

## **THE SULU SEA (1750-1990): THE REGIONALIZATION OF NATIONAL HISTORIES**

*Mohammad Raduan bin Mohd. Ariff*

This essay raises more questions than it can hope to answer. There is a great tendency for Departments of History in national universities of the region to over concentrate on the teaching of history that is confined within artificially defined national boundaries. University education which is an extension of the national education system often addresses issues raised within the curriculum of pre university schools. It is in the universities that research and teaching of histories continues to strengthen and consolidate the set-mind framework of earlier generations of national scholars. These custodians of national histories dawned the mantle of nationalism and fiercely defended their grounds of teaching and research. Breakthroughs in research are long in between and the daily routine that became the annual routine is the perpetuation of much the same about nothing new.

It is in the corridors of history departments that generations after generations of history school teachers are tutored and nursed to face the front-lines in the school system. The same could be said on the development of other disciplines in departments of teaching and research that are often associated with faculties of the humanities and social sciences. Disciplines jealously protect their disciplinary boundaries and resent intrusions by others and collectively faculties teach and research within national boundaries. The new frontier is to situate national histories in its regional setting.

A quick survey on nineteenth century Southeast Asia will reveal the growing volume of studies on the agricultural colonization of the region. The physical taming of vast tracts of land for the market economy has been the preoccupation of scholars in recent times. They have descended from J.C. van Leur's decks of European ships, ramparts of colonial fortresses and high galleries of trading-houses and headed straight for the flood-plains.<sup>1</sup> In a broad sense these scholars can be grouped under peasant studies. The Irrawady delta is the terrain of Cheng Siok-Hwa who pioneered the study of the rice export economy.<sup>2</sup> Michael Adas pushed the frontier with his classic *The Burma Delta: Economic Development and Social Change on an Asian Rice Frontier, 1852-1941*<sup>3</sup> and followed this study with another very closely associated field to rice cultivation that of peasant rebellions. The book *Prophets of Rebellion: Millenarian Protest Movements Against the Colonial Order* is a standard in Burmese history.<sup>4</sup> Rice, peasants and rebellion are the Southeast Asianists rebellion against an older generation of colonial historians.

---

The original version of this paper was presented at the 13th IAHA Conference, Tokyo, 1994.

The peasantization of history is also the phenomena of the Menam Chao Phrya. Scholars moving out of the gold gilded throne rooms of palaces went straight into the padi fields. In the 1950's James Ingram set the agenda with his *Economic Change in Thailand Since 1850* that emphasized the rice economy.<sup>5</sup> The peopling of the Menam Chao Phraya - 'land of one thousand stings' - is vividly portrayed in L.J. Sharpe's *Bang Chan: Social History of a Rural Community in Thailand*.<sup>6</sup>

The flooding of northern migrating peasants towards the Mekong delta in the mid-nineteenth century and peaking in the twentieth century is a similar theme in the writing on Indo-China. Rice was a strategic commodity in the economic expansion of colonialism in Southeast Asia. The peasants were mobilized into these plots of rice fields. Martin J. Murray's *The Development of Capitalism in Colonial Indochina (1870-1940)*, captures all the misery of an encapsulated peasantry serving an uncertain market economy with violent price structures, extreme profit maximization by rice traders and money lenders, cruel money lenders and frequent crop failures.<sup>7</sup> In island Southeast Asia, the islands of Java and Luzon became the twentieth century granary for food cultivation and baskets of human misery. The classic work of John A. Larkin, *The Pampangans: Colonial Society in a Philippine Province*, details the social life of rural society organising rice production for the markets.<sup>8</sup>

The island of Sumatra and the Malay peninsula were centres of cash crop production producing rubber for the industrial markets of Europe. Plantations, estates and small holdings hugged the roads and rails that transported these commodities to ports. Migrant communities from Asia were mobilized in large numbers as the labour force. Huge tracts of virgin tropical jungle were felled and replaced by neat rows of artificially planted rubber trees. The indigenous settlers were confined to the coast line in small rubber holdings.<sup>9</sup>

In all the huge rice granaries of Southeast Asia the phenomena of social movements expressed themselves in a multitude of forms. There emerged research specialists who have dedicated a lifetime explaining the historical meaning of such seemingly spontaneous outbursts of anger against the existing social order. J.C. Scott stands out amongst the rest with his insights in *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia*.<sup>10</sup> It provoked a serious rejoinder in the form of a book by Samuel L. Popkin entitled *The Rational Peasant: The Political Economy of Rural Society in Vietnam*.<sup>11</sup> The debate was set and the list of specialists grows as each advances our understanding of social movements. It is 21 years ago that Sartono Kartodirdjo authored *Protest Movement in Rural Java* which inspired many others to address the countryside.<sup>12</sup>

Standing back from the huge strides that have taken researchers away from the concerns of colonial historians, several patterns can be observed. In the first instance the land frontiers of the Irrawady, Menam Chao Phrya and the Mekong deltas of mainland Southeast Asia were recently populated. The same could be

said of the island of Luzon and the expansion of population in Java. It was in these densely populated rice fields that most of the peasant movements occurred. Finally it must be pointed out that the scholarly tradition on rural society and its rice economy appeared initially in the 1960's and took root in the 1970's and became full-fledged in the next decade. It was precisely in this period that each of the decolonizing nations of Southeast Asia went from land reforms as was advocated in the 1950's to agricultural development in the 1960's and the 'green revolution' of the 1970's. The research agenda and research funding and postgraduate training was organized to understand social change in the countryside. It was this very agricultural bound, rural bound and land bound agenda in the post-colonial period that invariably shaped national historical understanding. Historical reality was created by international agencies funding rural change within nationally defined boundaries.

Any construction of historical reality will have to be situated in the very processes that constructed that historical reality. The colonial period produced its own spokesmen. In the decolonization period the voice of nationalism permeated through textbooks. The emergence of new nations and their preoccupation with nation-building by instruments of planned change turned the attention to the peasantry as social actors in history. They were the democratic majority and their votes in the ballot box or their youth in the military barracks were the concerns of all states in Southeast Asia. The reality of Southeast Asia goes beyond the nation-state. Its real meaning is in its geopolitical reality that linked east and west sea-borne trade.

The Irrawady and Salween rivers flowed into the Andaman Seas and through it led into the Straits of Malacca. The Straits of Malacca flowed through many straits into the South China Sea. The Menam Chao Phraya, Mekong and Red rivers poured into the South China Sea. There are other vital passages that merged the Indian ocean with the other important seas in island Southeast Asia. The Sunda Straits, the Lombok Straits, the Banda and the Flores Straits carried eastbound vessels into the Java Sea, the Celebes Sea, the Banda Sea, the Flores Sea and beyond the Celebes Sea, the Sulu Sea. It was these interlocking seas and the trade winds that linked the continent of Africa, the peninsula of West Asia, the subcontinent of South Asia with that of the continent of East Asia. The strategic geopolitical location of Southeast Asia was, is and will be an important construct in any historical reality.

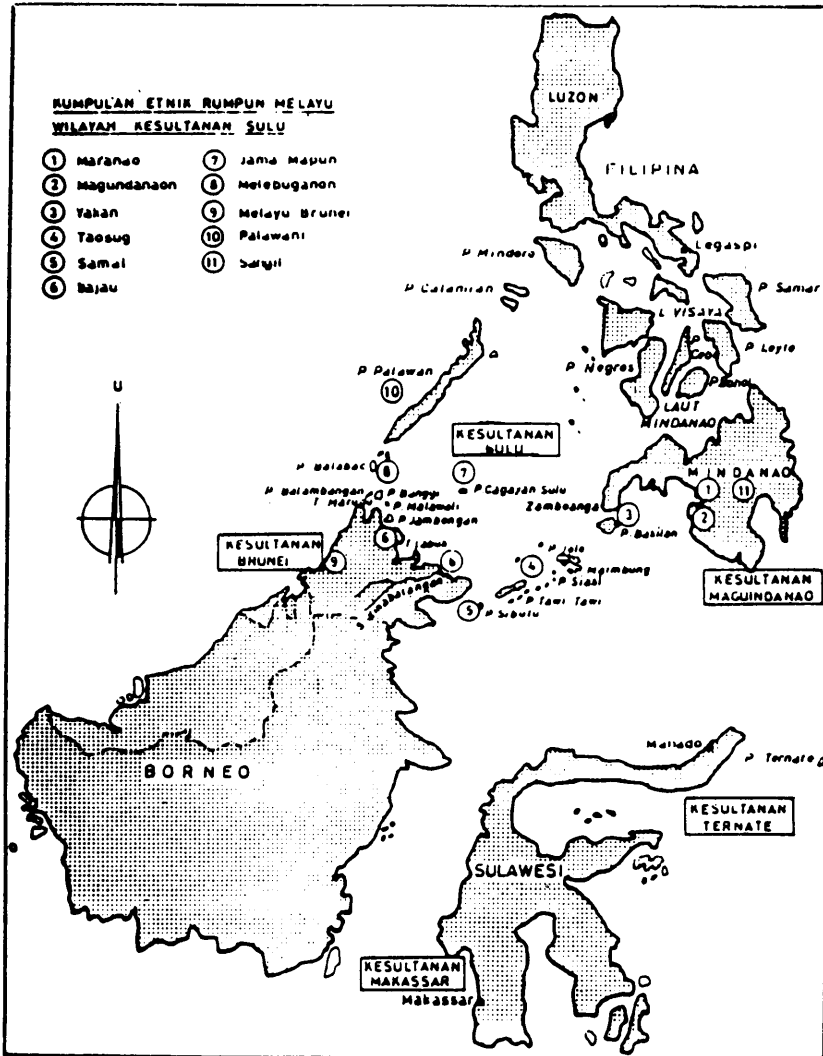
The kingdoms of island Southeast Asia straddled several groups of islands and strategic straits extracting from its domain economic resources, ruling peoples and controlling trade that was carried through these passages. The geographical space of Island kingdoms was never confined to a single island. Peoples were often identified with the island or the straits they originated from. Not only peoples moved but whole kingdoms migrated in the island world. The kingdom of Srivijaya on Sumatra shifted to Malacca on the Malay peninsula before retreating and regrouping at Johor Lama at the southern end of the

peninsula and in the early eighteenth century shifted once again to the Riouw archipelago and in the twentieth century its successors by male-line descent are in Trengganu. The Bugis of Luwu on the east coast of the south-western leg of the Celebes island moved and established the kingdom of Selangor in the eighteenth century on the Malay peninsula. In contemporary Southeast Asia the peoples continue to migrate and respond to markets. The Malay peninsula in the nineteenth and twentieth century is the meeting island of diverse communities of island Southeast Asia. The Javanese came, the Bugis arrived, the Banjarese, the Minangkabau, the Achenese, and others formed the personality of modern west Malaysia. Other islands too experienced the same processes at different periods in history. The modern nation-states are but mere artificial constructions between European colonial powers cutting across ancient power axis. The waters that separated islands could never be permanently cut.

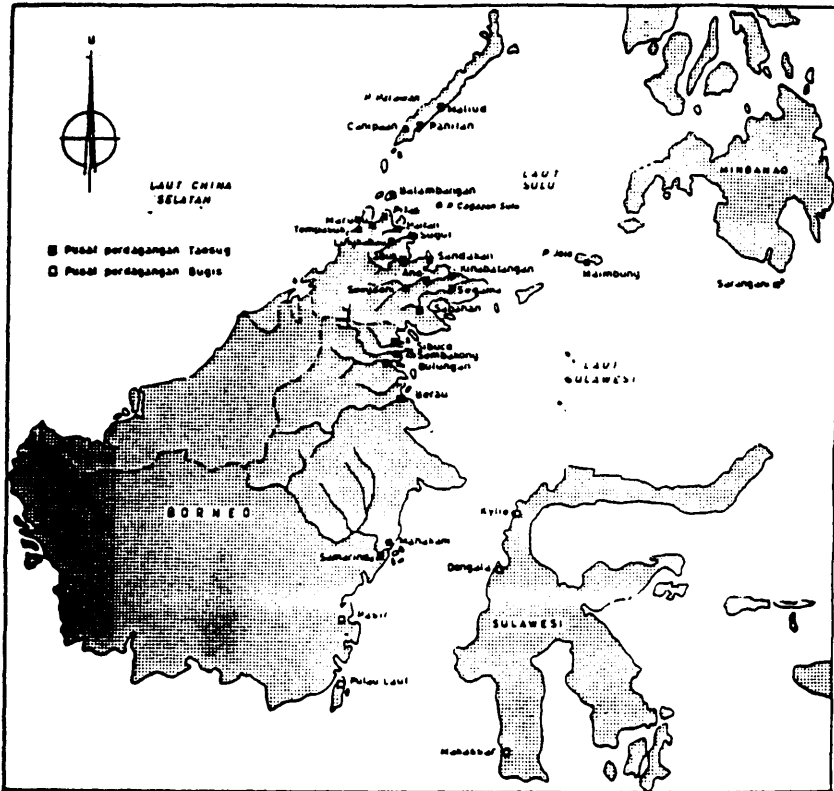
The Sulu Sea is one of many geographical expressions in island Southeast Asia where the divisions created by the British, Dutch and Spanish and later the Americans never really succeeded in severing the blood-ties of the diverse groups of island communities that peopled these islands in the sea.<sup>13</sup> The Sulu sea is the home of the Taosug, Bajau, Samal, Magindanao, Maranao, Sangil, Yakan, Palawani, Jama Mapun, Melebuganon and Brunei Malays. Each of these communities had a rough territorial division over islands but they could be found scattered in different parts of the Sulu seas. The marine resources of the sea and the forest produce of the islands, especially the east coast of Borneo, supported the maritime kingdom of Sulu ruled by Taosug Sultans. No serious effort can be made to reconstruct the reality of the Sulu seas by containing history within the boundaries of modern Sabah, Brunei, the Philippines and Indonesia. The land driven modern economies have shifted the focus of analytical units to the island of Manila and Luzon over Jolo and Pulau Maimbung; to Kota Kinabalu and west coast Sabah over Sandakan and east coast Sabah.

It was only a little more than a century ago that the island of Maimbung on the Sulu archipelago was the geopolitical centre commanding the Sulu and Celebes seas since the tenth century. The Taosug Sultans in an unbroken chain dominated all other communities unrivalled by others. In these seas many islands were clustered with its offshore reefs, channels, rocks and islets. The marine terrain provided a rich variety of marine produce for the China market. The mainstay of the maritime kingdom was its marine and forest produce for Asian markets. Beche-de-mer, shark's fin, mother of pearl, coral, tortoise shells from the seas and bird's nest and forest produce were the precious article of Asian commerce between the Sulu Sultanate and China. The dominant ethnic group in the Sulu sea were the Taosug. The nobility were Taosug. They formed the Sulu Sultanate. The other ethnic groups were subordinates and on key islands established their own kingdoms. In 1799 Thomas Forrest recognized no less than 33 smaller Sultanates on the Sulu Sea. However, the

Map 2: Ethnic Distribution and The Sultanate on The Sulu Sea (18th and 19th centuries)



Map 1: The Sulu Sultanate and Its Territories (18th and 19th centuries)



Sultan of sultans was the Jolo Sultanate. He had his representatives appointed on each island of his sprawling archipelagic state. *Panglimas* and *Datus* conducted the affairs of the state at the local level. The Sultan was the Caliph, the *Imam*, the leader in war, the fount of law and justice and the collector of *zakat*. He was the chief trader and the ruling class Taosug were the main merchant. Affairs of international trade and exchange were centralized and conducted at the *Rumah Bichara* at Jolo. From the vast territories produce was collected and sent to Jolo where the Chinese, Bugis and others came to trade.

At the end of the eighteenth century the Sulu Sultanate had complete domination of the north-eastern coast of Borneo. The area of Marudu was subjugated by the Sultan fightingmen and it served as an important resource base for trade in the Sultanate. The area covered the important rivers of the Paitan, Sugut and Labuk until Sandakan Bay. Mother of pearl, tortoise shells and rattan and other jungle produce was the main source of profits from this region. Further south on the east coast of Borneo were the territories of Mangindora which was noted for its bird's nest and forest produce and mother of pearls and *tripang* from the sea. The largest river of all Borneo, the Sungai Kinabatangan, was a vital artery in linking the inland areas with the coast and the sea. In neighbouring Tirun to the south the Taosug did not completely dominate the area peopled by the Tidung agriculturalists. It was in this area that the Bugis traders had a much freer hand to trade directly.

The principal items of China trade in the period 1750-1850 were pearls, tortoise shell, *tripang*, mother of pearl, shark's fin, bird's nest, wax, camphor, cinnamon, pepper, rattan and ebony. The items were low in bulk but high in value and profit margins for the merchants were enormous. Chinese junks exported to the region Chinese manufactured products such as porcelain, tiles, silk and satin garments, white and black cotton cloth, muslin and chintz piece goods, brassware, wrought iron, arms and munitions and rice, sugar, oil and lard. There existed a trade axis between China and Jolo and built around this European country traders who were unable to penetrate directly into the China market came to Jolo and purchased produce that was favoured in China in exchange for opium and guns. The Sulu produce were then carried to China in exchange for the much sought after China tea for European markets.

The technology used in extracting these resources for the China market was extremely simple. There was a heavy reliance on skilled manpower to extract these resources. *Tripang* was found in shallow coral waters and there were over 30 varieties and three grades for each variety. It was a much desired commodity in Chinese food culture. In 1835 over 10,000 *picul* of dried *tripang* was exported to China. The task of collection was by hand and the greater the number of manpower involved the greater the output. The *tripang* was cleaned and sun-dried or smoked over a fire for export. In the case of the shark's fin a spear was used for spearing the shark whose fins were subsequently removed and salted or dried for the China market. The collection of mother of pearl was

a much more elaborate and specialized affair. Pearl divers were known to commonly reach eight fathoms in depth and the better divers even 20 fathoms. The pearl diving period was in December and from February to May of each year. The Chinese highly favoured pearls from the Sulu seas for the making of head ornaments, jewellery and cutlery. The Chinese had acquired a taste for bird's nests in their food culture. There were two varieties of swallow nests. The most expensive were white birds' nests while the black bird's nest fetched only one-tenth of the former.

The export produces of the Sulu Sultanate for the China market was found in virtually every part of these seas and islands. The experts for the collection of these produce was identified in a given territorial space. However, these experts would leave their territorial space in search of good harvest from other quarters of the Sulu seas. In the collection of mother of pearl the Bajau specialists would leave his known waters and travel to other regions where other ethnic groups dominated. The movement of diverse peoples within the territorial area of each *datu* was a common feature. The Taosug ruling class dominated everyone. This complex structure of diverse ethnic groups under Taosug control collecting marine and jungle produces for the China market in the Sulu sea was broken by the combined efforts of the Spanish, British and Dutch colonial powers.

The breakup of the Sulu Sultanate went through several phases. In the early stage rival ports were established to collect produce needed for the China market. The next stage was the attack on the naval bases of the Sulu Sultanate. In 1848 the Spanish attacked the Samal fleet stationed at Balangingi. The third strategy was to execute in 1872 a trade blockade against the port of Jolo. The Taosug fleet was chased and destroyed on the high seas. The final assault was made in the later part of that decade where the port and fort of the Taosug Sultanate were captured. The Sultanate fell and never again regained its effective control over the whole of the Sulu and Celebes seas. The scramble for the Sulu and Celebes seas was for its resources, trade routes and manpower. The Spanish, Dutch and British colonial powers carved out territories that later were to form the Philippines islands under Spanish protection, Indonesia under Dutch protection and British North Borneo and the Kingdom of Brunei under British protection. The late nineteenth century colonial powers created new economies that drastically altered the earlier Asian based trade and commerce built on the extraction of natural resources in exchange for manufactured goods. The paradigm shift was towards agriculture for manufacturing requirements and food needs. Population increased, settlements developed and new urban inland commercial centres grew as geographical frontiers expanded further inland and away from the coast. The jungles were no longer the source of jungle produce feeding exotic tastes but the source of logs and timber for building materials. By the early twentieth century the pattern of the new colonial economy was firmly entrenched. The Sulu and Celebes seas had dried up as resource centres



and Manila and the island of Luzon was the centre of power, commerce and agriculture. The Taosug, Samal, Bajau and others were marginalized in the transformation. The Dutch concentrated on the islands of Java as a rice based economy and Sumatra for its commercial agriculture. The Celebes Sea, the Flores Sea, the Banda Sea and the Java Sea shrank in importance as the shift was made towards the land based economy. The British North Borneo Company opened new urban centres on the west coast of Borneo and the vast territories of Marudu, Mangindoro and Tirun were marginalized. The geopolity of Southeast Asia - its seas, lands and peoples were reconstituted to serve the industrialized economies of Europe, America and Japan.

The British territories on Borneo concentrated on tobacco and rubber cultivation, mineral exploitation and timber extraction. Asian immigrants from China were transported in large numbers to fill the new towns and urban centres that developed in the inland areas. A network of roads, bridges and rails linked the plantation, mining and timber extraction economies to ports and seas designed and defined by colonial powers.

The administration and objectives of British North Borneo Chartered Company contrasted with that of the former Sulu Sultanate. The Caliphate, the Imam, the leader of war, the administrator of justice and law, the collector and administrator of *zakat* and chief merchant was replaced by the Chartered Company. The Company established the necessary historical conditions in the form of infrastructures to attract others to develop the land based resources of its territories which were taxed as profits for its shareholders. The Taosug merchants and *Datus* were replaced Chinese traders and other native chiefs as the economic and political bases of the Borneo territories shifted from sea to land. Capital, technology and labour were applied on the natural resources for the pursuit of profits under British administration. Initially the thriving tobacco growing sector was located on the east coast of Sabah. In 1890 there were 61 tobacco estates on Banggi Island, in Marudu Bay and on the rivers of Labuk, Kinabatangan and Segama at Lahat Datu and at Tawau and Sandakan. Twenty years later there were only 12 such companies and by 1930 only one company braved on at Kinabatangan.

The fastest growing sector in the twentieth century was rubber. In 1902 there were only 100 acres and five years later a total of 3,226 acres of jungle land was cleared for rubber cultivation. On the eve of World War II over 96,000 acres were cultivated exporting almost 18,000 tons of rubber. The Chinese owned small holdings (less than 25 acres), medium-sized estates (25-100 acres) and estates (more than 100 acres) concentrated on the east coast of Sabah while western capital opened territories on the west coast of Borneo fronting the South China Sea.

It was the jungles of Borneo that was the source of immense profits and the mainstay of the colonial economy. The raw materials were not birds' nests, rattan, bees-wax, ebony and other jungle produce that were collected by inland

communities and exchanged with produce brought in by river and sea communities. The new sector was on timber that built the urban structures. In 1910 the export value of timber was \$642,935 and reached the \$2.2 million in 1940. In that year North Borneo was the third largest exporter of timber in the whole British Empire and Sandakan was its main port. The main markets for timber were the urban centres of Hong Kong, Japan, Britain and Australia.

The pioneering of Borneo land frontiers in the pursuit of profits relied on manpower drawn from Asian immigrants. North Borneo had a population density of only two people per square mile and most of them were engaged in the former exchange economy between the inland communities, the river communities and the sea communities ruled by the Sulu Sultanate. The Chinese during the Sulu Sultanate were mainly confined to trade at Jolo. These traders were disallowed to trade directly within the territories of the Sulu Sultanate. Chinese settlements in these islands was a slow process stretched over centuries with a high degree of integration and assimilation with the local communities. The twentieth century land based economy dramatically changed the demographic profile of the islands. In 1901 a total of 196 Chinese via Hong Kong and a further 193 from Singapore arrived in North Borneo. Ten years later the number of Asian immigrants swelled to 28,000 in North Borneo. In 1941 the total population of North Borneo was 309,618 of whom over one-third were immigrants. The majority of these immigrants were from mainland China and the rest were drawn from the diverse ethnic stock of Malays that made island Southeast Asia.

The five 10-yearly Census Reports of the twentieth century graphically captures the change and different emphasis on the social formation by the colonial authorities. In the 1901 Census Report each of the ethnic communities that made the former maritime Sulu Sultanate were painstakingly mapped out. They were located on the sea and its islands, the coastal belt of North Borneo and moving inland up the main rivers and into the deep interiors. Forty years later the focus was on the inland communities and the Asian immigrants who were drawn into the cash-nexus of the land economy. The Kadazan and Murut of 1901 were combined to form the largest ethnic group in 1941 overshadowing the diverse ethnic communities of the islands who were further reduced by into smaller ethnic units such as the land Bajau and sea Bajau.

The marginalization of the sea, its islands, its resources and its peoples is a twentieth century process. The Asian food markets were swallowed by European industrial needs. The Sulu sea and island communities off Borneo were reduced to the task of supplying fish for the growing inland urban markets. The process of change was gradual and the fishing sector was almost immediately captured and monopolized by Chinese traders who organized capital, technology, manpower and resources. The sector was administered by the colonial authorities. In 1891 only 910 individuals were registered as fishermen. In 1902 only 35 boats were registered as fishing boats at Samporna

and fees collected. Three years later the registered boat numbers increased to 370 and the Governor reported that the Bajau began to understand that trade must operate under the authority of a licence. The colonial authorities next moved to regulate, register and licence the very instruments used for catching fish. The inland and overseas markets demanded salted and dried fish for their urban populations. The fishermen caught the required fish species, cleaned it, salted the catch with the salt provided by the trader who bought the finished product. The strategic commodity in the entire fishing sector was salt. The profit margin was enormous. Fresh fish at Beaufort was purchased from the fishermen at five cents per *kati* and salted fish was sold to the estates at 22 cents a *kati*. In 1921 British North Borneo exported 17,380 *piculs* of dried and salted fish and 20 years later it had increased to 31,366 *piculs* valued at \$551,528. In contrast *tripang* which was once the mainstay of the maritime kingdom of Sulu exported only 893 *picul* valued at a little over \$11,000. The romanticized picture painted of the once powerful islanders under colonial domination was:

All around 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 Sipatang 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, Suluk and Tidongs. There are Chinese fishermen in Sandakan, who own large fishing junks and work further out into the deep waters than the native fishermen.<sup>14</sup>

In the postwar period the returning colonial government continued with greater conviction to establish the necessary infrastructures for an expansion of the export agricultural economy. In 1963 the timber, rubber and copra sectors constituted 50.6%, 32.10% and 17.6% of the total export value for that year. Dried and salted fish was only 1.2% of the total export value. In 1960 the population data according to occupations showed that 80.5% of the people were engaged in the agricultural sector of whom the fishermen were 3.5% of that total. The postwar trends showed a preference in the market for fresh fish and the strategic commodity in the industry was ice. The Chinese salt trader switched his operations from salt to ice. They continued to dominate and monopolize the industry with their capital, credit facilities, technology, transportation, boats and manpower.

The integration of the former North Borneo into the Federation of Malaysia in 1963 continued the established trends of a land based economy. Federal agencies such as Local Government and Housing, Social, Welfare and National Unity, Industrial and Rural Development and Public Works and Transport that were established in the former Federation of Malaya were extended to Sabah. In the fishing sector of Sabah, carbon copies of Federal agencies were established. The Ko-Nelayan was adapted after the Lembaga Kemajuan Ikan Malaysia. It was entrusted to modernize the fishing sector with subsidies and technological change. The core programmes included increase in productivity

by technological change, provision of facilities such as processing plants and transport and establishment of fishing centres at the local level. The state-led initiatives in the fishing industry concentrated on fish for the local food market. The international markets were catered by the private sector whose roots go back into the pre-independence period. The whole fishing industry was developed within fixed territorial boundaries. However, the social reality of the industry revealed that marine life as a resource knew no boundaries; that capital which invested in the industry knew no boundaries; that labour which earned a living in the industry knew no boundaries.

The markets for the marine resources of the Sulu and Celebes seas had collapsed. It had once supported the once omnipotent Sulu Sultanate. These seas were now but mere fishing grounds to feed the urban inland markets of Borneo and other urban complexes in Southeast Asia. Cheap salt and dried fish were staple exports from these seas in contrast to the expensive pearl, shark's fin and beche-de-mer. The fishing industry was commercially operated by Chinese merchants who controlled the salt. After the war the exports of fresh fish for inland markets increased and the Chinese merchants again dominated with the ice factories. In recent years the Japanese and American markets for prawns and tuna again saw the Chinese merchants dominating as they owned and operated the prawn and tuna processing factories.

At the end of the twentieth century the island economies experienced fundamental transformation. The dominant land economy is replaced by a strong manufacturing sector; the jungles are no longer the source of timber and logging rights; the seas are the resource base of oil and gas that supports the economy of the kingdom of Brunei; Sabah, Sarawak and Trengganu in Malaysia; and Banjarmasin and Sumatra in Indonesia. In 1993 the American Seventh Fleet sailed out of Subic Bay and with that it marked the end of 400 years of foreign presence in the islands and seas of Southeast Asia. The last decade of the twentieth century finally offers new possibilities freeing the researcher from captive histories. In 1992 A.B. Lopian embodied the free spirit of island Southeast Asia in his Inaugural Lecture entitled *Sejarah Nusantara Sejarah Bahari* at the University of Indonesia with the following statement:

Pendekatan sejarah maritim hendaknya melihat seluruh wilayah perairannya sebagai permasatu yang mengintegrasikan ribuan pulau yang terpisah-pisah itu .... bagi sebuah negara kepulauan, *heartland* atau daerah inti bukan suatu pulau, melainkan suatu wilayah maritim yang sentral letaknya. Jadi dengan pemahaman sejarah melalui studi aneka ragam satuan maritim, maka penjelasan proses integrasi berbagai unit ini bisa membuka peluang-peluang baru untuk membuat deskripsi dan analisis sejarahnya.<sup>15</sup>

The Sulu seas built a civilization and no nation-state can hope to appropriate that civilization as their exclusive national history. The shared history of these seas and islands knows no boundaries.

**Notes:**

1. J. C. van Leur, *Indonesian Trade and Society: Essays in Asian Social and Economic History*, W. van Hoeve Publishers Ltd, The Hague, 1967, p. 261.
2. Cheng Siok-Hwa, *The Rice Industry of Burma 1852-1940*, University Malaya Press, Kuala Lumpur, 1968.
3. Michael Adas, *The Burma Delta: Economic Development and Social Change on an Asian Rice Frontier, 1852-1941*, The University of Wisconsin Press, Wisconsin, 1974.
4. Michael Adas, *Prophets of Rebellion: Millenarian Protest Movements against the European Colonial Order*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1979.
5. James C. Ingram, *Economic Change in Thailand since 1850*, Stanford University Press, California, 1955.
6. L.J. Sharpe, *Bang Chan: Social History of A Rural Community in Thailand*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1978.
7. Martin J. Murray, *The Development of Capitalism in Colonial Indochina (1870-1940)*, University of California Press, London, 1980.
8. John A. Larkin, *The Pampangans: Colonial Society in a Philippine Province*, University of California Press, London, 1972.
9. See J.H. Drabble, *Rubber in Malaya 1876-1922: The Genesis of the Industry*, Oxford University Press, Kuala Lumpur, 1973 and Ann Laura Stoler, *Capitalism and Confrontation in Sumatra's Plantation Belt 1870-1979*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1985.
10. J.C. Scott, *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1976.
11. Samuel L. Popkin, *The Rational Peasant: The Political Economy of Rural Society in Vietnam*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1979.
12. Sartono Kartodirdjo, *Protest Movement in Rural Java*, Oxford University Press/P.T. Indira, Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta, 1973.
13. For the following discussion on the Sulu sea see Mohammad Raduan Mohd. Ariff, 'Dari Pemungutan Tripang Ke Penundaan Undang: Satu Kajian Mengenai Sejarah Perkembangan Perusahaan Perikanan Di Borneo Utara 1750-1990', Ph.D. thesis, Department of Southeast Asian Studies, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, p.36-84.
14. F.G. Whelan, *Our Land*, Borneo Literature Bureau, Hong Kong, 1962, p.50.
15. A. B. Lopian, 'Sejarah Nusantara Sejarah Bahari', Syarahan Perdana Fakulti Sastera Universitas Indonesia, on 4th. March 1992.