, are wrong. He reminded us that when witnessing an eclipse, we should pray, say takbir, pray, and give alms. Usman Dung also emphasized that the universe is vast and under the power of Allah SWT, who has control over all, including stopping the sun, triggering natural disasters, and determining the fate of the Judgement Days (Dung, 1983).

Furthermore, he called on everyone to always worship Allah, repent, and strive to do good. Explanation of the Verse: Usman Dung referred to a verse in the Quran that underlines that the universe is vast and under the control of Allah. This verse also reminds us to always repent and worship Him. The verse is found in Surah Ya-Sin

(36th Surah), Verse 82: "Meaning: Verily, Allah is the Lord of all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth, and He is the Most Rich, the Most Praiseworthy." This verse emphasizes the power of Allah as the Creator and Ruler of the universe and the importance of returning to Him in repentance and worship (Dung, 1983); (S. Murdy, personal communication, February 23, 2023; Syam & dkk., 1983).

b. In Political Field

Usman Dung, in his youth, was quite actively involved in organizations that had a strategic role in the struggle for Indonesian independence, especially in the Bungo-Tebo area. Apart from being part of the youth group that helped fight for Indonesian independence in the Bungo-Tebo Estuary region, through the Theatrical Group (Tonil) which became a place and a means of mobilizing mass gathering, which was useful for maintaining security and public order and carrying out propaganda activities in order to maintain independence, he also showed his involvement as Chairman of the Indonesian Islamic Youth Movement (GPII) in Tebo, when it was still within the scope of Masyumi (Syam & dkk., 1983; S. Murdy, personal communication, February 23, 2023).

In 1967, Usman Dung was entrusted to become Deputy Chairman of the DPRD-GR, representing the Nahdlatul Ulama political party. In the midst of the dominance of Islamic organizations in Jambi during this period, his political involvement was in line with his religious background. During the New Order government, Usman Dung succeeded in bringing the religious influence and vision of Nahdlatul Ulama into the policy discussion process at the regional level. His role in decision-making at the DPRD-GR reflected the link between ulama, religion and government (*Lampiran II Surat Keputusan Gubernur Provinsi Jambi No. 21/VII-13/20-67"*, 1967).

After the end of his term as a civil servant, Usman Dung did not stop involving himself in community affairs. On the contrary, he continued to hold important positions, including getting involved in politics again after the end of his term as Deputy Chairman of the DPRD-GR in 1971. Usman Dung was elected as a

representative of the people in the Bungo - Tebo Regency DPRD for ten years, from 1982 to 1992 (*Lampiran I Keputusan Gubernur Kepala Daerah Tingkat I Jambi, Tanggal 2 Juli 1987 Nomor 271 Tahun 1987.*, 1987).

In the 1970s, Usman Dung experienced a period of inactivity as an employee, and even had his official car confiscated. Together with Martunis, his close colleague at the Department of Religious Affairs (Depag), they established the NU leadership. However, with Golkar's growing dominance, political conditions became unfavorable for those not affiliated with Golkar. Martunis switched to Golkar to secure his security, while Usman Dung remained loyal to NU. However, in 1971, Usman Dung decided to move to Golkar and took up an advisory board position, illustrating his adaptation to the significant political changes of the time (Martunis, personal communication, Mei 2023).

The shift of the political party he represented from NU to Golkar during this period demonstrates the changing political landscape in Indonesia. The changing political landscape that emphasized the two main parties, PDI and PPP, and Golkar's dominance as the governing party, led Usman Dung to switch political streams. This decision was in line with the Golkar Joint Secretariat's restructuring policy that prohibited civil servants from becoming members of non-Golkar political parties (Wahyono, 2012).

As a member of the Bungo - Tebo Regency DPRD, in the period 1982 - 1992, Usman Dung had a role as an Advisory Board in the Golkar Party. His role included contributions to the legislative process and local governance. He was involved in discussions on development policies, community welfare, and other crucial issues. With his religious and scientific background, Usman Dung provides input on religious aspects of policy-making (*Laporan Hasil Kunjungan Kerja Kelompok I DPRD Kab. Dati II Bungo Tebo Ke Kecamatan Tebo Ilir, Tebo Tengah, Sumay, 26 Januari 1991.*, 1991).

During a working visit by the Bungo Tebo Regency DPRD in the 1990-1991 fiscal year, Usman Dung led a group that examined development, security, and community participation in the Tebo Ilir, Tebo Tengah, and Sumay districts. The results of the visit

showed that development was going well, but needed further guidance. Usman Dung remains active in contributing to the progress of Bungo - Tebo District through his role in the legislative process and regional development. With his long journey in politics, Usman Dung is a figure who represents the combination of religion, politics and development (*Laporan Hasil Kunjungan Kerja Kelompok I DPRD Kab. Dati II Bungo Tebo Ke Kecamatan Tebo Ilir, Tebo Tengah, Sumay, 26 Januari 1991., 1991*).

Conclusion

K.H. Raden Usman Dung, an *ulama* and political figure in Bungo Regency, Jambi, had a life path full of devotion to religion, education, and social society. He was born into a family with the noble title of Raden, and grew up in an environment that applied the value of deliberation and which gave freedom to the education that was undertaken, which he applied to his children. By having knowledge and influence in the religious field, starting from being a teaching staff to becoming an active member of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) of Bungo-Tebo Regency. Then, he was also involved in politics by becoming Deputy Chairman of the Bungo-Tebo Regency DPRD-GR (Regional People's Representative Council - Gotong Royong) and as a member of the Bungo-Tebo Regency DPRD for ten years, with a transition from being a member of the NU Political Party to Golkar which illustrates the changing political currents in Indonesia at that time. With his death in 2021, it was the end of his career journey, with significant contributions in development and local politics, by combining religious values to advance the community and the region.

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