ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION IN THE MALAY WORLD

Edited by
Mohd. Taib Osman

Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka
Kuala Lumpur
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Art and Culture
Istanbul
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Foreword

The spread of civilizations covering substantial areas of the world in various epochs of human history, bringing great changes to the lives and cultures of peoples has never failed to fascinate generations of students of human societies. The spread of Islam to Southeast Asia certainly constitute an example of such a fascinating story.

Our knowledge of the spread of Islam has been steadily enlarged over the years, continuously challenging and revising some established notions, and introducing fresh discoveries of historical facts. In this process of knowledge accumulation, there is no denying that we have benefitted a great deal from the pioneering contributions of non-Muslim scholars - especially the western students of eastern civilizations and history. Of late, however, a number of Muslim and other native scholars of Southeast Asia, have been offering fresh perspectives on the subject - made possible from the vantage point of the outcome of the cultural process.

The publication of Islamic Civilization in the Malay World, can indeed be seen as an effort by indigenous scholars of Southeast Asia to understand and explain the social and cultural ramifications of the advent spread and entrenchment of Islam in the region. I note with great interest that the participating scholars have perceived their contributions as an exercise in the rediscovery and reinterpretation of the social and cultural history of the Malay world - a cultural domain in which Islam has undeniably played a crucial role.

Given the uniquely "native" perspective of the project, we can expect that the contents of the book reflect the historical, cultural and sociological distinctiveness of the Malay world as a product of the dynamic interplay between Islam and the Malay culture.

A research project of this nature is expected to take a long time to come to fruition. Since the project was launched in Kuala Lumpur in 1987, a number of dedicated scholars, organizers and administrators have contributed relentlessly to ensure its successful conclusion. I congratulate the participating scholars, the project's editor, Mohd. Taib Osman, and the staff of the research team secretariat (provided by the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka), for their perseverance in completing the project. I would like to record a very special word of thanks to Prof. Dr. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, Director General of IRCICA, and Raja Fuziah Raja Tun Uda, the then Deputy Director General of IRCICA, for their unflinching commitment to the project.

Despite the plethora of problems, this volume bears testimony to the fact that, with the spirit of intellectual commitment and scholarly

brotherhood among the contributors, the problems were not insurmountable. I am truly delighted that *Islamic Civilization in the Malay World* is finally published and that we are able to read the works of scholars from our own region on a subject of immense importance to us.

DATUK SERI ANWAR IBRAHIM
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
MALAYSIA

Preface

The development of Islamic thoughts and knowledge in the Malay world is projected by the existence of study centres such as those found in Melaka (15 century A.D.), Java (16 century A.D.) Acheh (17 & 18 century A.D.) and in Kelantan – Patani (19 century A.D.). The study centres in Melaka, Demak, Ampel, Pasai, Barus, Singkel, Acheh and Kelantan-Patani helped to create awareness and new understanding of Islam among the Malays in the region. The wisdom and discretion of the Islamic intellectuals and *Ulama* that numbered in hundreds throughout the ages helped to spread Islam actively to be at the level where it is today.

An in-depth study carried out by scholars from the Malay World is very timely as many aspects of lives that are based on the fundamentals of Islam which have contributed to the intellectual, cultural and social development of the people have yet to be researched into. There ought to be many interesting facets in the socio-cultural history of the Malay. The publication of this book therefore paved the way for such a study to be made in the near future.

It gives me great pleasure therefore to see the completion of this important book. My association with the project started long before I joined Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka. It began in Kuala Lumpur in 1987 when the Regional Workshop was convened under the joint sponsorship of IRCICA Istanbul and The Ministry of Education Malaysia, hosted by Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Malaysia.

In 1990, a third Regional Workshop held in Kuala Lumpur decided to adopt an alternative approach to revive the project. A new editor for the project – Mohd. Taib Osman who was then the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Malaya was appointed. A new group of writers was co-opted and a revised work schedule was drawn up. To manage the project more efficiently, a new Regional Secretariat was appointed.

The First Writers' Consultation was held in July 1993 in Kuala Lumpur. It was at this meeting that the scope and content for each chapter was deliberated at length. The Second Writers' Consultation was also held in Kuala Lumpur in December 1993. The meeting discussed the first drafts submitted by each contributor, and co-ordinated the contents of the various chapters.

The Third and final Writers' Consultation was held in Langkawi on 15–16 June 1994. The two-day meeting discussed at length the final draft of the eight chapters of the book, and a date of publication was set.

Unfortunately, it is not always possible to keep to the deadline for a work of this stature.

Besides contributing to the project, each and everyone of the writer has his/her own academic commitment to fulfill. The contribution of the editor in putting this book together has been more than admirable: his arduous task also included extensive copy-editing and deliberating each chapter with the respective contributors.

DBP is proud to be an active participant in this exciting and important intellectual project.

HAJI A. AZIZ DERAMAN
DIRECTOR GENERAL
DEWAN BAHASA DAN PUSTAKA
MALAYSIA

Preface

This book resulted from an international scholarly undertaking that aims to better acquaint the world with the Islamic history and culture of Southeast Asian nations. The OIC Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA) is most pleased that the idea conceived in 1981, the very first year of its activities, has materialized in this publication through an international research project that was quadrilaterally organized and carried out in cooperation with the Governments of Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam.

The idea of the research project on Islamic Civilization in the Malay World was proposed to the first session of IRCICA Governing Board held in Istanbul on 12 November 1981, as part of the Centre's first work program. The meeting "approved the orientation of the Centre aiming to show the Islamic unity through history and to study, in particular, the history of the Islamic territories which are not well known in Africa and Southeast Asia". It also recommended that the specialists in this field be encouraged to cooperate with the Centre. The next step towards the implementation of the project was the project proposal from Malaysia submitted to the third session of IRCICA Governing Board (Istanbul, 23-25 November 1984). Approving the proposal in principle, the Board requested the Director General of IRCICA to establish contacts with the Member States directly concerned with the project, namely Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam, and to prepare a detailed program for the consideration of the Governing Board. Soon after, the project was adopted by the Fifteenth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers held in Sana'a in December 1984.

In January 1985, we made the first official contact with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia and entered into cooperation with the Ministry of Education of Malaysia. I was received by the officials of Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam; at these meetings, guidelines of cooperation were established for this project that would be carried out with financial and academic contributions from the three countries and IRCICA that would result in a comprehensive reference book. I am grateful that after these initial steps, the Governments' keen support and active involvement in the project enabled it to progress steadily. Malaysia, through the support of Y.B. Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, who was then the Minister of Education, officially launched the research project in Kuala Lumpur and designated Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Malaysia, as the Regional Secretariat for the project.

This book is the outcome of hard work and efforts put in by all the parties involved, and in particular, the chapter writers and the Editor.

Research and editing, which required years of work for a publication of high scholarly standing and wide subject-wise coverage, progressed satisfactorily thanks to their firm commitment, competence and perseverance. I wish to warmly thank and congratulate Mohd. Taib Osman, and all the chapter writers. I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to Tuan Haji A. Aziz Deraman, Director General of Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Malaysia (DBP), who sucessfully guided the Regional Secretariat established within DBP's structure, and to warmly thank the staff of DBP and the national secretariats of Brunei Darussalam and Indonesia for their contributions at all levels including research facilities, meeting arrangements, and other task throughout the implementation of the project. I also convey my thanks and appreciation to Puan Rohani Rustam, head of the Regional Secretariat, under whose guidance all administrative and secretarial services were successfully organized.

And, I owe very special thanks to our dear friend and colleague Raja Fuziah Raja Tun Uda who in her different capacities as Deputy Director General of IRCICA, as a member of IRCICA Governing Board, and as the Project Coordinator, closely supervised the whole process of the project from its initiation to its end and ensured continuous cooperation between all the parties concerned.

I believe this publication will play a significant role in introducing the Islamic civilization in the Malay world to the world opinion, not only to academic circles but to the present and future generations of all nations. With its thorough coverage from the spread of Islam in the region to state administration, from economic activities to arts and architecture, it will serve as a model for studies on the history of other regions. Meanwhile, it is hoped that this first English edition will be translated to other languages for dissemination to a growing readership.

On behalf of IRCICA and myself, I wish to reiterate our deep gratitude to the Governments of Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam for their support of the project from the beginning until its finalization. With their commitment to its goals and their active involvement in its realization, the States of the region gave a meaningful example of common consciousness on the importance of introducing the Islamic civilization to the world through scholarly research. In this respect, I would like to acknowledge gratefully the high patronage and support the Prime Minister of Malaysia Y.A.B. Dato' Seri Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad gave to IRCICA on many occasions since its establishment, including the Prime Minister's two visits to the Centre, on 15 May 1983 and 29 September 1994 respectively, which encouraged us in the implementation of this and other scholarly projects in cooperation with the Member States. I would also like to express my deep gratitude to my dear brother Y.B. Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia, for the close interest extended towards the materialization of the project.

May the international cooperation that bore fruit in this publication be an example for further research to highlight the brilliant achievements of Islamic civilization in its different geographical contexts.

PROF. DR. EKMELEDDIN IHSANOGLU
DIRECTOR GENERAL
IRCICA, ISTANBUL
TURKEY

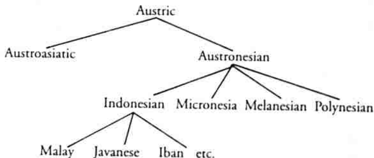
Introduction

Islamic Civilization in The Malay World

Mohd. Taib Osman

Islamic Civilization in The Malay World

An area stretching from Sumatra in the west to the Spice Islands in the east, and from the island of Java in the south to the plains of Kampuchea in the Indo-Chinese Peninsula in the north, is identified as the Malay world, or sometimes fondly referred to as *Nusantara*, or the world of islands. There are many reasons for identifying this part of the globe as the Malay world. Perhaps the evidence of linguistics, especially approached from its comparative and historical stance, is the most compelling in giving this area a homogeneous identity. A picture of a language family tree much like the Indo-European cluster of kindred languages stretching from India to the countries of Europe illustrates the point. In the case of the Malay world, most of the indigenous languages are cognatic and belong to the Austronesian family. Furthermore, the Austronesian group is supposed to have been derived from the Austric family of languages, with the other branch of the family being grouped as the Astro-Asiatic. Austronesian family of languages are in turn grouped into four families: Indonesian, Melanesian, Micronesian and Polynesian. More relevant would be the Indonesian family of languages which include the main languages like Malay, Javanese, Sundanese or Buginese, and the lesser known languages like Iban, Mentawei, Menado or Halmahera, spoken by the ethnic groups indiginous to the area.



Although "Malay" is just a convenient term adopted to identify the area generally, it is actually not an accurate description nor a collective reference. Perhaps the only claim to it lies in the fact that in historical times, Malay has been the lingua-franca of the region. When the Europeans made the first inroads into the area - the Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch and English - they found it convenient to deal with the

natives in the lingua-franca that has been established over the centuries. It was significant that correspondence with the authorities in Europe were conducted by the rulers of the Malay world since the 16th century in Malay, but it was supplanted by either Spanish, Dutch, or English as soon as the colonial powers established their stranglehold on the area.

When talking about the Islamic civilisation in the Malay world, the role played by Malay as a language, not only in spreading the religion in the area but also in making it the vehicle of the very civilization itself, cannot be over emphasized. Before the advent of Islam in about 12th Century A.D. in the area, that is if we were to go by the material evidence like tombstones, the area has been called by scholars as "Greater India". This was because since the beginning of the Christian era up to the time when Islam set foot in the area, the Malay civilization was characterized by Hindu and Buddhist influence. Hindu temples and Buddhist stupas and figurines are the material evidence of Indian influence over the region, since its influence over language and social structure had left indelible marks inspite of the Islamic influence over it by the 12th century. The process of Islamization was by no means and overnight phenomenon. It has been a long process, and as a Dutch scholar puts it, the process in still on-going up to this very day.[1]

The spectre of the concept of "Greater India" mooted by scholars like Nilakanta Sashtri had remained with modern scholars like Schrieke, the Dutch sociologist from Amsterdam, or Richard Winstedt. It can be seen in their idea that Islam was a veneer which enveloped the main and central Hindu and Buddhist beliefs and practices which were retained by the Malays inspite their acceptance and adoption of Islam.[2] This misconception must have stemmed either from a selective observation, mostly from the masses or the less educated rather than the main structure of the civilization itself, or from the misinterpretation of the history of the spread of Islam in the region. These two factors are actually interrelated, but nonetheless each has its own peculiarities. The first relate to the class structure of the society, the characteristic of Islamic learning and practice as related to the population structure, and the distance either in terms of distance or access to the Islamic educational centres.

There appears to be a connection between social class and the intensity of religious observance and knowledge. Using Robert Redfield's continuum model between two poles, urban and folk, we assume that the urban end of the continuum would consist of the trappings of civilization,[3] such as the centre of learning, peopled by

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1 Geertz, Clifford, 1960. *The Religion of Java.* Glencoe: Illinois.

2 See Sastri, Nilakanta 1949. *South Indian Influences in the Far East.* Bombay. van Leur, J.C. 1955. *Indonesia Trade and Society.* The Hague and Bandung. Winstedt, R.O. 1950. *The Malays: Acultural History.* New York.

3 See Readfield, Robert 1950. *Peasants Society and Culture.* University of Chicago Press.

scholars or *ulama*, and the development of scholarly traditions in religious learning. Such centres, in the history of the Malay world, had been the seats of the sultanates like Pasai-Samudra, Melaka, Acheh, Brunei, Patani, Macassar, Bantan, Cerebon and many others or the centres of learning known as the *madrasah, pesantren, balai* or *pondok*. It was at the courts of the sultans that the scholars and *ulama* not only taught Islamic religious knowledge, written books and treatises on religious issues but they also influenced the rulers in their administration of the Islamic law. The same too can be said of the centres of learnings which were often developed into the headquarters of the Sufi Order, because of the strong influence they exert on the masses. Thus the inhabitants in the proximity of the royal courts and the centres of lernings can be said to be steeped in their religious knowledge and staunched in their religious observance and practice compared to the people on the continuum away from it. It is possible that in practising the religious tenets they appear to be more pious and dedicated, but in grasping the actual teachings they could not draw a sharp distinction between the true teachings of Islam, accretions that have accrued within the religious practises, and the retentions of their former beliefs. These practices were often referred to as the folk religious practices.

Especially in the past, where the well known feudal system prevailed and strictly observed, the people living away from the courts and the centres of learnings usually occupied the lower rungs of the social ladder. The masses living in the remote areas in the interior, and those who had not accepted the religion, were often regarded as chattels to be taken as slaves. The safest way to escape being taken as slaves for these folks were by professing the religion and be accepted as part of the believers, even though in the hands of those who themselves did not subscribe to the strict tenets and religious values, the people would suffer more or less similar fate. Thus the people living the remote areas and those placed at lowest social ladder, have the tendency to profess the Islamic religion while still steeped in their former religious beliefs and at the same time retained their previous traditions.

A study by Clifford Geertz on the Muslim in Porwokerto (pseudonym) in Java illustrated the relationship even in modern times.[4] Although a continuation from the past. Geertz observed three schools of thoughts on Islam, (*aliran*), which existed in three social class: the "*abangan*", the "*santri*", and the "*prijayi*". The *abangan* not only referred to a particular perception and practice of Islam but were mixed with the local masses who share a common political affliation, occupation and views. The *santri* on the other hand have not only acquired proper religious training and thus became an educated group who strictly adhere to the Islamic teaching and practiced it. They tend to congregate

4 Geertz, Clifford, 1960. *The Religion of Java.* Glencoe: Illinois.

in a group known as "*kaumans*" and most of the time interacted among themselves. From the social aspect, they belong to the merchant class and affiliated themselves with the reformist Islamic party, "Masyumi", and they even sported similar attire and dressing. The *prijayi* class did not so much referred to their piety in the Islamic religion which has the tendency to syncretise with theosophy inherited from their previous beliefs, but to the fact that then were the heirs of Javanese aristocracy. It was the practices of the *abangan* that scholars like Wertheim and Winstedt look at Islam as the flaking enamel enveloping the thick Hindu core.

The second factor refers to the fact that Islamization is an on going process, even among those who have professed Islam centuries ago. The character of Islam has to be taken into consideration. While Islam emphasizes on communal character like the spirit of brotherhood amongst its adherents, it gives merit to the individual deeds and responsibility. In *ibadah* or observance, the five pillars of Islam are divided into 3 categories / obligations; (i) responsibility to oneself, (ii) one's duty towards social welfare, and (iii) good deed to humanity as a whole. Of the five pillars of Islam, fasting (*saum*), tithe (*zakat*) and the pilgrimage (*Hajj*), although beholden on the individual as piety, also imply good deed to others. Thus fasting teaches one to be sensitive to the hunger experienced by others, while the *zakat* is collected from those with the means and redestributed among the needy, and for the *Hajj* which is to be perform in Makkah for those who can afford the journey, either economically or in health. The purpose is primarily to bring together Muslims from all over the globe to be near His divine presence. The first two pillars befall on an individual's disposition, to bear witness to the oneness of his creator, Allah, and Muhammad as His messenger, and to his obedience and piety, to pray five times a day before His divine presence in the direction of the *Ka'aba* in Makkah.

Thus reflecting on the history of the Muslims, it is not unusual for one or even the whole society to suffer a lapse in his or their observance of Islam, at one point in time. But by the same token, there is always the possibility of going back to the right and proper path. Accessibility to the traditional Islamic centres of learnings in the Middle-East offered an opportunity to do so. While the local scholars or *ulama* at the centres where religious knowledge were actively pursued to provide another channel for the adherents to observe the right teachings of Islam. The regards with which the *ulama* from the Malay world were held by those in the great tradition of Islam in the Middle-East is so ably discussed by one of the writers in this treatise. The modernization of religious education in the early years resulted in the establishment of *sekolah pondok* and *pesantren*. *Madrasah* and religious colleges grew out of these *pondok* and *pesantren* and later became the centre of anti-colonialism sentiment in the area. The other method was through the growth of reformist movements which usually had social rather than religious

agenda in mind. Those movements were established as the direct result to confront the challenge brought by the domination of the colonising powers. They were represented by the *Muhammadiah* and *Kaum Muda* movements. The modern way of life which came in the wake of colonialism posed certain problems to the Muslim population, as some of the ways did not conform to the Islamic teachings. The usual response was the discovery of Allah with a new found vigour, but this sometimes can be lead the faithful going astray unwittingly, as seen in the spate of "Mahadi" movements or heretical cults which threaten the existing social fabric. Thus to go by the omission at a particular point in time and forgetting the possibility of the revival of Islamic idealism on the others, it would be easy to generalise by saying that Islam is simply a blanket to past beliefs.

The on-going process of Islamization was observed by C.W.J. Drewes as such:

> The Islamization of Indonesia is still in progress, not only in the sense that Islam is still spreading among pagan tribes, but also in that peoples who went over to Islam centuries ago are living up was almost to the standard of Muslim orthodoxy ... as the Indonesians grew better acquainted with the religious literature of Islam, the dividing line not only between orthodoxy and heterodoxy but also between what was consistent with Islam in Indonesia society and what was not, became clearer.[5]

In fact, since the 18th century, when the channel of communication was more resisting to change which was actually inevitable, the reform movements strategy was to make adjustments wherever possible and adopt new but admissible life-styles.

As we saw earlier, throughout its history, the spread, acceptance, practice and perspective of Islam in the Malay world was by no means uniform and homogeneous, both in terms of space and time, although there are certain basic characteristics which could be seen throughout. The Arabic alphabet and the Malay language have been adopted as the medium to convey Islam throughout the Malay world even though local dialects were in use for daily purposes. Except for certain areas like Bali and islands Christianized by the Portuguese, the coastal regions of the main islands and peninsula jutting from Mainland Asia, the Chams in Kampuchea, the Malays of Patani and the adjacent regions, and other areas in the Malay Peninsula became Muslim. Although the interior was not Islamized to a great extent, the process is still going on. In some areas such as in the Batak land in Sumatra and in the interior of Borneo, the endeavour were met with stiff competition from Christian missionaries who began converting the locals into Christianity in earnest in the 19th

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5 Orewes, C.W.J., 1955. "Mysticism and Activism" in G.E. von Grunebaum, ed., *Unity and Variety in Muslim Civilization*. Chicago, p. 292.

century. In the so-called open areas, where the inhabitants were pagans, the Christian Missionary movement met with great success, but no inroads could possible be made in the already Muslim areas. One reason was that in such areas, Islam was not merely a religious belief, but by the 19th century, had become a civilization and a way of life of the people.

This book is a collection of essays written by various scholars in their attempt to depict this civilization. There have been numerous works by scholars and writers from the West, that dealt with various aspects of Islam in the Malay region. However, only a few have ever attempted to look at Islam a civilization which in the span of about eight centuries beginning from the 12th Century A.D. to the present, had shaped the islands of the Southeast Asia region, into a distinctive Islamic entity. The project to produce this book was first mooted by IRCICA because the muslims of Southeast Asia are often left out when people talk of the Islamic world. The Muslim world for all intent and purposes, would often mean the muslims of the Middle East, North Africa, and those from the Indian sub-continent. The areas which made up the Malay world is inhabited by over 200 million Muslims of Malay ethnic stock and speaking the Malay language as the lingua-franca, and other local dialects which are cognate to Malay as explained earlier. Not only has Islam developed into a civilization distinctly recognisable as having its own cultural configuration, based on the fundamentals of Islam, but it make Islam a force to be reckon with in the present day world.

Basically the idea is to present an Islamic civilization that has crystallized over the centuries in an area identified as the "Malay world". To define the "Malay world" as was done above was not a great problem, but to write about its civilization beyond the "Malay-speaking" areas seems to pose some problems to the contributors. This is because they are not familiar with those areas and also lack references. That is why the essays mostly evolved around Malay-speaking area and not that of the Javanese, Buginese, Madurese or Achehnese, except for that of Azyumardi Azra. In a way, the projection of the Malay-speaking world seem to be practical, as it rightly reflected the general civilization of the area, considering Malay language being the lingua-franca: Malay was used in the spread and practice of Islam; Malay assumed the role of the courtly or cultural language; the political-culture of the Malay speakers were dominant and influential after their conversion to Islam.[6] Although the other sub-areas are not dealt with extensively in most of the essays, it does not detract any value from the generalization given here.

The emergence of the various Malay-Muslims kingdoms in the

6 This point became clearer at the recent seminar held in Brunei Darussalam in November 1994: "International Seminar and Brunei Malay Sultanate in Nusantara". The following paper is particularly enlighting: Kesultanan Melayu dan Identiti Nasional, Kasus Kesultanan Mataram di Jawa" (*Malay Sultanate and National Identity: The Case of Mataram Sultanate in Java*) by Dr. Djoko Suryo.

wake of the disintegration of Buddhist Sriwijaya empire based in south Sumatra but far-flung in control, as well as in its influence up to the present-day Thailand, or the Hindu Madjapahit based in Java, took place at different times and under different circumstances. But it was to those great and powerful kingdoms in the region such as Melaka, Acheh or Brunei, and some other small and insignificant dates, especially towards the 19th century like those in south Thailand and along the costs of Borneo, became the pivot of the Islamic civilization, although the civilization itself has been described as "galactic"[7] rather than homogeneous. Not only were these kingdoms the centres for the spread of Islam, but it also nurtured its intellectual thoughts through the presence of *ulama* and its advanced Islamic education, especially the sufi philosophies. It also participated actively in trade and military ventures against local as well as external opponents. Beginning with Samudra-Pasai in north Sumatra in 13th century, the succeeding centuries saw the rise of Melaka, Acheh, Brunei, Patani, Bantan, Cerebon etc. Politically, the rise and fall of these states were due to the vicissitudes of the trading activities and military rivalries in the region, involving both local and European rivals, the latter especially in 18th and 19th centuries. Although waxing their influence at different periods, the kingdoms displayed striking similarities in their structure or organization as a polity. Many scholars have pointed out that these kingdoms had arisen along the traditional trade routes in the region, indicating that commerce was one of the mainstrays of the Islamic civilization in the region. And it was due to the rivalry in trade that spelt doom for these kingdoms, especially at the hands of the monopolistic Dutch East India Company.

Thus the polity that was developed as these kingdoms emerged was a transformation from the previous pre-Islamic period. Although not homogeneous because Islamic overlay had to adjust to the peculiarities of the indigenous local culture, the overall structure and organization was given the Islamic perspective. The situation was similar to the Arabs when they adopted Islam. As von Grunebaum said, the new religion did not only introduce new values and ideals, but also succeeded in providing new solutions to old problems and helped to legitimise answers that seemed disrupting or otherwise inacceptable within the superceded system.[8] It was the case with, for instance, the institution of kingship. If during the Indian influence, kingship was based on the concept of divinity, and the king's person was god incarnate, this would run counter to the Islamic notion that divinity belongs to Allah alone.

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7 Stanley Tambian (1985) in his *Culture, Thought and Social Action: An Anthropological Respective* (Harward University Press) describes it as a "galactic" party.

8 See Von Grunebaum, G.E. "Transformation of Culture as Illustrated by the Rise of Islam", in L. Bryson, L. Finkelstein and R.M. MacIver, (1948) eds., *Conflict of Power in Culture: Proceedings of the Seventh Conference on Science, Philosophy and Religion*, New York , pp. 218-224.

And yet to exercise control over the subjects and to project familiar legitimacy of his rule, the ruler needs to recast the ideology pertaining to his position. From the Islamic viewpoint, the king as His shadow on earth who acts like a shepherd looking after the welfare of his flock is consonant with its teaching, and thereby established a new code for kingship in an Islamic polity. But to accomodate the mind set still prevalent among the common folk, the legitimacy based on divinity had to be sustained. That is why it was quite widespread in the Malay-speaking world for the ruler to claim descent from illustrious ancestors quite acceptable to Muslims, Alexander *the Great* or Nushirwan *the Just*. This may be relevant to the early days of Islam in the region, but later when Islamic learning was pursued with earnest and in depth, the mark of an ideal ruler in the Malay world became that of piety and justice.

Islam therefore did not revolutionised the social structure nor the organization within the polity. While the Hindu caste system did not take a foothold in the Malay world, the people were still class-bound. The royal and noble classes were not only privileged, in authority or in command, but were rigidly kept apart from the common people, who were categorized as free persons and slaves. The class parameters where strictly preserved with the exception that extraordinary deeds on the part of the common people could elevate them to the titled class, while certain categories of the slaves could win their freedom through payment of debts or loyal service. The division between the social classes were clear-cut and rigid. Even for nobles to be elevated to the royal class status world be highly impossible, although it occurred a number of times that the noble class person successfully usurped the throne and became the ruler, thus gaining for him and his family the royal status.

Nonetheless, Islam had provided the Malay royalty with a royal tradition, both visual and otherwise, to maintain their authority and status. The title *Raja* (king) which is of Hindu provenance was retained as appended title to the personal name of a royal-born, but for the ruler himself the title *Sultan* was adopted, clearly a borrowing from the Islamic civilization. Besides that grandiose titles, the title "*Shah*" were also adopted. It was a royal tradition too to assign to a departed ruler a reference beginning with "*Al-marhum* ... ". The following title may not be Arabic or of Arabic sounding, but it was in plain Malay, for example "*Al-marhum Mangkat Dijulang*" or "*Al-Marhum Teluk Ketapang*". One characteristic of the Malay royalty which survives up to this modern age and where the institution still survives as in the case of Brunei or Malay Peninsula, the Sultan is the Head of Religion. In Malaysia where the political power of the Malay sultans has been reduced to nought except as a titular head, he is provided by the state constitution as having the religious authority. In fact it was the colonial government in the Malay Peninsula that helped to make religious life more organized by introducing greater bureau criticization, as a government department. In areas which were under the Dutch or Spanish control, Islamic polity had to be

organized on single community basis where the *ulama* (religious learned) and the *penghulu* (village leader) provided the leadership and authority.

The *ulama* never formed an interested group except in building a network as a sufi order or as former students of particular *guru* (teacher), *pesantren* or *pondok*, or in later times during the colonial rule as political parties or religious movements. We have seen that the *ulama* were patronized by the rulers, and they formed part of the courtly officialdom. When attached to the centre of power, they became powerful. They were advisors not only on religious doctrines, but also on state matters especially those having some connection with religion. The *ulama* were either locals or foreigners coming from other muslim countries who succesfully pick up the Malay language and became proficient in it as to be able to write religious treatises in that language. As shown by Azyumardi Azra, the contact with the Islamic centres in the west, especially Makkah, was constant and frequent that not only were the developments in the east were of interest to the *ulama* of the west, but some have even achieved the distinction of teaching at *Masjid al-Haram* in Makkah. Apart from the *ulama* recognized at the court, there were those who taught religion and organized schools known as *pondok* or *pesantren*. There were also others who introduced and organized Sufi Orders and had vast following all over the Malay world. What is significant about these Sufi Orders, besides their teachings in achieving the nearest path to Allah, is to spawn communal or social activities which over time had been transformed into artistic performances like dances or dramatic performances as pointed out by the essay of Raja Fuziah. Sufistic chanting praise of Allah, often accompanied by bodily movements or even dancing, were originally acts of devotion to the Almighty. But over a time when the Sufi influence or involvement waned, they were still performed as semi-religious communal traditions, and sometimes even as entertainment. They were part of the people's tradition, especially in the rural setting, but they provide modern-day dancers and choreographers with indigenous resources to be recreated into modern dance idioms.

Without doubt Islam had given the peoples in the Malay region the design for living, as an individual, as a member of his immediate community, or as a member of a universal order. As an individual the Malay Muslim goes through the life cycle as patterned by the injunctions of his religion, always conscious of the presence of the greatness and oneness of Allah, his creator. He tries to closely observe and follow the examples of Muhammad, God's messanger on earth; he prays by facing Makkah five times a day; he observes the fast steadfastly during the month of *Ramadan*, he gives alms and pays the *zakat* to those prescribed by Islam; and finally he performs the *Hajj* in Makkah once in his life time when he can afford it. Woven into the pattern would be the elements of his own cultural traditions, either what is inherited by his culture from the past or what he creates to fulfill the needs of living

individually or socially. Inherited elements may even contradict Islamic tenets, as in invoking the plurality of supernatural beings, or in dabbling with magic. In Islam, to strive for the ideal as Allah commands it, is always there. Therefore, the ignorance of the true teachings of the religion may be due to circumstances, as for instant the distance from the teaching centres. This was bound to happen in the early period of Islamization, but once exposed to the right teachings, there was no reason not to conform. Similarly, past elements were still invoked because they serve a pragmatic mundane reason, such as the cure of the sick or avoidance of bad luck.

The basic injunctions also give rise to the inspiration in creativity in everyday life. Architecture, arts and crafts or even literature were the results of such devotion, tempered with a sense of tradition and creativity. Although paintings, especially depicting the human and animal forms, are found to flourish in the traditions of Muslim Persia and India, it did not prevail in the Malay world among the Muslim artists. Human and animal forms are to be seen in the indigenous weaving of cloth or wood sculpture, but Islam does not encourage such representation. Instead, the Malay Muslim artists found pleasure in depicting the nature, albeit in grafic forms like the bamboo shoots, flowers and tendrils, in weaving designs on the loom or plaiting the *pandan* leaves into mats and baskets. It is untrue therefore to say that the coming of Islam had blunted the creativity of the people because of its strict rule against the depiction of human forms or anything offensive to the moral sense of man. The art continued to flourish, even introducing new expressions like the *khat* or the art of writing. Qur'anic verses are beautifully written on paper or carved to decorate the wall of mosques etc. In fact some of the artifacts were beautifully crafted to meet the religious drive of the people, like the nearing of the pandanus leaves into prayer mats and *"tikar nikah"* (on which the bridegroom sits while solemnizing his marriage) or carving the Qur'anic verses on the pulpit where the *imam* gives his sermon. As amply discussed by Raja Fuziah, Islam has given to the Malay world a distinctive corpus of art and crafts of its own.

Similarly in architecture, the mosque is the main edifice to be considered as Islamic in character. Even in its lay-out, it has to be oriented towards Makkah. In form it shows typically a Southeast Asian creation of the stupa-like steep roof resting on a four-sided wall or square building. This was the original architecture of the mosque, built principally of timber, and having a roof that would allow the heavy downpour to rush efficiently down. Such architecture used to adorn the rural settlements throughout the region, but now the commercially manufactured tin or aluminium domes of various sizes with the crescent perching atop it grace the roof of the rural mosques, especially in Indonesia. The domes and the minarets are modern architectural designs imported by the colonialists from India and the Middle East. The

transition from the Hindu stupa to the Muslim mosque was smooth architecturally because it did not involve much structural redesigning, and it lasted until the 20th century when the domes and minarets structure became prominient. The mosque was symbolic of Islam, especially in the layout of the royal or court centre for the kingdom. When the kingdoms were sacked by the colonial forces, the mosque usually became the target of the invading forces and burned down. While the royal centres would have grand mosques, or *masjid raya*, the Muslim communities throughout the region would have the smaller version called the *surau* as the centre of religious activity. However, the essay by Kamaruddin Mohd. Ali deals with other forms of Islamic Malay architecture in the region besides that of the mosque. As shown by him the lay-out of the Malay Muslim principality or royal centre is characteristically Islamic with the mosque as an omnipresent feature. Even the typical Malay house observes in its structure the ethical perceptions of Islam.

The segregation of men from women, for instance, gives rise to the house architecture having the outer section and inner section. The former accomodates the male guests, while the latter belongs to the women. Except for women visitors, the men were not supposed to come into the house beyond the verandah. In fact, the inner part of the house is normaly the sanctuary for women but also reserved for family activities and privacy. Such segregation is better seen in the well-to-do houses, although not so obvious in the dwellings of rural dwellers. The need to rest and to perform prayers at appointed times of the day also prompted the building of *wakaf* at road junctions in the vast rice-plains in Kelantan or Kedah. This simple open four-sided structure with a platform and conical roof is built for travellers and toilers of land to rest and perform their prayer at noon or evening. Even the tombstones are quite distinctive in the Islamic period, especially those erected to mark the burial sites of sultans and nobles. One example of elaborate tombstone is the "*Batu Acheh*" which is to be found widespread in the Malay world beyond its supposed provenance in the northern tip of Sumatra. Tombs of great rulers like Sultan Bolkiah of Brunei or the Achehnese rulers which survive to this day attest to the artistry of the artisans of the past. One feature which is difficult to surpass even in this modern age is the in intracacy of the sculptured inscriptions in Arabic characters identifying the occupant of the tomb. But it is still the mosque, from the grand one erected in the capital of the kingdom to the simple but striking architecture of the local village mosque, which attests to this very day the ubiquitous presence of Islam. The architectural expression reflects the spirit of Islam, not only as a spritual beacon but one that guides man through his life.

Another tangible expression is the literature. Discussing its many aspects is the essay by Ismail Hamid. To think that Islam would only produce theological treatises by its *ulama* who served the various rulers

would be a rather limited view of the religion. Unlike Hinduism or Buddhism which did not seem to permeate the lower levels of society, as the learning of them were confined to the upper crust, Islam had spread far and wide, although, as we have seen above, some scholars felt it was merely a thin veneer. It is true that as Islam touched the unlearned, it was not practised or observed in the strictest sense of its teachings, but as stated above, the likelihood to be brought to the right path is always present. The literature connected with Islam was not homogeneous, nor monolithic, for it ranged from the serious writings on theology or the polemics on the finer points, such as Sufi approach in seeking closeness to Allah, which were often associated with the royal court, to the popular treatises on popular medicine such as *Taj-ul-Mulk*, the efficacy of certain *doa* or practices, advices on good conduct *(nasihat)* or spurious tales of magic or miracles purportedly performed by the Holy Prophet and other historical or legendary figures in Islamic history. The serious thinking on theology and law *(syariah)* and the sufistic activities represent one side of the coin, while the other side is to be seen in the *hikayat* or romantic and popular literature.

The Islamic civilization has introduced to the region Arabic script which in the area is variously identified as "Jawi"or "*Huruf Arab*". The writing has also developed the art of letter writing called "*tarasul*", which not only involved the correspondence among local rulers and nobility, but also between the local rulers with the authorities outside the regim. Referred to as "*surat emas*" because the ornamental border of the letter is usually gilded, it developed a special style of employing elaborate phraseology in addressing the other party, and at the same time seeing that the sender is not demeaned in any way or suffer any loss in standing.[9] It was not until the 20th century when colonial educational system introduced the Roman alphabet that the Arabic writing became threatened, but it remains dominant in the field of religion. As recounted by Ismail Hamid, Islam has given a boost to the intelectual tradition in the Malay world. Although still confined to the royal courts where the *ulama* and the scribes had gathered, the inherent drive for knowledge and religious piety which in Islam go together, encouraged the founding of *pesantren*, *balai* and *pondok* where the *ulama* and the *tarikat* leaders gathered their students and desciples as vividly described in Azyumardi Azra's paper.

The royal courts as in Melaka, Brunei or Acheh have encouraged Islamic learning and writing, but not all was religious in nature, because other forms of literature were also written. The *Sejarah Melayu* or histories is a widespread *genre* that spanned over a few centuries, even until the beginning of the 20th century when inroads of writing belonging to the colonial era and modernistic in style of writing and

9 The Gallop, Annabel 1994. *The Legacy of The Malay Letter*. London.

content had begun to appear. Although sharing common traits in that they were all about a particular kingdom in question, its rulers and significant events, they can also deviate from the norm and tell about a particular event or personality, including Europeans. The narrative *syair* or long poem is the product of Islamic civilization, and some of the *Sejarah* was also rendered in *syair* form. The scribe was attached to the royal court as the *bhujangga* used to be in the Hindu-Buddhist period. While the *bhujangga* had connection with religious life and had to perform religious rites, the scribe was more mundane in that he was involved more in the worldly duties like composing *syair*, copying *hikayat* or writing the "*surat emas*".

Among the general public, the *pesantren*, *balai* and the *pondok* provided the source for Qur'anic and religious teachers or *imam*. Young boys were sent by their parents to learn to read the Qur'an and learn of the basic tenets of Islam from these teachers. If they wanted to learn more and deepen their knowledge of Islam they would enrol at the *balai*, *pondok* or *pesantren*. Usually graduates of these learning centres became desciples of the Sufi Order espoused by their teacher, and as such they were bound to propogate not only the ideas of their orders, but certain practices such as *ratib* (chanting and dancing). Throughout the Malay world, Islam is not only found in the expression of piety and devotion through *ibadah* (prescribed rituals), but also in many social activities such as *beratib*, *berzanji*, dance-movements as in *rodat* or *dabus*. At the village level, this would be considered as life above the everyday mundane duties of toiling the land.

As stated above the rise of the Islamic kingdoms or Sultanates was the polity in the Malay world. And that polity had eventually carved out a distinctive civilization which basically was Islamic in spirit but characterised by the way in which the religion was spread, response towards it by the local culture at different social levels, and the circumstances prevailing including the incursion of the Europeans. The latter factor was especially true in the area of economics. The incursion of the Europeans took place only after two or three centuries after Islam made its appearance felt in the area. The Portuguese and the Spanish were the early comers, the former by way of the west and the latter by the way of the east through the Americas. The Spanish did not use the Philippines for its China trade route, but dominate it as a colony and turning the northern islands Christian after defeating the Malay Muslim ruler in what is now Manila. The southern island of Mindanao, the archipelagos of Sulu and other islands east of Borneo under their sultans resisted the Spanish well into 19th century. They were subsequently subdued by the Americans who supplanted Spanish rule in Manila at the turn of the century. The Portuguese succeeded in taking possession of Melaka and the Spice Islands in 16th century, but did not succeed very well, except in the spice islands, in converting the populace to Christianity. Part of the reason was the opposition of the Muslim

kingdoms which were in ascension then.

But the real struggle in the area outside the northern island of the Philippines only began when the Dutch and the English made their appearances. Unlike the former Europeans, the Dutch and the English were essentially interested in trade. The monopolistic policy of the Dutch and English East India Company eventually forced the destruction of the local trade netword and also the participation of the local kingdoms in the China and India trade. As pointed out in the essay by Shaharil and Raduan, the economy and wealth accrued by the Malay Muslim Sultanates, were essentially based on trade, although local economic activities in growing trade crops like rice, nutmeg, pepper and coffee, gathering of jungle produce or the collecting of sea products were also contributary. But the basis of economic well-being of these kingdoms was trade, either in carrying their own local products like pepper, jungle produce or sea-products, or in plying foreign goods in the extension of the international trade. The waterways in the Malay archipelagos like the Straits of Melaka, Straits of Sunda or the Sulawesi straits were deemed important in the control of trade passages. Most Sultanates were invariably founded at points strategic to these passages, and later European powers appeared to have followed this pattern. Sir Stamford Raffles, that English visionary who spent his life rivalling the endeavours of the Dutch to establish their hegemony in the western part of the Malay world, is credited as the founder of Singapore, which became from 19th century to this day the greatest emporium in the region. By his own admission, Raffles, who was then stationed in Bencoolen in Sumatra, had sought out the spot to build the English base to outrival the Dutch because he knew from his studies of the Malays' history, that it was once a thriving Malay kingdom. Referring to Singapore on which he started a trading port, he said:

> But for my Malay studies, I should hardly have known that such a place existed.... (p. 19)

And again,

> ... an island north of these straits called Singapore; this is the spot, the site of the ancient maritime capital of the Malays, and within the walls of these fortification, raised not less than six centuries ago in which I have planted the British flag.... (p.16)[10]

Raffles is mentioned here not merely to emphasize the maritime nature of the Malay Islamic polity while it lasted, but also the fact that the ruler of Tumasik, as Singapore was known at that time, was one of the earliest rulers to be converted to Islam. Known as Parameswara, he later became known in the history books as Sultan Iskandar Shah and

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10 Raffles Sophia, 1830. *Memoir of the Life and Public Services of Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles.* London, Vol. 2, pp.10 and 16.

also became the founder of Muslim Melaka when Singapore was sacked by Majapahit.

However, the Malay Muslim polity whose backbone was the various kingdoms or Sultanates which dotted the sea-lanes of the Malay world, and which experienced the rise and fall in the span of about seven centuries, came to its death throes in the 19th century in the face of the new revolution facing the world then. Industrial revolution and its attendant socio-economic readjustment in Europe (and North America) had affected the situation in Southeast Asia. The search for raw materials to feed the factories of Europe, the opening up of markets for these factories, better transportation which required better port facilities and also the opening up of the hinterland, the rise of capitalism and the desire to directly control the colonies, are some of the main factors that were bound to change the Malay Islamic polity. Politically the Malay kingdoms had lost their freedom and were being colonized directly and effectively, although in some areas, some semblance of their old dignity which was actually hollow was allowed to be retained by the colonial powers, as in the Malay Peninsula. Economically, as detailed in Shaharil's and Raduan's paper, the shift to land-based economy and the rise of commercialism had dealt a dying blow to the old independent Malay Muslim polity.

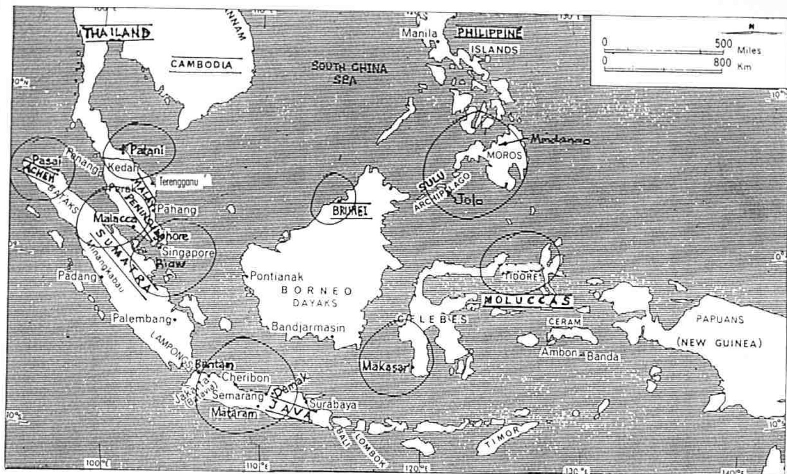
Thus the last chapter had to deal with the fate of Islamic community in the changing political landscape. Under colonial rule, Islam had stood its ground among the people, and in fact provides food for its strength in the face of adversity. Although under British rule, Islam was purportedly protected in the sense that religious matters were left to the local rulers in what was known as the principle of Indirect Rule, in territories under the Dutch and the Spanish, religious proselytisation by Christian missionaries were encouraged. In the Philippines, Catholicism took root in the plains of the northern islands, but the island of Mindanao and the island archipelagos remained staunch Muslims until the end; a legacy which confounds the independent Philippines government even today. In the territories which are Indonesia today, only pockets like central Sumatra and the islands of eastern Indonesia which had never been part of the Islamic polity had successfully been Christianized, but the majority which had been part of Islamic polity had never allowed the missionaries even to gain an inch. Similarly on the island of Borneo, the coastal areas which were dotted with Muslim principalities or little kingdoms apart from the main ones like Brunei, Pontianak or Kutai, the Christian missionaries were only successful in converting the people of the interior, who were not within the influence of Islam yet. The fervour of Islamic evangelism must have waned in direct inverse relation with the intensifying monopoly for trade and influence of European powers.

However, Islam provided a ready-made rallying point for the people in facing adversity, not only the direct colonial suppresion as in the

Dutch territories, but also against the dilemma faced by Muslims when confronted by modernism. In the first instance, the confrontation with the colonial administration may not be one between religions *per se* , but may be brought about by the imposition of certain tax or policy unpopular with the masses. In such circumstances, Islam was a common identity rallied by the populace to oppose the government's move. Also, the *pesantren* or *pondok*, was the hotbed for resistance against colonial rule, thus the animosity showed by the Dutch colonial rule against it. Even when Indonesian nationalism was mooted as an instrument against colonial rule, Islam was an indispensible element in its formulation. But the real challenge was modern developments that came in the wake of Western civilization. Capitalism with its commercial activities and banking institutions which not only dominated the economic conduct of the world including the colonial territories, but also exhibited their success in accruing wealth for the nations concerned, was a challenge to the Muslim community. Both in the economic principle involved where interest is forbidden, and the position of the Muslims who were comparatively in poorer station, the challenge was clear. As a result, it invoked reformist thinking within Islam itself. Following the lead of Islamic thinkers in the Middle East like Shamsuddin Al-Afghani and Muhammad Abduh, numerous Muslim figures in the colonial territories embarked on the reformist path, exhorting fellow Muslims through their writings, teachings and preachings to throw off the traditional shackles that had bounded them and to adopt progressive measures in order to advance and catch up with the progress shown by the West.

The intellectuals who believed reformed Islam would match the progress and advancement of the West would either join the political movements to achieve their end, including the nascent communist underground, or organise social movements based on Islam. One such movement which made a deep impression on Indonesian life in early twentieth century was the *Muhammadiah*, whose thrust had been educational and social service. On the Malay Peninsula the reformist movement was not organised into a distinctive body but rather a loose group of individuals who broadcast their thoughts through the newspapers, journals and books. Nothing that clearly emerged in the 20th century Philippines, mainly because the mainstream of society was Christian and the Muslims were regarded as on the fringe. But the Muslim intellectuals, like their brethren in Indonesia and Malaya then, were mainly educated in the centres in the Middle East and were inspired by the reformist thoughts sweeping the Muslim world at the time. The rise of the leaders who spearheaded the movement for the recognition of Muslim identity in the south had its roots in these intellectuals. Thus the first four decades of the 20th century saw a period of adjusting to the modern situations brought directly by Western colonialism, and the Malay Muslim civilization, which was mainly built on the polity of various sultanates which dotted the historical as well as

the geographical map of the Malay world over seven centuries, had lost its momentum by 19th century. While it was playing its role as a civilizational force in the Malay world, up to the early twentieth, the religion of Islam, which supplanted the religious systems of India beginning 12th or 13th century, should be given due attention. Today after the territories had been decolonized and become independent states of the Philippines, Indonesia, Brunei, Malaysia and Singapore. Islam, by the virture of its vast followers in these states, are still to be reckoned with in the social as well political life of these nations. While Brunei and Malaysia adopt Islam as the official religion of their states, Indonesia, the Philippines and Singapore, although favouring secularism as the foundation of their states, have to admit that Islam had played out an important role in their history as modern polity. But this belongs to another story which have been dealt with numerous books and authors on contemporary Malay Muslim world in Southeast Asia.



MAP 1 Muslim in Southeast Asia (15th–18th Centuries).

Chapter 1

Islamic Malay Polity in Southeast Asia

Hussin Mutalib

Chapter 1
Islamic Malay Polity in Southeast Asia

The "State" had existed for many centuries in the Malay world prior to the coming of Islam and colonialism to the region. More than just a reality, the State was the central driving force which, to a large extent, moulded the entire life of the Malay polity in its socio-cultural, economic and political realms. From the time when Malays were animists and Hindus to the time when they were Islamized, Malay life, in all its facets – including the nature of the Malay family, the type of economic system, cultural pursuits and intellectual activities – hinged very much on how the State, *via.* its king (*raja*) and other key institutions, went about their roles in managing the polity.

The structures and entities of such a state, as well as its changing modalities of governance, were the product of economic, political and socio-cultural forces, arising from both the domestic frameworks of individual states and from external sources. The extent to which such forces influence the character and operations of the state vary according to the particular exigencies and circumstances confronting the state. While the local and indigeneous elements of the state have always been felt, there have been times when foreign or extraneous influences exercised considerable impact upon the key institutions and socializing agents of the states.

The same confluence of forces and currents shaped, since early times, the nature and role of Islam in the states that comprised the Malay world (*Nusantara*), a world which included many parts of present Asia, stretching from Kampuchea and Myanmar down to Patani in southern

Thailand, to the entire Malay peninsula, further south to Sumatra and Java, then to Kalimantan, Brunei, Sulawesi, Moluccas and Sulu and Mindanao in southern Philippines.

THE "MALAY WORLD" PRIOR TO ISLAMIZATION

Change is the governing norm of all societies. Over the centuries, certain distinctive aspects of Malay society were gradually changed as they succumbed to outside forces and influences such as colonialism and other religio-cultural pressures. While some elements of Malay life continue to persist, in most cases, however, what occurred was the acculturation or fusion of aspects of life between the essentially indigeneous Buddhist/Hindu traits of the communities on the one hand, and extraneous influences, on the other. Other socio-economic and political imperatives also exerted their impact upon Malay society in their different historical and geographical settings. These include: the change from a maritime, commercial trading economy to an inland, rural subsistence peasantry consequent to the advent of colonialism; the change of kingdoms and rulers with different governing priorities because of power struggles either within the Malay courts or with royalties from other states; and the change of the traditional Malay cultural and ideological ethos after the arrival of Islam.

In the discussion that follow, we shall first highlight, albeit briefly, the salient characteristics of Malay states prior to the coming of Islam in terms of their economic life, political governance and socio-cultural features. We shall then document and analyse the elements of change and continuity in such spheres of Malay life after the arrival in the Malay world of two important forces, namely, **Islam** and **colonialism.**

The broad political and strategic canvas of the Malay world of Asia prior to the coming of Islam was coloured by the changing oscillation of power centres - particularly of the Indo-Chinese peninsula prior to the 7th century, to Java in the 7th to 12th centuries. By 900 A.D. the latter maritime empire of Sri Vijaya (modern Palembang), given its control of the lucrative trading sea routes, was the most powerful in Southeast Asia, and smaller states such as Sumatra, Malay peninsula and Western Java became vassals to Sri Vijaya. (Marr and Milner:1985; Raja Mohd Affandi:1974; Wolters:1970).[1] With its political, economic and strategic dominance of the region under eminent rulers such as Zabag, Samara, Manabharana, Sailendra, Kartanegara and Wijaya, Sri Vijaya's main religious creed of Mahayana Buddhism, also spread to many parts of the "Malay world" of Asia (particularly southeast) and influenced the

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1 Other than the major works by David E. Marr and A.C. Milner, R.O. Wolters and Raja Mohd Affandi, 1970 see the brief analysis captured by S. Asaratnam. "The Empire of Sri Vijaya", in *Glimpses of Malaysian History*, ed. by Zainal Abidin A Wahid, Kuala Lumpur, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, pp. 13-17.

weltanschauung (worldview) of its peoples, particularly its rulers.

AN ARCHIPELAGIC, SEA-BASED MALAY LIFE

This Indian-Buddhist influence later permeated the coastal cities and islands within the Malay peninsula since it deserves no exaggeration to note that for centuries, the epi-centres of political and economic dominion in the entire Malay archipelago were situated in states which strategically controlled the seas. In a sense, such a situation in Southeast Asia was similar to earlier great riverine civilizations elsewhere, such as the Nile, Indus and Mesopotamian empires which ruled over large areas of their territories given their superior technologies which were suited to the riverine and sea-based environments prevalent at that time. Carl Wintfogel's "Hydraulic theory" and Fernand Braudel's studies of the early world of the Mediterranean (during the time of Philip II) both confirmed how the degree of technological competencies and other skills had given certain civilizations the edge over others in different historical times and settings in early human civilizations.

A look at the map of Southeast Asia will show us that the entire "Malay" peoples reside within what is essentially a contiguous chain of islands within an archipelago. Studies of early post-Indic Malay states (Marr and Milner:1985; Rentse:1947; Wallace:1888; Wheatley:1955) had documented how essential seas and river estuaries had played in shaping Malay life. Hence, the importance of the Pahang, Johor, Perak, Kelantan and Terengganu rivers,[2] and how strategically significant was the Straits of Melaka and the Sulu seas in explaining the supremacy of the later Islamized Sultanates of Melaka, Samudra-Pasai, Sulu and Johor-Riau in the early centuries. So too with the pivotal role of the *Laksamana* (Admiral who was in charge of all things naval) in the governance of the states, as well as the wide Malay vocabulary on words pertaining to water and the seas, such as *pesisir, ilir, kuala, tanjung, telok, parit* and *sungai.*

Although there have been other Malay settlements and Malay courts situated inland and engaging in agriculture, the routes of such settlements almost inevitably led to the seas and straits. We saw for instance, as recent as 1861, in an authoritative eye-witness account of the peoples of Southeast Asia and how they lived, Alfred Russell Wallace, the botanist friend of Charles Darwin, documented the centrality of water, rivers and seas in the city of Palembang in Sumatra:

> "The city is a large one, extending for three or four miles along a fine curve of the river, which is as wide as the Thames at Greenwich ... the whole river-front on both sides is chiefly formed of houses (built upon great bamboo rafts), and they are mostly shops open to the

2 This "*pesisir*" (coastal) and "*dalaman*" (inland) difference is a major distinguishing feature that separates the Malay courts in Malay peninsula and the Javanese courts.

water, and only raised a foot above it, so that by taking a small boat it is easy to go market and purchase any thing that is to be had in Palembang. The natives are true Malays, never building a house on dry land if they can find water to set it in, and never going anywhere on foot if they can reach the place in a boat...The town is situated at the head of the delta of the river, and between it and the sea there is very little ground elevated above high-water mark ... Malays are tolerably clean - in some scrupulously so; and this peculiar and nasty custom, which is almost universal, arises, I have little doubt, from their having been originally a maritime and water-loving people, who built their houses on posts in the water, and only migrated gradually inland, first up the rivers and streams, and then into the dry interior".[3]

For the Malays, river deltas and estuaries served not only an economic function (of commerce and trade), but offered greater acessibility to matters such as migration, marriages between the royal families within the region and elsewhere, and also speeded up the religious conversion process.

It was also the common practice in traditional Malay society in this region, and particularly so after Islam had permeated Malay life, to build their religious institutions such as *surau*, *pondok*, *masjid* and *pesantren* near such riverine or coastal areas. Through the centuries-old sea trading and other commercial exchanges between Malays and the Indian-influenced neighbouring regions such as Java and, Kampuchea coupled with marriage and other cultural influences, Malay life, particularly of the ruling classes, became Indianized for many centuries prior to the coming of Islam to the region.

While some scholars, such as Naguib al-Attas (1969:2-7) maintained that such an Hindu-Buddhist influence was affecting mostly the rulers as opposed to the masses, and was limited to the area of artefacts and culture and not in the realm of ideology as did Islam when it arrived in the region, invariably it was to be expected that the masses would also be gradually affected given the hegemonic control of the royal court over the lives of its subjects. After all, in the Malay world during the pre-Islamic era, the ruler or *raja* (a Sanskrit word), was the centre of all political, economic and social life in the State - much akin to most Buddhist/Hindu states in ancient India.[4] Malays not only referred to

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3 Wallace, A.R. 1869, reprinted in 1989. *The Malay Archipelago*, Oxford University Press, pp.132-3, 135-36. Today, pockets of these sea-loving "gypsies" still exist in different areas of the archipelago, such as off the Borneo and Sulu seas.

4 For a selection of the many writings about ancient Indian life and civilization, as well as the centrality of the king in the Hindu polity, see: A.S. Altekar 1952. *State and Government in ancient India: from earliest times to c.1200 A.D.*, Sholapur, Institute of Public Administration.; G. Buhler 1969. *The Laws of Manu, New York, Dover Publications.*; C. Drelmeier 1962. *Kingship and Community in early India*, Stanford, Stanford University Press ; R.P. Kangle (1960-65). *The Kautilaya Arthasastra*, Lahore, Motilal Banarasidas (3 vols.).; B.A. Saletore (1957). *Ancient Indian Political Thought*

themselves as the slaves (*hamba* or *patik*) of the *raja*, the latter owned all the land in the state and all laws were "possessed" by him. (Milner:1985:25–35) As in the case of all early Hindu periods in India and in the writings of Hindu epics such as the 'Mahabaratta', the 'Arthasastra' and the 'Laws of Manu', the king controlled all his subjects and could do almost anything in the State. For the Malays, even the word *kerajaan* (government) itself means the condition of living under a *raja*.

THE MALAY WORLD AND ISLAM UP TO THE 15TH CENTURY

Sources and Spread of Islamization

There has been no unanimity amongst scholars as to whence and from where Islam first arrived in the many islands of the Malay world of Southeast Asia.[5] Much of the debate has been based on the kinds of sources (such as Dutch, Chinese, Portuguese or local indigeneous) and the historical-sociological interpretations that were adopted in such intellectual discourses. China and India, and later, Hadramaut in southern Arabia,[6] seemed to be favoured by most scholars as the most likely originating sources of the faith in the archipelago. The agencies of the spread of the faith were also unclear but could have originated from a combination of sources, such as via. the traders who stopped by the coastal regions where trading opportunities were more accessible (since the political and power centres then were maritime-based), Sufi missionaries, marriage with a daughter of the royal household, and conversion of the king. Over time, the simple doctrine and universalistic principles of the faith could also have begun to be appreciated by peoples who had wanted a change of life from their long-held cultural beliefs and dogmas steeped in the animistic or hierarchically stratified Hindu ethos and traditions.

Muslim tombstones and other historical and archaelogical findings in places such as Surabaya and Champa indicated that Muslims have

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and Institutions, Princeton, Princeton University Press.

5 For a selection of the theories on the Islamization of the Malay world, see S.Q. Fatimi 1963; D.G.E. Hall 1966 esp. chapters 1–4 and 10; A.H. Johns 1975; K.G.Tregonning, ed. 1962, C. A. Majul 1962; R.O.Winstedt 1982; Omar Farouk Bajunid 1988; B.J.O. Schrieke 1957, esp. pp. 230–67; P.M.Holt, Lambton and Lewis, eds 1970, pp. 123–54.

6 For a general account of the many ways of assessing the development of Islam in Southeast Asia in its different facets since early times, see the *Cambridge History of Islam*, edited by P.M.Holt, Ann Lambton and Barnard Lewis 1970, notably the chapters by De Graaf, Roff and Benda. The well-known Indonesian religious scholar, HAMKA 1965, esp. pp. 436–39, documented many names of Arab religious scholars who were sent to the Malay world since arly times to propagate the message of Islam. They include Sayid Abdul Aziz from Jeddah who met Parameswara, Sheikh Abdullah Arif from Makkah who visited Acheh, Sharif Hidayatullah (Fatahillah) in Pasai, and Sheikh Mansor from Arabia who assisted the Tidore king in his conversion to Islam in early 16th century. See also A.H.Johns 1976, pp. 304–20.

domiciled in the region from about the 11th century. By the 13th century, through local historiographies such as the *babad* (chronicles) and *hikayat* (historical annals), it was obvious that centres such as Pedir, Perlak (Ferlec), Aru, Acheh, and Samara which consisted of Samudra (Sa-mu-ta-la) and Pasai, particularly the latter, have assumed some significance in their role as agents of the spread of the religion in this part of the world. In 1282, it was recorded (HAMKA:1965; Tregonning:1964) that the Pasai ruler sent two Muslim ambassadors (Husayn and Sulayman) to China and in 1292, Marco Polo mentioned that the people of Ferlec in Sumatra were Muslims.[7] In the mausoleum of Pasai kings it was found a stone inscription dated 1297 belonging to the first Muslim Sultan of Pasai, Sultan Al-Malikus Saleh, the Sultan whose story also appeared in *Hikayat Raja-raja Pasai* and the Malay Annals (*Sejarah Melayu*) and one who established the foundations of the Malay Islamic civilization in the Malay world. More tombstones found in Terengganu and Brunei in the beginning of the 14th century further suggests that Islam had been fairly well established in the region by that time.

An Indonesian religious scholar, HAMKA (Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah) noted that Muslims in Arabia, particularly Makkah and Egypt, have known about the Muslim community in Pasai since the mid-13th century. He argued that the name of the Pasai Sultan was actually inspired by a similar name of the Mameluk king of Egypt, Al-Malikus Saleh Ayub, and so too with the names of the successors of the Pasai king (Zhahir and Mansor) which were similar to those of the successors of the Mameluk kings.[8] Malikus Saleh of Pasai later married the daughter of the Perlak king and the third Pasai king, Al-Malikus Zahir II (1326–1348), described by Ibn Batuttah during his visit of Pasai as a strong adherent of Islam and who recruited an Iranian religious scholar to be the State *kadi* (judge).[9] Tome Pires and other early Chinese travellers to the region, such as Cheng Ho, have also noted the economic and religious standing of Pasai. So credible was the Islamic image of Pasai scholars that even during the heydays of Melaka glory, Makkah scholars who could not find solutions to Islamic issues of the day would not refer to Melaka, but Pasai.[10] However, repeated attacks from the regional powers such as Siam and Majapahit (and, in 1521, Portugal), considerably checked Pasai's influence, and with it, its role as the Islamic religious centre of the region.

Pasai's successor was to be found in the Malay peninsula, where

7 K.G.Trengonning 1964, pp.26–27. The Islamic renaissance in Pasai which endedat the end of the 14th century, had inspired the subsequent Islamic developments in the Malay peninsula and Java: HAMKA 1965, p. 454.
8 HAMKA, 1965, p. 454.
9 HAMKA, *ibid.*, p. 455. On Ibn Battutah, see H.A.R. Gibb 1958. The writings by Barbosa 1918 and Hall 1981 also talked of the profitable and vibrant trading settlement in pasai in the 15th century.
10 HAMKA, 1965, pp. 455–56.

historical sources such as the *Sejarah Melayu* and the many *Hikayat* (such as the *Hikayat Raja-raja Pasai* and *Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa*), *Bustanus Salatin*, and the *Babad Tanah Jawa* ('Pararaton'), all placed Melaka highly in the further progression of Islam in the then Southeast Asia. While the Islamic renaissance in Pasai had influenced Islamic developments in other parts of the peninsula, it was generally agreed that it was Melaka that provided the impetus for the Islamic leadership and administration of many Malay states in the region. Parameswara's conversion to Islam after his marriage with the Pasai princess around 1414 and his adoption of the Muslim name of Megat Iskandar Shah[11] was one explanation to the rapid spread of the faith. Under the reign of Sultan Muzaffar Shah (1426–59) and his successors Sultan Mansur Shah (1459–77) and Bendahara Tun Perak who served both Sultans (1456–1498), Islam, *via.* marriage, Islamic scholarship, trade and conquest, flourished even further – to such places as Pahang, Terengganu, Kedah and Johor in the Malay peninsula, and Siak, Kampar, Indragiri and Jambi in Sumatra, and Patani in southern Siam. By the middle of the 15th century, some well known *ulama* from Java such as Sunan Bonang and Sunan Giri were already studying Islam and other sciences like *Hadith*, *Kalam*, and *Shar'iah* in Melaka.

In 1460, pockets of Muslims were found residing in Mindanao, Philippines (Majul:1973)[12] and, after the conversion of Sulu, some northernparts of Philippines were similarly Islamized, a process which was only stopped with the Spanish conquest in 1570. The spice-rich islands of Moluccas and Celebes were next in line with its acceptance of the faith around the end of the 15th century. The important coastal city of Demak, in 1478, led a combined naval force to defeat the Majapahit forces, and other riverine Javanese states such as Bantam and Bima, were gradually won over to the faith.

Although other states had received Muslim visitors much earlier than Melaka, such as the Burmese coastal regions which were said to have received Muslim traders from Persia and China as early as the 10th century (Yegar:1972; Harvey:1954) or the ancient Thai kingdom of Ayuthaya in the 14th century, it was, however, Melaka that was the major catalyst in the eventual flourishment of the faith to many areas of

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11 Consensus is lacking among scholars as to whether or not the Muslim name of Parameswara was Megat Iskandar Shah as claimed by the Malay Annals (written by the Johor Prime Minister [Bendahara] Tun Seri Lanang), or in fact Sultan Muhammad Shah. Chinese records named the Singapore king who fled to Melaka as Palisula while Portugese records had his name as Permaisura, both names resembling closely to Parameswara. There was also ambiguity as to Parameswara's faith when he assumed the name of Megat Iskandar Shah (or Muhammad Shah); some historians claimed that he was still a Hindu when he assumed that muslim name on the grounds that he wanted to protect his identity from the Siamese who had been looking for him far revenge after he killed the Siamese-supported prince in Tumasik.

12 C.A. Majul, 1973, esp. pp. 72–75.

the Malay archipelago and surrounding regions. Historical accounts from many sources, such as Portuguese (particularly the writings of Tome Pires and Duarte Barbosa), Chinese and Malay classical texts, all spoke, in glowing terms, of the extent of the Melaka empire.[13] Despite the probable exaggeration of such accounts (and the useful political myth that the Melaka empire represents in Malay psyche and history), it was no doubt that at the height of its glory, Islam in Melaka spread to other littoral and riverine cities in the region such as Palembang in Sumatra, Patani in southern Thailand, North Borneo, Brunei, and Mindanao in southern Philippines. Given Melaka's importance, we shall later return to a discussion of her prominence, after we first map out the ever-changing power centres in the region prior to Melaka's glorious ascendency.

Power centres in the "states" of the Malay World

Early Malay states were powerful entities but the notion of a "state" in pre-colonial Malay society was somewhat fluid and did not correspond to the spatial area and meaning that we understand it today. We saw for instance, in the 13th century, the Sumatran city of Melayu (Jambi), devoid of a big territory, still assumed the position of a powerful "state" given its role as an important trading centre in the region and its influence over other neighbouring states. Such was also the case with the small but powerful court of Patani in southern Thailand which declared the state as an Islamic State in 1457, and the city of Bantam in Java in the 18th century, which exercised tremendous influence beyond its shores, disproportionate to its size. (See Map). Political dominion by the rulers in early Kelantan history came not in the form of a well-established state which regulated such control but more in the form of a constellation of "power centres" which were actually quasi-states. The "states" in the Sulu Sultanate had, in different historical periods, came in the form of royal courts or powerful village chiefs such as the *panglima* and the *datu* who reigned over their contiguous domains.

In Malay history, many Malay courts were essentially mobile courts, a characteristic explained by the popular Malay saying, "*dimana Raja, disitu kerajaan*" ("where the king was, there was the kingdom"). Some states had come into being after they were "opened up" by a Sultan (as in the Malay saying, "*membuka negeri*") after he and his entourage landed in a certain area, and here again, usually overlooking the seas or rivers. This was what happened to Sultan Mahmud of Melaka who fled the Portuguese invasion in 1511 and landed at the banks of the Johor river to re-establish his rule of Johor Lama (Old Johor), and Sultan Hussein Shah who landed in Singapore at the time of the arrival of Raffles in 1819 with a few hundred canoes or *perahu* (small boats) and

13 See for instance, J.Bastian and W.Winks, eds. 1966, p. 21-22.

started his rule there, not far from the sea, in present Kampong Glam in Beach Road. So too with the establishment of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia's capital, when Raja Abdullah, the Bugis chief, arrived at the mouth of the tin-rich Gombak estuary in 1857. When the Johor-Riau empire crumbled, its remnants later reappear in an area near the Terengganu river after the royal family established some foothold there.

In terms of extent of influence, some states controlled large areas of a kingdom or an empire and were very powerful and economically vibrant sultanates as was the case with the Pasai, Melaka, Acheh and Johor-Riau Sultanates, while the influence of others were limited to their own geographical boundaries. Furthermore, while some of the *raja* (king or sultan) had established a long history of unbroken lineage in their governance, such as the Kedah sultans, others had to move on to different other areas to continue their rule, as was the case of the Melaka sultans.

The arrival of colonialists changed such traditional ways in the establishment and manner of governance of Malay states with the introduction of the notions of sovereignty, territoriality and permanency of location of royal courts. With a bigger and better military power, as well as capitalizing on the vulnerability of the Sultanates in confronting the territorial ambitions of other regional powers, colonialists succeeded to conquer and reign over the once-powerful Malay Sultanates – Pasai, Melaka, Acheh, Sulu, Johor-Riau kingdoms. Overtime, such a conquest led to the subjugation and weakening of Malay states throughout the Malay world. A major colonial approach or move which radically transformed traditional Malay life with dire consequences to the Malays was the positioning of the centre of colonial political and economic administration to areas deeper inland far away from the riverine and coastal settlements. More will be said of this later, but some of these consequences can be mentioned at this juncture.

As indicated earlier, traditionally a sea-based and sea-bound people, Malay life has, for centuries, revolved around the seas, rivers and straits. Such a littoral habitat and location of settlement had, to a large degree, shaped Malay life and worldview in all its facets, including in matters such as Malay leadership, cultural pursuits, values and aspirations, the form of Malay economic activities and the strategic alignments between Malay sultanates and other states within and outside the region. Economically, the radical land-shift from a maritime, commercial trading economy to an inland, rural subsistence peasantry, had a most unsettling effect upon Malays, rendering their traditional technological skills redundant as they became ill-equipped to face the new forms of economic activities initiated by the new colonial powers, as well as the introduction of money economy and urban-based capitalism. In the realm of politics, the centuries-old leadership role of religious leaders, chieftains, sultans and datus who mostly operated in and around the rivers and coasts, were subsumed under the influence of new urban-

based power brokers led by colonial officials, foreign entrepreneurs and middlemen and Western-sponsored Malay officials. Malay life was also transformed by the imposition of colonial laws and values which reigned supreme over traditional Malay *adat* norms and Islamic *shar'iah*.

All early Malay "states" had to contend with the changing fluctuations of their power; their strength was relative to the other power centres of the time. Jambi, for instance, despite its power over other Malay states, had no choice but to acknowledge much bigger empires of the time such as the Indian-influenced Majapahit in Java, and the Thai kingdom of Sukhotai (Wheatley:1960; Tregonning:1964), particularly the former. Within the Malay peninsula, northern states such as Terengganu (where the famous 'Terengganu stone' of 1303 was found at Kuala Brang),[14] Kelantan and Kedah, could actually have established their own "Islamic state" systems way ahead before Melaka. Although very little is known about these early experiments in governing the state Islamically, and more substantive research is needed, one view was that the Muslim state in Kelantan had already existed under the rule of Al-Mutawakkil in 1161 and that Islam had exercised some influence in the administration of the state ever since 1181.[15] The well-known explorer, Ibn Batutah, was said to have met a Muslim princess in Kelantan during his stopover there in 1297 on his travel from India to China. (Gibb:1958). By 1421, Admiral Cheng Ho, the Muslim ambassador from China, visited Kelantan, after which official diplomatic relations between Kelantan and China was established.[16]

By the 14th century, the Majapahit empire, particularly under the architect of its chief minister Patch Gajah Mada (1330–1364), had already consolidated its position in such a manner that its political, territorial and economic influence spread from Java to Sumatra, Kalimantan, Irian, and Singapore, formerly known as Tumasik. (Linehan:1947; Wilkinson:1935; Raja Mohd Affandi:1974:37–46) Like earlier empires in Southeast Asia, its control was made possible by its grip of the strategic sea lanes and its naval prowess. By the century's end, the loss of such a grip, the revolt in Sumatra and the breakaway of Tumasik, all led to its decline. The power vacuum in the region had to be filled up and hence entered Siam. From its powerful capital of Ayuthaya (Ayuthia), Siam regulated the strategic alliances in the area by securing tributaries from states such as Kedah, Kelantan, Terengganu, Pahang and

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14 H.S. Paterson, 1924. "An early Malay inscription from Terengganu", in *JMBRAS*, vol. 2.

15 Wan Hussein Azmi, 1980. "Islam di Malaysia: Kedatangan dan Perkembangan (Abad 7–20 M.), in *Tamaddun Islam di Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur, Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia, pp. 135–57, esp.144. See also Abdullah Alwi Hassan 1980. "Kelantan: Islamic Legal History Before 1909", in *Malaysia in History*, Journal of Malaysian Historical Society, ed. by Khoo Kay Kim, vol. 23, (rep. 1981), pp. 10–30, and Sa'ad Shukri Muda 1971. *Detik-detik Sejarah Kelantan*, Kota Bharu, Pustaka Aman Press.

16 Abdullah Alwi Hj. Hassan, 1981, *op. cit.*, p.10.

Tumasik. By such a time, it may have been probable that its southern Muslim state, Patani, could already have received Islam.(Wyatt and Teeuw:1970)[17]

Around the beginning of the 15th century, some areas in Java began to receive the Islamic message, most of which from the group of religious personages from Hadhramaut who were later to be popularly known as the *Wali Sembilan (Sanga)* or "Nine Religious Saints". Starting from Sunan Ampel (Raden Rahmat) in the mid-15th century, to Makhdum Ibrahim until Fatahillah (Sunan Gunong Jati) and Malik Ibrahim (Maulana Maghribi) who died a century later, these personalities contributed immensely to the Islamization process in Java (Raja Mohd Affandi:1974). However, given the large size and archipelagic nature of the thousands of islands in Java, Islam did not establish a strong foothold there by the 15th century. That foothold was actually forged in Pasai and Melaka, particularly the latter.

This came about when Parameswara, then the ruler of Tumasik (present Singapore), attempted a coup against Siam but failed and decided to flee to Melaka. Melaka, upon his arrival, was actually a small, insignificant village and was unlike the other major cities in the peninsula which were blessed by rivers and seas and which offered them political power and economic supremacy. However, Melaka's political fortunes changed to the better in early 15th century at a time when the Tang dynasty in China was spreading its influence southwards to places such as Tumasik. Fearful of being subjugated by Java or Sumatra, Parameswara quickly established cordial relations with China and entertained lavishly the Chinese Muslim Admiral who visited Melaka, Cheng Ho. Melaka's strategic location, its excellent port facilities which could help Asian traders to re-export their goods, and Parameswara's ingenuity in making the city secure and efficient, all explained the phenomenal success of Melaka. Such a political stability encouraged other international traders, from south Arabia, Persia, India and China, to come to Melaka.

It was against such a stable and vibrant, cosmopolitan setting and trading enterprise that Islam was introduced to Melaka and from thereon, to other neighbouring states. This came about especially after Sultan Muzaffar Shah's declaration, around 1450, of Islam as the official religion of the Melaka kingdom,[18] a declaration which could have explained the substantial increase of Muslim traders and missionaries from India and neighbouring coastal cities to Melaka. Given the significance of Melaka to our analysis of the position and role of Islam in the administration of Malay states of Southeast Asia, it is useful for us

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17 D.Watt and A.Teeuw 1970, esp. pp. 3-5, maintained that perhaps by 1387, Patani had already become a Muslim state.

18 The Sultan ruled from 1445 to 1459. There have been many writings about his rule; see for instance, H. Miller's brief description 1965, p. 351.

to now turn our attention to Melaka.

ISLAM AND STATE ADMINISTRATION IN THE MALAY WORLD FROM THE 15TH TO 18TH CENTURIES

By the 15th century, the otherwise heterogeneous and often ambiguous "Malay world" of Southeast Asia began to develop some underlying cultural unity as people who belonged to the *Melayu* (Malay) race. Although the origins of the word "Malay" is unclear, in the Melaka records of the 15th century (Milner:1982), mention was actually made of Melaka "Malays", and by the 17th and 18th century, both Chinese and Portuguese writings acknowledged not only the status of Malay as the lingua franca of the region, but the widespread reference to the Malays as a collective term denoting a people with some commonly distinguishable features, even beyond the Malay peninsula - to Patani, Brunei, Borneo and the Philippines. (Milner:1982: 9-10) Since then, *via*, common cultural traits such as language, religion, customs and manners, and "historical" literature such as the *hikayat* and the *babad*, the "Malay world" assumed a greater distinctiveness *vis-a-vis* others. After the arrival of Islam, it became obvious that Malay-speakers were in the forefront in the further spread of the faith throughout Asia and Malay political culture was the most dominant culture.

Melaka Sultanate

The early founding years of Melaka continue to remain unclear.[19] Some scholars have argued that Melaka's origins were intricately linked with India, such as the claim that the name of Melaka itself originated from the Indian-Sanskrit *Amalaka*.[20] By the late 13th century, some semblance of Muslim rule were found to have already existed in Melaka. It was stated that the Perak sultan who ruled the state from 1225 to 1263 (Makhdum Alauddin Malik Muhammad Amin Syah II) had married his daughters to the sultans of Melaka and Samudra-Pasai respectively,[21] 51

19 For the most monumental work produced so far on Melaka, refer the two volumes by K.S.Sandhu and Paul Wheatley, eds. 1983. *Melaka, The Transformation of a Malay Capital, 1400-1980*, 51 scholars contributed 46 articles in these two volumes. See also the pioneering classical works which made many references about Melaka.; A.Cortesao 1944, *The Suma Oriental of Tom Pires and the Book of Francisco Rodriguez*, London. (2 volumes), and *The Malay Annals (Sejarah Melayu)* versions Brown or Shellabear; and a recent collection of articles by Malaysian historians and edited by Omar Farouk Bajunid 1989.

20 See S.Singaravelu 1989. "Hubungan antara kaum India dengan negeri Melaka - suatu tinjauan berdasarkan sumber-sumber India dan sumber-sumber lain", in *Esei-esei Budaya dan Sejarah* (Melaka), ed. by Omar Farouk Bajunid, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-38.

21 M.J.Djamil 1968. "Silsilah Tawarich Raja-raja Keradjaan Atjeh", in article by Wan Hussein Azmi, *op. cit.*, p.144. Another well-known classical text is the *Hikayat Raja-raja Pasai* written by Nuruddin al-Raniri in the 17th century at the height of Achehnese power.

suggesting, albeit arguably, that both the Pasai and Melaka states were perhaps already practicing some form of "Islamic" rule by the 13th century.

It was, however, documented in the *Sejarah Melayu* that during the 15th century, and especially after Parameswara's arrival from the Hindu kingdom of Tumasik (Singapore) where he was hunted by Siamese forces, Melaka's position as a centre of Muslim activities and Islamic propagation eventually assumed a new enthralling significance (Sandhu and Wheatley:1983; Shellabear:1950).[22] His conversion in 1414 (and henceforth assumed the name of Megat Iskandar Shah), his marriage of a Muslim princess and the subsequent mass conversion to the faith by his subjects, the missionary zeal of devout Sufis, the strategic location of the city-state at the crossroads of a properous trading route, the legendary feats of its warriors such as Hang Tuah, Tun Perak and Hang Nadim, all explained Melaka's growing influence at that time.

Melaka's well fortified position was further buttressed by the vibrant economic activities there which attracted traders and ships from far and wide: Arabia, Persia, China and India. Even traders and entrepreneurs from Tumasik and Pasai, states which had been overrun by Siam, relocated their businesses to Melaka. In the *Sejarah Melayu* it was said that not only was Melaka producing its own prominent religious scholars such as Sayid Abdul Aziz, Maulana Abu Bakar, Kadi Menawar and Maulana Sadar Johan, it also established close religious connections with other Islamic centres of the time, as was done by Mansur Shah who sought religious advice from the well-known Pasai religious scholar (*'alim*) Makhdum Patakam. Soon, Melaka's influence spread beyond the Malay peninsula to parts of Sumatra such as Kampar, Siak, Aru, Indragiri and Rokan (Wilkinson:1971).

In so far as Islam was concerned, the position and role of the faith was usually closely related to the royal courts; in this regard, some scholars have argued that Islam, for the most part, operated as an adjunct to and part-definer of royal sovereignty. (Hooker:1984:130). Together with the strong influence of the then *adat* system, Islam was somewhat intermingled, or occasionally opposed to, royal legitimacy in that it was used to reinforce the idea of the divinity of Sultans. The *Hikayat Hang Tuah* and *Sejarah Melayu* provided many accounts to show not only the extent of power of the Sultan over his people and the State – such as declaring war, deciding on life and death of his subjects, administering justice and maintaining law and order – but also how the faith was used to legitimize the political and social aristocratic order and status quo. The ruler was often described as the "Shadow of God on Earth", who

22 See *Sejarah Melayu* (*Malay Annals*), ed., by W.G.Shellabear 1950, esp. pp. 63-65, where it was stated that the Sultan, upon conversion, took on a new Muslim name of Sultan Muhammad Shah. For a seminal and comprehensive coverage of Melaka's past glory, see K.S.Sandhu and Paul Wheatley, eds., 1983, 2 vols.

carries out God's Laws and expect that his subjects accepts his close-to-divine position.

The political structure during the period of the Melaka Sultanate was rigidly hierarchical and stratified - the Sultan at the apex of the socio-political pyramid, followed by his deputies and aristocratic court officials, with the masses right at the bottom, with little hope, if any, of climbing up the vertical social ladder. Quite contrary to the Islamic Caliphs who succeeded Prophet Muhammad, who were elected from a system of consensus and based on their knowledge and practice of Islamic tenets, the Melaka Sultans were hereditarily chosen, resided in opulent *istana* (palaces), sometimes surrounded by concubines, and lived extravagantly. While there have been some Sultans who adopted the Islamic lifestyle and values and played an active role in the spread of the faith, and the position of Malay women was generally far better than in many other areas of the Muslim world, by and large, during the long reign of the Melaka kingdom, Islamic laws, the *shar'iah*, were used rather symbolically and selectively, such as the imposition of the death penalty for the killing of another and amputation for theft. There was no system of applying similar Islamic laws on both the subjects and the rulers; the latter were often "above law" and Qur'anic and other Islamic teachings were used to bolster their rule, as was the common Qur'anic dictum "Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those who have command over you", which was contained in the Melaka Laws of the State. (Hooker:1984:15).

With such an extent of power, eventually, not only were the Sultans consolidating and perpetuating their control over their subjects, the Melaka empire itself began to shadow over that of the reigning empire of that time, *viz.* Majapahit kingdom. Under the legendary military prowess of *Bendahara* Tun Perak and *Laksamana* Hang Tuah, Melaka not only defeated the Siamese attack, but managed to subdue Pahang, for long a Siamese ally. (Raja Mohd Affandi:1974:47-67). Trade and political relations with China, coupled with the Sultan's reported marriage to a Chinese princess, further solidified Melaka's influence. Such Melaka-Sino relations was actually a continuation of Melaka's consistent policy, since Melaka had already, since the reign of its first Sultan, Muhammad Shah (whom the Chinese called Palisula) established close ties with China. It was recorded (HAMKA:1965) that the Sultan sent a delegation to China in 1404 in support of the coming into power of Emperor Cheng Tsu, and a reciprocal delegation to Melaka headed by Admiral Cheng Ho, with his 62 ships, visited Melaka. Soon after, Sultan Muhammad Shah, his family and a large entourage paid homage to the Emperor in China.(HAMKA:1965:464-66). Such a relationship with a superpower had helped Melaka from becoming easy prey to other regional powers as was the case with the territorial ambitions of Siam over Melaka. In fact, Siamese forces tried again, twice, during the reign of Sultan Muzaffar Shah (1426-1459), but all its

designs were thwarted given the strong Melaka-China relations at that time under Mansor Shah (1459–1477).

Under Mansor Shah's rule, Melaka became even more adventurous and expanded its territorial conquest, by invading Kampar, Siak, and Rokan, and also Kelantan and Terengganu in the Malay Peninsula. International trade flourished in Melaka and Islamic scholars from many places visited the city-state and by the time of the last Sultan, Sultan Mahmud Shah (1488–1511), Melaka was already a prosperous and stable state, the envy of many. Many foreign nationalities even domiciled there as seen from the names of certain localities such as *Kampong Bandar Hilir* (for the Javanese community), *Bukit China* (Chinese), and *Bukit Keling* (Indians). Of the three, the latter was the biggest settlement since many Malabaris from India not only made their homes there but became prominent traders and some even became high government officials, such as *Bendahara* Seri Maharaja, son of the well-known Malabar trader, Mani Purindam. Melaka's strength was only checked after the Portuguese' conquest in 1511, a conquest made easier by the latter's superior military hardware and an incessant internal struggle for power within the Melaka court involving the Sultan and his aides.[23] Finally, after public confidence in the integrity and capability of the Sultan and his chieftains began to wane, Melaka's long years of political stability and prosperity came to an end.

Despite the Portuguese conquest in 1511, however, Islamic life continued to be practiced in Melaka, though under some strain at the hands of the Portuguese administration. This sustenance of Islamic life could be seen from the continuing presence of Indian and Arab Muslims who were in Melaka either as traders or as religious missionaries and advisers to the royal court. Muslim literature *via.* "religious" stories (such as the *Hikayat*)[24] continue to be popular and so too with the wide use of the exalted Arabic-*Jawi* script. It was recorded in the *Sejarah Melayu* that when Melaka was attacked by the Portuguese, the Melaka soldiers were recited the two books which portrayed the heroic struggles of some Islamic patriots, namely the *Hikayat Amir Hamzah* and the *Hikayat Ali Hanafiyah.* By that time, from Melaka, the faith had spread not only to areas within the Malay Peninsula, but also to the southern coastal cities of Philippines, such as the Sulu-Mindanao regions, and to Java in places like Demak, Pajang, Matarram, Madura, Tuban, Surabaya, Bantam,

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23 The Portuguese trading team which was first sent to Melaka in 1509 and headed by Diego Lopez de Sequeira, after establishing a large economic complex in Melaka, later realized that the disunity of the Melaka court and its vulnerability, gave an excellent opportunity for Portugal to attack. Upon Sequeira's report, Alfonso de Albuquerque sent an attack force to invade Melaka but it failed. Two years later, however, Melaka fell.

24 Among the more well-known stories from Muslim lands were the *Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiah*, the *Hikayat Amir Hamzah* and the *Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa.*

Bintan, Cerebon, Ternate and onwards to the Moluccas (Hall:1958:184; HAMKA:1965:487–508).

With such a backdrop, and as alluded to earlier, by the 16th century, Malays in Southeast Asia already shared some sense of a common cultural identity. With Islamisation of the Malays, their language, *Bahasa Melayu*, also became the lingua franca of Southeast Asia particularly among the elites, right to the coming of colonialism in the 19th century. Writing in 1584, Linschott, described the language as the "most refined, exact and celebrated of all the East"; the Dutch writer Valentijn, noted, in the 18th century, that "if you don't understand this language, you are not considered a very broadly educated man in the East"; and as recent as 1854, Wallace confirmed the widespread use of Malay in the entire Malay archipelago[25] The language was not only the primary language of communication but was also, to some extent, a homogenising element in what was otherwise a disparated and highly heterogeneous Malay political landscape of the *Nusantara*. A common language and a common religion could also have led to the development of some form of a supra-national consciousness among the elites, a sense of *ummah Islam* or belonging to the wider world of Islam. Later, the Arabic *Jawi* script was also similarly used widely in the teaching of Islam in many parts of Java, Malaya, Brunei and Patani.

A few years after Melaka's downfall, many coastal cities in Java served as the bases, albeit small, of Islamic propagation in the region. Although there have been Javanese royal courts which were based much inland and were not as mobile as their Malay counterparts in peninsula Malaya (as was the case of the Jogjakarta court (Ricklefs:1974 and 1993), Islam had already settled in Giri, especially the area called Gerisek, early in 15th century. There, the first of the nine well-known religious saints from Gujerat and Hadhramaut (*Wali Sembilan*), Sunan Ampel, and later, Maulana Malik Ibrahim, later established their Islamic foothold, to be followed by new centres of Islamic scholarship in such places like Demak, Mataram, Bantam and Cerebon. (HAMKA:-1965:487–508) Elsewhere, in early 17th century, the Muslims in Kampuchea, originating from Champa, already managed to convert the Kampuchean king into Islam and Kampuchea Muslim traders had extensive business dealings with countries in the Malay peninsula much earlier than that. Within the Indonesia archipelago, the Buginese and Makassars in Sulawesi were not only regulating much of the *trepang* (sea cucumber) and pearl trade but other spices (Brierley:1994) were regularly bartered between seafarers in Makassar, Sumba and Timor and the Australian aborigines and surrounding regions for at least three centuries prior to that.

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25 Quoted from: A.C. Milner 1982, *op. cit.*, p. 3, and Alfred Russell Wallace 1869, reprinted in 1989, New York, Oxford. University Press; the quote was from this latter reprint, pp. 37–38.

The pre-eminent position occupied by Melaka in the spread of Islam in this part of the world, did not mean that other Malay Sultanates were dormant or played a mere tangential role. There were other smaller sultanates, while not as glorious as Melaka, were similarly instrumental in explaining the eventual spread of the religion throughout Southeast Asia. These were the sultanates which centred in Brunei and Sulu.

Brunei and Sulu Sultanates

In the well-known stone-inscription by a Khatib Abdul Latif, dated 1806, now kept in the Kings' Mausoleum in Brunei, was engraved the following text, which many Bruneian scholars accept as denoting the origins of Islam in the sultanate:

> "The first government in this place which brings in Islam and practices the Islamic 'sharia't' based on the teachings of Prophet Muhammad, was that of Paduka Seri Sultan Muhammad and his relative, Sultan Ahmad. Sultan Muhammad married a princess from Kinabatangan (Johor or Old Singapore) and they got a daughter who then was married to Sharif Ali from Tai'f". (Source: Dr. Awang Haji Jamil Al-Sufri ... bin Awang ... Haji Umar, 'Sejarah Perwira2 dan Pembesar2 Brunei I', Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Brunei, 1971, p.13).

The Sultan Muhammad referred to here was the Muslim name of Awang Alak Betatar, the first Muslim Sultan of Brunei who converted to Islam upon marrying the princess from Old Singapore, around 1368–1370. This date was surmised from a reliable Chinese palace record which stated that a Chinese delegation which visited Brunei ("Puni/Poni") in 1370 was received by the king whose name was *Ma-ha-mo-sha*, that is, the Chinese pronunciation for Muhammad Shah. It was related as to how, upon his conversion to Islam, all his followers who accompanied him to Johor/Old Singapore to witness his marriage to the Johorian princess, also converted to Islam *en masse*.

In fact, some Chinese sources actually concluded that there were already foreign Muslims residing in Brunei some 60 years prior to the official establishment of the first Islamic state in Brunei by Sultan Muhammad in 1363. This conclusion was arrived at after the finding of another tombstone in Brunei, made in Quanzhou in China in 1301, and transported to Brunei ("Poni") to mark the death of the Brunei king (Maharaja Brunei) nearing that date. (Chen Dasheng: 1984: 16–17, "Islamic Inscriptions in Quanzhou", Fuzhou, 1984:16–17). Quanzhou was an ancient city in China and whose port was a major meeting point of foreign traders, including Muslims, in the 13th and 14th centuries.

Prior to his conversion, Awang Alak Betatar ruled Brunei as a protectorate under the Majapahit kingdom. However, when the kingdom under the rulership of Hayam Worok (1350–1389) was on the decline, Awang Alak Betatar had managed to govern Brunei quite independently from Majapahit interference – and his kingdom began to

flourish as an Islamic Sultanate not long after his adoption of the new faith, and aided by his able relatives, the *Bendahara* Ahmad and *Temenggong* Semaun.

The "Islamic Sultanate" of Brunei, in its early days, operated in ways which were quite similar to newly- established Islamic states in Islamic history. The State was led by the Sultan and aided by different levels or classes of chieftains (*Pembesar, Ceteria, Menteri*), and its laws were generally derived from Islamic laws but were fused with the then existing traditional and indigeneous norms and practices known as the "*adat*" and "*resam*". Islamic teachings were conducted at many levels of the society - from the palace grounds, to mosques, *madrasah* ("*balai*") and homes.

Prior to the entry of British officials in 1888, Brunei had a long history of Islamic rule, a rule which, under the reign of the third Sultan, Sharif Ali (an Arab who married a Brunei princess) was already establishing some form of an Islamic state in the sultanate, from 1425-1432. In the analysis of David Leake J.R. (Brunei: *The Modern Southeast Asian Sultanate*, Kuala Lumpur, Forum, 1990:9), Sharif Ali spread Islam ever since he served the first two sultans, and during his own reign, he was known as the Blessed Sultan (Sultan Berkat) and Stamford Raffles nicknamed him as the Mirror Island Sultan (Sultan Pulau Cermin) after he tried to convert the Majapahit king, Perabu Angka Wijaya. Amin Sweeney in his "*Silsilah Raja-raja Brunei*" (JMBRAS, vol. 41, pt. 2, 1968:11), also recorded how *Sharif* Ali had started the program of building mosques and how he himself had delivered religious sermons in the mosques. By the late 15th century, Islam in Brunei, given the power of the Brunei kingdom, had spread to neighbouring areas such as Borneo (presently Sabah and Sarawak) and southern Philippines. The fall of Melaka in 1511 led to the transfer of Muslim power and Islamic scholarship to new areas, and Brunei (and Acheh) took up such a role.

Two other Brunei Sultans were said to have spread Islam beyond the shores of Brunei. They were the fifth Sultan (Bolkiah) and ninth Sultan (Hasan). Sultan Bolkiah defeated the Filipino armies in Suluk and Saludang (Selorong), the latter was said to be the ancient name of Luzon island where the present Manila capital-city is situated. (Cesar Abid Majul, "*Islam di Filipina*", Malay trans., Kuala Lumpur, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1988:106; and D.S.Ranjit Singh, "Brunei 1839-1983: "The Problem of Political Survival", Singapore, Oxford Univ. Press, 1984:18). In fact, at the height of its glory, the Brunei sultanate ruled over the whole of Borneo and many areas within Philippines, such as Kotaringan, Bolongan, Sulu, Balabac, Banggi, Palawan and Manila. (Yura Halim and Jamil Omar, *Sejarah Brunei*, Brunei, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, n.d., p.29). The attack by the heavily-equipped Spanish armada (of 40 ships) in 1578 while managed to defeat the Bruneians, but Spanish rule was shortlived since its occupation led to numerous

rebellions by the local people. It was only in the 18th century that other Western powers came to the region and, given their military prowess, succeeded in dividing their spheres of influence.

For the Muslim Filipinos, Muslim missionaries from Arabia, western India and from within the Malay world itself, were said to have brought Islam to the Filipinos, in particular the region of the Sulu archipelago, around the 14th century. In the 15th century, an Arab Muslim trader, Shariful Islam, married the daughter of the Jolo king, upon which he was later installed the first Muslim sultan of the Sulu region.

The Sulu archipelago, the region which in the main, was the centre of Islamic influence, accounted for some 1600 sq. miles of territory, and about 500 islands. Of these islands, the biggest are Basilan, Jolo, and Tawi-tawi. In the 18th century, it was estimated that the total population of southern Philippines (upon which most was comprised of the Sulu Sultanate) was about 2.5 million. (Cesar Adib Majul, "The Muslims in the Philippines: An Historical Perspective", in Peter Gowing & Robert D. McAmis, eds., "The Muslim Filipinos", Manila, Solidaridad Publishing House, 1974:9). A study by Thomas Forrest ("A Voyage to New Guinea and The Moluccas, 1774-1776", Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1969:321) found that in 1799, there were at least 33 small Muslim Sultanates throughout the Sulu archipelago. Within the Sulu Sultanate alone, there were at least 11 Malay ethnic groups: Tausug, Samal, Magindanao, Maranao, Yakan, Brunei Malays. Of these, the Tausug was the dominant Muslim group in the Sulu archipelago. Jolo was the most strategically powerful city in the 17th century and the Jolo kings were mostly Tausug.

After the consolidation of the Islamic rule of Shariful Islam in the 15th century, and since the Sultan was "the highest *datu*, the highest religious official, and the highest legal authority", (Thomas Kiefer, "The Tausug: Violence and Laws in a Philippines Moslem Society", New York, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1972:107), Islam under the sultans, gradually spread from Sulu to neighbouring areas: Maguindanao, Ternate, and Makassar. The strategic control of the Sulu Sultans and other high officials (*datu, panglima, maharaja bangsawan, maharaja pahlawan, orang kaya,* etc.) and the vibrant sea-related products which they traded with others, made the Sulu Sultanate a powerful one. However, the arrival of Spanish forces in the 16th century (eg. Legaspi in 1565) and their determination to spread Christianity in the Philippines, led to the decline of the sultans. In 1637 the capital of Sultan Qudarat, Lamitan, fell to Spanish forces and this was followed, a year later, by the fall of Jolo.

Concerned about the Dutch threat and the continuous resistance of Muslims, the Spanish forces decided to make peace with the Maguindanao and Sulu Sultans in 1645-46, but the truce was only a marriage of convenience and did not last. Many more wars were fought between

Spanish armies and the Muslims in Philippines, described by Spanish forces as the "Moros", from the Moors in Africa which Spain had earlier encountered. Peace was established for about 50 years from 1663 ever since the Muslim armies in Sulu, Ternate and Makassar combined forces to declare a holy war against Spanish invaders, a lull which helped the Sulu Sultanate to further expand its territory to Borneo (from Brunei).

In the 18th century, it was said that the Sulu Sultanate, aided by its vibrant trade with China, and its regulation of the slave traffic, was the most powerful throughout the Malay world. (J.F. Warren, "*Slavery and the impact of external trade: The Sulu Sultanate in the 19th century*", in Alfred W. McCoy & E.C.de Jesus, eds., Philippine Social History: Global Trade and Local Transformations, Quezon City, Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1982:415; and J.F.Warren, "*The Sulu Zone 1768-1898: The Dynamics of External Trade, Slavery, and Ethnicity in the Transformation of a Southeast Asian Maritime State,*" Singapore, Singapore Univ. Press, 1981:xxi.) The Sultans, while occupying the highest politico-religious position in the hierarchically structured society, adopted a consensual form of rule, with the practice of "*rumah bicara*" or "house of discussion", where issues of the day were deliberated between the Sultan and his many top aides.

By the 19th century, however, the colonial incursions (from Spanish to Americans), had led to the eventual decline of the Sulu Sultanate.

Acheh and Johor-Riau Sultanates

When Melaka fell to the Portuguese and later to the Dutch in 1511 and 1642 respectively, the already Islamised Brunei and Sulu Sultanates as well as the Javanese states, were not in a position to assume the (Muslim) leadership of the region. So too with other areas of Muslim influence such as Burma and Siam, because Islam was not very much patronised by the regimes and Muslim missionaries and traders had gone to other areas considered more conducive to their religious and economic interests. Such a regional leadership role was taken up by Acheh. The last of the Melaka Sultans had to flee to Johore Lama (Old Johore) in the southern tip of the peninsula, still hoping to resurrect the lost grandeur of old Melaka, but in vain.

Acheh's position and power rose consequent to the demise of trading centres not only in Melaka, but also Pasai and Pedir in north Sumatra which fall to the incessant Portuguese (and Siamese) onslaught. Classical texts such as the *Tuhfat-ul-Nafis* and the *Sejarah Melayu*, written at the height of Acheh's power, documented how Acheh not only controlled many Malay states in the Malay peninsula, like Perak, Johor, Pahang and Kedah, but had a booming entrepot trade, particularly under the able leadership of rulers such as the notable Sultan Ibrahim or Ali Moghayat Shah (1507-1528) and Iskandar Muda Mahkota Alam (1607-1636). While Sultan Ibrahim managed to bring together the

warring coastal states within Acheh into one unified and formidable power, Iskandar Muda secured the assistance of his Islamic advisers and other well known *ulama* to strengthen the Islamic foundations of his regime, and with such political and economic strength, Islamic rule and general stability, traders and missionaries who had formerly patronised Melaka, shifted their attention to Acheh. Her strategic maritime location at the cross-roads between the Malay archipelago and India, the control of the black pepper trade, and her overall prosperity, also helped the state to become a centre of Islamic meeting point and scholarship.

When the Dutch arrived, however, Achehnese society, already strained by internal squabbles within the royal court and the succession of women to the throne (1641-99) in place of strong sultans such as Mansur Shah and Iskandar Muda, was rapidly disintegrating. Dutch collaboration with Johor (Johore) not only led to the downfall of the Portuguese in Melaka but also enabled Johor to have the upperhand in its conflict with Acheh in the geopolitics of the then Malay world. (Andaya:1971) Hence, the end of Acheh's pre-eminence. For Johor, prior to gaining this edge, however, it had to first ward off the challenge from the Minangkabau which had claimed the right to the throne of the Johor Sultanate and which later succeeded in establishing a foothold in Negeri Sembilan. Faced with such a problem, Johor aligned itself with the Bugis from the Celebes to topple the Minangkabau Sultan, Raja Kechil, but had to pay a price for it: the Bugis' pre-condition that once their job was done, the post of "*Yang Dipertuan Muda*" (Under-king) must remain a privilege of the Bugis and their descendents.[26] Thus the Bugis began to exercise their control of the Johore-Riau empire, a control which, according to the well-known Bugis text *Tuhfat-ul-Nafis* (by Raja Ali Haji) was consolidated through the practice of Islam, marriage with Malay royal houses and the military acumen of Bugis warriors.

Given its strategic and trading importance, Rhio-Lingga (Riau) was chosen to be the capital of the empire. Soon, trade flourished and the mouth of the Riau river was a hive of trading activities involving many international traders and entrepreneurs such as Indians, Europeans, Chinese and Siamese. Although the only significant commodity produced by Riau was gambier, the capital's strategic location, its entrepot status, and the skills of Bugis traders made Riau a thriving commercial centre of products such as spices, marine goods and timber. Two notable books written during the mid-19th century about the empire, the *Tuhfat-ul-Nafis* and the *Salasilah Raja-raja Melayu dan Bugis*, recorded that by the 18th century, such economic power had enabled the Johore-Riau empire to be politically and militarily strong. Under its famous warrior, Raja Haji (who later became Bendahara in Johor and

26 Khasnor Johan, 1970. "The Johore-Riau Empire in the 18th century", in *Glimpses of Malaysian History*, ed., Zainal Abidin, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-43.

Riau), many Malay states became vassals or were subjected to Bugis pressures, such as Pahang, Selangor, Linggi, Perak and Kedah in the Malay peninsula, and in the neighbouring region incorporating Matan, Mempawah, Sambas and Kampar.

However, the history of internal power struggles within the Malay court and commercial rivalries (particularly of the lucrative tin trade in the Straits of Melaka) in the Malay world, seemed to repeat itself. The descendents of the Melaka Sultans who fled Melaka under Portuguese rule, later established their kingdoms in different parts of the Malay peninsula, such as Pahang and Johore. But quarrels within the court and other royal intriques involving the Sultan, his wives and children, as well as the chieftains, adversely affected the power of the royalty. With the coming of the Dutch and its commercial ambitions in the region, the Malays decided to settle their long-held score against the Bugis-by aligning themselves with the Dutch. An open war erupted between the Dutch and the Bugis and the more superior Dutch naval force combined with support from the Malays, led to the Bugis downfall, and with it, the demise of the Johore-Riau empire in the later part of the 18th century.

ISLAM AND STATE ADMINISTRATION IN THE MALAY WORLD FROM THE 18TH TO MID-20TH CENTURIES: THE COLONIAL IMPACT

Colonial Expansion

The colonization of Southeast Asia continued unabated, and with it, the Malay world and Islam, faced new challenges as the traditional Malay prowess in the political and economic spheres became marginalised. To start with, by the 19th century, politically, every one of the states in Southeast Asia, with the exception of Thailand, lost its independence to chart its own destiny. Their traditional inter-dependence and collaborative political, economic and religious relationships in the region were radically re-structured by the competing colonial powers (Portuguese, Spanish, French, Dutch, British) as they went about casting their respective "spheres of influence". In most occasions, and in the era of maritime power and diplomacy, the colonialists conveniently divided their areas of control among themselves by demarcating state boundaries according to their locations in the seas and rivers of the region. Hence the artificial division and rule of peoples who were traditionally sharing many political, economic and ethnic ties.

Significantly, the change of economic focus from sea resources to land products such as tin, rubber, and other new agricultural goods and industries meant that the centuries-old socio-economic life patterns of the Malays and the technological competencies relating to maritime trade which they acquired, were being radically transformed.[27]

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27 For a collection of writings on the role of Islam in the Southeast Asian economies, see Mohamed Ariff ed., 1991 and 1992.

Since the mid-19th century, the Malays in the Peninsula were no longer becoming masters of their own destiny after non-Malay immigrants (Chinese and Indians), by large numbers, were brought in under the British' "open-door" immigration policy. The immigrant communities, hard-working "coolies", manned the newly-opened tin mines and rubber plantations and, after the opening up of roads and railways, later settled in the newly created urban centres of insular Malaya, while Malays were left much alone in their traditional rural, sea-based regions. The more successful businessmen colluded with the Malay aristocratic class and colonial officials, with close ties between locals and the new arrivals not encouraged. While the Malay nobility continued to be officially patronised, and its economic and political interests somewhat protected, the British left alone ordinary Malays much to themselves to till the lands and to fish. The development of new towns exacerbated the marginalization of traditional centres of Malay political, economic and social activities, which were usually converging in and towards the islands and the straits.

The present Indonesia, centuries ago, was the centre of a powerful and well known international economic emporium under the Samudra-Pasai Sultanate. Many Portuguese historians (such as Tome Pires and Duarte Barbosa) and Chinese historical writers spoke in glowing praise of the prosperous and cosmopolitan setting of the Sultanate in the 15th and early 16th centuries, noting that the Pasai court had declared the state as an Islamic state in 1457. (De Graaf in Holt, Lambton, *et al.*: 1970). Such a stable and vibrant sultanate came to an end with Portuguese occupation in 1521. Later, the Dutch, against the backdrop of Islamic influence in Sumatra and the Celebes, decided to re-focus its attention more to inland Java away from the traditionally rich harbour cities which traded in spices and other marine resources and carried along the Java Sea into the Riau islands and across the Indian Ocean. Under the "Culture System", not only was the indigenous political power in central Java (Ricklefs:1974)[28] as the nature of traditional Javanese society radically transformed, with the Javanese peasants toiling their fertile lands but on credit to the Dutch masters, but immigrant labourers were brought in by the Dutch as farmers, artisans and servants to work in railways, mining areas and the plantations. The more skilled ones who came to work as dockhands in the ports even matched Malays who have manned these vocations for generations. After some time, the urban immigrant workers had the upperhand in the many new job openings that were created because of the rapid expansion of the urban economy and hence, left behind the indigeneous workers whose skills

28 Prior to the full impact of Dutch colonial rule, under the Mataram dynasty in central Java, Islam and the Javanese indigenous political elite emerged as a strong force in Javanese society.

and traditional competencies were suited more for water or maritime jobs.

In southern Philippines, both the Spanish and the Dutch, after defeating the Sulu fleets since the 19th century, divided their areas of subjugation and re-carved their economic and political zones to the insular areas of Luzon and the Visayas at the expense of the previously important coastal regions of Sulu and Mindanao. These regions produced huge amounts of sea cucumber, sharks' fins and other marine extractions and carried across the South China Sea to China. Britain later took a chip off the Philipines archipelago by concentrating its domain in areas near Borneo, parts of which were previously controlled by the Brunei, and later, Sulu Sultans based in the strategic island of Jolo. (See Map). By the mid-9th century, the imposition of a new land economy by Spanish officials, such as mining and logging, and the recruitment of non-Muslim immigrant labour who pioneered the land frontiers, resulted in the side-stepping of the formerly economically vibrant Muslim harbour towns and with it, left Muslim Filipinos as tangential elements in the new economy. Active Christian proselitization of Malay Filipinos and the control of the rich Galleon trade deprived the Malays of their traditional economic and cultural niches. By the time Spanish officials decided to confine Manila's Chinese to an area outside the city walls, Chinese immigrants had settled by the thousands throughout the country.

Brunei too, with a long history of traditional and Islamic rule in the earlier centuries since its first ruler Awang Alak Betatar,[29] no only had to surrender its control of Borneo (presently Sabah and Sarawak) in the early 19th century to the British North Borneo Company and the James Brooke family of Sarawak respectively, but had its own suzerainty subjected to British influence after the creation of a British Residency in 1906.[30] Under the terms of a treaty in 1888, the "advice" of British officials on matters such as the role of the Sultan, religion, and immigration policy, must be carried out, much in the same way as did Malaya under British administration. Economically, given the then relatively undeveloped nature of the state at the time of the advent of British colonialism, the Royal family had surrendered much of Brunei's economic agendas to the British government.

In Burma, the mainly Indian Muslims there, brought in by the

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29 Not much has been written about the early centuries of the Brunei Malay Sultanate. However, some of the early research have indicated how the Brunei Malay Sultanate was pioneered by Awang Alak Betatar and how some of the Brunei Sultans played a central role on establishing and propagating *shari'ah* laws in the kingdom. It was also obvious that other than the royal literati, Brunei Malay cultural and intellectual advancements were also attributable to the "Malay Pujangga".

30 There are very few authoritative books about Brunei's past. A recent useful work is by Graham Saunders 1994, *A History of Brunei*, Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press. The Brunei government also published recently published a book explaining the twin pillars of the state's ideology, namely Islam and Monarchy.

British to serve British' economic interests, had to face the wrath of the local indigeneous polity, a situation not totally dissimilar to the plight of Muslims in southern Thailand, particularly with the latter's assimilationist integration policies into mainstream Buddhist culture. So too with Muslims in Indochina particularly in Kampuchea and Vietnam (the Chams) who had settled there for several centuries but many of whom were exterminated under successive regimes until more recent times under the notorious Pol Pot administration in Kampuchea.[31]

Islamic resistance

The colonial advance in the Malay world would have been even faster if not for the force of Islamic sentiments and movements that checked such an advance. To illustrate this point, let us take the case of British rule of Malay peninsula, a rule about which much has been studied and documented.[32] As in the past, Melaka again caught the attention of outside powers in the early years of 19th century Malaya. With the signing of the Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1824, the role of Melaka as a major regional Islamic centre of the time was curtailed. One of the earliest principalities to feel the impact of British control was Naning, viewed by the British as being part of Melaka. After a spate of wars, the Naning defence (led by the legendary Pak Dol Said) had to give way to the more formidable naval power of the British in 1832.

Given the serious challenge mounted by the Naning people, Britain was hesitant to intervene in the affairs of Malay states for some forty years hence. When it did interfere again, this time in Perak in 1874, it had to encounter resistance from Muslims who regarded their defence of Perak as a religious duty given the belief that British administration would erode the position of Islam in the state. The assassination of the first British Resident, J.W.W. Birch in 1876, partly confirmed such an Islamic predisposition of the anti-British Malay groups then, led by Maharaja Lela (Zakaria:1980; Sarim:1979).[33] The official reports from the Perak Resident of the time also indicated how the people were told not to follow the ways of the "infidels" (*kafir*) and that to obey their laws

31 Seddik Taouti 1982. "The Forgotten Muslims of Kampuchea and Viet Nam", *in Journal: Institute of Minority Affairs*, vol. 4, nos. 1 & 2, Jeddah, pp. 3-13.

32 See a selection: C.N. Parkinson 1960. *British Intervention in the Malay States 1867-77*, Kuala Lumpur; D.G.E. Hall 1966, *A History of Southeast Asia*, New York, Macmillan.; Loh Fook Seng 1969. *The Malay States 1877-1895: Political Change and Social Policy*, Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press.; Rupert Emerson 1937. *Malaysia: Astudy in Direct and Indirect Rule*, New York, Macmillan.; Emily Sadka 1968. *The Protected Malay States 1874-1895*, Kuala Lumpur, University Press.; J.M.Gullick 1964. *Malaya*, London.; Chai Hon Chan 1967. *The Development of British Malaya, 1896-1909*, Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press.

33 Abdullah Zakaria bin Ghazali 1980, "Agama dan kebangkitan anti-British di Tanah Melayu", in *Tamaddun Islam di Malaysia*, ed. by Khoo Kay Kim, Kuala Lumpur, Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia, pp. 126-27.; Mohamed Sarim Mustajab 1979 in *Malaysia: Sejarah dan Proses Pembangunan*, pp. 149-73.

is to incur the wrath of Allah.[34] While not acting as the principal cause, suspicions about the control of Islamic affairs and the Muslim traditional life, also led to subsequent anti-British revolts throughout the peninsula, as had happened in Negri Sembilan, Terengganu and Pahang.

The late 19th century was also a time which saw the revival of intellectual and religious relations between the Malay world and the heartlands of Islam in Makkah, Medina, Egypt and Baghdad - and with it, the advent of Malay/Muslim nationalism. This came about through the Islamic reformist movement in the Arab-Muslim world, spearheaded by personalities such as Sayyid Jamaluddin al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida. Students from the Malay world, later to be known in Makkah and Medina as people from "*Jawi*", (Hurgronje:1970; Benda:1958; Geertz:1968)[35] not only were involved in Islamic activities there, but published reformist bulletins which had a wide readership - such as *'Al-Imam'* published in Singapore (1906-7), *'Al-Munir'* published in Padang (1911-16) and *'Al-Irshad'* in Pekalongan (1933-). A study by William Roff (Roff:1967) found that such bulletins were infuenced by *'Al-Manar'* journal edited by Abduh and Rida[36] with their return to their homelands as respected *ulama* graduates from the Middle East, a similar Islamic rejuvenation, of the modernist-reformist genre, began to take shape in the political-religious landscape of Islam in Southeast Asia.

It was obvious that the ideas of reformist Islam created such a stir in Malaya and Indonesia, in the first three decades of the 20th century. There have been many writings (Hussin:1990 and 1993; Roff:1962 and 1967; Sarim:1979; Safie:1978; Wertheim:1974) which documented how Malays in these two countries were exposed to and pitted between reformist and the more traditional orientations of Islamic practice.[37] In

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34 *Ibid.*, pp. 132-33.

35 C.S. Hurgronje: 1970. *Makkah in the latter part of the 19th century: Daily life, Customs and learning. The Moslims of the East-Indian Archipelago*, (trans. J.H. Monahan); Leiden, E.J. Brill.; Harry J. Benda 1958. "Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje and the Foundations of Dutch Islamic Policy", in *The Journal of Modern History, 30*, pp. 338-347.; Clifford Geertz 1968. *Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia*.

36 William Roff 1967, *Origins of Malay Nationalism*, *New Haven, Yale University Press*, p. 59.

37 See the two books by the present writer: *Islam and Ethnicity in Malay Politics*, Singapore, Oxford University Press, 1990, esp. pp. 18-21, and *Islam in Malaysia: From Revivalism to Islamic State?*, Singapore, Singapore University Press, 1993, esp. pp. 21-26. Not to be missed are: W. Roff 1962 "Kaum Muda-Kaum Tua: innovation and reaction among the Malays 1900-41", in K.G. Tregonning, (ed.)., *Papers on Malayan History*, Singapore: University of Singapore; W. Roff 1967, *op. cit.*; *Mohamed Sarim 1979, "Gerakan Islah Islam di Tanah Melayu, 1906-48", in Malaysia: Sejarah dan Proses Pembangunan*, Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia, pp. 149-173; Safie Ibrahim 1978, C.N. Parkinson 1960, *British Intervention in the Malay States 1867-77*, Kuala Lumpur; D.G.E. Hall 1966. *A History of Southeast Asia*, New York: Macmillan. Loh Fook Seng 1969, *The Malay States 1877-1895: Political Change and Social Policy*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford

Malaya, the traditional *ulama* had to counter these new and radical Islamic ideas while in Dutch Indonesia, much suspicion was placed on returned Islamic scholars from the *Hajj*.[38] Such a background also set the stage for the progression of anti-colonial developments among the Malays. However, despite being in the forefront of such movements by the later part of the 1930s, Islamic leaders were later side-stepped by nationalist figures and groups once Independence was achieved. Such a fate repeated itself in many other places of the Malay world beyond Malaya, as had happened in Indonesia, southern Philippines and Thailand.

As discussed thus far, over the centuries, the forms of governance and state administration in the Malay world of Asia, have undergone many transformations. With the arrival of Islam, and later, colonialism, while many indigeneous elements of such governance continued to remain salient, others gave way to the new influences. In the pages that follow, we shall, in greater detail, examine the extent to which Western colonialism impacted upon the indigeneous bases and foundations of Malay states, and how even the Islamic influence in the administration of Malay states itself was later curtailed and regulated upon the arrival of colonialism. Such was the extent of colonial control of Islam that led some scholars, such as Gullick (1965), to conclude in a somewhat exaggerated fashion, that Islam could not be said to have achieved the status of a "state religion".

COLONIAL IMPACT ON TRADITIONAL BASES OF POWER AND LIFE OF THE MALAY STATES AND SULTANATES

It is now opportune to discuss in greater detail, the extent of the colonial impact on the traditional bases or foundations of Malay life, upon the consolidation of colonial rule in almost every state in Southeast Asia. We shall analyse the consequences of the impact on three major areas or issues, namely:

1. Foreign Diplomacy
2. Malay Political System and Power
3. Malay/Islamic Laws and Jurisprudence

1. Foreign Diplomacy

As elucidated earlier, historically, ever since the 14th century, all the Malay states and Sultanates of repute, such as Pasai, Patani, Sulu, Brunei,

University Press: Rupert Emerson 1937, *Malaysia: A Study in Direct and Indirect Rule*, New York: Macmillan; Emily Sadka 1968, *The Protected Malay States 1874–1895*, Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press; J.M. Gullick 1964, *Malaya*, London; Chai Hon Chan 1967. *The Development* "The Islamic elements in pre-Independent Malaya", in *Islamic Culture*, vol. 3, no. 3; F.W. Wertheim 1974. "Gerakan pembaharuan agama di Asia Selatan dan Asia Tenggara", in Taufik Abdullah, (ed.), *Islam in Indonesia*, Djakarta: Tintamas; Harry J. Benda 1958: *ibid.*

38 Harry J. Benda 1958, *ibid.*

Melaka, Acheh, and Johore-Riau, particularly the latter three Sultanates, given their control of the maritime sea routes, had established wide strategic, economic and political linkages with not only neighbouring littoral states but also the major maritime powers of the time, such as Sri Vijaya, Siam, Majapahit, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch and British. The maritime route stretched a large area covering present city-ports such as Venice, Aden and Abadan to other ports on the west coast of India, then to places such as Goa, Colombo, Celebes, Dhaka, Rangoon, Singapore, Melaka, Sulu and to Guangzhou and Quanzhou in China.

Networking between the Muslim Sultanates in Southeast Asia and other regions of the international Islamic *ummah* had also been established since early times. We saw, for instance, the Melaka Sultans' regular consultations with Pasai on religious matters continued even after Melaka's decline as the regional Islamic centre. After all, the Sultanate of Samudra-Pasai was a powerful Muslim empire in the latter part of the 13th century until it was occupied by the Portuguese in 1521. Acheh also established friendly links with the Ottoman empire particularly under the rule of Sultan Ali Riayat Shah when diplomats were dispatched to legitimise the (Islamic) rule of the Achehnese Sultans. The Melaka royalty who were in control of different Malay states continued their good relations among each other as was the case involving Johor, Perak and Riau. So too with the exchange of Islamic scholars, the *ulama*, among other Muslim states in the region as had occurred with with Pasai, Melaka, Acheh, Patani, Brunei, Matarram, Bentan and parts of Sumatra and Java.

Much of such close relationships amongst the Malay Sultanates have to do with their need to safeguard their strategic interests in the face of their anxieties against a region known for its rivalry, jealousy and quest for power. Hence, in the historical texts of the Sultanates, we read of the many friendly emissaries and representations sent by Sultans, *via.* religious functionaries such as the *Haji* and *Sufi* mercenaries, and other court officials, to their counterparts in the region. Through marriages, trade and conversion (to Islam), such regional alignments were buttressed and consolidated.

After the arrival of colonialism, the new powers took over the strategic trading relationships that had already existed for centuries, both among Malay states within the region and between them and the international trading community elsewhere such as China, India and Arabia. The closed-door policy adopted by the Ming dynasty and the collapse of the lucrative China market, came at a time when new colonial-industrial powers such as Portuguese, Spanish, French, Dutch and British, began to penetrate the Malay world, especially after the 16th century. We saw, for instance, the rapid expansion of Portuguese maritime power, aided by the Vatican's division, in 1497, of the world outside Europe between the kingdoms of Spain and Portugal. With Papal blessing, Christianity was brought to the East by the Portuguese,

and with the ingenuity of maritime explorers such as Prince Henry the Navigator, Pedro Averas Cabral and Bartolemeau Diaz, Portugal discovered and opened up, as it were, many new settlements and sea routes across the globe.

The Malay Sultanates' conduct of foreign diplomacy was taken over by the colonial powers. This impacted the Sultanates in at least three ways. Firstly, it removed and by-passed the authority of the Sultanates in managing their own foreign policy. Secondly, it changed the priorities of relations with other states and powers - from India, China and Arabia and other maritime Muslim states in the region, to relations amongst colonialist powers themselves. Thirdly, it curtailed the long and established networking that were fostered by the Malay Sultanates with other Islamic states and centres such as the Middle East, the Gulf states, Turkey and with fellow brethren states in this region. Perhaps, we can illustrate some examples on one of the above three aspects of the colonial impact, namely, the by-passing of the authority of Malay Sultans and rulers in international diplomacy. Portugal signed treaties with other Western powers such as Holland, Spain and England to carve their respective "spheres of influence", and naturally without consultating the sovereign traditional rulers. All the colonialists favoured new forms of economic and trading exchanges which focussed more on inland urban areas in place of the coastal and riverine centres, which, as we had enumerated earlier, had for centuries, characterised Malay political and economic life.[39]

Spanish designs in the Philippines literally cut-off the control of the Sulu and Mindanao straits and neighbouring seas by the aristocratic Muslim Tausugs by which they exercised their own independent relations with other areas, even in the conduct of wars.[40] The Dutch under Daendels and Hurgronge, and despite protests from Malay leaders and Islamic-nationalist groups, deliberately curtailed what was otherwise a free-flow of exchange of diplomats and scholars between Malays in the then Netherlands East Indies and the heartlands of Islam in the Gulf and Middle East. Raffles, on behalf of the British, signed and enacted new treaties with the *Temenggong* and Sultan Hussein of Singapore despite the latter's political legitimacy being challenged by both the Riau royal court and the Dutch.

2. Malay Political System and Power

By the 15th century, the otherwise heterogeneous and often ambiguous

39 Mohd Ariff. (ed.), 1991 and 1992, Islam and the Economic Development of Southeast Asia series (3 volumes), Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asia Series (3 volumes), Singapore, Institute of Southeast Asian Affairs.

40 In the 18th century for instance, a large naval fighting fleet from the Sulu Sultanate attacked the Brunei Sultanate and subsequently established a flourishing trading region.

"Malay world" of Southeast Asia had already begun to develop some underlying cultural identity and unity in the ethnic and religious sense – as people who belonged to the *Melayu* (Malay) race, and as Muslims whose sense of unity and solidarity led them to dominate the political, economic and religious agendas of the region.

Although the origins of the word "Malay" is unclear, in the Melaka records of the 15th century (Milner:1982), mention was actually made of Melaka "Malays",[41] and by the 17th and 18th century, both Chinese and Portuguese writings acknowledged not only the status of Malay as the lingua franca of the region, but the widespread reference to Malays as a collective term denoting a people with some commonly distinguishable features, even beyond the Malay Peninsula – to Patani, Brunei, Borneo and the Philippines. (Milner:1982:9–10) Since then, *via.* common cultural traits such as language, religion, customs and manners, and "historical" literature such as the *hikayat* and the *babad*, the "Malay world" assumed a greater distinctiveness *vis-a-vis* others.

Malay Language and Culture

After the arrival of Islam, and particularly from Melaka, Malay-speakers were in the forefront in the spread of the faith throughout Southeast Asia and Malay-Muslim political culture became the most dominant culture. From Melaka, the Islamic faith had spread not only to areas within the Malay Peninsula, but also to the southern coastal cities of Philippines, such as the Sulu-Mindanao regions, and to Java in places like Demak, Pajang, Matarram, Madura, Tuban, Surabaya, Bantam, Bintan, Cerebon, and onwards to Makassar in Celebes and Ternate in the Moluccas (Bastin and Winks:1966; Fatimi:1963; Hall:1958:184; HAMKA: 1965:48) (See Map).

The Malay language, *Bahasa Melayu*, also became the language among the elites, right to the coming of colonialism in the 19th century. Writing in 1584, Linschott, described the language as the "most refined, exact and celebrated of all the East"; the Dutch writer Valentijn, noted, in the 18th century, that "if you don't understand this language, you are not considered a very broadly educated man in the East"; and as recent as 1854, Wallace confirmed the widespread use of Malay in the entire Malay archipelago.[42] The language was not only the primary language of communication but was also, to some extent, a homogenizing element of Malay identity in what was otherwise a disparated and highly heterogeneous Malay political landscape of the *Nusantara*. A common language and a common religion could also have led to the development

41 Some historians had instead used the term "orang Melaka" (Melaka Malays) to refer to Malays in a specific sense, referring to Malays resident in Melaka.

42 Quoted from: A.C. Milner 1982, *op. cit.*, p. 3, and Alfred Russell Wallace 1869, reprinted in 1989), New York: Oxford University Press; the quote was from this latter reprint, pp. 37–38.

of some form of a supra-national consciousness among the elites, a sense of *ummah Islam* or belonging to the wider world of Islam. Later, the Arabic Jawi script was also similarly used widely in the teaching of Islam in many parts of Java, Malaya, Brunei and Patani.

That the Islamic factor had contributed to the grandeur of the Malay Sultanates, was quite clear. We saw for instance, how the strong support for Islam by the Achehnese Sultanate, particularly during the reign of Iskandar Muda and his son-in-law Iskandar Thani, had turned Acheh into an international centre of religious scholarship. By the 17th century, not only was Muslim traders flocking to Acheh, the state benefitted from its location as the last port of call for pilgrims *en route* to West Asia.

Such was her Islamic image that when Acheh fought a war with the Portuguese in the first quarter of the 17th century, the conflict was seen by many Achehnese as a religious war (*jihad*) in defense of Islam. The Portuguese were also summarily defeated given the quick assistance that Acheh received from Muslim states in India and Turkey.[43] The involvement of these foreign Muslim powers at that time was understandable because the Islamic activities in Southeast Asia was already known to the outside world. Up to the late 18th century, Acheh's strategic and commercial importance had attracted many outside powers to try to gain an influence there, including the English East India Company. (Lee Kam Hing:1994). The religious writings of the ulama and the military prowess of Muslim figures of the Malay world of the time must have spread far and wide (Naguib al-Attas:1966, 1972; Raja Mohd Affandi:1974); the writings of Hamzah Fansuri (died 1604), Shamsudin al-Sumatrani (1630), Nuruddin al-Raniri (1650), Abdurrauf al-Singkeli (1680) and Abdul Samad al-Palembangi (1790)[44] were well-known and so too with national leaders of repute such as Iskandar Muda (Acheh), Sultan Agong Hanyokrokusumo (Matarram in central Java), Karaeng Galesong and Sultan Hasanuddin (Macassar), and Raja Iskandar (Minangkabau).(HAMKA:1965:452)

By and large, however, the extent of Islamic influence upon the political system and political culture of the Malay Sultanates throughout the region of Southeast Asia, not only depended on the extent of the strength of Hindu and *adat* influences prevalent at a given state and time, but also on the orientation and predisposition towards Islam, of the reigning Sultan or other indigeneous leaders in the kingdoms, variously titled as *raja* in Malaya and Java, *panglima* in the Sulu region,

43 For a most recent account of the power and might of the Acheh Sultanate, and the transformations which came about after the British came into the scene, see Lee Kam Hing 1994.

44 See for instance two of Naguib al-Attas' (Syed) writings: "Raniri and the Wudjudiah of the 17th century", in *JMBRAS*, no. III 1966, and *Islam dalam Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Melayu*, Kuala Lumpur, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1972.

patinggi in Sarawak or *pengiran* in Brunei. From the many *hikayat* and other historical writings by both indigeneous and foreign scholars, we saw how Malay states have witnessed the mixture of both the exemplary Sultans and the dictatorial tyrants, as was the case with the rule of the Melaka Sultans. (Andaya and Andaya:1982; Kassim Ahmad:1960; Willer:1975)[45]

Usually, in riverine or coastal states, there was greater mobility for masses to move out to another state if they so desire. In such states, the Sultan or Raja would be at the fountainhead of the state administration and he would be aided by religious scholars as his advisers. The more Islamically-inclined Sultans would regard their source of rule and power from a religious sense - as a personification or viceregent (*khalifah*) of God ("*Khilafah Allah Fil Al-Ardhi*" or "The Shadow of God on Earth") and one enjoined to see that Islam and Islamic laws prevail in his state. In the ideal setting, he would regard it as his religious duty (*amanah*) to ensure fair treatment of his subjects while exercising his power and leadership over the polity, as a shepherd looking after a flock of sheep - as evident in the examples set by some Sultans such as Sultan Iskandar Muda of Acheh, Sultan Muzaffar Shah of Melaka and the Matarram king in central Java in the 16th century. Sitting at his palace (*istana*) which would normally be decorated with Qur'anic inscriptions about God's powers and the king's roles, he would discuss with his religious advisers and other chieftains the problems of his state. Such was the basis of Malay political culture after Islam had been entrenched in Malay life.

Colonial Regulation of Malay Political System and Power

However, such an influence of Islam (and Malay *adat*) in the political system and administration of the Malay states, were checked with the consolidation of colonial rule, particularly its shifting of economic and political activities away from the traditional bases and centres of Malay life. Colonialism had regulated and restructured the system of governance of the Malay Sultanate systems, particularly when Islamic activities tended to threaten colonial rule and legitimacy.

The following brief and select illustrations, in different parts of the Malay world, will illustrate how the political system of traditional Malay life was subjected to such incursions by colonial officials.

British in Malaya

In British rule of Malaya, which first begun with only indirect intervention in 1786 when Penang was acquired from Kedah, and later

45 Andaya, B.W. and L.Y. Andaya 1982, *A History of Malaysia*, London: Macmillan Press, esp. chap. 2; Thomas Willer 1975, *Religious Administrative Development in Colonial Malay States, 1874-1941*, Ph.D. thesis, University of Michigan, Michigan. See for instance, pp. 28-47.

followed by Singapore in 1819 and Melaka in 1824 when the British divided its "sphere of influence" with the Dutch, the British control came in stages. Through its own characterisation of the Malay peninsular as constituting the Straits Settlements, Federated Malay States and Unfederated Malay States, British rule, particularly since 1874 (when it assumed a more formal control over the Malay states' sovereignty), was characterised by its desire to subjugate the states for British political and economic interests.[46] Unlike the Spanish and the Dutch in the Philippines and Indonesia respectively, the control of Islam was not the primary agenda of the British. However, over time, much of the nature of traditional Malay life in Malaya, including Islamic practice, came under the eventual supervision of British administrators. This was achieved through many ways, particularly through the establishment of a new powerful institution, the *Majlis Agama* or Religious Council. By such an act, not only was the power of the Sultans and traditional religious leaders replaced by a new breed of religious administrators, but the centuries-old religious institution of the Malays, the *masjid* (mosque) and *surau* (smaller mosques) which were often located near the rivers and coasts, were similarly changed to these new urban-based institutional bureaucracies, *via.* the *Majlis Agama*.(Husin Ali:1985; Hussin Mutalib:1990; Willer:1975; Yegar:1979).[47]

To start with, at least officially, British officials (*via.* Commissioners, Governor-Generals, Residents and Advisers) publicly projected the image of wanting to allow the continuation of traditional Malay rule under the aegis of the Sultans. At the time of British entry into Malaya, some Sultans were indeed very powerful, as was the case of Sultan Ahmad of Pahang whom the newly-arrived British Resident Hugh Clifford came to acknowledge with awe: "no one in his state dared think above a whisper without his leave".[48] Hence, in public ceremonies and the signing of important treaties, the Sultans were given all the regal respect by British officials.[49] It was also customary for a British Resident to regularly pay official visits to the Sultan the first thing he arrived at his state.[50] However, in the *realpolitik* of British rule, it was the British

46 See for instance, Eunice Thio 1969, *British Policy in the Malay Peninsula, 1880-1910*, Singapore: University of Malaya Press: Rupert Emerson 1937. *Malaysia: A Study of Direct and Indirect Rule*, New York, Macmillan; and J.M. Gullick 1992. *Rulers and Residents: Influence and Power in the Malay States, 1870-1920*, Singapore, Oxford University Press. (A useful work about 19th century Malaya just before the formal imposition of British control was by Khoo Kay Kim. 1972. *The Western Malay States, 1850-1873: The Effects of Commercial Development on Malay Politics*, Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press. 6

47 Syed Husin Ali (1985, reprint), *The Malays – Their Problems and Future*, Kuala Lumpur: Heinemann Asia, pp. 47-50. See also Thomas Willer 1975, Ph.D thesis, University of Michigan and Moshe Yegar 1979. *Islam and Islamic Institutions in British Malaya, 1874-1941*, Jeruselam: Hebrew University Press.

48 Quoted from J.M. Gullick 1987, *op. cit.*, p. 20

49 *Ibid.*, esp. chapter 2 on "The Ruler in Public Life".

50 A.C. Milner 1992, *Ruler and Resident: Influence and Power in the Malay States,*

officials and British preferences and values, not the Sultans' and his chieftains, who mostly reigned supreme. This could be surmised if we were to look at the many limitations imposed upon the Sultans' power and legitimacy.

In the 1824 Anglo-Dutch Treaty, Britain actually promised (Article 6 of the Treaty) not to interfere in matters affecting Malay culture and religion but to only offer advice on such matters. However, operationally, and especially under the rule of the more vulnerable Sultans who had to depend on British support, it was clear that such an "advice" had to be acted upon.[51] As an example, under the Federated Malay States, the original principle that individual Sultans should be in charge of his own state but to be advised by the (British) Resident stationed in his state, was changed to a more unified command structure. This new structure not only minimised the power of individual Sultans (some of whom were then very powerful), but transferred such powers to Kuala Lumpur under the direction of the Resident-General, in breach of the undertaking given by Britain under the Pangkor Treaty.[52] Although the Sultans' objections led to the establishment of the Federal Council which later abrogated the office of the Resident-General, and the introduction of the decentralisation policy by the High Commissioner, Guillemard (which only saw its implementation in 1935, ten years after its adoption), what actually came about was greater regulation.

Dutch in Indonesia

In traditional Sumatran and Javanese societies, the royal court (*istana*), usually headed by the Sultan, was the nerve-centre of life for the people in a given state. The court, headed by the *Raja* or *Sultan*, was the centre of all political, economic and religious activities. In east Sumatra, trade with other states and countries was co-ordinated from the *istana* and the power of the *Raja* would very much depend on the extent of his economic and political networks.[53] All this changed under Dutch

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1870-1920, Singapore: Oxford University Press.

51 See for instance, Rupert Emerson (1937), *Malaysia: A Study in Direct and Indirect Rule*, New York: MacMillan; Jagjit Singh Sidhu 1970, "Kemajuan Pentadbiran Tanah Melayu 1894-1941", in Zainal Abidin Wahid, (ed.), *Sejarah Malaysia Sepintas Lalu*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, pp. 88-95.; Moshe Yegar 1979. "Islam and Islamic Institutions in British Malaya: policies and implementation", Ph.D. thesis, Jerusalem: Hebrew University, Jerusalem, p. 52; Ahmad Ibrahim (1982). "Undang-undang Islam di Malaysia", Zuraina Majid, (ed.), *Masyarakat Malaysia*, Penang, Universiti Sains Malaysia, pp. 203-214; M.B. Hooker 1972. *Adat Laws in Modern Malaya*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, pp.13-50.

52 Hagjit Singh Sidhu, 1970. The administrative development of Malaya,1896-1941, in *op. cit.*, pp. 72-732.

53 See for instance the study by AD King 1976, *Colonial Urban Development: Culture, Social Power and Environment*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, and McGee 1967. *The Southeast Asian City*, London. It is to be noted, however, that most Malay kings did not deal in trade directly and Malay traders received little support from the kings. Melaka in the 16th century saw a predominantly Indian-Arab trading class

Occupation, particularly under Daendels, as new roads, railways and other administrative infrastructures were built further inland to serve the economic interests of the Netherlands. With economic restructuring, came political restructuring as the power of traditional Javanese rulers were made subservient to Dutch advisers and other officials, as was the case in British Malaya.

Daendels did this by the policy of depriving them the economic bondage that they exercised over their peasantfolk as well as appointing colonial-sponsored ministers to the courts of Jogjakarta and Surakarta who were accorded the royal insignia.[54] Stamford Raffles who took over Java from Daendels in 1811, even further limited the power of the Javanese regents by introducing the land-rent system which made the peasants having to directly channel their produce to colonial officials instead of the traditional nobility and aristocratic class.

Dutch attempts to deny Dipa-Negara's (Diponegara) claims for greater Islamisation in the state administration, led to the religious hostilities waged against the Dutch from 1825 to 1831, known as the Java War. The Java War made the Dutch, under the advice of Snouck Hurgronje and General van Heutz (Benda:1958; Hurgronje:1988, rep.1970; Rickelfs:1993) even more determined to stem the tide of Islam in Java ever since.[55] Two major ways by which such a policy was adopted was through the many restrictions imposed upon the *ulama*[56] and the introduction of the "Culture" (or Cultivation) System of making the country paying much of its economic produce to the colonial office. Traditional elites such as the Sultan were placed aside and the traditional chieftains, the *Hulubalang* were then recruited and redeployed as the executive arm of Dutch power, merely serving as administrators, officials and cronies of Dutch interests. Consequently, by the 19th century, Indonesian society already saw a big divide in Muslim leadership: on the one hand, the Dutch-appointed religious elites, the *penghulu* from the *priyayi* Javanese class, and on the other, the more independent and Islamic mass-based *ulama* from the *santri* class.[57]

The situation was also acute in Minangkabau, west Sumatra. Not only was the society matriarchically organised with women at the heads of the family and community groups – a system which the colonial

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whereas Patani in the 17th century saw the Chinese and Mestizes in the forefront of economic activities: A.C. Milner 1982, *Kerajaan ..., op. cit.*, pp. 20–21.

54 William Roff, 1970. "Southeast Asian in the 19th century", in *Cambridge History of Islam, op. cit.*, (ed.) by Holt, Lambton, *et al.*, p. 157.

55 C.S. Hurgronje, (1888, rep. 1970), *Mekka in the latter part of the 19th century ...*, Leiden, E.J. Brill; Harry J. Benda 1958. "Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje and the Foundations of Dutch Islamic Policy in Indonesia", *The Journal of Modern History*, 30, reprinted in *Readings on Islam in Southeast Asia*, compiled by Ahmad Ibrahim, Sharon Siddique, *et al.*, (1985), Singapore, IESAS, pp. 61–695.

56 Alfian, (1975). "The Ulama in Achehnese Society", rep. in *Readings in Islam in Southeast Asia* 1985, *op. cit.*, (ed.) by Ahmad Ibrahim, *et al.*, pp. 82–86.

57 *Ibid.*, pp.161–163.

masters had some difficulty to adjust to – the return to Minangkabau from Makkah of the puritanical reform movement, destabilised and checked the traditional bases of Minangkabau life. By the beginnings of the nationalist movement there, however, some accommodation between *adat* and aspects of reformist Islam were reached, despite Dutch plans to circumspect the *padri* (priests) groups as seen in some of the "holy wars" launched in Acheh against the Dutch administration around the late 18th century.[58]

By the early 20th century, the increase in travels to Makkah *via*. The *Hajj* (pilgrimage) by Indonesians and the advent of the reform movement in the Muslim world, had already impacted upon Indonesian society, particularly among its intellectual and the more modern religious elites. With westernization, Indonesia, as elsewhere, was exposed to greater communication outlets internationally. The regular contacts amongst Muslim scholars in Southeast Asia at the time, especially in Singapore and Penang, forced the pace of change in the Malay societies of the region, including a change in their perceptions and practice of Islam. Against such a development, the Islamic policy under the advice of Snouck Hurgronje (1857–1936) of repressive vigilance against pan-Islamic reformist Islamic teachings regarded as politically dangerous, not only failed, but actually precipitated the birth of Islamically influenced movements there, both religious and nationalist, such as the *Sarekat Islam, Masyumi* and later *Muhammadiah* in the early decades of this century. Many Indonesian Islamic-nationalist leaders, such as Soedirman, Nasution and Prawoto Mangkusasmito, who were around when the Jakarta Charter of 1945 was discussed, felt betrayed by Soekarno and later Soeharto, when the Islamic sentiments for the Constitution (such as the "Seven Words" which were to make Muslims subject to Islamic laws) were later not honoured.[59]

Spanish in Philippines

Traditional Muslim rule in southern Philippines over the centuries, was characterised by a hierarchically-ordered Sultanate system but one tempered with a consensual way of governance. Much has been documented as to how, under the leadership of the *Datu* (aristocratic chiefs) there was practiced the mode of ruling known as the *"Rumah*

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58 Alfian, 1975, rep. 1985. "The Ulama in Achehnese Society", in *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science*, vol. 3, no.1, pp. 27–41 (rep. in *Readings in Islam in Southeast Asia, (ed.)* by Ahmad Ibrahim, *et al.*, 1985, pp. 82–86; B. Schrieke 1955, rep. in 1985. "Islam, Adat and Communism on the West Coast of Sumatra", in *Readings in Islam in Southeast Asia, op. cit.*, pp. 87–93.; Taufik Abdullah 1966, rep. 1985. "*Adat and Islam: An examination of Conflict in Minangkabau*", in *Readings in Islam ...., op. cit.*, pp.94–102.; Harry J. Benda 1958, *op. cit.*

59 Saifuddin Anshari, 1985. "Islam or the Pancasila as the basis of the State", in *Readings in Islam in Southeast Asia, op. cit.*, pp. 221–228.

Bicara;" or House of Discussion (Che Man:1990:30). Not only was such a consensual system radically changed with the arrival of Spanish forces since 1565, but the power of the Sultans and *datu* was also dislodged (Che Man:1990; Madale:1989; Majul:1973; Mastura:1984) *via.* various measures, such as the severing of the lucrative regional trading relationships within the Muslim states and the shifting of the Tausug-led coastal empire towards an inland-based economy. Other policies, like inter-marriages, the hardening of distinction among the multiracial Muslim peoples, Christian proselitization and official encouragement of Christian resettlement into majority Muslim localities in places such as Manila, Mindoro and the Visayas, all led to pushing the Muslim Filipinos to the peripheries of mainstream life.[60] The Moros, once the majority inhabitants of the entire Mindanao region, found their numbers drastically reduced rendering them an economically sidelined community.(Che Man:1990:19).[61]

Muslims in southern Philippines, numbering about 3 million, and long settled there under their own traditional system of laws and notions of political loyalty, had to reconcile such a political system with that of a nation-state led by non-Muslims under Spanish sovereignty, and later, Americans.[62] For about three centuries, the "Moro struggle" for self-determination went on unabated and took the form of three major strands: violent armed secessionist movements; peaceful participation in the democratic political process; and a quiet rectitude of encouraging greater adherence to Islamic prayers and other religious rituals of self-purification.

The many treaties which the Spanish regime signed with the Sultans were so often abrogated by the former that when the Americans became the new masters, Muslim Filipinos had no confidence that their traditional lifestyle and welfare would be protected. In fact, when Philippines was granted Independence in 1946, Muslim Mindanao was incorporated despite widespread objections by Muslims. (Che Man: 1990: 23-24). As elsewhere, American colonial administration co-opted the ruling Muslim elites into the new bureaucratic structures and, while still seconding Christians governors to the southern Muslim regions, offered the middle and higher classes with greater opportunities for

60 See for instance, N. T. Madale (1989). "An Overview on the Muslim Social Scientists and the ASEAN States: The Muslim-Filipino Experience", in *Background Readings for the Third ASEAN Forum for Muslim Social Scientists*, Manila: Institute of Islamic Studies, esp. pp 3-7 (unpublished); Cesar Adib Majul 1973, *Muslims in Philippines*, Quezon City: University of the Philippines; Michael O. Mastura 1984. *Muslim Filipino Experience: A Collection of Essays*, Manila: Ministry of Muslim Affairs.; W.K. Che Wan, 1990. *Muslim Separatism: The Moros of Southern Philippines and the Malays of Southern Thailand*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press.

61 W.K. Che Wan, 1990. *Muslim Separatism: The Moros of Southern Philippines and the Malays of Southern Thailand*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press.

62 Peter O. Gowing, "Moros and Khaek: The Position of Muslims in the Philippines and Thailand", in *Southeast Asian Affairs 1975*, Singapore: ISEAS, pp. 27-40.

education aimed at socialising the locals into accepting Western values and ways. Hence, over time, new and secular political measures were enacted which changed the age-old Muslim traditions of governance under the Sultanate system.

3. Malay/Islamic Laws and Jurisprudence

Yet another major area where colonial control was widely felt, was in the realm of laws and jurisprudence. A distinguishable feature of such "laws", as they operate in the domestic sphere of Malay society, was that most were unwritten and were passed on from generation to generation through oral traditions and practices, sometimes referred to as *adat*. *Adat*, an Arabic/Islamic word which encompasses the whole corpus of traditions and life of a people, actually permeated all aspects of life of the Malays, politically, economically and socially, but were treated as being dichotomously divided into the Islamic and non-Islamic aspects by the colonial regimes, as would be discussed as follow.

For Malays in the Malay peninsula, the "Terengganu stone" (inscription) of 1303 indicated clearly that some form of Islamic codes of administration were already in practice in Terengganu. In Melaka, by the early 15th century, there was the *Undang-undang Melaka* (Liaw Yock Fang:1976) which implored the state to follow Qur'anic laws,[63] while most of the laws in *Undang-undang Pahang* were found to follow the Shafi'i school of jurisprudence.[64] By the 16th century, two more major written laws were practiced in Melaka - *Hukum Kanun Melaka* or *Risalat Hoekoem Kanon* (Melaka Digest) and Maritime Laws of Melaka. The first dealt with domestic matters such as Islamic rules governing farming and business activities, rules of marriage, relations between categories of people, and court etiquettes detailing the subjects' duties to the king and his court.[65] The second was on Melaka's conduct of trade and the do's and don'ts that ship masters and crews have to abide to.[66] It was widely felt by many scholars that many of the subsequent written laws in the peninsular borrowed or were fashioned from the broad guidelines given by the Melaka Digest - and they included the Kedah Laws, Customary Laws of Sungai Ujong and Kuala Pilah, and the 'Ninety Laws of Perak'.[67]

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63 Liaw Yock Fang, 1976. *Undang-undang Melaka*. The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, p.163.

64 See J.E. Kempe and R.O. Winstedt, 1948. *A Malay Legal Digest*, compiled for Abd al-Ghafur Muhaiyyudin Shah, Sultan of Pahang. *JMBRAS*, 21, pp. 24-25, and quoted from Omar Farouk 1988, *op. cit.*

65 For a detailed account of some of the court rulers involving the king, his chieftains and other lesser chiefs, see HAMKA's book 1965, pp. 460-464.

66 Liaw Yock Fang, 1973. "Satu catatan tentang Hukum Kanun Melaka dan Undang-undang Melayu Lama", *Dewan Bahasa*, vol. xvii, no. 9 (Sep); R.O. Winstedt 1953. *The Malays: A Cultural History*, London; J.M. Gullick 1968, *Indigeneous Political Systems of Western Malaya*, London.

67 Azizan Abdul Razak, 1980. "The Law in Malacca Before and After Islam", in

While many aspects of these laws and traditional practices continue to be observed by ordinary Malays upon the advent of colonialism, the colonialists' efforts at the "bureaucratization" of Islam (in the form of greater regulation, standardization and control of Islamic administration), had led to the marginalization of both the power of traditional Islamic religious elites and the practice of Islamic laws and jurisprudence, in preference for colonial- appointed religious functionaries and a bias towards Western, secular laws and systems. We had earlier noted how early Malay states, prior to colonialism, had practiced many aspects of Islamic laws and jurisprudence. In the *Hikayat Raja-raja Pasai*, *Sejarah Melayu*, *Hikayat Patani* and *Hikayat Melayu*, there were ample evidences to show how some of the more Islamic Malay Sultans had met regularly at the *istana*, *surau* and *masjid* to discuss the Islamic administration of their states with senior officials, or were guided by the Qur'an and other Islamic religious tracts when they issued certain royal pronouncements.

In the *Undang-undang Melaka* of the 15th century (Liaw Yock Fang: 1976) we read of how the Melaka Sultan ordered his Ministers to adhere to Qur'anic laws in administering the state, so too with the orders by Sultan Iskandar Thani in the Acheh court (Hooker:1984), and the Islamic pronouncements from the first ruler of the Sulu Sultanate, Sherif Hashim, the Arab trader who married the daughter of the Tausug chief. All these Islamic postures and preferences were either abandoned or modified or made subservient to secular Western laws upon the advent of colonialism. A brief discussion of some of the attempts of colonial officials in curbing the traditional role and position of Islamic laws will shed some light on this issue.

British in Malaya

Under British colonisation of Malaya, on the surface, Malay life continued uninterrupted, but British officials had attemped to regulate, if not restrict, some key aspects of the administration and practice of Islamic laws, the *shar'iah*, in the Malay states. To start with, no sooner after the establishment of the Straits Settlements in 1826 comprising of Penang, Singapore and Melaka, British laws were uniformly enacted as the laws of the land. Although matters relating to family laws were, at least on paper, left to the jurisdiction of Islamic and *adat* laws in operation at that time, in reality, however, even such an assurance on the more limited parts of the law, being applicable only to Muslims, was difficult to uphold. One explanation to this had already been alluded to earlier - that the Islamic bureaucracy, the Religious (Islamic) Council (*Majlis Agama*), formed to assist the Sultan in administering his state,

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"*Tamaddun Islam di Malaysia*", (ed.) by Khoo Kay Kim, *et al.*, Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia, pp. 29-47, esp. 29-31.

was not only controlled by British officials,[68] but marginalized the role and influence of traditional Malay Islamic *ulama* who were mostly located in the riverine and rural areas of the state.

Furthermore, important rulings affecting the Islamic courts and Islamic laws as well as the jurisdiction of the *kadi* (Islamic judge) were confined and subjected to the sanctions of British officials. In some important cases, (Ahmad Ibrahim:1965 and 1982) not only were the decision of the British Resident final but Islamic laws were made subservient to British-influenced state enactments which were almost replicas to the British Codes and Ordinances. Civil magistrates, in explaining their decisions involving Muslims, were found to have frequently referred to the precedents in British statutory law practices. [69] With such overpowering British legal preferences and values, it was not surprising to hear of some British officials who took pride in preventing Islamic laws from becoming the law of Malaya.[70] Such was the context and circumstances upon which Islamic laws operated in Malay states under British rule.

In Roff's study of Kelantan society, he concluded that what usually occurred was an admixture of both Islamic and *adat* laws and that a Sultan who cared about the implementation of Islamic justice in his state, would take on the task of acting as the final arbiter in cases of dispute which could not be resolved by the lower levels of the state judicial bureaucracy such as the *Mufti*, *Hakim*, and the *Kadi* and *Penghulu*.[71] In the early 1890s, Kelantan had adopted some strict aspects of Islamic laws including severe punishments for adultery.[72]

In Terengganu, under the reign of the benevolent Sultan Umar in 1837, the *Hukum Shara'* was assiduously practiced whereas under his successor Sultan Ahmad II (1876) very little attention was given to such laws as he left the administration of the state in the hands of his aides.[73] So too with the situation in Johore under the rule of Sultan Abu Bakar (1862–95), a Sultan described by the British as possessing habits and tastes like an English gentleman but one who was ostracised by many of

68 Ahmad Ibrahim, 1982. *op. cit.*, and John Funston (1979). "The politics of resurgent Islam in Malaysia", in *Seminar Paper*, Dept. of International Relations, Australian National University, unpublished.

69 Ahmad Ibrahim, 1982, *op. cit.*

70 Ahmad Ibrahim, 1982. p. 24, quoting Wilkinson's prejudices against Islamic law which he described as "inhuman in its principles, and impractical in its ability to distinguish crimes and sins": Wilkinson 1908, *Papers in Malay Subjects*, Kuala Lumpur, J. Russell, p. 7. In contrast, it was claimed that British laws conform to the principle of natural justice. See Section 10 of the 1937 Civil Law Enactment, quoted in Ahmad Ibrahim 1965, *op. cit.*, p.11.

71 W.R. Roff, 1974. *Kelantan: Religion, Society and Politics in a Malay State*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press.

72 See for instance, J.M. Gullick 1987, *op. cit.*, p.6.

73 Azizan Abdul Razak, *op. cit.*, "The Law in Malacca Before and After Islam", in *Tamaddun Islam di Malaysia*, (ed.) by Khoo Kay Kim, *op. cit.*, pp. 37–38.

his fellow Sultans from other Malay states.[74] The Sarawak Laws of 1915 consisting of laws of marriage, divorce, inheritance and torts, were a blend of Islamic laws and local *adat* customary practices, the latter being much upheld in property and inheritance matters. The actual practice of such laws, however, was limited to family-related issues whereas in the more fundamental aspects of law such as criminal and land laws, British laws took precedent. Such a bias prevailed in all three forms of British rule in Malaya, *viz.* the Straits Settlements (beginning from 1826), the Federated Malay States (1895) and the Unfederated Malay States (1910).[75]

Buddhists in Thailand

Given the assimilationist bias of the 50 million Buddhist majority, the Islamic and Malay identity of Thai Muslims were only evident in the southern provinces of Patani, Satun, Narathiwat and Yala (historically grouped under the Patani Kingdom) where Muslims constitute between 60 to 80 per cent of the total population. Despite being the smallest in land size, Patani, with about half a million Muslims, has been the most populous Muslim state of all the four southern provinces, and the most Islamised.[76] Studies have indicated that, until the end of the 18th century, even under the aegis of a wider Buddhist influence in Siam, Islamic laws continue to be practiced in Patani. After all, Islamised through Arab and Indian traders, Patani was arguably the "cradle of Islam in Southeast Asia" since the 15th century.[77]

Studies by Thai scholars such as those written in 1976 by Burutphat, Suthasat and Haemindra, and the two doctoral theses in 1984 and 1985 by Anurugsa and Pitsuwan respectively, indicated that ever since the Thais first claimed suzerainty over the provinces in the late 13th century until the latter's incorporation into the Thai state in 1902, Thai Muslims in the south have distanced themselves from the national Buddhist body politic, preferring to have their own Malay-Muslim identity and to reside in their own religious-cultural enclaves. As recent as the mid-19th century, British and Thai nationalist leaders were still

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74 J.M. Gullick, 1987. *op. cit.*, p. 6.

75 *Ibid.*, p. 41.

76 See two doctoral studies of Thai Muslims: Panmporn Anurugsa 1984, *Political Integration Policy in Thailand: The case of the Malay-Muslim Minority*, Ph.D. Thesis, University microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan; and Surin Pitsuwan 1985. *Islam and Malay Nationalism: A Case-study of the Malay-Muslims of Southern Thailand*, Bangkok: Thai-Kadi Research Institute, Thammasat University.

77 Mohd. Zawawi Salleh, 1978/79, "Pentadbiran Undang-undang Islam di Patani", Seminar Paper, Faculty of Laws, University of Malaya, (unpublished) and quoted from Omar Farouk Bajunid 1988. "The Muslims of Southeast Asia: An Overview", in Mohamed Ariff, (ed.), *Islamic Banking in Southeast Asia*, Singapore, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies. See also Surin Pitsuwan 1985. *Islam and Malay Nationalism*, Bangkok, Thai Kadi Research Institute, Thammasat University, pp. 47–51, and Che Wan 1990, *op. cit.*

embroiled in wanting to subjugate Patani, a policy which led to the removal of the Muslim royalty of their powers in preference for Thai bureaucratic rule. The administrative reforms of Rama V (King Chulalongkorn) during 1902–1906, planned to coincide with the British division of the boundaries separating Thailand from British Malaya, further alienated Muslims in the south. The Anglo-Siamese Agreement of 1909 which ceded Kedah, Kelantan, Trengganu and Perlis to Britain while surrendering Malay areas in southern Thailand to Thai rule, accentuated the problem and saw the Raja of Patani, Abdul Kadir, calling on Muslims to resist Thai subjugation of their religious and ethnic identity.[78] For a long time, Thai Muslims had detested the common reference by Buddhists of them, as the *khaek* (aliens/visitors), a term regarded as derogatory, and they themselves looked at Thai officials as *to'na* or colonizers.

In a situation which was quite similar to that of the British treatment of laws in Malaya, the Thais decided to replace and subsume all traditional Islamic and *adat* laws of Muslims in the south, with that of Thai laws administered by Thai judges and bureaucrats, as was the case with the reform laws of 1902, which also resulted in conscripting the power of the Malay royalty.[79] New Thai-sponsored religious institutions were established such the *Chulajmontri* or the State Council for Islamic Affairs which tried to co-ordinate and regulate Islamic activities in Thailand. The centuries-long tradition of Islamic education based at the *pondok* had to face tremendous challenge from the formation of state-sponsored religious schools with secular curriculum and Thai language as the medium of instruction.

In spite of their heterogeneity (comprising ethnic groups such as Javanese, Pathans and Haw Muslims), and generally low socio-economic status since most work as farmers and fishermen, their religious concerns saw Thai Muslims engaging in religious uprisings in the first twenty years of this century. Led by their royal and religious elites, they resisted the assimilationist policies of Thailand, even after the Patani ruler, Abdul Kadir, had to co-ordinate the fight from Kelantan where he was in exile. During the more recent wave of assimilationist rule from 1922 to 1945 (and the Thai nationalist slogan of "Nation, Religion, and King") some form of religious and political autonomy was actually granted to the southern Muslim states in the form of Islamic education and political representation (Anurugsa:1984; Che Man:1990; Pitsuwan:1985), but the sense of Thai Muslim alienation from mainstream

78 D. Watt and A. Teeuw, (ed.) 1970, *Hikayat Patani*, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff; GAMPAR (Association of Greater Patani Malays), "Some Facts about Malays in South Siam", Kelantan; N. Haemindra 1948, "The Problem of the Thai-Muslims in the Four Southern Provinces of Thailand" (Parts I and II), *JMBRAS*, vol. III, no. 2 (Sept 76) and vol. VIII, no.1 (Mar 1977); Surin Pitsuwan 1970, *op. cit.*, pp. 51–57.

79 Surin Pitsuwan, 1985, *op. cit.*, pp. 42–43.

national life continued unabated until the coming of the Second World War. The Thai policy of compulsory Thai education for all citizens, the rules requiring mosques to incorporate lessons in Thai and in civic studies, and the bureaucratization of Malay affairs under national Thai administration, contributed to such a malaise among Thai Muslims, a condition which later led to the birth of separatist movements in the south.

Dutch in Indonesia

Dutch rule of the Netherlands East Indies (presently, Indonesia) was, given the archipelagic diversity and sheer expanse of the territory, in the main, concentrated more in the populous island of Java. Given its long history of Islamic rule as indicated above, Sumatra, particularly through the coastal-bound Muslim axis of Acheh, had waged many rebellions against the Dutch.(Geertz:1968; Taufik:1974; Rickelfs:1993) Acheh was only won over during the late 19th century although pockets of Islamic resistance continued intermittently since then.

The position and role of Islamic laws in Indonesia were quite similar to that of British Malaya. At the time of the arrival of colonialism, both Islamic laws (*Hukum Shara'* or *Shar'iah*) and customary laws (*adat*) operated hand in hand. In central Sumatra, particularly Minangkabau, more of the latter was practiced where religious jurisdiction and hereditary rights were very much decided by the matriarchal system of governance.[80] A sharp contrast could be seen in Bantam where the Islamic courts had a great deal of say, sometimes even over that of the ruler, on juridical matters.[81] Although there had been moments of conflict between Islamic *shar'iah* and *adat* customary practices (as in fact occurred in the earlier-explained sixteen-year long "*Padri* War" from 1822 to 1838), by and large, a fusion between the two was adopted in many states.

In a sense, this hybrid system of laws was not new: a similar situation actually prevailed early in the sixteenth century when, in the Muslim kingdom of Matarram, while Islam was officially declared the religion of the state, the culture of the palace courts was still pre-Islamic. Hence, it was not totally surprising that when, during the Japanese Occupation in 1945, the Muslims and their faith have had to counter yet another form of challenge, after the nationalists, under Soekarno, decided to opt for a non-Islamic political platform in charting Indonesia's future. While acknowledging the contribution of the religious elite in the fight for Independence, nationalists had to deny the Islamic state for Indonesian Muslims, preferring to adopt the *Pancasila*

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80 De Graaf, 1970. In the *Cambridge History of Islam, op. cit, p. 140.* See also the seminal work by Daniel Lev, *Islamic Courts in Indonesia.*

81 *Ibid.*

Constitution with its emphasis, as one of its key pillars, on the "Belief in One God".

Spanish and Americans in the Philippines

The history of Muslim-colonial conflict in the Philippines has been a long one. Although the Islamization of Filipino Muslims, like other South-East Asian regions, was generally a peaceful process, such as *via.* trade and marriage, given the colonialists' experience with Muslims in Spain (Andalusia) and the Moors in Africa, the Spanish adopted a confrontationist attitude when they invaded the Muslims in southern Philippines. From such an experience, Filipino Muslims were called the Moros, a term used interchangeably with Mohamedans and Mahomets to distinguish them from others, the indios. The Muslims are actually a diverse people comprising mainly the Maranaos, Tausugs, Maguindanaos and the Kalagans, but shared a similar Malay/Islamic identity.

It was under the American occupation of the Philippines that the Muslim Filipinos were forced to converge more towards mainstream Philippine life. The Moro Province was made a United States' military and political outpost following American military occupation from 1899 to 1903. From 1914 to 1920, there was set up the Departments of Mindanao and Sulu. (Omar Farouk:1988)[82] Despite subsequent attempts by both the American administration and the Philippine governments to integrate the Muslims in Mindanao and Sulu, very little was achieved. So too with the Christianization drives by the Christian majority government to bring the Muslims into the fold of a predominant Christian national ethos and way of life. The impact would have been more serious if not for the close contacts that Muslim Filipinos had established over the centuries with their Muslim neighbours in Brunei and Sabah and their continuing adherence to traditional Islamic-*adat* sources of law.

During the American Occupation, an American Arab by the name of Majeeb Saleeby, was made the Superintendent of Schools in Moro Province. Other than his writings about the history and culture of the Moros, Saleeby also acknowledged the many traditional religious laws that were practiced by the Moros, such as in his Studies in Moro History, Law and Religion in 1905. His research on the *tarsilas* (geneologies) and *luwaran* (Islamic code of laws) of the Manguindanao ethnic community and the *luntar* of the Tausugs indicated that these traditional tracts, particularly the *luwaran*, were very much in vogue in traditional Moro life, and generally corresponded to the Shafi'i school of jurisprudence.

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82 Omar Farouk Bajunid, 1985. *op. cit.*

CONCLUSION

Our examination of the Malay States in the "Malay world" from early times and including the period of the fall of the Malay Sultanates, had indicated how the different forms of power centres in the Malay "states" had come to terms with the elements of change confronting them in their political, economic and socio-cultural environments, both arising from their domestic domains and from external forces.

Prior to the colonization of the Malay states in the then region of the *Nusantara* (present Southeast Asia), Malay states were very much influenced by the Indian-Hindu/Buddhist ethos and culture, then centred in the ancient kingdom of Sri Vijaya. The political system and political culture of Malay states echoed the hierarchically arranged nature of the societies prevalent then with all power emanating from the raja or sultan. Upon Islamization, the sultan was not only the centre of life for the state and its subjects but whose rule was sometimes projected to be derived from divine perspectives, *via.* the concept of *khalifah.* Islam arrived at different times and through different ways in the Malay world. From around the 13th century, pockets of Muslim states were found in the coastal and littoral regions of Southeast Asia such as Pasai and Demak, and by the time of the establishment of the Melaka Sultanate in the 15th century, the religion of Islam and the power of its adherents have assumed such prominence that international traders, maritime powers and Islamic missionaries have converged in the kingdom. With the permeation of Islamic value-systems, coupled with the prowess of Muslim sultanates in Pasai, Melaka, Acheh, Sulu and Johore-Riau, the once hitherto Indianised Malay states were gradually transformed.

Given the strength of indigeneous socio-political foundations in early Malay states, Islamization did not lead to the total overhauling of such indigeneous or local cultures and influences. In the majority of cases, what actually occurred was the metamorphosis or coalescence between such influences on the one hand and Islamic values and norms on the other. Ever since the last two centuries or so, there came the serious challenge posed by the return of Western colonialism to the region, a challenge which many Malay states was ill-prepared to counter and, as a consequence, had to face its wide-ranging impact. We saw how, commercial rivalries and the quest for political and strategic control of the lucrative maritime trade routes, had encouraged the entry of the Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch and British forces in the Malay world, and how such an arrival led to the end of the Malay Sultanates (Pasai, Patani, Melaka, Acheh, Sulu, Johore-Riau) by the 18th century. The more recent consolidation of colonial rule continue to change many facets of life - political, economic, social and culture of the Malays in this region.

While much has been written about how colonial policies had disadvantaged the indigeneous Malays, little attention had been given to

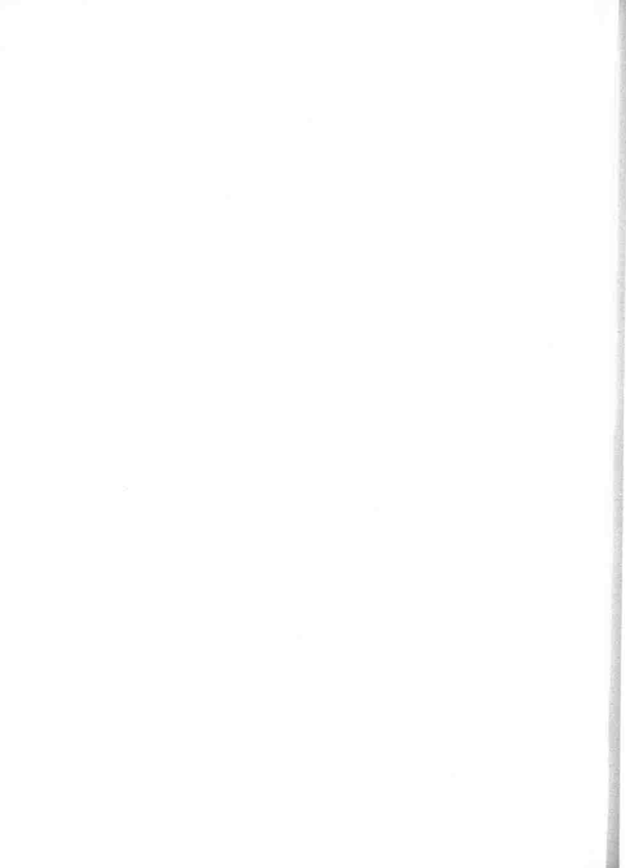
the colonial land-shift of positioning its bases of economic and political operations away from the traditional sea-bound areas of Malay life, an archipelagic life surrounded by many islands, seas and straits. It is thus necessary to highlight this perspective in any analysis about the fall of the Malay states and the declining power of the Malay Sultans generally in Southeast Asia - how a coastal-based maritime people whose economic dealings and political might concentrated primarily in the littoral, contiguous chain of many islands, found themselves marginalised and disempowered by the colonial policy of shifting the political and economic centres more towards the inland areas and cities.

From their newly established headquarters which were located much inland, also came colonialist-imperialist values and policies which submerged and radically altered many other aspects of traditional Malay life. While on the surface, colonial administrators projected the image of support for the traditional ruling classes of Malay society, in essence however, colonial officials regulated much of the politics in areas under their control. After all, their advice "must be acted upon" both in the domestic and foreign policies of Malay states. That was the case in colonial rule in present-day Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, and the Philippines. Similarly, the nature of traditional Malay political systems, the influence of Islam in the Sultanate system, the role of Malay language, were all subjected to colonial incursions and interference. Colonialism (and other factors previously analysed) also led to the diversity and diffusion of the traditional ruler-centred state structures in many Malay states throughout the Malay world. While the Malay states in peninsular Malaysia and Brunei managed to retain their sultanate or monarchical foundations within the framework of secular states, other Malay kingdoms were generally either abolished or were subsumed under newer forms of secular power centres. By the 1940's, Indonesia had abolished its last Sultanates (the Sultanate of Deli) while the kingdom of Patani in Thailand, through British incursions in 1917 and the Anglo-Siam Treaty of 1922, was cut off from Kelantan. Malay minorities in Philippines and Singapore and other regions within the Malay world, also came under new forms of political frameworks, leadership structures, and other value systems.

Chapter 2

Social Structure: The Practices of Malay Religiosity

Zainal Kling



Chapter 2

Social Structure: The Practices of Malay Religiosity

INTRODUCTION

The basic objective of this essay is to describe the patterns of social life among the Malays and to compare them with other Malay societies and the Malay-related groups as the cultural boundary. In order to distinguish between the various Malay groups I would regard, for the purpose of this essay only, the Malaysian Malays as the "core" group, the other Malays in Thailand, Singapore, West Sumatra and Brunei as the "outer" group and the Malay-related groups such as Minangkabau, Acheh, Palembang, Lampong, Sundanese, Javanese, Bugis, Banjarmasin and Bali as the "peripheral" groups.

Social life, here, would include the patterns of ecological adaptation as reflected in the physical arrangements of settlements, their spatial and social foundations as well as the social organisation emerging from such adaptations. It is hypothesised that social structural arrangements and organisation are largely associated, at least functionally, if not causally, with the ecological demands of living. The fact than human communities have to survive in a certain mode of living, specifically related to the sources of food, a kind of social arrangement has to be constructed in order to organise members of the community in their search for livelihood. This, however, is not a materialistic interpretation of social and cultural organisation in Malay communities. It is merely emphasizing the truism that ecology, and social and spatial organisations are, to a large extent, deeply inter-related.

In order to understand the specific inter-relationship, the patterns of social organization would have to be examined in the context of life among family groups, within the kinship linkages, as well as the marriage and gender relations. They contribute towards the establishments of the network of social foundation upon which community members and groups operate and enact their life. In a wider situation the social linkages establish the pattern of social evaluation and ranking of members to the extent of establishing the traditional system of stratification where individuals of groups are specifically classed into certain social locations in a set of hierarchy of positions. It is within this various levels of societal context that socio-religious processes of rituals, celebrations, artistic performances and practices are carried out by the Malays. Understanding the context of performances and practices would provide the societal location for the meaning of social and cultural life. Any description of the social and cultural life would aim at the exposition of meaning as perceived by the cultural actors. It would almost be meaningless to study socio-cultural life by merely describing the patterns of social organization or the performance of a religious ritual if it only translates external conceptions of culture but not the subjective perception of the carriers. To that extent this description would be almost phenomenological in the sense that it would concentrate on the internal point of view of the carriers – the Malays. Hopefully, this approach will enable readers to understand the Malay subjective point of view of their culture.

Islamic proselytization and, eventually, penetration of Malay culture seemed to have completely metamorphosed it to totally identify itself with Islam. All the major configuration of Malay society and culture such as territorial and spatial perception, marriage, family and kinship system, traditional political organization, fundamental economic exchanges and basic religions and belief tenets are in fact the consequence of Islamic modication. Islam had transformed them to conform with Islamic principles and operations. The emergent consequence is a complete ethnic identification of "being Malay" as "being Muslim". Historically, this pattern of identical cultural identification with Islam promoted cultural assimilation into Malay ethnic group through the mechanism of "becoming Muslim". This was the real process of "*masuk Melayu*" (becoming Malay) that occurred in the entire archipelago until very recently, when Islamising process was indistinguishable from cultural assimilation into the Malay domain. The spread of Islam in the Malay world was largely due to this process of "becoming Malay" and all its attendant social and cultural consequences of adapting Malay cultural characteristics. In recent years, however, due to several modern political dynamic of inter-racial relationships in a modern Malaysian nation-state, the idea of "becoming Muslim" is distinctively separated from the ethnic process of "becoming Malay".

The idea of the "Malay world" was and is related to the funda-

mental role of spreading Islam into the rest of the archipelago by the Malay ethnic groups *vis-a-vis* others. While the cultural spread was significantly recorded in the pattern of Islamization yet this process seemed to have become a kind of irony role played by the Malays. They were and is not the majority group in the archipelago. The Javanese had always been the more powerful majority. They were strongly entrenched in terrestrial culture and better known outside the archipelago to the extent that the Islamic world identify this region as "*Jawi*" or "Javanese". Yet the first contact made by external powers with this region was always through Malays and their cultural features, language, trades, dress and products. It was the Malays who gave identity to the region. Islam was the reinforcing power that butteressed the Malayness of the archipelago.

The history and cultural processes of the Malay world, therefore, was a dynamic transformation of a Malay minority culture to become the overarching cultural paradigm of the region through the force of Islam. Islam then was and is the dynamo of Malay socio-cultural system.

SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

Based on geographical features, H. Geertz (1963:6) has characterized the diverse communities of Indonesia into three major types:

(i) the strongly Hinduised inland wet-rice areas;
(ii) the trade-oriented, deeply Islamic coastal peoples;
(iii) the mainly pagan tribal groups of the mountanous interior regions.

This typology would generally apply to the whole Malay world. Malay communities in Malaysia, fell into the second category but has changed with the advent of British influence to such an extent that they no longer trade. Almost all of them are involved in wet-rice agrriculture or coastal fishing. In recent years, internal migration has affected the Malays to move into towns from their traditional villages thus radically changing the old Malay Muslim polity.

The basic unit settlement is the village *kampung*, mainly found outside the royal centers in the old polity and rural areas when the colonial authorities founded townships to ficilitate socio-economic infrastructure. The *kampung* may take the form of a clustered, linear or scattered settlements depending very much on topographic location, the basis of economic life, the mode of transportation and the availability of land.

Riverine and Plain Settlement

They are mainly paddy cultivators who are usually scattered in small cluster settlements within the large paddy fields were individual homesteads are constructed. There are also paddy cultivators constructing their houses, mainly of wooden structure, at the edge of the paddy field

where it meets the slightly higher ground in order to avoid annual floods. Recent development in irrigation system, especially in the large scheme, villages are concentrated at the periphery of the irrigated fields.

Riverine and plain settlements are today connected by major road systems. In some cases, new and modern highways have traverse their paddy fields so that communications are much easier with large urban centre. Within the settlement itself houses are usually constructed in linear pattern, either following the traditional orientation of the river and irrigation system in the past or the newly constructed road system during the colonial rule. Much of the homesteads are single houses of wooden construction as contrasted to the non-Muslim dwellers of the interior where the longhouse seems to be a common feature. The principles of Islam must have influencal not only in the construction of the homestead in the villages but also the whole settlement. Thus the mosque has been an essential feature of the village in the Malay Muslim policy.

Coastal Settlement

They are mainly fishermen, who are mainly involved in small scale coastal activities have their houses generally constructed along the coastal area facing the sea. They are normally linear in pattern, arranged in two or three lines along the coast. To avoid and lessen the impact of storm and wind, coconut palms are planted in between houses. The coconut also provide necessary food supplement to the fishermen.

Fishing villages along the coast are completely oriental towards the sea with much of the activities related to the extraction of products from the sea. Mainly fishes, prawns, crabs and processed products from these sources. The linear pattern normally stretch for several miles without break. At the centre there would be either a small bazaar where limited marketing takes place, or in recent times, small township had grown-up to cater for the service needs of the areas surrounding.

Swamp Area Settlement

In coastal areas, of the Malay would another pattern of setlement based on swamp exploitation could be found. These are mainly "water or swamp villages" where houses are constructed on high piles above water in the swamp. They may have linear or cluster arrangement, with wooden footwalks constructed to connect the houses. Villagers are either working in the extraction of swamp products like sago, *nipah* sugar or fishing along the river or at the river mouth. Fishing is carried out in accordance with the rhythm of tides, using the drift net to catch fishes at the coming of high tide. However, in the past, security was one of the main encouragement for the founding of such settlements. The capital of old Brunei was once such an arrangement.

The swamp villages are usually composed of invidual wooden homesteads straddling one of the river banks. Between 500–1000 houses may be closely constructed in several rows along a single village road. At certain intervals 3 feet wide, footwalks may be constructed to connect the house rows and each is demarcated them into a small local unit called "*jambatan*" (footwalk). As a result, all along the village boardwalk, many footwalks branch out to form small local neighbourhood units.

While no actual corporate group has emerged among people located along or using the same footwalk, each footwalk community – numbering between 15 to 30 houses – is identified by the name of the head of household at the junction of each footwalk.

Usually a single footwalk serves the two rows of houses on either side. A kinship relationship based on blood or marriage usually links the households along a common footwalk. This situation results partly from the system of land tenure and partly from the strength of kinship sentiment.

Along the same footwalk, locational reference is either "*darat*" (upland) or "*baroh*" (down by the river). Most of the households and individuals persons are linked by kinship, so that each identify the other by his or her kinship position in relation to the speaker as well as the location of their house.

At the river bank, boats are moored and each group of families claims that section of the river bank as their landing and mooring place. Since many swamp riverine village activities are quatic, or at least involve crossing the river, most people walk along the same footwalk every day. At the same time, wells for drinking, bathing and washing are sunk inland where the high tide does not reach, so that those living near the river bank go 'upland' for water. This two-way movement constantly puts each family in contact with others. At the same time, kinship sentiment – the affective elements in kinship bonds – often brings them together for short and informal gatherings or conversations. As a result, people linked by kinship and living within the same footwalk locality have many common interests and their intensive interaction accentuates kinship and group solidarity.

When the village is too large, subvillages develop on the basis of spatial closeness or remoteness for convenient interaction. There is a close identification between neighbours in frequent face-to-face contact rather than with others located remotely at the other end of the village. Inevitably the whole village is subdivided into subvillages. Nonetheless a sense of belonging is enhanced among the inhabitants by a ramification of kinship links, whether intimate or remote.

In all Malay villages there are two or more subvillages also called *kampung*. Since the alignment of villages craditionally follows the direction of river flows the subvillages derive their names from this physical orientation. There are therefore, *Kampung Ilir* (downriver

subvillage), *Kampung Ulu* (upriver subvillage) and possibly *Kampung Tengah* (middle subvillage). A subvillage may also derive its name from the creek on which it is located.

Two subvillages are usually separated by a small creek which further delineates each of them into local groupings. Common social and economic activities complete the sense of solidarity and giving each subvillage common bases of unity and identity. In many villages, these factors demarcate the *Kampung Ulu* from *Kampung Ilir* so that each claims to have different manners and customs, to speak with slightly different tones and economically engage in different kinds of occupations. At the same time, there could be a presence of the traditional class cleavaged in each kampung to further enhance the differentiation.

Finally, to mark off the internal subdivision within a large village, each subvillage would have a *surau* or smaller prayer house in which people of the same subvillage congregate to say their daily prayers. Modern political development in local government introduces the democratic concept of the decision-making through the election of representatives, down to the village level. A village is governed by a Village Development and Security Committee headed by the village Headman (*Penghulu*) or the Chief of the ruling party. All the members, except the Headman, are selected on the basis of political affiliation within the ruling party. This again strengthens the consciousness of local identity among the smaller units. For all these unifying factors, rivalries and hostilities between subvillages are frequent, as expressed in mutual claims to superiority or allegating inferiority of others.

Kinship links as well as religious communal consciousness symbolises by a common village mosque however help to integrate local groups. The wide ramification of kin and religious linkages lessens the possibility of an open political schism. It is the structure of the kinship system which exercises a great integrative effect; but the underlying religious teaching and social values and expectations enmesh the interacting individuals in a network of unity among the villagers as an *ummah*.

KINSHIP

Malay Muslims largely reckon kinship through both the father and mother but in certain situations mainly in inheritance and guardianship they follow the Islamic *syariah* law and the patrilateral links are emphasized. The overall bilateral kinship system contains some degree of patrilateral emphasis where Islamic injunctions are concerned. Another factor which modifies the symmetrical emphasis of the bilateral system is affineship, that is, those relationships emerging out of marriage. The main significance of affinal relationships stems from the matrilocal principle of residence which is common to Malays. While blood ties are traced through both parents, yet relationships with affines as well

constitute much of a person's social environment.

This leads us to three overlapping structural spheres in which a villager is encompassed – by virtue either of his role or his personality. In all of these there are appropriate obligations and expectations. First, there is the wider sphere of cognates (*saudara-mara*) which consists of all those individuals related to him directly or indirectly, closely or remotely by blood ties. Second, there is a specific category of agnates (*waris*), derived from the operation of the *syariah* law, constituting the sphere of guardians (*wali*) and inheritor (*waris*) in which a man is a member by virtue of his consanguinal relation to his father. Third, the sphere of affines (*ipar-lamai*) with whom a man intensively interacts or shares common economic interests, and probably live within the same domestic group or village complex.

The more inclusive sphere of cognates is highly differentiated internally into categories and subcategories of blood kinsmen or consanguines based on proximity or distance of blood ties as well as generational gradings. The closeness or remoteness of blood ties is measured along a horizontal plane – the generational plane. Along this plane several points are marked as siblingship and counsinship, with further subcategories. The sibling category is differentiated on the basis of age or birth order, while counsinship is differentiated on the basis of collaterality, that is, the origin of a relationship at the point along the vertical plane of generational grading.

The vertical plane is generally graded into specific generations from ego upwards or downwards. The first ascending generation is the parents, second, the grandparents, third, great-grandparents, and so on. The first descending generation is the children, second, the grandchildren, and so on until the fifth generation. Each of these generation order is identified by the generation of a linking relative. All persons of that generation are referred to the linking relative and identified by both the generation and the degree of collaterality and therefore the degree of counsinship. The final pattern will be a series of vertical and horizontal axes, at each intersection of which will be a category of individual relatives.

In a bilateral system, the vertical axes on both sides of the central vertical axis – the direct descent line – will be similar, and therefore symmetrical. But the horizontal axes above and below ego's generation will be different in that the higher the generation grade the larger is the downward span, because each person in the higher generation grade is simultaneously a potential ancestor of a descent line. Thus we have, at least conceptually, a series of expanding descending lines each crosscutting the generational planes. A biliteral kinship system is then a tremendously complex symmetrical structure with an enormous diffusion of relationships.

In the formal structure (see diagram) cousin differentiation begins with ego. The Malays use *aku* as the first person singular pronoun to

indicate ego. All other relatives are referred to *aku* or are genitively related to *aku*. Thus, in an ever increasing circle of kinsmen, *aku* will say *kakak aku* (my elder sibling), *adik aku* (my younger sibling). In the same pattern he possesses *sepupu* (first cousin), *dua pupu* (second cousin), *tiga pupu* (third cousin), *empat pupu* (fourth cousin) and so on.

On the ascending vertical or generational plane he possesses *emak bapa* (parents), *nenek* (grandparents), *datuk* (great-grandparents), *datuk-nenek* (great-great-grandparents). The descending generations are composed of *anak* (children), *cucu* (grandchildren), *cicit* (great-grandchildren), *piut* (great-great-grandchildren), *antah-antah* (great-great-great-grandchildren).

Collaterals on the higher generation grades are terminologically similar on both the father's and mother's sides, with no specific differentiation except by using the qualifiers *sebelah bapa* (paternal), or *sebelah emak* (maternal) when necessary. The parental generation is differentiated into *bapa* (father), *emak* (mother), *bapa saudara* (uncle), *emak saudara* (aunt). There is no actual differentiation in the grandparent generation, where all are designated *datuk, nenek* or *moyang* on respective ascending generations.

A persistent feature of the Malay bilateral system is the importance attached to generational and collateral factors. Generation and collaterality have significant social and jural functions in the ordering of society. In terms of values, the generational system is supported by a clearly defined concept of respect and etiquette. Functionally, the pattern of stratified organization, based on generation and collaterality, implies a social organization of graded authority, rights and oblications among members toward each other. In the Malay generational system, a lower generation shows deference to a higher one. Since the system is highly graded, the higher the generation, the more respect is displayed towards it.

In other words, such a system means that seniority is highly respected and valued. Politically, however, it implies that the social distribution of authority is concentrated in the senior generation. Thus, we find the institution of 'elders' (*tua*) in such traditional leadership positions as *tua kampung* or *tua rumah* in traditional Malay political organization. It also means that many social rights, obligations and privileges are held by the elders or the senior generation. They are the wielders of authority and custodians of norms and laws. This implies also that exemplary behaviour must be shown by them in order to exemplify proper manners and conduct to the younger generation. Thus the society is ordered within a system of reciprocal behaviour between individuals of different generations.

An important norm governing intergenerational relationships as filial piety – the deference for parents displayed by their children. This is expressed in the expectation that the authority of parents, especially the father, is not to be flouted. Disobedience is regarded as being

rebellious (*jahat*) and this is equated with impiety (*derhaka*). If each successive generation is governed by such a norm and its concomitant attitudes, the whole structure is pervaded, in relation to the parental generation, by a formal norm of deference (*hormat*). In such a situation, it can be expected that everyone is submissive to and holds a serious disposition towards his or her parents. In reality, this probability is modified by two other factors:

(a) the relatively relaxed attitude of parents (the higher generation) towards their children (the lower generation);
(b) the frequent intervention of another intimate family member from a lower or higher generation in the parent-child relationship.

A grandchild may become affectionately related to his or her grandparent, or *vice-versa*, who thus become the 'intervening' person between the parents and children especially when they live in a three-generation household. A three-generation household would have parents, children and grandchildren live together within the same homestead. Many instances were observed of grandchildren playing buffer roles between the two senior generations, principally between parents-in-law and son-in-law.

Other implications of the stratified generational system are the institutionalization of precedence and leadership in the senior generation. The elders are expected to be given precedence in most circumstances. For instance, a man may request an older man to walk in front of him, enter a house first, be first to eat from a common share of food at feasts and ceremonies.

This pattern of generational stratification is intimately related to the social structure of authority and leadership. While formally defined leadership may be based on several factors, yet other things being equal, the factors of age and generation are especially important. Advanced age is conceived as a cumulation of experience and wisdom. In most instances, the higher a man's generation, the older is his age. Together with ascribed authority he is given the role of leadership. This is the tendency in a situation where the leadership role is undefined or uncertain. In this situation, an old man is normally appointed as a leader if no one is formally instituted as the occupier of that position.

This formal structure of precedence, authority and leadership based on the generational factor may in reality be modified or changed by other factors or circumstances, especially rank, status and class. While age and generation are important in the ranking system and other stratificational structures, many other factors reinforce or deminish their importance. Personal quality and achievement, knowledge and education, wealth and religion, for instance, and prominent variables in the social ranking scheme.

Apart from the ranking emphasis, the bilateral system implies a

symmetry of structural stress on both parents. This means that both parents have an equal distribution of rights, authority and obligation towards their children and *vice-versa*. Whatever the condition of the marital relationship between parents – stable or unstable – they share equal responsibilities toward their children and receive equal treatment from children. The wife has as much right and obligation as the husband in the procreation and socialization of children. This principle of equality and balance is very often manifested in the sharing of household responsibilities as expressed in different domestic roles for husband and wife. Generally, a Malay father or husband has responsibilities in acquiring a livelihood or in finding work outside the house while a mother or wife restricts her responsibilities to managing and organizing her household.

Equality in gender relationships may also be expressed in cooperation in economic activities and the lack of economic specialization for women. Structural balance in gender relation may also imply that the husband's position may be counter-balanced by his wife in such processes as decision-making in running the household, on food expenditure and even on the disciplining of children. A Malay wife may do the same farming activities as the husband. While a fisherman's wife may not accompany her husband to sea, she is expected to take over all the jobs once the fishes are landed, from cleaning to drying and selling. The manifestation of this balancing pattern may differ between households, and even the degree of relative equality may differ.

The structural symmetry of the bilateral system is however slightly modified by the *syariah* emphasis or partrilaterality in certain situations such as guardianship and *faraid* which increases the authority or raises the position of husbands. In this term, the domestic power structure of the husband may increase its amount of authority over members of his household, including his wife. Nonetheless, such a situation is only occasionally relevant; it never became deeply institutionalized so as to modify the cognatic organization into a patrilineal principle.

The occasion for agnatic emphasis arises only in the two major situations: as a guardian (*wali*) of a girl giving her away in marriage, and in the division of inheritance according to the Islamic *faraid* system, where a male child receives twice as much as a female. The system of inheritance extends also into the system of devolution of hereditary personal titles among the traditional aristocratic upper class of *tengku, abang, pengeran* or *tuanku* groups.

The categories of agnates who are in the position of wali to certain female members of a kin group must be related first and formost through the father. In other words, *wali* is a special category of agnates in relation to a specific category of women – a group of female siblings. The *wali*, as stipulated by *syariah*, consists of the following agnatic kinsmen:

1. father

2. father's sons (brothers, paternal half-brothers)
3. father's father (paternal grandfather)
4. father's brothers (paternal uncles)
5. father's brother's sons (paternal cousins)

Diagramatically these appear as follows:

The *Wali* Grading

The *syariah* law also makes provision for a substitution of a guardian with another when one dies or is not easily available. A religious judge (hakim) or someone else appointed by the State Religious Council may act as *wali* in the marriage service. He may not even be a kinsman and in fact is usually the village Imam. Other than a marriage situation, the guardian has no further function. However, since guardians are primary members of one's family or cognates they have other sources of authority and responsibility towards younger kinsmen within the framework of the household structure of bilateral system.

The Islamic system of inheticance (*faraid*) stresses male over female rights. On the death of his father a man receives twice as much as his sister or mother. At the same time, it is imperative for him to support his mother and female siblings. If there are no children the deceased property returns to his wife and parents; if his parents are no longer alive, then their siblings especially male siblings inherit. The Islamic system of inheritance is generally adhered to by Malays, yet the actual mathematical calculation of shares can be baffling for many villagers. There are cawes where the traditional Malay inheritance system (i.e. adat as opposed to the Islamic system) is followed. This is a simple *bagi dua* (divide into two) or distribution into equal shares. This, of course, is also compatible with a bilateral emphasis in kinship relations.

Another situation where patrilaterality occurs is in the hereditary transmission of a personal title. Children inherit their father's title or receive titles through the father. A "*raja*" (aristocrat) for instance, automatically confers on his children the personal title of "raja". Even if he marries a non-titled woman, he is still entitled to confer such a title on his children. This is not the case for a woman, who cannot confer the same title on her children if they are born of a non-titled father. The assumption therefore is that a male inherits and transmits his agnatic 'breeding' (*baka*). A wife is merely a receptacle in which her husband's seed develops in is brought to life.

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Religious Basis of Marriage

Malays regard marriage (*nikah*) as the only legitimate basis for the creation of a family (*keluarga*) and a household (*rumah tangga*). It is

unthinkable to have a family without marriage. Morally marriage is the legitimizing process and contract for the relationships which constitute a family and enable it to be regarded as legal and consequential. Thus, marriage is the only justifiable basis for allocating rights over productive and reproductive resources, i.e. for the procreation of new members of society.

The moral basis of marriage is derived from the belief of every Malay in the absolute truth of Islam and its injuctions. It is a sanction of Allah that marriage should be conducted in the manner prescribed by Islam which formally legalizes and legitimizes the relations between two persons of the opposite sex. Religion is the only legal foundation recognized by the Malays that allows a man sexual rights over a female, and whatever other social rights and obligations it entails.

In marriage too, can be found the reason for the assignment of moral responsibility and obligation for a man to provide from and maintain his offspring. By his married status he is bound to bring up his children who are said to carry his 'seed'. He is their father, and by virtue of being a father he is obliged to support them through their life in this world and the next. His relationship and obligation toward them are immutable. In return for this, his children are likewise under a moral obligation to serve their parents materially and immaterially within the framework of social norms and values.

For his exclusive sexual rights to his wife, the husband is required to provide a livelihood and give sustenance to her. Sustenance (*nafkah*) is described as both 'spiritual' (*rohani*) and 'material' (*jasmani*): that is, sexual and spiritual matters as well as material necessities.

Marriage, to a Malay is therefore, the foundation of society. Its importance is discernible in the high evaluation of virginity (*dara*) before a marriage of the female partner and as a prime factor, above all others, in a first marriage.

Consequently, virginity is taken for granted, because a girl is automatically left out of consideration by young men once she is known to have lost this prime possession before marriage. If it is found that the bride is no longer a virgin on the marriage day, the marriage can be immediately dissolved.

For this reason, a nubile girl is guarded and secluded so that her chastity will always be safe. Traditionally, at this period of her life, she is always in the house, learning the skills of housekeeping, and is kept out of public sight as much as possible. Except for neighbours who know of her presence, others, especially strangers, will not meet her. The responsibility of being her guardian falls upon her parents and elder siblings, as well as other classes of relatives, especially those categorized as 'guardian' (*wali*). This is an Islamic conception and, as with the system of inheritance, it emphasizes partrilateral kinsmen.

The proper guardianship of the chatity of female relatives ensures the protection of the morality and dignity of the family and kindred. It

is a great source of shame and indignity to fail to protect their females' chastity against the encroachment of others. Malay parents often say that it is easier to control a herd of cattle than a daughter, alluding to the burden of responsibility of maintaining her chastity, and therefore keeping their dignity and pride intact. Their ability to mould the character of their daughters into 'good girls', is praised and admired by others. "So-and-so is a good girl", neighbours would say, or "How clever the parents are to bring up such a well-mannered girl!" They find pride and assurance in a courteous, shy and graceful girl, who speaks and laughs softly, covering her lips. This the ideal girl. Her other more attractive physical qualities only increase the likehood of her early marriage. She is a mother's dream of a prospective daughter-in-law.

While virginity and chastity in women are closely and jealously guarded, the men too are prohibited from indulging in premarital or extramartial sex. They must 'abstain' (*puasa*) as the Malays say, from such ventures prior to marriage. The man's reward for abstaining is the 'virgin' wife.

With modern social and economic development, seclusion is slowly being broken down, but chastity and virginity is still highly regarded and valued. Mothers often remind their daughters of the value of "self-worth" (*harga diri*), when letting them go out. At the very least, the girl is asked to take along a sister or very young brother as a chaperone.

Nowadays, most girls are no longer in seclusion but the tradition of *malu* (shyness, shame and prudence) is very strong. They are to be seen quite openly walking along the village road, and towns adorned in the latest fashion, yet their shyness is apparent. It seems this is the best guard for their chastity.

Closely associated with the concept of chastity and guardianship is the high respect for women, especially one's mother and sisters. A mother is a sacred person whom one should not only respect but protect. It is perhaps on the basis of this attitude towards women that the most intriguing problem of incest taboo in Malay society could be explained.

Malays conceive incest as deviance (*sumbang*) and partly as prohibited marriage (*haram nikah*). While the former is derived from their traditional *adat* law, the latter is part of the Islamic injunction of 'prohibition' (*haram*). The concept of *sumbang* is particularly vague. It defines any class of relationship or action which deviates from the acceptable norms and harmony and concordance with prevailing standards and values. In particular, *sumbang* concerns the restriction of freedom of interaction between the opposite sexes. This, of course, is directly related to the concern with safeguarding chastity, pride and honour. Anything that subverts the propriety of the relationship between the sexes is called *sumbang*. Islamic law and customary practices intervene in such a relationship and demand that the couple should marry so that they have the opportunity of continuing their association properly.

Marriage prohibition, on the other hand, involves an actual *syariah* prescription of categories of relatives with whom marriage should not be permitted.

While son/mother, sister/brother incest are considered improbable, it is not entirely impossible for daughter/father incest to occur. It is, or course, condemned as an infamy and Malays describe such a relationship as 'the fish eating its own offspring' (*ikan makan anak*) and they derogatorily liken it to the behaviour of beasts (*haiwan*).

Although marriage is regarded as desirable for the formation of a family, for procreation and the socialization of children and the foundation of a household, its inception must follow the proper procedure. A properly instituted marriage according to *adat* is more valued than one carried out otherwise. A proper marriage is called *nikah benar* while one conducted as a result of wrong-doing is called *nikah salah*.

Nikah besar follows all the necessary preparations and stages of rites and ceremonies, with a proper ceremonial organization. In many Malay communities, the *nikah salah* may be due to either of the following situations:

(i) *ngekot* – to follow – in which the girl goes to the boy's house and remains there until she is married off by her parents.

(ii) *nyerah* – to surrender – which is the reverse of the first, when the boy goes to the girl's house and surrenders himself to the girl's parents until they permit him to marry.

(iii) *khalwat* – caugh 'red-handed' in compromising positions or close proximity in a secluded situation. These methods are regarded as 'marriage out of wrong-doing' for the reason that the akad is conducted in a manner deviating from normal procedure.

Marriage Procedure

A series of phases, activities and material preparations make up a 'proper' marriage ceremony. Generally, the ceremonial phases can be distinguished as reflecting the three aspects of the Malay belief system: religion, magic and adat. In marriage, the whole complex of belief is embodied in microcosm. This makes marriage the most important single rite and ceremony in Malay life. In other words, marriage is the most important rite in the life history of a person, a final stage in his or her initiation into adulthood, and in becoming a full member of society. All other social and belief aspects of society are brought to bear in this final drama of social incorporation. Marriage is the final stage in the development of social maturity. It, therefore, has many meanings and implications in terms of social responsibility and obligations. It places a person in a position of being accountable for all his actions within the religious and

politico-jural systems of the community. He is now fully incorporated into the community, has internalized its social values, and is ready to play his full social roles. Marriage is like a graduation ceremony after a long period of socio-cultural learning and being socialized by his family and the society at large.

The Islamic aspect of marriage is a technical legitimation of a marital contract between the couple as publicly witnessed by others. It involves a clear utterance of 'giving away' (*ijab*) by the *wali* and an equally clear utterance of acceptance (*kabul*) by the groom. The whole process is called *akad nikah*. The bride and groom seal the contract by signing the proper papers (*surat nikah*), and by the groom making a customary bride-gift called *adat* or *mas kahwin* and by specifying the condition of possible diver if the husband fails to provide for her maintenance whenever he goes away from home (*taklik*). The *mas kahwin* payment varies according to state in the whole country, from RM20.00 (Malaysia Ringgit) to over RM100.00.

The magical and adat aspects of marriage overlap a great deal. All marriage procedures, excluding the religious contractual agreement, are regarded as *adat*, yet there are rites which may properly be regarded as magical, especially the *tepung tawar* (blessing with rice), *turun tangga* (rite of ascending and descending the staircase) and the observance of certain taboos.

The rite of *tepung tawar* seems to be the most important magical aspect, although it also has religious elements. In it lies the expression of the values and meaning of a marriage. Perhaps it may be conjectures here that the *tepung tawar* is a traditional, pre-Islamic rite, formally utilized as the central rite to legalize the whole marriage relationship. Later, Islam introduced the more formal contractual aspect between the couple, and the recital of marriage *khutbah*. It this Islamic aspect is removed, the *tepung tawar* rite perfectly fulfils the same function of blessing and legitimizing a marriage.

The chanting of verses at the *tepung tawar* expresses hopes and desires for prosperity, well-being and wealth. In the name of God, the Prophets, saints and learned Muslims, the rite specialist (*tukang tawar*) requests that the couple be blessed with 'many pious and good children'. May the children be famous all over the country, acquire gold and diamonds, and bring fame to the parents. While all these prayers are said over the couple, certain symbolic procedures are carried out to translate the meaning into concerete rites. The specialist touches the foreheads of the bridal pair with rice flour, scented water and a gold ring, and finally sprinkles them with rice grains, symbolic procedures are carried out to translate the meaning into concerete rites. The specialist touches the foreheads of the bridal pair with rice flour, scented water and a gold ring, and finally sprinkles them with rice grains, symbolic of all the wishes. The detailed procedure is described in later section.

THE FAMILY AND SOCIAL VALUES

The different forms and compositions of households are partly the manifestation of differences in the stages. Family norms impose a two-way obligation on parents and their children. It is the immutable obligation of parents to care for their children especially when they are young. On the other hand, children are obliged to support and provide for their parents if they can, especially when they (parents) are old. This is what Malays regard as an expression of *budi* – a reciprocal interlocking of obligations between parental duty towards their children, and the children's obligation to repay with gratitude. A failure on the part of parents or children to fulfil the norm may result in shameful ridicule by the public or neighbours. Parents may be ridiculed or rebuked for negligence, and children for letting their parents suffer or uncared for.

The result of this normative expectation is to restrain chidren from entirely moving away from their parent's house, and make parents reluctant to give away their children in marriage with someone living far away. Moreover, the principle of locality after marriage greatly enhanced the clustering of children around the parental household. Very seldom a girl goes out of the village to get married and leaves her natal family. The reverse process is the rule so that men come into the village to settle down. Matrilocal tendency and the need to repay the *budi* of parents also keep the men in the village. Even if they move into neolocal households or disperse into other settlements the bond of familial relationship is maintained by frequent visits and gifts of financial support. Very rarely, and only under an exceptional circumstance such a relationship is married or ruptured by interpersonal conflict between parents and children or parents-in-law and children-in-law.

The fact that children continue to provide for their parents or *vice-versa*, points to the strength of the familial obligation in maintaining the form and content of familian relationships. Thus, the fundamental form and content of relationships between parents and children normally remain intact even after the dispersal of children, or if parents are separated by divorce. The family therefore, remains as the institution within Malay social organization with the function to achieve the personal and social ends it is meant for.

SOCIO-RELIGIOUS PRACTICES AND RITUALS

Religious tenets and principles of Islam and expressed in various practices and rituals among Malays. While the basic principles and practices as instructed by the Qur'an and the prophetic traditions remain Islamic, there are elaborations which may be defined as Malay cultural embellishment. Much of the elaborations, however, do not modify the fundamental Islamic religious ideas. Only the external aspects, such as the locations, dress and certain details are culturally determined. These

aspects will be the focus of the paper.

The most fundamental practices are the performance of four of the "Pillars of Islam": *sembahyang* (prayer), *puasa* (fasting), *zakat* and *fitrah* (giving tithe and alms), and *naik haji ke Makkah* (pilgrimage to Makkah). The other pillar is a doctrinal attestation of faith in the oneness of God and prophethood of Muhammad (*dua Kalimah Syahadat*). Malays follow the *Shafie madhab* in their doctrinal practices. What would be stressed here is the cultural dimensions of such practices rather than the religious interpretation. It is the cultural dimensions that reflect the specifically Malay cultural expressions of fundamental religious tenets.

Malays observe all the basic tenets of Islam. Liturgical prayers are performed five times daily, fasting undertaken for thirty days a year, *fitrah* (alms) given once a year, individual *zakat* (tithe) on income and production, and the pilgrimage carried out once in a lifetime. The degree of observance depends on the understanding of elaborate religious teachings, perception of the merits of observance and the depth of conviction. It must be remembered that Islam equally stresses this-wordly blessings as well as other-wordly salvation. In both domains there are no concerete physical rewards except for the promise of *pahala* (divine merits) and the eventual usherance into heaven (*syurga*). Elaborate forms of ritual and practices are geared to achieve this ultimate bliss.

The perception of the need for divine merits varies directly with the depth of conviction, knowledge of age. The assumption is of course that the aged need more divine rewards that the young who still have time to live and to repent. Thus, most attendants at the mosque are the elderlies and the aged. Recent religious revivalism, however, has attracted the young to attend daily prayers in the mosque and smaller prayer houses (*surau*). For thos with a deep conviction of the truth and piety, religious rituals are usually performed fully and consistently, especially the daily prayers.

The most important rite is the daily prayer (*solat, sembahyang*). A Muslim worship lasts for about ten to fifteen minutes depending very much on the length of supplicatory prayers (*doa'*) uttered at the end of each prayer. Structurally, a prayer (*sembahyang*) rite is composed of several sections and movements. Each section is called a *raka'at*. To begin with, there is a series of identifiable body movements which are followed or preceeded by certain utterances of prayer, invocation or upplication. In the final part, there is normally a recitation of *doa'* (supplication) to request God for safety, security, blessing, protection or fulfilment of hopes. For the purpose of prayer a Malay may perform it either singly or in group in his house or at the mosque (*masjid*) or a smaller prayer house (*surau*). In the house, the performance may be done by the family as a group with the husband/father as the leader (*imam*). At the *masjid* or *surau* there would be a regular *imam* to lead the prayer. At the appointed

time a 'caller to prayer' (*muazzin* or *bilal*) would recite the *azan* in a loud voice, normally with an amplifier to the villagers.

Normally, Malays would be properly dressed, adorning the *Malay baju* (a sort of round-neck jacket) and *sarong* with a cap head dress. Many would also adorn the *haj* white cap especially if they have gone to Makkah.

Villagers would arrive at the *masjid* or *surau* on foot, bicycle or motorcycle. The usual time for congregation at the *masjid* would be in the early evening prayer (*maghrib*) or night prayer ('*Isya*'). The hour separating the two prayers would normally be filled with Qur'an reading, religious lecture or group prayers such as *zikir* and *doa*'.

On certain calendrical occasions, such as during the fasting months, the '*Isya*' prayer will be followed by the highly commendable (*sunat*) prayer – the *terawih*. This prayer is fairly lengthy and may take more than an hour. At the end of the rite, the congregationists would be served with light supper of cakes, fried noodles, rice and hot drinks.

The act of public congregation either daily or weekly integrate Malays as a community of believers. One of the most important group prayer is the Friday prayer (*sembahyang Jumaat*). Malay do not reserve Friday as a Sabbath, and every adult is enjoined to attend Friday prayer. Thus it is seldom that people stop their daily work on Fridays and therefore Friday cannot be equated with the Christian's Sunday or the Jewish Saturday. The Friday congregation lasts for over an hour and thereafter everyone returns to work.

Except in major centres, a Malay *masjid* are traditionally of timber construction with heavy wood as the main structure. In interior villages *masjid* are built with the floor on the ground, but in the coastal villages the *masjid* are built on stilts about five feet above the ground. Modern urban *masjid* since the colonial days however, would incorporate the traditional Islamic design with the great *kubah* or dome as the main roof. Malay traditional design would incorporate a pyramidal roof type in line with its wooden structure.

A village *masjid* is fairly small, and usually built entirely by villagers. With wooden posts and floor, and usually of corrugated iron roof, a *masjid* is a conspicuous design in a Malay community. The centre of the floor space is covered by a pyramid-like roof. Its steep rise is the most conspicuous design in a Malay village, distinguishing it from all other structures. The rest of the roof slopes gradually covering the four sides of the *masjid*. The front part of the floor is partitioned by a full wall to make a verandah of about one-fifth of the whole floor area, leaving the rest of the floor a large empty hall with only very few other fittings necessary for a congregation. Three sides of the wall are constructed with windows to allow light and air to enter easily making an airy and bright hall. The exterior wall of the verandah is only about 1/2 meter high making the verandah an almost open area.

At the foremost of the prayer hall is the *mihrab* (niche) about six

feet wide where the *imam* leads the prayer. On the right hand side of the *mihrab* is the *mimbar* (pulpit) where the *khatib* (sermon reader) reads his *khutbah* (sermon). The *mihrab* is constructed to face *Makkah*, the proper direction of prayer (*kiblat*).

In any congregation the members sit on the mat covered floor overlain with parallel rows (*saf*) of white cotton cloth, each at an interval of a sitting distance and all face the pulpit. Thus the congregation sit on the mat and place their forehead in prostration (*sujud*) on the cotton cloth. For the *Imam* a proper prayer mat (*sajadah*) is provided.

Daily and Friday prayers are almost routine in their performance. The occasional prayers marking the annual festival after fasting – the *'Id al-fitri* and the *'Id al-adha* – are the more colourful prayers. The congregation would dress up in their best jacket (baju), trousers (seluar) and gold threaded sarong (*samping*) to congregate in the early morning for the prayer. After the prayer, it would be time for the celebration.

Fasting (*puasa*) is the next most important tenet in Islam and is taken seriously by the Malays. Most people fast during the whole month of *Ramadhan*. Fasting demands a strict discipline of the body and mind. It prohibits the partaking of food or drink from sunrise to sunset. It demands abstinence from sexual relationships during the day, looking at sensual or sex-arousing sights, and refraining from putting anything into any open cavity of the body such as the mouth, nostrils, ears or anus.

The fasting month is a period of reduced occupational activity: there is clear evidence of recession in work. Most people prefer to concentrate learning religious matters by reading the Qur'an or perform prayer in the mosque to fill the hours of waiting to break the fast in the evening. At home, women prepare tasty cakes and other delicious food to break the fast with in the evening. Neighbours or kinsmen usually exchange food for breaking the fast. In the most township, however, fasting month saw the growth of numerous food and cakestalls to cater for the needs of consumers. Around late afternoon, just after office hours, buyers would be flocking them for their evening fast-breaking session.

The signal for fast-breaking is the call to prayer at the mosque and heard over the radio. In the village the mosque drum is beaten to inform the public. The Malays believe that it is commendable to break the fast with ripe fruit, especially *tamar* (dates) which was the fruit eaten by the Prophet. In some areas, children would shout jubilantly *sungke, sungke*! (break fast, break fast!) once they hear the drum beat.

Food for breaking the fast can be light or heavy depending on a family's food habits. Some people take cakes and drink a little, followed by a heavier meal of rice. Others just eat cakes and postpone the rice until after the evening prayer. However, others may take rice meal before going to the mosque or *surau for the 'Isya'* prayer to be followed by the commendable *sembahyang terawih* (a prayer held specifically in the evenings of the fasting month). After prayer, there would be '*tadarus*' or

the recital or the Qur'an by expert readers. Individual neighbours would serve cakes or rice as supper for the late night reciters in the mosque.

About ten days before the end of fasting, until the early morning prior to the festival (*Hari Raya*) and *'Id* prayer, alms (*fitrah*) are paid to the religious leaders or state appointed collectors (*'amil*). This is obligatory for all Muslims and a father/husband is responsible for such payments for all his dependants.

Traditionally the payment is made in the form of the staple food, in the case of the Malays is rice, to the amount of one *gantang* (gallon) of Baghdad (Iraqi gallon). Nowadays most payments are made in cash, fixed by the state which at the moment is at US1.00 per person. A centralised collection system where several collectors are appointed by the State Religious Council had been established to gather the total collection of every individual.

In the past, the relative isolation and self-contained nature of villages justified the payment of tithe and alms to the village religious teachers and officials. They provided unpaid services to the villages and the community rewarded them by way of tithe.

Finally, Islam enjoins the pilgrimage to Makkah (*naik haji*), if affordable, once in a life-time. The *haj* takes place on the 9th, 10th and 11th days of the month of *Zul-Hijjah*, the final month in the Muslim lunar calendar.

For the Malays, to go on pilgrimage is a tremendous tax on their wealth and saving. Despite this, the ability is socially rewarding. A distinct recognition is given in the personal name of *Haji*-so-and-so when a person returns home. Many would go at a very late age with the wish to die in the sacred land of the Prophet. On returning, Makkah dates, dried fuits and *zamzam* mineral water are brought home to be tasted by their relatives. Nowadays, pilgrimage is more organised. The central government has set up the Central Pilgrim Management Board where money can be gradually saved or deposited to finance the total cost of the travel and stay in Makkah and Madinah. At present, it amounts to about US3000 per person per season.

Prospective pilgrims would make elaborate preparations prior to their travels. Not only they learn or revise the intricacies of the rituals at home with a teacher but also physically take care of their health. Pilgrim dress (*ihram*) and other routine clothing would be collected for the month stay in the holyland. Several days before the travel, a *kenduri* or *makan widak* - a kind of ritual feast to pray for the safety of pilgrim would be held in his/her house. Neighbours would be invited. Some would ask for fogiveness of past grievances. Others would given small donation or *sadaqah* for the travel.

On the day of departure the Pilgrim Management Board would centrally organize their flight by the national carrier. The same would be done for their return from Makkah after the *Haj*. On their return pilgrim, now carrying the title *Haji*, would be received by relatives at the

airport. At home, they would hold another small *doa selamat* – a small feast – to pray for their safe return. From then on, a *Haji* normally would have to show religious by examplary life to others in the village.

RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS AND CELEBRATIONS

Within a yearly cycle two of the most regular and recurrent festivals are the annual festivals after fasting month, known as *Hari Raya Puasa, Hari Raya Fitrah* or *'Id al-Fitri,* and the festival on the 10th *Zulhijjah* which is the culmination of the *Haj* at Makkah, called variously *Hari Raya Haji, Hari Raya Korban* or *'Id al-Adha.* The Malays treat the first as the major festival of the two. This is exactly the reverse of the practice in most Arab countries (cf. E.Lane, 1908). The *Hari Raya Puasa* is more intimately involved in their individual lives and has a deeper sense of significance in social terms than the *Hari Raya Haji* which is thought to be mainly for the pilgrims in Makkah.

A day before the festival that ends the *Ramadhan* fasting the villagers or close neighbours again share the cost of buying a cow for slaughter. Most of the meat will be prepared for the next day's feast which is on the 1st of *Syawwal,* the month after *Ramadhan.* Socially, *Hari Raya Puasa* is a time for festivity and visits so that each household prepares for such receptions. For this purpose money is spent to furnish, repaint or change certain parts of the house. Other preparations include baking cakes and making sweet-meats and meat dishes, either of beef or chicken. New clothing is bought for the children and wife, and flour, sugar, margarine, coconuts and other ingredients for cakes are puchased in quantities far larger than for ordinary use. Traditional cakes such as *kuih dodol* (rice cake), *kuih jala* (rice flour mash), *kuih sepit* (pressed sago crackers) and *sagun-sagun* (roasted ground rice and coconut) need only easily available ingredients. But with the introduction of Western cakes other more costly ingredients have to be bought. Thus 'Jam Rolls' and 'Fruit cakes' now often replace the more traditional cakes.

By the amount of money spent on the *Hari Raya* celebration it might appear to be a simple case of conspicious consumption. Nevertheless, such an investment confers social prestige, for it forestalls the possibility of being embrassed or reduculed by neighbours when they come to visit on the *Hari Raya* day. It is very usual among women to compete and keep up with the neighbours by having an elaborate preparation to outshine others.

On the *Hari Raya* day, gay and colourful dress in worn. Everyone is in festive mood. It is a day for visits and being visited by kinsmen and for renewing family relationships. The younger members of the family – children and grandchildren – are expected to meet their elders. Married man return to their natal household, or at least visit their parents. This is perhaps the most important aspect of the family gathering during the first part of the morning before the male and female adults go to the

mosque for the morning congregation.

At such gatherings all the younger family members approach their parents (or grandparents) and ask their forgiveness. After that the adult members approach each other and ask for each other's forgiviness for all past mistakes and faults. On this particular day, it is considered to be most appropriate and suitable to forgive and forget all misdeeds committed against each other whether intentionally or unintentionally. The Malays express such a request for forgiveness in a very elaborate apology, such as: "Please forgive and pardon me for all my mistakes and misgivings, permit me to consume all the food and drink so far given to me, and please pardon me for any physical (*lahir*) and spiritual (*batin*) wrong". This holy day seems to be so sacred and meaningful that even the biggest mistake or misgiving can be completely forgiven and forgotten. The day is treated as the close of one section of life and the beginning of another.

There is a heightening of emotion on this festive day. While the sincere acts of apologies and forgiveness lessen the emotional content of tension in kinship relations, other reasons may move an individual, especially an older women, to feel sad or even mournful. Since all the members of a household or a primary family group usually return home for the festival and undergo the same ritual of apology and forgiveness, any member who is absent will inevitably arouse a sense of sadness among those present. Many mothers shed tears when thinking of a son or daughter being absent on such a day.

On the other hand, such a festive mood also arouses the mournful memory of the deceased. Very often a woman laments how nice it would be if a deceased son or daughter, mother or father were alive and able to enjoy this good day with her. Such nostalgic memory frequently leads to shedding of tears and expressions of sorrow. For this purpose, *doa'arwah* (prayer for the dead) with its accompanying feast is occasionally held to lighten the emotional burden of thinking about those who have departed. Further prayers may be said when a visit is made to the cemetery.

The actual *Hari Raya* celebration begins early in the morning. After the family gathering, most of the adult males and females go to the mosque for the morning *'Id* prayer (*sembahyang Hari Raya*). Dressed in their best, all available space in the mosque is filled. The mosque is sometimes so full that the overspill has to be accommodated on mats laid out outside the mosque for the occasion. This is due mainly to the large number of villagers, young and old, who return from other places to celebrate the festival with their families.

After the morning service, at about 8.30 a.m., each head of household will invite several other male neighbours and relatives to his house for a feast and prayer (*doa' selamat Hari Raya*). Apart from the cakes and meat dishes, rice is often served to the guests, so that a *Hari Raya* day is in fact "*a day of eating*" when the best food and cooking of

each household is tasted. It is not very often that a household spends so much money to entertain kismen and neighbours.

The custom is for the people of each household to exchange invitations and visits. Usually on the first day the members of a household would visit their elders, aged parents and families. The rest of the festive period will be for receiving or visiting friends, neighbours and relative far and near. Thus for about a month Malays enjoy each other's hospitality. But the major emphasis is for relatives and closed neighbours to visit each other and mutually ask each other's forgiveness and pardon.

Hari Raya is an especially jubilant festival for the children who are dressed up gaily for the occasion and are normally given a small sum of money as *sadaqah* to be spent as they wish. Wearing their new clothes, and together with playmates or peer group members they roam the village and visit many other houses on their own, very often with the anticipation of further *sadaqah* and delicious food. Some may be lucky and receive additional contributions to their small sum of money, while others are less fortunate. But there is always the joy of receiving *sadaqah* and they will relate their 'adventure' to their parents when they return home and probably show them their collection.

The festival continues for a month until all the cakes and food have been consumed. There is a tendency among the Malays to treat the whole month as a month of festivity, that is, visit and return visits may still be made until the end of the month even though there are no cakes left to treat the late-comers. The act of forgiving and pardoning is, however, carried out with the same sense of significance. By the middle of the month the festive mood quitens and those who came home to be with their family return to their work places.

Seventy days after *Hari Raya Puasa*, there is another major festival, *Hari Raya Haji*. Though the pattern of celebration is similar to *Hari Raya Puasa*, it is not of equal significance. Few people return home from distant working places on this occasion. Relatives and kinsmen in other villages or township may not take the trouble to visit or wish to be visited. Thus the festivities are confind to the village and among close neighbours only. But the basic intent of this type of festival neighbours only. But the basic intent of this type of festival – to express mutual pardon and forgiveness – is still strong.

Analytically then festivals reinforce social relations among kin-groups and co-villagers, and express group solidarity. At the same time they provide effective channels through which potential tensions and hostility are defused through sincere acts of apology. Both people of the same generation and of different generations forgive and forget the mistakes and misbehaviour of each other. However, not all family disputes and contemps are resolved in this manner. Deep-seated disputes may continue over a period of time despite ritualized conciliation, and may even push the hostile parties to the brink of over confrontation if anyone is reluctant to be reconciled. Reluctance to reconcile is generally

viewed as a direct refusal to accept kinship norms especially in the case of a younger member, and a posible cause of prolonged tension. In the village, there are cases of irreconcilable siblings who contest each other's rights to inheritance of land or other property. Other cases arise from disputes about the fairness of property division. A number of these have resulted in an entire rupture in family relations.

On the other hand, the complexity of interlocking family and kinship linkages, especially in the circumstances of a bilateral system may be able to restrain or impose constraints on the disputing parties through normative expectations to forgive, forget and apologise. The fulfilment of such expectation and obligation diffuses the tension. It dampens the possibility of a widespread verification of conflict within the total system, thus averting undesirable consequences.

It is worth noting here how the ritualization of relations (Gluckman, 1962), is utilized as a means to manage an existing or potential tension or situation of conflict. The rituals, in this case, of apology on a significant day, lend meaning, solemnity and obligation to the pledge of goodwill and solidarity among members of a kin group and a community.

This is also true at the individual level of personality conflict. The emotional tension emerging from the sense of guilt due to the thought of having done wrong to a family member may become so strong as to be repressive. Religious sanctions demand genuine reconciliation through the act of sincere and solemn apology and not a mere expression of "I am sorry". But if one of the parties involved had died the possibility of forgiveness is closed. This burden of not having been forgiven is keenly felt by the surviving party so that the only method of reconciliation left is for the latter to pray that the departed pardons him or her. Thus the normal method of demonstrating that such an apology is made is through holding a feast for the dead. This provides the guilty person with a publicly sanctioned mechanism to prove that he or she has done something for the dead person who was wronged.

While *Hari Raya* festivals have both religious and social meanings, other minor celebrations which are lightly taken by some but looked upon as significant and important by others may have the same effect on group solidarity. Among them are the *Nasfu Sya'aban* on the 15th *Sya'aban, Asyura'* on the 10th *Muharram, Safar* on the final Wednesday of the *Safar* month, and the *Maulud Nabi* (Prophet's Birthday) on the 12th *Rabi'ul Awal* and the *Isra'* and *Mi'raj* (Ascension of the Prophet) on the 27th *Rajab.*

The night of Ascension (*Isra'* and *Mi'raj*) has at least two significant aspects for Malays. First, it invests the Prophet with miraculous attributes, thus confirming the truth of his message, while at the same time putting Islam in a very close affinity with the traditional magical conceptions of the Malays. Second, it gives a divine justification to the act of performing the prescribed daily worship so that no doubt can be

cast upon the truth and righness of such acts. A divine miracle thus supplies a very strong basis for the fixation of belief and the legitimacy of a series of actions, so that in their mind there is a strong justification for believing in such a set of ideas. The Malays awareness of this religious occasion is refreshed annually when the *Khatib* reads the story to the Friday congregation. the *Nasfu Sya'aban*, on the evening of the 15th *Sya'aban*, involves no real feast at all. Adult males congregate at the mosque and perform the evening prayer (*maghrib*) together at about 7.00 p.m. After this, each person reads the surah *Ya Sin* three times. After each reading a wish is made: for prosperity (*murah rezeki*), long life (*panjang umur*) and peace of mind (*aman sentosa*).

While *Nasfu Sya'aban* may be translated as they day of penitence when wishes are made but the *surah Ya Sin* itself is regarded by Malays as the most sacred and magically potent of all the chapters in the Qur'an. It is used to ward off evil, to cure sickness, as a protection against evil intention and as a transquilizer for a nervous mind or a troubled heart. Thus when the *Imam* reads this surah several bottles of plain drinking water are placed in front of him in the belief that this magical *surah* will turn the water into a curative tonic with enlightening effect on the mind of the drinker (*terang hati*). Young children are given the 'tonic' water to drink so that they excell in their studies.

Asyura' is sometimes not celebrated at all or very few do so. The Friday sermon remains the only means by which its relevance and significance are remembered.

Safar, the second month of the Muslim lunar calendar is regarded by Malays as the Month of Misfortune (*Bulan Nahas*). On the final Wednesday of the month everyone is supposed to cleanse himself with the sacred water of *salamon* (*air tolak bala*), in order to ward off possible misfortune. The bathing itself is called *mandi salamon*, which is reality is washing from the well into which a piece of paper containing a prayer for safety has been thrown. The prayer is written in seven Arabic sentences, each of which begins with the word 'salamon'.

The most remarkable effect of *Safar* is that most people are afraid to do strenous work or go out to other places unnecessarily. They prefer to do light work and stay near home. If a misfortune were to occur it would be easier to handle. Thus many major works are left undone for many days or are performed lightly.

The Prophet's birthday is one of the most significant dates in the Muslim calendar, yet its celebration has become much secularised. On the Friday prior to the birthday (*maulud*) the *khatib* will read the story of the Prophet's struggle to proclaim the birth of Islam during the period in the Arab history called *jahilliyah* (ignorance). He faced many problems and had to make sacrifices before he was able to establish Islam. His struggle and patience are cited as an example of behaviour to be emulated by all Muslims.

The celebration of the birthday centres around a procession along

village road or gathering at village mosque. In the capital city the government, through the Department of Religious Affairs organize the celebration by way of mass procession when national dignatories come to gather and speeches on Islam are made.

On purely religious grounds many other dates are remembered because of their significance in the development of Islam. But the level of religious and historical knowledge among rural Malay communities are insufficient to enable them to understand the elaborate details of Islam. As such religious life is a mixture of local and foreign practices, the relevance and significance of which are closely related to their habitat. Hoever, the most notable aspect in the religious life of Malays is the persistent observance of what could be called the 'ritual feast'. This is the translation of the institution of *kenduri, doa' selamat* or *makan selamat.* Geertz (1960) has given much consideration, both descriptively and analytically to the same type of socio-religious institution among the Javanese, who call it *selamatan.* The Peninsular and Sumatran Malays call it *kenduri* or *doa selamat.* The Borneo Malays call it "ringgo".

Kenduri, Doa' Selamat and *Makan Selamat* Feast

A Malay ritual feast is composed of two insperable parts: prayer (*doa*) and a feast (*makan*). The prayer is the more significant component for it distinguishes a feast from a mere gathering for the consumption of food.

Almost the same prayer is said at all ritual feast, so that we can hear the same concept of selamat persistently repeated on all such occasions. The same form of supplication may be recited after the performance of the evening prayer, thus permitting us to say that the concept of *selamat* permeates the totality of Malay religious life. It is, therefore, central to the Malay belief complex and a basic value or a deep structure from which many other concepts are generated and intimately related. These include safety, security, order, peace, patience and generosity.

The prayer embodies the idea for which the ritual feast is held, and the occasion defines the size of the feast. Various names are given to different occasions and the reason for them, and each occasion varies in complexity. The occasions for feasts may partly be motivated by the religious cycle of feasts and celebrations, magical or customary practices, rites of passage, specific propitiation against misfortune or as acts of thanksgiving (*syukur*). However, even though a feast is not specifically directed to evading misfortune or evils, the theme of safety remains inherent. Thus, anywhere a person goes he has no escape from death; unconsciously he is always anxious for his life and safety. For this reason he must insure himself against any unexpected event, especially death, by giving feasts and prayers as a premium against unanticipated risks. Feasts and rituals thus enable a person to lessen the anxiety created by a deep-seated fear of unpredictable death or disaster.

The size of a feast is measured in the number of servings (*sapra*) of food. A *sapra* is a complete serving of food for four persons. It consists of a large bowl of rice, from three to four side-dishes (two of which are major *lauk* such as chicken or beef curry), drinking water, a drinking glass for each person, four eating places, a bowl of water for washing hands, spoons and hand towel (or paper napkins). A Malay feast seems to make allowance for two to three helpings or platefuls of rice per person, and occasionally even the side dishes are refilled. Besides the two major meat preparations, the side-dishes consist of vegetables, sweet deserts and a preparation of the internal organs of chicken such as liver, gizzard and skin mixed with vegetables. Malays view their various foods as of unequal rank order. the most important part is boiled rice (*nasi*), all other foods are side dishes (*lauk*) even if they are entirely prepared from chicken, beef or fish. Each part is to be taken inseparable from the others. A plate of rice is never taken without its *lauk* nor is the reverse ever done. A person who takes only the *lauk* (be it beef, chicken or fish) is called a 'cat' (*kucing*) for only a cat eats in that manner.

The seating position at a feast is four persons to a *sapra*, and all *sapra* are placed in two or three rows depending on the width of a house and the number of guests.

Malays eat with the right hand; it is ill-mannered to use the left hand which is used to wash the anus after defecation. Spoons are provided to take the *lauk* or to sip sauce, gravy, soup or sweet juice. While the guests eat, the head of household or his representatives attend to all the needs of the guests such as drink, extra rice or possibly extra *lauk*.

While the normal expectation is for the guests to consume all the foods served, so that (as the householder rationalisers) it will be easier to wash the plates, gluttony (*lahap*) is not at all desirable. This is of course differentiated from good eating (*kuat makan*). However, Malays leave a few grains of rice in the main dish, so that, it is believed, there should be a continuity of livelihood (*rezeki*) provided by God. This applies also to eating from a plate. If a Malay were to have a second helping of rice he does so when the first helping is about to finish and not after it is completely eaten. Traditionally, they explain that the remnant in the plate will call upon the souls of other rice grains to accompany them in the store.

Malay feasts may be distinguished at three levels of lavishness by the criteria of size or the number of *sapra*, or by occasion and name. Size, however, is a major criterion of elaborateness, because this reflects the economic aspect of feasting. An economically well-off family will inevitably hold a lavish feast. But in relative terms, that is in relation to the cycle of feasts, the occasion for which a feast is held also determined its significance and size. A marriage ceremony is the grandest and most lavish of all feasts. The following is a general attempt at classifying Malay feasts. Basically they range from a simple *doa' selamat*, passing through

a *makan selamat* and finally to *kenduri besar* which is elaborated by *berzanji* and *berzikir* (chanting in praise of God and the Prophet).

The *doa' selamat* feast, such as thanksgiving or *tolak bala* are small domestic feasts where four to eight persons are invited. Occasionally in a large household among whose males can be found a prayer reader, there is no invited quest at all. At the same time, very little expenditure is needed as the main refreshments consist of tea or coffee with sugar and biscuits. However, for the *tolak bala* feast a *ketupat tolak bala* is usually made. This *ketupat* is believed to have some kind of magical power to protect from misfortune or ward off evil threatening a man, his family or household.

The thanksgiving (*syukur*) feast is traditionally held when a child begins reading the 15th *surah* (chapter) of the Qur'an which is called *naik jus lima belas* (entering into the 15th chapter). this simple feast marks the child's progress in Qur'an reading. the teacher is presented with some *ketupat*, about a pound of rice, a cup of sugar, a packet of tea, and an egg.

More lavish than the *doa' selamat* is the *kenduri* where the feast includes rice and side dishes besides beverages. Basically *kenduri* has the combined meaning of thanksgiving (*syukur*) and propitiation. But there is another form of kenduri, larger in scale, which may specifically be called a propitiation rite. This propitiatory feast is locally known as *semah*. The size of a *kenduri* may extend from three to ten *sapra*, but the average is about six. I have mentioned the feasts at the beginning and end of fasting months. There are several other feasts which qualify as kenduri.

The feast of cutting the hair (*kenduri cukur*) is a rite of passage; it is normally performed when a child is between two weeks to two months. This feast is akin to another important rite of passage called *tepung tawar* (a ritual accompanying marriage ceremony). Basically, all the male guests take part in the *berzanji* or *zikir* prayer and part of the procedure is to chant in praise of God while standing. At this time the child is swaddled loosely and placed on a large pillow, is brought to each of the standing men to have a few wisps of its hair cut. Usually a pair of scissors is used to cutting the hair which is placed in a bowl of water carried on a tray. After at least seven persons have done so the baby is bought inside the house again. Food is then served to the guests seated cross-legged on the floor.

Kenduri besar is a Malay terms for a major domestic feast where the food may exceed 30 *sapra*; there should at least be ten *sapra* or forty people. Since it caters for a large number of people, careful preparatory organization is necessary. The specific areas of task allocation include the invitation of guests, the gathering of cooking and eating utensils, cooking rice, preparation of dishes, washing up plates, carriage of water from the well, serving the prepared foods in *sapra*, and arrangging them in the correct pattern in front of the guests. All these tasks need planning

and adequate manpower. Usually close neighbours and kinsmen are invited prior to the feast to make all the necessary preparations, especially for cooking. Many young girls are invited to help pound the spices, grate coconut, pulverise the chillies, chop onions, wash uncooked rice, and fetch water from the well. The actual cooking is normally done by older women because large scale cooking is not within the competence of young girls.

In general, ritual feasts express symbolically various forms of deeply internalized fears, anxieties and the persistent longing for safety from eternal damnation of immortal human souls in the hereafter. The weak and frail human souls, unable to resist other extra-human beings and powers, have to appeal to the highest power and submit completely to His will. Thus in their own way and based on their religious belief, they pay tribute to the Supreme Being in feasts and prayers.

Feasts and prayers are the empirical channels of communication with the symbolic world. They are also the idioms of expression of their feeling and thoughts concerning the symbolic world. Their welfare and happiness and that of the inhabitants of the symbolic worlds are mutually interlocked, so that they evaluate their actions in terms of the probably reactions of the superhuman beings. Thus the ritual feasts are the formal mediating institutions whereby human beings express social values towards themselves and the non-human world. For this reason too, ritual feasts embody not only the basic components of their complex believes but also their system of conceptual values; they are the meeting points for religious, magical/mystical and customary conceptions and observances.

Underlying all the religious efforts is the desire to gain the blessing of God through the accumulation of *pahala* (devine reward for being good). It is the cumulated *pahala* that will ensure a heavenly place in the hereafter. While most religious efforts have their material aspect, it would be logical to expect a direct correlation between other-wordly blessing and worldly material comfort. that is, only through worldly material comfort can the religious rites, celebrations and alms obligatory or voluntary) be fulfilled. This would subsequently reward the given more *pahala*. Yet in concrete action, this Calvinistic idea of the quest for worldly material comfort for the sake or other-worldly merit is generally absent. As a result, the religious idea of merit which can be a potent factor in economic well-being operates to lower material comfort.

It is also evident that there is a close parallel between 'Malays' idea of *pahala* with the 'Buddhists' and 'Hindus' idea of 'merit' even though the fundamental motivation is different. While *pahala* is directed towards achieving a heavenly bliss, Buddhistic or Hinduistic merit aims for a better state of existence in the cycle of *karma* (reincarnation), (cf. Note 12). It is not suggested that the quest for *pahala* is derived from Buddhistic or Hinduistic idea of merit, after all this idea of merit is widespread in most religions, yet in the Malay cultural experience such

a relationship may be possibly discovered.

CONCLUSION

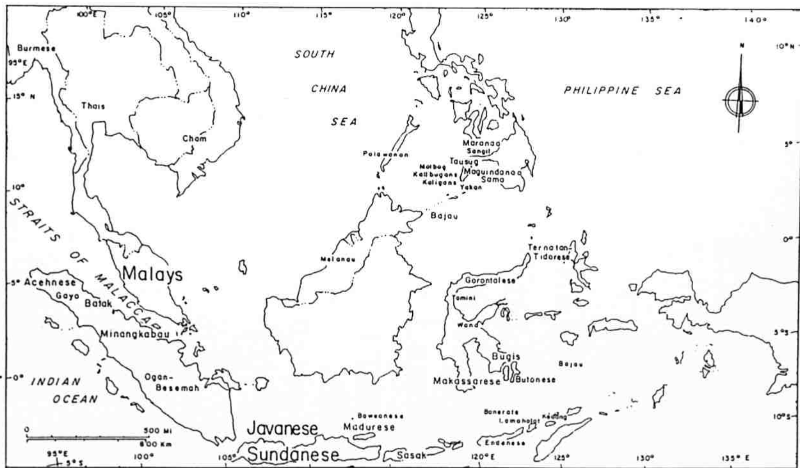
The chapter examined the social context of religious activities in the Malay society. Space limitation does not allow us to explore further the function of social stratification as a significant parameters for social expressions. Nonetheless, it is recognised that, in its traditional or modern form, is a significant social fact providing frame for the pattern of socio-religious activities. A certain degree of variation does exist in the pattern of social and cultural expressions of religious activities in the context of Malay traditional class system. At least a degree of elaboration of expressions and conseption is observable among the upper strata of modern and traditional Malay society, as compared to the lower stratum.

Social interaction for instance, with elaborate customary preparation, very often occur among high officials and the traditional elite. Rituals are carried out more formally and elaborately during various phases of life cycle. To that extent therefore, the class parameters differentiate patterns of social activities and expressions.

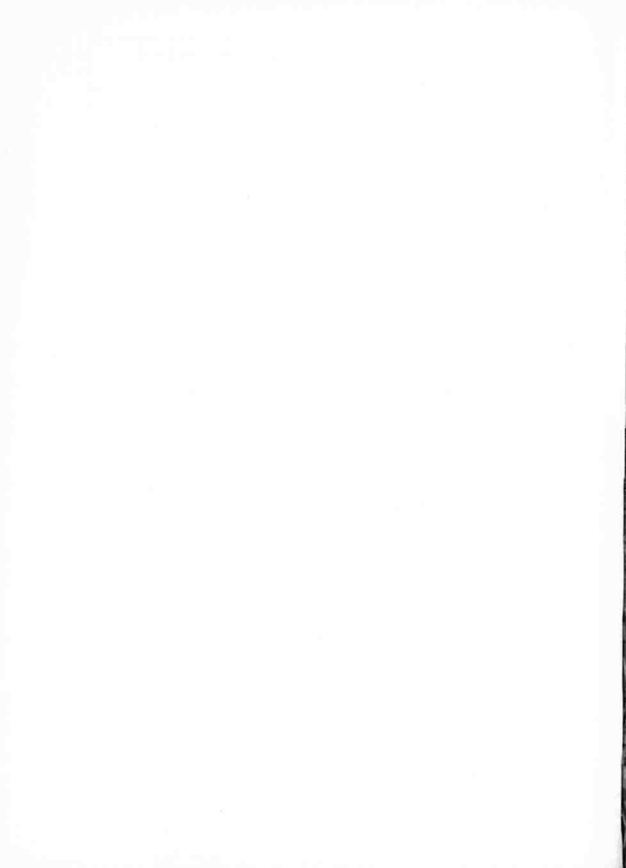
It must however be stressed that while the customary elaboration of socio-religious expressions may provide class markers in society, yet the fundermental Islamic premise remains the same. There is no class difference in terms of religious injunction for prayer, tithe payment or pilgrimage to Makkah. It is only in the *adat* or non-religious expressions that rituals are differentiated.

The Malay family and kinship system seemed to be impervious to Islamic (Arabic) social structure. The demand of specific social organization such as the *wali* institution lay stress on paternal line in the Malay kinship organization, yet the general structure does not undergo structural realignment. It remains bilateral in emphasis while accommodating Islamic social organization and institution such as *faraid* or power devolution.

The most significant observation however points to the strength of local cultural enviroment in determining the pattern of expressions of basic religious injunctions. Conventions and customary practices tranform religious rituals into indigenous cultural patterns to an extent that it provides identity to Malays *vis-a-vis* other religious and culture groups. Religious practices are too deeply embedded in the pattern of Malay culture that Islam and Malay have fused to be almost completely identified as a single cultural system.



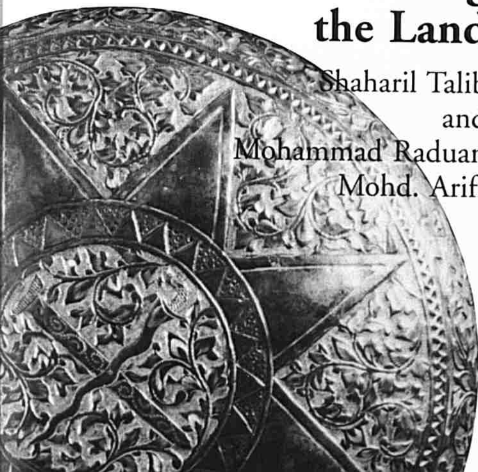
MAP 2 The distribution of ethnic groups.



Chapter 3

Economic Life: From Ruling the Waves to Toiling the Land

Shaharil Talib
and
Mohammad Raduan Mohd. Ariff



Chapter 3
Economic Life: From Ruling the Waves to Toiling the Land

INTRODUCTION

> "God made the land and the sea; the land He divided among men and the sea He gave in common. It is unheard of that anyone should be forbidden to sail the seas. If you seek to do that, you will take the bread from the mouths of my people."
>
> Sultan Ala'uddin, Makassar, 1615[1]

The Malay world as we define it, is essentially that geographical expressions that made up the thousands of islands in Southeast Asia that straddle on either side of the equator. The economic life of the region was set up and based on the resources of the many seas, straits and islands that made up the island Southeast Asia. The many seas, straits and islands of the Malay archipelago merged on its western boundaries with the Indian Ocean that washes the shores of the Indian subcontinent, the eastern shores of the African continent and the Arabian peninsula including the Red Sea. The eastern islands of the Malay world embraces the South China Sea. The sea hugs the long coastline of the southern portion of mainland China and extends into the Sea of Japan. The peoples and cultures of West, South and East Asia were carried

1 Cited in John Villiers, "Makassar: The Rise and Fall of an East Indonesian Maritime Trading State, 1512-1669", in J. Kathirithamby-Wells and John Villiers, 1990, (eds.), *The Southeast Asian Port and Polity*, Singapore, Singapore University Press, p. 154.

across these oceans by the Trade winds. The Arabs, Indians and the Chinese met the Malays in these islands.

The North-east and South-west monsoons carry ships and cargoes over long distances that forged intimate relationships between West, South and East Asia with the islands dominated by the Malay peoples. In broad economic terms there existed a clear division of labour between Asia, where the manufacturing centres were concentrated, and the resource based islands of Southeast Asia. It was mainland Asia that manufactured porcelain ware, brass ware, textiles and other commodities of trade. The region only manufactured these commodities on a larger scale much later. These commodities were transported throughout the centuries via the oceans, seas and the numerous straits into the thousands of islands. In exchange, these islands produced commodities that were exported to the Indian and China markets. Spices from the Spice islands were carried on a 1200-mile journey through the Java sea into the Riau islands and into the Straits of Melaka and thence onwards across the Indian Ocean. The Celebes and the Sulu seas were the centres of marine resources such as *Tripang* (the mother-of-pearl) and shark's fin that were extracted from the sea and carried across the South China sea for the Chinese markets. The tropical jungles of these islands, especially the island of Borneo provided a variety of tropical jungle produce and bird's nest that were also exported to the Chinese market. The east-west and north-south axis between the continents and the islands were the basis of economic life of the Malay world.

The settlement centres of the Malays on these islands were the coastal ribbon that encircled each island. There were of course exceptions in cases where intensive agriculture was practised when the inland areas were favoured. However, in all instances all routes led to the sea and all seas encircled the islands. The economic foundations of the island world set up political foundations that were specific to the islands. There were kingdoms that controlled strategic straits and thus dominated trade routes. There were settlements that were based on agriculture but the very nature of the island world had created access to the seas and trade. And there were those that thrived on the extraction of marine and forest produce for distant markets. The economic diversification of island Southeast Asia was not the *Kuala-hilir* axis and neither was it the plains against the hills. The economic axis is better explained in the context of the relationship of the seas and the islands.

The east-west trade via the Southeast Asia seas and islands existed before the Christian Era. The sea and land silk routes had brought traders from the west in search of precious commodities in China. Indian, Arab, Persian and European traders too participated in these long voyages. There were instances when these merchants would go to China for their trade needs and the Chinese merchants on the other hand would sail with their cargoes through the Straits of Melaka for India.

The emergence and spread of the Islamic civilization in Arabia and Persia had had a profound impact on the global trading network, including the islands of Southeast Asia. There were several markets where the merchants from the east and west could met to trade their goods. The history of island Southeast Asia after the fourteenth century circulated around the sphere of trade, statecraft and the spread of Islam. It was the Muslim merchants who dominated the extensive trade networks that stretched throughout the island world and seas that linked the east - west international trade route. They traded in small and large entrepots ruled by Sultanates. Arabs, Indians, Chinese and later Europeans merchants met in island Southeast Asia and traded their commodities which they brought from the distant lands for their distant markets.[2]

The Islamic Age of island Southeast Asia was not accomplished overnight. The making of the Islamic civilization in the archipelago was a long drawn process that streched over several centuries. K.N. Chaudhuri in his *longue duree* account of *Asia before Europe: Economy and Civilization of the Indian Ocean from the Rise of Islam to 1750* observed:

> "Serious conversions began at the leading commercial emporia of maritime Indonesia from the end of the thirteenth century and very slowly spread to the inland communities during the next two centuries. By the beginning of the seventeenth century Islam had turned into a major ideological and social force in the archipelago, though Malayan-Javanese social forms retained many features of the earlier identities..."[3]

Merchants from Basra and Siraf on the Persian Gulf in the ninth and tenth century supplied vessels, cargo and crew for trade in India, the Southeast Asian archipelago and China.[4] In the late thirteenth century Islam had made several beachheads on coastal India and set in motion the civilising role through seaborne commerce. By the early seventeenth century the Indian coastal ports of Surat, Coromandel, Madura and Bengal were the centres for Muslim merchants operating in three trading systems of the Middle East, South Asia and Southeast Asia. S. Arasaratnam noted in his 1971 *Inaugural Lecture* at the University of Malaya that:

> "Throughout the century, South and Southeast Asian traders carried on and even increased in strength. They faced the challenge of the 17th century even better and throve on competition. They were able to undersell European traders, crept into every nook and corner of

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2 Maznah Mohamad, 1989, "*The Malay Handloom Weavers: A Study of the Growth and Decline of Traditional Manufacture*", Ph.D. thesis, Department of Southeast Asian Studies, University of Malaya, pp. 61-71.

3 K.N. Chaudhuri, 1990, *Asia before Europe: Economy and Civilization of the Indian Ocean from the Rise of Islam to 1750*, London, Cambridge University Press, p. 61.

4 *Ibid.*

> the Asian trade and exploited it to the fullest. This was the great century of the inter-Asian trade with all regions showing increased turnovers. The rise successively of Acheh and Johor in the Straits of Melaka, the continuing and increased trade of Macassar, Grisek and Bantam, and the rise and fall of many other micro coastal kingdoms of Sumatra correspond closely to the movement of the Southeast Asian link in the inter-Asian trade in its efforts to break the Dutch strangle-hold. By the 1680's both the English and the Dutch were complaining bitterly that they could not compete against Asian traders who were flooding markets, underselling and moving about everywhere."[5]

The period from 1400–1940 saw the economic basis of Island Southeast Asia irrevocably shifted on several occasions. The fifteenth century continued to be the period of the domination of strategic sea routes; the extraction of marine and forest produce, and the cultivation of spice by the Malays for Asian markets. This was followed by the Islamic Era where trade and commerce had been extensive and the archipelago became the central market where traders from the east and west came to trade. In the more contemporary period the region had transformed into a land economy which catered for the European industrial products. The more recent watershed began in the mid-nineteenth century when the Chinese market collapsed and never again regained its former importance. Trade with industrial Europe first began with *gutta percha* that was collected from the tropical jungles. This was followed with the cultivation of tobacco, coffee, coconuts and the extraction of tin, in the twentieth century by rubber and oil palm. It was this transformation that had profound significance to the Malays and their economic life.

The Straits of Melaka, Sunda, Lombok and Banda, and the Sulu, Celebes, Java and the South China Seas are several distinct but inter-related zones that will be examined in this paper to illustrate the changing economic basis of the Malay world. The Straits of Melaka was an important artery that served the conduit in the east-west ocean bound trade. The collapse of the Melaka Empire in 1511 to the Portuguese merely saw a transfer of location of the Empire from Melaka to Johor Lama on the Southern tip of the Malay Peninsula. The Portuguese Empire at Melaka were never in a position to dominate completely the Straits of Melaka and the Asian trade markets remained firmly under the control of Muslim merchants and Sultanates. The successor of the Portuguese, the Dutch since 1641 were in the same predicament. In the seventeenth century the Sultanates of Acheh on the island of Sumatra and Kedah, Perak and Patani on the Malay Peninsula forged alliances to

5 Sinnappah Arasaratnam, 1972, *"Pre-Modern Commerce and Society in Southern Asia"*, Inaugural Lecture, Kuala Lumpur, University of Malaya, pp. 8–9. See also S. Arasaratnam, 1989, *"Islamic merchant communities of the Indian subcontinent in Southeast Asia"*, Sixth Sri Lanka Endowment Fund Lecture, Kuala Lumpur, University of Malaya.

control the northern entrance into the Straits of Melaka. At the turn of the next century the Kingdom of Johor Lama shifted its base and moved into the Riau-Lingga islands. The Bugis from the island of the Celebes had by this period moved into the Riau-Lingga Sultanate. They provided the army to protected the trading network of the Riau-Lingga kingdom. The Bugis from Luwu by about the middle of that century had established the Sultanate of Selangor on the west coast of the Malay peninsula facing the Straits of Melaka. The Minangkabau from the island of Sumatra had moved across the Straits of Melaka and settled on the west coast of the Malay Peninsula to form the federation of Negeri Sembilan. The central theme to note is that all these Malay Sultanates of the Malay Peninsula and those on the island of Sumatra participated in the trade that passed through the Straits of Melaka. Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula also provided to an extensive marine and jungle produce that was in demand. It was for the Chinese market that Britain established the ports of Penang (1786); Singapore (1819) and Melaka (1824). These three ports were located in the northern, central and southern entrance of the Straits of Melaka and it eventually formed the Straits Settlements.

In the Sulu Sea, the 18th century Sulu Sultanate set up on the island of Jolo had dominated vast territories. The basic economy of the Tausug Kingdom was the extraction of marine resources and forest produce for the Chinese market. The control of manpower for the extraction of resources and the control of the trading routes and networks were crucial for the Sultanates. The kingdoms expanded its economic potential either through the expansion of territories or the increase in manpower. The mid-18th century through the mid-nineteenth century was a period of intense economic activities as the Sultanate had increased its resource extraction for the Chinese market.

In many ways, mid-nineteenth century was a historical watershed in the Malay world. The Chinese market had collapsed because of domestic problems that had arisen in China. Britain who had participated in the trade with China desperately had to look for other resources that could serve the markets of industrial Europe. The first resource was *gutta percha* which was required for the insulation of underwater telegraph cables. Tin was also in demand in the European markets as the region industrialised. It was the cultivation of coffee and coconut that had shifted the earlier economic base from marine and jungle resources into a land based economy. The means of transportation of these commodities over the long distances too had changed from wind driven vessels to coal driven steam vessels. The control of the seas by the Malay kingdoms were challenged by the superior technology that resulted from the Industrial Revolution in Europe. It was towards the end of the 19th century that rubber was first cultivated for European markets and soon spread to cover vast inland areas of the main islands of Southeast Asia.

The shift from sea to land economies marked the marginalisation of

the Malay peoples. The periphery of the islands which were the centres of the island world were neglected as colonial powers developed an extensive infra-structures facilities to cater for the rapidly expanding agricultural sector which were located inland. This thrust continued well into the twentieth century and became the dominant pattern.

British interests in the Straits of Melaka moved rapidly onto the Malay Peninsula after the mid-19th century. In the 1870's Britain had secured her interests over the rich tin-bearing Sultanates of Perak, Selangor and Negeri Sembilan.[6] By the second decade of the next century Britain had won treaty engagements with the Malay Sultanates of Kedah, Perlis, Johor, Pahang, Terengganu and Kelantan. The expansion of rubber plantations and mining concerns spearheaded by Chinese, British and Japanese capital is a feature of that century. The production of commodities for European markets was dominated by non-Malay capital. The demographic and geographical distribution of the population in the Malay Peninsula had changed dramatically. New urban centres that had emerged had ecliped the older royal court trading centres. Ipoh and Taiping had overshadowed Kuala Kangsar in Perak. Kuantan replaced the royal town of Pekan in Pahang. Kuala Lumpur in Selangor superseded Kelang. The west coast of the Malay Peninsula became the centre of gravity for change eclipsing the east coast Malay Sultanates facing the South China Sea that had earlier participated in the China trade.

The Tausug dominated Sulu Sultanate was carved out by European powers. The Spanish took charge of her northern and eastern territories. Britain secured the eastern sea-board of the island of Borneo, while the Dutch eventually controlled the southern islands that once formed the vast and extensive Sulu Sultanate. On the island of Borneo, British interests had shifted from the east coast of Borneo to the northern shores facing the South China Sea extending through Brunei, Sabah and Sarawak. The Spanish in the Philippine islands concentrated on the main island of Luzon and the central islands that formed the Visayas. The once important island of Mindanao was neglected. The Dutch in the twentieth century concentrated its economic activities on the island of Java and Sumatra. The key island of the Celebes which housed the Bugis peoples had slipped into the backwaters. Its geo-political location was insignificant in the new age of industrial markets. Its geographical terrain was unsuitable for the industrialised agricultural commodities.

The Straits of Melaka in the 20th century became the centre of gravity for the islands of Southeast Asia. Javanese labour poured into either side of the Straits as wage labourers in the plantation sector or as small-holder settlers. The Banjarese from the southern shores of Borneo made their presence on the west coast of the Malay Peninsula and the

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6 Khoo Kay Kim, 1972. *The Western Malay States 1850-1873: The Effects of Commercial Development on Malay Politics*, Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press.

east coast of Sumatra as agricultural colonizers over padi fields. The Bugis continued to find their way into the Malay peninsula as they had done through the centuries. The Tausug were hardly discernible in the histories of the region.

It is against these historical background that the essay will emphasis in detail the processes of change and its significance on the eastern coast of the island of Borneo; the district of Batu Pahat on the west coast of the Malay Peninsular under the Sultanate of Johor; the Sultanates of Terengganu and Kelantan on the east coast facing the South China Sea, and the Sultanate of Makassar on the Celebes Sea.

THE SULU SEA[7]: THE SULTANATE OF SULU

In the mid-eighteenth century the Tausug had dominated the Sulu Sultanate which was located on the island of Jolo. The Sultanate had dominated the entire marine based economic resources of the vast Sulu sea and the jungle produce of the numerous islands surrounding its domain. The most significant of these islands were Borneo, especially its eastern coast, and the island of Mindanao. J. F. Warren noted that:

> "... in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries there existed in the zone comprising the Sulu archipelago, the northeast coast of Borneo, the foreland of southern Mindanao, and the western coast of Celebes a loosely integrated political system that embraced island and coastal populace, maritime, nomadic fishermen, and slash and burn agriculturalists of the coast rim and interior foothills. The zone provided a socio-cultural context for intersocietal relations and commerce with the Tausug state and beyond."[8]

There existed an ethnic division between the ruler and ruled in the Sulu Sultanate. The aristocrats were all Tausug. The subjects comprised of a vast groups of ethnic communities that lived on those islands. The core of these subjects were the Tausug farmers who planted hill padi and corn on Pulau Maimbung, Pulau Siasi and Pulau Tawi-Tawi on the Sulu archipelago. The majority of the inhabitants of the outer islands such as Pulau Sibutu were the Samals. They were also found living amongst the Tausug on the islands of the Sulu archipelago. The main island of Mindanao housed the ethnic communities of the Magindanao, Maranao, Sangil, and Yakan. They were centred at Cotabatu, Davao, Zamboanga and Lanao respectively. The Palawani group were from the

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7 The subject of Tausug dominated Sulu Sultanate and the China Trade was examined by Mohammad Raduan bin Mohd. Ariff, *"Dari Pemungutan Tripang ke Penundaan Udang: Satu Kajian Mengenai Sejarah Perkembangan Perusahaan Perikanan di Borneo Utara 1750-1990"*, Ph.D. thesis, Department of Southeast Asian Studies, University of Malaya, 1993.

8 J.F. Warren, 1981, *The Sulu Zone 1768-1898: The Dynamics of External Trade, Slavery, and Ethnicity in the Transformation of a Southeast Asian Maritime Trade*, Singapore, Singapore University Press, pg. xxi.

island of Palawan while Pulau Cagayan de Sulu and Pulau Balabac were the homes of the Jama Mapun and the Melebuganon peoples. The Brunei Malays of Borneo were also the subjects of the Sulu Sultanate. The Bajau boat dwelling peoples were nomadic and they were found throughout the Sulu sea.

The political structure of the Sulu sultanate covered vast regions of the archipelagic state. The Tausug Sultan was the highest political authority. He appointed *panglima* to each of the island. They were responsible for the administration of the appointed territories. In each of these territories were local powerful families led by *Datu* who enjoyed great prestige and authorities over their followers. The *Datu* were subordinate to the *panglima* but the more powerful *Datu* could advise the *Sultan* in council or *ruma bichara* on the island at Jolo.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the Sulu Sultanate had expanded its territorial boundaries. The process of expansion were through conquests, marriages and deference. In 1771 Sultan Mohammad Israel raided the coast of Marudu Bay with a fleet of 130 fighting vessels. The Brunei Sultanate were not able to withstand the superior naval power mounted by the Sulu Sultanate. Three years later the Sulu Sultanate despatched their Iranun warriors from the Sulu and Mindanao islands to raid the Brunei Sultanate. In 1780 the Iranun succeeded in establishing a foothold at Tempasuk, on the west coast of Borneo. The Sulu Sultan appointed his close relative, Sherif Usman as his representative to the Marudu Bay. Sherif Usman then married the sister of Datu Mohammad Buyo, the Raja Muda of Sulu. Consequently he controlled the Maruda Bay, Balabac and southern island of Palawan. Sherif Hussin, the grandson of Sherif Usman, married the daughter of the leader of Sungai Sugut and thus was able to extend the influence of the Sulu Sultanate up-river. In the nineteenth century the Tausug considered the Marudu Bay:

> "... to be the most fruitful, populous, and valuable district on all Borneo. The principal town, Sungai Besar, was strategically situated at the entrance of Marudu Bay. Neighbouring settlements with smaller populations were Bawengun, Tandik, Malasingin, Sipuni, Kudat, Tambalulan, Pamgilan and Malubang. These communities were inhabited by Muslim merchants and settlers who moved towards the coast from interior, attracted by the fish, tortoise shell, salt, cloth, porcelain, and metal utensils the Tausug offered in trade."[9]

On the south-eastern coast of Borneo were the major rivers of Sibuco, Sembakong, Bulungun and Berau. In these areas the dominant groups were the Kenyah-Kayan-Kayang, also referred to as Dayak, who were shifting cultivators. They were under the political control of the

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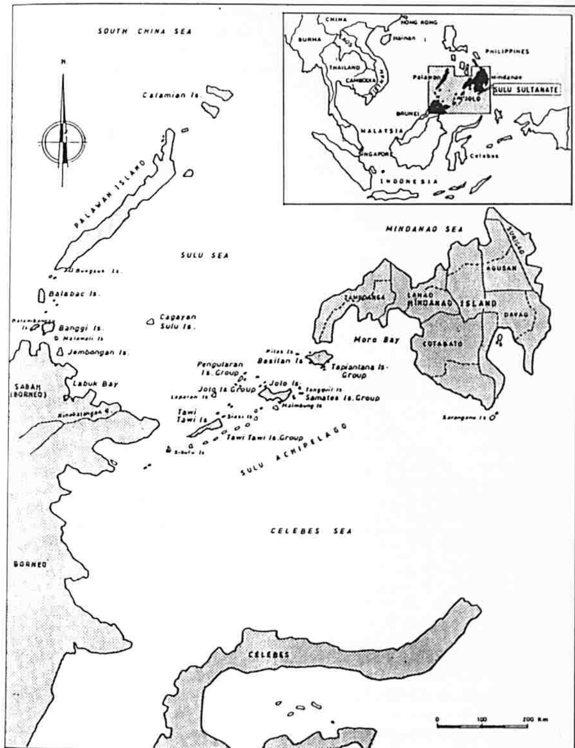
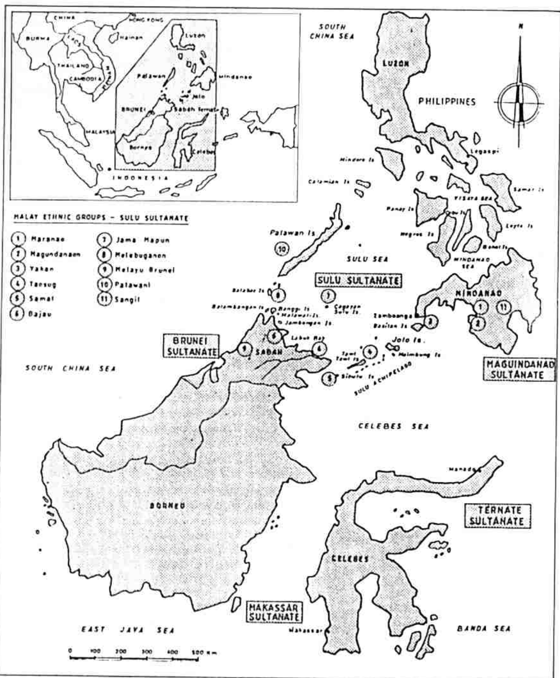
9 J. Hunt, 1837, "Some particulars relating to Sulo in the archipelago of Felicia", in *Notices of the Indian Archipelago and Adjacent countries*, ed. J.H. Moor, Singapore, p. 53.



MAP 3 The Sulu Empire in the 18th–19th Centuries.



MAP 4 The distribution of Malay ethnic groups of the Sulu Empire and the location of its neighbouring Malay Sultanates in the 18th–19th Centuries.

Tidung people who owed their loyalties to the Sulu Sultanate. The Tidungs acted as principals in the barter trade that existed between the Tausug aristocratic-merchants and the heterogeneous populations along the interior rivers.

The economic base of the Sulu Sultanate in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was predominantly the extraction of marine resources from the diverse marine ecology of the Sulu sea. The surrounding islands and territories were the resource base for forest produce, agriculture and minerals which were collected, cultivated and extracted for markets. There was also a distinct but small manufacturing base in the Sulu territories. The Tausug were the main traders of the Sulu Sultanate and tradings were their main source of income and wealth. The slave trade which was widely reported in these two centuries was a lucrative source of income. The trade was closely related to the needs for manpower in the extraction of raw materials.

The largest market for the produce from the Sulu sea was China. Arab traders had been trading in the Chinese market since the tenth century. The main commodity that was traded was marine produce. In addition, the islands of Borneo and Mindanao were the suppliers of forest produce, while those islands surrounding the Celebes Sea produced spices. The technology in the extraction and cultivation of these resources were backward and required huge manpower.

The Chinese food market imported *tripang* (beche-de-mer) and shark's fin while its manufacturing sector purchased pearls and tortoise shells. In 1835 a total of 10 000 *picul* of *tripang* were exported from Jolo to China. The collection of *tripang* and dredgers of pearls were undertaken mainly by the Bajau. The favourite areas for tripang extraction were the waters around the islands of Pangutaran, Panducan, Siasi, Tawi-Tawi, Maratuna and Sitangkai. The areas on the east coast of Borneo such as Sabahan, Teluk Sandakan and Tirun were popular sites too. There were over thirty varieties of *tripang* and each category could be graded as first, second or third class quality. The collection of *tripang* was done manually by hand and it was then processed by:

> "... washing, eviscerating by squeezing the animal if this has not already been done by spearing, boiling, rubbing off the hard shall-like outer skin with some abrasive substance like coral flowers, [and] drying either in the sun or over a smoke fire."[10]

Pearl from the Sulu sea had a very high reputation in the Chinese market. The Chinese used them in jewellery and cutlery. The oysters could be found in shallow muddy waters near estuaries or in waters further out at sea. The main islands for pearls were Laparan, Pangutaran, Pilas, Balabac, Parang, Maimbung, Tulayan and Maratua. There were

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10 David E. Sopher, 1965, *The Sea Nomads: A Study of the Maritime Boat People of Southeast Asia*, Singapore, National Museum Singapore, p. 246.

only two distinct periods for pearl diving. The first was in the month of December and the second between the months of February and May. The diving skills of these pearl divers were highly regarded:

"... The divers never use any expedient to facilitate their continuing under water, but drawing up their breath in the hollow of their hands; and even this scarce ever is practised by professed divers, who commonly go down in the depths of seven or eight to twelve or fifteen fathoms; but though a few can dive in 20 fathoms, that is to great a depth for the fishery. They swim to the bottom, tumbling when they first plunge into the water, and then making long strokes, get out of sight in three of four. They rise a considerable distance from the place where they go down, but this distance is merely accidental, from the direction they go along to the bottom, their fortune in finding shells, and the time the diver continues under water; they generally remain from one to two minutes, but in warm sunshine they can stay, perhaps longer."[11]

The hunt for shark's fin was carried out by using spears. Between five and six *lipa* manned by four fishermen each would move into the coral waters in search for their prey. They use *lembing* and *serampang* to spear their catch. The shark was then beaten to death before being dragged onto the *lipa* and its fin removed and salted or put out to dry.

There also existed a demand for forest produce from the Sulu islands in the Chinese market. The most precious commodity was bird's next. Other items that were also sought after were wax, camphor, rattan and clove bark. The limestone caves of Teluk Marudu, Labuk, Teluk Sandakan, Kinabatangan, Giong, Madai, Sahaban, Tidung, Sibuco, Sambakong, Sicatak and Berau were well known for their high quality bird's nest.

"The most valuable article was bird's nest, procured primarily from limestone caves on the east coast of Borneo. The tiny swallow nests were of two sorts. White nests were worth their weight in silver and a kati was sold for between twenty and twenty-five pesos or more. Sandakan nests and other off-colour varieties were of lesser value. Black bird's nest were inferior and commanded about one-tenth the price of white nests. In 1837 they were valued at between 200 and 250 *pesos* per *picul.* Bird's nest was sent exclusively to China, where it was esteemed both as a delicacy and as a medicinal broth."[12]

Bird's nest collecting in Kinabatangan lasted between February and June and the produce were divided amongst the men who procured them, their Sulu overlord and the Sultan.

Each territory in the Sulu Sultanate specialised in the production of

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11 Alexander Dalrymple, 1770, "Account of Some Natural Curiosities at Sooloo", in *An Historical Collection of the Several Voyages and Discoveries in the South Pacific Ocean*, Vol. 1, London, p. 1.

12 J. F. Warren, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

certain products for the markets. Camphor was available at Teluk Marudu, Teluk Sandakan, Sabahan, Tidung and Berau. However, Paitun was popular for its camphor in the Chinese market. The hill slopes near the Paitan river were forested with camphor trees. The Tausug traders in 1814 traded a bamboo of camphor for a bamboo of salt. The Paitan river was also used to trade rattan, clove bark and rice.

Beeswax was available in Teluk Marudu, Paitan, Sugut, Labuk, Teluk Sandakan, Kinabatangan, Sabahan, Tidung, Sibuco and Berau. In Kutai, beeswax was brought down by the Dayaks in large quantities. In 1828 the Dayak had traded 1735 *piculs* and had in its store a further 1430 *piculs* with another 1000 more expected to be brought down.

The Tausug peoples of the Sulu archipelago were not self-sufficient in rice. The islands of Jolo, Pata, Tapul and Siassi cultivated hill paddy. In 1761 its annual rice production was between 15 000 and 20 000 *piculs*. The rice shortage was supplemented by imports from the surrounding rice basins. The supplies came from Manila, the northeastern coast of Borneo, Cotabato basin, Palawan, Basilan, Cagayan de Sulu, Zamboanga and the southern Visayas.

The most important product of the Sulu sea was salt. It was used for the preservation of *tripang* and shark's fin since the journey to China took almost a month. The manufacturing of salt was monopolised by the Tausug on the islands of Balangingi and Tunki and the surrounding areas of Marudu Bay. The labour force for the processing of salt were made up of the Samal, Samal Bajau Laut and Kalibungan. The production of salt was tedious:

> "They cut down a quantity of wood always near the sea side, and rear over it sort of shed, of the leaves of trees of the palm kind, such as the sago, the nipa, or others. This pile is then set on fire, but as any flames issues, they throw on salt water, to check it. In this manner they will continue, till the wood be consumed, there remaining a quantity of ashes strongly impregnated with salt... These ashes they put into conical baskets, point downwards; and pour on fresh water, which carries off salt into a trough. The lye (residue) is then put into earthen pot, and boiled till it becomes a lump of salt, [and] sometimes salt in powder. They often burn in this manner seaweed, of which the ashes make a bitter kind of salt."[13]

The control over salt production provided the Tausug trader with the most valuable commodity that would be exchanged for paddy, bird's nests, beeswax, camphor and other forest produce.

Every year during the period between March and September, Chinese traders from mainland China would sail to the Sulu Sea and return before the north-east monsoon begun in September. It was

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13 Thomas Forrest 1779, *A Voyage to New Guinea and the Moluccas from Balambangan: Including an Account of Magindano, Sooloo and other Islands*, London, G. Scott, p. 221.

reported that in the mid eighteenth century as many as 200 large junks with a carrying capacity of between 200 and 465 tons and over 1000 smaller junks would leave the shores of mainland China for the Sulu sea. They would travel to the port of Manila, Panay island and the Visayas before arriving at Jolo. These junks carried:

> "Lacquered ware, porcelain, earthenware, and other articles from the celestial kingdom were exchanged for such culinary delicacies as beche-de-mer, shark's fin, and bird's nest. Rice, for which was always a ready demand in the Sulu market, was also taken on in the islands."[14]

The centre of market economy was the port of Jolo on the island of Maimbong where all trade were transacted. The Tausug merchant-aristocrat controlled the *Ruma Bichara* where all transaction were made. They imposed import taxes and advanced credit to these merchants. The cargoes unloaded were contracted in the previous year and were sold at trade centres rented from the Tausug merchant-aristocrat. Part of the cargoes were retained on board the junks where on a daily basis other Tausug merchants from the outer islands would purchase them. On the return journey these junks would carry from the port of Jolo:

> "Return cargoes embraced an incredible variety of marine and forest products as well as craft goods of the Sultanate and neighbouring realms. The principle items were pearls, mother of pearls, tortoise shell, seaweed, and precious shells from the Sulu archipelago, edible nests, beeswax, and camphor from Borneo's east coast, and pepper, clove bark, betel nut, and lumber from Basilan and Mindanao."[15]

The profit made from those Chinese traders were enormous. The goods that they brought with them from China and those that they sold in China were highly priced. Thomas Forrest in 1776 noted:

> "Manufactured wares, particularly hardware, were costly, although the seemingly high price of natural produce in Sulu enabled the Tausug to purchase such articles readily. Small cast-irons bars, frying pans, cooking vessels, household utensils, and brass ware realized a gain of 90 to 100 per cent. Underglaze blue on white and grey porcelain crockery, the bulk of the cargo, sold at double their cost in China and yielded the highest returns, owing to their sheer volume. The advantages to be earned on the return cargo were generally even greater. Although small in bulk, high quality products such as bird's nest and beeswax realized a profit of 90 to 100 per cent were sold. Mother of pearl, used in the manufacture of beads, furniture, and fans, was marketed in China for nearly three times the original price in Sulu. Homeward bound junks carried cargoes estimated at between 60 000 and 80 000 Spanish dollars. The net profit derived

14 J.F. Warren, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

15 Thomas Forrest, *op. cit.*, p. 325.

on this freight when unloaded at China's southern ports could be double the original investment. Hunt claimed that if only one out of three junks managed a safe return nothing was lost."[16]

In the regions south of the port of Jolo the Bugis traders brought *tripang*, shark's fin, rattan, sandalwood and spices from Sulawesi, New Guinea and the ports of Pasir and Samarinda on southern Borneo. Prior to 1760 it was estimated that between 14 and 15 Bugis *paduakan* (vessels) would sailed to the port of Jolo which served as an emporium for the Sulu sea. They came to trade with the European and Chinese traders the much needed firearms and gunpowder. Bugis traders also frequented the European ports of Batavia, Melaka and Penang where they barter traded their goods for muskets and gunpowder. The last two articles were traded with other Tausug merchants operating in the outer reaches of the Sulu Sultanate.

The Bugis and Chinese merchants only traded at the port of Jolo. Any attempt to violate this monopoly within the territories of the Sulu Sultanate would lead to immediate retaliation. Vessels would be seized, goods confiscated and the traders held prisoners. Tausug merchants, on the other hand, had free excess to the Bugis ports such as Ternate and Menado.

The arrival of British traders to the Sulu seas was because of their search for commodities that could be traded in the Chinese market in exchange for Chinese tea that was highly valued in Europe. The goods brought by the British merchants such as opium had little impact on the Chinese market. They sold opium, gunpowder and muskets at Jolo in exchange for produce from the Sulu territories which they carried with them to the ports of China to purchase the much sought after Chinese tea. Towards the end of the eighteenth century there developed local markets in the Sulu sea for British manufactured goods such as:

"Bengal chintz, white cloth, palempores, any coarse piece of goods of India, opium, cutlery of the cheap kinds, knives, scissors, razors, small looking glasses, spy-glasses for day and night, perfumes, essence of lavender, essence of lemon, curious toys, and a few fine goods."[17]

The pattern of trade along the north-south axis between Sulu and China continued well beyond the mid-nineteenth century. Even the presence of Singapore in the early nineteenth century was to complement the existing trade pattern and not to rival it. British traders would depart for Sulu from Singapore and transported products from Sulu to the Chinese markets and then return to Singapore with Chinese products. Bugis and other traders would come at Singapore with their goods from the Sulu seas have it shipped to China by other traders. In the eighteenth and for much of the nineteenth centuries the centre of

16 *Ibid.*, p. 324.
17 J.F. Warren, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

inter-island, regional and international trade was the Sulu sea. This was the period when the Sulu Sultanate was at its peak. It had embraced Islam since the fifteenth century but only gained pre-eminence with the expansion of the China trade two centuries later. The first ruler, Sherif-ul-Hashim was an Arab trader who married the daughter of the Tausug Jolo chief and elevated to the position of Sultan. He reigned as *Paduka Mahasari Maulana As-Sultan Sharif-ul-Hashim* and all succeeding Sultan came from this Tausug line of descent. All the Tausug aristocrat had kept in their family possession a family tree or *tarsilah* which could trace their descendents back to the first Sultan of Sulu.

The Sultan in the political hierarchy was the highest authority. He was the spiritual head and *imam* of the community. In the eyes of his subjects he was the descendent of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. and held the title of *Amir-ul-Muminin* (Commander of the Faithful). The Sultanate collected all the *zakat* and other fees that were imposed on marriages, birth, death, divorce and grains. The larger portion of these collection went to the Sultan and the balance were used to pay the wages of the religious officials.

It was the marine economy that allowed for the expansion of Islam. The climax was in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when the trade with China reached its peak and the Sultanate labour force reached its maximum. The Islamic Tausug which were based at Jolo had mobilised the human resources from the Islamic world for the extraction of marine resources and collection of jungle produce. The intense recruitment and search of manpower has often been labelled as "slave-raiding" by scholars. However, the perception of these "captives" of their "captors" could be explained in different terms. The *banyaga* were attached to the household of a Tausug aristocrat-merchant. In terms of social standings, the larger the number of *banyaga* under his care the higher will be his social status. The *banyaga* provided the labour force needed by the Tausug aristocrat.

> "Slaves were valuable; both economically and politically. They formed his private army, and no *datu* went out unaccompanied by a group of armed retainers. They were the nurses of his children and the servants in his home. They rowed his boats, cultivated his land, and collected the merchandise - birds, *tripang* and pearls which he used for trading. All in all, they brought him wealth which determined his ability to accumulate more retainers."[18]

The *banyaga* could lead a normal family life and own property and was accorded certain rights and privileges like the other members of the Tausug community. They were brought to the Islamic world as labourers from the Visayas, Luzon, Mindanao, Celebes and Borneo islands and

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18 Anne Lindsey Reber, 1996, "The Sulu World in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries: A Historical Problem in British Writings on Malay Piracy", M.A. thesis, Cornell University, p. 52.

even as far away as the mainland of Southeast Asia. The most able of these *banyaga* were allowed to carry out trade transactions on behalf of their masters. In the 1830's they were transfered to the islands of Balagingi and Palawan from Jolo.

> "The most intelligent of them are picked out as traders and perform long journeys sometimes of months duration, trading to different ports without ever thinking of running away. Many of these slaves amass considerable sums of money and have houses and belongings even finer than their masters...."[19]

Female *banyaga* also participated in trade. In 1834 an American sailor described:

> "... the boats of slave vendors at Siassi as being full of 'poultry, eggs, coconuts, bananas, turtles, monkeys and parrots'. *Banyaga* were instructed to barter a specified minimum amount of produce by evening. They accepted only cups and saucers, scissors, buttons, nails, empty bottles, tobacco, and opium as trade items from European sailors. Slave hawkers were an important source of wealth to their mistresses. It was at the same time an attractive and profitable way of life for many...."[20]

The *banyaga* would attained the status of commoners when they embraced Islam. They would acquired full rights as members of the Islamic community and often continued to be attached to the household of his former Tausug master.

The *Kiapangdilihan* were another group of labour force that served the Tausug aristocrat-merchant. They were members of the Islamic community who could not repay their debts and found guilty of crimes such as theft and adultery (*zina*). They lost their privileges as full members of the community and served their sentences by providing labour until they could redeem their debts. The *Kiapangdilihan* was yet another important source of manpower for the maritime based Sulu Sultanate. It also served as a social sanction against those who deviated from the Islamic teachings and rules and regulations of the Sultanate. The Sultan usually administered the punishment.

The maritime Islamic Sulu Sultanate was challenged by the Christian European powers in the mid-nineteenth century. These powers from the industrialised European nations used their superior technology ruthlessly in several critical sea-battles. Their eventual victory over the maritime Sulu Sultanate marked a significant turning-point in the economy of the Islamic world of the Sulu sea. The former territories of the Sulu Sultanate were divided amongst the Spanish, Dutch and British. These colonial powers set up new land based economy to serve industrial Europe. The islands and the muslims of the Sulu sea which

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19 J.F. Warren, *op. cit.*, pp. 215-229.
20 *Ibid.*, p. 221.

were once the centre of economic activities dropped to the background of the colonial economy. Land economy based on plantations, mining and logging were then introduced. The needs of manpower were met by the non-Muslim immigrants from mainland Asia. By the twentieth century the Sultanate that was once powerful had dropped to the background and the islands that were at one time weak had now became powerful.

In the mid-nineteenth century, the Spanish who had established itself on the island of Luzon surrounded, attacked and eventually conquered the Sulu Sultanate. In 1848 they destroyed the Sulu naval base that made up of the Samal fighting men on the island of Balangingi. Three years later they were defeated the Sulu Sultanate at Jolo. Trade were diverted to the port of Zamboanga. The Tausug aristocrat-merchants were forced to move their trading activities to other islands such as Labuan and Sandakan at Magindora Bay. In 1871 the Spanish destroyed the Samal fighters at Tawi-Tawi and the capital of Jolo was placed under a naval blockade. The consequences were devastating as Sulu's lifeline was threatened:

> "When the blockade was first established, there was a severe rice shortage in Sulu, since the Tausug had previously concentrated their activities and labour in the fisheries, and most of their paddy was imported and paid for with *tripang* and mother of pearl shell. In their extreme need, a basket of pearl shell worth about $M50 was exchanged for a bag a seed paddy worth about one-tenth that sum, and when mother of pearl shell were sold for as much as $250 per ton at Singapore in the 1870s, the return cargo of Straits vessels were often composed of little else. For Sulu, whose fate was tied to the international economy of Singapore, it was a cruel sort of trade. Cruising made it impossible for many communities to fish for pearl shell and gathering *tripang* on the reefs except at the risk of their lives; yet Straits traders insisted on being paid in it. The Sultan took a defiant stance against the Spanish pretences by issuing hundreds of passes for the procurement of shell to armed *prahus*. To Sulu, pearl shell became the mainstay of commercial activity with the Straits traders. Upon it depended the survival of the state."[21]

In 1876 when the blockade was finally lifted the Sulu Sultanate was already crippled. The economic domination of the Tausug aristocrat-merchant was shattered. The muslims merchants were never again to regain its pre-eminence in the Sulu sea. In their place:

> "[The] Chinese have complete control of the trade of the Sulu Archipelago. They are found everywhere and command all avenues of commerce. The Sulus [Tausug] have abandoned commerce as a trade and apparently have no inclination to resume it on a large scale. This

21 *Ibid.*, p. 121.

is due to the decline of their power and the present abeyance of their national life."[22]

In 1877 the Sulu Sultanate made an effort to counter the strength of the Spanish. The Sultan ceded the territories that made the entire east coast of Borneo to Baron Gustav von Overbeck and Alfred Dent for an annual payment of $15 000. They purchased in the following year from the Sultan of Brunei the area that stretched from Gaya Bay on the west coast to the Sibuco River on the east. In addition they obtained a grant of territories from the Pengeran Tumonggong Brunei that included the rivers of Kimanis and Benoni. In 1881 Baron Gustav von Overbeck and Alfred Dent sold their concessions to the British North Borneo Charted Company which opened a new era of economic opportunities based on capitalism on mainland Borneo. Profits were extracted from mining, agriculture and logging.

In the period 1881–1941 the Chartered North Borneo Company built an economy that catered for the industrial needs of Europe. The markets in China paled into insignificance. In the sixty-year period it was the agricultural sector that became the backbone of the economy of British North Borneo. It started with tobacco cultivation in 1884 catering for London and Amsterdam markets. In 1889 there were 78 companies which exported tobacco to the value of 400 pounds and three years later it increased to 100 000 pounds. In 1903 the tobacco industry reached its height with an export value of over $12 million. The main centres of cultivation were along the river banks of Labuk, Sugut, Segama and Kinabatangan at Lahat Datu, Tawau and Sandakan. However, the fall in market price, diseases and flooding forced investors to close down their operations. In 1910 there were only 12 tobacco estates that remained and twenty years later only one company braved on.

The dollar earner of the twentieth century was rubber that catered for Europe's industrialisation. The first rubber estate was planted at Tenom in 1892. It covered 75 acres. Twenty-five years' rubber was cultivated on 34 825 acres and 2444 tons were exported in that year. On the eve of the Japanese occupation 96 037 acres were cultivated with rubber. The majority of these estates were located on the foothills of the west coast of British North Borneo. Smaller areas of rubber cultivation were also found at Sandakan and Tawau. The main capital investors in the rubber plantation sector were Europeans and Chinese.

The jungles of Borneo were once a rich economic resource base for the China market. The inland jungle produce collectors traded rattan, gutta-percha, damar, tannin bark, beeswax and bird's nests with the Tausug aristocrat-merchants. This trade diminished in significance in

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22 Najeeb M. Saleeby, 1993, *The History of Sulu*, Manila, Filipiniana Book Guild, p. 21.

the twentieth century. In its place logging for timber became the second most important industry after rubber. In the period of thirty years from 1890–1920 the export value of timber increased twelve fold from $44 548 to $642 935. In 1930 it registered $2.5 million in export value. Timber emerged as the mainstay of the British North Borneo economy after World War Two. The largest investors in this sector were British capitalists. The port of Sandakan which was once the trading centre for jungle produce emerged as the third largest timber port in the world in 1941.

The demographic pattern of the interior territories that were once part of the Sulu Sultanate changed dramatically under the British North Borneo Company. In 1891 the first population census showed that the total population of British North Borneo was 67 062. The Muslim population comprising of Bajau, Sulu and Melayu Brunei constituted 27.93% of that total. They were located at the coastal districts of Darvel Bay, Marudu Bay, Abai, Tampassuk, Pendassan, Putatan, Papar and Kimanis. Scattered all over in the interior regions beyond the coastal strip were the Dusun, Murut, Kedayan and Bisayah that formed 51.39%. Their economy centred around jungle produce collection and their beliefs were Animism. The dynamic expansion of Islam was the continuous interaction between these jungle collectors and the dominant Muslim Tausug aristocrat-merchants.

The most significant entry into the demographic pattern of British North Borneo was the presence of 7156 Asian mainland Chinese settlers who constituted 10.67% of the total population. The early settlers were merchants who concentrated in the main trading centres of Kinabatangan, Sandakan and Kudat. These merchants only traded directly in Borneo markets after the collapse of the Sulu Sultanate.

The population density of British North Borneo in 1891 was as low as 2.2 persons per square mile. Only 5% of the total land surface of 29 388 was cultivated. The balance was in the natural state. It was estimated that a population of a million was required to sustain the mining, plantation and timber economy. In 1881 Sir Walter Medhurst, Commissioner for Chinese Immigration, made the first attempt to recruit Chinese immigrants from mainland China. In the tobacco period of the economy estates were encouraged to recruit directly from the Asian mainland. The British North Borneo Company made special provisions for migrants to establish homesteads. In 1887 Governor Treacher issued a Notice that allowed:

> "... each men will be given one acre and each women one acre, and each child, whether a boy or girl, under sixteen years of age half an acre... After the land has been selected and planting begun the Government will give a return lease for each lot which will endure for 999 years that is practically for ever and all that the owners will have to do will pay to the Government the small sum of ten cents a year for each acre they hold and five cents for each half acre.... If any

Farmer or Gardener wishes to have more than one acre of Land he will be able to buy up to five acres from Government at fifty cents per acre as the Government wish to see Chinese settled in the country."[23]

The Chinese arrived under extremely impoverished conditions from China and Singapore. In 1911 the number of Chinese increased from 7156 to 27 801 over a twenty year period and in the next twenty years they reached the number 50 056. In 1931 they constituted 18.04% of the total population of 277 476. The Chinese settlers pioneered the rubber belt beyond the coastal village settlements. The rubber belt of estates and small-holdings were serviced by roads, rails and telegraphs which linked estate towns to ports. It was in these urban complexes of bricks and mortars that facilities such as shop houses, municipal markets, hospitals, entertainment centres, government offices, church and missionary schools dominated the urban morphology. It was alien to the culture of the Muslim coastal dwellers who formed 27.64% of the total population. Further inland, beyond the rubber belt, were the non-Muslim Kadazans and Muruts who formed in 1931, 39.81% and 8.81% respectively of the total population. The land economy drove a wedge between the coastal peoples and their inland kindred stock.

The Chinese merchants dominated virtually all aspects of trade in the market economy. They were the rubber and rice wholesalers, sundry shop retailers, diesel licensed transport operators, food suppliers, timber and fish exporters, salt importers, medicine sellers, cloth merchants and a whole host of other services. Their mercantile activities were supported by credit institutions operated by Chinese bankers. They formed Chambers of Commerce and Associations which looked after their trade interests. These institutions lobbied the government to further their concerns.

The British North Borneo for administrative purposes was divided into five Residencies which included the West Coast Residency, Kudat Residency, Tawau Residency, Interior Residency and East Coast Residency. Each Residency was administered by a District Officer or a Magistrate in Charge.

"The District Officer was many professionals rolled into one. He was the District Magistrate, the Protector of Labour, Collector of Revenue, District Treasurer, the local executive officer of every department. His staff consisted of an Assistant District Officer and two clerks doing court work and revenue collecting."[24]

The general Chinese population were placed under the direct charge of the Superintendent of Chinese Protectorate who was a British official. The affairs of the various ethnic communities that peopled British North

23 *British North Borneo, Official Gazette*, 1 May 1887, p. 114.

24 Cecilia Leong, 1982, *Sabah the First 100 Years*, Kuala Lumpur: Percetakan Nan Yang Muda Sdn. Bhd., p. 55.

Borneo were entrusted to government appointed and employed *Ketua Anak Negeri* (Native Chiefs) whose duties included the general peace and harmony of the villages, collecting taxes and the administration of justice. They were provided with uniforms and badges which gave them all the symbols of authority and status that impressed their village people. These local leaders replaced the Tausug styled leadership with its *banyaga* followers and trading spirit. The peoples of Borneo were tamed to serve the food needs of inland markets that were built around the Asian migrant labour force in mines, estates and timber felling.

The marine resources that once supported the extensive territories of the Sulu Sultanate was throttled. The coastal dwellers either switched to food cultivation or continued to eke out their living in the newly developing fishing sector. Dried and salted fish were supplied as food for the labour markets. Even in this sector the Chinese traders wrested control. They financed the boat and equipment that was required for fishing, advanced credit, controlled processing of dried and salt fish, and monopolised the domestic and international markets. In 1962 F.G. Whelan in his book entitled *Our Land* captured the new realities with the observation:

> "All round the coast of Sabah are villages where the people live by fishing. The seas which wash the shores of our land contain many fish. The fish make good food for the people. From Sipitang to Papar the fishermen are Bruneis. From Papar to Marudu Bay they are Bajaus, and from Marudu Bay to Tawau the fishing people are Bajaus, Suluks and Tidongs. There are Chinese fishermen, who own large fishing junks and work further out into the deep waters than the native fishermen."[25]

THE STRAITS OF MELAKA: THE SULTANATE OF JOHOR

The Straits of Melaka is an extremely strategic straits that controlled the movement of vessels and trade between East and West. The Islamization of the kingdoms that straddled both sides of the straits had begun as early as the thirteenth century and rapidly reached its grandest in the fifteenth century when the Melaka empire dominated vast territories of the Malay peninsula and the island of Sumatra. The conquest of Melaka in 1511 merely shifted the royal capital to Johor Lama at the southern tip of the Malay peninsula. In the next two centuries Malay-Muslim traders competed and in fact had a larger portion of trade than those of their Portuguese-Christian and later Dutch-Christian (1641) counterparts. The Johor Lama Sultanate, which was the successor to Melaka, continued to control all the strategic trade routes coming and leaving the Straits of Melaka from the southern entrance. In 1699 internal palace events disrupted the political stability of the Sultanate. There was a

25 F.G. Whelan, 1962, *Our Land*, Hong Kong: Borneo Literature Bureau, p. 50.

serious succession dispute which resulted in the powerful *Orang Laut* (sea-people) who were the backbone of the Sultanate to desert their masters.[26]

The Johor Lama sultanate survived the crises by being propped by the successful Bugis of Sulawesi fighting strength who thwarted the attempt by the Minangkabau of Sumatra to assert influence on the Sultanate. The Johor Lama Sultanate shifted its capital to the Riau-Lingga islands and from here it continued to dominate the trade network and were supported by the skilful Bugis traders, seamen, naval strength and court officials. The period of the Johore-Riau-Lingga Sultanate from 1700–1800 was a great period of Islamic rejuvenation and energy. Much of the literary and religious texts were written in the Malay language.

The Sultan was located on the island of Lingga. The Bugis Yam Tuan was on the island of Riau and the *Temenggong* held sway over the Karimum islands on the Straits of Melaka, the group of islands that made Singapore, Tioman island on the east coast of Johor, and the Natunas, Anambas and Tembilan islands in the South China Sea off Borneo and the hinterland of Johor. The *Bendahara* of the Johore-Riau-Lingga Sultanate domain was over the territories of Pahang. These four distinct families related through marriages controlled the resources of the southern portion of the Malay Peninsula, the trade that passed through the Straits of Melaka and had links with the Bugis that took them further east through the Java Sea into the Sulawesi island and beyond.

It was at the turn of the nineteenth century that another internal strife that broke the Sultanate yet again. This time it was a question of succession between two brothers Tengku Hussein and Tengku Abdul Rahman with the British and Dutch supporting their favourites. The Dutch supported the Bugis backed younger brother, Tengku Abdul Rahman and installed him as the ruler of Johore-Riau-Lingga. The British installed Tengku Hussein as ruler of Singapore and won the support of the powerful *Temenggong* of Johore-Riau-Lingga, Tengku Abdul Rahman. In 1824 the two rulers ceded the island of Singapore and all islands, straits and seas within a ten-mile radius to the British. The Dutch and British through the earlier 17 March 1824 Anglo-Dutch Treaty mutually recognised their spheres of influence on the Straits of Melaka, Straits of Singapore and the South China Sea. It was within the newly created political and economic constraints that the Sultan of Singapore and the *Temenggong* of Johor attempted to keep their control over resources, manpower and trade.

The next one hundred years is the story of institution building by the *Temenggong* of Johor who transformed his status from *Temenggong* to *Sri Maharaja* and eventually to Sultan and shifted his location from the

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26 L.Y. Andaya, 1975, *The Kingdom of Johor 1641–1728: Economic and Political Developments*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press.

island of Singapore to his new capital at Tanjung Putri on the mainland. It was also the period of the demise of the Sultan of Singapore who shifted his capital to Muar and his line fell out after the death of his son in 1877. This was also the period when the economic base of the *Temenggong* of Johor moved from the control of the seas to that of land based resources. The latter proceeded from jungle produce, *gutta percha* in the mid-nineteenth century to cultivation of coconut and areca nut, and pepper and gambier. The second half of the nineteenth century was also the period when the *Temenggong* summoned his followers from his extensive islands to settle on the Johor mainland. It was a period of pioneering settlers who were led by headmen loyal to the *Temenggong*. This was also the period of a substantial shift in trade patterns from that of a China and eastern trade to that of a growing western trade that linked the peninsula to the port of Singapore and European markets. The detailed study of one district in the Kingdom of Johor the district of Batu Pahat will illustrate the major economic changes that the mainland was experiencing and the social consequences it unleashed.[27]

The District of Batu Pahat covered an area of 954 square miles or 610 000 acres of peaty and swampy lands. In the early eighteenth century Dutch reports counted between 10 and 12 houses on the main river draining the district. It was only in 1811 that the *Temenggong* Abdul Rahman of Johor (1806-25) showed indications of extending his control over the district. He sent his trusted Bugis strongman, Daeng Ahmad to secure the southern entrance on the Straits of Melaka into the kingdom of Johor. A village was established at Minyak Beku and Daeng Ahmad was appointed the first *Orang Kaya Setia* of the district. In the subsequent decades the *Temenggong* of Johor sent other chiefs from island Southeast Asia to establish their stations in the district. They were Bugis from the island of Sulawesi or later generation Bugis from the islands of Riau-Lingga, Banjarese from the south side of the island of Borneo on Banjamassin and Javanese from the eastern portion of the island of Java. The early settlers were supporters of the *Temenggong* and lived off trade between the collectors of forest produce and the merchants that plied the Straits of Melaka with Singapore. The *Temenggong's* representative over the forest gathers were known as *Bentara* or the *Manki Pimanggan of Boko*. They were holders of monopolies on jungle produce which they carried to Singapore and brought back cloth, earthen-ware, *parangs*, iron, sugar, coconuts and rice to these forest dwellers. The profits they made from transactions were extremely lucrative.

In these the first fifty years of the nineteenth century there developed all along the coastline of the district and inland along the

27 Shaharil Talib, 1993. "Global History at the Local Level: Batu Pahat District, Johor, 1900-1941", Department of Southeast Asian Studies, University of Malaya. (Unpublished manuscript).

main river and its tributaries a system of headmen who were appointed by the *Temenggong*. These *penghulu* were commissioned by the *Temenggong* and their posts were often inherited by their sons. The sons and daughters of these headmen married into each other's family and dominated the main strongholds of the district. The Sultan of Singapore too appointed chiefs to the district on the Simpang Kanan and Simpang Kiri rivers. They were brought in from Pahang and the island of Daik. However, his influence in the district was overwhelmed by the *Temenggong*. The second generation of the Sultan appointed *penghulu* who pledged loyalty to the *Temenggong* after Sultan Ali in 1855 ceded his full sovereignty to the *Temenggong* family and settled for the district of Muar as his newly installed kingdom.

The second half of the nineteenth century witnessed a major transformation in the economic base of the district. Trade in the district shifted from jungle produce to agriculture. Capital and labour were organised for commodity production and trade. The number of *penghulu* increased as the *Temenggong* used his influence over his former territories to marshall in settlers. The *penghulu* arrived with their *anak buah* (followers) to pioneer the peat and swampy coastal marshlands. An extensive drainage system was built draining the swamp lands for the cultivation of coconuts and areca-nuts. The district was settled by the archipelago Malays from Sulawesi, Borneo and Java.

The District entered into an era of agricultural commodity production with the market demand for areca-nuts, coconuts, pepper and gambier. The *penghulu* and their *anak buah* came to cultivate areca-nuts and coconuts. Production increased and trade was the basis of the expansion of wealth. The *penghulu* continued their role as traders but faced increasing competition from Chinese merchants with greater access to financial resources established at Singapore. At the end of the nineteenth century the dominant trading class in Batu Pahat were the Chinese merchants who had penetrated down to the production bases of areca-nut and coconut cultivation through the *pajak* system of cash advances against agricultural produce. Increasingly the only source of income for the *penghulu* was from land transactions and in the twentieth century from salaries.

The Asian mainland Chinese arrived as cultivators in the district only towards the last decade of the nineteenth century. They moved further inland in search of higher grounds that was required for the cultivation of pepper and gambier. The Chinese merchants organised *kangkar* headed by a *kanchu* who established a *kebun* (farm) of mixed cultivation. These merchants had strong connections with the port of Singapore and *tongkangs* (Chinese junks) would sail up-river to jetties built at the *kangkar*.

The main town that served the district was the newly established town of Bandar Penggaram. In the mid-1880's it had a hospital and by 1887 it boasted of 4 brick-made shops and a jetty owned by one of the

town's leading merchants, Lim Sau Pun. The local Malay Muslim merchants had raised enough contributions to construct a *masjid* for the town. On 1st January 1894 the Johor flag was raised with much pomp and ceremony announcing Bandar Penggaram as the official town centre for the district. A court house, police station and jail-house were built. The town's water supply was served by a 25 feet and 25 feet public well. At the end of the year the *Dato Bentara Luar* gathered all the *Orang Kaya, penghulu* and *pegawai* and officially named the town as Bandar Penggaram and he ceremoniously planted an *azimat* (talisman) at Simpang Jalan Rahmat.

At the turn of the century about 40 000 acres were cultivated by Malay peasant settlers hugging the length of the coast-line to a depth of a mile, and along the banks of both Simpang Kanan and Simpang Kiri for about 15 miles up-river. These coastal and riverine settlers had built a fairly elaborate *parit* system which drained the water-logged area. In 1911 about 128 *parit* were maintained. The construction of *parit* were *penghulu*-led. Each drainage ditch was uniformly dug 2 feet deep and 1 foot and 6 inches wide and led to the nearest river. However, older *parit* increased in depth and width with each clearing by the *anak buah* of undergrowth, weeds, fallen trees and water-hyacinths. The usual length of a drainage canal was anything from 3 to 5 miles. Subsidiary *parit* were built at right angles to the main drainage canals as cultivation pushed up-*parit*. Each *kawasan penghulu* developed perpendicular to the rivers. Drainage canals multiplied within the *penghulu* domain along a familiar right-angled grid away from the banks of the river. These *parit* were either named after the pioneering leaders or bore names that reflected an event such as Parit Tongkang Pechah, a place name such as Parit Bisu Lubok, or the name of the initial group of settlers such as Parit Jambi and after some commercial activities such as Parit Bakau Chendong. Each *kawasan penghulu* was the hub of economic activity as the *anak buah* cleared and cultivated the land. At key junctions of the *parit* waterway system within each *kawasan penghulu* a *masjid* was built usually with financial contributions from the merchant community. This pattern continued with the expansion of coastal settlements. The centre of commerce and trade activities was located near the main waterway which transported commodities and people to the main port at Bandar Penggaram.

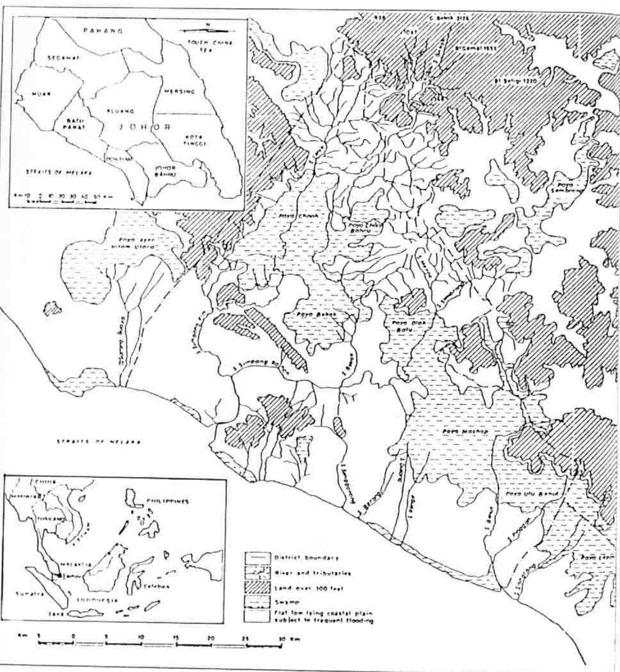
In the first few decades of the twentieth century Batu Pahat experienced an unprecedented extension of cultivation which decisively altered the economic and social landscape of the district. From about 40 000 acres at the turn of the century, this frontier district grew beyond recognition. In 1932 approximately 346 000 acres were brought under cultivation. Rubber occupied 156 000 acres and coconuts 150 000 acres. Areca-nuts (14 000 acres), paddy (11 000 acres), palm oil (10 000 acres) and other crops (5000 acres) covered the rest. The expansion was phenomenal as capital investors, labour, settlers from the Malay archi-

pelago and mainland China poured into the district. The Town of Bandar Penggaram had emerged as a coastal commercial and administrative centre serving the district. Tan Swee Hoe, the local Chinese merchant built a concrete jetty for its river port. It had a new market and a Chinese Assembly Hall which housed the newly formed Chinese Trade Association. The Chinese Government in China presented the Association with a wooden seal to mark its opening ceremony.

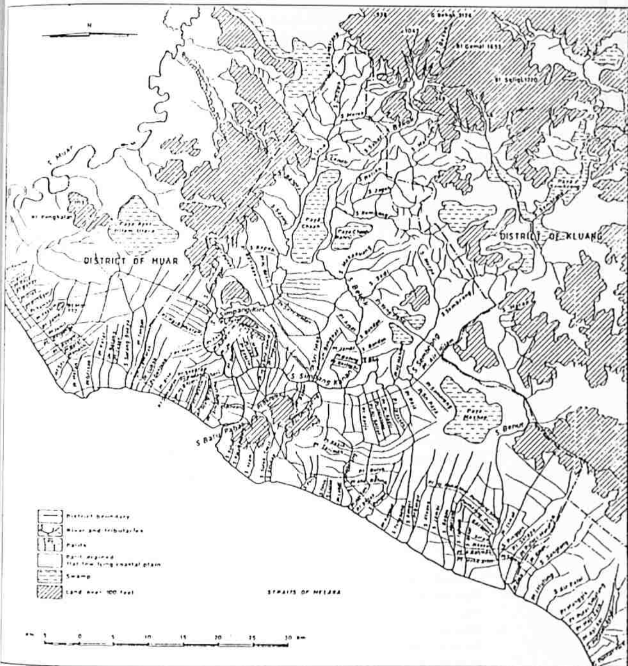
In 1911 the chief exports of Batu Pahat were areca-nuts, copra, pepper, gambier, rubber, tapioca, sago and forest produce. Areca-nuts and copra formed the greatest portion of exports, 124 000 and 35 200 *picul* respectively for that year. In that a year only 165 *picul* of rubber were exported. Three years later the export figures for rubber showed its potential. It increased to 5507 *picul* while areca-nuts stood at 154 944, copra at 64 332, pepper at 7887 and gambier at 14 539 *picul* respectively. In 1914 areca-nuts, copra and rubber made more than 80% of the District's customs revenue. By 1918 rubber clearly dominated the other agricultural produce. Out of an export value of $187 933 for the district, rubber formed 48%, while areca-nuts registered 20% and copra, coconuts, coconut oil and other agricultural produce constituted the balance. Forest produce which once dominated exports gave way to agricultural commodities, reflecting the changing land use. The coastal marsh-lands were brought under cultivation for an export market. In the interior, the jungle-clad foothills were subjected initially for gambier and pepper and later rubber. These commodities were transported to Singapore where other merchants shipped it to world markets.

Singapore based Chinese merchants had gained a firm control over the level of production of these agricultural commodities. It was common practise for areca-nut cultivators to farm out their holdings (usually 3-5 acres each) to these traders who paid from $20 to $35 annually per acre for the right of taking the nuts. The same grip over production applied in the case of coconut cultivation and extended into the trading network of rubber cultivators. The Chinese merchants were organised with their own premises in town. They had their Rice Merchants Association and even a Chinese Chamber of Commerce.

The district was open to migrant settlers from the Malay archipelago and mainland China that responded to the market economy. In 1931 there were at least over 100 000 new arrivals when the census was taken. The great increase in the population was due to the flux of Javanese, Banjarese and Bugis on the coastal areas. They opened up land for rubber, coconut and areca-nut *kebun* which encouraged other immigrants to join their friends and relatives. They extended their holdings inland. In the north of the district, Foochows and other Chinese groups pioneered the countryside cultivating mainly rubber. In their tracks followed an increase of investors, merchants, traders and shopkeepers that supplied and dealt with the increased numbers of land owners and settlers.



MAP 5 The district of Batu Pahat, Johor.



MAP 6 The district of Batu Pahat, Johor, c. 1950.

It was in the inland *mukim* of the district that a plantation belt of rubber estates and medium-sized holdings developed that followed a north-south direction on either side of the railway and roads that led to Singapore. The Settlement Officer of Batu Pahat, H.W. Hamilton wrote in amazement "Many acres of jungle trees were brought to earth to reveal mathematical rows of Havea Braziliensis." The inland rubber beltwas Chinese dominated with its urban towns such as Yong Peng, Kluang and Air Hitam that sprung at road junctions. Land transport became vital and by the end of the 1920's the district had close to 100 miles of metalled and gravelled roads. The new consumer need were petrol and the Chinese controlled the trade. The feature of the twentieth century was that every service and commodity that was licensed, it was the Chinese that dominated it. The Múslim merchants were effectively blocked out from the land based economy catering for European markets.

In the twentieth century the District of Batu Pahat emerged as the coconut district of all Malaya; one of two major areca-nut centres of Johor and witnesses an unprecedented expansion of rubber cultivation in its inland *mukim*. It was rubber cultivation that accelerated the economic expansion in Batu Pahat. The plantation sector was dominated by Japanese concerns from the beginning of the industry and they maintained the lead in terms of acreage, number of wage and contract workers employed and volume of exports. European and Chinese owned estates frequently changed hands and did not enjoy sustained growth as their Japanese counterparts. In 1937 there were 6 Japanese companies holding 23 981 acres, 26 Chinese plantations with only 8804 acres and 2 European concerns with 8451 acres. Indians held three small plantations with 783 acres. Japanese capital was the backbone of the agricultural investment in the district. The local economy was also strengthened by the very large Ishihara iron mines located at Sri Medan which operated from the period 1920–41. In the period 1921–33 the Sri Medan mines exported 3864 tons of iron ore to Japan.

Medium-sized rubber holdings attracted Chinese investors. In 1924 75 Chinese estates under this category owned 3378 acres while only 20 Malays owned 998 acres. The Malay holdings tended to concentrate along the coastal *mukim* which was flood prone while their Chinese counterparts went further inland and held the vantage high ground. The characteristic of the medium-sized estates were that they vast majority of investors were outsiders and they seldom retained their ownership for long periods. There were huge profits to be made in land investments by opening up land for rubber cultivation and then selling these estates. In the period from 1931 to 1941 there was a fourfold increase from 5130 to 20 095 acres. In 1941 the Malays owned 11.8% of these estates while the Chinese controlled 70.9% of total area under medium sized holdings. The Indians owned 17.3% of the total. In comparing the 1924 list with the 1934–41 list of medium sized holdings it is striking that

only 4 of the original 75 names of Chinese continued their interests in the district. There were 299 Chinese new comers into the district. The same feature can be noted for Malay investors. The earlier 20 investors had sold out by the 1930's and were replaced by 39 new entries.

The rubber licences is another general indicator of the domination of Chinese merchants in the rubber trade sector. In 1934 Chinese rubber dealers registered 78 out off 82 dealers with only three Malay dealers and one Japanese. The rubber dealers like the medium size estates owners never stayed for long in the district. Only six rubber dealers in 1940 had licenses in 1934. The 76 others from the 1934 list had closed their stores and moved elsewhere. All shops within Town Board limits were licensed under the Excise Enactment. The Chinese traders held a virtual monopoly in these urban centres. In 1929 there were 112 licenses issued for chemist, retail, toddy, and wholesale shops and public houses. The Chinese shop keepers numbered 98 while the Japanese held 8 and Indians 6 licenses respectively. These Chinese traders established an extensive network that linked remote villages with urban centres and the main entrepot on Singapore island.

The shift from the sea-based economic activities to land-based economy had disastrous consequences on the Malay-Muslim economic life. The most lucrative area of immediate monetary gain was in rubber land development schemes which were sold after clearing and planting. The *penghulu* were the front-line for these schemes. However, colonial officials were unsympathetic towards such flagrant abuses of public position and imposed immediate dismissal. The main Malay investors were in the medium sized holdings. In 1924 twenty Malays owned 998 acres. There were two *penghulu* on the list. Sixteen years later none of the initial owners continued their investments. The 1940 list indicated that the Bugis families emerged as significant landlords as well as a sizeable number of Syeds of Arabic descent. There were several cases of Malay landlords squandering their wealth and ended as debt-ridden.

The colonial administration at the district level built a class of Malay salaried earners. These lower grade government servants such as clerks, police interpreters, corporals, settlement officers and peons who worked at Bandar Penggaram owned small pieces of inherited properties in the *mukim*. The lots were too small for any profitable agricultural activity. Their salaries were their main sources of income. In the 1930's government loans were extended to public servants for the purchase of land and houses. A house owner type of civil servant was favoured by the colonial state.

In December 1940 the land records showed that 288 211 acres in the District were alienated for the market economy. The plantation sector occupied 95 000 acres. Rubber, coconuts, areca-nuts and oil palm were the main agricultural export produce. Except for oil palm, the other sectors of agriculture were characterised by peasant small-holders. In 1938 it was recorded that 74 859 acres were registered under 20 818

rubber holdings of less than 25 acres. Malay ownership dominated the rubber small-holding sector at 47 424 acres. However, on the average the Malay small-holding lots were much smaller at 3 acres compared to Chinese owned lots at 5.1 acres. The pattern of unequal size in landownership had its roots during the *penghulu*-led coconut and areca-nut and Singapore towkay financed gambier-pepper years in the nineteenth century. The advent of twentieth century rubber markets witnessed an adaptation of earlier forms of commodity production. The Chinese merchants at all levels were engaged in the process of capital accumulation and expansion. There were many others whole daily sustenance depended on the bicycle riding rubber buyer, the vagrancies of weather, water-logged peat soils, ageing trees and market processes.

The domination of twentieth century trade, credit facilities, storage and transport facilities, retail and wholesale dealing activities by non-Muslim merchants placed the Muslim Malay producer at a subordinate position. The immediate coconut and areca-nut cultivator was unable to weather the uncertainties of commodity prices, natural calamities such as floods and crop diseases, ageing trees and other demands of an agricultural sector that was industrialising. In 1933 the plight of the coconut small-holder was in dire straits. The price of copra was at $3.90 cents per *picul*. The average five acre lot of peasant holding at 4 *picul* per acre made only 5 cents per *picul* under the best of conditions. The coconut groves were littered with ripened coconuts as it was not worth collecting them. Even when the price of copra rose it was not the immediate producer that gained from the price increase. Often they had already leased their holdings to the Chinese trader. The independent owner-operator producer was not aware of the daily increase in market price and sold at lower prices. The copra industry was dominated by Chinese merchants who owned the kilns, Chinese Dealers, Chinese shippers and lorry owners and Singapore-based coconut oil factories and exporters. A similar situation existed amongst the areca-nut growers. Malay peasants were the owners of the holdings but the production and export of the various types of produce continued to be in the hands of the Chinese. The owners sold the areca-nuts or leased their holdings to Chinese producers. The Malay found employment in splitting the nuts for the Dealers.

In all sectors of the Agricultural Industry Chinese merchants dominated the different levels of the market. They profited from trade and capital investments. The Malay peasant sold their produce at wholesale rates and bought their daily requirements at retail prices. The wholesale price at the district markets was substantially below the wholesale price at the regional market in Singapore where the produce were shipped to International markets. It was the Chinese merchants that were able to extract profits, interests, rents and surplus labour at the level of agricultural production and market. In the manufacturing sector for export and domestic consumption again Chinese merchants domi-

nated. It was only in minor industries catering for very small localised markets that Malays organised themselves. In the internal trade for basic essential commodities and other consumer items Chinese traders were without rivals.

Kenelm O.L. Burridge, a field observer in the 1950's, comparing Malay and Chinese small-holders noted that in the land based market economy:

> "The Malay ... smallholder is almost entirely at the mercy of events and motives which lie not only outside his control but often outside his comprehension. Chinese primary producers are much more securely placed: being mixed farmers, what they lose on bananas they make up in pork or in vegetables. Annual floods are no menace. And the Chinese who very commonly form limited companies (*kongsi*) usually have sufficient capital behind them to ride out vagaries on the market. Even more resilient are the legions of Chinese middlemen who stand between production and eventual consumption".[28]

The Malay small-holder who built his economic and family life around his agricultural plot was impoverished. The evidence is overwhelming that the agricultural producer for the markets was the creator of wealth but never its owner. Ninety-three percent of the 1692 cases of Small Estates Deceased files of those who died leaving assets of $2000.00 and below were Malays. Only 6.6% were Chinese. The life span of a pioneer settler was often short. It was common for a peasant to be cut down at the prime of his adult life before the age of forty. The main cause of death was high fever as would be expected in newly cleared areas for cultivation where mosquitoes thrived. Rural agricultural life was a tough battle against the natural elements, fulfilling the basic daily necessities and reacting to prices in the commodity market.

In the twentieth century the Malay rural cultivators who had earlier migrated from the many islands of the Malay archipelago daily remake their life. The next generation of Malay agriculturalists began life even at a lower material position as a result of Islamic law of inheritance, land fragmentation, debts, ageing trees, large family size and limited assets. The explanation of the immediate Malay producer looking at the sharp contrast in material conditions between the Chinese and Malays was that:

> "We Muslims do not chase money. That is the Chinese way ... If we sell something we must make a profit in order to live; but otherwise we make our living from the soil. We do not chase money for the sake of the money. We want money to buy food - and other things. The

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28 Kenelm O.L. Burridge, "Race Relations in Johore", *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Vol. 2, May 1957, p. 158.

Chinese live to make money – that is their affair. We want money to live".[29]

The economic life of the Malay peoples who once dominated the trade artery of the Straits of Melaka were now dependent on their small plots of land for their production and reproduction of their daily survival.

In 1932 the *Mukim Councils* and *Perhimpunan Parit* bodies were established in the District. The blue-print called for a re-organisation of village affairs along the lines of modern associations with its Chairman, agendas, meeting and minutes. The once influential merchant *Orang Kaya* and *penghulu* provided the leadership in these associations. A year later 69 village-based associations were formed. The central concerns of these organisations contrasted sharply with the role of *Orang Kaya* and *penghulu* in an earlier century. The economic subjects discussed were at the level of improving agricultural production at the village level, self-help infra-structure building and religious matters. The *masjid* became an institution where the government announced the dates for collective work such as preparation of the land for cultivation and other related work. The *masjid* which once served as an institution of commerce supported by the merchants was taken over by lower level administrative officials organising agricultural production. The centres of commerce at the local level had moved into urban centres with its trading stores and trading associations dominated by non-Muslim merchants.

The frontline Chinese merchants at the local level were backed by a legion of kindred spirits who lived off the market economy. The Muslim merchants were unable to penetrate and compete in the twentieth century market economy. The failed attempt in 1930 to form a Malay based General Trading Company by Radin Hanafi, an ex-*penghulu*, reflects the odds that were stacked against the Muslim merchant. The objectives of this trading company included:

1. *"Hendaklah mencuba menjalankan pekerjaan berniaga iaitu menjual dan membeli macam-macam barang perniagaan di dalam daerah Mukim VII Tanjong Sembrong Batu Pahat yang difikirkan patut oleh sekalian ahli-ahli yang berkenaan di dalam perniagaan ini akan mendatangkan keuntungan serta nama yang baik bagi bangsa kita sekalian Melayu-Melayu sama ada anak-anak kampung ataupun anak-anak dagang dengan muafakat yang baik mudah menjadi jaya dan terlepas sekalian kita daripada bahaya yang amat besar.*
2. *Iaitu dikehendaki kita sekalian bermuafakat yang baik iaitu membuat satu peraturan kongsi iaitu masing-masing mengadakan modal seorang sedikit dengan peraturan bagaimana yang tersebut di bawah ini:*

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29 Shaharil Talib, 1993, "The Language of Real Life: Batu Pahat, 1900–1941", *Sejarah: Jurnal Jabatan Sejarah Universiti Malaya*, No. 2, p. 43.

Sebab difikiran yang demikian ialah nampak-nampaknya pada fikiran iaitu dari dahulu hingga sampai masa sekarang iaitu bagi pihak bangsa kita Melayu sama ada anak-anak negeri ataupun anak-anak dagang semata-mata kita sekalian ketinggalan oleh segala bangsa yang lain-lain sama ada di dalam pelajaran ataupun di dalam perniagaan ataupun di dalam perkebunan tiada dapat kita sekalian memending kerana kita sekalian tiada muafakat baik-baik dengan benar serta betul setia teguh".[30]

Literarily translated:

1. "To try to run a business, that is, to sell and purchase a variety of commodities in the Mukim VII Tanjung Sembrong district of Batu Pahat which were thought necessary by its members in the business that will bring profit and improved the esteem of the Malay race, be it to the *kampung* folks or traders, and with cordial cooperation could bring sucess dan freed us all from greater danger.
2. That is to require us all to cooperate peacefully, that is, by setting up a corporation whereby each member will provide a small capital in accordance with the provision below:

The idea was mooted out because to our mind since the early years up till to this day our Malay race, be it the *kampung* folks or traders, all of us were left far behind by the other races either in education or business and even in agriculture we are unable to compete because we are not united and truelly faithful."

THE SOUTH CHINA SEA: THE SULTANATES OF TERENGGANU AND KELANTAN

It was international trade, the control of trading routes, the mobilisation of manpower and the extraction of raw materials that were the economic foundations of Malay kingdoms. The fall of Melaka in 1511 to the Portuguese was a mere political event. The Malay trade centre and its political state merely shifted its base to Johor Lama at the southern tip of the Malay peninsula and continued its economic activities for the next two centuries. In 1699 Sultan Mahmud Mangkat Dijulang was assasinated by his court officials and the Johor Lama kingdom faced a serious internal crisis. However, two brothers continued the Melaka heritage of trade and Islam when they established their respective kingdoms at

30 Shaharil Talib, "Global History at the Local Level". The objectives of the company included general trading of commodities in the Mukim VII, Tanjong Sembrong, Batu Pahat District through co-operative endeavour among the Malay community. Malays were invited to invest in the company and profits were to be shared. The manifesto pointed out that local born Malays and others from the archipelago were backward compared to the Asian immigrants in the sectors of education, commerce and agriculture. This difference in achievements could be closed through *mufakat* amongst the Malays.

Riau-Lingga and Terengganu. The elder brother was installed as Sultan Abdul Jalil IV at Riau-Lingga in the early 18th century with the military and naval support of the Bugis chiefs from Sulawesi. The Bugis were unable to penetrate into the China trade from the mother island at Sulawesi. The Tausug at Pulau Maimbung effectively blocked their free northern access to the South China Sea *via*. the Sulu Sea. They were forced to travel westwards through the Java Sea and into the Riau-Lingga islands in order to have access to the China trade. It was in these islands that they installed the embattled ruler of Johor Lama as Sultan of Riau-Lingga and accepted the post of *Yam Tuan Muda*. A great Islamic centre under the patronage of succeeding Sultans was established on these islands. The Riau-Lingga kingdom traded, controlled trading routes that linked the South China Sea with the Indian Ocean, recruited manpower from its vast territories and extracted resources for trade. The presence of Dutch and British traders in the eighteenth century were unable to breakdown the intricate trading network built amongst Islamic Malay kingdoms and the merchants that plied between the numerous islands.

The second trade centre that was an off-shoot of the Melaka tradition through Johor Lama was the kingdom of Terengganu on the east coast of the Malay Peninsula that faced the South China Sea. Sultan Zainal Abidin I (1702–26), the first ruler of Terengganu, continued the trading and Islamic traditions of the previous Johor Lama rulers at Pasir Seberang on the opposite side of the Terengganu river where he built his royal palace and *masjid*.[31] It is important to note that the Islamic Malay kingdom shifted its locality and routinely built another urban complex for trade.

It was in these market configurations that Islam, trade and statecraft were intimately related. There was no artificial division between religion, economics and matters of state. Religious leaders were traders and influenced politics just as merchants were religious leaders and men of political authority. Sultan Zainal Abidin I of Terengganu was welcomed by Syarif Abdul Malik bin Abdullah, better known as Tukku Pulau Manis. His great grandfather, Syarif Muhammad bin Abddullah was born in Baghdad and had lived in Makkah and Acheh. He had established a religious centre at Kuala Berang on the Terengganu river. Syarif Abdul Malik was also educated at Acheh and Makkah and became teacher to Sultan Zainal Abidin I and eventually his father-in-law. He shifted the religious centre to Pulau Manis when the Sultan moved his

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31 Shaharil Talib 1990, "The Port and Polity of Terengganu During the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries: Realizing its Potential", in J. Kathirithamby-Wells and John Villiers, eds., *The Southeast Asian Port and Polity*, Singapore, Singapore University Press, pp. 213–230.

royal residence there. The *Masjid Syarif Abdul Malik* built at Pulau Manis is still in use today.[32]

In the mid-nineteenth century a second *ulama* family had emerged and exerted influence in royal circles. The Tukku Pulau Duyong were descendants of Fakeh Ali Malbari who had established their stature at the kingdom of Patani. Sheikh Abdul Kadir had fled Patani under Siamese threat and sought refuge under Sultan Baginda Omar (1839–76). He was granted land at Pulau Duyong where he built his religious establishment. A close relative, Sheikh Abdullah, rose in rank to be the *Sheikhul Ulama* and *Mufti of Terengganu* until he died in 1889. Sultan Zainal Abidin III had his religious training under the tutelage of the Pulau Duyong school.

At the turn of the century yet another *ulama* family line rose in prominence in the kingdom of Terengganu. The Tukku Sayyid Paloh family dominated much of Terengganu in the first half of the twentieth century. The leader was Sayyid Abdul Rahman bin Sayyid Al-Idrus who was the head of the large Arab community residing at Paluh, up the Terengganu river. The Arabs at Paluh were originally from Hadramaut of the *Alawiyyad* family clan. His grandfather was a Javanese trader who had married a local Sayyid's daughter. It was his descendants who established a religious centre at Paluh and continued the tradition. All Paluh religious teachers were trained in Makkah. Tukku Sayyid Paluh was Sultan Zainal Abidin III's confidant, teacher, adviser and brother-in-law. The *ulama* of Pulau Manis, Pulau Duyong and Paluh educated all eighteenth and nineteenth century rulers of Terengganu and their *mentri*. These *ulama* were religious teachers, merchants and the Sultan's trusted advisers.

In the eighteenth century the primary exports of Terengganu was pepper which were cultivated for exports and re-exports of tin, spices and forest produce. In the second half of that century the kingdom of Terengganu emerged as an important pepper producing country for English merchants. The port of Terengganu was a significant trade centre for the Gulf of Siam, Cochin China, Kampuchea, Borneo and the islands to the east. The entrepot was frequented by Chinese, English, Bugis and Portuguese traders. Sultan Mansur (1741–93) was the principal merchant in trade and he owned several ships which sailed to Cambodia, Siam, the Moluccas, Java and Sumatra.

> "Eighteenth and nineteenth century Chinese accounts attest to Terengganu's prominence as a trading centre, principally for pepper. In exchange, Chinese merchants brought tea, porcelain-ware, and silk. In 1764, the Chinese Governor General of Kwantung-Kwangsi requested the court to permit Chinese merchants to export raw silk

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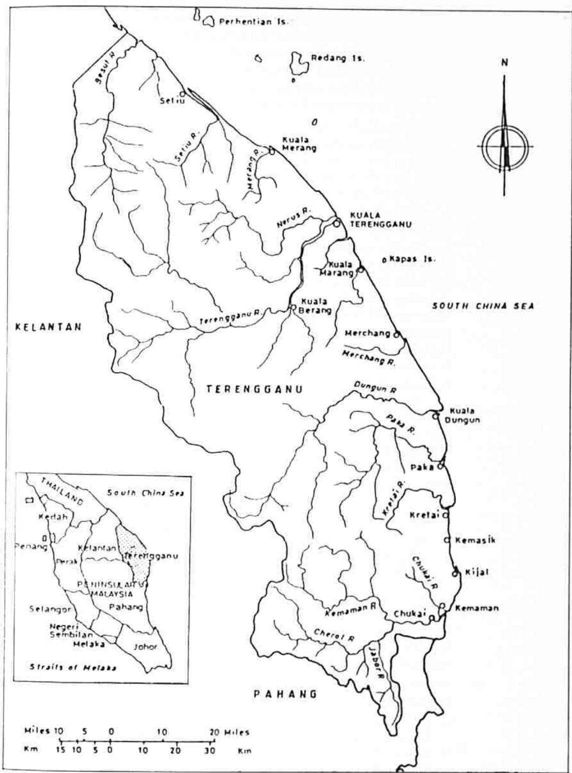
32 Shaharil Talib 1977, "The Terengganu Ruling Class in the Late Nineteenth Century", *Journal of the Malaysian Branch Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. 50, Pt. 2, pp. 25–47.

and Fuchou raw silk from second generation silk worms, among other places, to Terengganu. Chinese and European ships frequented it to exchange the pepper for their merchandise. Europeans brought Indian piece-goods while the Chinese brought silk. Silk fabrics produced from Chinese silk were luxury items produced for the ruling elites, especially of coastal kingdoms. The strategic maritime location of Kuala Terengganu and Kota Bharu together with the presence of a viable luxury market certainly played an important part in establishing the weaving industry which took root in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century."[33]

In the nineteenth century the kingdom of Terengganu declined as a pepper port. It pepper exports had wilted from 17 000 *picul* in 1788 to 3000 *picul* in 1826. However, the kingdom of Terengganu changed its economic production base to the cultivation of coffee and sugar cane to cater for the growing entrepot market at the newly established British port on the island of Singapore. Furthermore, the discovery of the Dungun and Kemaman tin mines made the kingdom as the chief exporter of tin on the Malay peninsula until the mid-nineteenth century when richer tin-fields were opened in the kingdom of Perak, Selangor and Negeri Sembilan on the west coast of the Malay peninsula. It was during the reign of Sultan Baginda Omar (1839-76) that the kingdom earned its reputation as the most significant trading Malay kingdom on the peninsula. It was trade that attracted migration. Between 1830-66 the tonnage in trade on the east coast of the Malay peninsula increased by 20 700 tons or about 500 per cent while the west coast remained unchanged.[34] In the mid 1830's the kingdom of Terengganu had a population of 35 000 and half of them lived at the trading centre. In the 1890's its population had reached approximately 100 000 in size. At its height in the mid-nineteenth century Terengganu had earned its reputation as a trading, boat building, weaving and metal-work centre.

> "The market scene at Kuala Terengganu during the trading season was one of high excitement, typical of an Asian bazaar. Vessels arrived regularly from Annam and other mainland capitals carrying supplies of salt and rice, while others might call quite by chance bringing for sale the crew of a captured vessel taken as slaves. The ruler and the more important chiefs dominated foreign trade and the unfamiliar European trader would have been bewildered by the elaborate etiquette and style that all large business transactions involved, whether at the Sultan's *balai* or in the house of the *kapitan China*. This contrasted with the bargaining and haggling within the network of internal markets, which were usually handled by women functioning both as principal buyers and sellers".[35]

33 Maznah Mohamad, *op. cit.*, pp. 83-84.
34 *Ibid.*, p. 85.
35 Shaharil Talib, "The Port and Polity of Terengganu", p. 219.



MAP 7 Terengganu.

In the late eighteenth century the territories that made the kingdom of Kelantan broke away from the overlordship of the kingdom of Terengganu that was located further south. Sultan Long Yunus (1776–95) consolidated the "warring chiefs" on the Kelantan riverand established the political structure necessary for the emergence of a trading centre at the royal capital. Trade, the Sultanate and Islam were intricately intertwined in Kelantan as it did in other trading centres.

> "In the first place, it must be fully realised that the Sultan was the main pivot upon which all things in his country turned. He was the source from which all blessings flowed; he was the person who held in his hands rewards and punishments; ... He was the principal trader, the richest man, the banker and advancer of capital to his people. He was also law to himself...."[36]

The kingdom of Kelantan in the nineteenth century emerged as the most densely populated Malay kingdom on the peninsula. In 1822 Kelantan had a population of about 50 000 excluding Chinese. Almost fifty years later it was reported that it had a size of 100 000 Malay males and about 2000 Chinese in the society. At the turn of the century the kingdom of Kelantan had a population of 300 000 of which 12 000 belonged to the ruling families. The trading network of the kingdom of Kelantan was more towards the Gulf of Siam or the Gulf of Champa as it was referred to locally and less towards the south where the kingdom of Terengganu and the port of Singapore dominated.[37]

The control of trade, more specifically Asian trade, was central to the Malay sultanates and Islam. Prior to the mid-nineteenth century the main Malay sultanates on the peninsula were located on its east coast which faced the South China Sea. Their strengths were derived from trade. A colonial official observed that the Terengganu Malay trader were:

> "... skilful and adventurous, and frequently acquire considerable fortunes. Most of the bridges, wayside wells, and resting places inland are the private work of such men. They frequently make the pilgrimage to Makkah: a rest-house for pilgrims in that city and at Jeddah have been erected by successful Terengganu merchants, and bear their names".[38]

The west coast Malay states were marginal in the Asian trade that developed on the South China Sea. However, the emergence of an industrial market in Europe which required new products from the region shifted the production and trade from the east coast of the

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36 H. Clifford, 1898–99, "Life in the Malay Peninsula; as it was and is", *Royal Colonial Institute Report of Proceedings*, Vol. 30, p. 375.

37 Shaharil Talib, 1981, "Nineteenth Century Kelantan: A Malay Tributary State", *Jurnal Antropologi dan Sosiologi*, Vol. 9, pp. 43–59.

38 Shaharil Talib, 1984, *After Its Own Image: The Terengganu 1881-1941*, Singapore, Oxford University Press, p. 52.

peninsula to the west coast. The emergence of an inland urban plantation and mining belt on the west coast of the peninsula and its implications on Islam has been touched on earlier. The east coast Malay kingdoms of Terengganu and Kelantan made necessary adjustments to compete in the European markets but they failed in the twentieth century. The failure was not because of Islam but the lack of raw materials that was suitable for the industrial markets.

Sultan Zainal Abidin III of Terengganu (1881-1918) introduced institutional reforms in his kingdom to strengthen the economic basis of the immediate royal family, the aristocracy and other court favourites.[39] The reforms reflected the trading character of the ruling class of the kingdom of Terengganu. In the export and import sector members of the ruling families were given monopolies for trade and bestowed rights of imposing taxes. The *pajak* system of revenue farms was developed extensively in an effort to participate the accelerating trade with the port of Singapore.

The *pajak* system was an effective instrument for allowing direct participation of the ruling class merchants in trade. They held monopoly rights over jungle produce which they traded on the open market. In other instances they controlled the price mechanism of produce that were sold. In this manner they were able to establish a comparative price advantage over their competitors.

> "All jungle produce, such as *getah*, camphor, agilar, wood, rattan, etc., are recognised throughout the state as being the property of the various district *rajas*; and all such articles have to be brought to the headquarters, and sold to the *raja* or to his agents at the price determined by them. The *getah* which is the most valuable product yielded in any great quantities by Malay jungles, has to be sold by the people at $25 per *picul* if of inferior quality, and $50 per *picul* if of the best kind. The prices now ruling in the interior of Pahang are $50 per *picul* and $150 per *picul* respectively, for inferior and superior *getah*. Camphor is valued at $20, $25, and $30 a *kati* according to quality, as against $60, $70, and $80 in Pahang. Gambier is sold by the basket of 5000 pieces, the prices paid being 10 *kupang* in Terengganu, viz $2.50. In Pahang $5 is the lowest paid for 1000 pieces. Damar is also exported in considerable quantities from Terengganu, and this also has to be sold to the district *rajas* at a uniformly low price. Kemuning wood, gum-benzoin, and ivory are similar perquisites".[40]

At the turn of the century the Malay ruling class merchants had lost out to Chinese merchants. They sold their revenue rights to Chinese revenue farmers. The rise of the new merchants in Terengganu marked the breakdown of Muslim traders who were relegated to less lucrative

39 *Ibid.*
40 *Ibid.*, pp. 51-52.

sectors of the economy. The Chinese traders with strong Singapore connections and the markets beyond offered attractive rents for their revenue farms, advanced loans and other favours and rewards to members of the former ruling class traders. The loss of control over the market forced the aristocratic merchants to depend on political privileges to act as leverage in their relationship with the Chinese trader. The accumulation of wealth of the aristocratic trader was more that of a

Table 1 Imports Exports of Singapore: Kelantan, Terengganu and Patani, 1897–1901

	1897	1898	1899	1900	1901
Imports to Singapore from:					
Kelantan	632 742	670 860	652 359	763 294	969 813
Terengganu	811 103	767 993	915 531	971 243	1 117 880
Patani	262 990	336 439	447 070	381 035	480 998
Exports from Singapore to:					
Kelantan	439 782	297 570	366 290	518 506	903 258
Terengganu	470 394	553 323	512 499	689 912	906 099
Patani	285 216	324 293	329 036	243 045	363 404

(**Source:** Shaharil Talib 1984, *After Its Own Image: The Terengganu Experience, 1881–1941*, Singapore, Oxford University Press, p. 50).

renter. The decisive factor that accounted for this shift was new markets trends that signalled the arrival of the market needs of industrial Europe. It was the port of Singapore that served Europe's markets and capitalised on that change.

The commodity trade pattern between Terengganu and Singapore for the period between 1911–13 reflected the pattern of commodity production of the kingdom of Terengganu for much of the twentieth century. The concentration was on agricultural and marine commodities that were to feed the food markets of twentieth century urban centres on the Malay Peninsula.

In the 1920's and 1930's the tin supplies of Terengganu shrank and pepper suffered from price fluctuations. The mainstay of the economy of Terengganu was marine resources and padi and copra. There were significant iron ore mines at Kemaman and Dungun but they were mined by Japanese and shipped directly to Japan. The ruling families had lost control of the key trade commodities that went into the markets and even the newly emerging food based commodity trade were handled by Chinese traders and dealers who had extensive Singapore connections. They dominated the credit, storing and transporting of these commodities to the Singapore market.

The greatest potential for wealth accumulation was the exploitation of agricultural and mineral resources for the industrial markets. The prized possessions were tin mining and rubber plantations. Sultan Zainal Abidin III of Terengganu was well aware of these possibilities. In the

period 1889–1910 he developed the concession system as a means of gaining from the growth of production capital in the expanding plantation and mining sectors. He introduced a device known as *cap zuriat* which were concessions given in perpetuity to members of the royal family. These instruments repeatedly emphasised the expression of "absolute property", "valid and final gift", and "full and perfect rights of ownership". On a single day – 26 February 1906 – the Sultan bestowed five grants to his children covering an area of approximately 326 600 acres. These members of the royal family and other aristocratic traders who held leases went into partnership with investors from Singapore. The failure of this concerted effort was the lack of mineral resources in the kingdom, the failure of the plantation sector to develop and the colonial state intervention. The later dismantled the concession system in an effort to open the kingdom to investors. In 1931 these two sectors only provided less than 9 per cent of the total state revenue.

The potential of the mining and plantation sectors for the industrial markets of Europe were realised by members of the ruling class. The concession system was an effective device for them to participate in the new economy. However, they lacked the capital, technology and manpower to exploit these resources. The merchant trader that was located in the port of Singapore was the key investor in these sectors. They offered ground rents, premiums, partnerships, cash advances and other incentives to these holders of the concession. The members of the ruling class took a back seat in the twentieth century economy, while it was the Singapore Chinese merchant who organised production for the markets.

Table 2 Commodity Trade between Terengganu and Singapore, 1911–1913

Item	1911	1912	1913
1. Fish, dry and salted	577 986	571 718	673 396
2. Tin ore	457 086	485 201	403 594
3. Paddy	265 403	198 295	221 991
4. Copra	225 708	240 380	315 981
5. Black pepper	160 351	93 382	157 752

(**Source:** Shaharil Talib 1984, *After Its Own Image: The Terengganu Experience, 1881–1941*, Singapore, Oxford University Press, p. 63.).

The third initiative of the old royal trading class under the changing economy was to establish control and ownership over food production for the new markets. The instrument developed was the *cap kurnia* which was awarded by the ruler to members of the ruling families and their trusted followers. These instruments gave effective ownership of village lands to the holders of these *cap kurnia*. They became landlords and reduced peasant farmers as mere tenants. The manpower of the Sultanate of Terengganu which once supported the Asian trading system

by extracting natural resources for the ruling class to engage in markets were subjugated for private property. They paid land rent for the right to use land which they had hitherto enjoyed without any obligation. It was estimated that as many as 50% of the adult male population lived in *cap kurnia* holdings or about 30 000 people in the Terengganu river valley lived within the confines of this *cap*. The violation of the natural rights of the rural cultivator under the *cap kurnia* system resulted in almost everyday confrontation at the local level between the landlord and the cultivator.

The resistance to these intrusions came in the form of a full-fledged peasant rebellion directed against the colonial state and the ruling class who had appropriated the peasant rights to subsist. The revolt was led by local religious leaders such as the *imam, bilal, khatib* and even *haji* and at the supra-level by highly respected *ulama* families. They made the distinction between the rules as laid down by the *Hukum Syariah* and those who followed the ways of the *kafir*. The call was for a return to the fundamentals where land was deemed as God's land and the cultivator owned what he cultivated on the basis of *Hukum Syariah*. The voice of the peasant leader opposed the role of the colonial state in facilitating capitalist production and expanded reproduction which secularised human relationships:

> *"Hak Allah empunya harta,*
> *segala tumbuhan di mana melata,*
> *telah direzeki kepada kita,*
> *sekarang berfas sekalian rata.*
>
> *Janganlah engkau takut dan ngeri,*
> *pergilah mengambil kayu terdiri,*
> *akulah boleh bantu memberi,*
> *jikalau dihukum perintah negeri.*
>
> *Datang hendak berbuat olah,*
> *bukankah ini harta Allah?*
> *janganlah takut engkau membelah,*
> *walaupun sampai jadi berbalah."* [41]

---

41 *Ibid.*, p. 144. The passages generally mean:

> This Earth belongs to God,
> all of nature's wealth,
> is gifted to man,
> now we have to obtain passes.
>
> Do not be afraid and terrified,
> go and take the wood,
> I will assist you,
> if the State arrests you.
>
> They come to do harm,
> Is this not God's property?
> do not be afraid to take action,
> even though there is trouble.

The revolt manifested itself in Islamic terms. Its leaders expressed an economic order that had lost its dominance in the twentieth century. Armed with a few old muskets, *keris, parang,* swords and other weapons they engaged a technologically more organised colonial police party. On 21 May 1928 at Kuala Telemong a group of 200 men chanting the *ratib* marched into the line of rifle fire from the government forces. When the invulnerable leader fell in the field of fire together with ten others the crowd fled.

The Terengganu royal family members were incorporated into the colonial bureaucracy where they earned salaries, allowances and gratuities. They were forcibly dissociated from the plantation and mining sectors which were regarded by the colonial authorities as highly speculative and unbecoming for men of royal birth. Trade which was the basis of old wealth was removed from these families and merchants with connections with Singapore dominated the agricultural and marine food sectors. The Malay peasant who toiled the land met the tender of money with the comment "*Apa guna*" (What was its use).

Twentieth century process of capitalist development and colonialism had equally disastrous effects on the Sultanate of Kelantan. The emphasis on the development of capitalism based on private property, production and other forms of capital and the accumulation of wealth reconstituted the trading Sultanate, its social order and its territories for the production of land based commodities that had a dollar value. The port that served its traders in the Gulf of Siam was re-structured to serve the markets of Singapore. The countryside that once supported the wealth of the old ruling class was re-oriented to produce for markets that were associated with Europe's industrialisation. The colonial state enforced an administrative grid that measured all forms of human endeavour in profit and loss balance sheets that violated earlier established social relations.

The petition letters written by Kelantan villages express the violation they experienced as the countryside was transformed for agricultural production along industrial lines to serve urban markets.[42] The cultivation of rice and rubber for exports was a twentieth century feature in Kelantan. The colonial state understood land, labour and produce as wealth-creating and marketable commodities. The two letters quoted below reflect the opposing organising economic principles of the countryside. The first is a statement by the British Adviser of Kelantan in 1911 who expressed:

> "I am of course opposed to the driving out of the Malay, but would rather have the land occupied and planted with rubber than lying

42 Shaharil Talib 1983, "Voices from the Kelantan Desa, 1900-1940", *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 2, pp. 177-195.

absolutely uncultivated as it has been".[43]

The peasants in Kelantan understood land, labour and produce as family sustenance as suggested in the following letter written in 1912:

> "It is not our intention to quit our home and country and go in quest of new lands to live in because some people are trying to avail themselves in our ignorance and to out the whole kampung with a view to reap future profits from it .... Our earnest pray[er] is that we may be left to live peacefully in our home and country where we have lived nearly a century".[44]

The peasant who faced the confiscation of his *paddy* land for non-cultivation pleaded ignorance as to what *dosaan* (offence) he had committed:

> *"Adalah ruangan tanah padi, chedungan, hak saya duduk miliki perintah tiap-tiap tahun lama kurang enam belas tahun dengan 1340 ini tempatnya di Temangan serta saya bayar hasil sebanyak tiga belas ringgit $13.00 tiap-tiap tahun tiba-tiba Kerajaan Pejabat Tanah Kuala Kerai Ulu Kelantan rampas ambil kepadanya tiada dengan suatu sebab.*
>
> *Maka yang saya telah dengar dan biasanya di dalam negeri Kelantan ini apabila tanah rakyat-rakyat isi negeri ada membayar hasil tiap-tiap tahun kerajaan tidak boleh rampas ambil harta benda tanah-tanah rakyat-rakyat ini melainkan tidak bayar hasil sampai dua tiga tahun pun dengan jalan lelong yang lebih itu dipulangkan kepada rakyat tuan empunya tanah itu ... susah besarlah tuan saya dan ahli anak bini saya tidak buat padi dengan sebab tiap-tiap orang ulu seperti saya ini disendiri oleh tuhan kita hidup dengan memakan nasi jika tanah saya. Kerajaan apa saya hendak dibuat mendapat padi".*[45]

The denial of vital water supply for rice cultivation also brought gasps of despair from the peasantry:

> *"Semai-semai padi yang sudah dicabut kering punah habis kerana parit dikatup kambus parit itu. Maka saya-saya nama tersebut mengadu ini meminta yang berhormat Tuan segera periksa jangan lambat minta jangan lengah sebab musim orang mencedong buat padi sekali setahun tidak bilik bertanam macam pokok-pokok yang lain jikalau lambat tak boleh makan nasi sama sekali nanti mati ahli anak bini saya-saya kesemuanya sebab tiap-tiap manusia ini hidup disandari Tuhan kita memakan nasi".*[46]

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43 *Ibid.*, p. 177.

44 *Ibid.*

45 *Ibid.*, pp. 181-182. The aggrieved petitioner states that he owned a piece of wet *paddy* land at Temangan for the last 16 years. He had paid $13.00 land rent annually and without reason the Land Office, Kuala Kerai, Hulu Kelantan had confiscated his property. It is on this land that he cultivates the food to feed his family and this was ordained by God.

46 *Ibid.*, p. 186. The passage generally translated means: The paddy seedlings had dried up because of the closure of the canal. They hope that the authorities will take

Literarily translated:

> "Paddy plants had to be pulled off the dry barren ground because the drains and canals have been filled with earth. Thus we, the complainants herewith asked your Honour to quickly check it. Don't be late because the planting time is only once a year unlike other plants. If the planting is done late than our children and wives will all die because every man is created by God eat rice".

The economic expansion of rubber plantations and mining areas inflicted a drastic toll on rural land for basic food cultivation. Villages and orchards that fell within the boundaries of alienated land by the colonial state for commercial enterprise were displaced. In Hulu Kelantan rubber estates bought out village land by offering them minimal compensation and in other instance offered them alternative sites to re-build their shattered homes. There were reports that rubber companies duped the ignorant peasants by making them place their thumb-prints on documents that sold their lands to the company. Their problems were even greater when several plantations were established in close proximity to each other. The peasants once open country was hemmed by private property, fences and estate guards.[47] The jungle which was once the traditional hunting and collecting grounds of the peasantry which supported the trading system of the Sultanate was closed to free access. The colonial state introduced forest rules and regulations which prohibited the felling of trees which were considered commercial. Forest passes were required for cultivators of rattan, collectors of jungle produce and fire-wood cutters. The peasants' relationship with the jungle were regulated by rules, fees, licenses, passes and royalties administered by local government officials. Violations of these rules led to court proceedings. The jungle was regarded as the property of the colonial state.[48]

THE CELEBES SEA: THE KINGDOM OF MAKASSAR (1605–1669)

The Sulawesi island dominated the Celebes sea which is located south of the Tausug commanded Sulu sea that was enmeshed with the north-south China trade. The peoples of the Sulawesi seas carried marine and forest produce for the China trade through the trade network of Tausug merchants. However, the port of Makassar on the western leg of

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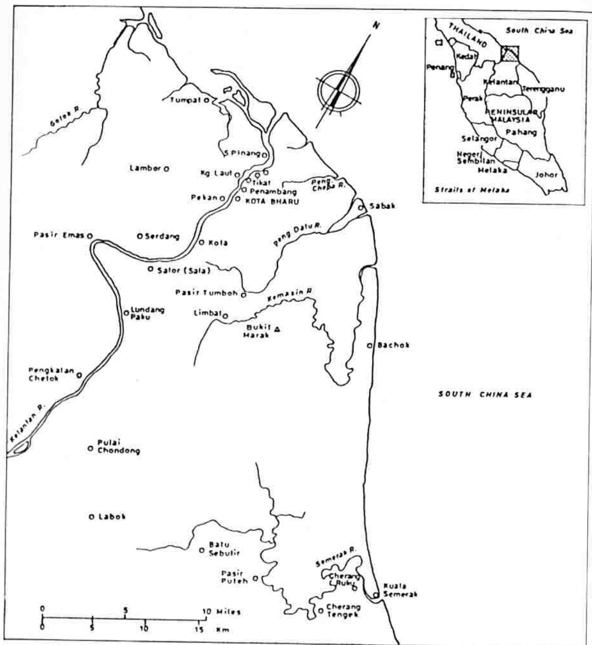
immediate remedial measures and will not delay any more because the planting season has arrived. Further delay will cause serious lack of food and the consequent death of members of the family, as all God's people eat rice.

47 Amarjit Kaur and Shaharil Talib, 1981, "The Extractive-Colonial Economy and the Peasantry: Hulu Kelantan 1900-40", *Review of Indonesian and Malayan Affairs*, Vol. 15, No. 2, pp. 32-91.

48 Shaharil Talib, 1982, "The Colonial Legal Machine: An Instrument of Capitalist Penetration in the Malay Countryside". Paper presented at a symposium on The Western Presence in Southeast Asia, Manila, Philippine. (Unpublished manuscript).



MAP 8 Kelantan.

the Sulawesi peninsula was geographically suited to participate in the east-west international spice trade that brought fifteenth century Melaka its fame. It lay mid-way between the Straits of Melaka to its west and the spice islands to its east. The pre-Islamic kingdoms of Gowa and Tallo merged in the early sixteenth century to form the kingdom of Makassar. Its rise to pre-eminence was only in the next century when the rulers of Gowa and Tallo converted to Islam in 1605. Sultan Abdullah Awal-ul-Islam (Tallo) and Sultan Ala'uddin (Gowa) (1593-1639) established the first Muslim kingdoms in Sulawesi and forged the kingdom of Makassar to be the leading seventeenth century commercial centre of the eastern islands and a centre for Islamic teaching and missionary undertakings.[49]

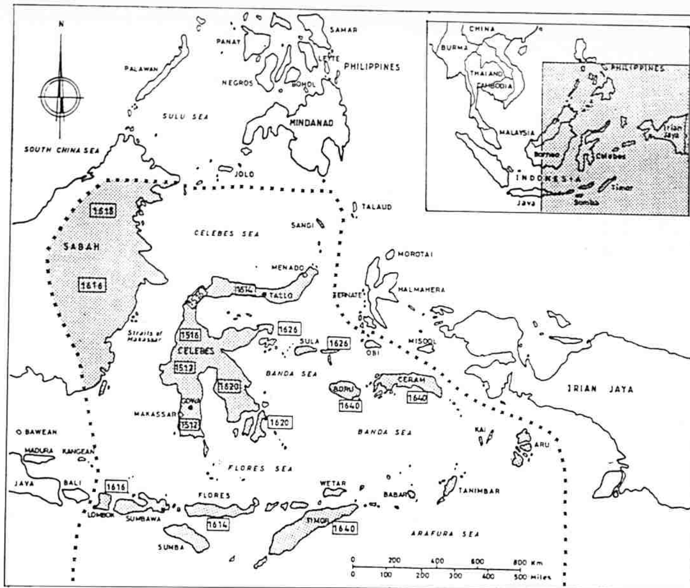
The introductory note dated 2 February 1826 of the British East India Company's Celebes Factory Records, 1613-74 captures the splendour of Makassar in the seventeenth century:

> "The commercial information brought out in these statements shows that Makassar was formerly a mart of great congress for spices and other imports; receiving cloves, nutmegs, and mace from the Moluccas; pepper from Banjarmassin; sapanwood from Bemah; sandalwood from Bemah and Timore; cotton cloths from India proper; wax, bonzoin, and elephants-teeth from Camboja; slaves, gumlac, tortoise shell, and cassialignum from various places in the neighbouring continent and archipelago; sugar, green ginger and chinaroots from China; steel from Coromandel, lead from Siam; tateniguo (tatenag) from China; copper from Japan; dollars from Manila; gold from Japarra, Manila, and China; exporting chiefly rice and arrack, with some native gold, and some tortoise shells in return for the productions of other oriental soils".[50]

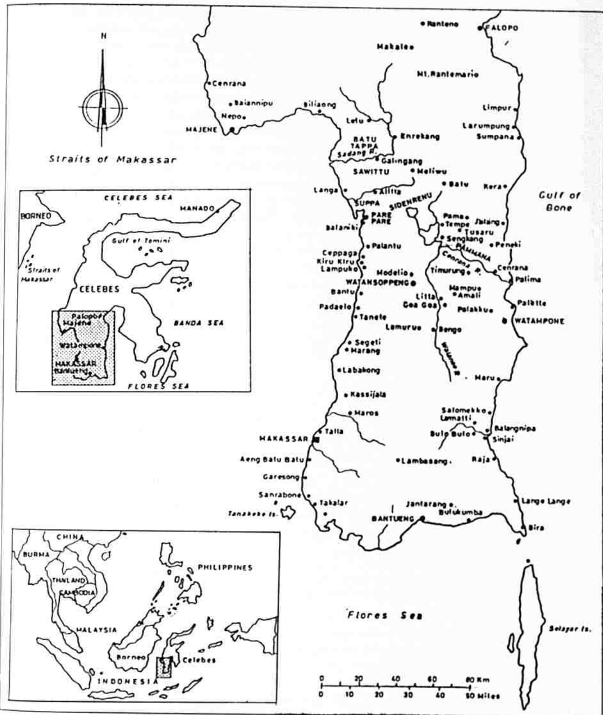
The glorious period of Makassar as a great emporia is marked by the conversion of its rulers to Islam. Muslim merchants that had long dominated the east-west Asian trade gathered at Makassar for their commercial transactions. The early rulers skilfully managed trade, statecraft and Islam.

The seventeenth century spectacular rise of Makassar is traced to an earlier century of slow economic, political and social changes that occurred amongst the many petty principalities on the west coast of southwestern Sulawesi. In the early sixteenth century the port of Siang, about 50 miles to the north of Gowa, was dominated by Malays from Johor, Pahang and Patani. These Muslim merchants had shifted their trading base from Portuguese occupied Melaka. They handled the sandalwood trade from Siang for Asian markets, specifically China. This precious commodity was imported into Siang from Timor and Sumba. It was the conversion of the ruler and the leading families of Siang to Christianity in 1545 that forced the flight of the Muslim Malay traders

49 John Villiers, *op. cit.*, pp. 143-159.
50 India Office Library, Factory Records Celebes, 1613-74, f. 1. (Microfilm copy).



MAP 9 The Kingdom of Makassar, c. 1700



MAP 10 South-west Sulawesi.

to Gowa where they welcomed by enlightened rulers who allowed them religious freedom. The pre-Islamic rulers of Tallo and Gowa combined their collective economic strengths and led the petty kingdoms that ribbon the Straits of Makassar. The former had strong overseas connections while Gowa was more endowed with rice production. These rulers re-organised the then existing political structure virtually along the lines of the Melaka Sultanate in anticipation of the expansion of trade. The ruler devised a new system of weights and measures, manufactured bullets, fortified the main settlements and royal capital, and introduced brick-building. There was a clear division of functions between the higher level officials in the kingdom. There was one officer appointed for the internal administration of the kingdom, another was exclusively responsible for the manufacturing sector of the economy which included ship-building, arms manufacturing, weaving, house-building and the making of gold and silver wares. The *syahbandar* was solely responsible for trade affairs.

The strong economic foundations built by late sixteenth century rulers inspired without doubt by the Malay traders assisted Matoaya and his nephew, Tumenangari Gaukanna, the rulers of Tallo and Gowa, to move beyond their immediate coastlines and enter into the vast Islamic trading network of the archipelago. In a series of military campaigns which came to be known as the "Islamic wars" the Makassar Sultanate conquered the various production bases of south Sulawesi and the islands further east. At its height in the mid-seventeenth century Makassar's economic and political hegemony extended over parts of Borneo to the west; all the southern islands of the archipelago from Pulau Lombok moving east; the Moluccas islands further east and all islands bordering the Sulu seas to the north. It was from this zone that the Makassar Sultanate drew its economic resources necessary for exchange in the international trade.

The economic expansion of Makassar territories under Matoaya did not take the form of subjugation. Matoaya did not demand indemnity nor tribute from the vanquished. He merely requested that they accept the will of *Allah*. The Wajo Chronicle mentions that Matoaya simply asked the Wajo leaders:

> "Do me the favour of accepting a small token from me, that you follow Goa into Islam and that you all offer homage to the one God.
>
> To Appamole [the Wajo' leader] replied to King Matoaya, 'We have made the profession of faith. Your Majesty, and we all offer homage to the one God. I request that my rice be not torn out, my mats not opened, and the mice not cut out from the folds of my sarung. So will I follow Goa; when Goa goes to war we will follow as Goarese, and I will bring my victuals in my sleeves, one for the journey out and one for the journey home. When Goa is victorious in war, so is Wajo also victorious. If you go by ship then we will not follow, for I cannot sail. I will sit in my house hoping that you win,

and if Goa wins then Wajo wins also. Only then will Goa and Wajo be divided, since God has divided them.'

The King said. 'I agree with what you have said. Wajorese, I grant what you request, as you make an effort to offer homage to Allah Ta'ala and to follow the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w'.[51]

The newly converted chiefs were invited to form a Makassar-led alliance that would defend the new economic arrangement for the eastern islands. The rulers of the kingdom of Makassar welcomed all European merchants to trade at Makassar. They only requested "That they shall not attempt to allure, nor permit any of our people to embrace the Christian religion".[52] The rulers and leading notables of Makassar initially invested in foreign merchants to trade on their behalf. The next step was to participate directly in trade by hiring foreign vessels themselves. Independent trading voyages organised by these rulers began when they built their own vessels. Matoaya had his ships stationed at one end of the production system at Ambon further east and others at Melaka to the west on the international trade route. The openness of the Makassarese rulers to trade by all and sundry is epitomised in the famous declaration of Sultan Ala'uddin in 1615:

"God made the land and the sea; the land He divided among men and the sea He gave in common. It is unheard of that anyone should be forbidden to sail the seas. If you seek to do that, you will take the bread from the mouths of my people".[53]

The liberal trade policy of the Makassar Sultanate went in direct opposition to the monopoly practises of the Dutch who were bent on forcing all trade to Jakarta.

In 1669 after a long seige Makassar finally buckled and was placed under Dutch direct rule. The Sultan abdicated, the Portuguese, English and Chinese traders transferred their business elsewhere; the more enterprising Malays, Bugis and Makassarese dispersed to other ports of the island world that was Muslim based. The Bugis propped the embattled Johor Lama Sultanate at the beginning of the eighteenth century in Riau-Lingga. The Bugis of Luwu established the Selangor dynasty on the west coast of the Malay peninsula in the middle of that century. They continuously arrived in their sailing vessels and made their presence felt in the Straits of Melaka.

CONCLUSION

The Malay archipelago is central to the Asian trade system that

51 Anthony Reid, 1981, "A Great Seventeenth Century Indonesian Family: Matoaya and Pattingalloang of Makassar", Masyarakat Indonesia, Vol. 8, No. 1, p. 16.
52 India Office Library, Factory Records Celebes, 1613-74, f. 35.
53 John Villiers, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

dominated much of the recorded history. It was in Asia that continental European traders came to seek their fortunes. In the early centuries the islands, straits and seas of Southeast Asia were passage ways for east-west trade. Participation was limited to the supply of essentials for long-distance seaborne traders and resources that had attracted markets outside the island world. It was during the Islamic Age in the archipelago that these islands were identified as trading entrepots where east and west merchants arrived for exchange. Sultanates emerged and either controlled key trading routes and in other instances were established on strategic islands that politically dominated an economic zone which provided economic resources for international trade. The fifteenth century Melaka Sultanate, the sixteenth century Brunei Sultanate, the seventeenth century Makassar Sultanate and the eighteenth century Riau-Lingga and Terengganu Sultanates were all located on the international trade route. The Sulu Sultanate centred on the island of Maimbung in the Sulu Sea through these centuries served as the gathering point of economic resources in its vast territories for the China market. Trade, statecraft and Islam were inseparable as Muslim merchants economically dominated Asian trade and Islamic politics strategically controlled key stations along the international trade route that passed through the island world.

The nineteenth century is a century of the dismemberment of Asia amongst European powers. It is the culmination of earlier centuries of European presence when these traders participated in the Asian seaborne commerce for commodities that had European markets. In that century the markets that once made Asian history changed dramatically. The markets that once made Asia collapsed and was replaced by the market needs of industrial Europe. The Muslim merchants were left out from the carrying trade. They were replaced by European, Chinese and to a lesser extent Japanese companies. It was in this century that the mode of carrying commodities changed. The age of sailing ships was eclipsed by steam vessels that were not dependent on seasonal winds and daily tides. The steam vessels used coal and later oil as fuel and in these two commodities the Muslim merchants were not involved.

The European industrial markets required raw materials that were entirely different from the earlier Asian market needs. The forest produce, the marine produce and spices were replaced by rubber and palm oil plantations, timber logging and mining concerns to serve industries. The British ruled Malay peninsula and the Dutch ruled island of Sumatra were the two key resource base islands in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The sun had set over the Sulu Sea, Celebes Sea, Banda Sea, Java Sea and the South China Sea. The Straits of Melaka and the island port of Singapore and Jakarta in west Java emerged as the new centres for the organisation of finance, transport, manpower and production. The geographical shift in economic production for European markets was from the eastern sectors of the archipelago to the

western. There occurred an unprecedented migration from Sulawesi, Banjarmassin and Java to the Malay peninsula and the island of Sumatra. They came as the work-force for the plantation, mining, transport and other sectors of the colonial economy.

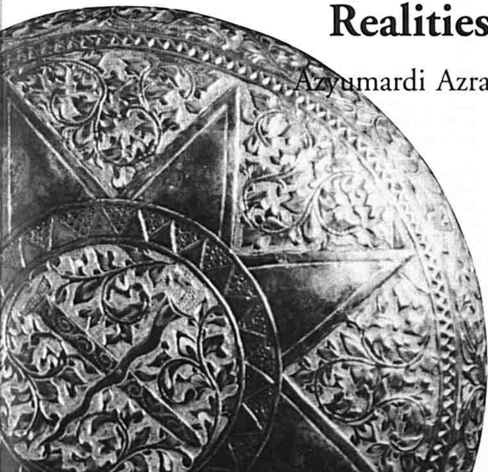
The colonial state created economic conditions necessary for the expansion of capitalist development. The manpower needs for development of the industrial sectors of the economy were met by massive migration of workers from India, China and Java. They swelled in numbers on the island of Sumatra and the west coast of the Malay peninsula and radically altered the demographic pattern of these islands. The inland areas further from the coast were pioneered for plantations, mining and timber extraction. The industrial infra-structure included an urban belt of towns supplied with the modern amenities of piped water and electricity and linked by road, rail, telephone and telegraph to major ports.

In the twentieth century all major roads on the Malay peninsula led to the Johor causeway and into the island port of Singapore. The same may be said of the railway system that developed which ended for all export commodities and began for all import commodities at Singapore for the Malay peninsula. The telegraph system had Singapore as the terminal which linked island Southeast Asia with England, India, China and Australia. The water supply that was so vital for the port and municipality of the island of Singapore was obtained from neighbouring Johor. The resource scarce island of Singapore emerged as the metropolis of capitals for Southeast Asia. All seas, straits, and islands in Southeast Asia led to the island of Singapore. The port of Singapore was designed and engineered to meet the technological advances of international shipping. In 1927 the port of Singapore was the berth of the British navy at Sembawang. It was the most fortified port of the Malay archipelago. The Malays at the new centre of Southeast Asia were confined to Kampung Gelam and Gellang on the island of Singapore. The land and the sea of Sultan Ala'uddin, Makassar was divided amongst the colonial powers. The Malays of the archipelago were at the periphery of the new economic order that encapsulated the region.

Chapter 4

Education, Law, Mysticism: Constructing Social Realities

Azyumardi Azra



Chapter 4

Education, Law, Mysticism: Constructing Social Realities

The history of Islamic religious institutions in the Malay world is very complex. There is a great deal of diversity in the Islamic institutions among the various Muslim societies in this part of the world. To a large extent this diversity is closely related to the differences in the process of Islamization. The extent of the adoption of Islam, as well as its religious institutions, in one part of the region or another depended not only on the dates of its introduction, but more importantly on the nature of local cultures that Islam encountered.

Thus, in the coastal regions which generally belonged to the maritime culture and were largely exposed to cosmopolitan life, Islam was able to penetrate more easily and deeply than in the interior regions which practised a more enclosed agrarian culture; Islamic religious institutions were more deeply rooted in coastal regions. Thus, a meticulous observer were able see some differences. For instance, Islam and its religious institutions in Phanrang (on the central coast of the Champa region) differ from that of Leran (on the northern coast of east Java) and Pasai (on the northeastern coast of Sumatra), or Melaka (on the western coast of the Malay Peninsula), and that of the central Javanese kingdom of Matarram.[1]

To elaborate the point further, the inhabitants of the coastal region which economically depended much on international trade, in one way

1 A.H. Johns, 1981. "From Coastal Settlements to Islamic School and City: Islamization on Sumatra, the Malay Peninsula and Java". *Hamdard Islamicus*, 4, 1, p. 5.

or another, appears to have accepted Islam and developed its religious institutions. In this way, they were able to continue receiving Muslim traders who had been visiting and trading in the Malay world since the seventh century. By converting to Islam, local ruler could to some extent implement Islamic commercial regulations which in turn would create a more favorable atmosphere for trade. An example of this was Parameswara, a Melaka ruler who converted to Islam in order to attract Muslim traders to come to his newly built port.

In a rather sharp contrast with that urban milieu were the inhabitants of the interior area. They lived mostly on their own agriculture products, not from revenues of international trade. Therefore there was no need for them to adopt and implement such internationally accepted Islamic trade regulation. Furthermore, in contrast with most inhabitants of the harbour-towns, who were more susceptible to the adoption of a universal and abstract religion, like Islam, the inhabitants of the interior were more strongly attached to local beliefs and deities. They believed their livelihood dependent very much on their relationship with supernatural beings.

It is clear that the great diversity in the Malay archipelago, not only in its population distribution but also its socio-cultural, economic and politics which made it impossible to formulate any single theory on the formation of Islamic institutions or periodization common to the whole region. To impose such a theory, if any, would only mean to simplify or even distort the historical course of Islam and its religious institutions in the region.

The adoption and development of Islamic religious institutions in the Malay world in many ways may be categorized as "adhesion". This was because, many of the inhabitants in the Malay region accepted Islam without discarding their old beliefs and practices. According to most Malay history, the people by and large had adopted Islam because they believed it could satisfy their material and natural needs. To most of them, Islam simply provided an additional set of beliefs and practices which could be used for certain purposes. Most of the early preachers Islam, more prominent in Java, for instance, the 'Nine Saint' (*Wali Sanga*), had introduced Islam to the local population not in all prophetic exclusiveness, but mostly in conformity with its local beliefs and superstitions or animistics beliefs. The famous *Wali Sanga* ('Nine Saints') of Java were successful in attracting large number of people to Islam, through various means such as by using amulets, charms and other supernatural tricks.

The adoption and development of Islamic religious institutions were an evolutionary process. While Islam gained the acceptance of many indigenous rulers - thus establishing an "Islamic political institutions" - there is little doubt that Islam and its religious institutions were only accepted by the masses. The conversion to Islam of various ethnic groups in the Malay world was indeed not a single act of total acceptance

of Islam, but a long process towards a greater conformity to the exclusiveness of Islam. This process, which can be clearly observed, still continues up to the present day. Various factors can be attributed to this process: the growth of Islamic educational institutions or tradition of learning; the establishment of Islamic legal institutions; religious and intellectual contacts with Islamics centres in the Middle East; and social, economic and political changes.

In certain cases, however, the search for conformity involved a painful process. There are always certain elements within the Muslim society, particularly among the scholars (*ulama*), who aspired to accelerate the process by forcing the people to abandon all beliefs and practices which were un-Islamic. The persistence of certain practices and beliefs which were viewed as genuine and authentic provided *raison d'etre* for some scholars in the Malay world to carry out religious reforms. The process began to gain momentum as early as the second half of the seventeenth century.

It is not easy to assess the degree of conformity of the Muslim Malays to Islam before the seventeenth century. One can hardly find sufficient evidence which could provide of such conformity. Such evidence as the establishment of Islamic religious institutions, the implementation of the *shari'ah* laws and the establishment of legal and other Islamic institutions. A minimal form of conformity was perhaps the changing of their names after their conversion to Islam. Many Malay rulers had shown their conformity to Islam by adopting Muslim names after their conversion. However the majority still retained their former names. Even some of the celebrated 'Nine-Saints' appeared to have retained their former names and popular with it.

However, we do not have much informations on the name changing, particularly among the notables or dignitaries, let alone those at the lower level of the Malay society. There is no such thing as biographical dictionary of notables which could shed some light on the process of the adoption of "Islamic" way of life, at least as reflected in the adoption of Muslim names.

There are of course indigenous historiographies such as the *hikayat* (annals) and *babad* (chronicles) and the like which provided some informations on the process of development of Islamic institutions and life. But those accounts were primarily about the kings and their royal families or state officials; it had no interest on matters relating to the masses. As a result, most of the chronicles related in detailed the conversion of rulers, their royal families and other dignitaries to Islam, but provided very little accounts of the development of various Islamic religious institutions.

Thus, local histories contained no clear and direct accounts of the socio-religious life of their society. When they do provide pieces of such description, one has to take into consideration the possibility that the texts have been altered by copyists over the years in order to suit them

to more current interpretations and practices of Islam. As a result, they may not entirely reflect the actual socio-religious life of the early Muslim societies in the Malay world. Having considered those possibilities, it is not surprising if some scholars questioned the realibility of the inormations.

Be that as it may, we should not totally ignore such accounts. Regardless of their authenticity, the documents do provided us with some informations on the nature of the early Malay societies and their socio-religious institutions. It also gave us some ideas as to the ways in which those institutions transform itself through the passage of time.

THE SULTANATES, ISLAMIC LEARNING AND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

In assessing the process of the early development of Islamic religious institutions in the Malay world, one should be very cautious before making any generalizations or drawing a conclusions. Marsden correctly reminded us of the danger of generalization that were often made by travellers. Conclusions had been drawn that the inhabitants of the coastal region were all Muslims and that those of the interior were pagans. They further suggested that Islamic religious institutions were much stronger in the coastal region than those in the interior. Such distinction, although it has some degree of truth in it is not always true, and as a result, create unnecessary confusion.[2]

Some scholars, mostly the orientalists of early Islam in the Malay world were of the opinion that the influence of Islam on the indigenous population was minimal and the existence of Islamic social and religious institutions were far from being substantial. Landon, for instance, argued that the influence of Islam was simply a veneer over the Malay indigenous culture.[3] In almost the same tone, Van Leur also refused to admit the influence Islam had in the region. To him Islam was merely a "flaking glaze on the massive body of the indigenous civilization".[4] In Winstedt's opinion, any influence of Islam, which was already very limited, had in fact become mixed with Hindu-Buddhist beliefs.[5] Writing specifically on the political culture of four nineteenth century Malay Muslim states, Gullick concludes that Islam was not to any significant extent a state religion. In his view there is no evidence that Islamic legal doctrine was an effective law and there were no *kathis*

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2 W. Marsden, 1811. *The History of Sumatra*, repr. ed., London: p. 40.

3 See, K.P. Landon, 1949. *Southeast Asia: Crossroad of Religions*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, pp. 134–64.

4 J.C. Van Leur, 1955. *Indonesian Trade and Society*, The Hague: van Hoeve, pp. 73–74.

5 See, R.O. Winstedt, 1951. *The Advent of Muhammadanism in the Malay Peninsula and Archipelago, JMBRAS*, 24, pp. 72–73.

(*Kadis*) in these states until the era of British protection.[6]

Other scholars have been in bitter disagreement with such views. One of the leading opponents is Naguib al-Attas, who entirely rejected it. In his opinion, the influence of Islam in the Malay world has been very great. Islam has transformed both the socio-cultural and spiritual tradition of Malay society. The coming and spread of Islam in this region constituted an enlightenment for the Malays, for it particularly encouraged an intellectualism not manifested in the Hindu-Buddhist era. The moving away of the Malays from the Hindu-Buddhist religious cultural systems to Islam had been described by al-Attas as being like the change of European world-view from that of ancient Greek mythology to the world of reason and enlightenment.[7]

Van Nieuwenhuijze, a Dutch scholar, maintains almost the same view. He asserts that Islam has been an important ingredient in Malay culture and has functioned as a major means of indentification for Malay cultural identity.[8] Majul also believes that the introduction and spread of Islam in the Malay world as a whole have affected the entire structure of Malay society, particularly in the political, cultural, religious and social realms.[9] As we will show throughout this section, this later view is much more plausible than the former ones.

Most scholars are in accord that among the earliest parts of the western region of the Malay world which converted to Islam was the eastern area of North Sumatra. But how deep was the influence of Islam upon the people's life there? Marco Polo, that great Venetian traveller, who was in the area in 1292 informed us that of the region's eight kingdoms only Ferlect, now known as Perlak, "had been turned to the law of Mahomet", by way of their intercourse with "Saracen merchants" who traded there.[10] Marco Polo further estimates that their number was very limited; the Muslim population consisted of the towns' inhabitants only. He makes no mention, however, of their religious institutions and life. According to his observation, the inhabitants of the other seven kingdoms were still idolaters with animistic beliefs and barbaric life styles.

Marco Polo's accounts obviously are not entirely correct. For instance, Samara, whose inhabitants he calls "wild idolaters", had in fact

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6 J.M. Gullick, 1965. *Indigenous Political Systems in Western Malaya*, London: Athlone Press, p. 139.

7 See, S.M.N. Al-Attas, 1969. *Preliminary Statement on a General Theory of Islamization of the Malay-Indonesia Archipelago*, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, pp. 4–7.

8 C.A.O. van Niewenhuijze, 1964. "The Legacy of Islam in Indonesia" *Moslem World*, 59, p. 210.

9 C.A. Majul, 1966. "The Role of Islam in the History of the Filipino People", AS, 4, II p. 308.

10 Marco Polo, *The Book of Ser Marco Polo: The Venetian concerning the Kingdoms and Marvels of the East*, 2 vols., ed. & trans. Sir Henry Yule, third (ed.), rev. by Henry Cordier, London: John Murray, 1903, II, p. 284.

adopted Islam as early as 1204. The king of Samara, whose region was later identified as Samudra-Pasai, was converted to Islam by a wandering Arab, Sheikh Isma'il, who came from Arabia *via.* the Malabar coast. According to the Chinese sources, in 1282 Samudra-Pasai had sent its ambassadors, Husayn and Sulayman, to the Chinese emperor.[11] Furthermore, one of the best known Samudra-Pasai rulers, Sultan al-Malik al-Salih, had died in 1297, seven years after the visit of Marco Polo. For all these reasons, there was no doubt that Samudra-Pasai had converted to Islam long before 1292; Marco Polo failed to observe not only the existence of Muslim population in the Sultanate but also the development of Islamic religious institutions there.

As far as the Islamic religious institutions were concerned, the Sultanate of Samudra-Pasai provided a good example. The Sultanate had flourished as the most important Muslim political power. It was also the earliest centre of Islamic education throughout the western part of Malay world since the last decade of the thirteenth century until it was occupied by the Portuguese in 929 A.H./1521 A.D.

According to Tome Pires in his *Suma Oriental* which was completed in 1511, Samudra-Pasai was a powerful and prosperous kingdom. Its realms included almost the whole eastern coastal region of Northern Sumatra as well as the interior area close to the frontiers with the Minangkabau kingdom to the south. Pasai was a cosmopolitan city with a great number of Muslim traders from Arabia, Turkey, Persia, Gujarat, Bengal, Siam, the Malay Peninsula, and Java. Pires had estimated that the population of Samudra-Pasai as many as 20 000 inhabitants.[12] The city dwellers were so proud of their city that many of them identified it with the island of Sumatra as a whole. Pires had this to say:

> "The kingdom of Pase has the city which is called Pase and some people called it Camotora (Sumatra). Because there is nothing else so important in the whole island, the city has thus given its name to the whole island, being called by either of these names".[13]

About half a century after the visit of Marco Polo, Samudra-Pasai was again visited by another great traveller, Ibn Battutah, who provided very valuable informations on its Islamic educational institutions and religious life. He stayed in Samudra-Pasai for two and a half months: two weeks on his way to China and two months for his return trip to the Middle East in 1345. When he anchored in Pasai's harbour on his way

11 See, H.J. de Graaf, 1979 "Southeast Asian Islam to the Eighteenth Century", in P.M. Holt *et al.*, (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Islam*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, vol. 2 A, p. 125: M. Nakahara, 1984, "Muslim Merchants in Nanhai", in R. Israil & A.H. Johns (eds.), *Islam in Asia: Volume II Southeast and East Asia*, Boulder: Westview, p. 6.

12 See, Tome Pires, 1944. *The Suma Oriental of Tome Pires*, (ed.) & trans., Armando Cortesoa London: Hakluyt, p. 142-43.

13 *Ibid.*

to the Far East, Ibn Battutah was warmly welcomed by the deputy of the Shahbandar or as the Arabic text has it, "*naib sahib al-bahr*", who granted him permission to land. He led him to the wooden-walled town of Pasai, located a few miles upriver from the harbor settlement. There he was introduced to several Muslim legal scholars (*fuqaha*) coming from other parts of the Muslim world such as *al-Kadi* al-Sharif Amir al-Shirazi (from Shiraz, Persia), Taj al-Din al-Isfahani (from Isfahan) and several others. In Pasai, he was also hosted and accompanied by Amir al-Dawlasah, whom Ibn Battutah happened to have met in Delhi, the seat of the Moghul Sultanate, several years earlier when Dawlasah were there on a diplomatic mission for Pasai.[14]

The extent to which Islamic life had been practiced in Samudra-Pasai can further be seen in the personality of its rulers. At the time of Ibn Battutah's visit, the ruler was Sultan al-Malik al-Zahir, the third in the line of succession of the Samudra-Pasai rulers, that extended back some years before 1297. According to Ibn Battutah, the Sultan was a follower of the *Shafi'i* sect and was very fond of studying and discussing matters particular concerning Islamic law. The great Muslim traveller was impressed by the Sultan's humility; he usually went on foot, not riding a horse or an elephant back as most other Malay rulers did, to the Sultanate grand mosque to attend the *Jum'ah* congregational prayer and religious discussion.

It was in the mosque, after the prayer, that Ibn Battutah met the Sultan for the first time. He was sitting on the floor; on his right were the *kadi* and his students, and he invited Ibn Battutah to sit on his left, posing questions about the situation at the Moghul court in Delhi and his travels. The lively discussion on religious matters continued, usually lasting until late in the afternoon, with full participation of the Sultan.[15] On account of the Sultan's manners and erudition, it was not surprising that Ibn Battutah had described him as an exemplary figure among the many Muslim rulers he had met in various parts of the Muslim world.

Those accounts clearly showed us that it was in Samudra-Pasai that the two basic forms of Islamic educational institutions took roots. As also the case in the development of Islamic educational institutions in the Middle East in the early days of Islam, the first of these institutions were the mosques and *halqah* (study circles). The mosque the centres of Islamic rituals ('ibadah); but since the time of the Prophet it had functioned as a place of learning where the Muslim community were thought the various aspects of Islam.

The *halqah* which were normally attached to the mosques, could be

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14 See, Ibn Battutah, *Rihlah Ibn Battutah*, (ed.) Talal Harb, 1987. Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, pp. 619–21; *Voyages d'Ibn Bathouthah*, trans. C. Defremery & B.R. Sanguinetti, 1879 Paris: Impimerie Nationale, IV, pp. 229–34; R.E. Dunn 1989, *The Adventures of Ibn Battutah: A Muslim Traveller in the Fourteenth Century*, Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 257–58.

15 Ibn Battutah, *Rihlah*, pp. 620–21.

divided into three categories; those designated for children to study rudimentary teachings of Islam; those reserved for students at the more advanced level; and those specialized in the study of a particular branch of Islamic disciplines. The *halqah* were headed by a senior teacher (*sheikh*) who were assisted by several assistants. They were usually appointed either by the ruler or the Muslim communities themselves. Thus, a *halqah* were usually centred around a sheikh who had attracted students to his *halqah* by his erudition and piety.

The Samudra-Pasai case reflected that both the mosques and *halqah* were established under the patronage of the sultan. Undoubtedly, the sultan's interest in religious matters had attracted many scholars to come to Samudra-Pasai. This, in turn, contributed much to the rise of Samudra-Pasai as the earliest centre of Islamic education and learning in the Malay world. The presence of Muslim scholars from outside of the Malay world in Samudra-Pasai indicated that religious life in the Sultanate was quite dynamic. This had earned Samudra-Pasai fame; it attracted students from various parts of the Malay world. One of the best known students who "graduated" from Samudra-Pasai was Nur al-Din Ibrahim Mawlana Izra'il or Nur Allah, who was later better known as *Sunan* Gunung Jati, one of the celebrated 'Nine Saints'.[16] It was said that after pursuing his study in Samudra-Pasai, Nur al-Din travelled to Java where he devoted himself to preaching Islam. As a result, he had been credited with converting almost the whole population of West Java to Islam and was the founder of the Sultanates of Cerebon and Banten.

The fact that Samudra-Pasai flourished as the most important centre of Islamic education and learning in this period was also confirmed by contemporary local sources. It can even boast as the first Muslim state to have produce the oldest Malay historical work called the *Hikayat Raja-raja Pasai* (lit., History of Pasai Kings). The literature contained historical accounts of Samudra-Pasai between the year 1250-1350, covering events during the reigns of Sultans Malik al-Salih, al-Malik al-Zahir, and the latter's son, Ahmad.[17]

The *Hikayat Raja-raja Pasai* provided us not only with accounts of the prosperity of the Samudra-Pasai court, but also informations on the socio-political and religious lives of the Sultanate. For instance, the Sultanate is officially called "*Dar al-Islam*" (Abode of Peace),[18] implying a contrast to the "*Dar al-Harb*" (Abode of War), the realms of the *kafir* (unbelievers). Meanwhile, the Sultans from the time of the conversion of

16 See, B.J.O. Schrieke, 1955. *Indonesian Sociological Studies*, 2 parts, The Hague & Bandung: van Hoeve, II, pp. 261-62.

17 R.O. Winstedt, 1938. "The Chronicle of Pasai", *JMBRAS*, 16, II p. 24; *A History of Classical Malay Literature*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1969, 155-56.

18 *Hikayat Raja-raja Pasai* (ed). & trans. A.H. Hill, 1960. *JMBRAS*, 33 pp. 58, 61-62, 64. Henceforth, *Hikayat Raja-raja Pasai*, pp. 61-62, 64. Henceforth, *Hikayat Raja-raja Pasai*.

Merah Silau (al-Malik al-Salih) had styled themselves with the politico-religious ephitet "*zill Allah fi al-'alam*" (God's shadow on earth),[19] commonly used by Muslim rulers in the Middle East in the medieval time.

Further information on the religious life of the rulers indicated that Islam had penetrated much deeper into the fabric of the society. Thus, when Sultan al-Malik al-Salih was lying on his deathbed, he whispered his last wish to his grandchildren to "enjoin good and eschew evil" (*al-amr bi al-ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar*). He also summoned his viziers, ministers, chiefs and court officials an order to enthrone his son, al-Malik al-Mansur to be his successor. To all of them he gave his last injunctions, among others, to enforce the law of the Qur'an and prevent anything which ran contrary to the Holy law (*shari'ah*). In short, they should obey the all commandments of God.[20]

Similar injunctions were also given by Sultan al-Malik al-Mahmud (d. 1326) to his son, Sultan Ahmad, when he was very sick and felt that he would soon be leaving this worldly life:

> My son, in light of my eyes and fruit of my heart, take that while you are ruler you fulfill all the commandments given to you by God and His Prophet, and that you eschew the things which are forbidden by them. Do not transgress the commandments of God the Exalted or the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad.... So conduct yourselves that you are always on your guard against the things which are not in accordance with the Holy law [*shari'ah*].[21]

All these accounts to some degree reflect the entrenchment of Islam in the Sultanate of Samudra-Pasai. It showed us that the practice of the Islamic faith had gone beyond the adoption of Muslim names and Islamic terms but more importantly it had reached a stage where the *shari'ah* laws was in fact put into practised. However, one must bear in mind that this does not necessarily mean that all things that were un-Islamic or contrary to the *shari'ah* had diminished. The *Hikayat Raja-raja Pasai* had laid down that there were certainly deviations by the rulers from the commands of God. There were several examples of these: the abduction of beautiful women by Sultan al-Malik al-Mahmud, the killing of Sayyid Asma al-Din who opposed such an unlawful action, and the plot by Sultan Ahmad to murder Beraim Bapa, his vizier.[22]

Samudra-Pasai in its heyday was highly respected in the Malay world as an authority on religious matters and Islamic learnings. Another Malay literature, the *Sejarah Melayu* (lit., "Malay history"), elaborated further on this. It had recorded an incident which occured during the

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19 *Ibid.*, pp. 58, 65.
20 *Ibid.*, pp. 65-66.
21 *Ibid.*, pp. 73, 133-34.
22 *Ibid.*, pp. 69-79, 84-93.

reign of Sultan Mahmud Shah (1488–1511). There arose a discord among Muslims in Melaka over an intricate theological issue regarding the view that one who believed that God is not the Creator and Preserver of eternity was an infidel, and that one who maintained that God does not have these attributes was also an infidel. No Muslim scholar in Melaka could satisfactorily solved the complicated issue and thus the Sultan of Pasai was consulted and gave his explication.[23] Curiously enough, the *Sejarah Melayu* provided no account of what the explication was.

Another interesting case which reflected the authority of Samudra-Pasai on religious matters was also elaborated in the *Sejarah Melayu.* It related that Mawlana Abu Ishaq, a scholar in Makkah had written a book entitled *Durr Manzum.* His student named Mawlana Abu Bakr took the book to Melaka as a gift to Sultan Mansur Shah (r. 1456–77). The people of Melaka however, found the book difficult to understand, particularly because it was written in Arabic. The Sultan, who was eager to understand its contents, ordered his court officials to send the book to Samudra-Pasai to be translated and interpreted. When the request was fulfilled by a scholar named Tuan Pematakan in Samudra-Pasai, the work together with its Malay translation and interpretation was sent back to Melaka. The Sultan was very pleased with it and showed it to Mawlana Abu Bakr, who praised the expositor for his excellent explication.[24]

In another incident, according to the *Sejarah Melayu,* Sultan Mansur Shah consulted scholars in Samudra-Pasai to explain a theological problem as to whether the inhabitants of heaven and hell would remain in their respective places forever. Again, the question was sent to Pasai and was answered by two *ulama,* Tun Makhdum and Tun Hasan.[25] These examples suggested the important role of Samudra-Pasai as the first recorded Islamic centre of learning in the Malay world. There were also evidence of the close relationship among the Muslim communities in the Malay world as far as religious matters were concerned.

The religious life in Samudra-Pasai should not be interpreted as being the same throughout the whole of Sumatra, let alone the whole Malay world. While in Samudra-Pasai, Islamic religious life were deeply rooted, in other parts of Sumatra Islam was still in its early stages of development.

Even though during the visit of Marco Polo most part of Sumatra was still "heathen", yet Islam had made considerable progress on the island and was making further inroads to the interior. A Chinese traveller who visited Sumatra in 1413, for instance, told us that all the

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23 Winstedt, "The Chronicle" p. 127; *Sejarah Melayu* or Malay Annals, trans C.C. Brown, 1970, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press pp. 148–49.

24 *Sejarah Melayu, ibid.*, pp. 148–49.

25 *Ibid.*, pp. 92–93.

natives of Lambri, on the north-eastern coast of Sumatra, were Muslims and were very good people. It had also reported that the king and people of Aru, Lambri's neighbour were Muslims.[26] In the southern part of Sumatra, according to Pires, various areas such Siak, Jambi, Palembang and parts of the Minangkabau had also been Islamized.[27]

Across the Straits, the successor of Samudra-Pasai Sultanate was the Sultanate of Melaka. Despite disagreement over the precise date of the introduction of Islam to Melaka, there is little doubt that by the second half of the fifteenth century it had almost entirely been Islamized.[28] Although Chinese sources had mentioned the existence of Muslims in Melaka in the early fifteenth century,[29] Islam had gained strong momentum only during the reign of Sultan Muzaffar Shah (1445-56). Founded in 1402 by Parameswara, a Srivijaya prince who had been driven out of south-eastern part of Sumatra or the Riau island by the Majapahit forces,[30] Melaka emerged as a famous port when Parameswara in 1414 converted to Islam and married the daughter of the Sultan of Samudra-Pasai's.

The conversion of the ruler marked the official acceptance of Islam as the religion of the Sultanate of Melaka. In this way Melaka had gained Pasai's full recognition and forged an alliance with that dominant state in Sumatra. However, rising like a meteor, by the end of the fifteenth century it had replaced Pasai as the most important international entrepot in the Malay world. Owing to its strategic location and political stability a great number of merchants from the west and east came to trade there. Before long, the Sultanate of Melaka became one of the most prosperous kingdom in the Malay world.

The Sultanate of Melaka took over not only Pasai's position in international trade, but also its prestigious role as an important centre of religious education and learning. One of the main factors behind the rise of Melaka as the leading centre of Islamic learning after Pasai, was the very positive attitude of the Melaka's Sultans toward Islamic learning. Both locals and foreign sources reported that the Sultans of Melaka not only patronized Muslim scholars but studied Islam themselves. Their interest in learning the religion and exhortation to the people to follow

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26 W.P. Groeneveld, 1880. "Notes on the Malay Archipelago and Malacca compiled from Chinese Sources", *VBG*, 39 pp. 94-98.

27 See, Pires, *The Suma Oriental*, pp. 145-65.

28 For further accounts of Melaka history, see, M.Y. Hashim, 1989. *Kesultanan Melayu Melaka*, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, K.S. Sandhu P. Wheatley, 1983, (eds.), *Melaka: The Transformation of a Malay Capital c. 1400-1980*, 2 vols., Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press; C.H. Wakes 1964, "Malacca's Early Kings and the Reception of Islam, *JSEAH*, 5, II.

29 See, Groeneveld, "Note", pp. 123-24; C.H. Wake, "Melaka in the Fifteenth Century: Malay Historical Traditions and the Politics of Islamization", in Sandhu & Wheatley (eds.) *Melaka*, pp. 140-43.

30 See, O.W. Wolters, 1970. *The Fall of Srivijaya in Malay History*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 43ff.

their lead in religious matters contributed significantly to Melaka's fame as a great centre of Islamic learning in the Malay world.[31]

Therefore, many seekers of religious knowledge came to Melaka to study Islam. Pires, for instance, informed us that the Sultans of Pahang, Kampar, and Indragiri together with some of their relatives studied Islam in Melaka under the sponsorship of Sultan 'Ali' al-Din Ri'ayat Shah (r. 1477–88).[32] Many leading Javanese scholars were also reported to have pursued their Islamic studies in Melaka. Sunan Bonang, one of the 'Nine Saints' of Java, was said to have also studied in Melaka. Sunan Kalijaga, another member of the 'Nine Saints', together with another man named Sheikh Sutabris, were believed to have studied Islam in Pulau Upih, one of the so-called "Javanese colonies" in Melaka.[33]

As for the rulers of Melaka themselves, it appears that they did show some special interest in Islam. The *Sejarah Melayu*, for instance, reported that after Sri Maharaja (r. 1424–44) converted to Islam and adopted the name of Sultan Muhammad Shah, he studied Islam under the guidance of Sayyid 'Abd al-'Aziz, and appealed to his subjects to follow his lead.[34] Moreover, one of Sultan Mansur's famous teachers was Mawlana Abu Bakr, who brought the book Durr Manzum, a work of his teacher Mawlana Abu Ishaq, to the attention of the Sultan. Abu Bakr had praised the Sultan for his great interest and progress in his study of Islam.[35]

It was also reported that Sultan Mahmud Shah (r. 1488–1511) and his son, Sultan Ahmad, studied Islam with another scholar named Mawlana Kadi Sadr Jahan. The scholar, apparently came from the Middle East, seemed to have been one of the leading teachers of the Sultanate elite circles. He was believed to have also taught all of Melaka's officials about Islam during the reign of Sultan Mahmud Shah.[36]

As far as Islamic learning in Melaka is concerned, it is apparent that the main institutions were mosques and *halqah*. There is no evidence that other educational institutions had also been established. All accounts tell us only that the Sultans, court officials, and some of the subjects in their pursuit of Islamic learning were involved in lively discussion with scholars. At certain points, when the scholars could not solve intricate religio-theological problems, they would not hesitate to consult and seek advice from another Islamic centre of learning. We have mentioned earlier that Melaka referred several theological problems to Pasai. However, when the latter lost its glory, Melaka soon boasted itself as the most prominent centre of Islamic learning in the Malay world.

The court of Melaka was evidently quite religiously oriented. The

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31 See, D.G.E. Hall, 1964. *A History of Southeast Asia*, London: Macmillan p. 198.
32 Pires, *The Suma Oriental*, p. 251.
33 See, Schrieke, *Indonesian Sociological*, II, pp. 261–62.
34 *Sejarah Melayu* p. 54.
35 *Ibid.*, p. 92.
36 *Ibid.*, p. 148.

Sejarah Melayu again informed us about the religious ceremonies carried out by the court. According to this Malay history there were three official religious ceremonies during the reign of Sultan Muhammad Shah, who was most responsible for instituting court ceremony. The first ceremony was the celebration of the night of *tujuh likur* (the twenty-seventh day of *Ramadhan*, during which the Qur'an is believed to have been revealed by God to the Prophet Muhammad). The second was the celebration of the "feast of breaking fast" (*'Id al-fitr*), and the last was the celebration of the "feast of sacrifices" (*'Id al-adha*). All celebrations were held in the Jami' Mosque in the presence of the Sultan, ministers, and other court officials.[37]

The special role that Melaka played in the development of the tradition of Islamic learning in the Malay world resulted, among others, in intensifying the Islamization process in certain parts of this region. Many preachers of Islam had studied in Melaka, including two of the Nine Saints of Java mentioned earlier. They preached Islam to their own people when they returned home. Having considered the point, it was not surprising that some scholars had claimed that Java was converted to Islam from Melaka.[38] Melaka was also responsible for the Islamization of Johor, Pahang, Jambi, Kampar, Bengkalis, Karimun island, and several other places in the Malay Peninsula.[39] Furthermore, preachers from Melaka were also believed to have been among the earliest propagators of Islam in the Philippine islands.[40]

In addition, the court of Melaka had accelerated the establishment of Islamic life through arranged marriages between members of the royal house and royal families of other Malay states. As a result, a Muslim court was established at Kedah, and Islam became more entrenched at the courts of Kelantan and Indragiri. In other instances, the Sultans of Melaka had conquered other states such as Pahang and Kampar and replaced its rulers with Muslims.[41]

The glory of the Melaka Sultanate came to an abrupt end when it was conquered and colonized by the Portuguese in 1511 A.D. The last ruler of Melaka, Sultan Mahmud, escaped to Pahang, while his son went to Muar, where they planned, but failed, to build a base in their attemps to recapture Melaka. With its downfall, Melaka's position as a centre of Islamic learning also dwindled. Its position as a centre of learning and international trade were assumed by the Sultanate of Acheh. Both Samudra-Pasai and Melaka, however, have presented us with vivid

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37 *Ibid.*, pp. 48-49.
38 Hall, *A History*, p. 198.
39 M.A. Rauf, 1964. *A Brief History of Islam with Special Reference to Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, p. 78.
40 See, C.A. Majul, 1964. "Theories on the Introduction of Islam in Malaysia", Siliman Journal, 2, IV pp. 344-45.
41 J. Kennedy, 1970. *A History of Malaysia*, second edition, London: Macmillan, p. 17.

pictures of an Islamic state, life and education in the Malay world up to the sixteenth century A.D.

THE RISE OF *MEUNASAH, SURAU* AND *PESANTREN*

We are not going to dwell on the political history of the Sultanate of Acheh. It suffices to say that after the fall of Melaka to the Portuguese, Acheh became the centre of Muslim power in the Malay world not only politically and economically but also in Islamic learning.

The sultans of Acheh generally encouraged learning; they patronized men of learning. Therefore a good number of Muslim *ulama* from outside of the Malay region made Banda Acheh, the seat of the Sultanate, their home. They contributed a great deal to the rise of Acheh as one of the most important centers of Islamic education and learning in the Malay world.

We have seen that both in Samudra-Pasai and Melaka most of the educational activities were held at mosques and *halqah*. It was in Acheh that we find new forms of Islamic educational institutions in addition to both mosques and *halqah*. Both local and foreign sources reported that the Sultanate of Acheh had had numerous religious schools at various levels, which were called "*meunasah*" (probably a corrupt form of the Arabic "*madrasah*), "*rangkang*", and "*dayah*". It is difficult to trace the origins of these educational institutions; there was no reliable account as to when they were first established. But it can assume that they gained momentum at least from the reign of the famous Sultan Iskandar Muda onwards.

Meunasah (or *binasah*) was initially a small place of worship which later functioned as elementary schools for children to study the Qur'an and basic teachings of Islam. When the student aspired to further their studies, they could go to the *rangkang* which was the intermediary religious schools established mainly within the compound of the mosques. When they considered that their knowledge were still shallow they could continue their study at the *dayah*, the most advanced religious schools in Acheh. The *dayah* were generally built outside of the mosque complex. Later, some of the *dayah* were turned into special schools by giving special attention to certain subject of Islamic disciplines. Thus, we have the *dayah* of *tafsir* (commentary of the Qur'an), *dayah* of *fiqh* (detailed rules of Islamic law), and the like.[42]

In the early days of these schools, it appears that most of their teachers were wandering sheikhs from the Middle East or from elsewhere outside of the Malay archipelago. Later, many teachers of Achehnese or

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42 K.F.H. van Langen, 1986. *Susunan Pemerintahan Acheh Semasa Kesultanan*, Banda Acheh: PDIA, pp. 12, 31, 45-trans. by Aboe Bakar, 1988 from the Dutch original, "De inrichting van het Atjehsche Staatbestuur onder het Sultanaat", BKI, 5, III, C. Snouck Hurgronje, 1906. *The Achehnese*, trans. A.W.S. O'Sullivan, Leiden: Brill, 1906, 23-32.

Malay origins replaced them. These teachers were generally called "*teungku*" – a local respectable title for one who possessed religious knowledge. Students of the schools, in particular the *dayah*, came not only from Acheh, but also from other areas in the Malay world. The students and teachers usually lived within the compound of the *dayah*. Like the traditional Islamic educational institutions in the Middle East, there was no fixed period of time for the students must spend at certain level of their learnings; and there was no diploma (ijazah) awarded either. Students could come and go as they wished, whenever they feel they had obtained sufficient knowledge that would allowed them to carry out the various religious mission.

Even though students were taught Arabic, but most of the subjects at the *dayah* were delivered in the Achehnese and Malay languages. As a rule, the teachers would read certain Arabic text, and then translated and explicated it in Achehnese or Malay. At the *rangkang* and *dayah*, the students learned not only religious subjects like *fiqh*, *tafsir*, *tawhid*, Arabic or Islamic history, but also geography and simple mathematics.

The *dayah* educational system seemed to inspired students from other areas to set up their own religious schools when they returned to their respective places after their studies in Acheh. One such student was Tuanku Burhan al-Din of Ulakan, a coastal town in the Minangkabau region. Historians agreed that when Burhan al-Din (1646–92) completed his study with the eminent Sheikh 'Abd al-Ra'uf al-Sinkili in Acheh and returned to his hometown in Ulakan, he set up a full-fledged Islamic educational institution called "*surau*".

The Malay term "*surau*" and its contraction "*suro*" is widely used in the Malay world. Linguistically, the word "*surau*" means simply "place", or more specifically "place for worship".[43]

In certain areas in the Malay world, particularly in Minangkabau, surau had become an integral part of the socio-religious system. In pre-Islamic times, the *surau* was built as a place of ancestral worship. Thus, the earliest *surau* was usually set up on a very high posts or at least built higher than its surrounding area. With the coming of Islam, the *surau* also underwent the process of Islamization. In certain areas, the former Hindu-Buddhist *surau*, particularly those which were located in remote places such as on hill top, disappeared rapidly under the influence of Islam. The Islamic *surau* can be found near the residential areas. It became a gathering place for the young men to carry out various activities both religious and otherwise. The term *surau* now generally refers to a small mosque, but not to be used for Friday noon prayer. In other words, it is not a mosque in the usual sense, although it is also used for many other religious activities.

In the Malay Peninsula, the distinction between the functions of

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43 R.A. Kern, 1956. "The Origin of the Malay Surau", *JMBRAS*, 29, 1, p. 179.

surau and mosque is somewhat blurred. As Roff suggested, the *surau* institutionally was a ritual centre, the prayer house for Friday noon services and other sorts of religious activities, including educational purposes. There were two kinds of *surau* in the Malay Peninsula: The "*surau besar*" (large) and the "*surau kecil*" (small).[44]

Based on Roff's description, it seemed that the *surau besar* functioned like a mosque in the Indonesia, and generally both establishments were not deliberately built to be Islamic educational institutions in any real sense. In contrast, the *surau kecil* was usually used for rudimentary religious training such as the recitation of the Qur'an, knowledge on the pillars of the faith (*rukun iman*), the pillars of Islam (Rukun Islam) and the like. In this sense, the religious functions of the *surau kecil* in the Malay Peninsula were similar to those of the *surau* in a narrower sense of the term in Minangkabau, the *meunasah* in Acheh, and the *langgar* in Java. The *surau* as a full-fledged educational institution was somewhat similar to the *pondok* in the Malay Peninsula, or the *pesantren* in Java. In this respect, the *surau* was an Islamic training centre for advanced students.[45]

There is little doubt, however, that the *surau* in early days of Islam was used mainly for the children's elementary religious education. It was only after Burhan al-Din established his *surau* in Ulakan that it became a fully educational institution. Since Burhan al-Din was noted for his erudition and piety, his surau became the sole authority on religious matters throughout the Minangkabau area. It was anathema to question the authority of the *Ulakan surau*. Therefore, it was soon able to attract students from other parts of Sumatra. After completing their studies, the students would returned to their respective regions and some of them had set up their own *surau* as the centres of Islamic education and learning.

In order to have a proper education system the *surau* were divided into several categories based on the number of students enrolled with it as was proposed by Verkerk Pistorious, a Dutch official, who visited the Minangkabau region to observe its educational institution. He divided the surau he visited into three categories: small - with up to 20 students; medium - which had up to 80 students; and big - which had between 100 to 1000 students.[46]

The small *surau* seemed to have been similar characteristics of the

44 P.T.W.R. Roff, 1974. "The Origin and Early Years of the Majlis Ugama", in his (ed.), Kelantan: Religion, Society and Politics in a Malay State, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 108.

45 The accounts of the surau are based mostly on Azyumardi Azra, "The Rise and Decline of the Minangkabau Surau: A Traditional Islamic Educational Institution in West Sumatra during the Dutch Colonial Government", M.A. thesis, Columbia University, 1988.

46 See, A.W.P. Verkerk Pistorious, 1869. "De priester en zijn invloed op samenleving in de Padangsche Bovenlanden", TNI, 3, pp. 423-55.

"*surau mangaji*" – the *surau* for learning the recitation of the Qur'an. This kind of *surau* usually had only one teacher who, also functioned as the *imam* (prayer leader) of the *surau*. The students need not necessarily live in the *surau* itself. In contrast, the medium and big *surau* were establised to provide a complete religious education. In other words, the medium and big *surau* only functioned as the *surau mangaji*, but more importantly as a religious educational centres where a wide range of Islamic knowledge were transmitted to the students.

The big *surau* which were established and developed by a famous *Tuanku* (*sheikh*) attracted literally hundreds and even thousands of students. The big *surau* very often consisted of several buildings; a typical big *surau* during its heyday in the eighteenth century had had at least twenty buildings devoted solely to religious and educational purposes. The *Tuanku sheikh* and his family, and other teachers lived in a special buildings in the *surau* compound. While the students lived in small huts surrounding the main buildings.

Even though the *surau* was initially founded by a *Tuanku sheikh*, usually on *waqf* lands, further expansion and maintenance of the whole complex were supported by the students' parents and members of the Muslim communities through *waqf* and donations. In return, the *surau* community was responsible for the performances of religious services. All these created a symbiotic relationship between the *surau* and Muslim communities. Before the introduction of the Dutch schooling system and, later, the modern Islamic *madrasah*, the *surau* stood as the only educational institution in the Minangkabau region. Thus the *surau* were very crucial in the religious and social lives of the people.

The organization of big *surau* was not very complex. At the very top of the ladder was the *Tuanku sheikh*. He was assisted by his deputies, usually his sons or sons in-law. Under them were the *guru* (teachers) who were either their very senior students or those invited to teach at the *surau* in accordance with their competency and experience. The *Tuanku sheikh* was usually responsible for the teaching of the advanced students; while the *guru* were assigned to teach students of lower grades or the more junior ones.

The *Tuanku sheikh* simbolises the *surau* itself. Thus, the prestige of the *surau* depended heavily on his erudition, piety and charisma. Therefore, it was not unusual that a well-known surau declined rapidly or disappeared after the death of the *Tuanku sheikh*, especially if nobody among his sons or sons in-law was competent enough to continue his work or was fortunate enough to inherit his learning and charisma.

The relationship between the *Tuanku sheikh* or teachers in general with their students was far from simple. The *Tuanku sheikh* in particular was more than a source of knowledge; he was indeed a source of spiritual blessing (*barakah*), without which the knowledge that the students had learned became useless. It was the blessing of the *Tuanku sheikh* that could open the minds and the hearts of the students; and it was also his

blessing that made students' knowledge meaningful. Thus, the blessing of the *Tuanku sheikh* was vital in the pursuit of the sacred religious knowledge. All these formed the basis of their relationship. As a result, the *Tuanku sheikh*/teachers-students networks and relationships extended beyond a particular *surau*. When a student became a teacher himself who later became a *Tuanku sheikh* of his own *surau*, nevertheless remained the spiritual student of his former teachers. His obligation to the teachers was also extended to the latters' sucessors.

The *Tuanku sheikh*/teachers-students relationship as a basis of social order were, more pronounced in a *surau* that was also teaching the *tarekat* (Ar., *tariqah*). In this respect, the *Tuanku sheikh* was the spiritual leader of those wished to intensify their religious devotion through mystical way. He was, an expert in the esoteric and sacred sciences and he was even the intermediary between the devotee and God. Total obedience, that was expressed through a pledged of loyalty (*bay'ah*) to him was essential toward the attainment of the highest gnostic knowledge (*ma'rifah*).

The *surau* in general were also closely associated with the *tarekat*. The great *Surau Ulakan* was also the centre of the *Shattariyyah* Order which was received by Burhan al-Din from al-Sinkili, his revered *sheikh*. Thanks to Burhan al-Din and his *khalifah* (sucessors), the later part of the seventeenth century saw the *Shattariyyah* Order became famous in the Minangkabau. One should not forget, however, that the *Shattariyah* was not the first nor the only tarekat in Minangkabau during this period. When Burhan al-Din returned from Acheh, there was already some followers of the *Naqshabandiyyah* Order in the Minangkabau interior highlands. Another *tarekat*, the *Qadiriyyah* seemed to have also been present in that part of the region in the late eighteenth century.[47]

All these *tarekat* orders had in fact organized their own *surau*. The *surau* with their *tarekat* provided an additional focus of loyalty for their adherents. The *tarekat* were led by the *Tuanku sheikh* of certain *surau* could gathered a large numbers of students around him for the instruction of the faith and practices in accordance with the mystical interpretation of Islam. However, it was not unusual, at least up till the end of the eighteenth century, for students to migrate from one *surau* to another or from one *tarekat* to another. During that period it was no surprise to find the followers of the *Shattariyyah* being also an adherents of the *Naqshabandiyyah* and *Qadiriyyah* orders at the same time.

The students of the *surau* were called "*murid*". It reflected the very nature of the *surau*, for the term *murid* is a sufi terminology, which refers to the novice-disciple of the *tarekat*. In the sufi context, the *murid* received instruction from the *sheikh* or the *khalifah*. The *sheikh* usually could assesed his *murid*, and thus instructed them according to the level

47 Azra, "The Minangkabau Surau", pp. 27-28.

of their intellectual and spiritual capabilities; he knew intuitively when to promote a *murid* from one stage of mystical journey (*maqamat*) to another, and finally as his successor. When a *murid* was deemed fit by the *sheikh* to be his successor, he would be summoned privately and the *sheikh* would then bestowed upon him an *ijazah* or licence to teach, to initiate neophytes into the *tarekat*, and to act as *sheikh* during the *sheikh's* absence.

The students of the *surau* were also known by several names. They were sometimes called "*urang siak*",[48] "*fakih*" (Ar., *faqih*),[49] and *fakir* (Ar., *faqir*). All these terms contain not only sufistic overtones, but also legal ones. The use of these terms became widespread within the *surau* circles after an appeal to "return to the *shari'ah*" gained its momentum among the *surau* circles in Minangkabau toward the end of the eighteenth century. The peaceful reforms proposed by some of the *sheikh* of the *surau*, however, underwent some kind of radicalization, particularly after the return of three *haji* from Makkah in the first years of 1800. This resulted in the outbreak of the *Padri* wars in the first decades of the nineteenth century. Later, the term *murid* was also used to refer to students of both Dutch schooling system and the newly founded Islamic *madrasah*.[50]

To a great degree the *Padri* movement and its relatively long wars were the first major blow on the *surau* education and its *tarekat*. The *Padri*, like the *Wahhabi* in Arabia, condemned the *surau* as the centres of unorthodox and un-Islamic belief and practices. The *Padri* did not stop at that but also burned many *surau* to the ground. Many *Tuanku sheikh* and teachers were killed in wars, left their *surau* neglected. The introduction of the so-called the *sekolah nagari* (state school) educational system by the Dutch in the 1870s was another blow to the *surau*. The *sekolah nagari*, village schools, proved to be very attractive to many sections of Minangkabau society. The final blow to the *surau* came in the early 1900s when some Muslim reformists launched a heavy attacks on the traditional *surau*, and established modern madrasahs and even secular schools instead. This finally put the existence of the *surau* in big question.

Another Islamic educational institution that deserves our attention is the "*pondok pesantren* or simply "*pondok*" or "*pesantren*". It appears that the term *pondok*, literally means "hut", is commonly used in the Malay Peninsula, though it is not uncommon in the archipelago, particularly in Java. The term *pesantren* simply means the "place of the *santri* ", that is, the students of the in the restricted sense of the term. It

48 Taufik Abdullah, 1972. "Modernization in the Minangkabau World: West Sumatra in the Early Decades of the Twentieth Century", in C. Holt (ed.), *Culture and Politics in Indonesia*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, p. 20.

49 *Hikayat Jalal al-Din*, (ed.) by J.J. Hollander 1857 in, *Sjech Djilal-Eddin: Verhaal van de aanvang der Padri-onlusten op Sumatra*, Leiden, pp. 240, 250.

50 See, Azra, "The Minangkabau Surau", pp. 54-55.

its wider meaning, the term "mostly" also refer to more religiously Muslims, as opposed to the "waw" a nominal Muslims. The very term *pesantren* is generally used in Java and in more recent times is also adopted in many Indonesian region. Despite the particular tendency to use either term *pondok* or *peasant* or both at the same time, or both at the same time all refers to traditional Islamic boarding schools.
It is almost impossible to trace the origins and early developments of the *pondok* or *pesantren*. However, some writers argued that this institution, like the *surau* in the Minangkabau, had its origins since the pre-Islamic time. At that time, the *pondok* or *pesantren* was a Hindu-Buddhist monastery used for training and producing religious functionaries. Later, when Islam came, the *pondok* or *pesantren* was Islamized; it was then adapted to suit the Islamic religious purposes.

Thus, little is actually known about the *pondok* or *pesantren* prior the nineteenth century. De Graaf suggested that the earliest *pesantren* in Java was established at Giri, in East Java, by Sunan Giri, one of the celebrated Nine Saints (*Wali Sanga*), who was believed to have played an important role in the Islamization of Java. The *pesantren* in fact constituted a separate Muslim community trained in religious sciences and the propagation of Islam. It was reported that Sunan Giri regularly held discussion on various topics, particularly concerning Islamic theology and mysticism. De Graaf and Atjeh maintained that some students of the Giri Pesantren, after the completion of their training.[51]

Another supposedly early *pesantren*, according to van Bruinessen, was located at the slopes of Mount Karang, in the realm of the Banten Sultanate of West Java. The "*kiyai*", an honorary title as the head of the *pesantren* and other eminent *ulama* in Java, were believed to have composed several early Javanese Islamic texts. The *pesantren* was also further mentioned in a famous Javanese text, *Serat Centhini*. The text reported that a protagonist named Jayengresmi studied at the *pesantren* in the late 1630s or early 1640s under Sheikh Ibrahim bin Abu Bakr or Ki Ageng Karang, a teacher of Arab stock. Van Bruinessen, however, regarded this *pesantren* was more a place for sufistic practices rather than an educational institution.[52]

The rise of several Muslim kingdoms in Java appeared to have stimulated the development of the *pesantren*. As elsewhere in the region, the Muslim rulers felt it was necessary to established Atjeh maintained that some students of the Giri Pesantren, after the completion of their training, became wandering preachers of Islam in the eastern parts of Indonesia.

Another supposedly early *pesantren*, according to van Briunessen,

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51 De Graaf, "Southeast Asian Islam", pp. 132, 135-6; Abu Bakar Atjeh, 1955, *Sedjarah Mesdjid*. Jakarta: T.B. Adil, pp. 25-26.
52 Martin van Bruinessen, "Shari'a Court, Tarekat and Pesantren: Religious Institutions in the Banten Sultanate", typescript, n.d., pp. 13-14.

was located at the slopes of some kind of Islamic learning and educational center. Thus, it was reported that a *pesantren* was established in 1513 in the Sultanate of Demak, became the first Muslim state in Java. During the reign of King Tranggono, several Muslim scholars came to the Demak court; among them was Sunan Fatahillah, one of the 'Nine Saints', who was appointed to teach at the *pesantren* of Demak. It soon attracted students from all over Java. Another Javanese Muslim state, the Sultanate of Pajang (1568-96), was also the focus of Muslim scholars. One of them, Ki Pandang Arang or Kiyai Ageng Panadaran, better known as Sunan Tembayat, founded a mosque and pesantren at Tembayat. Although Sunan Tembayat was not one of the 'Nine Saints' or *Wali Sanga*, he was generally revered as a devoted scholar who spent his life for the propagation of Islam.[53]

Again, the relationship between the *pesantren* and the state was cordial in the Mataram Sultanate. When the Pajang Sultanate declined, the centre of Javanese Muslim state moved to Mataram in 1588. Under the great Sultan Agung (r. 1613-46) the Sultanate Mataram reached its golden age. The Javanese Muslim ruler who was conferred the title of "sultan" by the Sharif of Makkah seemed to have had a special interest on religious matters. Sultan Agung was known, among other, as the ruler who was responsible for instituting the celebration of the '*Id al-Fitr* and the *Mawlid al-Nabi* (the Prophet's birthday) as court ceremonies. Furthermore, the Sultan commanded Muslim scholars to set up mosques and *pesantren* in every towns.

It is fair to assume that the *pesantren* before the nineteenth century were simply a small centre of Islamic education and learning. It seemed inappropriate to view the *pesantren* of the early days as having the same characteristics as the ones functioning as an educational institution in the nineteenth century. There was no doubt, however, that the *pesantren* as centre of Islamic education and learning had played a crucial role not only for the further Islamization of Java, but also in the rise of the santri elements amongst the Javanese Muslim population.

The rise and developments of *pesantren* in central and eastern Java were closely related to the so-called "*desa perdikan*". The term refered to a certain part of the towns or villages which were specially allocated by the rulers for religious purposes and, thus was awarded special priveleges, such as tax exemption. It had been said that this policy was implemented by the Javanese rulers since the time of the Hindu-Buddhist kingdom of Majapahit. With the coming and spread of Islam, the function of the *desa perdikan* was to establish and maintained Muslim cemeteries, mosques and *pesantren*. Having awarded special priveleges, the *desa perdikan* was able to establish and develop a true *pesantren*.

With the expansion of Dutch colonialism in Java, the *desa perdikan*

53 See, H.J. de Graaf & TH. G. TH. Pigeaud, 1985. *Kerajaan-kerajaan Islam di Jawa*, Jakarta: Grafitipers, pp. 69-70.

became safe haven for the *santri* group. They devoted most of their energy for Islamic *dakwah* and education. It was reported that in the early nineteenth century the number of the *pesantren* in Java was 1853 with 16 556 students. However by the end of the century, after the Dutch introduced several Western schooling system, the number of the *pesantren* inflated; there were 14 929 *pesantren* with 222 663 students.[54] The figure showed that the Dutch had failed to suppress the popularity of the *pesantren* education. On the contrary, the *pesantren* grew more rapidly at the time when the Dutch tightened their grips on Indonesia. At this juncture, the *pesantren* were apparently viewed upon by the Muslim population not only as a means for gaining religious knowledge, but more importantly as the bastions of Islamic integrity and identity *vis-a-vis* the Dutch infidels.

The *pesantren* also spread very rapidly in West Java in the nineteenth century. It was reported that many of the *santri* moved from one *pesantren* to another in western Java and also to the *pesantren* of central and eastern Java. Like their counterparts later, the *pesantren* in western Java were isolated from the central authority which were held by the Dutch and their Javanese allies. Avoiding the colonial system was a typical response of the traditional *ulama* and their institutions. This undoubtedly symbolized their silent opposition to foreign rule.

The rapid spread of the *pesantren* and the avoidance by their protagonists of the colonial education system largely contibuted to the rise of divisions within the body of the *ulama* and *santri* communities. A distinctive and substantial group of *ulama* who stood outside the colonial system firmly began to emerged. They were usually called "*kiyai bebas*" (independent *ulama*) who operated mainly in the *pesantren* and *tarekat*. The source of their authority was the community recognition of their erudition and piety, and also their opposition to the Dutch. These independent *kiyai* were very difficult to control; they wandered about from one place to another, spreading *santri* cultural and religious values. For this and other reasons, it was natural that they were subjected to Dutch oppression. On the contrary, there were the *penghulu* - official religious functionaries appointed by the Dutch. This group of *ulama* having been appointed by the Dutch were rejected and avoided by their own fellow Muslims.

The phenomenal growth of the *pesantren* from the nineteenth

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54 Marwan Saridjo, *et al.*, 1980. *Sejarah Pondok Pesantren di Indonesia*, Jakarta: Dharma Bhakti, p. 54. For further accounts of the pesantrens, see, for instance, Hafizh Dasuki, 1974. "The Pondok Pesantren: An Account of Its Development in Independent Indonesia", M.A. thesis, McGill University, 1974; Zamakhsyari Dhofier, 1982. *Tradisi Pesantren: Studi tentang Pandangan Hidup Kiyai*, Jakarta: LP3ES, "Kinship and Marriage among the Javanese Kiyai", Indonesia, 29 April 1980; Manfred Oepen & Wolfgang Karcher (eds.), 1988. *The Impact of Pesantren in Education and Community in Indonesia*, *Jakarta*: P3M, M. Dawam Rahardjo (ed.), 1974. *Pesantren dan Pembaharuan*, Jakarta: LP3ES.

century onwards was the result of religious revivalism in Java, or in the Malay world stemming mainly from the increasing number of Muslims of the region returning from their pilgrimage in Makkah. During 1850s, more than 2000 pilgrims left the Indonesian archipelago for Makkah, together with a smaller but unknown number from the Malay Peninsula. With the opening of Suez Canal in 1869, and the subsequent increase and improvement in steamship services in the Indian Ocean, the figures continued to rise. The peak was in 1895 when more than 11 000 Indonesian Muslims made the pilgrimage. The returning *haji* devoted their lives to the establishment and maintenance of Islamic religious institutions, including the *pesantren.*

In contrast to the rapid growth of the *pesantrèn* in Java in the nineteenth century, the *surau* in the Minangkabau experienced a relative decline. This was due to the fact that the nature of Islam and local culture in Java differed from that of western Sumatra. The Minangkabau of western Sumatra responded more quickly to the new ideas and institutions that was introduced by either western rulers or reformist Muslims. On the other hand, Javanese Muslims tended to resist new ideas and institutions brought by the Dutch and reformist Muslims. Instead, they held fast to their traditional religious views and institutions. This was also clear in more recent times. When the *surau* disappeared, some had adopted the very term "*pesantren*" itself at the expense of the term "*surau*", the *pesantren* in Java being the bastions of Islamic traditionalism. With some *ad hoc* innovation, the *pesantren* had gained new impetus.

When the *pesantren* finally established itself, there were at least four types of *pesantren.* Firstly, the small *pesantren,* which like the small *surau,* carried out instruction only for basic religious knowledge. These small *pesantren,* more appropriately called *langgar,* functioned as the small *surau* in the Minangkabau. Students of the small *pesantren* apparently did not live in the buildings. These students were known as the "*santri kalong*" - students who came to the *pesantren* only during the study session only. Secondly, the intermediate *pesantren,* that is, those that provided religious knowledge on Islam at the intermediate level. Accordingly, the students at this level were taught special religious books on the subjects. Most of the students at the intermediate *pesantren* lived in the *pesantren* complex itself. Students who lived in the pesantrens were called the *santri mukim,* which literally meant "permanent students". Senior teachers of these *pesantren* were called "*kiyai anom*". Thirdly, the advanced *pesantren* which were reserved for advanced students only. In these *pesantren,* students who resided within the compound were further taught knowledge on various Islamic disciplines in detail. Senior teachers of these *pesantren* were known as "*kiyai sepuh*" or "*kanjeng kiyai*". Finally, the specialized *pesantren* was where the students studied certain particular branches of religious knowledge in greater detailed. It was in these *pesantren* that the students were able to gain their specialty in

certain branch of the Islamic disciplines.

Such divisions, it seemed, were applicable throughtout the history of the *pesantren* up to this day. However, it is not unusual to find big *pesantren* carrying out all four levels of instruction. Thus, the division was not fullproof. The education at the *pesantren*, like that of the *surau*, was generally very loose. Students could move from one level to another or even from one *pesantren* to another as they wished. And they could also stay at one of the *pesantren* as long as they desired.

On the whole, the *pesantren* had had similar characteristics as the large *surau* in the Minangkabau. Instructions were carried out mostly in similar manner. As for the leadership, the *pesantren* was led by a *kiyai*, who was usually the founder of the *pesantren*. Under him were the senior teachers who were largely responsible for the carrying out of instructions with the aid of selected senior students. The leadership of the *pesantren* was traditionally hereditary, that is, from the *kiyai* to his son or his son-in-law. Through scholarly connections and marriages the *kiyai* were able to established an intricate networks of the *pesantren*.

Lastly, most *pesantren* were closely associated with the *tarekat*. In fact they were the bastions of the *tarekat* or *tasawwuf* in general. The *tarekat* was one of the most distinctive characteristics of the *pesantren*. One ought to be careful, however, not to conclude that all members of the *pesantren* were also adherents of *tarekat*. The *tarekat*, as a rule, were reserved for the *kiyai* and senior teachers only; not for lay students. This policy was implemented to avoid religious confusion on students who were not as yet ready to understand and practice the mystical way.

As for the *pondok* in the Malay Peninsula, there have been suggestions that it originated from Patani, a state in southern Thailand. According to some local accounts, one of the celebrated Patani scholars, Dawud bin 'Abd Allah al-Patani (b. 1740) studied at the *pondok* in his homeland before travelling to the Haramayn in his pursuit for Islamic knowledge. Matheson and Hooker pointed out that the *pondok* in Patani were very prestigious and that their more advanced students were welcomed as teachers anywhere.[55] I would argue, however, that this was only true in the nineteenth century, when native Patani scholars increasingly came onto scene and contributed significantly to further growth of the *pondok*.

Generally, the *pondok* had similar characteristics as the *surau* or *pesantren*. It appeared, however, that the *pondok* usually accepted

55 V. Matheson & M.B. Hooker, 1988. "Jawi Literature in Patani: The Maintenance of an Islamic Identity", *JMBRAS*, 61, I, p. 43. For further discussion of the pondoks, see, for instance, R.L. Winzeler, "The Social Organization of Islam in Kelantan", in Roff (ed.), Kelantan; A.A.H. Hasan, "The Development of Islamic Education in Kelantan", in Khoo Kay Kim (ed.), 1980. Tamaddun Islam di Malaysia. Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia, 1980. For an account of the Patani Pondok in recent years, see, W.K. Che Man, 1990. "The Thai Government and Islamic Institutions in the Four Southern Muslim Provinces", *Sojourn*, 5, II.

students who have completed their elementary religious knowledge. Like students of the *surau* or *pesantren*, students of the *pondok*, together with their *tok guru* (teachers) lived in the huts set up around the institution. In contrast to the *pesantren* which were mostly located in the rural areas, the *pondok* in the Malay Peninsula were concentrated around the state capital. Most teachers of the *pondok* were also religious functionaries of the state. Thus, though some of the pondok were privately set up and maintained, they were run in accordance with the will of the rulers. This was due to the fact that, after the establishment of British rule, all matters concerning Islam were the prerogative of the Malay rulers.

The fate of the *pondok* in the Malay Peninsula was also the same as the *surau* in the Minangkabau. They were threatened by the introduction of modern educational system, either religious or secular. The first threat came from the *madrasah*, a modern schooling system, which began to spread in the early twentieth century. The establishment and expansion of public schools throughout the Malay Peninsula also caused further considerable decline of the *pondok*.

THE *ULAMA*: THE DISCOURSE ON MYSTICISM AND *TAREKAT*

The rise and development of religious institutions, particularly the *surau*, *pesantren* and *pondok* as well as the *tarekat* had clearly been initiated by the *ulama*. Even though the establishment and spread of these institutions were also helped by the Muslim rulers, it was the *ulama* who really shape them up. In other words, the *ulama* played the crucial role in establishing and maintaining those religious institutions.

The history of the *ulama* in the Malay world before the seventeenth was obscure. Only in the seventeenth century could be found sufficient accounts which enable the reconstruction of a more accurate social and intellectual history of the *ulama*. It was during those years that several outstanding *ulama* could be found playing important roles in the development of Islamic religious life and institutions in this part of the Muslim world. It true that before the seventeenth century, there were several important *ulama*, but due to insufficient evidence of their works and activities to earn them a place in the history books.

The pioneers of the *ulama* tradition in the Malay world in the seventeenth century came from Acheh. The first was Hamzah Fansuri (d. before 1607?). Even though many things about the life of Hamzah were still obscure and dubious, there is no doubt that he was a great scholar. He mastered the Arabic, Persian, and probably also the Urdu language. He was reported to have toured the Middle East, visiting important centres of Islamic learnings, including Makkah, Medina, Jerusalem, and Baghdad. When he returned to the Malay world, he rose to prominence in the Achehnese Sultanate, holding the office of the Mufti. Hamzah was a prolific scholar; whose works were laden with mystico-philosophical ideas which greatly influenced the Islamic think-

ing of his time. In view of his works, Hamzah was rightly regarded both as one of the most important early Malay-Indonesian sufis and a prominent precursor of the tradition of Islamic thought in this region.[56]

In addition, Hamzah was apparently one of the many scholars who was responsible for the spread of the *Qadiriyyah tarekat* in the Malay world, since he was affiliated with this sufi Order. With respect to this, it is important to note that Hamzah was the first known scholar in the Malay world to have affiliated with a particular *tarekat*. Eventhough Islam after the twelfth century was spread mainly by the wandering sufi scholars, there was no mention of any name that was related to a particular *tarekat*. Therefore, the history of the *tarekat* movement in this region had to begin with Hamzah.

The successor of Hamzah was Shams al-Din al-Sumatrani (d. 1630). It appears that both persons had met before and some scholars even suggested that Shams al-Din was a student of Hamzah. Like Hamzah, Shams al-Din was a prolific writer and mastered several languages. He wrote in both Malay and Arabic, and most of his works dealt with *kalam* ("theology") and Sufism.[57] We have no account as to what sufi order Shams al-Din belonged to. But considering the fact that he was a student of Hamzah, it would be safe to assume that he might have adhered to his teacher's, that is, the *Qadiriyyah* Order.

Much more important, Hamzah and Shams al-Din had been categorized as belonging to the same stream of Islamic school of thought. However this is not the place to describe their thought in detail; it would be sufficed to say that the two were leading proponents of the *wahdat al-wujud* mystico-philosophical interpretation of Sufi doctrines. Both were deeply influenced particularly by Ibn 'Arabi and 'Abd al-Karim al-Jili and strictly followed their elaborate system of *Wujudiyyah*. They, for instance, explained the universe in terms of a series of neo-Platonic emanations and had considered that each of the emanations as an aspect of God Himself.[58] These are the very concepts that led to a long and bitter controversies among leading scholars in the Malay world. It thus created a dynamic tension among the later scholars.

Despite those controversies, both Hamzah and Shams al-Din had truely played a crucial role in shaping the Islamic thoughts and lifes, particularly in the first half of the seventeenth century. Their version of

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56 For further discussion on Hamzah, see, S.M.N. al-Attas, 1970. *The Mysticism of Hamzah Fansuri*, Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press. J. Doorenbos, 1933. *De geschriften van Hamzah Pansoeri*, Leiden: Battelee & Terpstra. A. Hasjmi, 1976. *Ruba'i Hamzah Fansuri*, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.

57 For more account of the life and thought of *Shams al-Din al-Sumatrani*, 1945, see. C.A.O. van Nieuwenhuijze, *Samsu'l-Din van Pasai: Bijdrage tot de kennis der Sumatraansche Mystiek*, Leiden: Brill. A.A. Dahlan, 1992. "Tasawuf Syamsuddin Sumatrani", DR dissertation, IAIN Jakarta.

58 See, Dahlan, "Tasawuf Syamsuddin", pp. 47–154; A.H. Johns, 1955. "Aspects of Sufi Thought in India and Indonesia in the first half of the 17th Century", *JMBRAS*, 28, 1, pp. 72–77.

mystical Islam was accepted not only in Acheh but also in many part of the Malay world, thank to their widely circulated works. The era of Hamzah and Shams al-Din was the time when mystico-philosophical Islam were more predominant compared to the more *shari'ah*-oriented Islam. Even though the Muslim Malays were already familiar with some of the *shari'ah* doctrines, there were however the tendencies to disregard them.

The fact that religious life had been dominated by mystical Islam could be observed in the writings of the next great *a'lim*, Nur al-Din al-Raniri (d.1658). In his treatise, *Bustan al-Salatin*, al-Raniri informed us that the Achehnese were very interested in mystical Islam. This interest appeared to have been generated by the deadlock in public discussions and debates between two scholars, from Makkah in 1540, on the mystico-philosophical issues, particularly that which concerned the permanent archetypes (*al-a'yan al-thabitah*).[59]

The first of the two *ulama* were Abu al-Khayr ibn Sheikh from Hajar, the author of a book entitled *al-Sayf al-Qati'*, which apparently dealt with the intricate mystico-philosophical issues concerning the nature of the third category between being and non-being: the fixed essence, or the permanent archetypes. It seemed that in addition to teaching *fiqh*, Ibn Hajar had disclosed topics which were obviously very difficult for the layman to understand. The other scholar was Sheikh Muhammad Yamani, an expert in *fiqh* and *usul al-fiqh* as well as in *'ulum al-hadith* and sciences which were related to the Qur'an.

Both scholars were later entangled heated discussions on those mystico-philosophical topics, but none managed to gained an upper hand by satisfactorily explicating these complicated issues. It left the people in confusion and intellectual curiosity to explore further those topics. To make matter worse, they both left Acheh, and the people had to wait for the arrival of al-Raniri's uncle to clear up the matter.

Thus, as al-Raniri further related, when his paternal uncle, Muhammad Jilani b. Hasan Muhammad al-Humaydi came to Acheh from Gujarat between 1580–83, he wished to teach people about *fiqh*, *usul al-fiqh*, ethics, logic (*mantiq*) and rhetoric. But many people were instead more interested in studying mysticism (*tasawwuf*) and *kalam*. As al-Raniri further told us that his uncle was no expert in mysticism, and therefore was not prepared to fulfill the people's request to learn about it. Muhammad Jilani then had to cancel his teaching and went to Makkah instead to pursue his study in Islamic mysticism and other related subjects. Having felt that he had mastered the subject, Muhammad Jilani returned to Acheh during the reign of Sultan 'Al al-Din Ri'ayat Shah to teach the people the subject they wished to study.[60]

59 Nur al-Din al-Raniri, 1966. *Bustan al-Salatin Bab II, Pasal 13,* (ed.) T. Iskandar, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 33.
60 *Ibid.*, pp. 33-34.

The religious confusion among Muslim Malays as a result of intricate mystico-philosophical teachings was not only reported by al-Raniri. Similar report can also be found in the Arabic sources. Mustafa ibn Fath Allah al-Hamawi al-Makki (d. 1712), a leading historian in Makkah in his unpublished three volume biographical dictionary entitled *Fawa'id al-Irtihal wa Nata'ij al-Safar fi Akhbar Ahl Qarn al-Hadi 'Ashar*, when he disclosed the accounts of sheikh Fadl Allah al Burhanpuri pointed out:

> "Our Sheikh *al-Khatimat al-Muhaqqiqin*, Ibrahim al-Kurani told me, while we are reading the Tuhfat al-Mursalah with him, that some our "Jawi" companions (*ba'd ashabina al-Jawiyyin*) informed him that this treatise and matters it treats was popular and famous in their land and that it is read in their religious schools, and their youths study it as one of the minor treatise in their rudimentary studies...."[61]

Who was Fadl Allah al-Burhanpuri who, in his book, created religious confusion among the Muslim Malays? He was the author of a small book entitled, *al-Tuhfat al-Mursalah ila Ruh al-Nabi*, which was written in 1590. It was reported that around 1619 or earlier the book was already known in the Malay world. Al-Burhanpuri in this succinct, complimented it through his short commentary called *al-Haqqat al-Muwfiqah li al-Shari'ah*, essentially as an attempt to restrain the extravagant type of Sufism by emphasizing the essential elements of Islam such as the absolute being (wujud) of God and the importance of the *shari'ah*.[62] Apart from his good intention, the author's basic concepts like the seven grades of being (*Martabat Tujuh*) and his arguments to explain them were absolutely philosophical. These in turn could obscure the real intention of the author, especially if the work was read by the *'awwam* (common people).

Another great scholar was Ibrahim al-Kurani. He was one of the main teachers of Abd al-Ra'uf al-Sinkili and Muhammad Yusuf al-Maqassari, two of the most important Malay *ulama* in the seventeenth century. Al-Kurani, claimed by some Arabic sources as the *mujaddid* of Islam in the eleventh century of the Hijrah or seventeenth century of Christian era. Having heared reports from his Malay students al- Kurani wrote a long commentary on al-Burhanpuri's work which he called *Ithaf al-Dhaki bi Sharkh al-Tuhfat al-Mursalah ila Ruh al-Nabi.*

In his introductory notes of the *Ithaf al-Dhaki*, al-Kurani provided further background to his writing of the commentary:

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61 Mustafa Fath Allah al-Hamawi, *Fawa'id al-Irtihal wa Nata'ij al-Safar fi Akhbar Ahl al-Qarn al-Hadi 'Ashar*, 3 vols., Cairo: MS Dar al-Kutub al-Misriyyah, Tarikh 1093, I, fol. 167.

62 See, Muhammad ibn Fadl Allah al-Burhanpuri, 1965. *The Gift Addressed to the Spirit of the Prophet*, (ed.) & trans. from Arabic and Javanese texts with introd. and annot. by A.H. Johns, Canberra: The Australian National University, pp. 5-7.

We have had reliable information from a group of (*jamaah*) the *Jawiyyin* that there have spread among the population of the lands of Jawah some books on the *haqiqah* [Divine Realities] and gnostic knowledge (*'Ulum al-Asrar*) passed from hand to hand by those attributed with knowledge because of their study and the teaching of others, but who have no understanding of *the 'Ilum al-Shari'ah* of the Prophet [Muhammad], the Chosen, the Elect [by God], peace be upon him, nor the *'Ilm al-Haqa'iq* bestowed upon those who follow the path of God, the Exalted; those who are close to Him, those admirable ones, or those who have set their foot on any path or their paths founded in the *Kitab* [al-Qur'an] and the *Sunnah* [Prophetic Tradition] through perfect obedience both outwardly (*al-Zahir*) and inwardly (*al-Batin*), as is done by the devout and pure. This is the reason for the deviation of many of them [the *Jawiyyin*] from the right path, for the rise of the impure belief; in fact they have entered into the crooked camp of atheism (*al-zandaqah*) and heresy (*al-ilhad*).

It is mentioned [by the *Jawiyyun*] to me that among the famous books was the compendium named *al-Tuhfat al-Mursalah ila [Rh] al-Nabi*, peace be upon him, written the adept by God's help, Sheikh Muhammad ibn Sheikh Fadl Allah al-Burhanpuri, may God the almighty render him of service. More than one of them have repeatedly asked my poor self (*al-faqir*) to write a commentary on it to make clear of the question [it discusses] to the principles of religion, confirmed by the Noble Book [al-Qur'an] and the *Sunnah* of the Master of the apostles, peace be upon him....[63]

The Malay's religious confusion apparently attracted special attention among the scholars in the Haramayn. Ibrahim al-Kurani himself seemed not to have been satisfied with writing only a single work on the "*masa'il al-Jawiyyah*" (the question of the Jawi (Malay) people). He wrote another book entitled *al-Jawabat al-Gharawiyyah 'an al-Masa'il al-Jawiyyat al-Jahriyyah*,[64] in which he attempted once again to clear up the matters which were left unsettled. It was unfortunate that we could not find any trace of it; therefore we hardly have any idea of its contents beyond what its title indicates.

The problem of religious confusion among the Malays evidently persisted for some time in the Haramayn. 'Abd al-Shukr al-Shm, one of al-Krn's student, wrote a treatise called *Ziyadah min 'Ibarat al-Mutaqaddimin min Ahl al-Jawi.* This work, like the *Tuhfat al-Mursalah,*

63 Ibrahim al-Kurani, *Ithaf al-Dhaki bi Sharh al-Tuhfat al-Mursalah ila al-Ruh al-Nabi,* Cairo: MS Dar al-Kutub al-Misriyyah, Tasawwuf 2578, fol. 2.

64 Ismail Basha al-Baghdadi, 1951. *Hidayat al-'Arifin: Asma al-Mu'allifin 'Athar al-Musannifin*, 2 vols., Istanbul: Milli Egitim Basimevi, 1951, I, 35; Muhammad Khalil al-Muradi, 1988. *Silk al-Durar Fi A'yan al-Qarn al-Thani Ashar*, 4 vols., Beirut: Dar ibn al-Hazm, I, 6.

dealt with the question of beings and the Unity of God.[65] Another prominent scholar in Makkah who wrote a special work to address religious problems coming from the "*Bilad al-Jawah*" was Taj al-Din b. Ahmad, better known as Ibn Ya'qub (d. 1656). The title of Ibn Ya'qub's work was *al-Jadat al-Qawimah ila Tahqiq Mas'alat al-Wujud wa Ta'lluq al-Qudrat al-Qadimah fi al-Jawab 'an al-As'ilat al-Waridah min [Bilad] Jawah.*[66]

The fact that at least three works were devoted by leading Haramayn *ulama* in the seventeenth century to what Arabic sources call "*al-Masa'il al-Jawiyyah*" indicated the existence of intense religio-intellectual discourse between Malay students and scholars in Haramayn. It further pointed to the fact that Islamic religious life in the Malay world did not fail to attract the attention of the community of scholars in the such centres of Islam as Makkah and Medina. It showed their concern for their fellow Muslims in the Malay world.

The Haramayn did play a significant role in the formation of the tradition of Islamic scholarship in the Malay world. The tradition of religious reforms in the region originated from among the circles of the *ulama* the Haramayn which was transmitted to the Malay world by the Jawi *ulama* who studied there.

The tradition of religious reform in the Malay world was apparently initiated by al-Raniri. He was a complex scholar indeed. He was not only a sufi, a theologian, and *faqih*, but was also a man of letters, a preacher, and politician. His multi-faceted personality could lead to misunderstanding, particularly if one viewed only a certain aspect of his thought. As a result, to this day he has often been considered more as a sufi, who was preoccupied with mystical practices, when in fact he was also a *faqih* whose main concern was the practical application of the very basic rules and regulations of the *shari'ah.*

Despite the fact that his father was an Arab of the 'Aydarusiyyah stock (though his mother was said to be Malay) and that he was born in Ranir, India, al-Raniri was generally regarded a Malay '*alim* rather than Indian or Arab. He acquired his early education in Raniri, and later continued his study in Hadhramaut. Later, he travelled to the Haramayn, where he performed his pilgrimage in 1620 or 1621. It was very likely that he also came into contact with the Malay students and pilgrims there, before returning to Gujarat, and then travel to the Malay world.[67]

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65 See, P. Voorhoeve, 1980. *Handlist of Arabic Manuscripts in the Library of the University of Leiden and Other Collections in the Netherlands*, Leiden: Leiden University Press, 461.

66 Al-Baghdadi, 1943-9. *Hadiyyat al-'Arifin*, I, p. 245; Muhammad Amin al-Muhibbah, *Khulasat al-Athar fi A'yan al-Qarn al-Hadi Ashar*, 4 vols., Cairo, repr. Beirut: Dar Sadr, n.d., I, p. 458; C. Brockelmann (143-49), *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur*, 2 vols. and 2 supplements, Leiden: Brill, II, p. 379.

67 'Abd al-Hayy al-Hasani, *Nuzhat al-Khawatir fi Buhjat al-Masami wa al-Nawazir*, 7

Although his sojourn as the Syeikh al-Islam in the Achehnese Sultanate was relatively short (1637–44), his role in the course of Islam in the Malay world was tremendous. He played a significant role in bringing the great tradition of Islam to this region by reducing substantially the tendency of a rather uncontrolled intrusion of local tradition into Islam, particularly by way of mystical Islam. Through his works, no fewer than 29, al-Raniri made it clear what his mission was. Following the general tendency in the Haramayn, al-Raniri insisted on the importance of the *shar'iah* in mystical practices. This was supported by his affiliation with the *'Aydarusiyyah tariqah*, an Arab sufi order known for its emphasis on the harmony between the mystical way and total obedience to the *shari'ah*, and for its non-ascetic and activist attitude. With regard to all of his intellectual and praxis tendencies, al-Raniri was the first *'alim* who sowed the seeds of Islamic scripturalism in the Malay world.

With his polemical works against what he regarded the "heretical" *Wujudiyyah* as taught by Hamzah Fansuri and Shams al-Din al-Sumatrani, al-Raniri decided to reform Islamic life and practice; he was the first in the Malay world to clarify the distinction between the true and the false interpretation and understanding of sufi doctrine and practice.

There were of course attempts by such scholars like al-Burhanpuri to clarify the distinction but to no avail. On the contrary, his *Tuhfat al-Mursalah* led to religious confusion among Malay Muslims. Further attempts were probably also carried out by Hamzah and Shams al-Din. But as al-Attas pointed out they both failed to draw a clear distinction, particularly between God and the universe, or relations between God and His creation. Al-Raniri, according to al-Attas, was a man gifted with wisdom and adorned with authentic knowledge, "who succeeded in making clear the false doctrines of *Wujudiyyah* scholars whom he calls the pseudo-sufis".[68]

Without underestimating the crucial role of the earlier Islamic scholars from the Middle East and elsewhere, it could be fairly argue that al-Raniri, through his scholarship, had established a much stronger link, connecting the Islamic tradition in the Middle East with that of the Malay world. He was indeed one of the most Islamic reformist in this part of the Muslim world.

Two other scholars of Islam to the Malay world were 'Abd al-Ra'uf al-Sinkili (1615–93) and Muhammad Yusuf al-Maqassari (1627–99). The former was born and brought up in the Sultanate of Acheh, while the latter was born in Gowa, South Sulawesi, and brought up in the

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vols., Hayderabad: Da'irat al-Ma'arif al-Uthmaniyyah, V, p. 349; P. Voorhoeve, (1951), "Van en over Nuruddin ar-Raniri", BKI, 107, p. 357.

68 See, S.M.N. al-Attas, 1986. *A Commentary on the Hujjat al-Siddiq of Nur al-Din al-Raniri.* Kuala Lumpur: Ministry of Culture, pp. 8–12.

Sultanate of Banten. Both, however, spent almost two decades in the Middle East, particularly in the Haramayn, and studied from the same academic school. One of their teachers was the celebrated Ibrahim al-Kurani, mentioned above. After having felt sufficiently educated, both returned to the Malay world, bringing not only new religious ideas but also several sufi orders. Al-Sinkili was the first recorded scholar who brought the *Shattariyyah* Order to the Malay region; but he was also affiliated with the *Qadiriyyah* and *Qushashiyyah* Orders. While al-Maqassari was the first to introduce the *Naqshabandiyyah* and *Khalwatiyyah* Orders to Muslims of the region.

Al-Sinkili in many of his writings insisted on the transcendence of God over creation. He refused to adhere to the notion of the *Wujudiyyah* which emphasized the immanence of God over His creation. Al-Sinkili argued that before God created the universe, He always thought of Himself, which resulted in the creation of *Nur Muhammad* (the Light that is Muhammad). It is from the *Nur Muhammad* that God created permanent archetypes (*al-a'yan al-kharijiyyah*), namely the potential universe, which became the source of the exterior archetypes (*al-a'yan al-kharijiyyah*), the creation in its concrete form. Al-Sinkili concluded that although the *a'yan al-kharijiyyah* were the emanation of the Absolute Being, they were distinct from God Himself; it was like a hand and its shadow. Although the hand can hardly be separated from its shadow, the latter is not identical with the former. With this al-Sinkili established the transcendence of God over His creation.

The most salient feature of al-Sinkili's teachings indicated that what he transmitted to the Malay Muslims was the harmony between the *shari'ah* and Sufism. His works affirmed that *tasawwuf* should go hand in hand with the *shari'ah*. Only with total obedience to the *shari'ah* can aspirants of the mystical ways gain the true experience of the *haqiqah* (realities).[69] The reform of Islamic life in the Malay world was proposed by al-Sinkili.

It is important to bear in mind that al-Sinkili's approach to Islamic reform was different from that al-Raniri. He chose a peaceful path rather than a radical one. Therefore, he preferred to reconcile with opposing views rather than to favour one of them. Even though he was against the doctrine of *Wujudiyyah*, only implicitly does he made clear his views. He also showed his dislike for the radical approach of al-Raniri reform simply in an unexplicit way.

Similarly, the central concept of al-Maqassari's *tasawwuf* was the purification of faith (*'aqidah*) in the Unity of God. This was his attempts to explicate the transcendence of God over His creation. Citing *Surat al-Ikhlas* (the Qur'an, chapter 112) and another verse of the Qur'an

69 See, Azyumardi Azra, 1921. "The Transmission of Islamic Reformism to Indonesia: Networks of Middle Eastern and Malay-Indonesian Ulama in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries", Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, pp. 409-10.

which stated that nothing can be compared with Him (42:11), al-Maqassari maintained that the Unity of God (*tauhid*) was infinite and absolute. Tauhid is the essential component in Islam; one who does not believe in tauhid is an unbeliever (*kafir*).

Al-Maqassari reserved the *tasawwuf* for the selected elite only. Throughout his writings he was eager to show that the mystical way can only be trodden through total commitment both physically and spiritually to the legal doctrine of Islam. He maintained that committing oneself simply to the *shari'ah* was better than practising *tasawwuf* while ignoring Islamic legal precepts. He even went so far as to classify as *zindiq* (freethinker) and *mulhid* (heretic) those who believe that they will be able to get closer to God without practising such rituals as prayer and fasting.[70]

It is clear that the three scholars - al-Raniri, al-Sinkili and al-Maqassari - were the precursors of Islamic reform in the Malay world. However, they did not declare that they were launching a reform, nor did they employ the *tarekat* to pursue their ends. But the central theme of their teachings leaves no doubt about their reformism. The reform was genuine and had developed as a spiritual response to the prevailing conditions amongst the Muslims. It is important to note that Islamic reforms or revival was not an overnight process. Therefore, although by the second half of the seventeenth century, reformist ideas had been introduced in the Malay world, its acceptance had been slow. But since the eighteenth century onwards, external factors, especially increasing colonial encroachment, had contributed to the acceleration of Islamic revival and reforms in the Malay world.

The trends towards Islamic reformism was also inherited by Malay scholars in the eighteenth century. There were several major Malay *ulama* during this period who came from other regions and ethnic groups. A number of them came from the Palembang region of southern Sumatra. The most important among them were Shihab al-Din bin 'Abd Allah Muhammad, Kemas Fakhr al-Din, 'Abd al-Samad al-Palimbani, Kemas Muhammad bin Ahmad, and Muhammad Muhyi al-Din bin Shihab al-Din. They were followed by Muhammad Arshad al-Banjari and Muhammad Nafis al-Banjari from southern Kalimantan; 'Abd al-Wahhab al-Bugisi from Sulawesi; 'Abd al-Rahman al-Batawi al-Misri from Batavia; and Dawud bin 'Abd Allah al-Patani from the Patani region. The fact that these scholars came from different regions indicates the growth of Islamic learning in various parts of the Malay world. If the *ulama* from Acheh was so dominant in the seventeenth century, in the eighteenth centuries other regions began to come to the forefront.

Almost all of these scholars obtained their advanced religious education in the Haramayn. Most of them returned to their homeland

70 *Ibid.*, pp. 454-55.

when they completed their studies in the Middle East. Only al-Palimbani and al-Patani, who were both the most prolific writers among them, stayed permanently in the Haramayn, while maintaining continuous contact and communication with their fellow Muslims in the Malay world. They were not only the agents for the transmission of Islamic reformist ideas from the Middle East to the Malay region, but also served as contacts for later Malay scholars who went in ever increasing number to the Middle East.

Therefore, Malay scholars in the eighteenth century played a very crucial role not only in maintaining the momentum for Islamic revival in the region, which had been kindled earlier by al-Raniri, al-Sinkili and al-Maqassari, but more importantly in passing the banner of Islamic revivalism to the next generation of Malay scholars. Furthermore, al-Palimbani and his fellow Malay-Indonesian scholars also played an important role in preserving the morale of their fellow Muslims in facing the continuing encroachment of European colonial powers. The encounters with European powers added new dimension to the development of Islam in the Malay world.

Like scholars in the earlier period, the central theme of the teachings of al-Palimbani and his fellow scholars in the eighteenth century was the harmony between the *shari'ah* and *tasawwuf*. They were of course very active in spreading such *tarekat* as the *Sammaniyyah*, *Khalwatiyyah*, *Naqshabandiyyah*, and *Qadiriyyah*, through their students, but at the same time they again emphasized the importance of the *shari'ah* in the mystical way.

Al-Palimbani in his works elucidated the principles of the Islamic faith and religious duties to which every aspirant of the mystical way should commit himself. He maintained that fulfilment of the doctrines of the *shari'ah* regaining its rituals and good deeds was the surest way to achieve piety. He believes that the blessing and grace of God can be attained only through correct faith in the Absolute Unity of God and total obedience to the *shari'ah* precepts.

Muhammad Nafis al-Banjari, a fellow of al-Palimbani, also maintained that it was very important for every aspirant on the mystical path to fulfil the rules of the *shari'ah*. It was simply impossible for anybody to reach closeness to God without intensifying his piety by performing the religious rituals and obligations laid down by the *shari'ah*.

Further, al-Palimbani, like al-Raniri, divided the doctrine of *Wujudiyyah* into two kinds: the *Wujudiyyah mulhid* (atheistic unity of being) and the *Wujudiyyah muwahhid* (unitarianism of being). The followers of the first went astray since they were actually no more than the pseudo-sufis. Their mistake was in their belief that God incarnated Himself into the beings of man and other creations. In the same manner, al-Patani was also very critical of people who styled themselves as sufis,

while in fact they were simply pseudo-sufis who were ignorant of the true teachings of Sufism.[71]

Sufism or *tarekat*, particularly among modernist Muslims, had been regarded as one of the main causes of regression of the Muslim society. From the religious aspect it has been accused of being a source of *bid'ah* (unwarranted innovations), *khurafat* (superstitions), and *takhyul* (delusion). From the social aspect however, Sufism or *tarekat* has been accused of drawing the Muslims into passivity and isolation (*'uzlah*) from worldly affairs. It allegedly promoted escapism from the socio-economic ills of their societies. As a result, Muslim society had failed to cope with the advanced but hostile Western world.

Most of those accusation were ill-founded. It was clear that what was taught by all the Malay scholars mentioned above was a reformed Sufism. All of them called for total obedience of Muslims, both physically and spiritually, to orthodoxy. They were in accord that it was simply impossible for the sufis to achieve their spiritual goals without committing themselves fully to the orthodox - doctrine of Islam. Similarly, the accusation that Sufism or *tarekat* encouraged passivity and withdrawal from worldly affairs was based mostly on ignorance or misunderstanding of the whole teaching of Sufism. None of the Malay scholars taught passivity and isolation. On the contrary, they appealed to Muslim activism; to them the fulfilment of Muslims' worldly duties was part of their progress in the mystical journey.

Such great scholars as al-Raniri, al-Sinkili, al-Maqassari, Muhammad Arshad al-Banjari, had preseted themselves as exemplary sufis, who were absorbed not only with their own spiritual journey, but also with their worldly affairs, holding the office of Mufti in their respective Sultanate. Al-Maqassari even went so far as to become one of the most important leaders and heroes of the Bantenese wars against the Dutch. Not least important, al-Palimbani repeatedly appealed to the Javanese rulers of Matarram to rise up against the Dutch and led the Muslims population to wage the *jihad* (holy war) against the increasingly dominant European infidels.[72] The same appeals for *jihad* also came from al-Patani, in his case, againts the Thai encroachment of the Patani Muslim population.[73]

The role of the *tarekat* practitioners in the resistance to Dutch colonialism cannot be ignored. One of the most famous armed resistance in Indonesia was the so-called "Bantenese peasants rebellion" towards the end of the nineteenth century. Kartodirdjo's study of the rebellion has shown us convincingly that the rebellion was in fact initiated and led by scholars who were adherents of the *Naqshabandiyyah*

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71 *Ibid.*, pp. 541, 547.

72 See, G.W.J. Drewes, 1976. "Further Data Concerning 'Abd al-Samad al-Palimbani", *BKI*, 132.

73 Azra, "The Transmission", pp. 551-52.

and *Qadiriyyah's tarekat.* Ahmad Khatib al-Sambasi and his *khalifah*, 'Abd al-Karim, the leading figures behind the rebellion, were respectively the *sheikh* and *khalifah* of the orders. Ahmad Khatib al-Sambasi, it is worth mentioning, was among the most celebrated Malay *ulama* teaching in the Haramayn in the nineteenth century.[74]

Thus, all the Malay-Indonesian scholars who were generally experts in the *shari'ah* as well as in the *tasawwuf* – or in other words, *fuqaha'* and sufis at the same time – were the leading proponents of Muslim activism not only in their daily lives but also in the struggle against foreign powers. This activist tradition, as one may expect, was generally maintained by the succeeding generations of Malay scholars up till the struggle for the independence at the end of World War II.

LEGAL INSTITUTIONS: SULTANS, *SHARI'AH*, AND *KADI*

The establishment and development of Islamic institutions and life depended greatly on the *ulama*. But the political will of the Malay rulers were also crucial. How serious were the rulers in implementing Islam in their administrative and political tradition?

The local Malay sources were rich with examples of rulers' attempt to apply Islam in their socio-political life. As far as legal institutions were concerned, there were a great deal of evidence showing that Malay Muslim rulers did attempt to apply a great deal of the Islamic legal doctrine (*shari'ah*). We have mentioned earlier the case of Sultan al-Malik al-Mahmud of Pasai who advised his son Sultan Ahmad to act in accordance with the rules of the *shari'ah*.

The rulers of Melaka, like their Pasai counterparts, too attempted to implement God's law in their realm. The *Hikayat Melayu*, for instance, related that Sultan Mansur Shah advised his son, Sultan 'Ala' al-Din Shah to govern the state according to the rule of God:

> Upon you is laid the duty of faithfully cherishing those who are subject to you and of liberally forgiving any offense they may commit, as we are bidden by Almighty God in the words: "Verily God is with them that show forbearance." If you are confronted with your own business and the business of God, put the business of God before your own, and submit yourself utterly to the will of God and He shall suffice unto thee. Do as I am telling you, my son, and be assured you shall receive the blessing of Almighty God and the blessing of His Prophet.[75]

Again, essentially the same injunction was laid down by the *Undang-undang Melaka* (*Melaka Digest*), which ruled that Melaka should be

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74 Sartono Kartodirdjo, 1966. *The Peasants' Revolt of Banten in 1888, Its Conditions, Course and Sequel: A Case Study of Social Movements in Indonesia*, 'S-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff. esp. pp. 104–128.

75 *Sejarah Melayu*, p. 103.

governed in accordance with the Qur'anic law.

> Concerning all the ministers and the *sida-sida* (court officers) and the fighting men, they should act in accordance with the words of Allah Most High in the Qur'an; they should obey the command to do good and the injunction forbidding to do evil.... You should from early morning sit in the hall of audience, because God has to a great extent left all human beings to [the care of] the rulers and their ministers, for the Prophet, may God bless him and give him [peace], has said: "*Kulluhum ra'in wa Kulluhum mas'ulun an ra'iyatihi* [sic.], that is all of you, being shepherds, will be questioned about your herds...."[76]

The *Melaka Digest*, considered the earliest Malay law digest available, indeed contained a great deal of Islamic elements in addition to those of the indigenous *adat* (local customary usages/tradition). Therefore, the text was interesting, for it showed how Islamic legal doctrine interacted with and adapted to local circumstances.

The *Digest* in essence laid down several principles. First, the idea of administration and nature of sovereignty were determined by Islamic thought. Secondly, administration and preservation of public order and settlement of legal disputes among the citizen were both Islamic and indigenous. Thirdly, the family law was based primarily on Islamic law. Fourthly, the law was drawn in accordance with Muslim trading practices and fifthly; the law relating to land is indigenous in nature.[77]

It is important to note that the Islamic elements of the *Melaka Digest* were mostly taken from the doctrine of the Shafi'i school of law. Certain portions of it are simply translation of *Shafi'i* standard texts such as the *Fath al-Qarib* of Ibn Shuja' (d. after 1196). In addition to following Shafi'i doctrines, certain *fasal* (chapter) of the digest directly cited the Qur'an and example of this concerns the adoption of the *qisas* law (Qur'an 2:178) for one who kill another without any excuse.[78] Another example was the Qur'anic law (2:275) concerning the prohibition of *riba* (usury) which became *fasal* 30 of the *Digest*.[79]

Thus the *Melaka Digest* did reflect some impact of Islamic law upon the Malay administrative and legal systems. But it should be reminded that the *Digest* was not free at all from un-Islamic elements. There were some indication that it also reflected Hindu-Buddhist ideas and tendencies.[80]

Further development of Islamic legal institutions in the Malay

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76 Liaw Yock Fang, 1976. *Undang-undang Melaka*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, pp. 64-65.
77 M.B. Hooker, 1984. *Islamic Law in Southeast Asia*. Singapore: Oxford University Press, pp. 15-16.
78 Fang, *Undang-undang*, p. 69.
79 *Ibid.*, pp. 135-36; Hooker, *Islamic Law*, pp. 9-16.
80 M.Y. Hashim, 1988. *Persejarahan Melayu Nusantara*, Kuala Lumpur: Teks Publishing Sdn. Bhd., pp. 206-11.

world could also be seen in the sixteenth and seventeenth century *Pahang Digest*. The law digest, compiled for Sultan 'Abd al-Ghafur Muhay al-Din Shah Pahang (r. 1592-1614), like the *Melaka Digest*, exhibited a strong Islamic colours. No fewer than 42 out of 68 articles of the *Pahang Digest* were almost a word-for-word translation of certain Shafi'i texts.[81] This *Digest* also recorded an attempt on the part of compiler of the text to make the Malay *Raja* identical with the *Khalifah*, the highest political authority according to Sunni classical political theory. The *Raja* was responsible, among other things, in enforcing God's law (*shari'ah*) on earth. Therefore, it demanded that the Pahang Sultanate be governed by its rulers in accordance with Islamic law, for Pahang was a *Dar al-Islam* (Abode of Peace), where the *shari'ah* occupied a special place.[82]

At an edge of the Malay world was the Patani state. Though Islam was said to have been introduced to Patani as early as the twelfth century according to the *Hikayat Patani*, Islam only gained momentum in the fifteenth century. It was due to the Malay Muslims on the borders of the Malay Peninsula who had increasingly engaging themselves in propagating Islam to the Patani population. It was the leader of the Malays, Sheikh Sa'id or Shafialuddin (sic.), who converted the Patani ruler, Phya Tu Antara (Phya Tu Naqpa) to Islam in 1457 after the former healed the latter from an illness. After his conversion, the ruler adopted a Muslim name and title and called himself Sultan Isma'il Shah, *zill Allah fi al-'alam* (God's shadow on earth).[83]

How far did the conversion led to the enforcement of Islamic legal injunction in Patani society? The conversion, it seemed was limited to the court, and even the sultan himself continued to maintain most of the Hindu-Buddhist practices. As the *Hikayat Patani* related: "He gave up worshipping *berhala* (idols) and eating pork, but apart from that he did not alter a single one of his *kafir* habits."[84] Thus, despite the adoption of Muslim name and title, there was not much indication that Islam was really implemented by these Patani Muslims in their actual life.

Back to Sumatra, a much clearer picture of how Islamic legal institutions had developed under the patronage of the rulers could be seen in the Achehnese Sultanate. Again, like the case in Melaka and Pahang, Islamic legal injunctions in Acheh were instituted in Achehnese in texts called "*sarakata*". The *sarakata*, however, contained not only Islamic elements, but also the local *adat*. The principal collections of

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81 J.E. Kempe & R.O. Winstedt, 1984. "A Malay Legal Digest compiled for Abd al-Ghafar Muhaiyuddin Shah, Sultan of Pahang", *JMBRAS*, 21, p. 2.

82 *Ibid.*, hlm. 24-25.

83 *Hikayat Patani: The Story of Patani*, (eds.) A.E. Teeuw & D.K. Wyatt, 1970. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, p. 74; Ibrahim Syukri, 1985. *History of the Malay Kingdom of Patani*, trans. C. Bailey & J.N. Miksic, Athens, OH: Center for International Studies, pp. 16-17.

84 *Hikayat Patani*, 75; Syukri, *History*, pp. 16-17.

texts were known as the "*Adat [Bandar] Acheh*", "*Majlis Acheh*" and "*Makota Alam*", which were traditionally believed to have been promulgated during the reign of the famous Sultan Iskandar Muda (r. 1607–1636).[85] In particular the *Adat Majlis*, the third collection, contained a considerable portion of Islamic principles concerning the application of Islamic injunctions to Acheh social and political lives. It also provided an elaborate description of the etiquette and ceremony according to Islamic principles practiced when the Sultans visited the mosque during the month of *Ramadhan*.

The *Adat Majlis*, however, was much more a set of idealized guidelines for the Sultans and dignitaries of Acheh rather than practical rules of legal conduct. The text, even to certain extent, showed the supremacy of Islamic mystical doctrines over the *shari'ah*. Much of it were preoccupied with the Sufistic interpretation of certain terms related to the ruler. Bearing that in mind, it was not surprising that Milner concluded that the *shari'ah* had played only a limited role in Acheh. To support his conclusion, he cited two cases of unlawful acts which were not settled according to Islamic law. The first was the case of reigning Sultan who, according to a report in 1599, had drank alcohol. The second was related to the execution of a condemned man who was either trampled to death by an elephant or by driving a stake "into his fundament".[86]

It appears that it is too early to draw conclusions from these seemingly isolated cases. For, on the other hand, some of the Sultans of Acheh did attempted to enforce certain rules of the *shari'ah* in the Sultanate. The greatest ruler of the Achehnese, Sultan Iskandar Muda, for instance, even sought to transform Sultanate into a "theocratic state".[87] For instance, he initiated the establishment of the *Bayt al-Mal* (state treasury), according to the *shari'ah* precepts. He promoted the religious court to the same plane as the civil, criminal and business courts; issued orders to his subjects to practice *'ibadah*; prohibited the practice of usury; and imposed Islamic penalties in place of traditional ones. He also created the office of *kadi* ("judge") as an important higher post in the Sultanate. The office of the *kadi* will be discussed later.

In relation to Java, the period between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries was the time during which Islam began to take deeper roots on the island. In the fifteenth century, Muslim traders had gained supremacy in the ports along the northern coast of East and Central Java.

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85 See, Hooker, *Islamic Law*, p. 16; van Langen, "De inrichting", p. 436–47, p. 463–66; T. Braddell, 1851. (ed.) & trans., "On the History of Acheen: Translations from the Majellis Ache", *JIAEA*, 5, 1532; "Ceremony Observed at the Court of Acheen", *JIAEA*, 4 (1850), pp. 128–33.

86 A.C. Milner, "Islam and the Muslim State", in M.B. Hooker (ed.), 1983. *Islam in Southeast Asia*, Leiden: Brill, p. 28.

87 S.M.N. al-Attas, 1966. *Raniri and Wujudiyyah of 17th Century Acheh*, Singapore: *MBRAS*, p. 10; van Langen, "De inrichting", pp. 390–93, 415–19.

Those ports were the nuclei of the earliest Muslim communities. These communities, led by the 'Nine Saints', erected the first mosques as well as centres of Islamic education and learning, in Java. The most famous was the holy mosque of Demak, deeply venerated by Javanese Muslims till today. The mosque became the most important religious centre in Java, playing a great role in the development of Islamic life on the island. By the early sixteenth century, the Demak Sultanate, the first Muslim political entity in Java was established. In about 1524, the third ruler of Demak, Pangeran Tranggono, adopted the Muslim title of *Sultan* together with a new name, Ahmad 'Abd al-'Arifin.[88]

It must be admitted, however, that despite the adoption of a Muslim name and title, religious life in the court of the Demak Sultanate was not very much different from that of the Hindu-Buddhist court of Majapahit Kingdom. Many of the pre-Islamic traditions were simply adopted by Demak and its better known successor, Matarram. Islamic socio-cultural and legal institutions were slowly developed and integrated into the Javanese daily life.

Thus, generally very few of the *shari'ah* laws seemed to have been adopted or practiced by the Javanese Muslims. Raffles in his *magnum opus* on the history of the island, pointed out that the Sultanate of Demak did promulgate a Muslim law text, the *Surya Alam*, as a source of law and order.[89] On close examination, however, it was revealed that the text mostly dealt with the legal procedures and duties of the court officials. In fact it contained no substantive Islamic elements. It was true that the text was believed to have originated from the reign of the first Muslim ruler of Demak. It was referred to as the *hukm* (law) of God, but it was not concerned with the *shari'ah* or *fiqh* as such. Islamic legal rules were only partially integrated into the Javanese *adat*, and not at all absorbed in the rulers' law digest.[90]

It must be kept in mind, however, that the Javanese rulers' digests did not represent the entire development of Islamic legal institution in Java. One should not ignore the existence of an Islamic literature that were produced by the few Islamic-oriented Javanese since the fifteenth century. Their works could be generally classified into two group: first, those which represented the mystical or sufistic tendencies, and the second were those that emphasized on the more legalistic interpretation of Islam.

The first group of works, at least in the beginning, were the most appealing to many Javanese Muslims, since they contained mystical teachings similar to those prevailing in pre-Islamic time. These mystical

88 See, de Graaf & Pigeaud, *Kerajaan-kerajaan Islam*, pp. 46–48, 56–57.
89 T.S. Raffles, 1817. *The History of Java*, 2 vols. London: Black, Parburg and Allen, repr. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1965, II, app. C.
90 Hooker, *Islamic Law*, p. 29.

works, considered by some as heterodox, were later disputed by the other *shari'ah*-oriented authors.[91]

It is interesting to note that the earliest known Islamic work written in Javanese was a polemical treatise against what its author believed to be heterodox teachings.[92] Citing such leading authorities as al-Ghazali, it strongly attacked Muslims who maintained superstitious beliefs and practices. In the same breath, it also warned its readers against the excessive veneration of the sufi masters:

> "It is unbelief to say that the great masters are superior to the Prophets, or to put the saints above the Prophets, and even above our lord Muhammad."[93]

The fact that the veneration of the sufi masters were popular in Java was confirmed by Pires, who had travelled in Java in the early sixteenth century. He reported of observing numerous wandering ascetics (*tapa*) who "are also worshipped by the Moors, and they believed in them greatly. They say they are sacred".[94]

The warning against the excessive practices of mysticism was not difficult to understand, for throughout any phase of Islamic religio-intellectual history one could easily find such a warning or criticism. But the fact that such a criticism was put forward at this relatively early period of Islamic history in Java, when Islam was still in process of taking roots, remains an exceptional case. The text clearly emphasizes the supremacy of the *shari'ah* over mysticism. Concerning this, for instance, it declares:

> How does one put into effect God's high commandments which apply to every Muslim without exception? Outward works are: to pray five times every day; to fast for the month of *Ramadham*; to pay the alms-tax according to one's property.... A Muslim should not trade with forbidden goods.... He should practice charity; perform the pilgrimage; take part in the holy war; observe ritual purity; recite the Qur'an; ... avoid all kinds of baleful sins and take part in the corporate Friday prayer in the mosque".[95]

Again:

> It is unbelief ... to say that is lawful for a Muslim to slay an infidel who does not oppose him in order to gain possession of his property.[96]

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91 TG. TH. Pigeaud, 1967. *Literature of Java*, 3 vols. Leiden: Bibliotheca Universitatis Leidensis, I, pp. 76–83.

92 See, G.W.J. Drewes, 1978. *An Early Javanese Code of Muslim Ethics*. The Hague: KITLV & Nijhoff.

93 *Ibid.*, p. 39.

94 Pires, *The Suma Oriental*, p. 177.

95 Drewes, *Javanese Code*, pp. 17–19.

96 *Ibid.*, p. 39.

The text then went on to list numerous religious obligations and prohibitions which should be put into practice by Muslims in their daily life. In spite of the existence of the text, however, there was little evidence that its exhortations were implemented by the Muslims in general. Although the text indicated that scriptural orthodoxy began to penetrate the Javanese Muslim society, many remnants of pre-Islamic beliefs and practices continued to be practised by the large part of the population. Even in the early nineteenth century, according to Raffles,[97] the Javanese in general were little acquainted with the doctrine of Islam.

We have to be very cautious of these reports, however, since they do not present the whole story. Raffles himself at the same time also reports the existence in Java of *shari'ah* functionaries, whom he called "*priests*".

In every chief town there is a high priest, who with the assistance of several inferior priests, hold an ecclestiastical court and superintends the priests who are appointed in the subordinate districts and villages.[98]

What Raffles called "priests" were undoubtedly the "*penghulu*", a local Javanese term referring to experts in or functionaries of Islamic law, appointed by the rulers. One should not confuse this with the term "*penghulu*", used in the Minangkabau region which referred to the functionaries of the *adat*. Pijper suggested that the office of *penghulu* in Java had been in existence for centuries, though its better development began only in the nineteenth century, when the Dutch had firmly established their rule.[99]

The existence of the *penghulu* as religious and law functionaries could also be found in the Sultanate of Palembang. According to a Palembang canon entitled *Simbur Cahaya*, the *penghulu* was responsible for the handling of Islamic legal matters at the district level. He was assisted by some "*khatibs*" who administered matters concerning the Islamic law at the village level. The highest position in the hierarchy of the *penghulu* was called "*Natagama*", who was second only to the Sultan himself. The *Natagama* operated not only in the religious realm of the Sultanate; in fact he also played an important role in matters concerning politics and economy. For instance, the *Natagama* was always present at the signing ceremony of agreements between the Sultanate and foreigners who came to Palembang to trade.[100]

In comparison, in many other areas of the Malay world, Islamic law was administered by the functionaries called *kadi*. In many respect the functions of the *kadi* was the same as the *penghulu*. It was not unusual, however, for the *kadi* to interfered on political and economic matters.

An interesting case of the role of the *kadi* could be seen in the

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97 Raffles, *The History of Java*, II, p. 2.
98 *Ibid.*, p. 3, 4.
99 G.F. Pijper, 1984. *Beberapa Studi tentang Sejarah Islam di Indonesia 1900-1950*, Jakarta: Penerbit Universitas Indonesia, p. 67.
100 See, Jalaluddin, 1993. *Laporan Penelitian Hukum Islam di Kesultanan Palembang*, Palembang: Balai Penelitian IAIN, pp. 53-64.

Sultanate of Banten. Most scholars of Islam in the Malay world were in accord that Islam was more entrenched in this West Java Sultanate than in most other places in Java. Islamic institutions were strong; scholars of the Islamic legal institutions were an integral parts of the Sultanate bureaucracy. Van Bruinessen recorded that the post of *kadi* or supreme judge was the most distinctive institution of the Sultanate, at least since the last decade of the sixteenth century onwards.[101]

The office of the *kadi* in Banten had been regarded as responsible for the introduction of the strict Islamic-penalties, for instance, on the use of tobacco and opium.[102] There were also reports, however, that the *kadi* in Banten, like in many other Muslim Sultanates in the Malay world, had replaced the *shari'ah* harsh punishment such as mutilation, flogging or execution for capital crimes with fines.[103] We are not sure whether or not this policy was based on the local *kadi* own interpretation (*ijtihad*) of the established precepts of Islamic law or simply on liberalism.

Apart from this, according to Dutch observers, the Bantenese *kadi*, better known with the honorific title "*Pakih Najmuddin*", in his rulings was also prepared to used the Qur'an and "Muhammadan law book". The latter, Van Bruinessen argued, was in fact a Bantenese law digest similar to the *Undang-Undang* of the Muslim states in the Malay Peninsula. This Bantenese law digest seemed to be as systematic and comprehensive as the Malay *Undang-Undang*. The Bantenese law digest was very likely used as a reference in legal matters.[104]

As we mentioned earlier, the *kadi* operated mainly in the religious realm. But it is wrong to assume that the *kadi* was swamped only by religious matters; he also played the relatively crucial role in political matters. The *kadi* in many instances interfered in the political affairs of the Sultanate; in 1574 a young sultan in Banten could ascend the throne only after the reigning *kadi* provided him with his religious legitimacy.[105] There were other cases in the Banten Sultanate, in which the *kadi* even did not simply legitimise a *de facto* ruler, but the actual kingmaker. Furthermore, the *kadi* was also assigned to be responsible for the administration of the Sultanate when the Sultan carried out military expeditions on Palembang. In certain instances, the *kadi* was entrusted to lead Banten's important diplomatic missions.[106]

The office of *kadi* was also powerful and influential in the Sultanate of Acheh. As early as 1599, when John Davis the navigator visited Acheh, there was already an "archbishop", who in later accounts was also

101 Van Bruinessen, "Shari'a Court", p. 6.
102 Schrieke, *Indonesian Sociological*, II, p. 241.
103 Van Bruinessen, "Shari'a Court", p. 10.
104 *Ibid.*, pp. 9-11.
105 De Graaf & Pigeaud, *Kerajaan-kerajaan Islam*, pp. 154-55.
106 Van Bruinessen, "Shari'a Court", p. 8.

called "cady" [*kadi*]. Davis now tells us how the Achehnese population venerated the *kadi*.

> These people [Achehnese] boast themselves to come of Ishmael and Hagar, and can reckon the Geneologie of the Bible perfectly. In religion, they are Mahometists, and pray with Beades as the Papist doe. They bring up their children in learning, and have many schools. They have an Archbishop and Spiritual dignities. Here is a prophet in Achien, whom they greatly honour, they say hee hath the spirit of Prophesie, as the Ancients have had. He is disguised from the rest in his Apparell, and greatly embraced of the King.[107]

Sir James Lancaster, who was in Acheh in 1602, had also found what he called the "chiefe bishope",[108] who was termed by the French traveller, Beaulieu, "Bishop or Cady". According to Beaulieu, who visited Acheh in 1621, the official position of the *kadi* was the chief of the religious court and president of the Sultan's Judicial Board.[109] The influence of the *kadi*, however, went far beyond his formal position.[110] Beaulieu narrated vividly how the *kadi* played a crucial mediating role in solving the delicate power struggle among the elites of the court:

> ... upon that the *Orang Kaya* [notables] met in order to choose a king [to be assigned vassal state], but everyone affecting the dignity for himself, they could not agree upon the matter, and resolved to decide it by Force. In this ferment, the Cady, or Great Bishop, by his authority and would remove all their jealousies; namely, to put the Crown upon the head of a certain *Orang Kaya*, who in all these divisions had not stirred or affected anything for himself or his family, but had lived in the Reputation of a Wise, experienced Man, being then seventy years of Age, and descended of one of the noblest Families in Ancheen.[111]

Sir Lancaster and John Davis' accounts refuted Van Langen, who maintained that the office of the *kadi* was initially established during the reign of the powerful Sultan Iskandar Muda (1606–1636).[112] However, it was difficult to know exactly when the office of *kadi*, one of the highest positions in the Sultanate of Acheh, began its existence, but apparently it had been around well before the seventeenth century. Later, the *kadi* in Acheh was better known with two epithets: the "*Kali*

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107 See, John Davis, 1744, accounts, in *Navigantum atque Itinerantium Bibliotheca. Or a Complete Collection of Voyages and Travels*, 2 vols., rev. ed. of the first ed. published by John Harris (1705), London: II, p. 321.

108 *The Voyages of Sir James Lancaster to Brazil and the East Indies 1591 - 1604*, new ed. with introd. and notes by Sir William Foster, 1940. London: Hakluyt, p. 96.

109 "The Expedition of Commodore Beaulieu to the East Indies (1619–1622), drawn by Himself", in *Navigantum atque Itinerantium*, ch. 2, section XXV, p. 744.

110 *Ibid.*, p. 747.

111 *Ibid.*

112 Van Langen, *Susunan Pemerintahan*, p. 54.

Malikon Adê" (Qadi Malik al-'Adil) and the "*Kali Raja*" (King's *Kadi*).

Again, during the time of Iskandar Muda, the office of the *kadi* was highly structured from the highest *kadi* at the court level to the lowest *kadi* at the village level. It appears that "*Kali Raja*" was, in many cases, was also the *mufti* or *Sheikh al-Islam* of the Sultanate, one who gave solicited and unsolicited legal opinion on various religious matters and even on political and economic issues. We knew that great scholars such as Hamzah Fansuri, Shams al-Din al-Sumatrani, Nur al-Din al-Raniri and 'Abd al-Ra'uf al-Sinkili had occupied the office of the *Kali Malikon Adil*, the role of *mufti*, and also as *Sheikh al-Islam*.

In the Malay Peninsula, since the fifteenth century there were some evidence of the existence of functionaries of Islamic legal institutions, especially that of the *kadi*. There was suggestion that Mawlana Abu Bakr, who presented a book *Durr al-Manzum* to Sultan Mansur Shah, was appointed the *kadi* of the Sultanate of Melaka in addition to his function as a religious adviser to the Sultan.[113] There were several other religious advisers in Melaka who apparently also functioned as the *shari'ah* functionaries, for they were called *kadi*; the most prominent among them were *Kadi* Yusuf, *Kadi* Munawwar, and *Kadi* Sadr Jahan.[114] These *kadi* were also reported to have exerted considerable influence upon court circles, and socially on the same par as the traditional dignitaries and notables.

After the fall of Melaka to the Portuguese, several members of Melaka's royal families and their religious functionaries went to Johor. According to a Dutch report, there was a *kadi* exercising the doctrines of Islamic law in the early sixteenth century Johor. The *kadi* was said to have strong influence upon Sultan Abd al-Jalil, the ruler of Johor in 1623 - 1677.[115] In Kedah where Islamic legal principles were also put into effect in the middle of the seventeenth century, the *kadi* could even impose God's law upon the *Raja* (ruler); the ruler and his ministers alike would submit to his legal decisions.[116]

The relatively strong position of the *kadi vis-a-vis* rulers in the Malay world reminded us of the powerful structure of the *shari'ah* functionaries in other parts of the Muslim world, for example, in the Ottoman Empire. Even though the *kadi* in certain parts of the Malay world, particularly in Acheh, Banten and Melaka exercised a relatively tremendous influence upon the population and rulers like their Ottoman counterparts, they generally had no such highly elaborated Ottoman hierarchy of Islamic legal authorities.[117] An exception was in the

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113 Hashim, *Persejarahan Melayu*, 192.

114 *Ibid.*, 200. R.O. Winstedt (ed.), 1938. "The Malay Annals or Sejarah Melayu", *JMBRAS*, 16, III, p. 129.

115 L.Y. Andaya, 1975. *The Kingdom of Johor: 1641-1720.* Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press. pp. 39, 208-09.

116 R.O. Winstedt, 1928. "The Kedah Laws", *JMBRAS*, 6, I, pp. 41, 44.

117 See, H.A.R. Gibb & H. Bowen, 1957. *Islamic Society and the West*, 2 vols. Oxford:

Achehnese Sultanate, as mentioned earlier, where the Sultan Iskandar Muda developed a hierarchy of functionaries of Islamic law in conjunction with the power structure of the state.

Despite the relatively strong influence of the *kadi*, it was evident that the application of doctrines of Islamic law in the Malay world varied from one area to another, as well as from one period to another. It appears that Islamic law exercised a stronger force in Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula than it did in Java, particularly in Central Java. It would also seem that Muslim rulers in the former areas were more susceptible to Islamic legal doctrines than their counterparts in Java. Moreover, the Muslim rulers in Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula were generally more willing to expand the realm of influence of Islamic law at the expense of local *adat*. In contrast, Javanese Muslim rulers of Central Java were much slower to adopt Islamic legal doctrines and had more attachment to their indigenous local *adat*.

It is fair to assume that Islamic law in the Malay world as a whole was generally practiced only by a minority of the Muslim population, that is, those who had a better understanding of the teachings of the *shari'ah*, or rather *fiqh*, in particular. This minority group, often called the "nucleus of the *santri* communities", however, played a crucial role in expanding the understanding of Islamic teachings among the general population.

Moreover, the implementation of Islamic law in different periods in the history of Islam in the Malay world much depended on the rulers understanding of and attachment to Islamic teachings. It was reported that the implementation of Islamic legal teaching in Terengganu from the middle of the eighteenth to early nineteenth century fluctuated in accordance with the changes of the rulers. The position of Islamic law during the times of Sultan Umar and Sultan Zayn al-'Abidin III who ascended the throne in 1833 and 1881 respectively was much better than during the reign of Sultan Ahmad who came to power in 1876.

It is important to note, however, that even if a learned ruler did attempt to implement the principles of Islamic law, the result would depend very much on how far he could exercise effective control over the various parts of his realm. With regard to this, in most Malay Muslim state, its rulers had no real effective authority over any but a varying portion of their domains. Therefore, it is doubtful whether they could enforce Islamic legal precepts in the interior areas which were usually controlled by traditional tribal chiefs who hardly had a proper understanding of Islam.

After the firm establishment of European rule in the Malay world, all Islamic legal institutions underwent the process of bureaucratization. This institution was integrated into the colonial administration. In Java,

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Oxford University Press, pp. 1-2, 81-138.

the Dutch introduced a hierarchy of the *penghulu* institution. At the top of hierarchy was the "*penghulu kepala*" (head penghulu) who were assigned at the capital city of the province. Below him were the *penghulu distrik* (Dutch, *onderdistrik*) who were assisted by a number of *ajung penghulu*, assistants to the *penghulu*. All these *penghulu* were responsible for the administration of the *peradilan agama* (Dutch, *priesterraad*-more appropriately, Islamic courts). Not only that, they were also responsible for handling other matters pertaining to Islam. In 1935 there were 82 Islamic courts throughout Java and Madura. In 1938 the Dutch created at the very top of the hierarchy the *peradilan agama* called "*Hoofd voor Islamitische zaken*" (the supreme court for Islamic matters).[118]

The bureaucratization of the *ulama*, in turn, created divisions within the body of the *ulama* in Dutch East Indies. On the one hand there was a group of "official *ulama*" who were appointed by the Dutch to occupy various religious posts. On the other, there was another group of the *ulama* called "independent *ulama*" who operated mainly in the *pesantren* and the organization of the *tarekat*. This group of the *ulama* gained their authority not from the colonial government, but from the Muslim societies themselves. They were often viewed by the Dutch as "trouble makers" who resisted not only the colonial government, but the *penghulu* as well. An example of the resistance of the independent *ulama* against the *penghulu* authority was *Kiyai* Ahmad Rifa'i of Kalisalak, Central Java. Rifa'i who spent years studying in the Haramayn declared that the authority of the *penghulu* was religiously invalid. Therefore, their rulings should be refused and abrogated.

The case was almost similar in the Malay Peninsula when the British firmly established their rule in the second half of the nineteenth century. Even though the Pangkor Engagement of 1874 stated that the Malay religion (Islam) and customs (*adat*) were the prerogative of the Malay Muslim rulers, in realities it was the British who was largely responsible for the administration of law, including Islamic law. This was the beginning of the bureaucratization of Islam under the colonial system. Thus, the Perak *kadi*, for instance, was appointed in 1879 by the State Council which was led by the British resident. Consequently a *kadi* hierarchy was introduced. At the top of the strata was the "*kepala kadi*" (Chief *Kadi*); followed by the *kadi* and *na'ib kadi* (Assistant *Kadi*). All of them were salaried officials; they were no longer entitled to accept religious gifts and contribution from the societies.[119]

Together with the bureaucratization of Islamic legal institutions, the Dutch and British introduced the secular legal institutions. It inavoidably became a serious threat to the Islamic courts. Even though Islamic courts tended to be neglected by the colonial administrations, the

118 Pijper, *Beberapa Studi*, pp. 71-75.
119 See, Hooker, *Islamic Law*, pp. 130-33; J.M. Gullick, 1987. *Malay Society in the Late Nineteenth Century*. Singapore: Oxford University Press, pp. 284-301.

structure of the above Islamic legal institutions generally survived until the outbreak of the Second World War.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE *FIQH* LITERATURE

Our discussion above has been centred mostly on the position of Islamic law *vis-a-vis* political institutions in the Malay world. The adoption of precepts of the *shari'ah* as well as the establishment of Islamic legal institutions in various Malay Muslim states could create an impression that the Muslim population in general had been well acquainted with doctrines of the *shari'ah*.

Even though certain rules of the *shari'ah* had been adopted and implemented in some Muslim states from the early history of Islam in the Malay region, it is important to point out that there was no complete *fiqh* book in Malay or in any other local dialects until the second part of the seventeenth century. Before this period, we can safely assume that the knowledge on the *shari'ah* or *fiqh* were apparently fragmented and mostly derived from oral transmission. It is true, as mentioned earlier, that certain portions of the 'Melaka Digest' and 'Pahang Digest', for instance, were translation of Shafi'i texts. But these fragments of the Shafi'i doctrines were mainly concerned with the "mundane" communal law, or more appropriately, some aspects of the *mu'amalah*, not with "strict" religious law or *'ibadah*.

The fact that there was no complete *fiqh* book before the second half of the seventeenth century is not very difficult to understand. The *fiqh* was simply not a central concern for most Malay Muslims in the period. They were more interested in the mystico-philosophical aspect Islam rather than in legal one. This is perfectly reflected by the kind of Islamic literature circulated; the most popular works were those which were written by such outstanding scholars as Hamzah al-Fansuri and Shams al-Din al-Sumatrani. Almost all of their works dealt with Islamic metaphysics and mystical knowledge; one will not find any writing on *shari'ah* in the list of Hamzah and Shams al-Din's works.

The first scholar in the Malay world who devoted a pioneering work on *fiqh* was Nur al-Din al-Raniri, who was, as mentioned earlier, the most bitter opponent of the Hamzah and Shams al-Din's doctrines. Al-Raniri was the first *'alim* in the Malay region ever to have taken the initiative to write a standard manual for the people's basic religious duties. Even though the precepts of the *shari'ah* had to some extent been known and practiced by some Malay Muslims, as pointed out above, there was no single work to refer to.

Realizing the paramount importance of *fiqh* in the Muslim daily life, al-Raniri during his relatively short sojourn (from 1637 to 1644) in the Achehnese Sultanate as its *Sheikh al-Islam*, wrote the first rather complete book on *fiqh 'ibadah* entitled *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim*. In his work he explicated the basic but fundamental duties of each Muslim in his

life. Using the now familiar outline of any *fiqh* book, al-Raniri had explained in detail the various matters concerning ablution (*wudu*), prayer (*salah*), "alms" (*zakah*), fasting (*sawm*), pilgrimage (*hajj*), sacrifice (*qurban*), and other *'ibadah*. Although the book would seem to be a simple exposition of basic *fiqh* rules, one should not underestimate its importance for Malay Muslims during the time when philosophical Sufism was prevalent. The work proved that it was very needed by the Muslims in the region, for it soon became highly popular and is still in use to this day in some parts of the Malay world.

Not less important, through *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim*, al-Raniri introduced some standard works written by leading authorities of the Shafi'i sect. In this way, he contributed significantly to make the Shafi'i school of law as the dominant *madhhab* in the Malay world. Among the works and authorities he often cited in his work were *Minhaj al-Talibin* by al-Nawawi, *Fath al-Wahhab bi Sharh Minhaj al-Tullab* by Zakariyya al-Ansari, *Hidayat al-Muhtaj ila Sharh al-Minhaj* by al-Nawawi, and *Hidayat al-Muhtaj* by Shams al-Din al-Ramli.[120]

Al-Raniri's concern about the application of the detailed rules of the *fiqh* had led him to extract sections of his *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim* and issued them as a separate work. The most famous among these extracts were *Kaifiyt al-Salh* and *Bab al-Nikh*. The latter together with *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim* were sent by al-Raniri personally to Kedah in about 1640. It appears to be of particular importance in furthering the entrenchment of Islam in Kedah. For that reason, it has been claimed that such contribution to deepen the roots of Islam in Kedah was equally importance in magnitude to that of the first preachers who brought Islam to the people of Kedah.[121]

A significant contribution to further development of *fiqh* in the Malay world was presented by 'Abd al-Ra'uf al-Sinkili, another leading scholar of the seventeenth century. Like al-Raniri, al-Sinkili had devoted his life to writing and holding the office of the *Kali Malikon Adil* of the Achehnese Sultanate. One of his numerous works was *Mir'at al-Tullab fi Tashil Ma'rifat al-Ahkam al-Shar'iyyah li al-Malik al-Wahhab*, better known simply as *Mir'at al-Tullab*.[122] This was the second major work in Malay on *fiqh* in the Malay world after al-Raniri's *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim*. The *Mir'at al-Tullab* was in fact the first work dealing with the *fiqh mu'amalat*, including the political, social, economic life of the Muslims. Covering such a vast topics, it was indeed a substantial work in that field.

The main source of the *Mir'at al-Tullab* was the *Fath al-Wahhab* by Zakariyya al-Ansari. But al-Sinkili had also deduced certain materials from such standard Shafi'i books as the *Fath al-Jawad* and *Tuhfat*

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120 Azra, "The Transmission", p. 369.

121 Siti Hawa Saleh, 1970. *Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa*. Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, p. 115; al-Attas, *A Commentary*, p. 11.

122 Azra, "The Transmission", pp. 400-01.

al-Muhtaj, both by Ibn Hajar al-Haytami (d. 1565); *Nihayat al-Muhtaj* by Shams al-Din al-Ramli, also popularly known as the "Little Shafi'i"; *Tafsir al-Baydawi* by Ibn 'Umar al-Baydawi (d. 1286); and *Sharh Sahih Muslim* by al-Nawawi (d. 1277).[123] In this way, al-Sinkili, like al-Raniri, had played a significant role in introducing some of the most important works of the Shafi'i to Malay Muslims in general.

Thus, al-Sinkili by way of the *Mir'at al-Tullab* shows his fellow Muslims that Islamic legal doctrines are not confined to purely devotional service (*'ibadat*) but also included all aspects of their daily life. Although the *Mir'at al-Tullab* was apparently no longer used in the Malay world today, in the past the work was widely circulated. Hooker has pointed out that the *Luwaran*, "selections" of Islamic law, used by the Muslim of Maguindanao of the Philippines, since the middle of the nineteenth century, made the *Mir'at al-Tullab* one of its main references.[124] Another work of al-Sinkili on *fiqh*, *Kitab al-Far'id*, presumably taken from the *Mir'at al-Tullab*, was still used by certain segments of Malay Muslims until more recent times.

The doctrines of the *shari'ah* undoubtedly continued to become one of the main concern of the many Malay scholars in the subsequent period. It was the two great scholars, namely Muhammad Arshad al-Banjari (1710–1812) and Dawud ibn 'Abd Allah bin Idris al-Patani (d. 1847) who were responsible for the further spread and entrenchment of the *shari'ah* in the Malay world in the eighteenth and the first half nineteenth centuries. Both scholars, like al-Raniri and al-Sinkili, spent decades of their life in pursuing Islamic religious sciences in the various places in the Middle East. Later, at the height of their career, Muhammad Arshad al-Banjari and Dawud al-Patani paid a special attention to the understanding and implementation of the *shari'ah* doctrines in their homeland.

Muhammad Arshad's major work on *fiqh* was the *Sabil al-Muhtadin li al-Tafaqquh fi Amr al-Din*. Without doubt it constituted one of the major works on *fiqh* in Malay after the completion of *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim* by al-Raniri and the *Mir'at al-Tullab* by al-Sinkili. As Muhammad Arshad pointed out in his introductory notes, he began to write the *Sabil al-Muhtadin* in 1779 at the request of Sultan Tahmid Allah of the Banjar Sultanate. The work, completed in 1781, consisting of two volumes some five hundred pages. It deals with detailed rules of the *'ibadah* (ritual) aspect of the *fiqh*. Basically, it is an elaboration, or to some extent a revision, of al-Raniri's *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim* which used many Achehnese words hardly understood by Malays from other places.[125]

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123 *Ibid.*

124 Hooker, *Islamic Law*, pp. 20, 42.

125 See, Shaghir Abdullah, 1983. *Syeikh Muhammad Arsyad al-Banjari, Matahari Islam*. Pontianak: al-Fathanah, Azra, "The Transmission", p. 528; Mohd. Nor bin Ngah,

The main sources of the *Sabil al-Muhtadin* was Zakariyya al-Ansari's *Sharh Minhaj al-Tullab*, Shams al-Din al-Ramli's *Nihayat al-Muhtaj* [*ila Sharh al-Minhaj* af al-Nawawi], Ibn Hajar al-Haytami's *Tuhfat* [*al-Muhtaj li Sharh al-Minhaj*], and Khatib al-Sharbayni's *Mughni al-Muhtaj*.[126] Both al-Raniri and al-Sinkili also made extensive use of most of these sources. Al-Raniri's *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim*, which was also printed in the margin of the *Sabil al-Muhtadin*, was Muhammad Arshad's starting point; then he made the works of the scholars mentioned above his major references.

The *Sabil al-Muhtadin*, printed several times in Melaka, Cairo, Istanbul and various other places in the Malay world, was highly popular among Muslims of this region. Later, the descendants of Muhammad Arshad compiled a collection of his teaching on the fundamentals of belief (*'aqa'id*) and *fiqh*, entitled *Perukunan Besar al-Banjari* or *Perukunan Melayu*. This work enjoyed similar success and was subsequently translated into other languages of the Malay world, such as Javanese and Sundanese.[127]

The popularity of Muhammad Arshad's works, as well as of other earlier *fiqh* works by al-Raniri and al-Sinkili, indicated that the works explicating Islamic legal precepts were indeed needed by many Malay Muslims as practical guides to their daily life. It also attested to the fact that Muslims in the Malay world now also exhibited a deep interest in the legal aspect of Islam and were not simply interested in Islamic mysticism, as have been suggested by some scholars of Islam in this region.

In addition to his significant contribution to the *fiqh* literature, Muhammad Arshad took an important step in the reformation of the administration of justice in the Sultanate of Banjar. Through his ceaseless efforts he made Islamic legal doctrines the most important references in criminal courts. Then, with the support of the Sultan, he established a separate Islamic courts to deal with a more purely civil matters. He also initiated the establishment in the Banjar Sultanate of the office of *Mufti*. With all these initiative, Muhammad Arshad managed to put Islamic law into effect in Kalimantan.

A substantial contribution to the further spread of Islamic legal doctrines was made by Dawud al-Patani, probably the most prolific among Malay scholars of the eighteenth century. He was one of the best examples of a scholar who was successful in reconciling legal and mystical aspects of Islam.

Al-Patani wrote a number of works dealing with various aspects of

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1982, *Kitab Jawi: Islamic Thought of the Malay Muslim Scholars*. Singapore: ISEAS, p. 5.

126 Azra, "The Transmission", pp. 528–29.

127 See, Zafry Zamzam, 1970. "Karya ar-Raniry dan al-Bandjari", *Sinar Darussalam*, 25 p. 49; Martin van Bruinessen, 1990. "Kitab Kuning: Books in Arabic Scripts used in the *Pesantren* Milieu", *BKI*, 146, pp. 250–51.

the *shari'ah* and *fiqh*. The most important among them were the *Bughyat al-Tullab al-Murid Ma'rifat al-Ahkam bi al-Sawab* [sic.] which explains religious observances (*'ibadah*), and *Furu' al-Masa'il wa Usul al-Masa'il* which dealt with the great number of rules and guidelines in daily life. Smaller epistles then follow, such as the *Jami' al-Fawa'id* on various obligations of a Muslim towards his fellows Muslims and others, *Hidayat al-Muta'allim wa 'Umdat al-Mu'allim* on *fiqh* in general, *Muniyyat al-Musalli* on prayer, *Nahj al-Raghibin fi Sabil al-Muttaqin* on commercial transactions, *Ghayat al-Taqrib* on inheritance (*fara'id*), *Idah al-Bab li Murid al-Nikah bi al-Sawab* on matters relating to marriage and divorce, and other shorter writings on particular sections of *fiqh*.[128]

Coming out from the same intellectual milieu, it was hardly surprising that al-Patani also derived most of his teachings from the important scholars referred to earlier. His major sources for *Bughyat al-Tullab* were, among others, the *Minhaj al-Thalibin* by al-Nawawi, *Fath al-Wahhab* by Zakariyya al-Ansari, *Tuhfat al-Muhtaj* by ibn Hajar al-Haytami, and *Nihayat al-Muhtaj* by Shams al-Din al-Ramli.[129]

Al-Patani's *Bughyat al-Tullab* consists of two volumes of 244 and 236 pages, and was printed several times in Makkah, Istanbul, Cairo, and various other places in the Malay world. Delineating the details of various Muslim religious observances (*'ibadah*), this work had been acclaimed as the most complete book on this particular aspect of *fiqh*. The *Bughyat al-Tullab* was as popular as the *Sabil al-Muhtadin* by Muhammad Arshad and it is used in many places in the Malay world.[130]

The *Furu' al-Masa'il* was also an ample work on *fiqh*; a reprinted Makkah edition (1841), based on an earlier version published in Cairo (n.d.), consisted of two volumes of 275 and 394 pages. The work was an adaption of both Shams al-Din al-Ramli's *al-Fatawa* and Husayn ibn Muhammad al-Mahalli's *Kashf al-Litham* and was written in the form of questions and answers. By adopting this style of exposition, al-Patani had introduced a new method of delineating the intricacies of *fiqh* in what he considered an attractive and effective way to teach fiqh to his Malay audience.

Al-Patani, through his works listed above, played a major role in history of *fiqh* in the Malay world. Even though the works bore Arabic titles, they were in fact written in Malay. This reflected al-Patani's concern that his Malay-co-religionists had to understand the precepts of the *shari'ah*. He underlines the importance of the *shari'ah* or *fiqh* for Muslims by citing a hadith of the Prophet Muhammad which stated that a good *faqih* can better defend himself against evils than a thousand

128 H.W.M. Shaghir Abdullah, 1990. *Syeikh Daud bin Abdullah al-Fatani: Ulama dan Pengarang Terulung Asia Tenggara.* Kuala Lumpur: Hizbi, pp. 55–99; Matheson & Hooker, "Jawi Literature", pp. 21–26.

129 Azra, "Transmission", pp. 530–31.

130 Abdullah, Syeikh Daud, pp. 99–100; Matheson & Hooker, "Jawi Literature", p. 21; Hooker, *Islamic Law*, p. 32.

Muslims who perform religious obligations without sufficient knowledge of *fiqh*.[131]

Before the publication of *fiqh* books in Roman scripts in the more recent times, all the above mentioned book spread widely throughout the Malay region. With the availability of Arabic printing machines toward the end of the nineteenth century in Singapore and Batavia many *fiqh* books which were used to be printed in the Middle East, were now printed in the region. This is also another important factor that allowed these books to spread more widely in the Malay world. With the intensification of Islamic religiosity since the second half of the nineteenth century, more and more Malay Muslims here looking for those *fiqh* books.

CONCLUSION

The development of Islamic religious institutions and life in the Malay world were very dynamic. In the earlier phase of their developments, all these religious institutions were not necessarily very Islamic and strongly influence of local the *adat*. This, however, had stimulated revival and reforms, as proposed by the Malay scholars, towards the creation of more Islamically-oriented Muslim societies. The stimulus for reforms was also strengthened by various other important factors such as the expansion of colonial rule, continued intense contacts and communication with the centers in the Middle East – particularly through returning *haji* and Malay scholars and students in the Haramayn and Cairo.

Malay Muslims were geographically peripheral *vis-a-vis* Islamic centres in the Middle East. Yet, their experience in the development and maintenance of their Islamic institutions and life showed us that they had done their best possible to implement a more Islamic way of life in accordance with the true teachings of Islam.

131 Abdullah, Syeikh Daud, pp. 103–04.

Chapter 5

Kitab Jawi: Intellectualizing Literary Tradition

Ismail Hamid

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Kitab Jawi: Intellectualizing Literary Tradition

INTRODUCTION

In the pre-Islamic times education among the Malays was undertaken informally first by the family at home and then by the elders in the community in social mores and etiquettes. They were taught the social norms, beliefs and customs indirectly as they interacted with other members of the community. As the children grew they learnt further about conductings themselves with propriety as expected of them by the community. This was the process of socialization experienced informally by one throughout his life.

A form of formal education among the Malays can be said to be carried out by the various experts or teachers in the areas essential to the life of the Malays in the ancient times. For example the *pawang* who was the expert in a particular activity was the agent of socialization, as in *pawang lebah*, the exponent for the collection of honey, or *pawang ikan* whose knowledge in detecting schools of fish is very much needed by the fishermen. The expert of a more technical nature was called *tukang* or *pandai* as in *tukang besi* or *pandai keris*. While *pawang* would include expertise and skills of extraordinary matters like *pawang lombong* who is an expert in locating tin and other deposits and conduct mining operations, the *pandai* or *tukang* is the master craftsmen involved in the manufacturing skills like *pandai besi* (ironmonger), *pandai emas* (goldsmith), or *tukang kayu* who was sought after in carpentary or building trade. These experts were also knowledgable is customary practices and

rituals observed by the Malays. *Pawang* enjoyed a very important place in the Malay life. Their advice was sought not only in healing the sick but also in other life activities of the society, both during war and peace. The Malay rulers would also engage *pawang* at the court not only as royal physician but as an advisor in time of need. This was expecially so in matters relating to the beliefs in supernaturals. A state did not only have its *jin kerajaan* (state genie) as protector, but a state *pawang* as well to guide the ceremonials connected with the affairs of the state. *Pawang* were therefore considered by the Malays as men of learning who master the art of healing and esoteric knowledge. They enjoyed a very respectable place in the Malay society.

In preliterate Malay society, education among the people was also conducted through the medium of story telling. The Malay folktales narrated by story-tellers contained the messages of educating the audience about the Malay etiquettes and moral values. The professional story-tellers known as *penglipur lara* (soother of woes) who mastered the art of storytelling in the Malay society were also considered as knowledgeable men and looked upon with very high regard by the society. The story-tellers were not merely entertainers but also played the role of imparting knowledge to the audience during the storytelling session. They were also preachers who conveyed to the audience the Malay cultural values, etiquettes, norms, customs and beliefs. Thus they were also considered as the more learned in the society.

The pre-Islamic Malay would see conflicts and wars occurring from time to time, either in the form of aggression by foreign enemies or civil war occurring among themselves, perhaps on account of a scramble for political leadership among themselves. As every member of society had to be involved during such a conflict, it was essential for every individual in the Malay society to master the technique of self defence and learnt the art of war. Those adept and skilful in the martial art was always sought after and enjoyed a luncrative existence as retainers to the feudal lords, or could himself rise to eminent position and highly honoured by the society. The Malays would also consider them as knowledgeable men or expert who mastered an essential skill in life.

Besides those mentioned above who were considered as learned men in pre-Islamic Malay life, there were the nobility who were engaged by the rulers to help govern the state, and the *pujangga* or Brahmins who served the court on spiritual matters. The former would range from those with royal titles and given briefs to supervise the economic life (including the collection of taxes) provide military protection and organize manpower needs of the ruler in an institution known as the *kerah* (compulsory labour for the government), to the country local officials like the village chiefs known in Malay as *penghulu* or *demang*. During this period authority was vested in the royal courts and higher learning was monopolized by royal households, compared to the

education and the conduct of ordinary life among the village people as described above.

The Buddhist in the Malay world introduced a form of formal education carried out by Buddhist institution. According to the Chinese traveller I Tsing, a Buddhist institution already existed in northern Sumatra in the seventh century. The students of this institution numbered about one thousand; they studies Sanskrit language and Buddhist doctrines as a preparation to become priests. During this period formal learning was catered by Buddhist institution, and education was confined to the priests and monks as their preparation to preach the faith in the society.[1]

When Islam was first introduced to the inhabitants of the Malay world, they were taught through the Malay language the important doctrines of Islamic religion such as the concept of *tauhid*, the pillars of the faith, that is the belief in the Oneness of God, the messenger of Allah, the angels, the holy book, the day of judgement and the *qada* and *qadar*. Then they were also taught about obligatory Islamic rituals which are compulsory for every Muslim to perform such as the five daily prayers, fasting during the month of *Ramadhan*, payment of tithe and the pilgrimage to Makkah (*Haji*) for those who have the means to do so.

At the beginning Islam was spread among the Malays orally because writing was not widespread at that time. As the Malays were converted to Islam they were required to perform daily prayers and were compelled to learn the Qur'an in order to recite verses from the holy book. At the beginning the Malays must have memorized the Qur'anic verses by heart because they could not read the holy book as it was written in the Arabic script. But when Islam was well established among the Malay communities in the thirteenth century, they began to learn performing Islamic rituals, especially the five daily prayers. Thus learning Arabic script was more or less compulsory for all Muslims to enable them to read the Qur'an especially among the children.

For the purpose of disseminating Islamic knowledge the necessity of writing Islamic text books in the Malay language became inevitable. Therefore effort was made to introduce a new script for writing Islamic knowledge in the Malay language. Although there were already some scripts familiar to the Malays such as *Kawi* and *Nagari*, they were of Sanskrit origin and only suitable for the writing of a Hindu and Buddhist teachings. The Arabic script was therefore chosen because it was suitable for teaching Islamic knowledge especially when Islamic doctrines contain various Islamic terminology. Consequently Arabic script was adopted as a new script for the Malay language with slight adjustments so as to accommodate Malay phonetics which were not found in Arabic.

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1 D.G.E. Hall, 1961. *A History of Southeast Asia*. London: MacMillan & Co. Ltd., p. 37.

By using Arabic script which was also known as *Jawi* writing began to develop in the Malay language. The necessity of writing Islamic religious doctrines in the Malay language became very significant because it acted as a guide for religous rituals which are obligatory to every Muslim. At the beginning, the earliest writings were in the form of treatises called *kitab* or *risalah*, which contained the basic teachings of Islam which included the subject matters of *shahadat, solat, zakat* and *haji*. However when Islam became dominant among the Malays, advanced writings on various subjects of Islamic studies were undertaken by Muslim scholars on topics such as Islamic law, theology, the Qur'anic exegesis, the *hadith*, and sufism.[2]

The earliest record of Arabic script used as the medium of writing in the Malay language was found inscribed on stone at Kuala Berang, Trengganu, dated 1303. The inscribed stone was considered one of the earliest inscription found in the *Jawi* script in the Malay world. The inscription of the stone recorded an edict to promulgate Islamic legal provisions and a proclamation ordering rulers and governors to uphold the Islamic faith and the teaching of the Prophet Muhammad.[3] Another Arabic inscription was found on the grave stone of the ruler of Pasai dated 1297 in northern tip of Sumatra named Malik al-Salih, who ruled Pasai and Samudra in 1297. The inscription was written in the Arabic language. Yet another inscription was found on a tombstone at Minye Tujuh, Acheh, dated 1300, but it was written in an Indian script containing several Arabic vocabulary such as *nabi, hijrah, rahmat, ilahi, rabbi* etc. After the coming of Islam the Malay language developed as it was used for the preaching of Islamic religion as well as the medium for writing Islamic sciences. Consequently the Malay language was used as *lingua franca* in the Malay world. European travellers who visited the Malay world testified to the widespread use of the Malay language in the sixteenth century. One of them, Magellan, said that the Malay language was widely used as a medium of communication among the people in the Malay world from Acheh to Molucas.[4]

During the Islamic period the Malay language was used as the language of communication and the language of culture and knowledge for the various kingdoms in the Malay world. The rulers of Moluccas in the sixteenth century wrote in the Malay language to the King of Portugal[5] while the rulers of Acheh used the Malay language in all their correspondence with foreign governments. According to Van Ronkel the Malay language became a medium of communication among various

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2 Zuber Usman, 1963. *Kesusasteraan Lama Indonesia*. Djakarta: Gunung Agung, pp. 17-20.

3 S.Q. Fatimi, 1963, *Islam Comes to Malaysia*. Singapore: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute Ltd., p. 60.

4 R.O. Winstedt, 1961. *The Malay. A Cultural History*. London: Routledge & Keegan Paul Ltd., p. 149.

5 S. Takdir Alisyahbana, 1956. *Sejarah Bahasa Indonesia*. Jakarta: Pustaka Rakyat, p. 8.

ethnic groups of the Malay world. Van Linschoten who lived in Indonesia between 1586 and 1592 said that Malay enjoyed a respectable place among other Asian languages during that time.[6]
During the period also, Arabic strongly influenced the Malay language through the propagation of Islam. The large number of Arabic vocabulary borrowed by the Malay language were estimated to be more than one thousand words. The borrowing of Arabic vocabulary occurred because the Malays were familiar with the language of the Qur'an their holy book after their conversion to Islam.

The borrowing of Arabic vocabulary took place in various ways. For example the Malays became familiar with some of Arabic words through their usage in performing Islamic rituals such as five daily prayers and other religious obligations. Arabic educated Malays who were schooled in Makkah, Egypt, and Hadhramaut since the early times became the agent of this language change. After graduating from their studies in the Middle East the Arabic educated became religious teachers and writers of Islamic books. Although they borrowed many Arabic vocabulary in their oral and written communication the Malays still maintained their own language as the medium. Gradually the borrowing of Arabic vocabulary became widespread and accepted as part and parcel of the Malay language.

Besides writing of religious books, translation of Arabic books into the Malay language also took place since the sixteenth century. In the translating process, the Malay writers not only rendered ideas from the Arabic text in the Malay language, they also brought along Arabic terminology which they could not find its equivalent in Malay especially with regard to the various terms pertaining to Islamic sciences such as in *fiqh, kalam, sufism, tafsir,* and *hadith.*

The process of borrowing Arabic vocabulary took place in a very long period of time after the Malays were converted to Islam. The Arabic vocabulary gradually assimilated into the Malay language and many of them transformed themselves to suit the Malay tongue and gramatical structure. Many Arabic words in Malay were no longer pronounced in its original Arabic sound, but Malaysianized. With such borrowing, the recipient language enriched itself and developed into a *lingua franca* and a medium of communication in writing various branches of knowledge in Malay. In the course of borrowing, certain Arabic terms and words not only lost their original texture but meaning as well. For example the Arabic *tabl,* a kind of drum, came *tabal* in Malay which means the installation of king to the throne. In Arabic *madrasah* is a school, while in Malay it denotes the prayer place. In Arabic *funduk* means a hotel or lodging; in Malay it is a traditional religious school or hut. In the Malay language there are more than one thousand words and terms which

6 Ismail Hussein, *op. cit.*, pp. 37-38.

originated from the Arabic language especially those which are related to the various branches of Islamic knowledge.

CENTRES OF ISLAMIC LEARNING IN THE MALAY WORLD

The conversion of the Malays to Islam did not occur all at the same time in all places, but rather spread gradually, which in the process saw the development and growth of various states playing the role as the pivot for proselytizing activities as well as the centres of Islamic learning.

Marco Polo, the great Venetian traveller, in his voyage to China visited Ferlec (Perlak) in Sumatra in 1292 A.D. He reported that the inhabitants of Ferlec had already become Muslim. After conversion to Islam, Pasai grew up into a Muslim political power in northern Sumatra and acted as the patron of Islam in this region. The court of Pasai and its mosque became the earliest centres of Islamic education in the Malay world.[7]

A Malay traditional historical work, *Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai*, mentions about a ruler of Pasai, Merah Silu, who was converted to Islam by Sheikh Ismail and Faqir Muhammad. After his conversion to Islam, he was installed as the Sultan by the name Malik al-Salih. The grave of the first Muslim ruler of Pasai named Sultan Malik al-Salih was discovered and dated 1297 A.D. After the death of Sultan Malik al-Salih, he was succeeded by other Muslim rulers such as Sultan Malik al-Zahir, and Sultan Malik al-Mansur.[8]

With the Islamization of Pasai, it became the first centre of Islamic culture in the Malay world beginning from the thirteenth century. As a centre of Islam, Pasai established its Islamic educational institution at the mosque of Pasai. The institution was patronized by the Sultan who himself participated in its studies. According to Ibn Battutah who visited Pasai in 1345 A.D., he found that the Sultan of Pasai, al-Malik al-Zahir was a man of wisdom who loved knowledge and encouraged learning. Consequently, Pasai developed into a centre of Islamic studies and also became the meeting place of Islamic scholars and theologians from the Islamic world, such as *Kadi* Amir Sayyid from Shiraz, Taj al-Din from Isfahan and Amir Dawlasa from the Sultanate of Delhi, India.[9] According to Schrieke, Abd Allah ibn Muhammad al-Muntasir, a descendant of the last Caliph of Baghdad had also visited Pasai and passed away there in 1407.[10]

Another Malay traditional history, *Sejarah Melayu* (Malay Annals), mentions that Pasai once became a centre of Islamic studies in the Malay world. It says that an Islamic scholars in Makkah by the name Mawlana

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7 S.Q. Fatimi. *op. cit.*, p. 37.
8 *Ibid.*, pp. 38-39.
9 Ibn Battutah, 1983. *Rihlah*. Paris, p. 230.
10 B. Schrieke, 1957. *Indonesia Sociological Studies*. The Hague: Van Hoeven, 1957, p. 262.

Abu Ishaq wrote a book entitled *Dur al-Manzum.* He asked his student Mawlana Abu Bakr to bring the book as a gift to Sultan Mansur Shah of Melaka. However, the book could not be understood by the people of Melaka because it was written in Arabic. The Sultan of Melaka who was very interested in knowing its content ordered that the book be sent to Pasai for its interpretation or translation. When the work was accomplished it was sent back to Melaka. *Sejarah Melayu* also mentions about a religious problem which could not be explicated by theologians in Melaka, therefore, it was referred to Pasai.[11]

Pasai became the first centre of Islamic culture in the Malay archipelago. From Pasai the teaching of Islam spread to other parts of the Malay world. Pasai, which acted as the centre of Islamic studies, might have first produced Islamic literature through the medium of the Malay language. Unfortunately, evidence could not be substantiated because most of Malay Islamic legacies from early Islamic period do not bear the date nor the name of their authors. One of the works which might have originated from the time of early Sultanate of Pasai is in a form of Malay traditional history entitled *Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai* (The Narrative of Kings of Pasai).

The author of the above book is not known nor the date when it was written. However, whoever was the author of the traditional history of Pasai he must be a Muslim well-versed in Islamic writing tradition for he commenced his book with Islamic doxology; that is by beginning the witing with the prayer to Allah and His Prophet and the believers following the tradition of the Prophet Muhammad, who began his speeches and letters with Islamic doxology.

By 1409 A.D. Melaka was converted to Islam; gradually it grew up into a strong Muslim Sultanate as well as a new centre of Islamic studies after the decline of Pasai. As a new centre of Islamic studies for the Malays, Melaka established its Islamic Educational institutions. Students from the other parts of the Malay archipelago came to study in Melaka as for example, Mawlana Ishaq, an Islamic scholar and a religious preacher in Java who came to study at the Islamic religious school during the middle of the fifteenth century. Other Muslim preachers from Java who studied in Melaka include Sunan Bonang and Sunan Giri at the end of the fifteenth century.[12]

Sultan Mahmud, the ruler of Melaka, once made a claim that "Melaka is the right of Makkah", because it played the same role as Makkah in promoting Islamic education in the Malay region. According to Winstedt, the Muslim students in Melaka, especially from Java, had studied religious sciences, for example, *Ilm al-Hadith, Ilm al-Kalam, Tasawwuf* and *Shari'a,* and the following titles *Ihya 'Ulum al-Din* by

11 R.O. Winstedt (ed.), 1938. *The Malay Annals,* JMBRAS, 16 pt. 3, p. 127.
12 R.O. Winstedt, 1972. *A History of Classical Malay Literature.* Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1972, pp. 84–85.

Imam al-Ghazali, *Kitab al-Tauhid* by Abu Shukur, *Talkis al-Minhaj* by Imam al-Nawawi[13] were said to have been made their text books.

As centre of Islamic studies, religious books were not only taught in Melaka in the fifteenth century but it might also have been written by religious scholars there. For example, the Melaka Sultanate had sent some religious books to Patani following the spread of Islam there.[14] Since Arabic works could not be understood by the newly converted Malays religious books must have been written in the Malay language.

Besides religious books, early Malay authors might have created their own Islamic literature in order to cater to the needs of the people. The Malay text *Sejarah Melayu* mentions two books of romantic literature which were read to the warriors on the eve of the Portuguese invasion of Melaka in 1511 A.D. These two works were *Hikayat Amir Hamzah* and *Hikayat Muhammad Ali Hanafiyyah*.[15] Another which was entitled *Hikayat Dhu al-Qarnayn* must have been known in Melaka during that time because the first ruler of Melaka took the name of Iskandar Shah, which is the name of the main character in that book. At the same time the rulers of Melaka were very proud to trace their genealogy to the Muslim hero, Sultan Iskandar Dhu al-Qarnayn (Zulkarnain).

The only literary work pertaining to the Melaka era is *Sejarah Melayu*. Though the work is said to have been written after the fall of Melaka; yet there must have been some sketches of the writing originating from the period. The writer of the "Annals" also must have been trained under Islamic discipline because the author adopted the form of Islamic literature by commencing his book with a lengthy prayer. Even the authors chose to name his work with an Arabic title *Sulalah al-Salatin*.

After the defeat of Melaka by the Portuguese in 1511 A.D., Acheh assumed the role of a Muslim political power in this region. The Muslim rulers of Acheh who always loved learning sponsored the establishment of Islamic institutions in their kingdom. The rulers also encouraged Muslim scholars from other parts of Islamic world to settle down in Acheh and employed them as teachers. The Islamic government of Acheh set up a system of education by using mosques as places of learning throughout the country. An institution of higher learning was also established for the students to further their studies, which was called *Rangkang*. Those who liked to pursue advanced studies, had to go to Makkah, India and Egypt.[16]

The encouragement of learning carried out by Acheh's rulers

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13 R.O. Winstedt. *The Malays. A Cultural History*, p. 35.
14 R.O. Winstedt. *The Malay Annals*, p. 127.
15 C.C. Brown (trans.), 1970. *Sejarah Melayu, Malay Annals*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, pp. 162-163.
16 Zakaria Ahmad, 1972. *Sekitar Kerajaan Atjeh*. Medan, pp. 98-101.

especially during the reign of Sultan Iskandar Thani, Sultan Iskandar Muda and Sultan Safiat al-Din made Acheh a great centre of Islamic studies. Because of the advancement of education in Acheh, several Muslim scholars and authors emerged in Acheh, such as Hamzah Fansuri, Sham al-Din al-Sumatrani, Nur al-Din al-Raniri, Abd. al-Rauf Sinkel, Bukhari al-Jawhari.

Hamzah Fansuri was a well-known author in the Malay archipelago in the sixteenth century for his literary work and interest in a brand of sufism called *Wujudiyyah*. Besides being a *sufi*, Hamzah was also known as a poet whose poetry expressed his learnings towards sufism, dealing with the relation between the Creator and the created. According to S.M. Naquib al-Attas, Hamzah Fansuri was the first writer who used the Malay language for expressing rational and systematic ideas; therefore he suggests that Hamzah should be considered as the father of modern Malay literature.[17]

Another Achehnese Muslim writer was Nur al-Din al-Raniri, who is author of various works such as *Sirat al-mustaqim, Durrat al-faraid bisharah al-aqai'd, Asrar al insan fi ma'rifat al-ruh wa al-prahman, Jawahir al-ulum fi kashf al-ma'lum.* The most important work which was written by al-Raniri was *Bustan al-Salatin* under the instruction of Sultan Iskandar Thani in 1630.

Bukhari al-Jawhari was another Muslim writer who wrote a book entitled *Taj al-Salatin* in 1603 for the guidance of the Malay rulers. The works dwelled on the method of public administration and political affairs based upon the teachings of Islam. Abd al-Rauf was another Achehnese scholar who wrote *Daqq'qiq al-huruf, Mira'at al-tullab Umdat al-muhtajin* and translated *Tafsir al-Baydhawi* into the Malay language.

Besides Acheh, Johor and Riau became another centre of Islamic learning in the Malay world. After the fall of Melaka, Sultan Mahmud Shah went to Johor Lama and established his new seat of government at Bintang. As Sultan Mahmud was regularly attacked by the Portuguese at Melaka, he was forced to flee to Kampar where he died in 1528. During the reign of Sultan Alauddin Riayat Shah (1597–1602) Johor Lama became a centre of learning with Tun Sri Lanang as a court scholar as well as prime minister. In Johor, Tun Sri Lanang began writing his work entitled *Sulalatus al-Salatin.*

When Sultan Badrul Alam Shah (1722–1760) ascended the throne, he transfered the seat of government from Johor Lama to Riau and the development of Islamic education greatly accelerated through the role of its rulers who were very fond of learning. An Islamic institution was established in *Penyegat*, the capital of Riau. One of the foremost scholars who emerged from Riau was Raja Ali Haji. A member of the royal

17 S.M. Naquib al-Attas, 1972. *Islam dalam Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Melayu.* Kuala Lumpur: Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, p. 20.

family, he pursued his studies until be became a scholar in Islamic studies. Later he became a teacher instructing several disciplines of Islamic studies. Raja Ali Haji was also a prolific writer. He wrote several books, such as, *Bustan al-Katibin, Tuhfat al-Nafis, Kitab Salasilah Melayu dan Bugis*, and *Kitab Pengetahuan Bahasa*.[18]

Patani to the north of the Malay peninsula became one of the centres of learning in the Malay world since the fifteenth century because of the wise administration of its rulers. According to the *Hikayat Patani*, the ruler who first converted to Islam was called Sultan Ismail Shah who reigned around 1457. He was succeeded by his son Sultan Muzaffar Shah. During the reign of Sultan Muzaffar, Patani developed into a prosperous kingdom as stated by Pinto, a Portuguese traveller, in his book called *Peregrinacoes*.[19] From the fifteenth century to the seventeeth century, Patani became a powerful Sultanate in the northern Malay Peninsula with Kelantan and Terengganu coming under its domination. An English traveller named Alexander Hamilton who visited Patani in the seventeenth century described the Sultanate as having about 43 states under its administration and it established a very good relation with Johor through matrimonial relationship.[20]

Patani was well known for its traditional Islamic education called the *"Pondok"* system. The Sultanate established traditional Islamic institutions throughout the states and encouraged the *ulama* to preach Islam and spread its teaching. As a result many Islamic institutions were established. Students came from all over the Malay world to study in Patani. After graduating from a *pondok* in Patani, they might further their studies in Makkah. The most well known *ulama* who taught in Patani included Sheikh Daud bin Abdullah al-Fatani, Wan Ahmad bin Mustafa al-Fatani, Sheikh Wan Ahmad al-Fatani, Sheikh Zainal Abidin al-Fatani, and Sheikh Muhammad Zain al-Fatani.[21] Beside teaching at Islamic institutions, the scholars also wrote books on Islamic subjects in the Malay language. These books were later published in Makkah, Patani, the states in the Malay peninsula and Indonesia and they became text books for the teaching of Islamic knowledge in Patani as well as other Islamic institutions in the Malay world.

Kelantan, a northern Malay state also came under the rule of Patani Sultanate. Like Patani, Kelantan also played the role of spreading Islamic education through the establishment of the *pondok* system. The *ulama* who taught in the *pondok* were trained in Patani. The development of Islamic education in Kelantan flourished especially during the reign of

18 T. Iskandar, Dis. 1964. *Raja Ali Haji, Tokoh dari Pusat Kebudayaan Johor-Riau*. Dewan Bahasa, p. 533.

19 A Bangnara, 1977 *Patani Dahulu dan Sekarang*. Patani: Panel Penyelidikan Angkatan al-Fatani, p. 9.

20 *Ibid.*, 3.

21 Mohd. Zamberi A. Malek, 1944. *Patani dalam Tamadun Melayu*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, p. 101.

Sultan Muhammad II since 1837.[22]

When Sultan Muhammad II ascended the throne, he accorded religious authority to all the *Imam* in Kelantan to administer religious affairs in every village in the state. *Surau* became the centre of Islamic administration as well as learning in every village. *Imam* would collect *zakat* and *fitrah*, registered the marriages and divorces and carried out Islamic rituals such as congregational prayer on Friday and delivered all religious sermons issued by the state to the villagers. The Sultan was assisted by religious scholars from Patani in the administration of religious matters in the state.[23]

Under the administration of Sultan Muhammad II a ministry of religious affairs was created called the Ministry of Justice and Judiciary. The important members who took charge of the ministry were the *mufti* who became the Chief Judge, the *kadi*, who was responsible in administration of *Syari'ah* Law, and the judge who took charge of administration of law, not related to the *Syari'ah*.[24]

In the nineteenth century Kelantan developed into a centre of Islamic learning as testified by Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir Munshi who visited Kelantan in 1838. In his book *Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah*, Abdullah had described about the Islamic administration and the development of Islamic learning in Kelantan as he saw it during his travel to the state.[25] After Patani, Kelantan began to introduce Islamic-traditional system of education called *pondok*. A grand mosque was built at Kota Bharu which became a centre of Islamic religious learning.[26]

Besides Kelantan, Terengganu was another centre of Islam on the eastern coast of the Malay peninsula. The discovery of a stone incription at Kuala Berang written in *Jawi* script constituting an order to promulgate certain Islamic law indicated that Terengganu was already a centre of Islam since 1303 (702 A.H.) that is according to the date inscribed on this stone edict.[27] According to S.Q. Fatimi, Terengganu was the first centre of Islam on the eastern cost of Malaysia based upon the evidence from the inscription. This idea is also supported by reports in certain Chinese annals of the parallel rise of Islam in Champa which faces the eastern cost of the Malay Peninsula.[28]

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22 Roof (ed.), 1974. *Kelantan: Religion, Society and Politics in a Malay State.* Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, p. 153.

23 Clive S. Kessler, 1978. *Islam and Politics in a Malay State.* London: Cornell University Press, pp. 42–43.

24 M. Hussin Khalili, 1970. *Kelantan dari Zaman ke Zaman.* Kota Bharu: Pustaka Dian Bhd., p. 70.

25 Kasim Ahmad (ed.), 1964. *Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah ke Kelantan dan ke Jeddah.* Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, p. 106.

26 M. Hussin Khalili *op. cit.*, p. 72.

27 S.M.N. al-Attas 1970, *The Correct Date of Terengganu Inscription.* Kuala Lumpur: Muzium Negara, p. 24.

28 S.Q. Fatimi, 1963. *Islam Comes to Malaysia.* Singapore Malaysian Sosiological Institute, pp. 67–69.

It can be assumed that before the date of this stone inscription, there were already Islamic institutions established in the state of Terengganu and the promulgation of Islamic law. The stone inscription indicates that the knowledge of Islamic law must have been taught and understood by the people of this state especially as the inscription mentions about the punishment of adultery and debt according to Islamic law. Based upon the same evidence, the Malay language written in *Jawi* script was already known and used in writing Islamic knowledge.

As a centre of learning Terengganu became a place of sojourn for *ulama* or Islamic scholars from other Islamic countries especially from the Middle East such as Sharif Muhammad who came from Baghdad and settled down in Ulu Terengganu in the sixteenth century. He passed away in the village called Batu Belah, Kuala Berang. At the same time other Muslim scholars came from Acheh to settle down in Terengganu.[29]

With the migration of Muslim scholars to Terengganu it developed into a centre of learning. One of the famous Islamic institutions was established in Terengganu at a place called Pulau Manis, near Kuala Terengganu under a famous scholar named Sheikh Abdul Malik bin Abdullah. A large collection of books from this institution is still preserved in Terengganu.

Pulau Duyung was another centre of Islamic studies in Terengganu. A well known Islamic scholar who taught at Pulau Duyung was Sheikh Muhammad bin Ismail Daud al-Fatani. Another scholar from Patani who came to teach at Islamic institution in Pulau Duyung was Sheikh Daud bin Abdullah al-Fatani after he retreated to Terengganu as the result of Siamese aggression against Patani.[30] Other than the above institutions there were many Islamic institutions called *pondok* or *madrasah* established throughout Terengganu. Abdullah Munshi who visited Terengganu in 1838 testified about the existence of Islamic institutions in Terengganu which taught Islamic studies using text books in Arabic as well as in Malay.[31]

After the fall of Melaka to Portuguese in 1511 Brunei was one of the Malay Sultanates which succeeded the role of Melaka as centre of Islamic learning. Under the rule of Sultan Bolkiah in 1562 Islam was spread throughout the Empire of Brunei which consisted the whole of Borneo Island and part of the Philippines Archipelago. During the reign of Sultan Bolkiah, Brunei was visited by an Italian traveller Pigafetta who described the Sultanate which was also known as Dar al-Salam.[32]

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29 Shafie Abu Bakar, 1976-77. *Institusi Shakh Abdu'l Malik bin Abdullah dan Kitab-Kitab Padanya.* Tesis Ijazah Sarjana UKM, pp. 20-22.

30 H.W. Md. Shaghir Abdullah, 1987. *Syeikh Daud bin Abdullah al-Fatani, Penulis Produktif Asia Tenggara.* Solo: C.V. Ramadhani, p. 24.

31 Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir Munshi, 1965. *Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah.* Singapore: Malaysia Publications Ltd., pp. 28-32.

32 Robert Nicholl, 1975. *European Sources for the History of Brunei in the 16th Century.* Brunei: Brunei Museum, pp. 10-11.

The Sultanate of Brunei encouraged the preaching of Islam in Brunei and its territories; mosques were built by the Sultan. The spread of Islam reached as far as Manila, Tonda and other Philippines islands. However with the coming of the Spanish, confrontation between Spain and Brunei developed. The Empire of Spain began to colonize the Philippines and blocked the spread of Islam into the islands. On the other hand the Spanish authorities took an active role in the spread of Christianity in the Philippines. The Spanish military might weakened the influence of the Sultanate of Brunei and curbed her role in spreading Islam in the Philippines.[33]

Before the arrival of the Spanish in the Philippines, Islam was already established in Jolo, Mindanao and the neighbouring islands. Sharif al-Hashim was said to be the first Muslim to ruled Jolo and had spread Islam throughout the islands in the middle of fourteenth century. Sharif Abu Bakar was another Muslim preacher who played an important role in spreading Islam in Jolo. Besides the Sultanate of Sulu, the Sultanate of Maquindanao was established in the island of Mindanao under the leadership of Muhammad Kabungsuwan in 1515. Both the Sultanates became the centres of Islam which spread its faith to other islands. However the Spanish, who were very zealous in spreading Christianity, managed to stop the active Muslim *dakwah* movement in spreading Islamic influence. Finally through the Spanish military superiority the two Sultanates were defeated by the Spanish. However the Muslims continued their resistence against the Spanish till the 20th century.[34]

Some of the above centres of Islamic studies had produced many scholars as well as religious works written in the Malay language. In spite of the fact that the works bore Arabic titles, most of them were written in the Malay language. These centres of Islamic studies besides producing religious books also acted at the centres of Malay culture. Although many works on Islam emanated from these centres, it is difficult to ascertain who their actual authors were and also the dates when they were written because these informations were not recorded on them. In most cases only when these works were copied by later scribes that one gets the recording of the name of the scribe as well as the date the manuscript was copied. There is a large number of Malay Islamic writings which is preserved in the form of manuscripts in various libraries of the world, such as, Leiden, Jakarta, and London.

THE *ULAMA* OR SCHOLAR: THE CENTRE OF INTELECTUAL WORLD

The development of centres of learning and the establishment of

33 *Ibid.*, pp. 32-38.

34 C. Adib Majul, 1973. *Muslim in the Philippines*. Quezon: The University of the Philippines Press, pp. 6-72.

numerous educational institutions in different parts of the Malay world accelerated the acquisition of literacy and education among the Malays. Through these Islamic institutions Malay religious scholars and authors emerged. These writers, steeped in Islamic learnings, wrote various works in the Malay language popularly known as *Kitab Jawi.* In Malaysia *Kitab Jawi* refers to religious books written in the classical Malay language using Arabic characters. Literally, "*Kitab*" means book and *Jawi* means the people of Java because the Arab recognized the inhabitants of the Malay archipelago as hailing from Java,[35] therefore the Malay writing using Arabic scripts is called *Jawi.* Generally *Kitab Jawi* is understood among the Malays as religious works.

From the early period of Islam, *Kitab Jawi* had been widely used by the Malays as their text books in learning religious knowledge because most of them did not understand Arabic although they can recite Arabic texts as in the Qur'an, albeit not knowing their meaning. *Kitab Jawi* on the other hand were widely read in the mosque, *surau* (prayer hall) and used as text books for students in the traditional Malay Islamic institutions called *pondok.* At the beginning *Kitab Jawi* was written by hand and copies were made by later scribes. These works were distributed throughout the Malay archipelago. Handwritten copies of these *kitab* are still preserved by individuals, libraries and archives in various states in Malaysia. The introduction of printing press in the nineteenth century accelerated the production and distribution of *Kitab Jawi* in the Malay world.[36]

However *Kitab Jawi* is known by different names in Indonesia like "*Kitab Kuning*". "*Kitab*" means book, while "*Kuning*" means yellow. It was called "yellow" after the tinted paper of the books brought from the Middle East in the early twentieth century.[37] In Indonesia, "*Kitab Kuning*" used as religious text books in the *pesantren* under petronage of Muslim orthodox *ulama.* These *ulama* wrote religious books in the Malay language using the Arabic script. Religious works were also written in other vernacular languages using the Arabic script, but "*Kitab Kuning*" was predominantly written in the Malay language.

The activities of writing religious literature began in the sixteenth century based upon the information provided by the collection preserved until today. Not many of the original authors are known, but some prominent ones are known and traceable through the hallmark of their writing. One of the prominent authors who wrote religious works in the form of *sufi* teachings in the sixteenth century was Hamzah

35 The Arab called the people of Malay Archipelago as jawi or Javanese following Ibn Battutah in his work who named the Malay Archipelago as al-Jawah. So the people are al-Jawi or the Javanese see Ibn Battutah (1893), *al-Rihlah,* Paris, pp. 230–235.

36 See also, Mohd. Nor bin Ngah, 1982. *Kitab Jawi: Islamic Thought of the Malay Muslim Scholars.* Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, pp. vii–viii.

37 See Martin V. Bruinessen, 1990. "*Kitab Kuning: Books in Arabic Script Used in the Pesantren Milieu*". Bijdrage 2 & 3, pp. 227.

Fansuri whose works are still preserved until today such as *Asrar al-Arifin* (The Secret of the Gosics), *Syarab al-Asyiqin* (The Drink of Lover) and *al-Mutahi* (The adapt).[38] The above works were written in the Malay language using the Arabic script. In these works Hamzah Fansuri conveyed his teachings on mysticism according to his *sufi* school of thought called *Wujuddiyyah*.

Shamsuddin al-Sumatrani was another religious scholar who was also a productive writer. He was a student and follower of Hamzah Fansuri. Following his teacher Shamsuddin preached the brand of sufism introduced by his teacher Hamzah Fansuri (*Wujuddiyyah)* based upon the doctrine of sufism taught by Ibn Arabi. Shamsuddin al-Sumatrani was a very active *ulama* who involved himself with the administration of Achehenese Sultanate. He became an advisor to the Sultan and later was appointed to the post of *Kadi Malik al-Adil*. Like his master, Shamsuddin also wrote books on religious knowledge expecially on sufism. Shamsuddin al-Sumatrani had contributed more works than his teacher Hamzah Fansuri. As an established *ulama*, Shamsuddin mastered the Arabic language and wrote some of his works in Arabic such as *Jawahir al-Haqaiq*, *Taubih al-Tullab fi Ma'rifah Malik al-Wahbab*, *Risalah Baiyin Mulahazat al-Muwahidin ala-al-Muhtadi, fi Zikr Allah*, *Kitab al-harakah*, and *Nur al-Daqaiq*.

The following works were written in the Malay language although the titles are in Arabic, they are *Mir'at al-Imam*, *Mir'at al-Mu'minin*, *Syarah Mir'at-Qulub*, *Mir'at al-Haqiqah*, *Mir'at al-Muhaqqiqin*, *Syarah Mir'at al-Qulub*, *Syarah Ruba'i Hamzah Fansuri*, and *Zikr Daairati Qaaba Qansaim aw Adna*.[39]

Another most active *ulama* who held an administrative post, while at the same time wrote books on Islamic studies was Sheikh Nuruddin al-Raniri. He was well known as a great author in classical Malay literature who wrote books on various topics on Islamic studies including on sufism which was popular subject in Acheh during that time. Nuruddin was well known for his strong opposition to *Wujuddiyyah* as preached by Hamzah Fansuri and his follower Shamsuddin al-Sumatrani. After the death of Sultan Iskandar Muda, Sultan Iskandar Thani ascended the throne (1636–1641). He appointed Sheikh Nuruddin al-Raniri as the chief religious official at Acheh's royal court known as *Kadi Malik al-Adil*. So much was he against *Wujuddiyyah* which had spread widely in Acheh under the patronage of his predecessor Sheikh Shamsuddin al-Sumatrani that he took this opportunity to suppress the movement when he was appointed the chief religious official at the royal court of Acheh. According to Nuruddin al-Raniri, *Wujuddiyyah* was

38 S.M.N. Al-Attas, 1970. *The Mysticism of Hamzah Fansuri*. Kuala Lumpur: University Malaya Press, pp. 223–353.

39 Hawash Abdullah, 1980. *Perkembangan Ilmu Tasawuf dan Tokoh-tokohnya di Nusantara*. Surabaya: al-Ikhlas, pp. 42–43.

misleading the Achehnese Muslims because it deviated from the teachings of *al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah*. In order to fight against this teaching he wrote several books specially to refute the teachings of *Wujuddiyyah* taught by Hamzah Fansuri and his followers. Nuruddin persuaded Sultan Iskandar Thani even to take a more drastic action by burning the books written by Hamzah Fansuri and Shamsuddin al-Sumatrani in front of the *Bait al-Rahman* mosque.[40]

Some of Nuruddin's works, which strongly refuted the teaching of *Wujuddiyyah*, such as *Asrar al-Insan fi Ma'rifat al-Ruh wa al-Rahman, Akhbar al-Akhirah fi Ahwal al-Qiyamah*, and *Tibyan fi ma'rifat al-adyan*, accused Shamsuddin and his followers as heretics. During his service of about 17 years under the Sultanate of Acheh, Nuruddin wrote several books and delivered lectures with strong arguments against proponents of *Wujuddiyyah* who based their *tarikat* or mysticism on the concept of *wahdah al-wujud*, derived from the trend of sufism preached by Ibn Arabi. After the death of Sultan Iskandar Thani, his widow Sultanah Safiatuddin ascended the throne (1641-1675), and she appointed Nuruddin as the *Mufti* of the Sultanate of Acheh. With this powerful position in the state, Nuruddin took the opportunity to suppress the teachings of *Wujuddiyyah* and introduced a brand of sufism based upon the doctrines of *ahli al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah*. While serving under Sultan Iskandar Thani, Nuruddin was directed by the ruler to write a special book on the Sultanate of Acheh and its administration entitled *Bustan al-Salatin* (the garden of the Kings). In this book, the author records the various rulers of Acheh, their administration of the state and the *ulama* who served under them. This book was very popular and read widely in the Malay world especially among the Malay rulers.[41]

Besides holding the post of *mufti* at Achehnese court, Sheikh Nuruddin was also a prolific writer of *Kitab Jawi* whose works were circulated throughout the Malay world. His writings are still read and studied by religious students especially in traditional institutions in the Malay world until today. Among his works which are available today and kept in various libraries are *Sirat al-Mustaqim* (The Straight Path), *Durrat al-Faraid bi Syarah al-Aqa'id* (The Precious Jewel in Explanation of the Faith), *Hidayah al-Habib fi al-Tarqib wa al-Tarhib* (The Guide of Lover about happiness and fearful), *Lata'if al-Asrar* (The Fineness of Mystery), *Asrar al-Insan fi Ma'rifat al-Ruh wa al-Rahman* (The Secret of Man in Search of Spirit and God), *Tibyan fi Ma'rifat al-Adyan* (Exposition on the Knowledge of Religious), *Akhbar al-Akhirah fi Ahwal al-Qiyamah* (The Account of the Hereafter and the Day of Judgement), *Ma al-Hayah li Ahl al-Mamat* (The Water of Life for the Dead), *Jawahir al-Ulum fi Kasyf al-Ma'lum* (The Jewel of Knowledge for Revealation of

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40 M. Daud Mohamad (ed.), 1987., *Tokoh-tokoh Melayu Klasik*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, pp. 45-53.

41 *Ibid.*

Truth), *Syifa al-Qulub* (The Healing of Hearts), *Hujjah al-Siddiq li dafi al-Zindiq* (The Evidence of Truthful Man Against the Atheist), *Al-Fathu al-Mubin ala al-Mulhidin* (The Visible Victory Against the Atheists).

According to Ahmad Daudy, Sheikh Nuruddin had written about 29 books. Most of them on sufism in which he refuted the teaching of *Wujuddiyyah* as taught by Hamzah Fansuri and Shamsuddin al-Sumatrani while other works deal with Islamic law, *al-Hadith*, History, Comparative religion and philosophy.[42]

Abdul Rauf al-Singkel was another *ulama* who also served the court of Acheh. He was also active in writing books on Islamic studies. Sultanah Safiatuddin appointed Abdul Rauf to the post of *Kadi Malik al-Adil* after Nuruddin returned to Gujarat, India. During the time of Abdul Rauf, *Wujuddiyyah* had diminished in their influence in Acheh. Abdul Rauf took this opportunity to convince the followers of *Wujuddiyyah* to change their following to the *sufi* order of *Shatariyyah* whose doctrines were acceptable to the *ahli al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah*. Abdul Rauf was very active in religious preaching. Besides his official duty at the royal court of Acheh, he spent time to write books on *fiqh*, sufism, *tafsir* etc. Among his works are *Mir'at al-Tulab* (The Mirror of Students), *Turjuman al-Mustafid* (a work on the Exegesis of the Qur'an), *Umdat a-Mahtajin* (as the benefit for whose who are in need), *Al-Tariqah al-Shatariyyah* (a book about a trend of sufism called *al-Shatariyan*), *Majmu'al-Masail* (a work on Sufism), *Mawaiz al-Badiah* (a book on Hadith literature), *Shams al-Marifah* (a book on sufism), *Hidayah al-Balighah* (a book was written as guide for judges), *al-Mawaiz al-Badi'ah* (on book on Islamic ethics), *Kifayah al-Muhtajin* (guide book for public to understand sufism), *Daqaiq al-Huruf* (the work contains the teaching of sufism and a guide to practise it), *Hadith Nabi* (a collection of the traditions of the Prophet and other Islamic narrative).[43]

In Palembang in the eighteenth century there was a leading *ulama* who was active in preaching Islam as well as a well known author of works on Islamic studies. He was Sheikh Abdul Samad al-Palembani. In Palembang Sheikh Abdul Samad also preached against the teachings of the *Wujuddiyyah*. In its place he introduced a brand of sufism taught by Imam al-Ghazali. In order to spread the doctrine of sufism acceptable to *ahli al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah*, he wrote several books based upon al-Ghazali's work entitled *Sir al-Salikin* and *Hidayah al-Salikin*.[44]

In Banjarmasin another centre of learning in the Malay world had emerged. Sheikh Arshad al-Banjari was a leading *ulama* of Banjarmasin in the eighteenth century. As a guide for the people who practised

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42 Ahmad Daudy, 1983. *Allah dan Manusia dalam Konsepsi Syeikh Nuruddin al-Raniry.* Jakarta: Rajawali, pp. 47–58.

43 Peunoh Daly, 1987. *Hukum Perkahwinan Islam.* Batu Caves: Thinkers Library, pp. 29–32.

44 Zalila Sharif dan Jamilah Ahmad, 1993. *Kesusasteraan Melayu Tradisional.* Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, pp. 429–431.

sufism, Abdul Samad wrote a book entitled *Tuhfat al-Raghibin* in which he discusses about the trend of sufism accepted by *ahli al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah*. On *fiqh* he wrote a book as a guide in Islamic law entitled *Sabil al-muhtadin li tafaqquh fi amr al-din*.

In the Malay peninsula, an *ulama* Abdul Malik bin Abdullah had dedicated his life to preaching Islam on the East Coast in the eighteenth century. He established his Islamic institution at Pulau Manis, Terengganu. A well known work written by him entitled *Kitab Hikam* was based upon the work written by Taj al-Din bin Ata'Allah al-Iskandari. His work became a guide for the people throughout the Malay world who wanted to practice sufism as accepted by *ahli al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah*.

In the nineteenth century Riau had emerged as a centre of learning and saw the rise of a number of *ulama* and authors, most of whom were educated in Islamic institutions. They wrote books on Islamic studies as well as works on Malay language and literature. The rulers of Riau were very enlightened and they loved religious scholarship and knowledge. Many *ulama* and scholars were encouraged to teach in Riau and served the Sultanate. These included Tuan Shahabuddin, Haji Hamim from Banjar, Sheikh Ahmad Jibrati, and Syed Hassan al-Hadad. Through the initiative of the Riau rulers, the members of the royal family were encouraged to study and master the knowledge in various religious disciplines. Among them who emerged as *ulama* as well as writers were Raja Ahmad, Raja Ali Haji, Raja Daud bin Raja Ahmad, Raja Hasan Raja Ali Haji, and Raja Khalid bin Raja Hasan.[45]

The most prominent *ulama* and writer who came from the royal family of Riau was Raja Ali Haji. He had writen various books on Islamic studies, the Malay language and many literary pieces and works like *Syair Hukum Nikah* (Poem on the Law of Marriage), *Gurindam Dua Belas, Bustan al-Katibin, Tuhfat al-Nafis, Salasilah Melayu dan Bugis*, and *Kitab Pengetahuan Bahasa*. Raja Ahmad, the father of Raja Ali Haji was also a writer. He wrote poems entitled *Syair Perang Johor, Syair Ungku Puteri* and *Syair Raksi*. Raja Daud bin Raja Ahmad was also from the royal family and a brother of Raja Ali Haji, he wrote a Malay poem entitled *Syair Perang Banjarmasin*. Raja Hassan Raja Ali Haji, the son of Raja Ali Haji also became a writer and had written a poem entitled *Syair Burung*. Raja Khalid bin Raja Hasan was another member of royal family who wrote works such as *Thamarat al-Matlub, Tawarikh and Salsilah Riau*. Raja Haji Abdulah a grandson of Raja Ali Haji also became a writer who wrote several works such as *Kitab Belajar Bahasa Melayu* (A Book on Learning the Malay Language), *Hikayat Tanah Suci* (The Narrative of Holy Land), and *Ghayah al-Muna, Shair Shahisah*.[46]

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45 Siti Hawa Hj. Salleh (ed.), 1987. *Cendekia Kesusasteraan Melayu Tradisional*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, pp. 179-205.

46 *Ibid.*, p. 187.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the Sultanate of Patani saw an emergence of many *ulama* as well as writers who wrote books on Islamic religious knowledge in the Malay language. Their works became text books for religious institutions in the Malay world and were even circulated outside the Malay world such as Vietnam and Kampuchea where they are used as text books and references among the Muslim Chams in the Islamic institutions of those countries.

The most productive author from Patani was Daud bin Abdullah al-Fatani, who wrote more than 30 works in all. His masterpiece is *Furu al-Masa'il*, a work on Islamic law written in 1838. His book on prayers entitled, *Muniyyat al-Musalli*, became a popular reference book used in various institutions as well as read widely by the Malays. As Daud Abdullah took part in the resistance against Thai colonization of Patani, he was exiled to Makkah and there wrote most of his work. Daud bin Abdullah was a prolific writer; he wrote books on various subjects such as theology, Islamic Law, Sufism, *Hadith*, and Literature. His works were circulated throughout the Malay world and used as text books in the religious institutions or *pondok* in Patani and the Malay Peninsula or *Pesantren* in Indonesia. Beside Daud Abdullah there were several prominent *ulama* and authors from Patani such as Zayn al-Abidin bin Muhammad al-Fatani who wrote a theological treatise entitled *Kashf al-Ghaybiyah* and Muhammad bin Ismail Daud al-Fatani who produced a popular text book for religious school entitled *Matla 'al Badrayn* containing discussions on theology and jurisprudence.

During the Islamic era the Malay world saw the emergence of writings on theological subjects and other branches of religious knowledge like*Hadith* or *Syari'ah* by the local scholars. The *ulama* who studies in religious institutions acted as the agents of religious knowledge as well as leaders in Malay writing in the Malay world. Besides, teaching and writing books in the Malay language, the *ulama* as the intellectual elites in the local society since the sixteenth century were also in demand by their rulers to serve in the administration of the Malay Sultanates. Some of them rose to be advisors to the rulers, both in religious matters as well as secular. The *ulama* in Malay traditional society therefore played a great role in charting the intellectual life throughout the Malay world.

THEOLOGICAL THOUGHTS (AS EXPOUNDED BY THE SUFI THOUGHTS?)

When Islam was introduced to the Malay world, Muslim missionaries taught the Malays about the fundamental beliefs in Islam, that is the doctrines of *tauhid* (monotheism). It was given special priority not only because it forms the basis of Islamic beliefs, but also because in the pre-Islamic time the Malays were imbued with the notion of the multiplicity of gods. Called *Deva*, each was in control of a certain natural phenomenon in the universe according to the doctrine of Hinduism. Islam on the contrary stresses the concept of monotherism, which is the

notion of Oneness of God, and considers the multiplicity of deities worshipped as a form of polytheism.

As the teaching of theology became a priority in the Malay world since the fifteenth century the subject always became an important issue in religious discussions. As the Malay courts became the centre of religious knowledge, theological posers always became the topics in religious dialogues participated by the Malay rulers themselves. The 'Malay Annals' reported that Sultan Mansur Shah of Melaka (1456-1477) was very enthusiastic in the studies of theology that once he posed a question whether the inhabitants of Paradise or Hell would remain there forever. Since the problem could not be solved satisfactorily by the scholars in Melaka, a delegation was sent to the court of Pasai to consult the theologians in that state. A religious scholar by the name Mukhdum Muda managed to give a satisfactory answer and he was awarded with gifts and honours from the Sultan of Melaka.[47]

The Malay Annals also mentioned another account about a theological problem raised by Sultan Mahmud Shah (1488-1530), the last ruler of Melaka. The Sultan was interested to get an answer to a theological question, that is if one said that Allah created and nourished since time immemorial, he would became unbeliever. According to the Malay Annals the above theological problem was explained to Sultan Mahmud by a religious scholar from Pasai by the name of Tun Hassan.[48]

THE CONCEPT OF ALLAH

A theological issue on the concept of Allah became a topic of continued debate in Acheh with the emergence of a brand of Sufism known as *Wujuddiyyah* advocated by Hamzah Fansuri and his follower Shamsuddin al-Sumatrani. With his appointment as the chief *Mufti* in Acheh in 1637, Nuruddin al-Raniri took the opportunity to suppress the teachings of *Wujuddiyyah*. According to Nuruddin, *Wujuddiyyah* derived its teachings from Ibn Arabi whose concept of God had deviated from the doctrine of *Tauhid*. Nuruddin accussed the concept of God as taught by *Wujuddiyyah* as a kind of pantheistic view as expressed by Ibn Arabi that God, universe and man as one in unity.[49]

In order to refute the teachings of *Wujuddiyyah*, Nuruddin wrote several books on topics of theology specially to oppose the concept of God as advocated by the followers of the *Wujuddiyyah* order. He accussed the teachings as misleading the masses because it deviated from the true Islamic principle. Nuruddin stated openly that those who followed the teachings of *Wujuddiyyah* would become heretic. In his

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47 *Ibid.*

48 W.G. Shellabear (ed.), 1978. *Sejarah Melayu*. Petaling Jaya: Fajar Bakti, pp. 150-153.

49 Ahmad Daudy, 1983. *Allah dan Manusia dalam Konsepsi Syeikh Nuruddin al-Raniri*. Jakarta: CV Rajawali, pp. 83-85.

book entitled *Hujjah al-Siddiq li daf al-Zindiq* Nuruddin stressed that the existence of Allah is a reality while the existence of the universe as a metaphor created from nothingness. Whoever said that the existence of both as identical would tantamount to making him an unbeliever. Nuruddin also said that the existence of Allah is a necessity, while the existence of universe as possible. The relationship between the two is that of the creator to the created. It should be distinguished between the two so as not to confuse the people about the concept of Allah and the creation of universe.[50]

On the Essence and Attribute of Allah according to Nuruddin in his book entitled *Jawahid al-Ulum fi Kasf al-Ma'lum* there are two names for the same reality. Allah is a name of an Absolute Essence who has some Attributes of Super Perfection. All His attributes cannot be distinguished from His Essence except for the name only. Ultimately the real existence is the Essence of Allah alone. Essence and Attributes are a totality and in reality; both are an essence by itself. Anyone who distinguishes between the two would lead him to deny the concept of *tauhid*. According Nuruddin Allah as described in form of Attributes which he divides them into two categories, that is the Attributes of the Essence and Attributes of *Ma'ani* or Attributes derived from ideas. The Attributes of Essence are divided into six, *Qidam* (state of non origination), *Baqa* (permanence), *Mukhalafa al-Hawadith* (difference from the created), *qiyamuhu bi al-Nafs* (self subsistence) and *Wahdaniyah* (oneness). The Attributes of *Ma'ani* are seven, that is *al-Haya* (life), *al-Ilm* (knowledge), *al-Kudrah* (power), *al-Iradah* (will), *al-Sam'* (hearing), *al-Basar* (sight) and *al-Kalam* (speech). In all Nuruddin's writing on the subject of theology, he always rejected the concept of unity between Allah, Universe and man as expressed in pantheistic philosophy on the concept of God.[51]

The school of *al-Asha'riyah* became a strong foundation of Islamic theology in the Malay world. This school of thought accepted the use of Greek dialectics to assist the rational theologizing and applied logical bases for Islamic theological doctrine. To proof the existence of Allah, the authors used to introduce logical categories such as *wajib* (necessary), *mustahil* (inadmissible) and *ja'iz* (admissible) together with logical proof (*barahin*) of Allah's existence.[52]

According to al-Ash'ari there are thirteen attributes of Allah, but al-Baqilani and Imam al-Haramayn added another seven attributes making a total of twenty. This view was adopted by al-Sanusi and was followed by other theologians in the Malay world. Thus the essential attributes of Allah as taught in the Malay world were twenty. These

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50 *Ibid.*

51 *Ibid.*

52 Omar Awang (Julai 1972), "Umm al-Barahin al-Sanusi" in *Nusantara*, No. 2, p. 157.

twenty attributes of Allah are considered a necessity and another twenty attributes are considered as inadmissible, that is, its opposite. Malay theologians explained that the twenty attributes of Allah had two kinds of proof; the first is called *dalil naqli* (proof from the Qur'an) and second is called *dalil 'aqli* (proof of reason). An example of the first kind is that Allah is self-existence, because the Qur'an says that Allah is the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and therefore He is the Creator not the Created. As for the second type of proof, that is by intellectual reasoning Allah is Self Existence and the sign of His Existence is this world. This world is new, therefore it is created. The proof that the world is new is because it is everchanging and is situated in space and time, while Allah as the Creator is not substance, neither atom nor coming into existence by accidence. He is not situated in time or space like the world. Allah is beyond any description and He is other than anything we know or imagine.[53]

THE CREATION OF UNIVERSE

Nuruddin in his work on Islamic theology described the universe as *hadith* (originated). He rejected the potrayal of the universe as *Qadim* (non originated) as stated by al-Farabi. In Nuruddin's views the acknowledgement of the universe as *Qadim* or non originated would tantamount to turn a believer to become a polytheist. Nuruddin stressed that the universe was created by Allah through a theory which he named as "*tajalli*". In his conception the universe is divided into two parts: first the upper universe contained nine planets and ten intelligences, while the lower universe consists of elements such as fire, water, earth and air. The upper universe influences the lower universe, thereby creating all hard substances on the earth like plants, animals and man. The creation of man was the most perfect creation on earth. With the creation of man, the process of the creation of the universe was completed.[54]

Other views on the creation of the universe were also described by Malay scholars such as Zayn al-Abidin bin Muhamamad al-Fatani in his work entitled *Kashf al-Ghay Biyah* and Ahmad b. Muhammad Yunus Langka in his book entitled *Daqa'iq al-Akhbar.* In the above two works the creation of universe was referred by them to its origin from *Nur Muhammad* (The light of Muhammad). According to them, *Nur Muhammad* was first created by Allah in the form of peacock made from white jewel. Then Allah created a tree called *al-Muttawin* and He placed the peacock on it. Then Allah created a mirror in front of it. When the peacock saw his reflection he became ashamed and perspired. From these sweats came the spirit of the Prophet and Companions and all things in

53 *Ibid.*

54 Mohd. Nor Ngah, 1982. *Kitab Jawi: Islamic Thought of the Malay Muslim Scholars.* Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, p. 11.

the universe. The above explanation on the origin of the universe was based upon an unauthenticated *hadith* quoted by the author who said, "Once the Prophet said to Jabair, 'The first thing created by Allah was the light of your Prophet, O! Jabair, then He created other things and you are one of those things'".

Another version of 'the Creation' was narrated by the stories of the Prophet edited by Azhari al-Khalidi. It was said that before the creation of the universe Allah had earlier made a precious stone. After 70 000 years the stone was converted into water. Then Allah created fire which caused the emergence of smoke and foam on the water. From the smoke and foam, heaven and earth came into being; each one had seven layers. The process of the creation took place about six days. Then the earth began to shake. Therefore God created pegs in the form of mountains on the earth. Allah also created a gigantic whale and another gigantic cow and place it on the back of the whale. Then the earth was placed by Allah on the horns of the cow. Whenever the cow moves earthquakes would occur on the earth.[55]

THE ORIGIN OF MAN

According to Nuruddin, the origin of man came from Adam, the father of mankind who was created by Allah as the most perfect creation to represent Him on earth. The creation of man was unlike other creations and it had its own special process. Nuruddin said that when Allah wished to create Adam, He took a handful of earth and sent it to the world of *Malakut*. Then He mixed the handful of earth with sweet scent. Then Allah showered the handful of earth with water from the Ocean of God and mixed it with its attributes of beauty and glory. The handful of earth was left for about 120 year. During that time it mixed with water for about forty years and with dry earth for another forty years, and finally it mixed with black and rotten earth for next forty years. Then Allah breathed His spirit into Adam's body. The process of creation of the body of Adam took a very long period of time; it went through a process most sacred and honourable. However Nuruddin said that man's body was merely an instrument to carry out the work set by the soul. The essence of man in reality according to Nuruddin was indeed his soul.[56]

In the theory of man's creation by Nuruddin, he emphasised that the essence of man is his soul (*ruh*) because it differed from the body as it originated from the world of souls (*alam arwah*), while the body originated from the created world (*alam khalk*). Therefore both soul and body are different from each other because their origin came from

55 Ahmad Daudy *op. cit.*, p. 244.

56 Azhar al-Khalidi. *Qisas al-Anbiya*, Penang Dar al-Ma'arif, not dated, p. 210.

different sources. However the body represented the perfect attribute of the soul on the earth.[57]

On the creation of the soul, Nuruddin referred its origin to *Nur Muhammad* (the Light of Muhammad). He said that the creation of *Nur Muhammad* by Allah was the result of His longing for His Essence. Then He said "Kun" and therefore *Nur Muhammad* was created. From *Nur Muhammad* other souls emerged on the earth. *Nur Muhammad* was like a candle which enlightened other lights. When it enlightened others, it did not mean to transfer its light onto others but merely to reflect its essence on them. The soul of man was also not eternal according to Nuruddin and here he critized the *Wujuddiyyah* view that the soul of man was eternal because it originated from the essence of Allah. Nuruddin said that anyone who acknowledged that the soul was eternal and originated from Allah, it would tantamount to involving Allah in every action made by man including the vices.[58]

Another Malay scholar Zayn al-Abidin bin Muhammad al-Fatani viewed the creation of men as originating from Adam who was created by Allah from clay which was taken from several parts of the world. Because the clay was of different colours, the children of Adam were born with different colours of skin. The process of creation of Adam began when Allah breathed into him the spirit or soul which spread throughout his body. After that Allah gave him beautiful clothes and all things he desired except permission to go near a forbidden tree. When Adam disobeyed Allah, he was sent into exile on the earth where he lived until the age of 930 years. Then Adam passed away. Thus came the time when the soul was again separated from the body. The soul then entered the world of *barzakh* while waiting to be judged at the day of judgement either to be sent to the Paradise if the man had led a pious life or to the purgatory if otherwise.

MALAY LITERATURE DURING THE ISLAMIC PERIOD

The Forms of Literature

Before the advancement of Islam in the Malay world, folk literary genres had already flourished and narrated orally by the Malay storytellers. The genres which were popular in the Malay society in the pre-Islamic times were mythology, legends, fables, other animal tales, romances and various forms of poetry, particularly the *pantun*. Traditionally the authors of these oral genres were not recorded through their oral transmission, but were only known by their narrators such as *Tok Selampit, Awang Belanga, Tukang Kaba*, and *Tok Jubang*. These oral stories were transmitted from one generation to another without the

57 Ahmad Daudy *op. cit.*, pp. 131-133.
58 *Ibid.*

slightest reference to their origins as they were always regard as the property of the community. Winstedt and Sturrock who published works on Malay folk romances could not trace the original authors of these oral narratives. The tale were simply referred to as folk romances narrated by Pawang Ana and Mir Hassan.

Even when works of literature were written the tradition of oral transmission made the scribes who copied the manuscripts of Malay literature omited the name of the original authors and instead recorded the name of the scribes who copied the manuscripts. The coming of Islam had caused some changes to this practice. In Islamic tradition the name of the authors of literary works were acknowledged and recorded because the authors would be responsible for their own writings. Through this practice the Malays began to recognize the authors of books expecially on Islamic subjects.[59]

In the pre-Islamic era, works of Indian religious tradition strongly influenced literature in the Malay archipelago. Of particular influence was Indian religious epic literature, like the *Ramayana* and *Mahabhrata*. In the Hindu period, Indianized literature in the archipelago was mainly written in the Javanese language. In the process of Islamizing the Indianized literature, Hindu terminologies and names were omitted, as were Hindu concepts and religious ideas; in their places, Islamic thoughts were introduced. For example, Hinduistic terms such as *Dewata Mulia Raya* and *Brahma*, were replaced with the Islamic *Allah Subhanahu wa Taala*. Hindu heroes and heroins were given Muslim names, as were other essential characters in the Hindu epics and romances.

In the Malay version of the tale of *Ramayana*, named *Hikayat Seri Rama*, and *Brahma* had been replaced by Allah. The epic has also been adapted so that it fitted with the Islamic spirit. For example, the Malay writer added an episode describing an Islamic event to the introduction of the tale, the tale of Prophet Adam. The Prophet Adam was seen in this episode to have prayed to Allah on behalf of *Rawana* and to appeal to Allah to give *Rawana* the kingdom in the four corners of the earth. The prayers of the Prophet Adam were said to have been answered by Allah, and thus *Rawana* became a great King.

One of the main characters in the Malay tale of *Ramayana* was *Dasartha*; he had been given an Islamic genealogy as a descendent from the Prophet Adam *'alayhi al-Salam*. The name of the Prophet Adam has been inserted in many places of the tale, as well as the name of Allah Taala, in order that an Islamic colouring could be added to the tale. However, the epic *Mahabharata*, which had been adapted to the Malay language under the name *Hikayat Pendawa Lima*, has retained many of its Hindu features: however the Malay translator continually reminded

59 *Ibid.*

the reader that the tale was one about people whose belief had deviated from the truth.

Hikayat Ganjamara was an Indian tale which appeared in classical Malay literature, bringing an Islamic message. Ganjamara, the protagonist of the tale, also acted as a Muslim missionary who succeeded in converting several Hindu kingdoms to Islam. Many other Indian tales which have been adapted to the Malay language had adopted Islamic titles, and the characters have been given Islamic names. For examples the tale of *Marakarma* is known as *Hikayat Ahmad Muhammad*, and the Tale of *Serangga Bayu* is known as *Hikayat Si Miskin*: the Tale of *Indrajaya* has been called *Hikayat Syahi Mardan*.

In pre-Islamic times, the Hindu epic tradition was very popular in the Malay archipelago. The epic literature was mostly written in the Javanese language. At the same time, it was being performed in traditional theatres like the shadow play or puppet theatres. This genre of epic tradition was known to the Malays through the media of traditional theatres and the Malay storytellers. The Hindu epic related stories about the gods and goddesses in their world of mythology, but such narratives were contrary to the faith of Islam. However the legacy of Hinduism continued to be attractive to the Malay audience even after the spread of Islam. A Muslim theologian and author, Sheikh Nuruddin al-Raniri (d. 1658), condemned the Hindu epics on the grounds that they were against the Islamic concept of *tauhid*.[60]

This religious view was one of the factors which encouraged Muslim writers to Islamise the Hindu epic tradition, or to make certain changes so that it would not oppose the fundamental tenets of Islam. At the same time, Muslim savants and writers sought an alternative medium with which to draw away the attention from the Hindu epics by introducing to the people, Islamic narratives and Muslim romances. Therefore, Islamic literature was translated or adapted into the Malay language. Some translations were also made into various regional languages, such as Javanese, Achehnese, Sundanese, Buginese.

The above factors became the major reasons for the Muslim writers to begin to compose Islamic stories and translate Islamic narratives into the Malay language, in the hope of countering Hindu influence in the literary field. Islamic narratives served to portray the concept of *tauhid* and to reject polytheism and anthropomorphism, as these were common in the Hindu epic tradition. The Muslim authors chose their central characters from Muslim personalities in the history of Islam, such as the Prophet Muhammad, his Companions, the earlier prophets, Muslim warriors, and pious men.

During the early days of Islamic influence, the first task undertaken by the Muslim preachers was to teach the Malays the basic tenets of

60 Siti Hawa Hj. Salleh, 1994. *Kesusasteraan Melayu Abad Kesembilan Belas: Sejarah Pengkajian dan Sifatnya*. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, UKM, pp. 55-56.

Islam. To be sure, the preachers also impressed on the Malays about the *sirat* of the Prophet Muhammad, who had been chosen by Allah as His apostle, and related to them how he had struggled to spread Islam in Arabia. In the life of the Prophet Muhammad there were many important events; for example how he was chosen and made the apostle of Allah, his preaching of Islam to the people of Makkah, his night ascent to heaven (*Mi'araj*), his migration to Madinah, and his wars which the unbelievers. All these events became the themes of the various stories which were already popular with the Malay audiences and readers because they were the examples to be followed by an ideal Muslim.

The history of Islam, as found in the Qur'an, began with Adam, who had instructed this children in the religion of Allah. The same teaching was revealed again and again to the various Prophets who came after Adam until Muhammad. The narrative accounts of these Prophets had been written down by Muslim authors in the Near East and those narratives had found their way into the Malay archipelago and adapted into the Malay language. It had developed into a popular narrative traditions in classical Malay literature known as *"Kisah Nabi-nabi"* or *"Kisas al-Anbia"*.

The history of Islam also related stories about several of the companions of the Prophet who had dedicated their lives for Islam. Some of them succeeded the Prophet as the leaders of the Muslim community, while others had rendered other significant contributions toward the spread of Islam during those early days of the struggle. The companions of the Prophet became the model of devout Muslims and leaders of the community. The account of their exploits were recorded in the Islamic history, and some narratives about their lives were written by various Muslim writers. These narratives in turn reached the Malay archipelago, and was translated or adapted into the Malay language, so that the Malays could learnt and modelled on the Muslim leaders as a guide in their life.

According to M.G. Emeis, there were several trading ports in the Malay archipelago which became centres and meeting places of Malays and Muslim traders. It was the usual practice for these traders to remain in these ports for a few months to await the changing of the monsoon wind before they set sail again. It was during this waiting period that most of those works were translated into the Malay language from other Muslim sources.[61] Snouck Hurgronje has noted that the practice of *hikayat* reading and the collective name of the traditional narratives, religious or otherwise, became the chief form of mental recreation among the Achehnese. It was customary of the Achehnese to entertain their guests by reading a *hikayat* to them. Most of the Achehnese were even willing to sacrifice their night's rest in order to listen to these

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61 Liaw Yock Fang, 1975. *Sejarah Kesusasteraan Melayu Klasik.* Singapore: Pustaka Nasional, p. 194.

narratives.[62] As the *hikayat*, especially religious literature, greatly appealed to the Malay readers and audience many Islamic stories and romances were written in the Malay language, and most appeared to have been derived from other Muslim sources. Besides providing entertainment to the Malay, those *hikayat* narratives served also to convey the messages of Islam to the people and to show certain values as an examplary behaviour, which was to be followed.

The spirit of holy war or *jihad* as depicted by the stories and romances, was often utilised by the Malays to incite their fellow countrymen and co-religionists to fight against foreign enemies and invaders. When the Portuguese, the Dutch, and other Western colonial powers launched their wars of colonization on the Malay states between the sixteenth and nineteenth century, the romances of the Muslim heroes were frequently read to instill in them the spirit of holy war againts the infidel invaders. For example, *Sejarah Melayu* has related the following incident:

Sultan Ahmad Shah then sent out men to assemble all his forces and bid them get ready their arms. That night the war-chief and the young noble were waiting in the hall of audience, and the young nobles said, "Why do we sit here idle? It would be well of us to read a tale of war, that we may profit from it." And Tun Muhammad Unta said, "That is very true. Let us ask the Raja to give us the story of Muhammad Hanafiah." Then the young nobles said to Tun Aria, "Go, sir, and take his message to the Ruler, that all of us crave for the story of Muhammad Hanafiah, in the hope that we may profit from it, for the Portuguese are attacking tomorrow." Tun Aria, accordingly, went into the palace and presented himself before Sultan Ahmad, to whom he addressed the young nobles' request. And Sultan Ahmad gave him the Story of Hamzah saying, "We would give you the story of Muhammad Hanafiah, did we not fear that the bravery of the gentlemen of our courts falls short of the bravery of Muhammad Hanafiah! But it may be that their bravery is such as the bravery of Hamzah, and that is why we give you the story of Hamzah."[63]

According to R.O. Winstedt the cycle tales in classical Malay literature were translated from the original Muslim sources, like *Hikayat Bayan Budiman, Hikayat Khoja Maimun, Hikayat Khoja Mubarak*, and *Cerita Thaifah*. These were mostly translated from Persian, although some originated from the Sanskrit literature. The Malay "*Bayan Budiman*" for instance originated from a work of Kadi Hasan in 1371, but the Persian source of the Malay tale was called *'Tuti-nameh'*, and was originally translated from Sanskrit into Persian by Nakhshabi in 1329.[64]

62 C. Snouck Hurgronje, 1906. *The Achehnese 2*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, p. 268.

63 C.C. Brown (trans.), 1976. *Sejarah Melayu*. "Malay Annals". Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, pp. 163-164.

64 R.O. Winstedt. *A History of Classical Malay Literature*. p. 114.

The story of *Kalilah wa Daminah* was first translated into Persian by Burzoe under the order of the Sassanian king, Khusru Anushirwan. Abdullah ibn Muqaffa translated this tale into Arabic. The Malay version of this story, according to L.F. Brakel, was rendered into the Malay language from a 12th century Persian tale written by Nasrullah (Brakel 1970:10). Another Malay cycle tale, *Hikayat Bakhtiar*, was also derived from a Persian tale called *Bakhtiar Nameh.*[65] *Hikayat Ghulam* is yet another Malay cycle tale which is also known by different names, such as *Hikayat Raja Azbakh* and *Hikayat Badah Bokhtin*. One of the Malay versions of this hikayat, in Leiden, was translated from Arabic by 'Abdul Wahab from Siantan.

The penetration of Islamic culture into the archipelago had brought along with it Muslim romances from Arabic, Persia and India. These Muslim romances tell of stories about Muslim kings and queens with their princes and princesses. The themes of these tales were adventures of love, war and struggle for the establishment of justice. Some of the tales appear in classical Malay literature like *Hikayat Jauhar Manikam, Hikayat Muhammad Muqqbil, Hikayat Raja Damsyik, Hikayat Hasan Damsyik, Hikayat Mahmud, Hikayat Siti Abasah, Hikayat Fath al-Sham, Hikayat Omar al-Zaman, Hikayat Bustaman, Hikayat Mahmud Ghaznawi, Hikayat Sultan Moghul,* and *Hikayat Ali.* Farcial tales were also adapted from Muslim sources, for example *Hikayat Abu Nawas* and *Hikayat Umar Umaiyah.*

In classical Malay literature, there are two well-known works which were written for the guidance of the Malay rulers. They were *Taj al-Salatin* and *Bustan al-Salatin. Taj al-Salatin* (The Crown of Kings), was written by Bukhari al-Jauhari in 1603. The title of the work is in Arabic, but the content was written in the Malay language. According to Winstedt, this work was of Persian origin. G.E. Marrison had cited about eight bibliographical sources which the author acknowledged as authorities for his writing.[66] *Taj al-Salatin* contained Islamic instructions and injunctions from Allah to His servants. The book contained examples of Muslim kings and pious men of olden times. The author had added Islamic teaching to his writing by warning his readers about the painful punishment in the Day of Judgement that awaited those who infringed Allah's commandment.[67]

Bustan al-Salatin (The Garden of Kings) was another work of instruction for rulers. It was written by Sheikh Nuruddin al-Raniri. His writing of this book was inspired by *Taj al-Salatin*, and he copied from it the arragement of his materials and derived from it the title of his book. Nuruddin's work is divided into seven chapters, dealing with creation, prophets and kings, just kings and clever ministers, liberal men

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65 L.F. Brakel, 1970. *Persian Influence on Malay Literature.* Abr Nahrin, p. 101.
66 G.E. Marrison, 1965. "*Persian Influence in Malay Life.*" *JMBRAS.* 28 pt. pp. 61–62.
67 L.F. Brakel, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

and heroes, intelligence and all kinds of sciences. Nuruddin has thus based most of his subject matter on Islamic teachings. According to L.F. Brakel he above two works were commissioned by the rulers of Acheh in an effort to adopt the style of administration practised by the Muslim rulers in India, who patronized literary activities in their kingdoms.[68]

According to S. Santoso, the Islamic influence affected other classical Malay writings, such as the *Sejarah Melayu*, or *Salalatus-Salatin*, into which the Malay writers inserted various elements conveying Islamic thoughts and style.[69] The style of writing in *Sejarah Melayu* for instance and much of its subject matter, appeared to be based upon the Islamic literary tradition. In the introduction of the book, the author began with an Islamic doxology, such as the following:

> "In the name of Allah the Merciful, the Compassionate, Praise be to Allah, the Lord of all worlds; and the prayers and peace be to the Apostle of Allah (May Allah bless him and give him peace) and to all his Companions likewise".[70]

The author of *Sejarah Melayu* also concluded his writing following the Islamic tradition with another prayer.

"Allah alone knowth the truth. To Him do we return".[71]

Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai was another work of Malay historiography which had been influenced by Islam. G.E. Marrison has described it as having the Islamic background of India and Persia.[72] Another work with an Arabic title, on Malay historiography, was *Tuhfat al-Nafis*. It was written by Raja Ali Haji bin Raja Ahmad. Santoso maintained *Hikayat Hang Tuah* as another classical work which had obviously been influenced by Islam. As an example, he mentioned that the Islamic concept of Allah is expressed in this *hikayat*.[73] Thus, almost all works of Malay historiography contained some Islamic elements, either in style or in subject matter.

In pre-Islamic times, the Malays had their own forms of poetry which were developed through the oral tradition. Prominent genres of Malay poetry originating from the pre-Islamic period, such as *pantun*, *seloka*, *gurindam* and *perbilangan* continued to adorn the Malay life, but with the coming of Islam the subject matter of the poetry also took Islamic features from various areas. In the ensuing process of cultural fusion, the Malays borrowed some forms of poetry from the near East like the *syair*, *masnawi* or *raba'i*. These new forms of poetry greatly contributed to the enrichment of classical Malay literature, especially the *syair*.

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68 *Ibid.*

69 S. Santoso, "Islamization of Indonesian/Malay Literature in Its Earliest Period".

70 *JOSA* 1/2 December, 1972, p. 16.

71 See B.C. Brown (trans.), *op. cit.*, p. 1.

72 *Ibid.*, p. 200.

73 G.E. Marrison, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

The most popular form of poetry which derived its original source from the Islamic civilization was the *syair.* It originated from *sya'ir,* a form of Arabic poetry which emerged from pre-Islamic Arabic, but was adopted by Muslim poets during the time of the Prophet as a genre of Islamic literature. It must been noted, however, that there were many different opinions concerning the origin of the Malay *sya'ir.* For example, C. Hooykas, in his hypothesis on the origin of the Malay *sya'ir,* made a quite different assumption. Although he conceded that the name *sya'ir* was borrowed from the Arabic, he claimed that the form itself was derived from a Malay creation from pre-Islamic times. He considered that the earliest form *syair* originated from the Malay poetry inscribed at Minye Tujuh and dated 1380. This inscription, written as Malay poetry, adopted a form of Sanskrit verse called *upajati.*[74]

Winstedt and S.M.N. al-Attas both considered the Malay *sya'ir* to have first been created by Hamzah Fansuri (1550-1600), who was the earliest Malay writers of prose and poetic works in *sufi* literature. S.M.N. al-Attas proposed that the four line *sya'ir* of Ibn al-Arabi in his works of *sufi* poetry may have been the origin of the Malay *sya'ir.* This form of poetry came down to the Malay Archipelago through his work on the *sufi* literature.[75] Teeuw's viewed that the origin of the Malay *sya'ir* was probably Hamzah's *ruba'i,* which later the people called *sya'ir.* L.F. Brakel explained that after undergoing certain development, *sya'ir* liberated itself from its religious environment and became suitable for use to serve all purposes. By the eighteenth century, *sya'ir* had been used for the transmutation into poetry all categories of Malay literature, such as religious works, *hikayat* and Malay historiography.[76]

Za'ba, a well-known Malay scholar, had divided Malay *sya'ir* into three main categories: religious poetry, tales of fantasy, and poetry on Malay historiography.[77] In the first category is included the religious poetry of Hamzah Fansuri like *Sya'ir Dagang, Sya'ir Burung Pingai, Sya'ir Perahu,* and *Sya'ir Sidang Fakir* and that of Abdul Rauf Singkel, *Sya'ir Ma'arifat.* Other Malay religious poems were *Sya'ir Mistik dan Tauhid, Sya'ir Unggas Bersoal 'Ilmu Akhirat, Sya'ir Kiamat,* and *Sya'ir Cerita dalam Kubor.* In the second category, *sya'ir* developed from its religious origin into the medium used for the production of tales of fantasy and narratives of adventure and love, such as *Syair Taj al-Muluk, Sya'ir Badrul Zaman dan Badrul 'Ashil, Sya'ir Siti Zubaidah, Sya'ir Bidasari,* and *Sya'ir Yatim Mustafa.*

According to Winstedt, by the end of the seventeenth century, Malay *sya'ir* was being used to describe historical events, such as the exploits of General Speelman in Makasar (1666-1668), recorded in

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74 S. Santoso, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

75 C. Hookays, 1977. *Perintis Sastera.* Kuala Lumpur: Fajar Bakti, pp. 71-72.

76 L.F. Brakel, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

77 Za'ba, 1958. *Persuratan Melayu II: Puisi.* Singapura. Qalam, p. 115.

Sya'ir Perang Makasar, Sya'ir Kompeni Belanda Berperang dengan China, Sya'ir Resident de Brouw, Sya'ir Perang China di Montrado, and *Sya'ir Pangeran Hashim* were all poems on the wars in Banjarmasin in 1862. Engku Haji Ahmad of Riau wrote a *sya'ir* on a voyage of Engku Putri, the sister of Raja Muda Ja'far, from Riau to Lingga. Munshi Abdullah produced *Sya'ir Singapura Terbakar* (Winstedt, 1972:191-2), and many other historical *sya'ir* were written to mark historical events up to the twentieth century.[78]

In classical Malay literature, there were other forms of poetry which originated from Muslim sources, for example *ghazal, masnawi, nazam, ruba'i* and *kit'ah.* According to S.T. Alisyahbana, all these forms of poetry originated from Arabia and Persia.[79] The term *ghazal* refers to a form of Arabia poetry which deals with love. In Malay literature, it first appeared in *Taj al-Salatin,* written by Bukhari al-Jauhari in 1603 in Acheh. According to Winstedt, the *ghazal* verse which appeared in *Taj al-Salatin* was a form of Persian prosody.[80] In classical Malay literature, *ghazal* is a category of poetry dealing with love, affection and advice. The *ghazal* poem comprised of eight lines with twenty or twenty-two syllables, and each line ends with the same rhyme. *Masnawi* was another form of classical Malay poetry that originated from a popular poem in Persia. The first creator of *masnawi* poetry was Jalalluddin al-Rumi, a great *sufi* from Persia, who lived between 1207 to 1273. He used *masnawi* poetry to relate his mystical teachings. According to S. Simandjuntak, *masnawi* in classical Malay literature was used for the purpose of eulogizing either noblemen or important deeds: in Malay it has the same rhymes in each two line, and each line consists of ten, twelve, or fourteen syllables.[81]

Ruba'i was also used in classical Malay literature on the subjects of sufism and general Islamic philosophy, and it was also used in epigramatic form. *Ruba'i* comprised of four-line stanzas, with "aaba" rhyme (Aminurrashid, 1963: 156-7). *Nazam* was a term derived from the Arabic term *nazm,* which in classical Malay literature, it took the form of twelve line, having the same rhyme at the end of two, or four lines. The subject matter was usually the devoted palace of servants. Finally, *Kit'ah* was another category of Malay poetry, the name of which was derived from Arabic which meant "a fragment of poetry". This form of poetry had no exact syllable, and no proper definition has been given.[82]

From all the above forms, *sya'ir* is the most popular in classical Malay literatures. According to H. Aminurrashid, a well-known Malay

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78 R.O. Winstedt, *op. cit.,* pp. 191-192.

79 Alisyahbana, 1971. *Puisi Lama.* Petaling Jaya: Zaman Baru, p. 177.

80 R.O. Winstedt, *op. cit.,* p. 139.

81 S. Simanjuntak, 1971. *Kesusasteraan Indonesia I.* Djakarta: Pembangunan, pp. 64-66.

82 *Ibid.*

writer, the last five forms of Malay poetry, which were derived from Muslim sources, were introduced by Malay writers of religious subjects. These forms of poetry, according to Aminurrashid, were not popular and seldom appeared in the Malay literature. He suggested that probably these types were not suitable. He also suggested that probably it did not suit the structure of the Malay language, or that their forms and structures were ambiguous, unlike the *sya'ir*, *pantun*, *seloka* and *gurindam*. Hamzah Fansuri wrote the *sya'ir* with *Wujuddiyyah* themes in *Sya'ir Perahu*, *Sya'ir Si Burung Pingai*, *Sya'ir Dagang*, and *Sya'ir Sidang Fakir*. In these poems he described about the journey of the human soul to meet Allah. In *"Sya'ir Perahu"*, Hamzah expressed his views in a symbolic form: the depiction of the boat represented a man's journey to Allah, and the equipments in the boat represented the obligatory rituals which man had to perform, while the helm, anchor and sail as guides for man to reach his destination. In this *sya'ir* Hamzah described the obstacles the boat had to overcome, and these represent the different stages in sufism namely *syariat*, *tariqat*, *haqiqat* and *al-makrifat*. As the boat in the ocean had to overcome obstacles such as the heavy waves and violet storms, so is man in his quest for his Creator.[83]

Another poet and scholar Abdul Rauf Singkel, wrote *Sya'ir Ma'arifat*, in which he expressed his sufistic thoughts in conformity with the teachings of *al-sunnah wa al-Jamaah* and opposed the doctrine of *Wujuddiyyah* as preached by Hamzah Fansuri. Other works on the sufi poetry written by the Malay scholar included *Sya'ir Kiyamat*, *Sya'ir Kubur*, *Sya'ir Ilmu Suluk*, and *Sya'ir Zikir*.

The knowledge of theology was also rendered in the *sya'ir* form, such as *Sya'ir Sifat Dua Puluh*. It was believed to have been written in Riau by an unknown writer. It discussed about the twenty attributes of Allah which is obligatory upon every Muslim to know them. By putting it in the *sya'ir* form, the knowledge of theology had a wider audience. Other similar attempts in the form of poetry that dwell on Islamic theological thoughts included *Sya'ir Allah*, *Sya'ir Tauhid*, and *Sya'ir Usul*.

Other subjects on theology like the performance of rituals or other related topics such as law, were also expressed in the *sya'ir* form, for example *Sya'ir Ibadat* and *Sya'ir Qaqaid al-Islam*. In them the poet discribed the fundamentals in performing obligatory rituals in Islam such as the prayer (*solat*), fasting (*saum*), tithe (*zakat*) and the performing of pilgrimage to Makkah (*Hajj*). Raja Ali Haji a well-known scholar from Riau wrote a *sya'ir* in 1863 entitled *Sya'ir Hukum Nikah* which dealt with the laws governing marriage. Other branches of Islamic theology were also dealt with by scholars for the purpose of disseminating them to the masses, such as a treatise on inheritance entitled *Sya'ir Faraid* or on the science on Qur'anic reading called *Ilmu Tajwid*.

83 *Al-Qur'an*, 24:2-4.

An unknown author had written a work entitled *Sya'ir Cermin Islam* (Poetry of Islamic Mirror) in which the author exhorted its readers to abide by the teachings of Islam and to carry out the obligatory rituals, saying that if one failed to do so one will face the judgement of Allah in the hereafter. The author also urged his readers not to commit sinful acts such as drinking wine, adultry, gambling, and slandering. *Sya'ir Pembangunan Islam* was another *sya'ir* which preached to its readers the same message and warning them about the punishment of Allah to evildoer and those who disobeyed Allah's injunctions.

Several works on Islamic poetry focus on the teaching of Islamic ethics and moral code. In *Sya'ir Hasad Dengki* the poet described envy as a kind of sickness loved by *syaitan* (satan). The author also explained the outcome of envy which could lead one to vice. Finally the author advised his readers not to be influenced by ill-will and be envious of others for no reason because it was sinful and contradicted the teachings of Islam. *Sya'ir Pengasuh Budi* was another Islamic poetry which taught its readers about Islamic moral and conduct.

THE CONVEYANCE OF RELIGIOUS MESSAGES

Islamic treatises and religious works written by Malay scholars were intended to enhance the knowledge of Islamic studies among Malays especially with regard to the Islamic instructions on ritual performances. Works on doctrinal subjects were supplemented by the Islamic literary narratives known in Malay as *Hikayat* which was designed to portray the teachings of Islam and practised by the characters in those narratives. Malay literary writers and scribes adapted into *Hikayat* literature narratives was specially intended to promote and inspire Islamic spirit and religious consciousness among its readers. Islamic teaching especially on morality and ethics were instilled in the action and struggle of protagonist characters or hero of the narratives. Therefore the Islamic *Hikayat* literature tended to be didactic, and this was part of the reasons for the conveyance of Islamic doctrine of social responsibility through obedience of Allah's injunctions. The forms of Malay Islamic *Hikayat* had been on the message of Islamic faith and devotion in the cause of Allah with special emphasis on ethics and moral. It intertwined religious thoughts with literary elements as a device to convey the doctrines in a manner attractive to the readers.

The characters portrayed in the Malay *Hikayat* literature were adopted from famous men in Islamic history including the Prophet Muhammad, so were the narratives presented in this literature which were based upon Islamic historical events. Malay scholars who wrote the Islamic religious work did not dare to make any changes to the Islamic teaching for fear of contravening the doctrine of Islam. However the writer of *Hikayat* literature had written their works based upon their own creativity and imagination except on message intended to be

portrayed. Though the narrative were borrowed from the events in Islamic history, the Malay authors added their imaginative accounts simply to attract more readers. As a result the Malay Islamic *Hikayat* were used as the medium for Islamic missionary activities; these are nevertheless intermixed with some religious innovations. Inspite of this setback Islamic *Hikayat* literature generally had served the interest of Islamic religion in the Malay world during its early Islamic period.

THE CONVEYANCE OF FAITH AND *TAQWA*

In *Hikayat Nur Muhammad*, Prophet Muhammad preached the faith in Allah, the Creator of the whole universe. The author honours the Holy Prophet as the greatest and the last of the Prophets of Allah whose 'light' became the origin of the universe and whose 'spirit' became the origin of all Prophets. In the narrative of the Holy Prophet's ascension to Heaven entitled *Hikayat Nabi Mi'raj*, many marvelous scenes such as the nature of heavens, were described. The promise of Hell in the form of punishment for the sinners and the reward of Heaven for the pious were clearly annunciated in the literature. The description of the wonderful creations of Allah in the Holy Prophet's journey to heavens were intended to show the glory of Allah as the creator of the universe in whom man should put all his faith and obedience.

Like the story of the Prophet's journey to Heaven, *Kitab Seribu Masalah* also focused on the punishment of Hell for those who disobeyed Allah and committed evil deeds forbidden by Him such as committing theft, adultery, murder, deception, making false accusations, and being excessively proud, envious or greedy. The stories narrated by the author for the purpose of instilling the faith in Allah and creating fear for His punishment in Hell. In *Hikayat Iblis* the author described how *Iblis* would always be accompanying evil man and continue to misguide him. However, if one is obedient to Allah, he will not be vulnerable to *Iblis'* seduction. The author cited an example of pious men whom *Iblis* failed to approach and influence such as the Prophet's campanions, Abu Bakar, Umar ibn al-Khattab, Uthman ibn Affan and Ali bin Abu Talib.

In the story of prophets, *Qisas al-Anbiya*, it described how Allah punished Adam and Hawa, the father and mother of mankind for their transgression of the commandment of Allah by eating the forbidden fruit and for which they were expelled from Paradise. The error of Adam and Hawa served as a lesson to the readers for Allah would inflict punishment even to His prophet. However in the story of the Prophet Idris, Allah raised his status even above that of an angel because he was a very pious and virtuous man who lived by the law of Allah. He was rewarded with a permission to visit Paradise and granted an eternal life for his devotion and *taqwa* to Allah.

The stories of Musa and Ibrahim described the two prophets'

struggle to establish the religion of Allah and converted the Pharaoh and Namrut. Although they failed, yet they had fulfilled the command of Allah. As for Pharaoh and Namrut, they were punished by Allah because of their disobedience and stubborness in refusing to accept God's commandments. The greatest sacrifice of Ibrahim for his faith to Allah was dipicted in the story of Ibrahim who was willing to sacrifice the most precious thing in his life, his son Ismail, who was also willing to die for his faith and devotion to Allah. The story of the Prophet Yusof was another example of an obedient servant of Allah who refused to commit adultery with his master's wife and was punished and thrown into prison for it. As a reward Yusuf was awarded by Allah with the appointment as King of Egypt and reunion with his father and brothers. The story of the Prophets depicted examples of their struggle to establish the religion of Allah and the sacrifices of those who dedicated their lives to serve Him with faith and *taqwa*. Their rewards were bestowed by Allah in this world as well as in the hereafter.

In the narrative of the Companions of the Prophet, the character of Ali bin Abu Talib appeared in the *Hikayat Fatimah* to represent a pious man who obtained a respectable place besides Allah. So was the character of Umar which had been described as a man who was very obedient to the commandment of Allah as narrated in the *Hikayat Abu Shahmah*. Although Umar loved his son Abu Shahmah he had to carry out the law of Allah upon his son because Abu Shahmah had committed adultery. Umar ordered his son to be flogged a hundred lashes for his crime as prescribed by the Qur'an.[84] With his fulfillment of the law of God upon his son, Umar therefore would not face the judgement of Allah and his son would be forgiven by Allah in the life hereafter.

The narratives of the pious men in classical Malay literature portrayed various characters who dedicated their lives to serve in the cause of Allah and had rejected the worldly life. *Hikayat Wasiat Luqman al-Hakim* (The Story of the Testament of Luqman, the Sage) depicted the character of a faithful servant of Allah who was very concerned that his son would not follow his footsteps to be a faithful servant of Allah. The narrative described how Luqman delivered his testament to his son to have a strong convictions in Allah as one God and not associated Him with another external power because it would lead him to belief in polytheism.

In the narrative of King Jumjumah (*Hikayat Raja Jumjumah*) the protagonist was rewarded by Allah to have a second chance of life in this world after he was punished in Hell. Although he was invited by his people to return to his palace and rule his kingdom, he outrightly rejected it and remained as a common man who dedicated his life to the cause of Allah by preaching the people to be obedient to Him. The

84 See also S.M. Naquib al-Attas. 1970. *The Mysticism of Hamzah Fansuri*. Kuala Lumpur: The University Press, p. 300.

Hikayat also depicted vividly, albeit metaphorically, the horrible punishment that Allah would hand out to the disobedient and evildoers, such as their mouths would be filled with fire of Hell and that the snakes would coil around their tongues.

In the *Hikayat Sultan Ibrahim bin Adham* it described about yet another King who abdicated his throne simply to concentrate his daily life to prayers and devotion to Allah. He thought that the glory of power and wealth might stand in the way of his dedication to the cause of Allah. Therefore he left his palace and made a long journey to Makkah where he remained until his death. Another Muslim mystic named Abu Yazid al-Bistami also becomes a character in the Malay narrative called *Hikayat Abu Yazid al-Bistami*. Like Ibrahim al-Adham, Abu Yazid also spent his life to dedicate in the cause of Allah by preaching the teachings of Islam among the people.

THE ROLE OF MAN IN SOCIETY

The Malay Islamic narratives echoed the concept of man in the Qur'an as the representative of Allah on earth. The role of man is not only to fulfill the Commandment of Allah but also to spread His teachings. In the narratives concerning Prophet Muhammad, the Holy Prophet became the model for man to follow. For example in the *Hikayat Mu'jizat Nabi* the Prophet strived to fulfill his task as an apostle of Allah to establish His religion, until he achieved victory. In the *Hikayat Nabi Mi'raj* it described the Commandment for man to perform their prayers daily. At first the Commandment required every Muslim to perform his prayer fifty times daily, but through the Prophet's repeated appeal to Allah, the number of prayers was reduced to five. It is obligatory upon every man to perform his prayers because it prevent man from committing vice.

Hikayat Raja Khayabar dan Raja Khandaq depicted Prophet Muhammad, supported by the Companions, as playing the role as men who fought against the power of polytheism and injustice, represented by the characters of Raja Khayabar and Raja Khandaq who were opposed to the teaching of Islam. The Prophet and his followers fought fearlessly against the enemies of Allah, until they achieved victory. However in *Hikayat Nabi Wafat* although the Prophet was the chosen one, but as an ordinary man he wanted to cleanse himself of sin before his death. Therefore his followers were encouraged to come forward to claim from him if he had done anything wrong to them. The character of the Prophet in this narrative was a model of a man who became the leader of his people but was always concious of his every action whenever he exercised his authority.

The story of the Prophet emphasized on the role of man who continued to preach the religion of Allah eventhough face with resistance. He steadfastly carried out his role as the Caliph of Allah on

earth. The characters of the Prophet Musa, Ibrahim and Isa were models of men who carried out their role in establishing the religion of Allah and fought against polytheism and vice.

The story of the Prophet Yusuf provided another example of a man who possessed the qualities prescribed by Allah such as patience, trustworthy, honest, modest, piety and forgiving. The story exhorted the readers to follow the example of Yusuf who possessed the above virtues inspite undergoing all sorts of sufferings. As a virtous man Yusuf did not have ill-feelings against his brothers who had mistreated him or caused him to suffer. Instead he welcomed them and treated them well. In the eyes of Allah Prophet Yusuf had performed his role as a virtuous man and thus was later appointed as the ruler of Egypt as his reward.

In the narratives portraying the companions of the Prophet, it described the responsibility of man to uphold justice, as portrayed in the character of Umar ibn Khattab who became the Caliph. In this narrative Umar was portrayed as a man who was concious of his position as a Caliph and judge, and therefore wanted to exercise the laws of Allah without prejudice upon his subjects, irrespective of their station in society or their blood ties with him. Thus he had no hesitation in passing the judgement upon his son for the crime he had committed.

Hikayat Abu Bakar and *Hikayat Raja Khaybar* described the character of Ali as a warrior in the battlefield as an example of a man who was endowed with the attribute of bravery to fight in the cause of Allah. Besides the above *Hikayat*, Ali was also portrayed in *Hikayat Nabi Mengajar Ali* (The Story of the Prophet's Instruction to Ali) as a man of learning, who loved knowledge.

In the narratives of Muslim warriors, man was described as one who would fight evil and established justice and faith in Allah. The characters of Iskandar Dhu al-Qarnain, Amir Hamzah, Malik Saiful Lizan and Muhammad Ali Hanafiah were portrayed as model of brave men and warriors who fought against evil and uphold the religion of Allah as the true faith. At the same time, these warriors, after defeating their enemies, treated them humanely and ruled with just and fairness.

WOMAN IN SOCIETY

Although the characters of women were not highlighted in the *hikayat* literature as compared to the men, they still appeared in several of the works. For instance the *Hikayat Puteri Salmah* (The Story of Princess Salmah) featured a dialogue between the Prophet Muhammad and Princess Salmah who had inquired from the Prophet the role of a woman as a housewife as well as her role in society. This fictatious dialogue created by the author was simply to convey the role of woman in the family as well as society. However the instruction, said to have been given by the Prophet, was simply concocted by the author to conform to the traditional values of the Malay society for whom the story was

composed. As the narrative was written in the eighteenth century, thus the role of a woman was described, other than to be obedient, that she was supposed to be a virtuous mother, and instructed to remain indoors and should not leave the house except with the permission of her husband.

In the *Hikayat Nabi Wafat,* the character of Fatimah represented the beloved daughter of the Prophet. She was depicted as a daughter who loved her father, but yet the Prophet could not save her on the day of judgement, unless she saved herself through her own devotion to faith and good deeds. Therefore the role of woman was similar to that of a man, that is, she had to follow the injunctions of Allah and has faith (*iman*) in Him, which was the way to salvation. For a woman who was disobedient to Allah she would face the same punishment as the man in Hell.

However the author of the *Qisas al-Anbiya* or the story of the Prophets had depicted the character of the woman as weak, easily tempted by *Iblis* to vice and disobey Allah's injunctions. For example the character of Siti Hawa that appeared in the story of Prophet Adam had shown that she was easily tempted by *Iblis* to eat the forbidden fruit in Paradise. When Siti Hawa had eaten the fruit, she persuaded Adam to follow suit. Similar character of the woman was also depicted in the story of the Prophet Yusuf. Althought Siti Zulaikha was a wife of a nobleman in Egypt she had stooped to seduce Yusuf to commit adultery with her because she was so much in love with him. However when Yusof rejected her overtures, Zulaikha accused him of molesting her and resulted in him being thrown into the prison.

In the *Hikayat Fatimah,* the character of Fatimah was depicted as a virtous wife who was devoted to Allah as well as a faithful wife to Ali bin Abu Talib. While in the *Hikayat Abu Bakar* the character of Saiyidatina Salmah, the wife of the Prophet, appeared in the story as a religious preacher. She converted the princess Shahbanun who was the daughter of the Persian Emperor, to Islam. The *Hikayat* showed that the role of the woman was not only as a housewife at home, but that she too had the responsibility like the man in the society, like preaching religion and teaching religious knowledge to the people.

ISLAMIC LITERATURE IN OTHER ETHNIC LANGUAGES

The inhabitants of the Malay world spoke different local dialects. Hinduism and Buddhism introduced Sanskrit as a language which identified it with the two religions. However, besides Sanskrit, Javanese was also used in the writing of religious treatises and general literature.[85] When Islam came to this region, the Malay language was used as the

85 See R.M. Ng Poerbatjaraka and T. Hadidjajo, 1952. *Kepustakaan Jawa.* Jakarta: Penerbit Djambatan.

medium for the preaching Islamic knowledge.[86] This happened because Islam took root among the Malay speakers first. However when Islam expanded to other parts of the Malay Archipelago, the literature on Islam were also written in other vernacular languages.

One of the earliest Muslim Sultanates in the Malay world was the kingdom of Acheh. Established in the sixteenth century it became the centre of the spread of Islam in the northern tip of Sumatra.[87] In this kingdom, Islamic literature were written in the Malay language as well as Achehnese. For example a literary work written in Achehnese like the *Hikayat Nun Parisi* was about a prince of the Islamic Sultanate of Samudra Pasai. Although the work was in the form of the *Hikayat* literature, the narrative was presented in poetry. Other works on Islamic literature written in the Achehnese language included the *Hikayat Banta Beuransah* and *Hikayat Maleem Dagang*. These *Hikayat* narrated about the activities of the Muslim rulers of Samudra-Pasai and the conflict between the forces of good and evil in the kingdom.[88]

Besides the above *Hikayat* there were several collections of Achehnese *Hikayat* literature which had been adapted from Arabic or Persian literature such as the *Hikayat Abu Samah, Hikayat Abu Nawaih, Hikayat Juha Manikam, Hikayat Saiyidina Usen, Hikayat Muhamet Napiah, Hikayat Menhanjo Abidin, Hikayat Banta Ali* and *Hikayat Kamarodaman*.[89] It is possible that the above *Hikayat* might have been translated from Malay because the literature that dealt with Islamic subjects was first written in Malay.

Many religious treatises in Acheh had been written in Malay which was the main medium, but some were also written in Achehnese specially for people who could not understand Malay very well. For example the *Akhbar al-Akhirah* which was written by Nuruddin al-Raniri could also be found in Achehnese. Besides the above works there were several short treatises written in Achehnese that were found to be in the collection of SOAS library in London such as commentary of the *Fatiha, Surah* 12 and *Hikayat Mawot* which described about death.[90]

Achehnese writers had also wrote religious subject in the form of poetry in the Achehnese language since the fifteenth century. One of them was entitled *Hikayat Prang Peuringgi* which was considered by the Achehnese as their epic literature which had exerted a very strong

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86 A large number of Malay manuscripts in the form religious *risalah* or Islamic short treatises had been written which are still being kept in several libraries such as in Jakarta, Leiden, London etc.

87 Ismail Hamid, 1985. *Peradaban Melayu dan Islam*. Petaling Jaya: Fajar Bakti.

88 A. Hasjmy, 1977. *Sumbangan Kesusasteraan Acheh dalam Pembinaan Kesusasteraan Indonesia*. Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, pp. 76-84.

89 See Dada Meuraxa, *op. cit. Sejarah Kebangsaan Sumatera*: Bulan Bintang.

90 M.C. Ricklefs and P. Voorhoeve, 1977. *Indonesian Manuscripts in Great Britain*. London: Oxford University Press, p. 1.

influence among them. This epic poetry was written specially to instill the Achehnese with the spirit of *Jihad* or religious war against the Portuguese who invaded Melaka and some part of the Achehnese territories in the fifteenth century.[91]

When the Dutch invaded Acheh in the nineteenth century, a religious poetry was written by an Achehnese writer named Abdul Karim which was entitled *Hikayat Prang Kompeuni.* Another Achehnese writer Tengku Tjhik Pantee Kulu, had written another *jihad* epic in the Achehnese language called the *Hikayat Prang Sabi.* Both works had very strong influence among the Achehnese who had waged war against the Dutch colonialists. In the nineteenth century, the Dutch were occupied with the war to colonize Acheh after they had succeeded in dominating other parts of the Indonesian territories. The above two Achehnese epics succeeded in inciting the spirit of *Jihad* against the Dutch who faced difficulties in colonising Acheh.

In the sixteenth century, several Hindu kingdoms in Java were defeated at the hand of the new emerging Islamic principality, which consequently established their own rule and in several parts of Java. Muslim preachers led by the 'nine saints' known as the *Wali Sanga* had spread the Islamic faith among the Javanese population. They were Malik Ibrahim, Maulana Ishak, Sheikh Shubakir, Sunan Ampel, Sunan Bonang, Sunan Giri, Sunan Darajat, Sunan Bayat and Sunan Muria. Through the efforts made by these Muslim preachers Islam was accepted by the Javanese. Since the Javanese were strongly inbued with Hindu culture, Islamic religion and culture took some time to take root among the people of Java.

To facilitate the spread of Islamic teachings and culture among the Javanese, literature on Islam were written by Muslim missionaries in the Javanese language. Among the earliest works on Islam introduced to the Javanese were stories of the Prophets in Islam called the *Kitab Ambiya* and *Kitab Kando.* The works mentioned told of the stories of the Prophets of Allah, while the later specially focusses on the story of the Prophet Adam as the father of mankind. Despite the above works which dealt with the prophets of Islam, the Javanese authors created some additions to the above stories with some tales from the Hindu traditions.[92]

Besides the stories of the Prophet Muhammad, there were Javanese manuscripts which have been found to relate stories concerning Prophet Muhammad and other prophets of Allah. For example there was a Javanese manuscript which gave an account of the Prophet Muhammad's ascension to Heaven entitled *Kitab Muhammad Miraj*

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91 A. Hasjmy, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

92 R.M. Ng Poerbatjaraka and T. Hadidjaja, 1952. *Kepustakaan Jawa.* Jakarta: Penerbit Djambatan, pp. 140-142.

while another manuscript gave an account of the Prophet Yusuf.[93]

During the Islamic era, Javanese writers had written many Islamic romantic narratives based upon Arabic and Persian literature. For example there was a Javanese manuscript which dealt with the story of Iskandar Dhul Qarnain entitled *Caritanira Iskandar Dul Karnen*, while *Serat Menak* was a genre of Javanese literature which had developed like the Javanese *Panji* with several stories on different accounts of Amir Hamzah as a Muslim hero.[94]

Many Islamic religious treatises were also written in Javanese. For example a *sufi* treatise was adapted by a Javanese writer from an Arabic work entitled *Al-Tuhafa al-Musala ila ruh al-Nabi*. A book on theology written in Javanese entitled *Kitab al-Zubad*, was also based on an Arabic treatise written by Ahmad bin Husain ibn Raslan. On Islamic law, there were several manuscripts written in Javanese such as the *Kitab Sitten Masalah fi al-fiqh* and the *Mukhtasar*. There were many Arabic treatises with an interlinear Javanese translation such as the *Bahr al-Mushahada* by Ahmad ibn Ahmad al-Samtrani and *Bahr a-lahut* by Abdullah al-Ariffin. There were also short treatises in Javanese on different topics of Islamic rituals such as prayer (*solat*), redemption (*taubat*), fasting (*saum*) in the month of *Ramadhan*.[95]

Islamic literature were also written in the Minangkabau dialect using Arabic scripts. Most of the works in the Minangkabau dialect were in the form of narrative literature. The Minangkabau writers had written stories on the prophets of Allah such as Prophet Yusof and Prophet Sulaiman. There were other Islamic works in the Minangkabau literature that dealt with the stories of the Prophet Muhammad and his grandchildren Hasan and Husain. There was also found a manuscript about a Muslim hero entitled *Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiah* written in the Minangkabau dialect.[96]

In the collection of the Indonesian manuscripts in Great Britain there were several works on Islamic literature written in the Bugis language. Since the Islamic literature was first written in Malay, most of the Bugis religious literature were translated from the Malay language. In relation to the Islamic narrative literature there were several manuscripts found written in Buginese such as the *Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiah* and *Hikayat Isma Yatim*, etc. Other Islamic religious treatises were also found written in Buginese such as *al-Risalah al-Mubarakah*, a work translated from Arabic. There was also found a religious treatise written by Nuruddin al-Raniri translated into the Buginese language entitled

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93 *Ibid.*, p. 79.
94 See Poerbatjaraka & Hadidjojo, *op. cit.*, pp. 140–142.
95 Ricklefs & P. Voorhoeve, *op. cit.*, pp. 55–56.
96 Ph. S. van Ronkel, 1909. *Catalogus Der Maleische Handschriffen*. Hague Nijhoff, pp. 482–493.

Akhbar al-akhirah, and another work translated from Arabic entitled *Tanbih al-Ghafilin*.[97]

Sundanese is another language on the island of Java used to convey the Islamic subjects. Most of the manuscripts found written in this language were in the form of Islamic narratives on the prophets of Allah namely the *Hikayat Nabi Ayub*, while there were also stories on the Holy Prophet Muhammad ascension to Heaven. There were also stories on Muslim notables such as the *Hikayat Sultan Ibrahim, Hikayat Samaun*, and *The Story of Imam Shafii in Makkah*.[98]

ISLAMIC MODERNISM IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

From the seventeenth century the colonial powers, particularly the Spanish, Dutch and British, began to colonize the territories that now make up the Philipines, Brunei, Malaysia and Indonesia. Although resistance against the colonial powers were continually carried out by inhabitants of the Malay world, but faced with the more modern armaments the indigenous people finally succumbed to the superior forces. In some instances, the local rulers were retained by the colonial powers merely as symbolic heads, and in the case of the Malay Peninsula, religious affairs and custom were supposedly remained with them.

Since the indigenous people could not match the colonial powers in their military might, resistance against colonialism took a different shape, that is through the revival of *Muslim* society and peaceful resistance against them. In the spirit of revivalism, the *ulama* had played an important role in revitalizing the *Muslim* society through the upliftment of their standards of education and economy.

As Muslim countries in both the Middle East and the Malay world came under Western political control some of the *ulama* began to realised their own weaknesses. The first Muslim *ulama* to call upon the Muslim *ummah* to reconstruct their religious thoughts and be conscious of their political and economic backwardness was Jamaluddin al-Afghani. His voice had also strongly influenced the Muslims in the Middle East that some of the *ulama* had followed his footsteps and began to incite the Muslim public to overcome their plight and to rethink their approached on their religion. Thus an Islamic modernism was adopted by Muslims in the Middle East as a response to their plight.

Islamic modernism propagated by Sheikh Muhammad Abduh (1849-1909) and Muhammad Rashid Rida through their journal called *al-Manar*, published in Cairo in 1896, had left some impact on Malaysian and Indonesian graduates returning from the educational institutions in the Middle East. In Indonesia a movement on Islamic

97 See Ricklefs & P. Voorhoeve, pp. 31-32.

98 See H.H. Juynboll, 1899. *Catalogus van de Maleische en Sundaneesche Handschriffen*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, pp. 39-336.

modernism was first started by Sheikh Ahmad Khatib from Minangkabau, an *ulama* who was educated in Makkah. He taught at Masjid al-Haram but later returned to Minangkabau to preach on ways on religious observations to his people.[99]

Another Indonesian *ulama*, Sheikh Tahir Jalaluddin from Bukit Tinggi who was educated at the al-Azhar University became a desciple of Muhammad Abduh and Muhammad Rashid Rida. He spread the modernist teaching both in Sumatera and in the Malay Peninsula. Both Sheikh Tahir and Haji Abdullah Ahmad had teamed to publish Islamic publications and spread their teachings in the Malay world. Sheikh Tahir had published a magazine called *al-Imam* in Singapore but intended for the readers in the Peninsula, while Haji Abdullah published the *al-Munir* in Padang, Sumatera. Both the magazines had made a very strong impact on the Muslim readers in both territories which are today known as Malaysia and Indonesia.

In the late nineteenth century the movement of Islamic modernism saw the rise of a group of *ulama* who used their pens to propagate their teachings through their writings in books, newspapers and magazines. They became a new breed of *ulama* who were independant of the rulers and the state. As such they worked independently and played an important role in educating the Muslim society. One of the *ulama* who became one of leading writers of that era was Syed Sheikh al-Hadi who first worked with Sheikh Tahir Jalaluddin as an editor of a newspaper in Singapore called *al-Imam*. Later Syed Sheikh took the initiative to publish other newspapers such as the *Neraca* and *Tunas Melayu*. Besides writing articles for his newspapers Syed Sheikh also published books to spread the teachings of the modernist movement, including the *Tafsir Muhammad Abduh*, *Agama Islam dan Akal* (Islam and Rationalism). He also published magazine called *al-Ikhwan* and wrote a fiction called *Hikayat Faridah Hanum* through which he introduced his modernist thoughts.[100]

The contributions made by Sheikh Tahir Jalaluddin and Syed Sheikh al-Hadi had generated an intellectual development in Malay society. They had encouraged the Malay students in the Middle East to participate in intellectual and political movement to free their motherland from the colonial domination.[101]

Sheikh Tahir Jalaluddin had several colleagues in Indonesia; one of them was Muhamad Jamil Jambek. The latter was involved in the Islamic reformist movement in Indonesia with organizations such as the *"Muhammadiyah"* and *"Thawalib"*. Another *ulama* of the same standing

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99 D. Noer, 1973. *The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia 1900-1942*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, pp. 31-33.

100 W. R. Roff, 1979. *The Origin of Malay Nationalism*. Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya, pp. 34-63.

101 *Ibid.*

was Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah who carried out his missionary work in the Minangkabau. Leaders of Islamic reformist movement in Indonesian especially the Muhammadiyah, had called upon the Muslims to abandon *taqlid*, that followed blindly the teachings of the *mazhab* in Islam. Instead they were encouraged to exercise *itjihad*.

On the other hand the *ulama* who opposed the Muhammadiyah movement had formed another organisation called the *Nahda al-Ulama*. The organization had called upon the Muslims to retain their traditional practices and adhere to the views of the *Shafie* school, the main *mazhab* observed in the area. Although *Nahda al-Ulama* represented the conservative trend in Islamic movement in Indonesia yet they had also contributed in the development of Islamic intellectualism in Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

The advent of Islam in the Malay world had greatly contributed to the development of learnings among the inhabitants of the region. Islam had introduced its various desciplines to the Malays namely theology, philosophy, mysticism, law, astronomy, and logic. The teaching of the above sciences were carried out in the Malay language. Consequently the Malay language had borrowed and adopted large number of Arabic vocabulary and terminology to improve their language and make more efficient as a medium of instruction for these sciences. Thus Islam had played almost similar role as it did in Arabia by contributing to the advancement of learning in the Malay world.

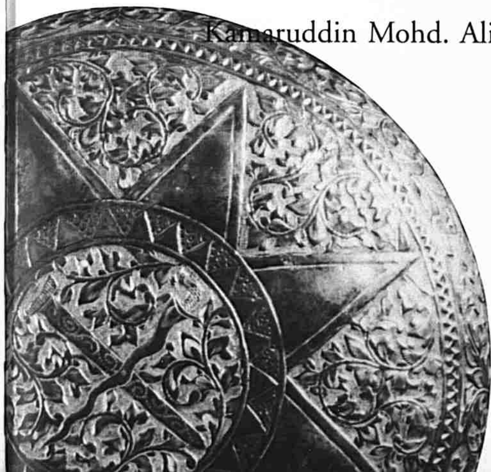
The establishment of numerous Islamic institutions in many parts of the Malay world had accelerated the acquisition of literacy on the above sciences and expanded education among the people. Through these Islamic institutions Malay authors and scholars were born. They were steeped in their Islamic tradition and had written treatises on the various branches of religious knowledge in the Malay language. During the Islamic era the Malay world saw the emergence of learning and development of intellectualism. Islamic era in the Malay world can be described as an era of enlightenment.

As decadence sets in the Muslim world with the emergence of Western domination since the seventeenth century, the Archipelago gradually came under European control. Thus the once independent Malay world came under the colonial yoke, and the period of the dark age descended on Muslims in the region. However the role played by Islamic modernists in the nineteenth and early twentieth century had generated independence movements in the Malay world. After gaining independence in the second half of 20th century the Malay world once again was given the opportunity to rebuild its Islamic intellectual tradition with a role of revitalizing its *ummah* to face the new challenges of the 21st century.

Chapter 6

Architecture: Unity of the Sacred and the Profane

Kamaruddin Mohd. Ali



Chapter 6

Architecture: Unity of the Sacred and the Profane

INTRODUCTION

The rise of an Islamic kingdom of Samudra-Pasai in 1292 near Acheh in north Sumatra marked the beginning of Malay-Islamic civilization in the region. Samudra-Pasai had established itself as an important centre of Islamic scholarship to be fittingly regarded as a model of Islamic learning and culture by later Malay Sultanates. However not until the Sultanate of Acheh reached its peak of power and wealth in the seventeenth century was there any significant evidence of its architectural splendour. Even then warfare and the impermanence nature of the natural building materials used, have left little traces of the various structures including the great Acheh palace complex and the grand timber mosque nearby that were destroyed by the invading Dutch armies in 1874. All that remains includes a small part of the royal parks called "*Gunungan*" and the Indera Puri Mosque built during the same period and style of the perished grand mosque. Little can be drawn upon, to describe the earliest Malay Islamic architectural form except for the few remaining structures found at the various royal cemeteries of Pasai and Acheh. Such mortuary arts as expressed in the royal tombstones have strong images of the stupa in their profile design even though they were equally embellished with the typical Islamic calligraphic patterns. This clearly shows that Islam came and grew peacefully in the region and has successfully blended into the local culture which was already well established for the last ten centuries.

By the sixteenth century several other Islamic Sultanates were established and rose to great strength and wealth but only to attract the attention of Christian European powers and their eventual colonization of the region under the guise of trade and religious interests. In the process, warfares and the plunders of properties were inevitable , while many noted architectural works of the period were even lost through the initial overzealous acts of the colonial masters. As for example , after her defeat, Melaka was immediately set for changes, and to accomodate the needs of the Portuguese, the magnificent palace complex including the main mosque, were destroyed and in their place rose the Spanish governor immediately ordered his soldiers to burn down the magnificently decorated grand mosque, while in another instance, the Malays' engagements with the Dutch saw the destructions of the Bandar Acheh Mosque in Sumatra and the Bantan Palace in Java. So were the fates of some of the great architectural works of the period. In fact at one stage of their rule in Java, the Dutch administration ordered a ban on new mosque constructions in Batavia. Fortunately however, with the colonial grips of the region becoming more established and secured in the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, there arose another period of building activities which saw more new palaces, mosques and religious institutions being built around the colonial administrative centres; this time around with a great diversity of stylistic influences to reflect the increasing roles of the colonial architects and new building techniques.

As a result of about seven centuries of development, there appears to be a clear emergence of two distinctive stylistic traditions of Islamic Architecture in the Malay world. Firstly, there is the vernacular tradition that had evolved from the early period of Islamisation of the region. The Malay world then was able to share a common symbol in Islam without disturbing the existing roots, and in architecture it merely involved new interpretations by designating new functions and meanings to existing pre-Islamic forms and structures. Secondly, there is the later colonial tradition popularised by the images of the more familiar classical Islamic forms such as the domes, minarets, and arches. In this regard there were undoubtedly heavy borrowings from the Moghul and Islamic Bengal models, that have flourished earlier in the Indian subcontinent. It may be generalised that most of the colonial urban centres bear the marks of the colonial tradition in their architecture, while the pre-colonial indigenous centres of power were largely built in the vernacular tradition. Through the centuries of development, it can be said that the Malay Islamic Civilization had been embelished with a unique and fine collection of building types in the service of the faith that mainly includes the mosques, palaces, houses, religious schools, and other small community and religious structures.

PLATE 1 Gravestone, Tomb of Sultan Malik al-Salih, Acheh (Died 1297 A.D.)

PLATE 2 Gravestone, (Batu Acheh Type), Tomb of Sultan Muzaffar Shah (1465–1497), Biloy, Acheh.

PLATE 3 Gravestone (Batu Acheh Type), Tomb at Chondong, Pekan, Pahang.

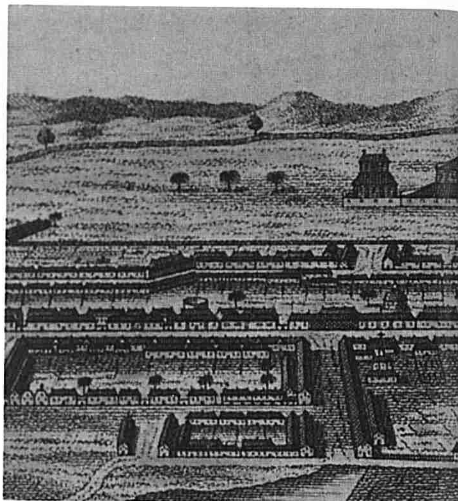


PLATE 4 An early drawing of Acheh showing the great timber Mosque in the background, before its destruction by the Dutch in 1874.

PLATE 5 Indera Puri Mosque, Acheh. Built during the reign of Sultan Iskandar Muda (1607–1636).

PLATE 6 The Bantan Palace and Mosque, as seen on a 17th. century. Dutch map.

PLATE 7 Part of the remains of the Surosowan Palace, Bantan.

MOSQUE ARCHITECTURE IN THE MALAY WORLD

In architecture, the characteristic Islamic building is the mosque. This building type is readily identified worldwide by their inseparable features of the domes and minarets. However, the development of mosque design in the Malay world has given rise to a richer variety of forms. Beginning with a vernacular architecture of its own, the horizon of mosque design in the region continued to be enriched by the later colonial contributions.

The vernacular Malay mosques were by design without the characteristic domes, and instead they were typically dominated by the high pitch roof forms that were common to the tropical region. These basic design features, especially with the tiered pyramidal roof formations were very common and could be found throughout the Malay Peninsula, Sumatra, Java, Kalimantan, Brunei, the southern Philippines and the former kingdom of Champa in Vietnam. A survey of those structures in the Malay world revealed a further variation of styles, and some even strongly reflected the heritage identity of a particular ethnic.

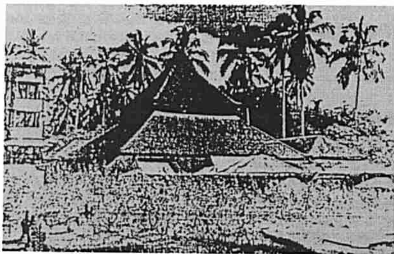
In the Malay Peninsula, the vernacular mosques were either modelled on the traditional dwelling architecture or as in most cases, the regionally identified tiered pyramidal roof formations. The former types were found to be more common in the northern part of the peninsula, while the largest and most dominant concentration of the regional types is in Melaka. Collectively, the mosques in Melaka form a unique

grouping of a delightful style and with their picturesque settings, they constitute as equally outstanding visual units of their own. Further north in the east coast state of Kelantan, the Kampung Laut Mosque which was built more than two hundred years ago is generally considered as the oldest still standing. Its origin and detailings are historically linked to the 'Grand Mosque' of Demak in Java, although the Kampung Laut Mosque is comparatively smaller in scale. Its unique features include a square main prayer space, above which is the three tiered roof formation which is supported on fourty four pillars; four main central columns support the upper-most pyramidal roof; a middle ring of sixteen columns support the lower middle roof tier, and twenty four short outer posts support the lowest veranda roofs along the four sides of the square space. Initially Islam did not bring with it the established classical Muslim form to the region as evidenced by the extant examples of early mosque design in Java. Islam came to the island upon an already established Hindu-Buddhist civilization with a well developed religious architecture as symbolised by the magnificent Borobudur and numerous smaller temple structures. In fact the development of the prototypes Javanese mosque had underwent an initial period of adaptation of the earlier architecture; exhibiting a strong presence of the Hindu-Javanese elements. Similarly, many of the earliest Muslim tombstones in the region were found to contain various adaptations of the pre-Islamic art forms. Furthermore, the Islamization of Java had proceeded slowly; only after at least one and a half centuries did Islam gained its significant political foothold, whereby the Islamic Sultanate of Demak had an ultimate control over the Hindu Majapahit. Thus the longer period and pace of change had enabled the process of cultural syncretism to occur thus resulting in a creative synthesis between the old Hindu and the new Islamic traditions. Architectural features such as the square plan, raised floor and walled enclosure that were originally identified with Hindu-Javanese temples, were later readily adapted and interpreted into the early Javanese mosques. Similarly, the multi-tiered roofs in many of the Javanese mosques can be traced to their pre-Islamic origins and are still common elements in the present day Balinese *meru* structures. In the Javanese context, heaven and wholeness have always been associated with the pointed pyramidal roof that portrays a strong central power commanding the four quarters. In another instance, the architectural form of the fifteenth century 'Grand Mosque' of Demak was said to be similar in many aspects to the wantilan or open pavilion structures that were erected within the larger Hindu temple complexes. Considered the largest and oldest of its kind in the region, the mosque consisted of twelve columns over a square plan with the four in the centre bigger and taller than the others. Many parts of the region shared similar mosque architecture as that of Demak, and continued to this day, as they were before, to become a communally shared symbol for the Malay mosques. Apart from the roof, other Hindu-Javanese architectural structures can

be easily noticed from the designs of many other main Javanese mosques. This ranges from the typically *candi* character of the minaret of the Kudus Mosque and the various masonary gateways that decorated the Sunan Ampel Mosque, Sunan Giri Mosque and the Sunan Sendang Dawur Mosque. Outside of Java, the relatively strong ethnic elements were distinctively displayed in the roof design of the mosques, while retaining the basic *meru* typology. Noted examples are the various mosques in Paya Kumbuh and Batu Sangkar in Sumatra, with their Minangkabau features forming their silhouettes, while the Ternate Mosque and the Pontianak Mosque display a *tajug* design and a bell design respectively to cap the main roof. As a roof form, the domes are absent even as small decorative features while most of the crowns are mainly Hindu-Javanese in their origin. Traditionally, minarets too were rarely built, except in seventeenth century Bantan, where such structures were quite common, perhaps mainly due to the pioneer works of a Chinese builder who was involved in the construction of the Great Mosque. Incidently minarets were also common in Melaka mosques in the Malay Peninsula where the influence of Chinese builders were significant then.

Classical mosque designs, complete with their characteristic domes, minarets, and arches were introduced by the colonial architects in the

PLATE 8 The Tanjung Keling Mosque, Melaka.



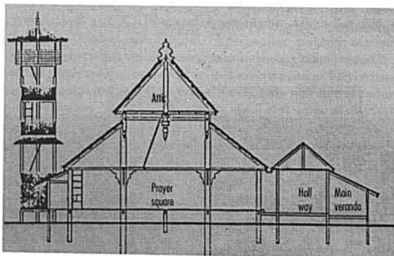


PLATE 9 View and section of Kampung Laut Mosque, Kelantan.

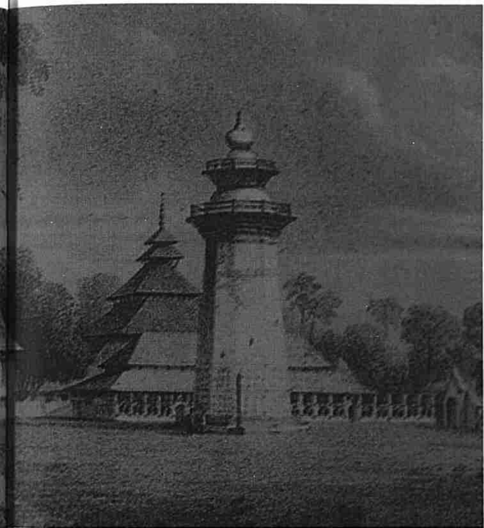
in the nineteenth century and became favourable to the Malay rulers for their respective royal mosques. Many of these buildings were built close to and in association with several main palaces throughout the Malay Peninsula and Indonesia. However other western forms, such as the Dutch colonial architectures were actually used earlier in the seventeenth century as can be observed on the addition to the 'Grand Mosque' of Bantan, while an attempt to bring back the image and proportion of the Turkish mosque can be seen in the Raya Mosque (Sultan Deli Mosque) in Medan. By far the most popular at the time was the mosque architecture of Moghul India and perhaps to some extent, the Middle East and Andalusian elements, which resulted in some delightful works, especially in the Malay Peninsula, and which still remains as beautiful landmarks to the present generation.

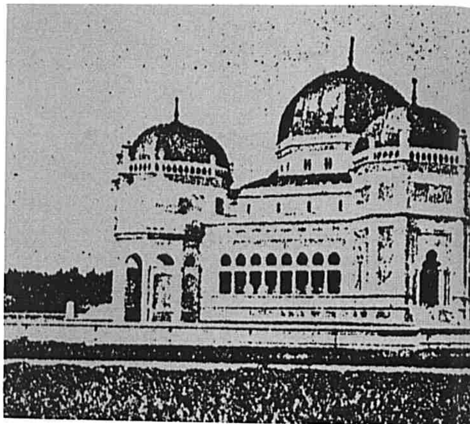
PLATE 10 Sendang Dawur Mosque, East Java.

PLATE 11 A Minangkabau Mosque near Batu Sangkar, Central Sumatra.

PLATE 12 Present view of the Great Mosque of Bantan, West Java.

PLATE 13 A 19th. century view of the Great Mosque of Bantan from a Dutch engraving.





ISLAMIC EXPRESSIONS IN MALAY HOUSES

According to the Malay *adat* (customary traditions), women must be separated from the men folks in all formal social interactions. This is a reflection of the Islamic social norms which restrict male-female relationships between the unmarried persons, and between family and non-family members, guests or visitors. It also means that in a Muslim dwelling, adult women in the family have to be secluded from everyone else, except with the female guests, uncles and aunties, their own members of family and sometimes their close neighbours. The zoning of the house space is therefore based on these socio-religious requirements; and with the traditional flexible open-plan solution, common in all traditional dwellings in the region, various forms of physical and symbolic barriers or boundaries are necessary. For this purpose, a Malay house is distinctively divided into a guest zone with a clear male domain at the front, and the family zone which is usually a female domain at the rear. It is only in term of entertaining or receiving non-family (non-*muhrim*) guests and also perhaps in the sleeping arrangement that these zones are implied, otherwise the whole house is considered as a single flexible space throughout.

PLATE 14 Raya Mosque (Sultan Deli Mosque) in Medan, North Sumatra.

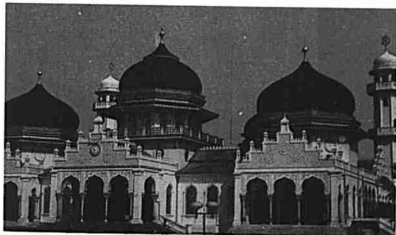


PLATE 15 The Raya Mosque, Acheh, displaying a delightful mixture of classical Moghul and Andalusian Islamic elements.

In the Peninsular Malay house, the guest zone is the frontmost structure and is called *Rumah Ibu* (main or mother house), while the rear unit is the family zone which also includes the kitchen and appropriately called *Rumah Dapur* (kitchen house). The main halls are further defined by different floor levels, with the floor of the female guest area in the middle, being higher than the rest. The first door separating the male and female guests areas symbollically marks the limit for the female (non-family) guests who have to obey the customs of not going beyond the threshold (*bendul*) of the doorway; and male guests are rarely invited beyond the threshold. Another doorway separating the female guests and family areas becomes the limit for the female visitors; this is however in term of expressing formality, because as a mark of respect, the female visitors will be entertained by the host in the main hall and not in the family area at the back. Inside the house, a show of respect is to be observed by bowing slightly if one is to move around while someone is sitting nearby. The same rule also applied when one wants to move from one place to another; with the split in levels of the floors and the significantly low doorways, one has to show respect and be very careful when moving about in the house. In most cases, in order to prevent male visitors from even glimsing inside of female area, the main entrance is positioned away from the first internal doorway or in any event, the higher floor level of the female area ensured the desired segregation.

A typical Javanese house consisted of a large open space, the *pendopo* at the front, in which visitors were entertained and an enclosed rear

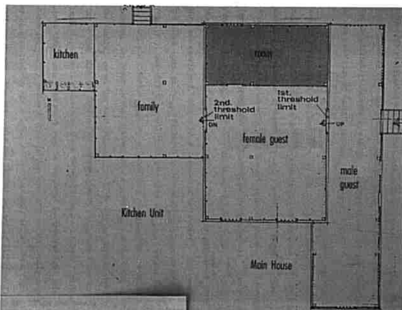
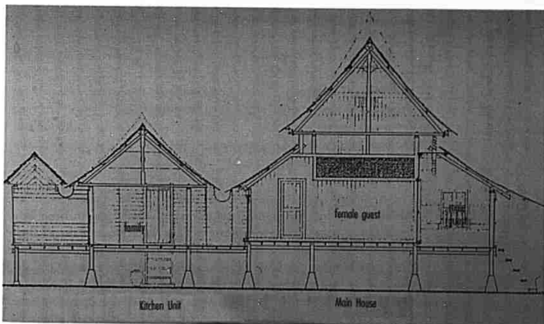


PLATE 16 Plan of a peninsular Malay house at Beranang, Selangor.

space, the *dalem* or the *omah* , next to it, to form the main house where the family activities took place. Outside the house, an assemble of walls further provided the barrier between the visitors and the host family. Historically, the layout designs of a Javanese house remained relatively unchanged from its pre-Islamic origin and was merely adapted to suit the new Islamic ethics. The *omah*, for example, used to be the sacred domain associated with the pre-Islamic belief that it contained the abode of the rice goddess *Sri*. Such sacred domain concept still remains important to the Muslim household, who in some cases, even related their prayer spaces with some of the former traditional sacred spots in the *omah*.

The long period of relatively undisturbed Islamic Civilization in Acheh is equally matched by the richness of their house architecture. Strikingly uniform in their looks and orientations, each unit has the typical male and female domain concept of spatial arrangement, which is common to all Muslim dwelling types. In this instance, the main house floor is divided into three main spaces; firstly the *serambi depan*, a long open space at the front for the male guests; secondly the *ruang tengah*, a raised middle space for the married members of the family and important guests; thirdly the *serambi belakang*, a long closed space at the rear for the unmarried women, and usually connected to a separate kitchen unit. Similar basic spatial arrangements are equally present in all other Malay dwelling structures in the region, while giving rise to a great variety of forms and room articulations to display their respective vernacular traits within the bounds of an established Islamic ethics.

PLATE 17 Section of a peninsular Malay house at Beranang, Selangor.



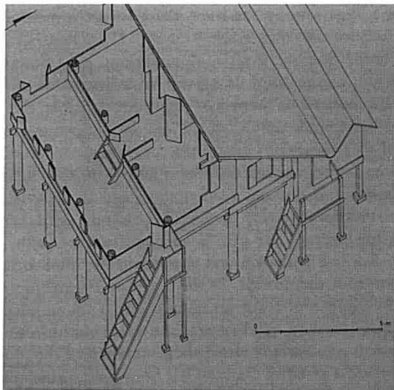


PLATE 18 Axonometric drawing of a house from the Acheh region.

Rituals, mainly to do with the cycle of life, are important practices of the Malays since the pre-Islamic times. As such, occasional ceremonies and feasts are distinctive parts of the Malay community life. The most demanding occasion is the traditional wedding festivity where all the stages which culminate in the big feast are held within the house itself. In this respect, the open-plan concept of the Malay house, which has minimum partitions, provided for the flexible use of space for such big gatherings and feastings. Again the demand for segregation between the males and females is strictly observed. The main house is usually reserved for female guests while a marquee will be erected in the compound of the house for the menfolk and guests. Indeed the large open compound of the house without any clear physical boundary or fence may resulted the spilling over of the feasting space into neighbouring grounds.

In several parts of Sumatra, it was a practice among the local communities since pre-Islamic times for the young men to sleep in a separate communal house within the village cluster. Those houses which were commonly known as *meunasah* in the Acheh districts, had found new function for the later Muslim communities as a *surau* for the menfolk, and where religious and Qur'an classes were held. According to the Minang tradition, these *surau* were still used as lodgings for the young men and travellers. In all the villages the *meunasah* might be

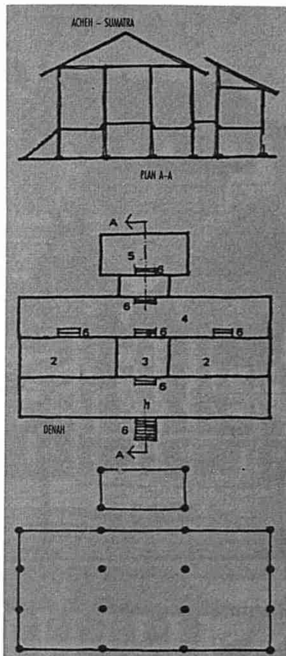


PLATE 19 Floor plans and section of a house from the Acheh region.

STRUCTURING OF PILLARS

1. Front veranda
2. Room
3. Hall
4. Back veranda
5. Kitchen
6. Ladder

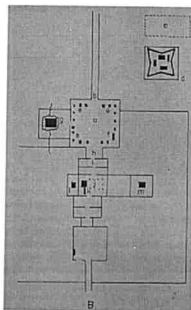
PLATE 20 Exterior view of an Acheh house.

turned into a full fledge *madrasah* (religious school) and eventually into a mosque. Several villages would inevitably be associated with the mosque and united into a larger community known as district or *mukim* from just a mere humble beginning of a cluster of neighbours or family groups.

THE MALAY PALACES

The Malay feudal system was developed since the coming of Hinduism to the region in the first century A.D. At the top of the pyramidal structure of the ancient feudal societies were the state rulers and court officials who enjoyed spécial previleges in many aspects of life and culture. In conformity with the Hindu custom, the rulers were even accorded godly powers with respect to the running of the state and whose authority would never be questioned by the subject. Such hierarchical structure of society was likewise embodied in the planning of the Malay palaces, in the form of a vertical or horizontal hierarchy of spaces and floor levels. However in Islam, the Malay rulers were accorded another distinctive identity with respect to the religion; this time by virtue of their duty as supreme religious leader and regulator in religious matters. Apart from being in the traditional role of a supreme and military commander, a Malay ruler was virtually accorded the duty to maintain the religion as the successor of the Prophet. Reflecting such duties, palace complexes built by the Javanese rulers were among the most magnificent and grandest in the Malay world. Much of the palace

PLATE 21 Plan of the Kraton of Yogyakarta.



Comparative schema of the palace described in the *Negara Kertagama* (A) and the *kraton* of Yogyakarta (B).

a. Square before the palace (*alun-alun*)
b. Main gate
c. Market
d. Fort
e. Pavilions reserved for the royal servants
f. Pavilion housing instruments forming the royal orchestra
g. Circular canal surrounding a religious building
h. Terrace (*sitinggil*)
i. Entrance
j. Courtyard planted with trees
k. Dining hall
l. Main *pendopo*
m. Private quarters of the monarch

PLATE 22 Great Mosque of Cerebon, as seen from the *alun-alun* outside the Kasepuhan Palace.

layout developed by their Hindu predecessors in Matarram were adapted by the Muslim rulers. However, the inseparable functions of the state and religious affairs were clearly expressed in the planning of the palace complex, where a large square (*alun-alun*) and a grand mosque were the two dominant community buildings apart from the main palace (*kraton*). The square was usually built to the north of the palace as the military training grounds, parades, and for festive ceremonies. The grand mosque was usually built on the west side of the square for the neighbouring subjects to perform their Friday prayer, and as a centre of religious administration.

The emergence of several prosperous states in Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula during the colonial periods saw several new palaces being built to replace the smaller traditional structures. Inevitably the palaces were built based on the colonial architecture and with the diminishing power of the Malay rulers, the close association between the palace and the royal mosques was also slightly neglected in the layout design. With the mosque a statement of identity and isolated as a distinct type of building of its own; divorced in location but still within view of the main palace. However, religion always occupied a special place in the life of the palace. The Friday prayer was performed and observed with some pomp and festivity. In the Javanese palaces, every Thursday evening saw the beginning of the congregation with religious recital and feast, and ended with another feast after the Friday prayer the

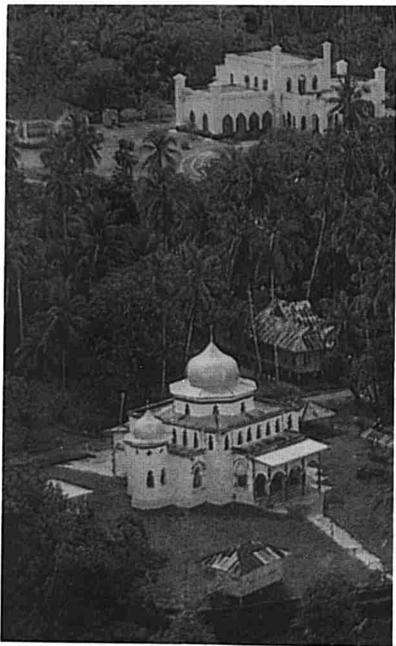


PLATE 23 The new Palace and Mosque at Siak Sri Indrapura, Sumatra.

next day. In the seventeenth century, Acheh's court also astonished visitors with its lavish feasts and rituals, while the Friday procession from the palace to the grand mosque was accomplished in such grandeur with hundreds of decorated elephants and soldiers accompanying the Sultan.

PLATE 24 View of Zahir Mosque from the gate of Pelamin Palace, Alor Star, Kedah.

OTHER RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS

Accompanying the spread of Islam to the Malay world was its own form of religious teaching method and organisation system. At first, simple classes and institutions for the teaching and learning of the Qur'an were developed. These activities would be performed at home, local mosques, or *surau* in each community. Later it led to the establishment of more organised vernacular religious schools, popularly called the *pondok* or the *pesantren.* These institutions were known to have been in existence throughout the Malay world since before the period of colonial rules. Typically they were independent *madrasah* institutions which were set up by the founding teachers, using their own resources or public donations. The term *pondok* actually refers to the individual self-help dwelling units where the students were required to live close to the founding teacher's quarter. A large *pondok* establishment would also include quarters for married students. Consequently it becomes a close knit village with a main school building and a mosque.

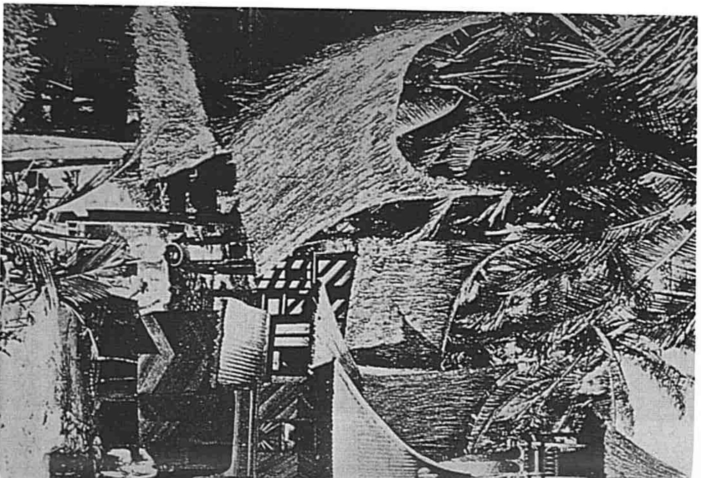


PLATE 25 View of a Minangkabau Madrasah, Sumatra.

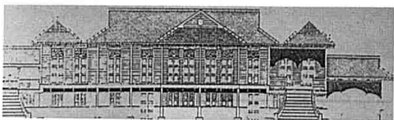


PLATE 26 Elevation of main school Building and general view of Madrasah Nadzah, Alor Star, Kedah.

WAKAF

Throughout the various phases of Islamic Civilizations, the welfare of travellers had been a matter of public concern; as demonstrated by the building of shelters, mosques, lodging, wells, and route markings along the established paths. This practice was followed by the pre-colonial Malay rulers in the Peninsular states of Kelantan and Terengganu, with the widespread distribution of simple shelters, locally known as the *wakaf*, throughout the countrysides. Even during the British administration, and without any strong central patronage, the charitable activity was actively practised by wealthy individuals and from public donations irrespective of race or religion. At those shelters travellers could rest and perform their daily prayers, and as such, wells were also provided for ablution and drinking. However studies that were carried out show that those shelters and their respective water wells were also significant elements in the socio-cultural life of the surrounding villages. During the rice planting season for example, the wells were used by farmers for refreshment breaks and daily prayers because of their convenient locations. While in the dry harvesting season, the respective *wakaf* sites would become a hub of activities as convenient waterholes for the livestock and even popular as sites for seasonal festivities and games.

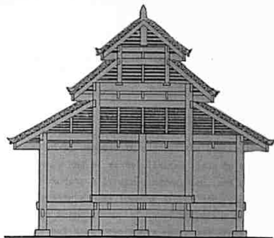


PLATE 27 Sectional drawing of Wakaf Pak Badol, Pasir Puteh, Kelantan.

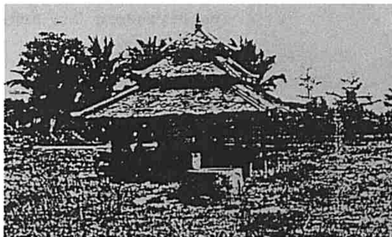
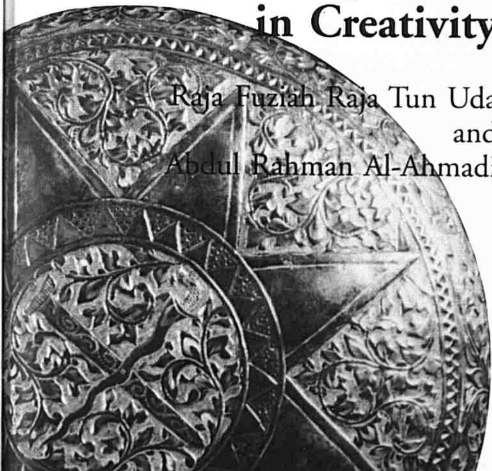


PLATE 28 Views of Wakaf Pak Badol, Pasir Puteh, Kelantan.

Chapter 7

Malay Arts and Crafts: Islamic Inspiration in Creativity

Raja Fuziah Raja Tun Uda
and
Abdul Rahman Al-Ahmadi



Chapter 7

Malay Arts and Crafts: Islamic Inspiration in Creativity

INTRODUCTION

The history of Islamic Empires and civilizations bear testimony to the contribution which Islam had made to world cultural heritage. Today, this legacy is being preserved in some of the museums around the world. The Islamic Collections in these museums manifests the artistic skills, creativity and craftsmanship of the master craftsmen and artisans that have spanned several centuries of the history of Islamic world which stretched from the Andalus in Spain to the peninsulas and islands of the Malay Archipelago. These are works of art which were made from traditional materials like wood, metals of gold, silver, brass and bronze, ceramics, glass, leather and textiles. These artforms and artworks are only some of the treasures of Islam which symbolically represent, not only the cultural impact of Islam on the ethnic and local cultures, but more significantly, manifest the evolution of an artistic expression which was deeply rooted and inspired by Islam. For the Malay world, the process of assimilation, adaptation and innovation have led to the flowering of an Islamic tradition in the arts and crafts.

PRE HISTORIC ERA

Prior to the coming of Islam, the people of the Malay Archipelago had already developed a distinct culture of their own. The dominant feature of this culture was the animistic elements derived from the Neolithic and

Dongson cultures. Archeological findings have provided evidence of the practices and rituals performed by these early communities and the type of artifacts which were used in these rites.

During the Paleolithic Age, several artifacts of the Tampan Culture were found in Perak which were quite similar to the finds in the Niah Caves in Sarawak. As in the case of Sarawak, the Paleolithic Age in Peninsular Malaysia was further characterised by the burial of the dead which indicated that the inhabitants at that time already believed in spiritual values.

Cave paintings that can be traced to the Hoabinhian Era in Peninsular Malaysia, have been found in Tambon Caves in Perak depicting a festive dance scene with the people holding sticks in their hands and having floral decorations around their heads, pictures of deer and a deer hunt drawn in red ochre and pictures of squids and fish. In Sarawak, cave paintings were found at Lubang Batu Putih and Sarang Caves in the Bintulu district. Among the artifacts of the Neolithic Age, many articles of art were found such as decorative items, bangles made of stone and painted necklaces.

The most interesting artifacts of the Bronze Age was the *nekara* (royal kettle drum), a drum-type instrument almost resembling a *genderang* (war drum) or *rebana* (drum) with a waist in the middle of it while the upper end was enclosed. In other parts of the Nusantara, *nekara* was found in Java, Sumatra, Bali, Sangean island, Sumbawa, Roti, Leti and in Alor where it was known as *moko*. In Peninsular Malaysia similar finds were made in Kelang (Selangor), Batu Buruk (Kuala Terengganu), Tembeling river (Pahang) and Kampong Sungai Lang in the Ulu Langat district in Selangor.

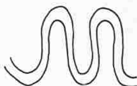
An important aspect of the *nekara* is the decorative motif which indicates that the Bronze Age culture covered the whole of the Southeast Asia. The decorative motif on the *nekara*, other than the straight line, curve and geometric drawings, included animals, birds, elephant, peacock, horse, deer, house, boat and hunting party, people performing sacred rites, even a picture of a person riding a horse with his retinue wearing what looked like Tartar costumes. The Tartar costumes remind us of our long ties with China, and until today this decoration is used by the Dayaks of Borneo (Kalimantan) and the Ngada tribe in Flores, Indonesia.

Some *nekara* also carry images depicting a person playing the flute similar to the ones at Candi Borobudur of the Hindu/Buddha period, also of a crescent-shaped boat which is believed to be the death boat carrying the soul of the dead from this world to the world hereafter.

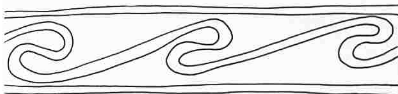
Historical evidence pointed to the use of jewellery, such as bangles decorated with stones and painted chains. It was also probable that bark-cloth was used for clothing as well as those made from natural fibres. From the etchings made on ceramic and clay pots of this era, it could also be deduced that the basic motifs and patterns used may have

been the beginning of the art of batik making. These artifacts were also decorated by applying a surface decoration on to the body such as shells, or plaited fibre or knotted string arranged in a specific manner. From these basic patterns evolved designs which are used until today in the art of mat weaving.

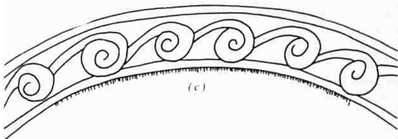
(a) i



(a) ii



(b)



(c)

PLATE 1 Geometric patterns Dongson period.
a. i and ii Meander motifs.
b. Motif 'S' which had strong influence on batik design.
c. Repetitive-coiled 'S' motif used in surface decoration of bronze-wave.
(Adapted from Siti Zainon Ismail)

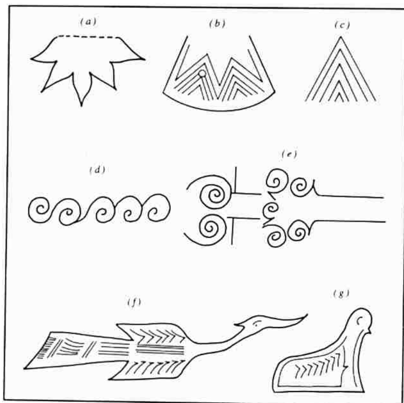


PLATE 2 Geometric patterns Dongson period.
a. Star motif.
b. Star with stylised bamboo shoot motif.
c. Stylised bamboo shoot motif or conical shape.
d. 'S' in repetitive style.
e. 'S' in combination of line pattern.
f. Bird.
g. Animal.

(Source of Patterns and Motif from surface decoration from bronze drum found in Klang, Malaysia 1964. (Adapted from Siti Zainon Ismail)

The Bronze Age (Dongson period) was known for its characteristic use of the motif 'S', the swastika and *keluk* (meanders). The swastika motif is used because it symbolised the earth and the movement of the sun and stars, and considered to bring good fortune. This motif found its way into Malay culture and has remained as one of the motifs commonly used in Malay textile decoration.

PLATE 3 Kampung Laut Mosque, Kelantan. 400-year old mosque built entirely of wood and believed to be the oldest mosque in Malaysia. The mosque with three ventilated-roof structure is distinctively Javanese in origin and it is said that the builders of this mosque were missionaries from the island of Java.
(Photo: courtesy of National Museum Malaysia)

The early motifs and patterns recorded in prehistorical period and Dongson culture were later absorbed into the local Hindu culture manifesting itself into various forms of expressions on sculpture, figurine work, temple decoration, shadow play, weaponry, decorative ware and brassware.

THE COMING OF ISLAM

With the advent of Islam into the region in the 13th century, the Malay world-view underwent a major shift from being primarily mythological – animistic to being more rational and philosophical in nature. The evolution of Islamic artistic tradition which followed its teaching meant that in terms of creative expression, artists and craftsmen were being guided by specific principles in their activities. The core consciousness is *Tauhid* or the unity of Allah, God and Creator of the Universe. In practice, everything that the Muslim does is in full awareness of this consciousness. This means that the personality of the craftsman is de-emphasised in order to draw the mind of the viewer to the notion of Divine transcendence.[1] For the craftsman, he crafts in total submission applying his creative energy and knowledge to the utmost in pursuit of excellence. And, at the end of the process, he leaves no signature, no name to exalt his creation: For to him this is an act of devotion.

1 Azizan Baharuddin & Raja Fuziah bte Raja Tun Uda, "*Tradition and the Arts: Recent Trends in Malaysia*", a paper presented at The Australian Institute of Arts and Administration Conference on "Dialogue in Diversity: Arts Administration in the Asia Pacific", Adelaide, 6-9 March 1994.

The process of Islamization of the Malay world has been attributed to the tireless efforts of Sufi *ulama*,[2] who, consequently shaped the philosophy, form and contents of traditional Malay arts.[3] As religious teachers and missionaries, they had brought the new faith of Islam to the island people, preaching new concepts about life and the ideals of community living and social justice. The teachings of these *ulama* received the support of the Malay rulers. Indeed, many Malay sultans did not only become devoted disciples of Sufism but as royal patrons of the arts, were also responsible in ensuring that their forms and contents were spiritually inspired. Thus, under the impact of Islam which emphasises man's vertical relationship with God as well as his link with society, traditional Malay arts became not only spiritually enriching and socially integrative but also psychologically ennobling.[4]

The influence of Sufism is evident as seen in the spirit of creation. According to Abdullah Mohamad Nakula, Sufi cosmology is deeply embodied in the various forms of traditional Malay art such as calligraphy, palace decorations, mosque and house architecture, kite-making (*wau*), wood carving, silverware and others. An example of this influence is the Sufi cosmological model in Malay mosque architecture such as the Demak mosque in Java and in Kelantan, Terengganu and Melaka in the Malay Peninsula. Abdul Rahman Al-Ahmadi in expounding the Sufistic interpretation of the roof structure of Malay mosques asserts that "the ventilated roof structures were normally arranged in odd numbers of three or five. This arrangement was of great importance in the Malay's Islamic philosophy. It signifies the stages of man's search for God through mysticism, *tariqah*, *haqiqah* and *ma'arifah*".[5]

ROYAL PATRONAGE

By the 14th century the Malay world was dotted with Islamic Malay Kingdoms or Sultanates, stretching from Melaka to Sumatra, Java, Borneo and the Sulu Seas. The Arts under the patronage of these rulers and the aristocracy blossomed and from the indigenous expression emerged a new dimension of artistic expression. Craftsmanship in the art of writing, carving, batik making, weaving, metalsmithing and other

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2 See Anthony H. Johns, 1961. *The Role of Sufism in the Spread of Islam to Malaya and Indonesia*, a journal of the Pakistan Historical Society 9, and 19 (1975) *Islam in Southeast Asia: Reflections and New Directions*, Indonesia.

3 Sulaiman Esa, 5 July-15 August 1993. "*The Reflowering of the Islamic Spirit in Contemporary Malaysian Art*", The Manifestation of Islamic Spirit in Contemporary Malaysian Art, an exhibition publication by Balai Seni Lukis Negara, Malaysia.

4 *Ibid.*

5 Abdul Rahman Al-Ahmadi, 1988. "*General Introduction on the Cultural Development in Malaysia*", Arts & The Islamic World, Vol. 5, No. 1 Spring-Summer, Islamic Arts Foundation, London.

artistic expressions assumed a new vigour and importance. The foreign contacts developed with India, China, the Middle East and the Ottoman Empire acted further as a catalyst from which adaptation and innovation ensued in an atmosphere of competitive spirit. New designs and arrangements crafted for ceremonial, ritual, religious and everyday life manifested the dexterity and skill of the artisans, and also reflected their knowledge and sensitivity in the handling of indigenous and new materials and technology.

PLATE 4a Silver betel-nut tray: Objects used in royal courts/nobility depicting the ornateness of craftsmanship. Master craftsmen were commissioned to make ornate objects used by the Royal courts and nobility. This silver betel-nut tray consists of receptacles in which are placed lime, areca nut, cloves and tobacco with a special casement for the betel leaves. It was the tradition to offer the betel-nut tray to a guest as a sign of welcome and a diplomatic gesture practised by the Malays before any serious verbal communication was made.
(Photo: courtesy of National Museum Malaysia)

PLATE 4b Silver kettle. It is used as a container for cold water to wash the right hand after eating. An example of Malay Perak workmanship.
(Photo: courtesy of National Museum Malaysia)

CEREBON, THE ART CITY

The ruler and the nobility as the patrons of the arts indeed played important and significant roles in this dynamic process. An illustration of this fact is seen in the role of the royal kingdom of Cerebon, which was instrumental in spreading Islam using art as the medium. Sunan Gunung Jati, on ascension to the throne used art as the vehicle for the dissemination of Islam. He established art centres, introduced the teachings of the arts and encouraged the development of new forms and new expression of the indigenous arts. Master craftsmen and artisans took on the role as agents of social change and as religious envoys migrated to the smaller kingdoms and to the interior of the Indonesian archipelago with a mission to spread the message of Islam.

CROSSROADS OF TRADE

Strategically located at the major sea-lane, the Malay world was at the crossroads of trade, commerce and cultures. By 15th century, Melaka, on the Malay Peninsula, was reputedly the emporium of the East, where traders and merchants brought new raw materials in the form of silk cloth and silk yarns from China, silk metallic thread of silver and gold, writing paper and ink from Europe, hitherto unknown to the local craftsman and artisan. Imports from India brought exotic dyed and woven cloth of brilliant colours such as the *patola* and *kain cindai* and from the Middle East, embossed fabrics richly embellished with gold thread. Trade however, was not confined to import of readymade goods only, but also in agricultural produce. And when the Dutch introduced cotton seeds and cultivation techniques, it proved to be an enterprise which later proved profitable in providing the supply of much needed cotton cloth to the batik and weaving industries in the region. At the heart of these commercial activities was a dynamic process of contact and exchange between the vibrant ethnic communities and people. The process generated a new flow of ideas, fostering experimentation and innovation.

While trade and life were centred along the coastal region, the hinter lowlands were rich fertile land suitable for the cultivation of crops. In the highlands, the rainforests was a source of indigenous raw materials providing a variety of species which only the tropics can offer. The complexity of the tropical forest offered tremendous opportunities for the artist and craftsman to exercise their creativity. Trees, with a multitude of colour, shapes, patterns, and sizes of leaves, fruits, bark and flowers, offered unlimited inspiration to the artist, while the wood varying from light soft timbers of some pioneer trees to very dense dark timbers of heavy hardwood species and rattan with unique characteristics offered tremendous possibilities for the craftsman. Palms, numbering over three hundred species, have been used as craft medium in many

forms derived from the trunk, fruits and leaves. Other resources from the forest were also utilised as craft materials, such as vines, reeds, grasses, various fruits, flowers and of products with unique shapes and colour. Besides complexity and variety, tropical forests offered uniqueness. Trees such as Teak, *Meranti* (Shoree spp) and *Keruing* (Hunteria Zeylanica, a hardwood) were only a few of the numerous unique woods from the tropical forests of this region not found anywhere else but in the Malay world.

Inspired by the natural beauty of these indigenous materials, a Malay folk art tradition evolved. From these materials, traditional craftsman made artistic objects, utilitarian and ornamental, using the most beautiful texture of woods, plants and fibres which were carefully processed and prepared before ready to be carved or sculptured, plaited or woven. A variety of objects were made by plaiting using a combination of bamboo, vegetative leaves and rattan for use as household items such as mats, baskets, food covers and wall panels and for fish traps and animal cages. In woodcraft and woodcarving, musical instruments like the *rebab* (a lute played like a cello, but small in size), *serunai* (flute) or even the *rebana* (drums) the skilful woodwork as well as the artistic touch is well reflected. So is the coconut grater (*kukur kelapa*) used in the Malay kitchen. It is usually carved with motifs of plants and tendrils that is not only a culinary utensil but as an expression of decorative beauty as well. The *congkak* board surpasses its function as mathematical game for recreation, for it too is often carved with elaborate embellishments.[6]

Other folk art traditions include top and kite making connected to the after-harvest leisure activities and the art of traditional floral decoration, initially used in the preparation of offerings and for ceremonial presentation such as weddings.[7]

PLATE 5a Folk artifacts head cover, *tudung kepala*. This conical-shaped head cover made from indigenous fibre plant is used by the farmer as protection from the heat of the sun. Several layers of the dried palm plant is held together by net-like stitches around the base of the hat. (Photo: private collection)

6 M. Taib Osman, 1988. "Malay Folk Arts", Art & The Islamic World, Vol. 5, No. 1 Spring-Summer, Islamic Arts Foundation, London.
7 *Ibid.*

PLATE 5b Coconut grater, *kukur kelapa*. A wooden *kukur kelapa* or coconut grater with motifs of plants and their tendrils carved onto it. Designed slightly raised above the floor-level, the coconut grater used to be a functional everyday kitchen tool. Many were elaborately carved in different types of wood. (Photo: private collection)

PLATE 5c Musical instrument, *rebab*. This string musical instrument forms part of the ensemble for the performance of Malay puppet show and dance. (Photo: courtesy of National Museum Malaysia)

PLATE 5d Bird cage, *jebak*. This bird cage made from a combination of wood, bamboo, rattan and cocorib is designed for luring the *burung puyuh* (bustard quail).
(Photo: private collection)

INSPIRATION FROM NATURE

For generations, nature has adorned the works of the traditional artisans. Plants have inspired craftsmen and their intrinsic beauty are transformed into motifs and patterns in the various crafts. Vegetative images such as leaf-shoots were chosen for its quality symbolising strength, growth and vigour and depicted as intertwining in a semi circular frame to signify destiny, while sweet fragrant flower such as *cempaka* (Michelia Champaca Alba) inspires a special message of welcome when woven as a motif in the fabric of a cloth or mat. The process requires a careful selection of the plant species and its adaptation into the craft has become an art in itself requiring skill and creativity.[8] The exploitation of plants and flora from the variety of luxuriant ethno-botanic collection, home-grown and available in the vicinity of the environment developed into a tradition for the Malay craftsman. Over time, a variety of motifs and patterns derived from nature were ingeniously incorporated and became known as the motifs of the Malay world. These have become part of the ethnic design source which grew with each generation of craftsmen. For example, in wood-carving, motifs and patterns ranging from plants, foliage, floral, geometric, cosmic signs to calligraphic writings were identified; of these some twenty-six motifs have been identified as relating to foliage and another twenty-six motifs identified relating to flora.[9]

With the teachings of Islam which stressed on the love for nature and the guidance for man to seek beauty in the natural world which God has created, this message further reinforced the beliefs of the craftsman and ultimately his action. Indeed, from the fusion between Islamic religious beliefs and Malay aesthetics emerged a synthesis: The wall panel of a traditional Malay house would be a typical example of this brilliant metamorphosis.

From the innumerable images of natural life, a new tradition and new designs evolved incorporating flowers and birds, fruits and foliage. The flora became the central object from which transcended images into endless forms and patterns. An example of this inspiration was the persimmon fruit. Malay weavers were so inspired by this fruit which originated from Persia but came via the silk route from China to the Malay world that the persimmon motif became a favourite feature in *songket* weaving.

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8 Nik M.N. Zainal Abidin, 1990. "*Malaysia's Flora and Its Inspiration to Traditional Artisans*", Art & The Islamic World, Vol. 5, No. 2 Summer, Islamic Arts Foundation, London.

9 Syed Ahmad Jamal, 1992. *Rupa dan Jiwa*, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur.

PLATE 6 Wood carved wall panel. A direct piercing carving technique the *"semangat"* flower lends inspiration to this *"silat serong"* design featured on the wall panel of a Malay house.
(Source: BBMB)

SYMBOLISM OF COLOUR

Colour in the Malay culture has special significance both in terms of its symbolic association as an expression of form and beauty and for the pigmentation from which natural dyes were made. Closely linked to nature, colours are often associated with its life-giving purpose and vegetative images. Hence, red is mother earth, blue is the sky, green is for the greenery and plants that exudes life, white is the cloud, yellow (orange-yellow) is the sun and blue-green for the sea. In the context of a structured-society, colours also signify power and authority. According to the Malay Annals, the four colours signifying power are white,

yellow, red and black. White as a sign of purity was reserved for the ruler as the protector of Islam. Red signifies bravery and the colour of honour for the chosen warrior. Yellow is attributed to royalty, the colour symbolising patronage and thus differentiating the ruler from the ruled and forbidden to be used by the public except on the occasion of a wedding reception where the bride and groom may adorn yellow and golden attire. Black is universally considered sinister and evil, fringing on the world of supernatural elements.[10]

In the Malay society, medicinal, magical and ritual significance have been associated with colour since the earliest times. Thus, green symbolises the religion Islam and as the colour used by the Prophet. According to the late Nik Abdul Rahman bin Nik Dir, *pawang diraja* Kelantan, in traditional medicine colour is ascribed with certain qualities – white for purity, yellow for authority, green for asceticism, blue for godly, red for warrior-like, grey for bravery, black for meditation.

Description of colour in textiles comes in a wide range of tones and hues. What is most interesting is the description given to a particular colour and shade derived from the world of nature, such as from herbal plants, palms, fruit trees and flora. For example, shades of green are referred to as banana shoot green of the *cekur manis* plant and description of other types of plants and leaves. Similarly, bright yellow is likened to the ripened-colour of the areca-nuts. While this terminology provides a poetic term of reference for the weaver it also reflected the closeness of their lives to the natural world. A range of colours from vegetable dye sources often became the colours reserved for royalty and the nobility. For instance, tumeric root yellow (*kuning kunyit*) refers to the tumeric roots, whilst *merah pulasan* refers to the deep red of the *pulasan* fruit used as red dye. Before the importation of chemical dyes, cloth were dyed with vegetables and plant extracts found in abundance in the forests and on the fringes of the coastal areas.

THE RHYTHM OF UNITY: MUSIC, SONG AND DANCE

Malay expressive artforms are performances of traditional music, song, dance and theater. These are usually performed in open-air during occasions such as weddings and events associated with the rites of passage and of religious significance and other ceremonial occasions in which the local community is involved. As village entertainment, the participants and audience are often immediate family members and members of the extended family. As such, village entertainment did not exclude women's participation in public performances.

With the coming of Islam, a new repertoire of music, song and dance were incorporated into the traditional forms. And where these

10 Syed Ahmad Jamal, 1992. *Rupa dan Jiwa*, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur.

expressions were considered alien to the Malay culture and aesthetics, modifications were made as in the case of the *Zapin* dance. Performances of music and chanting in praise of Allah and the Prophet such as in *Hadrah*, *Rodat* and the mystical dances as in *Dabus* and *Ratib* Saman, provide an all-enriching religious experience to an all male ensemble.

Existing theatrical traditions were given new dimensions. In the theatrical tradition of the *Wayang Kulit* or Shadow Play, it was given a "new life". This story-telling performance relating to the duel between the forces of "good" and "bad" in life continued to entertain the public with tales from the Hindu epic of *Ramayana* and *Mahabrata* but interspersed with messages of the new religion. Thus, the vehicle for change remained the same figures or puppet characters which are most endeared to the audience but the story gradually conveyed the values of the new faith, Islam.[11]

Indigenous musical instruments provide the accompaniment at these performances. The traditional musical ensemble usually consist of different types of drums of varying sizes called *rebana* and *gendang*. The musical instrument *gamelan* is indigenous and widely used in Indonesia. Trade and contact with the Islamic world introduced the use of new musical instruments such as the flute (*serunai*), 'ud (*gambus*) and lute (*rebab*) into the world of traditional Malay music.[12] Traditional instruments also fulfilled the needs of daily life - drums were placed in the mosques and at certain times of the day they were used to announce the call of prayers whilst, in the royal courts of Java, the sound of *gamelan* music marked the prayer time.

MATERIAL ARTS

Jawi Script, the Beginning of a Calligraphic Tradition

The advent of Islam introduced the Malay world to Arabic writing and Arabic alphabets. Through the teaching and recitation of the Qur'an, the Malays became familiar with the use of Arabic alphabets. And when Arabic script was adopted for the Malay Language, known as *Jawi* script, it sowed the seed for nurturing the growth of an Islamic calligraphic tradition (*khat*) in the Malay world. Already the Malay Archipelago has its own style of *khat* as can be seen in the old manuscripts and from the *khat* writing on the Terengganu carved Tablet found to be the oldest of such writing found in Malaysia and the *Batu*

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11 We wish to thank Dr. Mohd. Anis Mohd. Nor, Associate Professor, University of Malaya for the deliberation on this subject.

12 For a description on the relationship between the music and performance of the traditional dance forms, see Mohd. Ghouse Nasuruddin, 1989. *Muzik Melayu Tradisi*, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Malaysia.

Acheh in North Sumatra.[13] The introduction of newer forms of *khat* writings, hitherto unknown to the island world, such as '*Kuffi*', '*Tuluth*', '*Diwani*', '*Farisi*' and '*Riq'ah*' from the Muslim world generated keen interest and scholarship.

As a lingua franca of the island world, the Malay language was no longer confined to its dominant role of an international language of commerce but with the adoption and adaption of the Arabic script, it attained a cultural dimension. Malay vocabulary became enriched with a great number of Arabic, Persian words and terms, and even its syntax underwent the influence of Arabic, emerged as the language through which Islam spread its message throughout the Malay world, attaining its apogee in the religious and cultural spheres during the 16th and 17th centuries of the Christian era and went unchallenged by any other regional language in these respective domains.[14]

Through this language, written in *Jawi* script, Islam spread throughout the Archipelago and the myriads of islands. And through the message of the Qur'an, man learnt the act of piety. One of these is the devotional act of copying the Qur'an or passages from it.[15] The discipline, required to achieve such proficiency in writing, was deemed to produce results in the character of the person which were wholly compatible with the aims of religious life. It is said that "If man writes *Bismillah al-Rahman al-Rahim*, and writes it very well and carefully, God will pardon him", which is a tradition attributed to the Prophet.[16] It may have been the driving force behind the rapid and dynamic growth of Islamic calligraphy in Malay traditional arts and it is an expression of this

13 See Othman Mohd. Yatim, 1988. *Batu Acheh, Early Islamic gravestones in Peninsular Malaysia*, Museum Association of Malaysia. Othman points to the fact that *Batu Acheh*, a type of gravemarker made in Acheh to embellish the graves of the 15th to 19th century Malay royalty and chieftains of the Malay Peninsular, Arabic calligraphy is used in decorative form to convey a religious message.

14 Yusof Ahmad Talib, 1-5 June 1989. *Jawi Script: Its significance and contribution to the Malay World*, a paper presented at the International Seminar on Islamic Civilisation in the Malay World, Brunei Darussalam.

15 Bashir Wali Mohamed writing in Islamic calligraphy 1994. *The Script of Divine Proportions*, an exhibition catalogue on Islamic calligraphy by Kouichi Honda, Kuala Lumpur, elaborated that the verse *Thy Lord is the Most Bounteous, who Teacheth by the pen, teacheth man that which he knew not*, (The Clot, 96:3-5) refers to the knowledge within the Qur'an and the knowledge without. The written *form* of Allah's words represent visually the Eternal Qur'an and pointing to man's possible entry into understanding the Divine. The 'sacredness' attached to the written word turned it into a powerful symbol. Whereas the other cultures surrounding the known Islamic world made use of figural images - implicating idolatory, for their signs and symbols of temporal and spiritual authority - the Caliph, Abdul Malik (685-705), in the early Ummayad period, innovated the striking on his coinage of the *shahadah*, in what may generically be called the 'kufic' script of the time. This was a significant step, and a turning point for all Islamic visual arts. It made writing central to Muslim life. Script and beautiful writing, was used everywhere conceivable: in architecture, doorways and documents, minarets and pulpits (*mimbars*).

16 The Calligrapher's Craft, p. 3, Summer Exhibition, 1-27 June 1987, Ahuan Gallery of Islamic Art, London.

desire to achieve spiritual purification as well as creating a physical and psychological ambience where the signs of God and His omnipresence are manifested everywhere. This may well explain the ubiquitous presence of calligraphy in palace architecture, royal regalias, mausoleums, Malay houses, textiles, metalworks and letter writing. More importantly for the calligraphers (*khattat*) themselves was the constant practice of producing these spiritually noble and intricate artforms which constituted a form of *zikir* (chanting in meditation) that directly contributed to spiritual purification and transformation of their souls.[17]

Calligraphy in Malay Letter Writing

Another dimension in which Arabic calligraphic has shown its mastery was in its inspiration to the development of the art of Malay letter writing. It has been described that in the history of four centuries of the art of Malay letter writing it had left a legacy of some of the finest Malay letters as remarkable art objects. This is attributed to their splendid illumination, elegant calligraphy, intricate seals and courtly and refined language, which embodied all that is most beautiful in Malay culture, civilisation and aesthetics.

Written in the *Jawi* script in calligraphic style, the Malay letter would incorporate a Qur'anic quotation or religious phrase written in Arabic as a heading at the top of the letter such as *al-Hamd li-'llah Rabb al-'Alamin* (All praise is for God; Lord of the Universe), *Qawluh al-haqq wa-kalamuh al-sidq* (His Word is the Truth and His Speech Veracity) and *Ya Qadi al-Hajat* (O Fulfiller of Needs), and again, in the closing statement invoking praises for the Prophet. And according to T.J. Newbold, "written on the envelope, after the name and address of the person written to, would usually follow a pious prayer that *Allah* may cause the letter to arrive at its destination in safety". Although rare, letters have also been written in Arabic as in the case of Sultan Alauddin Riayah Shah of Acheh's letter in reply to Queen Elizabeth I in 1601 A.D.

Described as "golden letters" because of their "striking visual beauty" by Annabel Teh Gallop in the publication *The Legacy of The Malay Letter (1994)*, of these, the oldest and most beautiful illuminated Malay letter in the British Museum is a letter from Sultan Iskandar Muda of Acheh to King James I written in 1615. These "golden letters" were written with much care and artistry, illuminated with arabesque geometric patterns and indigenous foliage and floral motifs like the clove flower or borders of jasmine flowers.[18]

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17 Sulaiman Esa, *The Reflowering of the Islamic Spirit in Contemporary Malaysian Art*, The Manifestation of Islamic Spirit in Contemporary Malaysia Art, an exhibition publication by Balai Seni Lukis Negara, Malaysia, 5 July–15 August 1993.

18 Annabel Teh Gallop, 1994. *The Legacy of The Malay Letter*, The British Library.

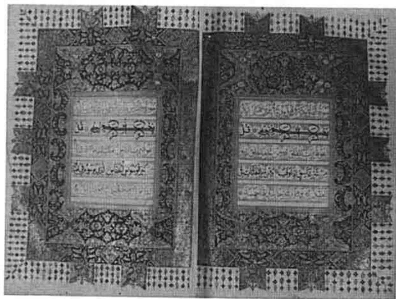

PLATE 7 Al-Qur'an. Handwritten during the period of the reign of Sultan Zainal Abidin of Terengganu in 13th century Hijrah. Border decoration of floral and vegetal motifs.
(Photo: courtesy of National Library Malaysia)

PLATE 8 Seal in *Jawi* script. Seal of Ungku Biru, daughter of Sultan Muhammad of Kelantan dated 1328 Hijrah, written in *Jawi script*.
(Photo: courtesy of National Library Malaysia)

As it was the tradition that Malay letters were written by professional scribes who remain anonymous, seals were used on Malay letters as a mark of authenticating the identity and authority of the sender. Ornately crafted in silver and brass, Malay seals, until the 18th century were inscribed in relief, and the inscription was written either in Arabic, Malay and Arabic or Malay in *Jawi* script, bearing the personal name, title, date, place and a religious expression such as *al-wathiq bi-'illah,* while all sultans bore the title *Zillu-Allah Fill-Alam.*[19]

From the design aesthetics, Gallop observed that the Malay seals are perhaps the most beautiful of all Islamic seals in terms of shape and exhibit a degree of ornamentation not found elsewhere. Shapes closely follow motifs in traditional Malay silverware, the most common being circles, petalled circular seals of 8, 12 and 16, the lotus-shape, although ovals and octagons are also found.

CARVING AND WOODWORK

Wood as an indigenous material readily available has been a medium for both artists and craftsman. The variety of hard wood species such as *Chengal* (Balanocarpus spp), *Medang* (Lauraceae spp), *Sena* (Pterocarpus indious), *Merbau* (Intsia spp), *Meranti* (Shoree spp), *Nyatuh* (Sapotaceae spp) and *Belian* (Eusideroxylon zwageri) for example has been a source of inspiration for the shaping and moulding for the creation of aesthetics forms in wood.

The art of carving on materials such as wood, bamboo, stone and metal is probably the oldest form of artistic expression in traditional society. Malay wood carving thrived as decorative art in the writing of Qur'anic verses in calligraphic form to beautify mosques and pulpits, palaces and palatial homes, *wakaf* (a public resting place) and sailing boats apart from ornamenting cultural artifacts such as musical instruments and weaponry used for ceremonial, social and ritual functions. The Malays had developed unique wood carvings for their houses as early as 14th century with a strong Hindu influence. And the spread of Islam at about the same time further influenced the style of woodcarving amongst the Malays. It introduced the Arabic calligraphy which played an important and prominent role in developing the style of Malay wood carving.

According to a study made by Abdul Halim Nasir, Malay wood carving has three basic patterns, the single pattern (*pola bujang*), the screen/frame pattern (*pola pemidang*) and the complete pattern (*pola lengkap*).[20] '*Pola bujang*' or single pattern is also known as '*pola putu*'. "Its motif is executed in a free style, stands on its own, and flows dis-

19 *Ibid.*

20 Abdul Halim Nasir, 1987. *Traditional Malay Wood Carving*, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Malaysia, p. 94.

continuously. Normally, '*pola bujang*' takes the elements of a flower, young fruits, the moon, the star, the sun or elements of living things or living creatures. The choice of flowers or fruits normally made up by the carvers are the types of plants and herbs that have medicinal value and are found growing in their neighbourhood as well as in the jungle. Their favourite choices are *tampuk manggis* (mangosteen calyx), *bunga cengkih* (clove), *bunga lawang* (star anise), *bunga teratai* (lotus), *bunga keladi* (colocasia esoulenta), *bunga petola* (aristokolia), *bunga ketumbit* (leucas zeylanica), *buah saga* (adinantiraia), *bunga cina* (gardenia), *bunga matahari* (sunflower), *bunga raya* (hibiscus), *bunga senduduk* (melastomacene), *bunga keladi bunting* (water hyacinth), *bunga misai kucing* (otosifon), *bunga mawar* (rose), *bunga melati* (jasmine), *bunga sikup dada* (oxalis corniculata) and others.[21] The cosmic and living-thing elements often found in '*pola bujang*' are the moon, stars, hens, ducks, rhinoceros, birds and living creatures. The use of living-things as elements in this type of pattern is a heritage found only on traditional houses particularly in Negeri Sembilan".[22]

The second is '*pola pemidang*' or screen pattern is also known as '*pola bingkai*' (frame pattern). "It uses simple elements and its movement is less interwined or interlaced and is usually enclosed in a screen or frame. The motifs used in this kind of pattern are more aesthetic in nature and carry certain meanings. Some of these patterns may be seen on the old houses in Negeri Sembilan that were constructed by Minangkabau craftsmen specially brought in from West Sumatra. The motifs of carving used in this kind of pattern are '*itik pulang petang*', a stylised repetitive motif inspired from a procession of slow-moving ducks in the rice-field, '*setampuk manggis*', a fruit of rhomboid-shaped centre motif surrounded by eight petals arranged closely together, reminiscent of the five to eight lobes at the bottom of the mangosteen fruit, and others.[23]

'*Pola pemidang*' or '*pola bingkai*' are also commonly found on household utensils such as betel-nut receptacles, cupboard and wooden trays. In a house structure, this kind of pattern is usually applied on threshhold cap, part of a staircase, roof eaves and on other parts of the house where this concept of carving is suitable".[24]

The third is the '*pola lengkap*' or the complete pattern is also known as '*pola induk*' or the main pattern. "It combines all elements to form one complete carving. This kind of pattern gives more emphasis on plant elements because of its soft nature and ease of arrangement. It incorporates all parts of a plant ranging from the roots, stumps, branches, leaves, fruits, flower buds to flowers. It is arranged in a series

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21 *Ibid.*, pp. 94, 96.
22 *Ibid.*, p. 96.
23 *Ibid.*
24 *Ibid.*

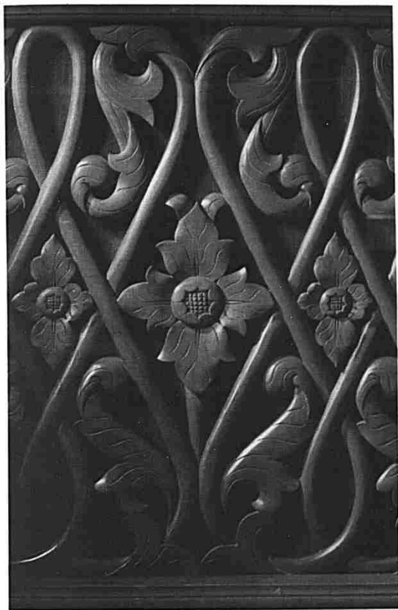


PLATE 9 Malay wood carving. *Pola bujang.*

of curves, winding, knotting, coiling, interlacing, interwining or arabesque. The style of arrangement is indeed up to the discretion and talent of the carver".[25]

25 *Ibid.*, p. 98.

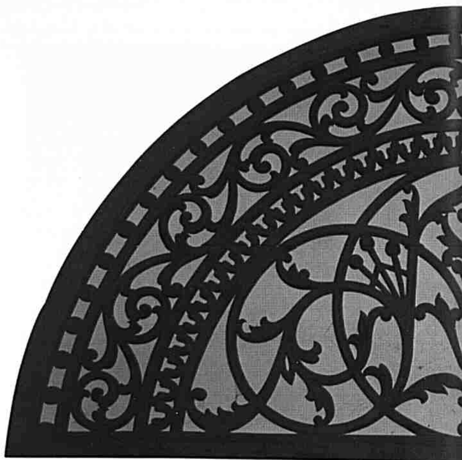


PLATE 10 Example of carving on wood panel. A carved timber panel visually located above the doors with a leguminous plant (*sulur kacang*) as the carved motif. This 'cut through' carving technique is referred to as "*tebuk terus*" meant to bring in light into the house as well as improving ventilation.
(Photo: private collection)

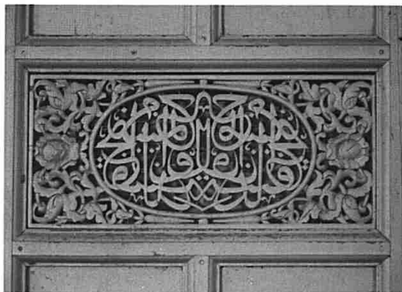
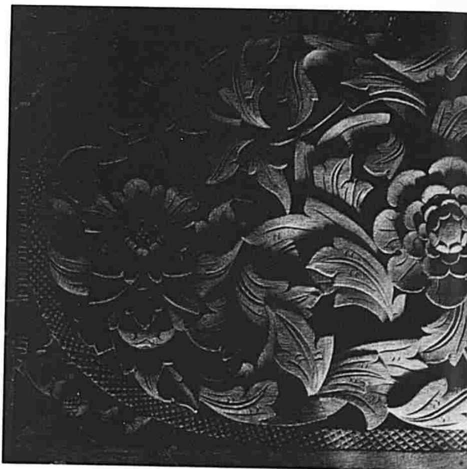


PLATE 11 Wood carved panel Kelantan. Late 19th century. Thuluth calligraphy in open-work carving on wood panel. Inscription from Surah Yassin, verse 30, 50. (Photo: courtesy of Syed Ahmad Jamal)

The three-step design illustrate not only the complexity and craftsmanship involved in wood carving but also to demonstrate how design is related to function. Techniques used in wood carving is determined by the function of the artifact. It usually comprises various piercing techniques, namely, the see-through direct-piercing method (*tebuk terus*), the semi-piercing method (*tebuk separuh*) and the embossed-relief piercing technique (*tebuk timbul*).

The essence in wood carving is the knowledge of the technique to produce the effect desired. As the technique would normally relate to the design of the artifact, herein lies the carver's mastery of material, tools and his sense of balance, beauty and harmony. It is also customary that in the execution of the design, the carver merely captures the essence of the motif so as to subtley suggest its origin and does not render an



explicit replica or design of the motif. An example of relief wood carving could be seen in the Mantingan Mosque, Japara in Central Java.

A characteristic pattern in wood carving is the ornamental motif, described as *awan larat*, "a pattern showing the form of coiled carving and knotted like the morning clouds". It is a pattern personifying nature and usually consists of foliage motifs that is repeated several times according to the length of the wood carving panel. This particular pattern has been ascribed as an example of an indelible Sufi imprint on the traditional Malay art.

PLATE 12 *Awan larat* motif in wood carving. The "*awan larat*" design based on the "*ketumbit*" flower brightens this wall panel in a palace in Terengganu. Technique used embossed and semi-pierced. (Source: BBMB)

Pottery

The love for clay, the respect for Mother Earth distinguished the potter from the artisans of other craft traditions. The potter's special relationship to the earth have placed him in a unique position in the traditional society. Both the pot and the vessel have been identified as symbols of sustenance of life – the association with the "bowl of rice" that nourishes and the water that quenches the thirst. And in worship, clay forms were created as icons, to be worshipped and then cast into the waters and recycled back to Mother Earth. From this perspective, the art of terracotta was primarily fulfilling the social and ritual needs of village life.

With the advent of Islam, the village potter shifted to the making and the embellishment of earthen vessels, clay bowls, pots, jars, incense burners, spouted water pot, plates, ink pot and other artifacts. The wares were decorated on the surface with motifs and patterns drawn from the world of flora and vegetation. These were mostly inspired by the four-petalled shaped flower, bamboo shoot, clove, *bunga keduduk* (straits rhododendron), *bunga tanjung* (mimosa elengi), *bunga lawang* (star anise), *siku keluang* (herringbone pattern) and *bunga padi* (sheath of padi).

PLATE 13 Water vessel (*labu sayong*). This terracotta water vessel was used for medicinal purposes. It is designed with a built-in strainer at the neck of the vessel and with a spout that has a special contraption to control the flow of water to enable the patient to sip the water down slowly.
(Photo: courtesy of National Museum Malaysia)

The method of making these earthern wares was either hand-moulded or beaten into shape with the use of a wooden spatula, or the coiling method. Once moulded into the form and shape desired, it was dried in the sun. Hardening the base of the pot with pebbles or strengthening its body by other means would be done before it is baked in an open fire using natural waste material. To give the pots the black-polished look, a characteristic of ethnic earthernware, they were treated by rolling into grain scum repeatedly.

Plaiting and Mat Weaving

The variety of rattan (Calamus manan), bamboo (Bambusoidae) palms, pandanus and *mengkuang* (Pandanus Kaida) and vines such as Lygodium have been a source of indigenous materials used in making household furnishing of traditional Malay timber dwellings. Mats for floor coverings and woven panels of stripped bamboo were essential items used for insulation and as partitions in creating the interior living space for the family and in providing privacy to the family members. The art of plaiting and weaving of fibres thrived in the homes as a

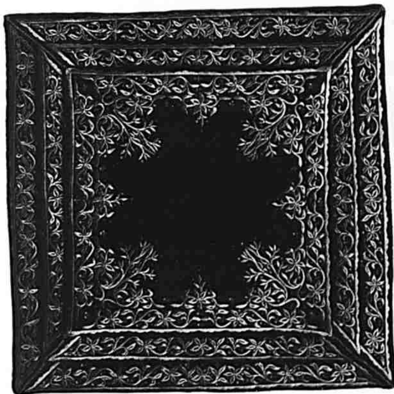


PLATE 14 Embroidered mat designed for *nikah* ceremony.

The most elaborate mat works are made for religious and ceremonial functions such as this layered mat which eventually becomes a family heirloom.
(Collection of Museum of Asian Arts, University of Malaya)
(Photo: courtesy of Syed Ahmad Jamal)

function for making items needed for everyday artifacts. The weaving of baskets of every shape and sizes to carry and store agriculture produce, to keep clothing and other personal effects was a common feature of village activity.

The ingenuity of the artisans was in the manner in which they could incorporate the use of different materials found from time to time in the forests, jungles and swamps to the already existing designs. At times, new inspiration gave birth to innovation in the form and function of new artifacts.

Over time, a number of motifs and patterns, known as *kelarai*, have been created by the artisans. These motifs are expressions personifying the beauty of nature. They are in the form of flora and foliage, fish and insects. Individual *kelarai* is given names of places and also those artisans who initiated the design. Examples of motifs used in matting include the eight-petalled flower, sunflower, jasmine, clove, rose, *bunga tanjung* (mimosa elengi), mangosteen calyx, areca-nut calyx, and bamboo shoots. Fish, animals and insects seems to have been given prominence as *kelarai* motifs in fibre-matting and examples include 'the eye of anchovies fish', fish-bone, fly-head and elephant head. The star-pattern varies from the 4-pointed side to the 7-sided star-shape. The encroachment of development on the natural habitat of these indigenous materials has caused some concern. A depleting source of supply of these raw materials may well affect the making of these traditional products and with it, the withering of a folk-art tradition.

TRADITIONAL MALAY TEXTILES

Trade contributed significantly to the development of traditional Malay textiles. Being at the crossroads of trade, fabrics and cloth in the form of *kain sarung, kain sarung panjang*, shawls, head-cloths and were made and traded as commodities among the island people for use as essential items of clothing. Cloth of special design and patterns were also commissioned for use by the royal courts of the Malay Kingdoms. Foreign imports of cotton and silk cloth, silk yarn, gold and silver metallic threads, beads, velvet, damask and *patola* cloth acted as a stimulant to highly ingenious and creative weavers. The impact of the introduction of these new materials, innovation of techniques and designs have led to the founding of one of the world's richest heritage in traditional textiles.

PLATE 15a Malay ladies attired in formal traditional clothing consisting of wrap-around woven-silk *sarung* with long overblouse of Chinese imported printed silk worn withr gold accessories. Head cover made of netting material embroidered with gold thread.

PLATE 15b Kedah. The Malay Headress. In the Malay attire, the headress forms an essential part of the formal attire and denotes the rank of the wearer as well as in creativity of design.

PLATE 15c Pahang. The Malay Headress. In the Malay attire, the headress forms an essential part of the formal attire and denotes the rank of the wearer as well as in creativity of design.

PLATE 15d Selangor. The Malay Headress. In the Malay attire, the headress forms an essential part of the formal attire and denotes the rank of the wearer as well as in creativity of design.

The Art of *Batik Tulis*

Batik, the exquisite finely hand-drawn and patterned cloth applied with wax to resist a dye, is one of the rich indigenous textile tradition of the Malay world. The art of writing and drawing on cloth with a *canting* (copper spout through which flows the molten wax) was an ancient tradition, practised by the Javanese since the 12th century.[26] Its formal development has been attributed to the rise of the Matarram Kingdom in the 17th century.[27] Batik cloth was designed essentially to be used as a *sarong* (a tube-like cloth worn by both men and women throughout the Malay world), *kain panjang* (skirt cloth), the *selendang* (shawl), the *ikat kepala* (head-cloth) and *kain kemban* (cloth worn up to the breast). Made from cotton, locally grown and later imported, batik-making inspired the creation of different patterns ornately and intricately painted by women. Of these, certain designs were designated for the exclusive use of certain social class such as those used in the courts of central Java.[28]

Batik described by Inger Elliot as the "fabled cloth of Java" became symbolic and identified with the lives of the Javanese people as

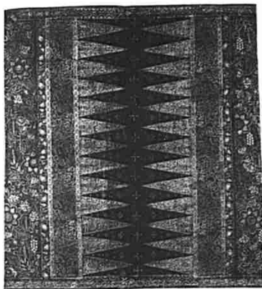


PLATE 16a. Batik cloth, *kain batik*. One of the most typical batik cloth is the *kain panjang* of 2 metres in length and about 105 cm wide. It is used to wrap-around the body with the *kepala* (head) of the cloth decorated with motifs such as birds and flowering vines encased in the bamboo shoot pattern folded in the front. (Photo: courtesy of National Museum Malaysia)

26 Siti Zainon Ismail, 1994. *Tekstil Tenunan Melayu*, Kuala Lumpur.
27 K.R.T. Hardjonagoro in a personal interview in 1991.
28 For an elaboration on the social significance of batik and ornamentation in the context of Javanese society and the technical process of batik making, refer to *Batik Traditions in the Life of the Javanese* by Bevely Labin, 1979, in *Threads of Tradition: Textiles of Indonesia and Sarawak*, Fidelity Saving and Loan Association, California for the University of California.

batik making spread throughout Java creating distinctive styles peculiar to each region - from the Cerebon courts of central Java to Pelcangan in the north coast and then to Gresik in eastern Java. And in the course of that journey, new influences and ideas were fused whereby distinctive styles and forms emerged contributing to the richness of a cultural tradition of Java.

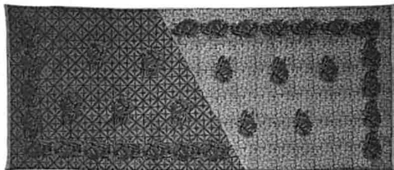


PLATE 16b Batik *pagi-sore*. This batik cloth of *pagi-sore* (morning-evening) design is different from other batik cloth in that it incorporates two designs in one batik cloth allowing it to be used for both in the morning as well as in the evening, an improvisation probably attributed to the shortage of cotton cloth during the Japanese war years between 1940–1945.
(Photo: private collection)

PLATE 16c Batik makers at work. *Batik tulis* is made by applying hot wax to the cloth with a *canting* through which the artisan trace the patterns and motifs, working usually in a group but each in tranquill concentration.
(Photo: courtesy of Paul Zacharia)

PLATE 16d *Batik panjang* as a baby carrier. Batik cloth had multi-function other than used as an item of clothing. This *batik panjang* used as a baby carrier. The motif "*parang rosak*" (slanting knife-like design) was only meant then for the use of nobility.
(Photo: peoples of All Nations by J.A. Hammaton)

Motifs and Pattern in Batik

Early batik designs imitated woven textiles and were called *djelemprang.* They were popular because the simulated woven design took far less time to produce than actual woven cloth. The double *ikat* weave (*patola*)[29] was often copied as a batik design, and this and other geometrically patterned *djelemprangs* were to find their way into the batik of both central and the north coast of Java.[30]

The *djelemprang* design was the most highly prized of all the designs in Indonesia. It is the *djelemprang* that is the most often imitated in batik and other Indonesian textiles. This design was also the one most frequently used as wedding garments for the nobility, as underskirts or as coverings for sacred instruments.[31]

Just as Buddhism and Hinduism before it, Islam was instrumental in the creation of new design and uses of batik. The textile was "encouraged by the Muslim rulers as a major element of social expression in garments and hangings". Not only did Muslim traders expand the batik market but because of the Muslim prohibition against depicting human forms, design motifs also changed. New shapes – flat arabesques and calligraphy – were introduced and became integral in the evolution of batik.[32]

The ascension of Sunan Gunung Jati as the Muslim ruler of Cerebon in the 16th century, fostered the establishment of Cerebon as the Islamic City and artistic centre in the north coast of Java, through which Muslim artisans pursued Islamic ideals in the development of artistic expression and faithfully spread the new forms of art through the entire island of Java. From this endeavour, a new artistic expression in Batik called *Batik Kaligrafi* evolved through the innovative enterprise of the batik-makers of Cerebon. Batik in the form of long shawl, head-cloth and as hangings were decorated with Qur'anic inscription, among these were the *Shahadah* and *Allah Yang Maha Besar* (God is Almighty). Abstract forms of calligraphic renditions also evolved.

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29 For detail information on Patola motifs, refer to Lisa Singh, 1988. "*Patola - The Romance of a Textile*", *Cindai - Pengembaraan Kain Patola India*, Jakarta: Himpunan Wastraprema.

30 Inger McCabe Elliot, 1984. *Batik-Fabled Cloth of Java*, New York: Clarkson N. Potter Inc., p. 36.

31 Lisa Singh, 1988. "Patola – The Romance of a Textile", *Cindai - Pengembaraan Kain Patola India*, Jakarta: Himpunan Wastraprema.

32 Inger McCabe Elliot, 1984. *Batik-Fabled Cloth of Java*, New York: Clarkson N. Potter Inc., p. 26. For description of textiles of the different geographic areas in Indonesia, see Mattiebelle Gittinger, 1990. *Splendid Symbols Textiles and Tradition on Indonesia*, OUP Singapore.

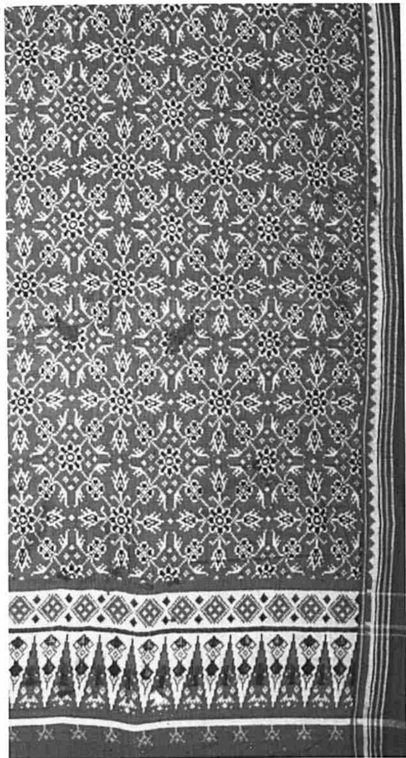

PLATE 17 *Patola* cloth source of *batik* djelemprang design. *Patola*, double *ikat*. Export textiles such as this double ikat from India called *Patola* had a proud effect on the textile designs of the Malay world. This eight-rayed floral motif, locally termed *djelemprang* was particularly prized and emulated. The compositional arrangements of these imported silks was adopted by many local weavers and dyers in Indonesia.
(Photo: courtesy of National Museum Malaysia)

PLATE 18a Batik calligraphy head-cloth. Batik headcover in calligraphic motif style. Batik cloth of this type made in Cerebon around 1900 in blue and white. Arabic script was also known as *batik Arab* and exported from Java to Sumatra. (Photo: courtesy of National Museum Malaysia)

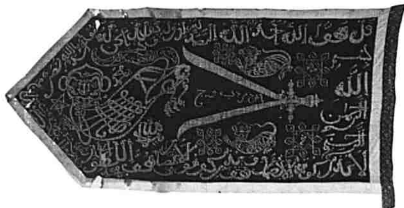

PLATE 18b Royal Standard, Cerebon 16th Century. The Royal Standard made from batik cloth with calligraphic inscription from Surah al-Ikhlas (used by Sunan Gunung Jati).
(Photo: courtesy of Textile Museum, Jakarta)

TEXTILE WEAVING

The weaving of textiles for ritual and daily use has been the work and responsibility of women. It was therefore a tradition that the art of weaving was handed down from mother to daughter. Her competency and mastery at the loom in producing patterns and motifs in various techniques, was a deciding factor then for a young girl to enter into matrimony. Hence, the weaving of patterns and motifs on to the cloth was regarded as an act of love, and in ensuring the weaver's self-esteem. Method of weaving in the early indigenous weaving tradition was on a backstrap loom. These were the cloth made by ethnic groups such as the *Iban, Ilanum, Bajau, Batak* (*ikat pakan*) and *Toraja.* With the introduction of the treadle loom, and the importation of gold/silver metallic threads, new weaves were created in plaid patterns, generically known as *kain corak Bugis, corak Muar, corak Samarinda, corak Palembang* denoting its place of origin in the Malay world.[33]

PLATE 19 Borneo *ikat* cloth with anthromorphic design *Pua Kumbu.* Motif: Warriors, tree of life and sea animals, Iban, Borneo. Anthropomorphic figures feature in tribal *ikat* textiles as an expression of dieties existing in *Iban* legends. These motifs served as talisman to protect the individual from any untoward harm as well as to restore a bountiful harvest. (Photo: private collection)

33 For technical details on looms and the process of textile weaving techniques - decorative dyeing and weaving techniques, refer to Handwoven Textiles of South-east Asia by Sylvia Fraser-Lu, 1989. Oxford University Press.

An important development in textile production was the introduction of silk thread and the reed for combing the finer silk threads and sericulture into Southeast Asia in early historical times. The process initiated the making of a new range of textile types - the weaving of weft *ikat*, supplementary weft brocades and weft banding of silk textiles.[34]

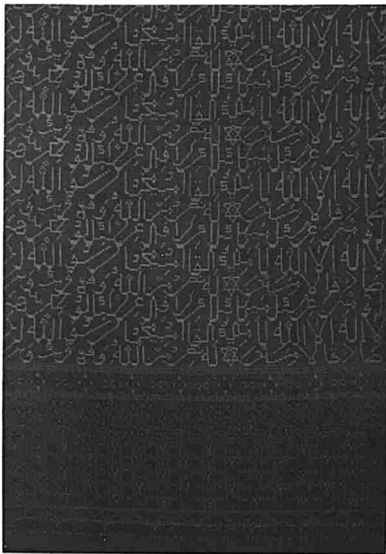

PLATE 20 Silk woven shawl with calligraphic motif and Qur'anic inscription in praise of Allah.
(Photo: courtesy of National Museum Malaysia)

34 Robyn Maxwell, 1992. "*Traditions Transformed: The Cultural Context of Textile Making and Use in Southeast Asia*", p. 20, Cultures at Crossroads, Southeast Asian Textiles From The Australian National Gallery, Canberra, Studies on Asian Art No. 2.

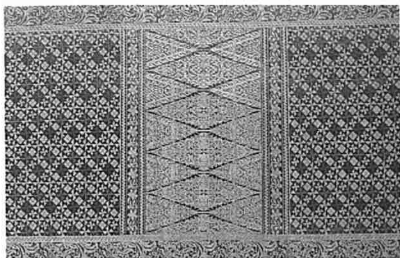

PLATE 21a *Songket Brunei.* Richly woven *songket sarung* motif '*Silubang Bansisi*'. (Photo: courtesy of Brunei Handicraft Centre)

PLATE 21b Man's *songket* head-cloth of eight-petalled flower motif with a rich gold border and the corolla of the persimmon fruit motif dominating the four corners of the cloth. (Photo: courtesy of National Museum Malaysia)

Originating from Gujarat, India by the 7th century, the double weft-ikat or *patola* cloth made an inroad into the royal courts and the local inhabitants of the Malay kingdoms, and later became known as *kain cindai* and *kain cindai Limar*.[35] It was a much desired cloth which has been described by Winstedt as, "... The silk so dyed and woven in Kelantan, Terengganu, Pahang, marks the perfection of this kind of work and is evidently the product of high civilisation. Its colours are a rich blend of reds, yellow and greens, the shape of the pattern, if closely inspected bearing a distant resemblance to the 'lime', from which it has acquired its name.[36] The effect of these *kain limar* is very charming and harmonious and a great deal of their beauty is undoubtedly due to the woof being of the ground colour, so that each portion of the pattern is mixed with their colour, whereby all crudity of tint is avoid".[37]

Songket Weaving

Songket may be regarded as the 'queen of handloom fabrics'. Traditionally, this fabulous brocaded cloth is handwoven in silk or cotton and patterned with gold (or to a lesser extent in silver) threads, which contrasts in subtle relief against the darker hues of the cloth. The term '*songket*' comes from the Malay word '*menyongket*' (to weave with golden thread). *Songket* cloth is woven using the supplementary weft technique, where extra or supplementary metallic threads are inserted in between the silk or cotton weft or latitudinal threads of the main cloth.[38] As a textile, *songket* weaving thrived along the coastal cities under the patronage of the Malay Sultanates in the Malay Archipelago, like the Malay Kingdoms in Palembang, Minangkabau, Riau and the principalities of Patani, Brunei and Bugis-Makassar. By the 16th century, the use of cloth *songket* had become associated with ceremonial function and as artifacts in ceremonial exchange of gifts such as a royal wedding, as an act to bestow spiritual strength and blessing and as a reward for bravery and excellence.[39]

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35 Siti Zainon Ismail, 1994. *Tekstil Tenunan Melayu*, Kuala Lumpur:

36 R.O. Winstedt, 1920. "*Art and Craft*", Paper on Malay Subject, Malay Industries, part 1, Kuala Lumpur: F.M.S.: Government Press.

37 *Ibid.*, p. 66.

38 Syed Zulflida S.M. Noor, "*Magical Moments with Motifs*", pp. 10-11, Malaysian Textile Design - Old and New, an exhibition publication by Balai Seni Lukis Negara, Malaysia, 3 December 1992 - 15 January 1993.

39 For a description of the various *songket* cloth woven in Indonesia and an understanding of its social significance, refer to *Songket Weaving in Indonesia* by Drs. Suwati Kartiwa, 1986, Djambatan.

Gilded Cloth (*Kain Telepuk*)

The art of gilding cloth with gold-leaf pattern produced *kain telepuk* usually worn by selected members of the Royal Court. The process involved the stamping of the pattern with gold leaf on to plain silk materials or woven cotton or silk cloth and especially on *kain songket* and *batik tulis*. The intention is to decorate and enrich the cloth giving it a gilded-look. Motifs such as the lotus, floral bouquet and the six-eight petalled flora were used.

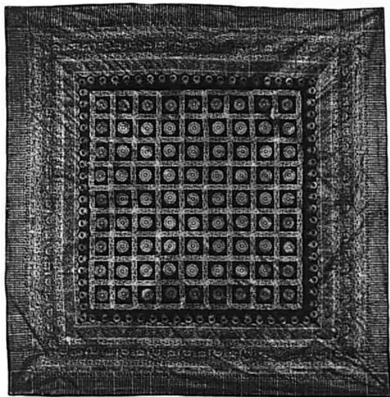

PLATE 22 Head cover of gilded cloth. Head cover with overall gold-leaf work, motif, floral with border and inner border of crescent and star motif. Probably used as ceremonial head dress for circumcision ceremony. (Collection of Kedah State Museum, Malaysia)
(Photo: courtesy of National Museum Malaysia)

Motifs and Patterns in Woven Textiles

For a long period of time, the traditional weavers lived in a world very close to nature. In the rural villages, they saw things with discerning eyes, captured the intricate designs of nature and incorporated them as motifs and patterns in their creative works. As a result, most of the motifs in *songket* were designed and named after the flora and fauna of their environment. Examples of floral motifs are derived from garden plants such as *bunga tanjung* (mimosa elengi), *bunga kemunting Cina* (Rhodomyrtus tomentosa) and *bunga cengkih* (clove); and of fruits are *buah manggis* (mangosteen), *buah delima* (Purucagranatum-pomegranate) and

buah cermai (Cicca acida). A favourite motif from nature which is used as the border for *songket* is *pucuk rebung* which is the young, triangular-shaped bamboo shoot.[40]

Motifs from the animal kingdom include *unduk-unduk* (sea horses), *gigi yu* (shark's teeth), *gigi belalang* (grasshopper's teeth), *kepala lalat* (head of the fly), *siku keluang* (flying fox's elbow), *kaki lipan* (centipede's legs), *jari buaya* (crocodile's claws) and *jari gagak* (crow's claws). Another source of inspiration for the *songket* weavers were the shapes of a great variety of Malay cakes and sweetmeats that are usually arranged in geometrical designs on plates. Sometimes the shapes of the cakes themselves lend their names to evoke suitable motifs. For example, we have the *potong wajik* (a diamond-shaped cake of glutinous rice), *tepung talam* (also a diamond-shaped cake), *madu manis* (honey sweet cake), *potong seri kaya* (egg jam cake) and *potong putu* (cakes of rice flour or peas).[41]

Village activities have also made some impact on *songket* designs, like the *bunga tiga dara* (the three maidens), *lawi ayam* (the cockerel's tail feathers), *bunga pitis* (coins), *tapak catur* (squares of the chessboard) and *biji peria* (bitter gourd seeds). Further afield we have motifs with names like *kota raja* (the ruler's fort) and *cogan* (ruler's mace). The moods and temperaments of nature too are depicted, for instance, in the swirling and eddying water of the rivers and rapids is captured in the *air muleh* motif and the description of the trailing clouds in the blue heaven are seen in the *awan larat* motif, which is represented by a chain of 'C' or horizontal 'S'-shaped patterns. The chain of bays or lagoons along the coast and beaches had created a unique motif called *teluk berantai* (interlocked bays) which is also known as *jong sarat* (the well-laden junk).[42]

Motifs that are derived from the world of beliefs and the cosmos include *lidah bota* (the demon's tongue), *bunga semangat* (inspirational flower), *sinar matahari* (the sun's rays), *bintang beralih* (the moving star), *pergunungan* (mountain range) and *tampuk semesta* (core of the universe). Animal motifs are highly stylised and modified since Islam discourages a realistic portrayal of animal and human figures in art. Most *songket* motifs, because of the nature of the weaving technique, have the tendency to become geometrical in design and this characteristic has helped to diffuse an exact portrayal of human figures or animal shapes.[43]

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40 For an elaboration on the motifs, patterns and symbols in *songket* cloth, refer to Grace Inpam Selvanayagam, 1990, *Songket, Malaysia's Woven Treasure*, Oxford University Press.

41 Syed Zulflida S.M. Noor, "*Magical Moments with Motifs*", p. 13, Malaysian Textile Design – Old and New, an exhibition publication by Balai Seni Lukis Negara, Malaysia, 3 December 1992 – 15 January 1993.

42 *Ibid.*

43 *Ibid.*

Gold Embroidery (*Tekat*)

Tekat, the art of embroidery using gold-thread was a court art which gained popularity and by the 15th century has a following of the *Nyonya and Baba*[44] in Melaka. It also flourished among the Minangkabau people in Sumatra. Historical evidence points to the fact that the art may have originated from the Ottoman Empire brought by the traders to the royal courts of the Malay Kingdoms. Great skill is required in stitching the gold thread on and around a paper-cut pattern over a piece of fabric, usually velvet of a dark colour, stretched on a low frame. The sheen of the gold-threaded pattern intricately designed, seen against the dark-colour velvet usually create a stunning visual effect.

Only special items are made of *tekat* - ceremonial apparel (jacket), home accessories - food cover, personal accessories, handbags and sandals for both men and women, which were things for everyday use in the palace and home of the nobility.[45] It was also usual to have a bridal suite furnishing done in elaborate *tekat* works. In fact, it was considered

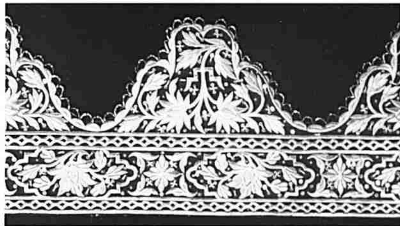


PLATE 23a *Tekat*, traditional gold embroidery on velvet. This piece of *tekat* is elaborately embroidered for use as a part of the bridal bed-hangings and decoration. (Photo: courtesy of National Museum Malaysia)

44 The term "*Nyonya and Baba*" refers to the *Peranakan* community or Straits Chinese. When the Chinese first came to Melaka in the 1400's they found brides among the Malay community and settled down. Over the centuries a unique blend of both cultures emerged which was reflected in their dress language, customs, and traditions. Mohd. Kassim Haji Ali, 1994, *Metals, The Crafts of Malaysia*, Editions Didier Millet.

45 M. Taib Osman in *Malay Folk Arts* observes that in the making of the *tikar nikah* for the *akad nikah* ceremony for the bridegroom to sit on when pronouncing his marriage oath *akad nikah*, the mat is usually plaited from pandanus leaves and combined with the cloth embroidery *tekat*. The square mat varies from 3, 5 or 7 layers, and conspicuously display fine workmanship.

PLATE 23b *Tekat* embroiderer. Master *tekat* embroiderer sits on the floor with the "pemidang", the wooden-frame tool used in *tekat* embroidery made to the size of the commissioned work. (Photo: private collection)

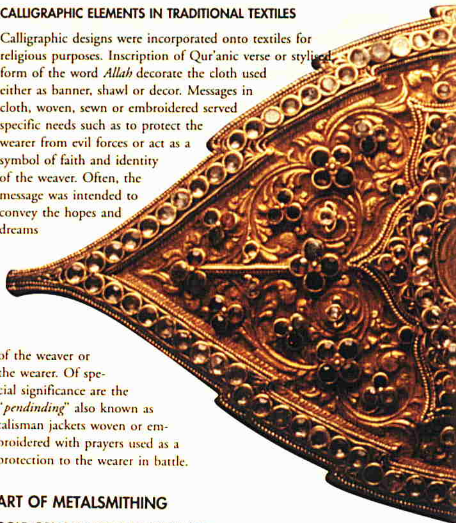
the ultimate for a wedding celebration to have the entire bridal chamber decoration done in *tekat*. Motifs of foliage and floral bouquets were the favourites. Four-petalled flowers *cempaka* (Michelia champaca), rendition of yam leaves, *pucuk rebung* (young bamboo shoot) are some examples of stylised patterns used. Later, sequins imported from China were added in the arrangement, scattered and placed in the empty spaces or used to edge the border. With the migration of foreigners from China during the Melaka Sultanate, the style of *tekat* was adapted by the *Nyonya and Baba* and beads were used to enhance the overall design.[46]

46 See Siti Zainon Ismail, 1986. *Rekabentuk Kraftangan Melayu Tradisi*, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (Design of Traditional Malay Handicrafts), pp. 248–259.

PLATE 23c Prayer mat in gold-embroidered *tekat* work.
(Collection: Museum of Asian Art, University of Malaya)
(Photo: courtesy of Syed Ahmad Jamal)

CALLIGRAPHIC ELEMENTS IN TRADITIONAL TEXTILES

Calligraphic designs were incorporated onto textiles for religious purposes. Inscription of Qur'anic verse or stylised form of the word *Allah* decorate the cloth used either as banner, shawl or decor. Messages in cloth, woven, sewn or embroidered served specific needs such as to protect the wearer from evil forces or act as a symbol of faith and identity of the weaver. Often, the message was intended to convey the hopes and dreams



of the weaver or the wearer. Of special significance are the "*pendinding*" also known as talisman jackets woven or embroidered with prayers used as a protection to the wearer in battle.

ART OF METALSMITHING

GOLD ORNAMENTS AND JEWELLERY

The art of crafting gold ornaments and jewellery, exquisitely made and often set with precious stones reached its peak in popularity during the 17th and 18th centuries under the patronage of Malay royalty. The rich deposits of gold found in the Malay Archipelago provided the precious materials required in making exquisite items using the repousee (art of embossing a pattern in relief onto a thin sheet of gold), granulation (the application of tiny grains of molten gold to the surface of an ornament) and filigree techniques.[47] Gold jewellery and ornaments were made for the royal regalia, ceremonial use and personal artifacts of the aristocracy. As part of the full ceremonial dress of the Malay rulers was the *pending* or belt buckle, many examples of which were inspired by the shape of

47 Mohd. Kassim Haji Ali, 1994. *Metals, The Crafts of Malaysia*, Editions Didier Millet, p. 189.

the *sukun* or breadfruit leaf. Many of these antique gold ornaments were covered with tiny granules of gold known as *telur ikan* or fish roe, which were carefully polished to catch the light and highlight the piece.[48] Portable tobacco box worn by suspending it from a chain around the waist was crafted in exquisite form and detail in silver and dipped in gold.

As a sign of modesty, a unique item produced in the region at that time was the modesty disc, *caping* which was a heart-shaped disc designed to cover the genitals of small children made either in gold or silver.[49]

PLATE 24 *Pending*, ornamental waist-buckle. This waist-buckle was worn by both Malay men and women of title when in full dress. (Photo: courtesy of National Museum Malaysia)

48 *Ibid.*

49 Mohd. Kassim Haji Ali in *Gold Jewellery and Ornaments* describes the *caping* (modesty disc) as a heart-shaped disc measuring approximately 6.0 cm × 7.0 cm designed to cover the genitals. Until the turn of the century it was worn as the sole item of apparel by small children, predominantly little girls, on the north and east coasts of Peninsular Malaysia. Although *caping* have been found in other states of Malaysia, it was not in common use. *Caping* was fashioned from a variety of materials depending on the rank of the wearer. Members of the royal households and influential families, for example, commissioned local artisans to fashion highly decoratives *caping* from gold. (Mohd. Kassim Haji Ali, 1988, *Gold Jewellery and Ornaments*, Persatuan Muzium Negara, p. 185.)

With the migration of foreigners who were dealing in commerce, the art of crafting gold ornaments and jewellery were adapted to suit their needs. However, the foliage and geometric patterns adopted by the Malays remained a legacy of Islamic influence.

PLATE 25 *Caping* (modesty disc). This modesty disc made in silver depicts in each of the four segments foliated motifs depicting the long bean vine (*sulur kacang*). (Photo: courtesy of National Museum Malaysia)

Silver

The Malay world was especially renowned for its exquisite silver craftsmanship. Magnificent objects used for personal decoration, ceremonial and ritual were made by silversmiths using the techniques of repousee and filigree. Some of the finest examples include functional but highly decorative items such as *celapa* (tobacco pouch), *cembul* (small box) and the betel-nut tray. In personal items were the *caping* (modesty disc) for little boys and girls and *pending* (belt buckle), worn by both men and women. In terms of aesthetics and quality of craftsmanship, the *pending* is a fine example of ornateness in metal decoration. According to Brunei mastercraftsman, Pehin Haji Awang Abdul Rahman bin Haji Taha, Brunei silversmithing tradition included works of silver ornamentation used in daily life and for ceremonial purposes. For example, silver mangosteen were ornately crafted in detail, after the mangosteen fruit, often in a nest of three sizes. Anklets were made for children of both sexes whilst modesty discs were for infants. An interesting tool was the silver hair-cutter used in the ceremony for cutting the lock of hair from a newly-born baby. For the royal court were artifacts for the Royal regalia and court paraphenalia such as the maces, spears and shields, betel-nut trays and the fashioning of silver buttons for ceremonial uniforms for the different ranks of knights of the court. Throughout the history of Brunei's silverware, royal patronage had contributed to give the impetus for the art of silversmithing to develop and to achieve excellence. In the twilight days of the "*Silver Village*" of Kampong Ayer, the home of several generations of accomplished masters in silversmithing in the capital Bandar Seri Begawan, which as a result of social change and new occupational opportunities the number of silversmiths had actually dwindled, royal patronage again saw to the revival of Brunei silversmithing in the 60's.[50]

Victor T. King and Bantong Antaran suggest that "probably the best illustrations of Malay silverware are still to be found in Ling Roth's collection entitled *Oriental Silverwork* (1966), though he has examples of Chinese pieces too. A variety of Malay silver objects can also be seen in Choo's recent catalogue of silverware in the collections of the National Museum, Singapore, called simply *Silver* (1984). The main items depicted in these two publications are tobacco and betel boxes, bowls, salvers, cups, pillow and bolster-end plates, belt-buckles, silver combs, and little girl's leaves or modesty plates. As one would expect the Malay work is dominated by floral and foliated motifs, scrolls and abstract, geometric patterns. For Ling Roth, a very typical piece of Malay silverwork, and probably of Malay/Javanese origin, is the elliptical

50 We are indebted to Pehin Haji Awang Abdul Rahman bin Haji Taha of Brunei Darussalam, Master Craftsman and designer for royal regalias and state artifacts for the special interview in 1994.

belt-buckle. Belt-buckles of oval shape are very popular among the *Iban*. But, if nothing else, one can clearly see, in Ling Roth's book, the complex interpenetration of different silverworking traditions – Malay, Javanese, Siamese, Chinese, Indian, Persian and Dayak (Maloh?)".[51]

PLATE 26a Silver mangosteen fruit. As decorative and functional objects, Malay silversmiths drew inspiration from nature. These replica of the mangosteen fruit are used as containers and usually are made in a nest of three sizes. (Photo: courtesy of Saad al-Jadir)

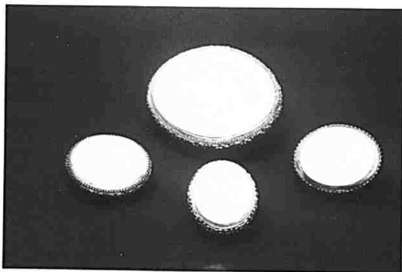


PLATE 26b Silver boxes. Malay oval boxes ornamented with plant motifs. (Photo: courtesy of Saad al-Jadir)

51 Victor T. King and Bantong Antaran (The Brunei Museum Journal), "*Some Item of Decorative Silverware In The Brunei Museum Ethnographic*", an annual publication for the Brunei Museum, Brunei Darussalam, p. 65, 1987.

Indeed, throughout the Archipelago, a silver smithing tradition thrived, making almost similar objects, differentiated mainly by the use of the motifs and patterns under royal patronage.[52] Of these, the lotus flower remained the most prevalent vegetal motif used in Javanese silver works. In surface decoration such as on plates and trays, stylised floral motifs are used to decorate the perimeter. Silverware from the former royal courts of Bima, Sumbawa Besar and Dompur on Sumbawa have been acclaimed for its fine quality and items include filigree betel-nut trays, spittoons, fluted bottles, swords and *keris* with finely chased silver scabbard and blades inlaid with Arabic script.[53] Again as in the other craft tradition, the use of *awan larat* was the dominant theme and the choice of using flora and foliage motifs portrayed the essence of Islamisation. It is interesting to note that the only "hall mark" records used in stamping silver items then were the inscription written in *Jawi* stating its place of origin as in the case of Brunei (بروني) and Kelantan (كلنتن).

Brass and Bronze Ware

Decorative and utilitarian items for the home were made in brass.[54] Artifacts included the whole paraphernalia of cooking utensils which came in a variety of shapes and sizes. Kettles, covered food containers and trays were decorated with *awan larat* motifs of foliage and flora. Items to be used in the mosque such as the water pail (*baldi*) was also carved at the edge. For personal accessories, brass was also used in making the belt-buckle and the scabbard of the *keris.*

Brass and bronze wares were predominantly crafted among the Magindanao of Cotobato and the Tausug of Sulu, the Mananao of Southern Philippines and the Brunei Malays. Brass cannons, elaborately-shaped kettles, trays with stand, ceremonial containers and lidded betel-nut box, shaped either rectangular, circular, oval or octagonal, were casted and inlaid with designs of local significance.

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52 Mubin Sheppard, 1978. *Living Crafts of Malaysia*. Singapore: Times Books International. See also Sheppard, 1972, *Taman Indera, A Royal Pleasure Ground, Malay Decorative Arts and Pastimes*, Oxford University Press for general information on Malay silversmithing, and Pengiran Haji Ismail Pengiran Ibrahim, 1985. *The Craft of the Silversmith in Brunei*, Brunei Museum Journal, pp. 89-104.

53 Motifs used are in the form of stylised floral and vegetative plants such as the clove flora (*bunga cengkih*), long bean vine (*sulur kacang*) and the bamboo shoot (*pucuk rebung*).

54 For a description of brassware of the Malay archipelago, see Baldev Singh, Malay Brassware, Singapore, National Museum, A Guide to the Collections.

PLATE 27a Kettle. This bronze kettle is made with Arabic calligraphic inscription in Borneo.
(Photo: courtesy of National Museum Malaysia)

PLATE 27b White-brass kettle casted in Terengganu using the lost-wax process.
(Photo: courtesy of Malaysian Handicraft Development Corporation)

WEAPONRY – THE *KERIS*

Malay blacksmiths have forged a variety of weapons of war including cannons, *parang*, *keris* and short daggers (*badik*, *tumbuk lada*) of various shapes and sizes. Of these, the *keris* was the most lethal and were regarded as the national weapon of the Malays. The origin of the *keris* is believed to have dated back to the early years of the Majapahit Empire in 13th century Java. When the empire collapsed two centuries later, many of its craftsmen migrated to other parts of the Indonesian Archipelago and later to the Malay Peninsula. The art of *keris* making continued to flourish under the patronage of the Malay Sultans and the nobility.

In traditional Malay society, the *keris* was used as an accessory. It was only used as a weapon in hand combat when faced with a foe in an act of self-defence to ward off the enemy. Symbolising power and authority of the owner, the *keris* was often used in the past to act as proxy for the owner in the event that he could not be present on that important occasion. This was often the case as practised in the royal courts of the Malay Kingdoms. The design of the *keris* further denotes the social status of the user and his origin.

A *keris* consists of three main parts, namely, the hilt (*hulu keris*), the blade (*tulang keris*) and the sheath (*sarung*). Different metals were used to make a *keris*. The *keris* blade is made with two to seven thin layers of different types of metals. In exceptional cases, there might be as many as twenty-one different plates or more, like the blade which is believed to have belonged to the legendary 15th century hero, Hang Tuah, in the court of the Melaka Sultanate. Hence the Malay craftsmen had a reputation for producing fine metal work.[55]

Although some *keris* blades were made solely from iron, most were alloyed with another metal usually nickel, which was placed along either side of the iron and pounded repeatedly to produce a damasked effect. The typical wavy edge of the *keris* blade was achieved by repeatedly reheating the metal and hammering the edges of the blade against the side of the anvil. Provided the blacksmith was well equipped, it took him no longer than a day to make a good blade.[56]

The superiority of the *keris*, particularly one believed to posses supernatural powers, was judged according to the *pamur* or damascening of the blade, the quality of the alloys used, and its length which must be compatible with its owner. The length of the blade should correspond to the distance between the nipples of its owner, otherwise misfortune might fall upon him. A well balanced mature blade was considered more potent.[57] To enhance its "healing power" and to provide protection to the user, some *keris* were decorated with Qur'anic inscription and inlaid with either silver or brass.

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55 Mohd. Kassim Haji Ali, 1994. *Metals, The Crafts of Malaysia*, Editions Didier Millet, p. 179.

56 *Ibid.*

57 *Ibid.*

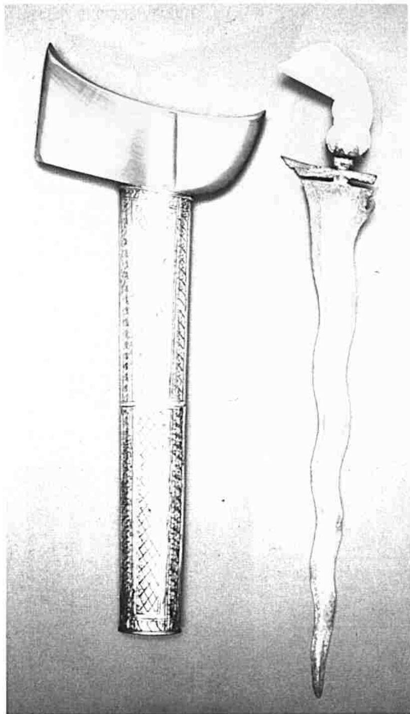

PLATE 28 The Malay *Keris*. Sheath/blade with Qur'anic inscription. In the Malay world, the *keris* was a symbol of empowerment, wealth and prestige. Different types of wood were used in making the sheath, with copper, silver and gold for the hilt.
(From the Collection of Islamic Silver of Saad al-Jadir)
(Photo: courtesy of Saad al-Jadir)

PLATE 29 Ceremonial *keris*. This ceremonial *keris* from Barus, Sumatra has Qur'anic and the Syahadah inscribed on the upper most part of the metal cover of the sheath.
(Photo: courtesy of National Library Malaysia)

MALAY EXPRESSIVE ARTS

The Shadow Play

The shadow play (*wayang kulit*) has been popular in many oriental and middle eastern countries for more than a thousand years. There are many different forms of shadow play found in India, Indonesia, Thailand, China, Kampuchea, Turkey and Malaysia. The oldest example of shadow play are those of India, Indonesia and China, but the appearance of the figures used and the stories told are very different. In all countries however, figures are made of thin leather, cut out in flat silhouette, usually with at least one arm mobile.[58]

The performance among the Malays and Javanese takes place behind a large white cotton screen, and the leather figures are moved (usually by a single operator called "Dalang") between the screen and a hanging light, thus casting a shadow. The audience sit or stand on the opposite side of the screen and listen to the dialogue which is delivered

PLATE 30a A *wayang* character. Characters of shadow play are made from leather and crafted to portray the personality. This puppet is the figure of Laksamana.
(Photo: courtesy of National Museum Malaysia)

58 "*Wayang Kulit Malaysia - Hamzah Tok Dalang*", p. 3, an Exhibition Guide on Malaysia Shadow Play - Hamzah Tok Dalang by Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism Malaysia, 21 December 1993 - 21 January 1994. See also Mubin Sheppard, 1978. Living Crafts of Malaysia, Singapore: Times Books International.

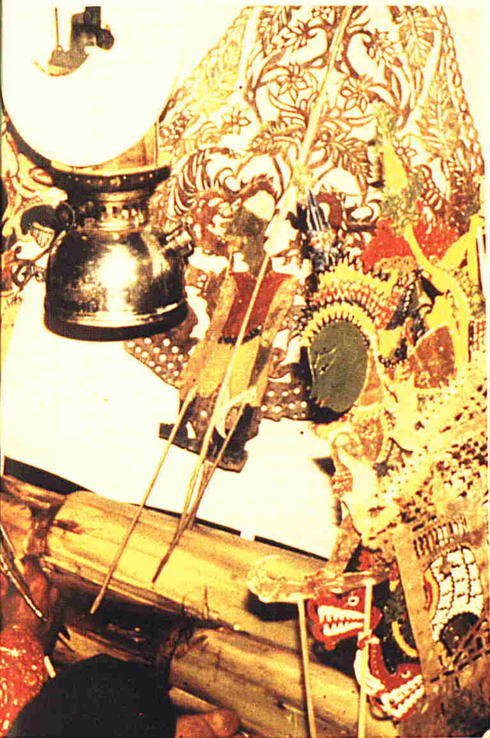

PLATE 30b Puppeteer. A shadow play performance in progress viewed from behind the screen. A puppeteer manipulates a figure during a performance. The puppeteer is moving a figure behind the hanging lamp before bringing it back to the centre of the screen.
(Photo: courtesy of National Museum Malaysia)

by the Dalang, varying the tone of his voice to suit the characters.[59]

Wayang kulit is a popular form of public entertainment, as a kind of people's theatre. Audience could be so engrossed that an all night performance was not an uncommon feature.[60] Of course, this depends on the *Dalang*'s ability to create excitement, and to be able to hold the interest of the audience through their responses. The emotion of love is expressed in *wayang kulit*. In this context, *wayang kulit* was an ideal media and channel for the purpose of communicating a message to a wide target audience. In what was then Hindu-Java, *wayang kulit* was the instrument through which the Muslim missionaries introduced the religion which proved to be a strategic approach.

The shadow play was used by the Sultanate of Demak, the 'Nine Saints' (*Wali Sanga*) in propagating Islam to the Javanese. Puppets cut out of leather with moveable limbs were introduced. Before this, the puppets were two-dimensional cut-outs pasted on pieces of paper, leather or leaves with the story narrated by the story teller (*dalang*). *Wali Sanga* made changes in the presentation of the puppets in mixing the forms of flora shaped in human forms with elongated body and limbs to emphasise the imperfection of man's creation.

The narration of the shadow play was then given a religious educational theme other than the traditional stories of *Mahabharata*. Stories of *Amir Hamzah* and *Ali Hanafiah*, heroes in the early history of Islam were also incorporated. The important aspect of the stories was the emphasis on the moral teachings of truthfulness and goodness and the avoidance of evil and cruelty. In observing the various characters of the shadow play, the audience would have had the advantage of comparing between what is "good" and what is "evil" from the characters personified. But, at the same time, it provides a deeper insight and consciousness to the fact that it is a process in the world of make-believe for what is real is God, the Creator, and this is only a mean in understanding His Divine presence.

Wayang Beber

Another form of shadow play is the *Wayang Beber* which had existed from pre-Islamic time. It is a traditional art form where characters drawn from legends and historic events were painted on to cloth and displayed to narrate a story. Other than cotton cloth, glass was also another material used by the artists of the palace workshops. *Wayang Beber* is a popular form of story-telling entertainment and was the media for conveying social messages to the public. It became an appropriate tool

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59 Hamzah Awang Amat in a personal interview in 1994.

60 See Mubin Sheppard, 1972. *Taman Indera, A Royal Pleasure Ground, Malay Decorative Arts and Pastimes*, Oxford University Press.

and channel for communicating the moral values and disseminating the teachings of Islam in Indonesia.[61]

Bangsawan

Another form of popular drama which grew in the urban melieu was the *Bangsawan*, a stage performance involving both men and women. It originated in Penang in the 1870s when a Persian troupe of stage-performers (*Mendu*), first came to perform plays of Persian origin.[62] These included stories about *Abu Nawas* in the court of Sultan Al-Rashid, *Hikayat Maal'un Takdir* and the love epic, *Leila* and *Majnun*. Because of its popularity, bangsawan troupes began to incorporate stories of traditional Malay themes into their repertoire. *Bangsawan* also found its way to other urbanised parts of the Malay world where it is known as tonel and *wayang stanbol*.

TRADITIONAL DANCE FORMS

The advent of Islam to the Malay world did not prohibit the development of the dance as a performing art. Instead, this artistic form of expression incorporating body movement and vocal, became the basis for communal ritualistic expression of devotion for the religion.[63] There were many traditional dance forms which originated from Acheh such as *Seudati* and *Dabus*, which included the *Meuseukat* performed only by women. Like the "Shadow Play", these dances were popularly received and instrumental as a channel for spreading the message of Islam particularly to the outlying and more remote areas of Sumatra and Java.

Seudati Dance

Seudati is a traditional dance performed by male members of the community to the accompaniment of music. It originated from Acheh and spread to the rest of the Malay world as an expression of devotion to the teachings of Islam as a way of life. The dance is performed by nine or ten dancers with a lead singer whilst the members move according to a certain formation in two rows of four, jumping one step to the front, to the side and back, keeping in tune to the music by snapping the

61 Drs. A.D. Pirous, "*Seni Rupa Masa Kini Bernafaskan Islam di Indonesia – Perkembangan dan Cabarannya*", p. 3, a paper presented at the Seminar on *Identiti Islam Dalam Senirupa Malaysia: Pencapaian dan Cabaran*, Kuala Lumpur, 14-25 October 1992.

62 For further reading on *Bangsawan*, refer to Tan Sooi Beng, 1993. *Bangsawan, A Social and Stylistic History of Popular Malay Opera*, Singapore: Oxford University Press. See also Rahman Bujang, 1975. *Sejarah Perkembangan Drama Bangsawan* di Tanah Melayu dan Singapura, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka. (The history of the development of *Bangsawan* Drama in Malaya and Singapore).

63 Mohd. Ghouse Nasuruddin, 1989. *Muzik Melayu Tradisi*, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Malaysia.

middle fingers and moving the hands to the heart. Performed in a repetitive formation, the dance manifests harmony in the co-ordination between the movement, the rythmn and the recitation. Originally, the *Seudati* was a religious ritual performed by sitting on the ground but it evolved into a dance form as practised until today. The word "*seudati*" is derived from the words "*syahadatin*" or "syahadat" to express that there is no other God but *Allah* and *Mohammed*, peace be upon him (p.b.u.h.), is His Prophet. Hence, it is performed to relate religious events and to provide general advise on religious matters through the narration of historical events and by incorporating local examples into the story.

Meuseukat Dance

In contrast to *Seudati*, *Meuseukat* is performed only by the young female members of the community. It is believed to have originated and inspired by a religious teacher Ibnu Maskawih, who had gone to Acheh during the time of Hamzah Fansuri. Initially, it was used as a tool to propogate Islam and through this dance form, a consciousness was imprinted in the minds of the young people as to their role in missionary work.

Dabus

Dabus, originating from the Middle East, is a dance performed by male members accompanied by music and chanting on occasions such as religious ceremonies, special social occasions like marriages and during the installation of a new ruler and on other national occasions.

The *dabus* dance group consists of 15–18 performers, of which eight are dancers and between 8–10 are the musicians. The dancers perform by holding a sharp-slim metal rod called *dabus* (Bugis word for a sharp instrument) under the guidance of a master-performer. In some performances, other sharp instruments or weapons, for example, knives, axes or even *keris* have also been used. This sharp instrument forms an essential part of this ritualistic dance, where the dancers in a show of bravery and spiritual ecstacy (*kebatinan*) inflict self-stabbing act on their arms and bodies as they dance and chant to the tempo of an ensemble of drums. This act is repeatedly done and at the end of the performance the dancers emerge having had no physical injury from the seemingly dangerous and vigorous act of self-mortification.

The songs were chanted in three languages of Malay, Achehnese and Arabic and it usually described tales of bravery as well as sad religious encounters relating to the story of *Hassan* and *Hussain* the Prophet Mohammad's (p.b.u.h.) grandchildren.

Rodat

Similarly, *rodat*, is performed by an all-male vocal group chanting songs

PLATE 31a *Seudati* dance. A performance of *Seudati* dance at a public ceremony in Acheh.
(Photo: courtesy of Directorate of Culture, Indonesia)

PLATE 31b *Dabus* dance.
(Photo: courtesy of National Museum Malaysia)

PLATE 31c In the *Dabus* dance, dancers reach a stage of trance where they are able to perform vigorous act of self-mortification with the use of sharp instruments.
(Photo: courtesy of National Museum Malaysia)

PLATE 32 Musicians chanting in praise of the Prophet to the accompaniment of music.
(Photo: courtesy of National Museum Malaysia)

in praise of Allah and the Prophet on occasions such as the celebration of the Prophet's birthday. Accompanied by a musical ensemble of drums, the performance is led by the chief drummer. By 1930s in the Malay Peninsula the messages conveyed in the *rodat* performance also expound on social issues.

Hadrah

Hadrah is believed to have orginated from the Middle East and came to the Malay world through India. Performed by a vocal group, the chanting follows the rhythm of the drum-beat. Eight to ten musicians play the *rebana* and *gendang*. *Hadrah* was originally performed by a choral group led by the guru or lead performer but later incorporated dance movements.

Zapin

The contact between the Arab Peninsula and the Malay world was instrumental in introducing the dance form called the *zapin.*[64] It is believed to have derived from the Arabic term '*zaffa*' which means "to lead the bride to her groom in a wedding procession", and form part of the tradition of the *hadharmi* Arabs traders and merchants from Hadhramaut, who settled in the regions of the Malay Archipelago around the 14th century. Mohd. Anis Mohd. Nor observed that "the resemblance of *zapin* to '*zafana*' in terms of the place of performance, style of the dance, the occasion which it takes place, and the overall ambience of the musical and dance genre thus suggest the plausibility of the origin of *zapin* in the *hadhrami* tradition". The dance which came *via* Sumatra to Riau became entrenched in the State of Johor in the Malay Peninsula and reflect Arab-Islamic tradition, a form which is a distinct genre of *zapin Melayu* from its Arabic origin evolved with characteristics which encapsulated and expressed the Malay aesthetic world-view. As a dance form, it was transformed from the original *zapin Arab* in keeping with Malay temperament and refinement.[65] From this dance genre, several *zapin* performance styles developed throughout the Malay archipelago.

Zapin is a dance performed to the accompaniment of the 'ud (*gambus*) as the leading instrument, several *marwas* hand-drums and a harmonium or a violin.[66] The *zapin* songs in the style of *pantun* or quatrain, are sung either in Malay or in a mixture of Malay and Arabic verses. The dancers wear a Malay dress (*baju Melayu*) consisting of a hip-length loose tunic, pantaloons with a *sarung* worn over it and a head dress.

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64 For a treatment of this subject, see *Zapin: Folk Dance of the Malay World* by Mohd. Anis Mohd. Nor, 1993, Singapore: Oxford University Press.
65 *Ibid.*
66 *Ibid.*

Its widespread popularity in the Malay world is evident from the royal patronage it received from the Malay Sultanates. Mohd. Anis Mohd. Nor, a music ethnologist, observes that *zapin* was the tradition that was most often performed for the entertainment of the aristocrats in the Sultan's palace. For example, at the royal courts of Deli and Serdang in 19th century Sumatra, *zapin* was performed on special occasions such as the Prophet's birthday and to mark this event competitions were held and prizes were also awarded. The honour bestowed on the winning team would be to perform in the palace for the Sultan's guests. But *zapin* was not only confined to the Malay courts. It attained a popular status as a folk dance tradition and were performed at wedding ceremonies, for circumcision, *khatam Qur'an* (completion of learning the recitations of the Qur'an) and the ceremony of shaving an infant's hair. It was later incorporated into the repertoire of *bangsawan* troupes for public entertainment.

RATIB SAMAN

Ratib Saman is a traditional concert performance originating from the Sufi practice known as *sama*. It is performed during marriage ceremony and at the *madrasah* on special religious occasions. It was first introduced in Acheh and spread to the other parts of the Malay world and became especially popular in the state of Perak in the Malay Peninsula. The chanting using the *sha'ir* verse style relate to the greatness of *Allah* and offers general advise on good conduct.[67]

ZIKIR

Zikir, a Sufi practice which became absorbed into the cultural life of the Malays "denotes the devout invocation and repetition of the holy Name of God, either alone or enshrined in some formula".[68]

Cyprian Rice observes that "... the *zikir* par excellence is the *shahadeh*, or, at any rate, that part of which relates to God alone. 'There is no god but God' - *La ilaha illa 'illah*. This formula is often recited by the devout while they sway gently from side to side.

A number of religious confraternities (*tariqa*) have their own form of *zikir*, constituting the service performed by the brethren, grouped together, often on a Thursday evening (eve of the sacred day of Friday, *shab i jum'a*). A *zikir* may, however, and often is, gone through in private by single individuals.The words should be repeated a great many times, with as great a degree of intense concentration as can be summoned up. Attention should be centred more and more on the meaning or spiritual

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67 *Ibid.*

68 Cyprian Rice, O.P., 1964. *The Persian Sufis*, Great Britain: C. Tinling and Co. Ltd., p. 89.

reality of what is said, until the *zakir* (remembrancer) is not so much busied with the *zikir* (remembrance) as with the *mazkur* (the one invoked or remembered)".[69]

The practice of combinationg meditationan invocation is to prepare the *zikir* for the state of readiness for the contemplation that is to follow.[70] There is no music accompaniment to this tradition. To both men and women who perform the *zikir* the spiritual power of music is the rhythmic chanting of the name of *Allah*.

VERBAL ART

Likewise, verbal art (*tajwid*) developed as an artistic form requiring intense discipline and devotion in order to achieve accuracy and exaltation in the recitation of the Qur'an. Its importance can be seen from the fact that books (such as *Kitab Tajwid* by Abdullah Sangora) were written in Malay to enable students to receive proper instruction in *tajwid*.

SILAT: THE MALAY ART OF SELF DEFENCE

Silat, the art of self defence evolved as a conscious effort to prepare oneself, physically and mentally, to ward off an undesirable situation. It is performed as "a series of graceful movements, in which two people demonstrate how to defend themselves without weapons".[71] In Malay society, it is considered as an act of chivarly to be able to protect one's family name and the safety of its members, religion and the state. And as a Muslim, one is considered to be duty-bound to defend Islam against the enemies of *Allah*. It is in this context that the Malay world held in high esteem the great warriors such as the legendary Hang Tuah, Hang Jebat and their other colleagues who lived during the reign of the Melaka Sultanate.

Silat has also been described as being in a state of readiness to ward off one's foe by having a mastery of agile body and foot-work likened to that of movements made by animals such as the tiger, crocodile, snake, monkey, the birds and others. At the same time, centred in one's concentration is the force, spiritually-motivated, dominating the duel between the "good" and the "evil". A dance form version of the *silat* was developed for presentation at marriage ceremonies and on formal occasions. Such presentations are accompanied by music. There are many variations and forms of *silat* movements.[72]

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69 *Ibid.*

70 *Ibid.*

71 Mubin Sheppard, 1972. *The Malay Art of Self-Defence, Taman Indera, A Royal Pleasure Ground, Malay Decorative Arts and Pastimes*, Oxford University Press, pp. 140–48.

72 For further elaboration see Mubin Sheppard, 1972. *The Malay Art of Self-Defence*,

CONCLUSION

With the passage of time, the region have lost much of its material culture. The adverse climatic condition of the tropics, the natural calamities and wars together with a lack of serious conservation efforts until of late have contributed to this destruction of built-up spaces and the poor preservation of artifacts. Palaces, houses of nobility, towns and Malay villages of the past have perished as a result of these circumstances. Artifacts in the collections of museums and private individuals are what remains as sources of nourishment for the present and next generations. And it is in these objects that we continue to discern the spirit of the Malay craftsmanship of the past especially nourished by the religious spirit.

By adopting Islam as a way of life, master craftsmen and traditional artisans were not only inspired to create new forms for new functions but also to infuse the new beliefs with the traditions in creating new works of art. The common *sarung*, for example, evolved from its basic function to its most ornate use as a ceremonial cloth.

The strongest influence was perhaps in the use of Arabic script and its artistic application in calligraphic form in almost all the areas of the arts and crafts. Predominantly used in wood-carving, textiles and in metalworks, calligraphy have made the objects not only being distinctively Islamic in nature, but also, exudes the powers associated with it. A *keris*, with Islamic inscription on the blade, would be a good example of this.

Another dimension of Malay-Islamic legacy is in the enrichment of designs and motifs from a tradition based on natural phenomenon to that entrenched in philosophical interpretation of the universe and life in general. The inter-twining motif of *awan larat*, formed from vegetative plants and tendrils, for example, symbolically generates the significance of destiny. The images that are woven into a piece of cloth or a *sarung*, would designate and elevate it from its everyday use to that of a religious ceremonial function.

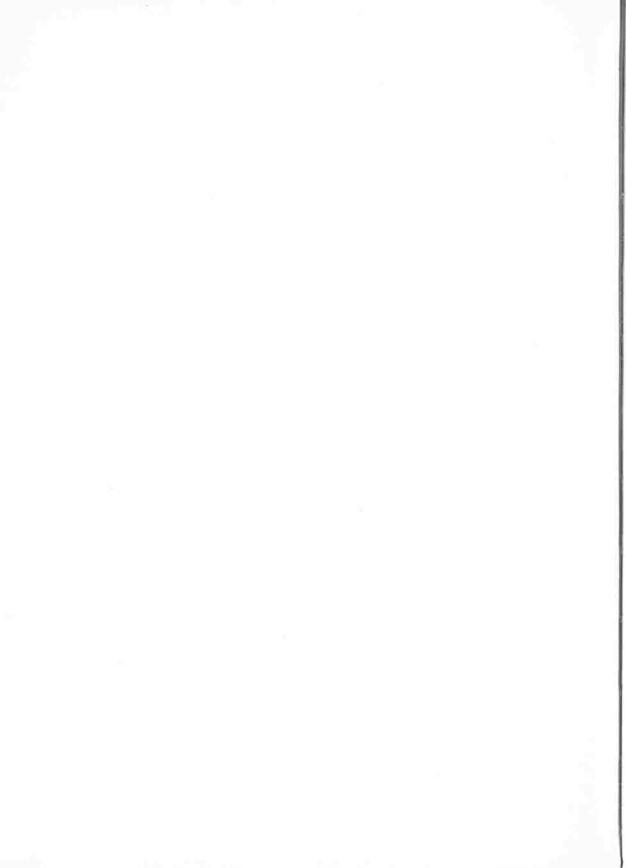
As a new faith introduced in 13th or 14th century A.D., Islam had spread to the Malay Archipelago and had since then left an indelible mark on the rulers, as patrons of the art, and the ruled, as makers of artistic expression. The fusion and the merging between the indigenous traditional arts and Islamic aspirations had led to a rich legacy of Malay arts and crafts.

Taman Indera, A Royal Pleasure Ground, Malay Decorative Arts and Pastimes, Oxford University Press.

Chapter 8

The Ummah: Rising to the Challenges with Special Reference to Indonesia

Nasir Tamara



Chapter 8

The Ummah: Rising to the Challenges with Special Reference to Indonesia

INTRODUCTION

Islamic trade and commerce are the dominant theme underlying Southeast Asian History. Merchants and religious teachers from Persia, India, China and Arabia introduced Islam to the island population through trade and commerce. By the thirteenth century several Islamic trading kingdoms were established in different coastal principalities of Sumatra, Malay Peninsula, Kalimantan, Java and other islands of Southeast Asia. Over the centuries the new religion and its institutions gradually replaced the previously dominant Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms and other indigenous religions and beliefs.

The first clear evidence of an Islamic dynasty was in Samudra (in Sumatra) where the tomb of Sultan Malik as-Salih (A.D. 1297), its ruler, was found. However, Muslim traders had apparently come to the region centuries earlier before the establishment of important Islamic communities in Indonesia.[1]

Historical records show the archipelago as an extremely rich resource area where international trade relation has always been very important since ancient times. Asian traders from India, China and Arabia have always been present in trade with these many islands. However, in the sixteenth century the Europeans, first the Portuguese

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1 Ricklefs 1981, p. 3.

and later the Dutch and English, came with their technological advantage and military superiority.

The pre-colonial economic life of the archipelago was very lucrative. In the fifteenth century the Islamic kingdom of Melaka was the greatest emporium found in the world then. A vast trading network linked the islands within the archipelago and with the outside world. It stretched westwards towards India, Persia, Arabia, Syria, East Africa and the Mediterranean and even further west and eastwards to China, and even perhaps Japan further east. The main commodities traded were spices, rice, marine produce and textile.[2]

After the fall of Melaka in 1511, there emerged other significant Islamic kingdoms such as Demak, Mataram and Makassar. The Islamic states of the archipelago were not only rich materially but also culturally. Islamic influence was important in enriching pre-Islamic traditions. Literature written in Malay, Javanese and other local languages developed. Arts too flourished.

The advance of European power after the sixteenth century could not be stopped. The Dutch after many wars and diplomacy finally succeeded in controlling the politic and economic power bases of the archipelago. By the 1830's, the richest and the most populous island, Java completely fell to the Dutch.

The Indonesians were heavily taxed and forced to produce export commodities with minimum investments from the government. It was a story of exploitation *de l'lomme par homme* by the Dutch. Seventy per cent of the farmers were involved in *cultuurstetsel*. As control from the central government in Batavia was largely insufficient, the situation created opportunities for corruption among its officials in the sprawling islands. The people who gained from the *cultuurstetsel* were Dutch government officials and landowners. They were "mostly Chinese entrepreneurs and the administrators and officials, many of whom not only received percentages but also held "official office" (*ambtsvelden*) by virtue of their office."[3]

The profit gained through colonial exploitation was enormous for the Dutch government. Between 1850-1851, thirty-two per cent of the Dutch revenue came from *cultuurstetsel*. From 1831 to 1877 eight hundred and thirty-two millions Dutch gilders of profits were collected by the state. Amsterdam in Holland was a world centre for coffee and sugar. The books published by Eduard Douwes Dekker (1820-1887) and Max Havelaar in 1860 were the best documentary accounts of the devastating oppression and corruption exercised by the Dutch colonial power.

Islam made many major contributions to the different aspects of life of the Southeast Asian people that continues until today. Long before

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2 Ricklefs, p. 19.
3 Ricklefs, p. 117.

the coming of the Europeans, Islam had introduced a linear way of thinking replacing the previous cosmology form of thinking. Algebra, philosophy and different rational forms of thinking were taught and adopted by the islanders. A lunar-based calendar was used since the introduction of Islam. The Arabic script, using Malay words enriched by new vocabularies from Arabic and Persian, substituted the use of Sanskrit as a written language. New forms of administration and hierarchy based on Islamic traditions were adopted by the Sultans. These rulers were the former *Rajas* who ruled the many islands of Southeast Asia.

Islam played an important role in the everyday life of the people of Southeast Asia. Life was organized in close relationship to Islamic teaching. The people followed the *Shari'ah* closely. Mosques, small and large, were found in almost every city and village corner and were never empty of people praying. During the fasting month of *Ramadhan* religious life was socially adapted to allow Muslims to follow this religious principle closely. From the shores of contemporary Southeast Asia the largest number of pilgrims in the world departs every year for Makkah. Large sums of money are collected and distributed every year to the poor as religious tax (*zakat*).

The five daily prayers are an important reference for time in daily life. Today, government and private companies provide facilities and give time to Muslims for prayer. Muslims would stop their work and go for their noon prayer (*zuhur*) and also in the afternoon (*asar*). The day is started by the morning prayer (*subuh*) before sunrise. In the evening, at sunset people do the (*maghrib*) prayer and more than one hour later the last prayer of the day (*isyak*) before having their supper. The melodious sound of families reading the Qur'an at this time can be heard everywhere.

Islam in Southeast Asia is a vigorous and tolerant religion. The teaching of the religion is an intense activity through different channels: mosques, educational institutions and even in homes. Young people are very active in the many Islamic organizations particularly in the universities of urban areas. Books and articles in the media, speeches on radio and television and cassettes concerning Islam are growing and have large audiences among the population. Many new books are translations of works from other Muslim countries such as Egypt, Iran, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. The present as in the past was never isolated from other centres of Islamic civilization.

Historically, Islam has always been an important rallying cry for different political movements in Indonesia. During the Dutch colonial period in what is now Indonesia, it was the leaders of *Syarikat Dagang Islam* (Muslim Traders' Union) who created the first national anti-colonial organization in Indonesia. *Syarikat Islam* under the leadership of H.O.S. Tjokroaminoto, organized varied methods such as strikes and boycotts in confronting the colonial power. Major political organizations

such as *Partai Nasional Indonesia* (Indonesian Nationalist Party) under the leadership of Ir. Soekarno, Indonesias first President and the *Partai Komunis Indonesia* (Indonesian Communist Party) were born and developed under the banner of *Syarikat Islam*. So did *Masjumi*, the Islamic Party, which played the pivotal role in the first fifteen years of the new Republic after its declaration of Independence on 17th August 1945. The Islamic wheels of change once set in motion by organization such as *Syarikat Islam* galvanised and inspired other sectors of the society to move in concert. The urban-based *Muhammadiyah* and the rural-based *Nahdatul Ulama* in Indonesia were examples of the responses to the motion that released deep-rooted social forces in the archipelago to answer global challenges such as the oppressive colonial rule and the problem of nation building after the Second World War.

MUSLIM RESPONSE TO WESTERN COLONIALISM

The coming of the Europeans disrupted long established trading links between the East and West dominated by Muslims traders. The Malay archipelago came under the control of westerners, like the Spanish who ruled the Philippine islands and the British who confined themselves to the Malay Peninsula and parts of Borneo. But the Dutch economic colonial exploitation in Indonesia was considered as one of the most ruthless forms of European economic exploitation in the world.

It was started in the sixteenth century by the Dutch East India Company (V.O.C.) and went on until 1798. It "succeeded largely by means of shrewd and ruthless dominance of export trade". Later, the Dutch government decided to take over totally the administration of Indonesia from the company until the independence of Indonesia in 1945 and the formal transfer of sovereignty in 1949.

The Dutch introduced for forty years (1830-1870) a "culture system" (*cultuurstetsel*) by which through a form of tax, Javanese farmers were forced to produce profitable export commodities mainly sugar, coffee and indigo. The "free market" system introduced through the Agrarian and Sugar Laws of 1870 replaced the "culture system" which was under criticism from the liberals in the Netherlands because of its unfairness. Very soon, the Dutch private enterprises - rich from 30 years of economic boom - dominated the export sector of Indonesia, killing Indonesian small holder export and prohibiting them from developing their economy.

In 1901 the Ethical Policy was introduced to complement the free market doctrine because of strong criticism from the liberals that economic liberalism had failed in improving the indigenous economic situation. Attention was then given to the sectors of agriculture, public works, health and education. However, investment continued to come from Europe. There was a change in economic geography from the over-exploited land in Java to the island of Sumatra. Unfortunately the

long economic growth trend stopped as the worlds recession in the 1930s reduced drastically the European market. At the same time there was a deficit in domestic production of consumer goods. The government policy then looked at the internal market to produce more industry and rice cultivation in Java and primary products in the outer islands. Inter-island trade developed rapidly since then.

From 1942 to 1945, when the Japanese military power replaced the Dutch, there was no growth in the economy. An inward looking economic policy was developed: Resources for export production such as land for sugar plantation were diverted to food production for the local market. The Indonesian economy was in a very bad shape during the four years of the independence war. Furthermore, it was characterised by a "colonial structure" where the modern sector was monopolised by export-oriented foreign enterprises and the traditional sector by peasant agriculture.

SYARIKAT ISLAM: FIRST ORGANISED RESISTENCE

Long before the political resistance, Muslims had resorted to economic resistance. The origins of the Indonesian Muslim organized resistance against the colonial power can be traced to the beginning of this century under the economic banner of *Syarikat Islam.* The Netherlands then had introduced an Ethical Policy (1901) based on the Christian liberal values of the then Dutch ruler whose presence in Indonesia began in the sixteenth century. The European nation of traders completely gained control of all the islands of the archipelago after defeating the Muslim kingdom of Acheh and the kingdom of Bali at the end of the nineteenth century.

The relations between the Dutch and the Muslims were bad. The government, basically a Christian one, was afraid of the development of Islam in Indonesia. In the context of the nineteenth century it could be easily understood. The movement of Pan Islamism was considered as a threat to many governments in Europe that had colonised many countries where Islam was the religion of the majority. Furthermore, the government had many problems with the *ulama* or *kiyai* (muslim religious leaders) who had just returned to Indonesia from their study in the Middle East and had taken an attitude hostile to the colonial regime.

The general attitude of the Muslim population was hostile to the Dutch who were called "*kafir Olanda*", (Dutch infidel). It was only natural for the Dutch to give privileges to the children of Christian indigenous in the schools. In fact the relationship between the Dutch and Indonesian Christians was always active in propagating Christianity.

Within this historical context that we can understand the reasons for the birth of *Syarikat Dagang Islam* (SDI) which later changed its name to *Syarikat Islam* (SI). This organization was founded in 1911 by Muslim traders and intellectuals in Solo, such as H. Samanhudi and RM

Tirtoadisuryo. The aim of *Syarikat Islam* was to promote close co-operation among its members against European and Chinese business people. The SDI was thus organized as a business concern by the Indonesians, mostly *batik* traders, in Solo against the Chinese and members of the nobility.[4] Many important leaders of *Syarikat Islam* were *batik* traders, shipowners, *kretek* cigarette producers and distillers of lemonade. At that time the principal business people were of European and Chinese origins who had enjoyed important positions due to the economic and political policy of government.

Very soon the *Syarikat Islam* became powerful. For the first time in the colonial era an organization existed which was capable of organizing people for strikes and demonstrations against the government and the enemies of *Syarikat Islam*. There were many boycotts against the Chinese business community. In every city there was a branch of *Syarikat Islam*. The political and economic solidaritary was really strong among its members. The Dutch government, afraid of the success of *Syarikat Islam*, watched it closely by sending spies and officials to its different meetings and activities. Various ways were used to stop *Syarikat Islam* from being an economic and political power in Indonesia.

In the Malay world during the colonial period, Islam was the only ideology a political leader could use to have popular support nationally, at least until the 1920s. Politicians on the national front had tried to win the support the population to their ideology, using Islam as a focal point. At that time the combined ideas of Islam and Nationalism, or Islam and Marxism or Islam and Communism were popular. The most striking example was the left-wing of *Syarikat Islam*, or the *Syarikat Islam Merah*, which was under the influence of the Marxists who used the organization for a Marxist-Leninist revolution. There was also a close link between the leaders of the left-wing of *Syarikat Islam* with some Dutch communist leaders such as Mr. Seevliet.

Islamic Socialism was seen by the leader of *Syarikat Islam* H.O.S. Tjokroaminoto as an answer to capitalist exploitation of the people in Indonesia by the colonial powers. But communism did not appear to be the right approach to him. He dreamt of the "elimination of the suffering of the people" through Islam.[5] He was the leader of the movement from 1912 to 1934, the year of his death. He was born in Bakur, Madiun, East Java on 16 August 1882 from a religious and aristocratic family.

After a good career in the regional indigenous administration as a *patih* (chief assistant to Regent) he resigned from the native civil service. He was employed at a Dutch enterprise in Surabaya. Later he worked at a sugar factory outside the city. His egalitarian and anti-feudal attitude was widely known. He had a strong personality, and was known for his

4 Noer, p. 102.
5 Noer, p. 106.

courage and strong leadership. He had been given the nickname of *Gatotkaca* by *Syarikat Islam* an allusion to the *"wayang kulit"* (puppet theater) hero who possessed leadership qualities.

In the initial years H.O.S. Tjokroaminoto had not had an economist to advise him, and the intellectuals in general were Marxists. He worked hard by himself to develop his thinking in economics. Seven years after the 1917 Russian revolution, in a small city outside Java, in Mataram, he finished his one-hundred-and-four-page book called *Islam dan Sosialisme* (Islam and Socialism).

Islam dan Sosialisme is an important book on philosophical economics written for the first time by an Indonesian Muslim in history. There are many books dealing with the same theme published in later years, but H.O.S. Tjokroaminoto's book is still unsurpassed. It is still as relevant as before. Unfortunately the book has not been available in Indonesia for the last thirty years and the people now tend to forget him. In many cities in Indonesia there is always a street called Jalan H.O.S. Tjokroaminoto but most people have forgotten who he was and what his contribution to Indonesia was.

The attitude of *Syarikat Islam* towards Dutch capitalism was clearly stated in its second National Congress in 1917.[6] The *Syarikat Islam* will "fight sinful capitalism which is the origin of the present deteriorating economic condition of the majority of the Indonesian population". In its Action Program the party expressed its concern for economic justice for the people. *Syarikat Islam* demanded improvement in agricultural sector. They demanded the nationalization of the most vital industries such as the textile, paper and iron and also public utility services such as communication, water, gas and electricity. They asked the government to introduce taxes proportionate to income and taxes on estate profits. They demanded support for cooperative movements and also the prohibition of child labour, more medical facilities and labour laws that protected workers rights.[7]

In 1921, the party became more hostile to the colonial power. It refused to work with the government. Under the Basic Principles of the Party, the Ethical Policy of the Dutch was heavily criticized as mostly benefiting the Dutch themselves, as the Dutch MP, Troelstra, had commented at the introduction of the Ethical Policy that "everything remains the same: now capitalism is being protected by incense and the Bible".[8] The *Syarikat Islam* claimed that the need of the Europeans to control the supply of raw material from Indonesia was the only reason for their presence in the archipelago. In this instance H.O.S. Tjokroaminoto used the argument of Germany's Social Democrats' *Ehrfurter*

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6 Neratja, 25/10/1917 and Noer, p. 113.

7 Noer, p. 115.

8 Noer, p. 315; H.A. Idema, 1924. *Parlementaire ...*, The Hague: M. Nijhoff, p. 176.

Program of 1891.[9] The Europeans, according to the Principles of *Syarikat Islam* had turned "almost all the people in Indonesia into labourers".

In the view of H.O.S. Tjokroaminoto, "international imperialism" and "international capitalism" were condemned to failure. Nevertheless, he recognized individual property and individual initiative, spirit of enterpreneurship since it did not harm other people. The *Syarikat Islam* leader further demanded that big companies must belong to the State and workers and peasants must be united to fight capitalism.[10] He referred to Rosa Luxembourg, *Die Akkumulation des Kapitalis*, 1913 and even recognized the Indian principle of self-help (*swadeshi*) as appropriate.

H.O.S. Tjokroaminoto believed Indonesian national independence was a first step to create the ideal of Islam where in an Islamic State the power is "controlled by all the people or *ummah* who are all subject to the only law - that of God".[11] In his political career, H.O.S. Tjokroaminoto was imprisoned by the colonial authorities for seven months in 1921-1922, after the affairs of *SI afdeling B.* This was in the year of the split between SI and the Communist Party.

Socialism was an important aspect of H.O.S. Tjokroaminoto's economics thought, as was shown in his major works, "*Islam dan Sosialisme*". According to the author, Islamic economics is based on *Tauhid* (unity of God). The author acknowledged that he used some European ideas for the description of socialism and some Pakistani authors for his discussion on Islamic economics (without mentioning the sources, however).

In the same year of the publication of his book, H.O.S. Tjokroaminoto in the second *Kongress Al Islam Indonesia*, held in Garut, elaborated his reasons for writing the book: to challenge the general belief that Islam is not capable of incorporating important "political, social and economic" matters.[12] In the journal of *Partai Syarikat Islam*, H.O.S. Tjokroaminoto also published two articles: "*Apakah Sosialisme Itu*" (What is Socialism) and "*Sosialisme Berdasar Islam*" (Islamic Socialism).

According to H.O.S. Tjokroaminoto, all laws for Muslims have only one origin, that is the word of God as transmitted in the Qur'an. Man must act in line with the teachings of the Holy Qur'an. The Islamic government during the life time of the Prophet Mohamad was considered the perfect example of the economic interpretation in Islam where land and all national resources belonged to the State. Citizens

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9 Noer, note p. 141.
10 HOSC, p. 42.
11 H.O.S. Tjokroaminoto, 1952. *Tafsir Program Azas dan Program Tandhim Partai Syarikat Islam Indonesia*, Jakarta, BP PSII, p. 4. SI became PSII in 1930.
12 HOSC, 1924, p. 7.

could nevertheless own the means of production.

Furthermore, the State protects the workers' rights, and controls the development of industries and capitalism. The Islamic law prohibits '*riba*' (earning interest from loan) and opposes the use of capital for unproductive and unethical purposes. It is also compulsory for rich Muslims to give part of their income to the poor through *zakat* (a Muslim tax).

Marxism is strongly criticized in this book because it does not believe in religion, and opposes God. But at the same time, for H.O.S. Tjokroaminoto, the Marxist created their own God that is materialism. Credit was given nevertheless to Marx and Engles for their fight to help the oppressed people of the west. For H.O.S. Tjokroaminoto, generosity is also an important qualify of Islam. And in Islamic socialism there are three important principles: Liberty, equality and fraternity. Naturally the book is full of Qur'anic quotation related to economics. The book contains the author's basic principles of Islamic economics and political philosophy. H.O.S. Tjokroaminoto, however, did not elaborate on how to transform this philosophy to an operational economic theory.

SOCIO-POLITICAL RESPONSE

There are many Islamic social organizations in Southeast Asia. The two oldest and most important which survive until today are *Muhammadiyah* (founded in 1911) and *Nahdatul Ulama* (founded in 1926); each of which presently claim to have 30 million members. The two organizations represent the two main currents of Islamic socio-political movements in Indonesia since the beginning of this century: The modernist and the traditionalist.

Muhammadiyah was founded by Kiyai Haji (KH) Ahmad Dahlan and represents the Islamic modernist movement. The organization emphasizes the importance of practicing Islam strictly following the example given by the Prophet Mohammad s.a.w. himself during his lifetime. The modernist is a puritan movement; in a way they want to purify Islam from aspects of ritual that are of foreign origin, Asian or Western. The modernists are known for their rational thinking. They try to interpret Islamic teaching coming from the Qur'an and the *Hadith* into the reality of the modern world and the new needs of the people. They believe in using technologies and new methods imported from the west in their schools. Indeed, *Muhammadiyah* that began its activities in Islamic education now owns the largest number of schools, universities and hospitals based on the European model compared to the other Islamic organizations in Indonesia. The modernists are mostly from the urban areas of the various islands of Indonesia. Initially, traders and educationalist such as lecturers and teachers formed the core leadership of *Muhammadiyah*. But recently more people from the bureaucracy and rural areas joined the modernist•movement.

The traditionalists, on the contrary, are members of the *Nahdatul Ulama*, which is very strong in rural areas of east and central Java and south Kalimantan. The traditionalists believe it is important to keep the local traditions that have been incorporated into Islamic traditions through centuries in Indonesia. To them, the Indonesian identity of being a Muslim is extremely important. The *Nahdatul Ulama* founded by KH Hashim Asyari, focuses their teaching through *pesantren*: A traditional system of Islamic education known in Java. The *Ulama*, his family and staff live with the students in the *pesantren*. Recently a new curriculum that introduced different disciplines such as science, technology, economy, business and foreign languages was widely accepted.

Ulama and the *Kiyai* have a strong influence among the traditionalists as they are not only seen as religious leaders but also as political and social leaders. For people of rural origin, *Kiyai* are also leaders who can bridge their traditional way of life with a changing modern world. The *Kiyai* are expected to prevent their followers from being alienated socially; and play a role as a link between a tradition strongly rooted in the past with the need to be integrated into the modern life.

Sufism also flourished among the traditionalists. Many "*tarekat*" (Sufi) orders such as *Naqshabandiyyah* and *Qadiriyyah* have a close relationship with and are officially linked to *Nahdatul Ulama*. Many *kiyai* are in fact also "*tarekat*" leaders. Mysticism was very important in Indonesia before the coming of Islam and the tradition continued into the Muslim period with the bases transformed into the Islamic brand of Sufism. In Java where more than half of the Indonesians live, social divisions among Muslim into *santri*, *abangan* and *priyayi*, are widely acknowledged. The *santri* is in fact very close to the modernist, the *abangan* to the traditionalists and the *priyayi*, formally the feudal class, is the upper class variation of the *abangan*.

Syarikat Islam successfully forged powerful alliances between Muslim traders and Muslim intellectuals. The Muslim business people are mostly from the *santri* groups. They are the most dynamic group in Indonesian history.[13] The *santri* were originally very active in the cities and coastal areas of Java where Muslim trade kingdoms had been established. They also established themselves in rural areas in Java and now they are everywhere in Java.

In many cities they live in areas called *kauman* which is chosen by the indigenous administration to be the living and working quarters of the religious officers. The *santri* have been successful in combining the role of *kiyai*, a Muslim leader and preacher, and that of businessman simultaneously. The most famous example is KH Ahmad Dahlan, the founder of the modernist Muslim organization *Muhammadiyah*.

KH Ahmad Dahlan, a roommate of *Nahdatul Ulama's* leader KH

13 Kuntowijoyo 1991, p. 81.

Hashim Asyari, was appointed *penghulu* (chief) of Masjid Agung Yogyakarta. At the same time he became a successful *batik* trader. In the history of *Muhammadiyah* there are always many business people who become important leaders of this organization.

The *kauman* is also the centre for trade, industry and business such as Kota Gede in Yogyakarta and Laweyan in Surakarta. It is well known in the past that the *santri* from Kota Gede had become rich and had business relations in cities like Betawi, Cerebon, Pekalongan, Semarang, Surabaya, Purwokerto, Kediri, Tulung Agung and Madiun. In the colonial times they even had cars and were involved in the car rental business which was unusual for the indigenous people during that time.

The inhabitants of *kauman* have strong business ethic as compared to the *priyayi*. In fact many scholars, borrowing from Max Weber, considered the "*santri* as having the spirit of" as they are serious, independent and rational in doing their business. In the rural areas, which is the domain of *Nahdatul Ulama*, the *santri* had established for centuries many Islamic schools and learning centres called *pesantren* under the direction of a *kiyai*. Most of the *kiyai* are leaders of the *Nahdatul Ulama* and are also very active in businesses related to agricultural production.

The leader of *Nahdatul Ulama*, KH Abdul Wahab Hasbullah owned a business organizing pilgrimages to Makkah. Other leaders such as KH Bisri Samsuri was a general trader and Kiyai Ridwan a *batik* trader. Until now religious leaders are still the most important group in this organization. The *pesantren* have also close relations with urban centers in Java and indeed have often taken the characteristic of city life.[14]

Furthermore, the *Nahdatul Ulama* created the *Lajna Waqifah* (*Waqaf* Committee) aimed at managing the finance and business activities of *pesantren* in 1930. In 1937, a cooperative movement called *Syirkah Mu'awanah*, was established as an importer of goods coming from Japan. In the 1950s the *Nahdatul Ulama* opened a bank. For centuries the *santri* created a strong religious and business network all over Indonesia. Solidaritary has always been strong among them. In the nineteenth century, rural *santri* had a very important role in propagating Islamic teachings in the agricultural areas of Java. In the twentieth century, with the strong urbanization of the island, the centre of Islamic movements shifted to the cities of Java. The *santri* are more dynamic reformists and have more international contacts compared to the Islamic movements of the previous century.

There is a valid reason to call the *santri* movement in the twentieth century Java as a Muslim middle class movement. Contrary to the people in the outer islands where rich people had political power, in Java,

14 Dhofier 1980, chapter 4.

the Muslim traders in the colonial time did not possess the same privilege. Although numerically significant, they are mostly small business people. Furthermore, they did not enjoy a high status as they were categorized as "*wong cilik*" (little people of the lower class) and peasants as well. The bureaucrats (most of them are *priyayi*) and the aristocrats, *wong agung* (grand people) were members of the ruling class. Members of this class were not encouraged to become business people.[15] The ideal occupation of the Javanese people for a long time was to be a bureaucrat, *pangreh praja*, working for the state.

The history of conflict between Muslim traders who founded merchant cities in the north coast of Java with the rural based kingdom of Matarram is well known because it brought devastating consequences for Javanese society. Merchant kingdoms were destroyed by Matarram at a very high price. It had to ally itself with the Dutch colonial power to accomplish that. But when Matarram became weak, the Dutch authority took the advantage and politically dominated the whole island of Java by the eighteenth century.

The economic position of the *santri* Muslim later was further weakened dramatically as the colonial power invited foreigners, Europeans, Chinese and Arabs, to replace indigenous business people. As foreigners they could not attain political power that could one day challenge colonial authority. Chinese immigrants became successful not only as businessmen but also enjoyed positions as tax collectors, harbour master (*syahbandar*) and business middleman. Economically the Chinese position became second only to the Dutch business people. They constantly improved their business achievement by expanding their commercial ventures. At the same time indigenous traders suffered a setback and were confined to small business activities only. The reality is shown in the statistics based on tax obligations at the beginning of the century.[16] The Chinese business people are able to keep their dominant position in the field of economy until today regardless who is in power.

Although foreigners, the Arabs are Muslims and their numbers have always been small. Therefore they had never been considered as an enemy by the *santri*. However, their role in the commercial world in Indonesia has constantly been decreasing. Today their businesses are taken over by the Chinese.

The predominance of non-Muslims in economic life has created a very strong resentment among the Muslim people during the colonial period and this became aggravated after independence. During the colonial time the *santri* tried to organize a riposte. They created and became leaders of *Syarikat Islam* that was originally called *Syarikat Dagang Islam*. In order to compete with the Chinese business, and free themselves from the latter's stranglehold, they resorted to boycotting

15 cf. Bonnef in Merchand ...
16 Kuntowijoyo 1991, p. 88.

Chinese business, building a strong solidaritary between the members of *Syarikat Islam*, selling shares to its members and creating cooperatives. *Syarikat Islam* achieved a limited success. But it was a long and useful apprentice years for Muslim business people in political and economic organization. They learnt that through cooperative movement they could fight for equality and economic justice. As an organization, *Syarikat Islam* was a useful training ground for the politically inclined Muslim organizations to chart their courses of action against the Dutch government and consolidated their forces in the political sphere.

MUHAMMADIYAH: REFORMIST AND MODERNIST MISSION

In the early twentieth century there were other pathways taking Islam towards a more central role in defining common destiny and identity of the peoples of Indonesia under Dutch rule. *Syarikat Islam* emphasized economic and political non-cooperation while *Muhammadiyah* chose cooperation with the colonial authorities and spearheaded reforms through schools and education. *Muhammadiyah* was founded by Muslim reformists in 1912 in Yogyakarta, central Java. This organization of urban origin continues to attract members from cities in present-day Indonesia, although members from rural areas are also not uncommon. *Muhammadiyah*, a reformist and modernist organization with the *Nahdatul Ulama*, traditionalist organization, are the two biggest Islamic organizations in Indonesia. *Muhammadiyah* with branches in Singapore and Malaysia, claims a total membership of thirty million people today.

Important and famous leaders of *Muhammadiyah* included KH Ahmad Dahlan, the founder and chairman. He was an *ulama* for many decades and a businessman. There was also Dr. Hamka, an *ulama* and a novelist. Younger generation of leaders included many scholars from different universities and also many leading business people and active politicians. The social background of *Muhammadiyah* membership covered a wide spectrum: *ulama*, businessmen, teachers, professors, lawyers, medical doctors, journalists and publishers. In general, the members of *Muhammadiyah* had a higher level of education than those in other Islamic organizations in Indonesia. Furthermore, its members were known to be active, open-minded, and loyal to their organization.

Muhammadiyah was known as a rich organization owning much funds and many properties. It had more than ten thousand employees throughout the country. The major activity of *Muhammadiyah* was to promote Islam through education and involvement in social welfare. *Muhammadiyah*, ran hundreds of schools all over the country including kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, universities and different Islamic educational institutions such as *madrasah* and *pesantren*. The organization also managed hundreds of hospitals, health clinics and cooperatives. It built mosques and had its own printing factory and published its own newspaper, magazines and books.

The founders of *Muhammadiyah* believed there was an urgent need to reform Islamic teachings and traditions which had been practised in Indonesia for centuries. They were against the Muslim traditionalists, accusing them of "adopting an attitude that hampered their own progress, and in general the progress of the Muslims. Especially in the early years of the movement, they branded the traditionalists as *djumud* (inertia) because these people were content with their traditional methods and practices and showed every indifference towards the progress made by the outside world".[17]

The modernists were members of the Islamic elite and thus were better educated in Islam and other subjects and had stronger contacts with international communities. Through their education in the Middle East they had better knowledge of the international world. Most of them were *haj* that means they had made a pilgrimage to Makkah; by this it can be seen that they were children of rich people. During their stay in the Middle East, the first generation of Indonesian modernist Muslims used Arabic as their language of learning. They learned new ideas from important reformist *ulama* such as Muhammad Abduh of Egypt. They also deepened their knowledge by studying the ideas of Ibn Taimiyah and Ibn Al-Qayyim[18] to which they applied their own interpretation.

The modernists did not deviate from the basic stand that the Qur'an and *Hadith* are the source of Islamic teaching. At the same time they emphasized the importance of thinking rationally and maintaining a critical attitude through study, reexamination, and reconsideration (*ijtihad*). To them, method was important in rationality irrespective of whether it came from the non Muslim western world. The modernists supported the idea of progress because they believed that it was also the essence of Islamic teaching.

The social origins of the founder of *Muhammadiyah*, KH Ahmad Dahlan, showed us that a Javanese *santri* could be as rational and open to western systems of education based on rational thinking as well as the *priyayi* who were already exposed to the European world through their education. In fact the rationality of KH Ahmad Dahlan made him very much at ease with different worlds: With Europe from where he took as a model its education system and rational organization, with *priyayi* (he was a member of *Budi Utomo*) and with Muslim traditionalists.

The biography of Muhammad Darwis, who later became KH Ahmad Dahlan tells us how deep were his Javanese and Islamic roots. He was born in Yogyakarta in 1869 from a traditional Javanese family of *ulama*. His father, KH Abubakar bin Kiyai Sulaiman, was the Sultan's mosque preacher (*khatib*) in Yogyakarta. His mother was a daughter of a religious official (*penghulu*) called H. Ibrahim, also from the same city. KH Ahmad Dahlan started his studies at various *pesantren* in Java,

17 Noer, 1973, p. 297.
18 *Ibid.*

studying grammar (*nahw*) *fiqh* and *tafsir*. Later he studied in Makkah, the first time for one year (1890) where he had among his teachers a modernist Sheikh Ahmad Khatib, and the second time for two years (1903–1904). He had also known Muhammad Abduh's ideas through his own readings, including those ideas on how to carry out and sustain a modern Islamic organization.

KH Ahmad Dahlan founded *Muhammadiyah* with the intention of creating a multi-dimensional modern Islamic organization which would not be tied to the whims of its founding *kiyai*. He started a program of education because he believed it was the best way to change society. It was a common situation at that time that an organization involved in education, such as *pesantren* or *madrasah* would go into decline after the death of its founder. By introducing a good curriculum, a system of discipline for its pupils and regular and sufficient salaries to *Muhammadiyah* teachers, KH Ahmad Dahlan and his followers have been successful in sustaining Muhammadiyah for many decades.

Muhammadiyah next enlarged its activities in other areas such as orphanages, health services and publications. Different sub-organizations tailored to special needs were created, for example *Pemuda Muhammadiyah* (organization of the youth), *Hizibul Wathan* (Scouts), *Majlis Tardjih* (The Council of Opinions), which issued *fatwa* and interpreted of Islamic law. The Missionary (*Mubaligh*) Corps of *Muhammadiyah*, since the very beginning had been active in propagating Islam all over the country. Many organizations had joined *Muhammadiyah* because they saw it as fresh, rational and efficient. One such case was a woman's organization, *Aisyiyah*, that played a very important role in the emancipation of Indonesian women. Another organization to join was *Nurul Islam* (Light of Islam) founded by Muslims traders in Pekalongan in 1920. The extraordinary success of *Muhammadiyah* was obvious: By 1938 there were no less than 250 000 people registered as members in its 852 branches, spanning the entire islands of Indonesia.

Muhammadiyah's views on Islamic law, social and economic matters became a guiding influence for Indonesian Muslims, although it gave a total liberty to all individuals to act according to their own conscience. In the field of economics, the banking system and the organization of *zakat* are important concerns of *Muhammadiyah*. In 1932, the prohibited the charging of interest on capital (*riba*) although many of *Majlis Tardjih* its member were active in business. In the opinion of the people in *Muhammadiyah*, it was possible to do business with ethics as shown in Islamic teaching. Thus, *Muhammadiyah* really encouraged business activities. The best example was given by its founder. To earn his living, KH Ahmad Dahlan set up a *batik* trading company in Yogyakarta that was managed well and become a good source of income for him and his family. Because of his economic independence, the founder was able to keep himself free from any pressures by political power.

The importance of being economically independent influenced

Muhammadiyah to introduce classes on handicraft and sewing in *Muhammadiyah's* education system. Thus members of *Muhammadiyah* and students of its schools were taught Islamic religion and relevant skills to meet the demands of everyday life. This was opposed to the policy of the government schools, which during the colonial times prepared their students to man the administrative machinery of the colonial government.

The willingness to learn from the modern western system was a major characteristic of the founder of *Muhammadiyah*. It was reported that KH Ahmad Dahlan and his students had often visited churches, Catholic schools and different Christian social activities. Without hesitation he told his students to copy the hard working spirit, devotion, respect for hygiene and love of beautiful objects of the Christian people.[19] Furthermore, KH Ahmad Dahlan's respect for commerce was well known. He gave recognition to a profession that was generally looked down on by the Javanese culture, in which the *priyayi's* way of life had been an ideal for centuries. Working as a bureaucrat was the dream for every traditional Javanese family. This fresh attitude of *Muhammadiyah* was a revolution with its most important result being the meeting of ideas between an important Islamic organization and the Muslim traders, who are the most dynamic class in Indonesian society for centuries.

The *Muhammadiyah* spirit of capitalism captured the aspirations of business people in Indonesia. Many Muslim traders, mostly involved in *batik* businesses, became members of *Muhammadiyah*. KH Asnawi, a traditionalist *Kiyai* from Kudus, who had important contacts with business people of his city, was reportedly won over by *Muhammadiyah*.[20] It was only natural that many leaders and members of *Muhammadiyah* themselves became economically and politically involved in *Syarikat Islam*, an organization created by Islamic traders and intellectuals. It is also important to see the difference between the more modern organization *Muhammadiyah*, and the more traditional and feudal organization like *Syarikat Islam*.

The good relations between the two organizations soured in 1926, three years after the death of KH Ahmad Dahlan (23 February 1923), when leadership problem reared its head in the Islamic community of Indonesia. *Muhammadiyah's* rapid expansion in Java by 1920 and all over Indonesia by the following year was perceived as a threat by *Syarikat Islam*, which was founded a year earlier than the modernist organization. It also appeared to be threatening to the traditionalists who founded the *Nahdatul Ulama* by the middle of the decade. *Syarikat Islam's* ambition to be more involved in religion and educational matters also irritated *Muhammadiyah* that wanted the *Syarikat Islam* to remain a purely

19 Noer, p. 93.
20 Noer, p. 227.

political and economic organization.

In the Islamic Congress of 1920, H.O.S. Tjokroaminoto was accepted by *Muhammadiyah* as the Islamic leader of Indonesia. But in 1926 some leaders of *Muhammadiyah* were disappointed by his lack of discipline in religious practices during his visits to Makkah, his many absences from the Congress of Al-Islam, and his inability to master the Arabic language. The integrity of the leader of as the overall leader of the Muslim Community in Indonesia was being questioned.

This attack on the personality of the leader of *Syarikat Islam* was resented and interpreted as an attack on the organization itself. In this we witness a confrontation between two big Islamic organizations at the time in Indonesia. It pilted the *Muhammadiyah* as a modern rationalist reformist movement against the more conservative *Syarikat Islam.* The fact that H.O.S. Tjokroaminoto remained the leader of *Syarikat Islam* until his death goes on to show that the organization was closely identified with the stand of its leader, whereas *Muhammadiyah* whose leaders changed regularly and were chosen during its congresses was more open and democratic.

Disciplinary measures were subsequently taken by *Syarikat Islam* against members of *Muhammadiyah:* people were forced to leave *Muhammadiyah* if they wanted to continue to be members of *Syarikat Islam.* In 1927, the relationship between *Muhammadiyah* and *Syarikat Islam* became an important issue in the *Syarikat Islam's* Congress in Pekalongan. Here, a hostile decision was taken resulting in the purging of all *Muhammadiyah* people from *Syarikat Islam.* The attitude was even more hostile in 1929 when *Muhammadiyah*, it was reported, opposed *Syarikat Islam's* intention to publish the translation of Maulana Muhammad Ali's Holy Qur'an, because the author was a member of *Ahmadiyah* of Lahore, an organization that *Muhammadiyah* considered to have a different theological foundation.

In the mid-1930s, the withdrawal of disciplinary measures against those who belonged to *Muhammadiyah* was requested by different Muslim leaders, including *Muhammadiyah's* chairman, as a gesture of reconciliation. The request was rejected. At that time, *Muhammadiyah* leadership under KH Mansur was known to be very critical of the inflexible, noncooperative and "*Hijrah*" policy of *Syarikat Islam. Muhammadiyah* had always been pragmatic in its policy. This organization tried whenever possible to convince the people and the government to avoid confrontation. Nevertheless, it did not fail to support the Republican fight for Independence as did *Syarikat Islam. Muhammadiyah* continued to develop organizationally to become one of the two principal social organizations in Indonesia till this day. Furthermore, many of *Muhammadiyah's* leaders have held important positions in government, business and other fields since Independence.

As an organization, *Muhammadiyah* survived attacks coming from many different directions. The most important political and rational

attack came from the Marxists. The Communist party, which also based its policy on rational thinking, modern education and active propaganda considered *Muhammadiyah* to be a difficult enemy. They were engaged in a strong ideological war against the voice of modernist Muslim. Communists party intellectuals strongly attacked important leaders of *Muhammadiyah* such as HAMKA (Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah). The polemics between *Muhammadiyah* and the Communist intellectuals centred on the Communist party's attack on religious beliefs, and considered Islam to be the cause of the under development of Indonesia. Furthermore, the communist was on the offensive against many members of *Muhammadiyah* who were traders and considered capitalist. In the end it was the *Partai Komunis Indonesia* which was forced to bow out from the political arena in Indonesia.

Millions of people since colonial times had been educated in various parts of the *Muhammadiyah* network of education. They are everywhere, and take pride in being members of *Muhammadiyah.* President Soeharto publicly acknowledged his affinity towards this organization, having been one of *Muhammadiyah's* graduates. The network shared a common vision of the Islamic society, which was based on *Tauhid* and puritanism in religious practice while remained a rationalist and having an independent mind in everyday life.

Nevertheless, as *Muhammadiyah* became established and successful, it became more conservative and developed a complicated system of bureaucracy. Although at the beginning, members of the dynamic business community were omnipresent in the leadership, since the New Order they were largely outnumbered by people working in bureaucracy and education. Many people feel that inspite of its claim to be a reformist movement, contribution of ideas were on the decrease. Furthermore, the organization was resented for becoming less independent and less critical of political power. It is also accused of not being sensitive to the people's aspirations for social justice and their mild stand on the problems of social inequality. On the contrary, the traditionalist *Nahdatul Ulama* appeared to come out with many more ideas that appeal to society.

NAHDATUL ULAMA: TRADITIONALIST AND POLITICAL RESISTANCE

Compared to *Syarikat Islam* which was founded on economic grounds or to the modernist movement as exemplified by *Muhammadiyah*, the *Nahdatul Ulama's* view and policy on the economic matters are much less known as a traditionalist Islamic organization. It appears that this organization was much more interested in politics and religious teaching. The quantity and quality of writings on economic by the leaders of *Nahdatul Ulama*, made this apparent.

Today, the *Nahdatul Ulama* (The Awakening of Islamic Scholars) claims to be the biggest Islamic social organization in Indonesia with 30

million members. This means that over one sixth of the Indonesian population (190 million people) are members of this organization. It is a *sunni* Muslim organization, as are all Indonesian Muslims, and it is also traditionalist with strong rural bases in east and central Java, Kalimantan, Sumatra and Nusa Tenggara Barat. However, it recognizes all the four traditions of Islamic legal schools, namely the Syafii, the Hambali, the Hanafi and the Maliki.

Nahdatul Ulama consists of two distinct types of leadership, the politician (*tanfziah*) who run the everyday life of the organization and the *ulama* (*syuriah*) who makes sure that the organization's complies with Islamic teaching. In principle, the *ulama* has a dominant position over the politician. Also, the politician does not necessarily have to be an *ulama*; however, since the foundation of *Nahdatul Ulama* in 1926 the leadership had always been in the hands of the *ulama*.

The leadership of *Nahdatul Ulama* is chosen by its members during a general meeting held regularly every four years in different cities in Indonesia. However, founders, former leaders and their immediate families continue to occupy important positions within the leadership. From an outsider's view, the leadership of *Nahdatul Ulama* appears conservative, old and lacking new ideas.

Historically, the leaders of *Nahdatul Ulama* had knowledge of business, a strong commitment to public education and intellectual debate and a very active political involvement. In 1913, KH Wahab Chasbullah, KH Abbas Jember, KH R. Asnawi Kudus and KH Dahlan Kertosono were active in the Makkah branch of *Syarikat Islam*. The *Syarikat Islam* was the first national movement and was founded by a combination of Islamic traders and intellectuals with the aim of helping Muslims to improve their economic position through economic and political action. An example of an early economic activity of *Nahdatul Ulama* was to form a cooperative movement (*syarikat 'inan*) *Nahdatul Tujjar* (the awakening of businessmen) led by KH Hasjim Asjari, a former pupil of Wahab Chasbullah, who first suggested the idea. KH Wahab Chasbullah himself owned a business organizing pilgrimages to Makkah. Among his colleagues, KH Bisri Samsuri was involved in trading activities and KH Ridwan had a *batik* business.

The first leaders of *Nahdatul Ulama* also had a strong commitment to intellectual life and public education. Most of the *kiyai*, the Javanese name for *ulama*, ran religious schools called pesantren covering all of Java. In 1920, KH Wahab Chasbullah with his friends founded a circle of intellectual discussion called *Taswirul Afkar* (notion of thinking). From here they created the school *Madrasah Nahdatul Watan* (the Awakening of the Motherland). This group of *ulama* were responsible for the birth of *Nahdatul Ulama* six years later.

Nahdatul Ulama continued to be involved in business. In 1930, the organization created the *Lajnah Waqfiyyah* (*Waqaf* committee) aimed at managing the finances and businesses belonging to the *pesantren*. In

1937, a cooperative movement called *Syirkah Mu'awanah*, was established to import goods from Japan. In 1950, a bank (Bank Nusantara) was established but the institution did not last. Ten years later *Nahdatul Ulama* created, through a foundation called '*Yayasan Mu'amanah lil Muslimin*', a type of bank (bank *haji*) aimed at managing the finances of Muslims who want to perform *haj* in Makkah.

The *Nahdatul Ulama* was also active in the anti colonial movement. The *pesantren* were the rural bases for anti colonial activities. For hundreds of years there was animosity and strong suspicion of the colonial power towards *pesantren*. Many spies were sent to monitor the activities of the *pesantren*, and Muslim leaders were kept under scrutiny. The Dutch created obstacles for the people who wanted to perform the pilgrimage. When they returned home very often their passports were confiscated and they were kept under close surveillance. This suspicion of the colonial powers was especially strong after the success of the Pan Islamic world movement.

Nahdatul Ulama worked with other Islamic organizations under the Japanese occupation during the Second World War. This organization actively supported the independence movement by creating its own militia to fight against the allied troops after the end of second world war when the Dutch tried to return to power in Indonesia. The *ulama* had given a *fatwa* for *jihad* to the Muslims that inspired them to revolt.

MASJUMI: CRYSTALIZATION OF THE IDEOLOGY

The twentieth century cry for freedom was the voice of Islam. The Japanese occupation (1941–1945) finally broke the backbone of western colonial power headed by an internal alliance with Muslim intellectuals, nationalist, traders and reformers. It was these groups that formed *Majlis Syuruh Muslimin Indonesia* (the Big Council of Muslim Indonesia), also known by its acronym *Masjumi*.

It was during the first 15 years of independence that Muslims had important roles in elaborating Indonesian political, economic and social institutions that are still intact until today. Leaders of the major Islamic political party *Masjumi* lead the Cabinet. Many leaders of this party had important positions in national government such as Minister of Economy, Minister of Finance and Governor of Bank of Indonesia. At one stage *Masjumi* formed the Cabinet in which the Prime Minister, Mohamad Natsir, was their own leader. Some authors called the period of December 1949 to June 1953 as "the *Masjumi* period".

The most important figure in economic policy and theory from *Masjumi* was Sjafruddin Prawiranegara. Long after finishing his career in the government, he regularly wrote economic comments in the major publications in Indonesia until his death, except during the years 1958–1966 when he was imprisoned by the Soekarno regime. He was known as a man of integrity, honesty and courage in expressing his

opinions that were often critical towards the decision-makers.

In 1948, through Sjafruddin Prawiranegara the *Masjumi* made known its thinking in political economics. According to him:

> "The ideology which is suitable to our society is Religious Socialism, an ideology which is in harmony with the Constitution. Religious Socialism does not abolish individualism, individual initiative, and individual responsibility.... Competition arising out of private initiative [is allowed] as this is not bad, but [on] the contrary, because competition increases production and improves the quality of goods ... only at a certain stage does this liberal economy not increase production and is there a tendency to limit production. At that stage the government must intervene by nationalizing certain private enterprises or establishing enterprises itself".

Former *Masjumi* leaders, although the party has been banned since 1959, had been successful in encouraging young sympathisers to be interested in economics. Later they became not only respected economists but also interested in elaborating an economic theory consistent with the teachings of Islam. It is also interesting to see how the latest generation of *Masjumi* is also inclined to socialism. In fact *Masjumi* has been called *Sosialis Islam* (Islamic Socialist) by the people. They have always been close to the Socialist Party (*Partai Sosialis Indonesia* which was also banned as a political party with *Masjumi*).

Masjumi had the burden of managing the transformation of the Indonesian economy, from colonial economics to national economics. It had chosen a gradual transformation since the proclamation of independence on August, 17, 1945 and then the transfer of sovereignty from the Dutch in 1949 (when *Masjumi* was asked to form the government). It had programmes which recognized and protected business in Indonesia and returned to the original owners all business and goods confiscated by the Republic. Sjafruddin Prawiranegara had been criticized for defending this position that conformed to the conditions for power transfer of the Round Table Conference between The Netherlands and Indonesia.

For *Masjumi* it was not an easy job because the state of the economy during the time of colonisation was characterised by:

1. Export economics (products from plantations, forestry, mining) were monopolised and owned by Europeans.
2. Very heavy imports of products for consumption and industry.
3. The service sector was totally in the hands of the Dutch government and European entrepreneurs.
4. Most of the technical experts were European.
5. In general the indigenous people were poor.
6. The Chinese were the middleman between foreign business

people, particularly the Dutch and the indigenous people.[21]

The *Masjumi* as a Muslim party defended the Benteng policy that aimed to help indigenous business people through different facilities such as monopoly of import licence in 1950s. The policy, considered as unfair, received strong criticism from Chinese and European business people. It did not work for various reasons. It was the *Masjumi* that initiated the first nationalisation of banks in Indonesia.

Sjafruddin Prawiranegara was trained as a lawyer. He had received his knowledge of economics and finance through working for business and finance in the colonial administration. Although in his actions and writings one can feel a very strong colour of Islam, he never believed that there was such a thing as "Islamic economics" or "Islamic system of economics". For him, there was no difference between western capitalist economics and Islamic economics. He felt that if there was an Islamic economics, it is in fact a capitalistic economics, or profit-economics but with ethics based on the Qur'an where some economic practices are prohibited, such as economic exploitation, corruption, selling pigs and gambling.

Sjafruddin Prawiranegara had always taken a different interpretation from other Islamic scholars on *riba* (interest). For him interest from loans was not considered as *riba*. On the contrary he categorized an unfair business deal as *riba*.[22] He also criticized the preference for monetarism of the economic policy of the New Order Indonesia (started after the *coup detat* against Soekarno in 1966). He criticized the government of worrying more about inflation than the problem of unemployment and education that he considered as vital for economic development.

The economic policy of the government of Soekarno of 1959–1966 was opposed to the economic ideas of Sjafruddin Prawiranegara and the Muslims from the former *Masjumi*. Both Sjafruddin Prawiranegara and former members of *Masjumi* had opposed strongly the anticapitalist attitude of government, and the irrationality and irresponsibility of government in spending more money on armament and having a belligerent attitude towards Malaysia. They opposed the systematic nationalisation of foreign owned businesses in Indonesia and were against having closer ties with the communist countries. They did not like the government decision to quit the United Nations and its actions to kill the still young tradition of democrary in Indonesia. Former members of *Masjumi* worked with an important faction of the army in overthrowing the Soekarno's government.

However, the relationship between *Masjumi* and Soekarno remained to be very good until 1955. However that year Indonesia hosted

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21 Rosidi 1988, p. XVIII.
22 Rosidi, p. xxix.

the BANDUNG non-aligned movement conference, the first united front of the third world of different regions, religions and beliefs against the colonial power. Muslims were the main actor of the world movement for independence and a more just society where there will be no more *l'exploitation del' homme parl' homme.* 1955 was also the year that a really free election in Indonesian was organized under the government of *Masjumi.*

CONCLUSION

Muslims in Indonesia take economic issues as a very important matter. Everytime when there are problems they try to formulate an answer. Their attitude is always in line with capitalism. They are also pragmatic, sometime Keynesian, but at other times they accept the monetarism. Nevertheless, they are very cautious and conservative in their policy and always wanted to keep the right balance. They believed very strongly in the role of the State as an economic regulator but did not hesitate to critize the bureaucrary and they support economic deregulation as well as reform in administration for a more efficient government.

Their basic economic philosophy is that everything belongs to God but God has also given man an opportunity to profit from economic wealth through trade, industry, finance and other means and to keep, to protect and to defend it. Nevertheless they are expected to observe very closely Islamic ethics of economics so as to be generous to their Muslim co-religionists.

The important question asked by many scholars of economy from the west and the Muslim world: Is Islam as a religion conducive to economic development?

Distinguished European scholars such as Karl Marx and Max Weber and their disciples and many orentalists have tried to apply their expertise to the relation between economic development and Islam. Their views are widely known through their writings.

Intellectuals from Muslim worlds have taken the same question seriously as well. However their works are less well known in the European languages compared to the thoughts of Western scholars who have dominated the world since the industrial revolution.

We have to understand first how the Muslims see their religion and their relationship to it. As Mohamad Natsir, an important Muslim leader in Indonesia sees it, Islam is:

> "a way of life that gives equal duties to all mankind ... a code for the upholding of ethics ... for the regulation of relation of mans relations at home, society, in the government and the state ... the regulation of relations with people of other faiths ... with people of other countries; which gives guidance for the fulfilment of the physical and spiritual needs of man in order to attain his highest aspirations".

So Islam is perceived as a totality where all aspects of life: politics, economics, social, are integrated.

The very important difference in views of economic development between the Western world and the Muslim world has raised several questions whether there is a relationship between the attitude of Muslim towards a capitalistic society. Is Islam an obstacle to economic development? And if it is so what would be the answer and remedies?

The Qur'an, the words of God given to Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. and the *Sunnah*, the collection of the sayings and actions of the prophet, are very important sources for Muslim studies. The two books have many verses related to the question of economics and consider the subject as important.

In the book we find the following teachings. Commerce and trade are encouraged. Working hard is respected and a man has the right to get a salary as fruits of his work. Fraud is condemned. Individual property is respected, solidarity and generosity are encouraged. Social justice becomes an ideal. Even though Islam condemns the profits from *riba*, interest gained from loan and moralizes good and clean businesses, interdiction to make money from gambling, there is nothing that can be considered obstacles to the development of capitalism. On the contrary, the Islamic teaching encourages capitalism.

The explanation of the origin of the unequal development between the West and the Muslim world should be found in different directions. During the seventh and eighth centuries there had been an important class of bourgeoisie in the Muslim countries in the Middle East but unfortunately it had not grown large enough to form a class with a strong enough political power to be able to have relative independence from the State.

Syarikat Islam set in motion the crucial on going twentieth century debates of tradition versus modernity; conservatism versus progress; resistance and reform; east and west; continuity and change; colonialism and independence and above all Islam and world history. It is the task of the new generation of Muslims to answer the question.

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Glossary

Adat: Traditional norms and codes of behaviour, usually unwritten but widely practiced.
Alim: Religious leader; usually much respected.
Amanah: Religious duty/responsibility which has to be performed or fulfilled.
Amir-ul-Mu'minin: Commander of the faithful.
Anak buah: Followers.
Azimat: Talisman.

Babad Jawa, Hikayat Melayu, Hikayat Hang Tuah, Hikayat Raja-raja Pasai, Hikayat Patani, Salasilah Raja-raja Melayu dan Bugis, Sejarah Melayu, Tuhfat al-Nafis: Some well-known Malay historical texts.
Balai: Royal audience-hall.
Banyaga: Chattel-slave.
Bendahara: Prime Minister.
Bentara: Forest dwellers who were representatives of the Temenggong of Johor.
Berzina: Adultery.

Cap kurnia: Deed of royal gift.
Cap zuriat: Concessions given to members of the royalty and their heirs in perpetuity.

Datu: Official title meaning Lord, for males and females; powerful chief who was usually in charge of a region within the state; eg. in Muslim-dominated areas in Philippines.
Dosaan: Offence; sin.

Getah: Rubber.
Gutta perca: The latex-like sap of various species of Blanco Palaquim.

Hakim: Judge.
Hikayat: Historical writing/literature.
Hilir: Lower, hence *hiliran*, downstream.
Hukum Shara': Islamic laws & jurisprudence.
Hulubalang: Traditional chieftains.

Ilir, kuala, muara, parit, pesisir, sungai, tanjung, teluk: Common Malay words pertaining to water, rivers and seas.
Imam: Vicar.
Istana: Palace.

Jawi: Malay form of writing Arabic script.
Jihad: Performing good deeds in the service of God; narrowly used by Western writers as "holy war".

Kadi: Islamic magistrate; solemniser of marriage.

Kanchu: Chinese river headman, specific to the opening of pepper and gambier agriculture in Johor.
Kangkar: The settlement of the Kanchu, usually located at the foot of the river.
Kapitan China: Leader of the Chinese community.
Kati: A weight of 1⅓ lb.
Kawasan penghulu: The territorial domain of the village leader.
Kebun: Garden.
Kerajaan: Government.
Ketua anak negeri: A leader of the local-born community.
Khalifah: Vicegerent; God's "representative" on earth.
Kiapangdilihan: A Muslim slave who had committed criminal offence, adultery or not paid his debts.
Kuala: River-mouth.

Laksamana: Admiral who was in charge of all things naval.
Lembing: Spear.
Lipa: A dug-out.
Luwaran: Islamic code of laws.

Majlis Agama: Religious Council.
Manki Pimanggan of Boko: Forest dwellers who are representatives of the Temenggong of Johor.
Masjid: Mosque.
Melayu: Malay; belonging to the Malay race.
Menteri: Minister.
Mufti: Highest religious authority empowered to issue binding Islamic declaration (fatwa).
Mukim: Sub-district.

Nusantara: Malay World (Archipelago) of what is roughly present Southeast Asia.

Orang Kaya: Men of substance.
Orang Laut: Sea people.

Paduakan: A Bugis sailing vessel.
Pajak: Revenue farm.
Panglima: A titular office; village chief known for his military prowess.
Parang: Machete.
Parit: A drain.
Patinggi: Powerful head of the state; used in Sarawak.
Pegawai: Officer in the Government.
Pembesar: Close aides to the King or Sultan.
Penghulu: Village headman.
Pengiran: Powerful nobility in Brunei.
Perahu: Small boats/canoes.
Perhimpunan Parit: A Council of Villages.
Pesantren, pondok, masjid, surau: Common Malay words pertaining to Malay religious institutions.
Picul: A weight of 133⅓ lb.

Raja: King or Sultan.

Rotan: Rattan.
Rumah bicara: An audience-hall where decisions are made by the Datus.

Serampang: A trident.
Shari'ah: Islamic laws.
Syahbandar: Harbour master.

Tarsilah: Genealogical tree.
Tongkang: Chinese sailing vessel.
Tripang: Sea-slug, beche-de-mer.

Ulama: Religious scholars; learned men versed in the scriptures.
Ummah: International community of Muslims; a certain "pan-Islamism" ideological orientation.

Zakat: Muslim tithe.

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