

# Knitting Togetherness among the Allied Malay: Aceh – Minangkabau – the Malay Peninsula

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**ABSTRACT:** *In the 15<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> centuries AD (Anno Domini), the trade map of the Malay peninsula is so inclusive; the Malacca strait was preoccupation with the activities of foreign trade fleet from Europe, the Middle East, India, and some other centers of world civilization. Referring to the constellation of Malay world trade, which was increasingly exotic, the Malay civilization and culture became higher. The Malay language became the lingua franca used in the commerce world of Malay at the time. This paper tries to elaborate the growth of Malay civilization that could not be separated from the shaft of Aceh – Minangkabau – Malay Peninsula. Aceh played the role of elites who held political supremacy of the Malay world, while Minang and the Malay Peninsula — in this case held by the related palace elites — held a position as the locus of proliferator in the aspects of sociological, anthropological, and the Malay culture became a major cultural identity in Southeast Asia for centuries to the present.*

**KEY WORDS:** *Allied Malay, Aceh, Minangkabau, Malay peninsula, interaction of the Malay, national awareness, and Malay ideology.*

## INTRODUCTION

*What is called as the allied Malay (Melayu) are people whose language and traditions are Malay and whose religion is Islam. The Malays are a group of Muslims residing in many regions having the same culture.*

Southeast Asia plays an important role as the meeting point of the world civilization. The archipelago in the region keeps story chunks with never ending discussion and advantage for the future. The discussion on the region should not be separated from the discussion on the Malays who

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are the keeper as well as the developer of the Malay civilization. In the past, in the range of 17<sup>th</sup> century, the land and the territory waters of the Malay became the most important place to be visited by foreign nations. The natural wealth in the form of spices, especially pepper, became the “green jewel” that was sought by the busy travelers and the wholesalers coming from Arab, Europe, and many other nations of the world.

Beside bearing the Malay treasury, in other part of the nation’s history, there are also various kinds of uproar stories in relation with interdimentional contacts on trade, politics, culture, and many other prominet aspects with the European nations. The spread of the God’s gift in the form of pepper plantation and gold mine caused the region to be laced with endless wars with the European military police. One thing that caused the region to survive from the the fierce onslaught of the Westerners’ guns was the same vision as “the great society”; the Malay community. The combination of the Malay community, mountains of gold, acres of the spices plantation, emporium of the coastal areas which were preoccupied by foreign trader constantly, maturity of Islam as the religion, and the no-retreat spirit of the military men of the Malay kingdom have put the Malay civilization as one of the great images in the great expanse of the human history. To be more specific, the discourse of the Malay civilization is restricted to the range when the Sultan of Aceh the 11<sup>th</sup>, Sultan Mughayat Syah, came to power in 1511 until the death of the Greatest Sultan of Aceh, Sultan Iskandar Muda, on December 27, 1636.

## **HETEROGENITY OF THE MALAY**

Discussing the advance of a civilization would not be separated from human aspect as the main catalyst of the presence of the grandeur and the supremacy of the civilization itself. In reality, the Malays inhabit many regions becoming the busy points in the span of Southeast Asia region. However, in accordance with the selected title, only three regions in the Malay which are discussed in this article, namely: Aceh, Minangkabau (West Sumatera), and the Malay peninsula and several other regions which historically were the proliferator of the Malay civilization.<sup>1</sup> The following are the profiles of general pictures of the three interrelated areas.

*First, on the Aceh.* Geographically, Aceh is located due West and also due North of the Sumatera island. Aceh position on the edge of the Malacca

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<sup>1</sup>This article, before revised, was presented in an International Seminar on the Traditions of the Great Malay Archipelago on March 16-17<sup>th</sup>, 2012 at Taman Budaya Sumatera Barat in Padang, West Sumatra, Indonesia.

strait has caused the region to gain a lot of profit since the Malacca strait is well known as one of the destinations for international trade.<sup>2</sup>

Aceh locus on the edge of the territory waters of the international trade was the triggering factor of the emergence of the socio-politics reconstruction modernizing social life in Aceh which previously was a small fisherman village which then turned into the emporium of the world. A wide variety of the merchant fleet docked and made transactions with the local residents.

The society's transformation comes together with the coming of Islam in Aceh. Aceh was the gateway to the initial spread of Islam in the archipelago, including Indonesia.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, the process of the coming of Islam had occurred since 7<sup>th</sup> century AD (Anno Domini) until the 13<sup>th</sup> century AD, the spread of this Muhammad's religion was limited to the region around the territory waters of the strait of Malacca. The emergence of the early Islam was concomitant with the dim of Sriwijaya's influence in Sumatera in the century.<sup>4</sup>

Just like panning for gold in murky water, the situation was completely exploited by Muslim traders to build a village merchant who was then established for the convenience of buying and selling access to the local population. Slowly but surely, they began to form a structure of government by appointing Merah Silu, the ethnic chief of *Gampong* (village) Samudera to be Sultan Malik al-Saleh (Tjandrasasmita, 2000:19), the first Sultan of Samudera kingdom.<sup>5</sup> Later, the kingdom is known as Samudera Pasai.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Since the Neolithic period, the strait of Malacca had become the migration path for the ancient Asian nations. See, for example, Zakaria Ahmad (n.y.:16).

<sup>3</sup>Uka Tjandrasasmita divided two views among the scholars and the historian on the coming of Islam in Indonesia. *First*, the group supports the coming of Islam in Indonesia in the early century of *Hijria* or the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD (Anno Domini). The theory was proposed by W.P. Groeneveldt, T.W. Arnold, Syed Naguib al-Attas, George Fadlo Hourani, J.C. van Leur, HAMKA (Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah), Uka Tjandrasasmita, and so on. On the other hand, another group that stated the coming of Islam was in 13<sup>th</sup> AD was C. Snouck Hurgronje, J.P. Mouquette, R.A. Kern, Agus Salim, and so on. See, for example, Uka Tjandrasasmita (2009:1).

<sup>4</sup>According to O.W. Wolters (2011:1), Sriwijaya had important contribution to the existence of Asian trade in the mid century for over 500 years. This opinion could be taken as a platform that Sriwijaya was the keeper of the uninterrupted flow of trade in Southeast Asia.

<sup>5</sup>There is an important story about the name of "Samudera". The Portugese called Samudera as Sumatera. Later on the name become the name for the whole island, Sumatera island. See, for example, H.M. Zainuddin (1961:116).

<sup>6</sup>Slowly but surely, after finding the platform, this kingdom grew as a strong kingdom after strengthening its position among the society. Thus, the kingdom became the catalyst of Islamic spread to its neighboring regions such as Aceh, Malacca, and Pidie. It can be

According to Anthony Reid (2011:92), between the time span of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century, there was an extensive network path of trade in Southern Asia which laid from the Red Sea in the West to Canton in the East as well as a large part of the Malay maritime world. This dynamic modality did not only form a wide road map of trade in Southeast Asia and the spread of Islam but also witnessed the birth of maritime kingdoms that initiated great ideals of the modernization of the Malay world.

Islam in Aceh did not only mean as a mere *letterlijk* (literally) which tended to be interpreted only at the level of rituals, but also became the reference for grounded in the formation of culture, traditions, and customs. One of the examples was the tradition of the kingdom in the past which was full of Islamic symbols, starting from the used title (*Sulthan, Kadi Malikul Adil*), the concept of government, ceremonial tradition of the palace (in which Islamic tradition differed from the kingdom) as well as numerous religious policies at the kingdom, especially those launched in the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Hadi, 2004).

Anthropologically, the Acehnese were plural, or in other words, they came from differing tribe, race, and nation. Snouck Hurgronje (1906:18) once interviewed a great scholar of Aceh in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Teungku Kuta Karang. This religious leader claimed that the Acehnese, actually, came from three differing elements of ethnicity, namely the Arab, Persian, and Turkish. Moreover, there was also the influence of Europe and India (Hadi, 2010:282).

There is no doubt that the reality became the special characteristic of Aceh, because in the past many people from differing parts of the world decided to rest and settle in Aceh. Furthermore, according to Ludivico de Varthema, in one corner of Aceh there were 500 money changers (cited by Hall, 1986:235), a fascinating phenomenon for that era. Therefore, the Acehnese is often associated with strong adherents of Islam. Islam has become the adhesive strength for inter-ethnic in Aceh (Hadi, 2010:278-279).

If it is viewed from the social class, the Acehnese, like other traditional kingdoms,<sup>7</sup> also called as pre-industrial society (Sjoberg, 1995:7-13), consists of four classifications: (1) the class of the kings and their families; (2) the class of the elites; (3) the class of the non-elites; and (4) the class of

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stated that the foundation of Islamic intensification in Aceh was initiated by this kingdom. Later on, in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the kingdom became the center of an international trade with pepper as its preeminent commodity. For further information, see Noor Huda (2007:64).

<sup>7</sup>Demak, Banten, Mataram, Ternate, Gowa, and Banjarmasin are categorized as traditional kingdom. See, for example, Uka Tjandrasasmita (2000:79).

the slaves. The class of the elites were respected because of their high social status. Generally, they had prestigious position in religion, government, and military services rank; wealthy merchants were also included in this class. The elite was often called as “the Rich”. The Rich came from the elite bureaucrats and the elite traders; and having “bargaining power” or prestige before the ruler or the king.

In *Hitu Tale*, the Rich was also called “the Great Man” (Rijali, n.y.). In Aceh, those called as “the Rich” was included in the nobility responsible for the administration of the city. This group was directly under the protection of the King. Instead, they were assigned to maintain the order of the palace. Generally, they did not bear the arm and were surrounded by loyal guards. Whenever the court hearing on various criminal matters were held close to the gate of the palace, the head of the Rich frequently attended the events (Tjandrasasmita, 2000:100).

If the elites were those who live on an exclusive level and only became a small nominal group, the non-elites were those coming from the common people. Generally, they had particular profession as the source of their livelihood such as farmers, fishermen, small traders, artists, and the builders. Though living outside of the palace or far away from luxury, this group supported the existence of the elite (Tjandrasasmita, 2000:105-106).

**Second, on the Minangkabau (West Sumatera).** In 1561, Henrique Diaz (1968:97-102) reported that there was a great event in the 16<sup>th</sup> century that was the sinking of Nao (large vessel) of the Portuguese, Sao Paolo, on the coast of Sumatra. Initially, the ship sailed from the Cape of Good Hope to Goa, but there was a violent storm dragged them into the territory waters of Sumatra. Many people were killed in the incident, a small group of survivors continued the journey to the mainland asking for help. Arriving at the nearby beaches, Portuguese sailors sent a crew and a Javanese slave as the translator to speak with the local residents about the name of river and the region. This slave used Malay language. Soon, they knew the name of the river in the region was “Minangkabau” and that region was home to the son of King Kampar.

From the incident, it is known that Minangkabau is a region that recognized the system of kingdom. Although Minangkabau was not comparable to Aceh, it implied a significant footprint in the 16<sup>th</sup>, especially as one of the community as well as the proliferator of the early Malay civilization. The same opinion was stated by J.C. van Leur in his article stating “*Minangkabau, the nucleus of traditional Malay culture and earlier royal power*” (Van Leur, 1983:174). This meant that Minangkabau was the starting place of Malay traditional culture and the pioneer force of

the kingdom in Southern Sumatera. Standing as an independent force, according to J.C. Van Leur (1983:174), Minangkabau, politically was contaminated by the implementation *a la* Javanese governance rather than the Malay peninsula.

Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, in the early July 1818, held a series of trips from Bengkulu to Padang in Sumatera. When he arrived at Pagaruyung, he was fascinated by the glorious heritage of Pagaruyung kingdom that he called it as “the Classic Malay Land”. It is stated in his note that Pagaruyung, which was home for the kings of Minangkabau managed to form the mosaic of localities as something recognized as a valuable work in its era. However, the beauty of the heritage was not known to the global community like the lost paradise. Thomas Stamford Raffles noted that until his arrival, there had never been European and Chinese nations who set their foot on Minangkabau. Minangkabau was isolated from international arena.<sup>8</sup> However, Anthony Reid noted that the kings of Minangkabau in Pagaruyung had strong charisma in the eyes of almost the entire coast of Sumatra island. Although the existence of the kings were mysterious, their relation with gold mines in the area of Tanah Datar was undebatable (Reid, 2010:186).

In other travel record in 1683, the Dutch Governor-General for Malacca, Cornelis van Quelbergh (Qualbergen) sent Thomas Dias to explore the upstream of Siak river and tried to establish diplomatic relationship with the king of Minangkabau. The goal was for the Dutch to be able to have direct trading with the kingdom well-known as the supplier of gold, pepper, and tin. Thomas Dias’ adventure in Minangkabau kingdom was colored with vagaries of the road that finally managed to build a dialogue with the king of Minangkabau and to assure Malacca as the right partner for Pagaruyung. For a souvenir, the king of Minangkabau appointed Thomas Dias as the royal servant bearing nobility title as “*Orang Kaya Saudagar Raja Orang di Dalam Istana*” (Rich Man of the King’s Merchant in the Palace), a rank which made him easy to have direct communication with the king, just like a high-ranking officials of the kingdom at large, without having preoccupied with bureaucratic rules of the kingdom.

In a conversation between Thomas Dias and the king of Minangkabau, the king acknowledged that Thomas Dias was the first Christian (European) who visited Minangkabau. The event was recorded in the king’s note that there was a Christian (European) who was the envoy of Malacca to

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<sup>8</sup>See, for example, *Memoir of Life and Public Services of Sir Thomas Satmford Raffles by His Widow*, Vol.1 (London: James Duncan, 1835, second edition), pp.401-409, 415-427, and 432-433.

Pagaruyung kingdom (cited in De Haan, n.y.:340-353).

From the three records written by foreigners visiting Minangkabau, slowly but surely, the identity of Minangkabau was revealed and became the top topic for the foreign nations, as one of the regions where gold mines and plantations of spices were abundant. Therefore, it could be strategic option that became the reference for European merchant for trading and to obtain spices and agricultural products from its original location.

Geographically, Thomas Dias noted that the location of Pagaruyung kingdom is not in accordance with the location of the modern Pagaruyung location in Selo river, Tanah Datar (cited in De Haan, n.y.:187). Meanwhile, by referring to a map made by Marsden, Thomas Stamford Raffles stated that Pagaruyung is located about 82 miles (approximately 132 kilometers) from the Northeast of Padang, and 66 miles (approximately 106 kilometers) from shore. Based on Raffles' observation, Pagaruyung was actually located no more than 50 miles (approximately 80 kilometers) from Padang, and 45 miles (approximately 72 kilometers) from shore, in a straight line. Its position is at the 14 Southern latitude and 28 miles (about 45 miles) from the East of Padang (cited in De Haan, n.y.:210). Pagaruyung itself is the capital of Minangkabau (Reid, 1999:100).

Minangkabau had a long way in the span of the history of Sumatera. Around 1356–1375, the region was a commonwealth of Majapahit kingdom in Adityawarman reign. Islam came to the region in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. After that, there was a three-kings system: *Raja Alam* (King of the World), *Raja Adat* (King of the Customary Laws), and *Raja Ibadat* (King of Divine Worship). The authority of the kingdom was closely related mainly with possession of the gold. Villages, known as the supplier of gold, were located at Tanah Datar (Graves, 2007).

In 1780s, gold reserves were decreasing and the old order of the old society was threatened by a large number of new resources of prosperity, especially coffee, salt, gembier, and textiles. Commodities were consolidated in mountainous regions of Agam and Limapuluh Kota. In 1803-1804, the two regions were the place for the sprout of the movement of Paderi (Ricklefs, 1991:213).

The area locating outside of the Minangkabau kingdom was governed by local noble men who were also called as "king". According to the tradition, they generally embraced patrilineal rather than matrilineal kinship system that had become customary in Minangkabau. These small kingdoms were semi-independent. It is proved by the use of the name of the king of Pagaruyung, as a form of political recognition, in taking taxes port charges (Graves, 2007:37-38).

Pariaman and Tiku, two areas on the West coast of Sumatra, were important areas as the international pepper trading port. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, these areas were occupied by Aceh which had a great agenda to dominate the boiling points of the international trade (Lapian, 2008:48). Anthropologically, the stratification of Minangkabau society at the time, as stated by Uka Tjandrasasmita (2000), belonged to the traditional kingdom in which the king and his family occupied the top position of the pyramid of the class of society.

**Third, on the Malay Peninsula.** The Malay peninsula is located on the edge of the Malacca strait. The region was said to be the homeland of modern Malay society since many Malay kingdoms were located in the region. The kingdom of Malacca, Johor, Pahang, Trengganu, Perlis, Perak, and Kedah and many other kingdoms were actively engaged in the development of the great revolutionary project of putting Malay as the central position of the world trade. The modernization of the architecture of the Malay peninsula society was adopted when Muslims traders started to bustle to flock the area. Like in many other regions, in addition to trade, these Muslim traders also spread the religion of Islam.

Referring to Marco Polo's travel report, Islam started to spread in the Malay world when Parameswara converted to Islam in 1414; and when Perlak became the first region to embrace the religion (cited in Saifullah, 2010:42). Parameswara was the founder of the Malacca kingdom, which was formerly at Tumasik (Singapore). Having converted to Islam in 1406, he titled "King Iskandar Syah". Before moving to Tumasik, Parameswara lived in Palembang and had another name, "Sri Tribuana" (Lapian, 2009:102).

Parameswara's ability to create diplomatic relations with foreign countries, either with Samudera Pasai or China, could strengthen the position of Malacca. As a result, Malacca changed its face and became a new center of trade and replaced the supremacy of Southeast Asia trading which was in the hand of Samudera Pasai. Due to the proliferation of foreign merchants who made transactions in Malacca, slowly but surely, the center of the spread of Islam gradually shifted from Samudera Pasai to Malacca (Azwar, 2011:13). The same statement is expressed by the Indonesian maritime historian, Adrian B. Lapian (2008:48), that Malacca as the stakeholder of trading in the Malacca strait in Sout East Asia replacing Samudera Pasai.

Pocut Haslinda MD Azwar (2011) explained that there are three imperial heirs to the greatness of Malacca, namely the kingdom of Pahang, Johor, and Perak. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Pahang was the colony of Siam kingdom, before being released by Malacca troops under the leadership of *Bendahara*

(Treasurer) Tun Perak on the command of Sultan Manshur Syah. To control this new territory, the Sultan sent Seri Bija Diraja as the representative of the Sultan of Malacca, before finally crowned his son named King Muhamad Syah as the first Sultan of Pahang.

Johor became a sultanate after the conquest of Malacca by Portuguese in 1511. Sultan Mahmud Syah I had a unique position since he was the last Sultan of Malacca (1488-1511) as well as the first Sultan of Johor (1511-1528).<sup>9</sup> Days of the first Sultan of Johor were always haunted by the pursuit of the Portuguese troops. Therefore, he always moved from one region to another until his death in Kampar island (Vlekke, 2008:104).

Although Sultan Mahmud Syah I always spent his life in foreign countries as for he was the most wanted person by the Portuguese, his authority and supremacy over his territory did not fade. An important man of Perak origin who knew and sympathized with the track record of the struggle of Sultan Mahmud Syah I asked the Sultan to enthrone his son to become the first Sultan of Perak. The request be passed and after a few while Sultan Mahmud Shah I inaugurated King Muzaffar who was the son of this important man of Perak as the first Sultan of Perak (Azwar, 2011:13-15).

The residents of the kingdoms in the Malay peninsula suffered a massive migration when Sultan Iskandar Muda had the authority over Aceh. The war with Pahang in 1613 had made the population of Aceh declined sharply since many of the Acehnese troops were killed (Vlekke, 2008:45-55).

Apart from the above three regions, there were several other regions of the Malay civilization which are important in running the trade in Southeast Asia, especially in Southern Sumatera. J.C. Van Leur (1983:174) stated that the northern coast of Malaya was in Siam' sphere of political influence (Patani, Sengora, and Ligor). In southern Sumatera, beyond the power of Achin, lay Jambi and Palembang, dominating the Batang Hari and Musi rivers.

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<sup>9</sup>According to another resource, there was a folklore saying that the princess of Bintan, named Tun Sri Binai, married a king from Siguntang valley and became the first king in Riau. From the marriage, many kings who ruled Johor, Singapura, Malacca, and many other kingdoms were born. The story was referred to a manuscript stating: "[...] *pada masa itoe kepala prampoean nama djoea Toen Seri Bineij ja la jang mengambil radja jang datang darie Boekit Siegoentang nama djua, satria ja la jang mendjadikan radja di Bintan, maka toeroen toemoeroen dari pada satria boeana inie la asal radja Melajoe sampaeij malarat ka Singapoera sampaeij ke Malaka*" [... in that time, there was a woman leader, Tun Sri Binai, who had married with king of Bukit Siguntang and also first king of Bintan. The two of them were ancestors of all kings of Malay, Singapore, and Malacca]. See, for example, *Encyclopedie van Nederlands Indie*, Vol.III (Leiden: Martinus Nijhof, 1905), pp.605-626; Nahar Effendi (1973); and *Mukhtasar Tawarikh al-Wusta* (Short Chronic of the Riau Region) in Library of Leiden University, Netherland, 1999.

Besides, the so-called Palembang was said to be one of the parents of the Malay culture, especially in the 7<sup>th</sup> century. This opinion was referred to an ancient record written by an envoy from Tiongkok, Yi-Jing, who stated that *Mo-Lou-Yu* (Malay) was located in *Shi-li-fo-shi* or *Fo-shi* (Sriwijaya). According to Fukami Sunio (2002:97), this interpretation stated that Malay became the territory or the colony of Sriwijaya. The main reason for this opinion was the identification of Malay with Jambi (or the valley of Batang Hari); and Sriwijaya with Palembang. Reflecting on this theory, indirectly, an opinion that Jambi may be a part of Malay territory might also be drawn. Recently, Riau was also mentioned as one of the homelands of the kings in the Malay peninsula (Darmiati, 2004:188).

### **INTERACTION OF THE MALAY**

Dialogical relationship between Malay nations in the Southeast Asia had been intertwined for centuries ago. Actually, the patches of brotherhood with the inter-island trade routes and *meubisan* (a tradition to relate two families into one through marriage) had been commonly used as a means of strengthening relations among kingdoms in Malay, especially when Samudera Pasai was then replaced by Malacca as the center of trade. Indirectly, the good relationship between the leader and his people existed. However, the harmony was broken when the Portuguese seized Malacca in 1511. Portuguese arrival in the Malay world was mentioned as a factor triggering the outbreak of the destruction of the allied Malay's inscriptions.

The success in occupying Goa on 10<sup>th</sup> November 1509 did not satisfy the thirst of Portuguese conquest in the archipelago (Amal, 2010:10). Malacca,<sup>10</sup> in 1500, was the busiest trading port in Southeast Asia. While visiting the trading port, with their own eyes the Portuguese traders saw how the harbor was crowded with people. In addition, Malacca was also an international city and managed to become the main port of trade traffic and shipping spices (Lapian, 2008:41), where many foreigners lived. Around the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, Malacca residents numbered an estimated of 190,000 people and the largest population living around the harbor were foreign nations. Tome Pires also noted that the kings of Pahang, Kampar, and Indragiri established trade offices in Malacca; though in general their roles were passive, but they could also color the hustle and bustle of life in the port city (cited in Lapian, 2008:60).

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<sup>10</sup>According to the Portuguese fishermen, when they stepped their feet on Malacca, Malacca was the richest harbour in the world. Hiperbolically, Tome Pires (1468-1540) stated: "*Anyone conquering Malacca could gobbled up Venesia*". Venesia was one of the most crowded trading ports in Europe. See, for example, Jack Turner (2011:29).

After coming back from Malacca, Portuguese traders reported to the Viceroy of Goa, Alfonso d'Albuquerque, on any progress that lied in Malacca. Responding to the report, Alfonso d'Albuquerque ordered to prepare a fleet of seven battleships, 10 cargo ships, and 13 ships transporting troops which directly went straight to the heart of the port of Malacca. Soon, after arriving on the coast of Malacca, the firing of the canons of the Portuguese ships broke the crowd of trade in Malacca. The people made frantic scattered aimlessly. As long as they inhabited Malacca, they had never heard the thump of the canons. Among them were some who thought that the source of the sound of thunder was from the sky (Amal, 2010).

The panic stricken the public space of Malacca did not last long. Tun Hasan Tumenggung deftly coordinated with the people of Malacca to beat the Portuguese army back from the mainland. With unflinching spontaneous spirit, they managed to scatter the attack scheme of the Portuguese on their arrival in the mainland. Soon the situation turned around and the Portuguese were in distress. Many of the Portuguese troops were dying. The scattered weapons were seized by the people of Malacca. This conquest expedition was declared a failure.

Hearing the bad news, Alfonso d'Albuquerque was mad and removed the commander who failed to bring Portuguese to glory in Malacca. The Portuguese viceroy immediately ordered to form a new fleet to attack Malacca again. Alfonso d'Albuquerque was fully conscious that in order to conquer Malacca, he needed a great and hefty combat troop. Toward the end of his working term, he went to Lisbon and asked the King of Portugal to strengthen his combat armada. His wish was answered, the King of Portugal approved his plan and give Alfonso d'Albuquerque four battleships and five ships carrying troops. In the spirit of never losing, Alfonso d'Albuquerque led the fleet with the plenary aim to counquer Malacca (Amal, 2010).

In 1511, it was a historical year for Southeast Asia. At that time, Malacca fighters were assisted by the Chinese ships and a number of merchant ships from Gujarat who desperately defended Malacca from the onslaught of the Portuguese naval of volume II, after the previous request of "peace" by Alfonso d'Albuquerque was rejected by the Sultan and Princes of Malacca. The duel is the persistence to defend Malacca versus the fierce of the Portuguese. This time, the wind of victory started to blow to the opposite direction, right on the morning of 26<sup>th</sup> July 1511, the Portuguese managed to stick its supremacy in Malacca. Since then, the Portuguese entrenched in Malacca for 130 years until the Dutch's VOC (*Verenigde Oost-indische Compagnie* or East India Company of Netherlands) arrived and took Malacca in 1641 (Amal, 2010:11-14).

The fall of the king of Malacca's power and other areas conquered by Portuguese were illustrated dramatically by K.N. Chauduri (1989:66) as "years of heroic activity" where the king of Asia maintained its coastline desperately, even though the Portuguese was finally able to take over the emporiums which were originally ruled by the king of Asia. Some of the names of the busy trading ports were ports of East Africa, Malabar, Konkan, the Persian Gulf, and the last the Malacca strait which were conquered by Portuguese.

The most important commodity in the western part of the archipelago was pepper. Pepper topped the most sought commodity from other spices. The price was higher than the price of other spices in the market in Europe and China (Raliy, 1980:32). International commercial fleet frequently visited Pasai, Pidie, Jambi, Palembang, Lampung (Tulang Bawang and Sekampung); the cities of the west coast of Sumatra such as Pariaman, Tiku, and Barus; and Banten and Sunda Kelapa in West Java.

Referring to the records of Tome Pires, Pasai produced 8,000 to 10,000 *bahar* per year, especially when it was big harvest which reached 15,000 *bahar*. Bangka was known as an exporter of food, forest products, cotton, and iron. Meanwhile, in addition to pepper, the west coast of Sumatra also exported gold, aloes wood, camphor, incense, silk, amber, honey, and other foodstuffs. All of these commodities came down in Malacca as the major international market (cited in Lapien, 2008:85).

The fall of Malacca also struck peace in Aceh Darussalam palace. In the same year as the event, Sultan Ali Mughayat Shah was asked to lead the kingdom of Aceh Darussalam. During that time, the Sultan began to unify the vision of the entire army officers and the bureaucrats of the Aceh kingdom and carried the spirit to wipe out the influence of Portuguese in the Malay. Although the Portuguese seized Malacca, but the failure of the Portuguese in many gun battles with Aceh became positive memory that the Portuguese in the Malay lands, including in Malacca, would be defeated. Previously, Aceh often carried out attacks against the Portuguese army when crossing the strait (Lombard, 1986:36), because it was known that the Portuguese wanted to make Malacca as a missionary center but failed due to an internal factor namely no conversion to Christianity on a large scale (Hadi, 2010:9).

Therefore, to embody these ideals economic resilience and sophistication of the strong fleet (naval) is necessary, that's what Sultan Ali Mughayat Shah believed (Hasjmy, 1983:97-98). In 1550 and 1574, the armada of Aceh war joined with those of Johor and Demak to attack the Portuguese defense in Malacca, but this combined attack was a fiasco (Vlekke, 2008:108). This

spirit of hatred, carried down through the generations until Sultan Iskandar Muda, the king who was touted to bring Aceh into the top golden.

As a strategic breakthrough, the Portuguese began to install stakes of dominance in several Malay kingdoms. The result was positive; some Malay kingdoms such as Pahang, Johor, Kedah, and Perak that previously were closely related to Aceh for they made *meubisan* tradition (a tradition to relate two families into one through marriage) as one of the holy brotherhood adhesive factors of the Malay race was successfully annexed into the trap of the Portuguese. Portuguese was famous for justifying all ways in politics and managed to scatter the unity of Malacca.<sup>11</sup>

Portuguese realized that even though Malacca was overrun holistically, the Portuguese seemed to have to think long to conduct patrols around the territory waters of Malacca. It was caused by the influence of Johor, which was constructed by Portuguese later on-and Aceh in the Malacca strait were still very strong. Presumably, the Portuguese chose a safer path, rather than getting caught in the crossfire with the two kingdoms (Chauduri, 1989:74). This condition made Sultan Iskandar Muda offended and decided to have military diplomacy to free the kingdoms of the Malay from Portuguese.

Conquest of the kingdoms in the Malay peninsula is a major step to stop the influence of the Portuguese in Malacca territory waters. Sultan Iskandar Muda attacked the Malay peninsula since the kingdoms in the region often made diplomatic contact with the Portuguese. In addition, the conquest of the kingdoms of the Malay peninsula was intended to facilitate an attack on a large magnitude toward the Malacca by Portuguese. In 1618, Sultan Iskandar Muda sent his naval army of 17,000 troops to the kingdom of Pahang. The city was destructed and the Sultan of Pahang with 10,000 people consisting of government officials and his people were taken along to Aceh (Linehan, 1936:35).

Subsequently in 1619, a great Acehnese fighting force approached the northern Malacca, particularly the kingdoms of Kedah and Pattani. In the battle, Kedah was assisted by Pattani, but the strength of the two kingdoms were repulsed by the Acehnese troops (Hasan, 1980:159-160). In Kedah, the Acehnese army damaged and destroyed crops of pepper since it was often sold to the Portuguese. Sultan of Kedah, who was very old together with 4,000 people, suffered similar fate as Pahang; they were brought into Aceh. In the following year, the kingdom of Perak which was famous for its

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<sup>11</sup>M. Adnan Amal (2010:3) noted that Portuguese political style tended to be harsh and tough. It's different from that of the Dutch and the British whose economical condition are developing and whose industry are reliable for the welfare of their society. Conversely, the Portuguese did not have those modalities and tended to put forward political intrics to deceive the Sultans and local leaders in its conquered areas.

tin mines had the next turn. Its capital city was conquered and about 5,000 of his people were taken to Aceh as a prisoner (Tiele, 1886:246).

Then, in 1635, Sultan Iskandar Muda still made an attack on the kingdom of Pahang. Pahang city could be destroyed and many people were captured. The attack was motivated by Pahang's help toward the Portuguese when Aceh attacked Malacca in 1629. Hostilities with the Pahang came to an end when King Mughal, son of Pahang, became the King of Aceh with the title of Sultan Iskandar Thani (Lombard, 1986).

In that military expedition, it was highly possible that Sultan Iskandar Muda got some advice and input of ideas from his staff, including Tun Sri Lanang. Tun Sri Lanang, who had previously been titled as "the Rich" or the adviser of King Aceh, who once became the treasurer of Johor, must be very aware of the interrelationships between Portuguese and Malay kingdoms. Ideally, Sultan Iskandar Muda would not have carried out the attack, before knowing about geographical, geopolitical, socio-religious, and economical conditions of the kingdoms in the Malay peninsula. To fill this void, the opinion of Tun Sri Lanang was very vital for consideration prior to the shooting (Azwar, 2011:5).

Military expeditions undertaken by Sultan Iskandar Muda could not stop the activity of diplomatic contacts between the kingdoms at the Malay peninsula and Portuguese, even though it was done with mature and focused plan. Although many buildings in the city were destroyed and the people became the hostage in Aceh, but Johor, Pahang, and Pattani were not discouraged and even gave assistance to the Portuguese frequently (Sufi, 1995:68). W. Linehan (1936:35) recorded that the total captive of the Malay peninsula kingdom amounted to 22,000.

In the Sultan Iskandar Muda era, Aceh had mastered almost all the Malay world. It is noted that Pahang, Pattani, Perak, Siak, Indragiri, Riau, Lingga, and to the south, according to a letter of Sultan Iskandar Muda to the King of England, as well as Palembang and Jambi, including the cosmopolitan port area as Pariaman, Tikus, Salida, and Indrapura, were among the territory of Aceh (Suny ed., 1980:160). Slowly but surely, Aceh dominated the spice trade and replaced the position of Malacca as a trading center. At that time, the kingdom of Aceh had been a super power that can be said to successfully create "Pax Malay" in Southeast Asia.

## **THE PROTOTYPE OF NATIONAL AWARENESS AND MALAY IDEOLOGY: BETWEEN HOPE AND REALITY**

The extensive power did not benefit only on political and economic matters for the Acehnese kingdom in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, but also issued a

new phenomenon that was the mushrooming ripples of consciousness on “the allied Malay nationalism” in Southeast Asia, particularly in reference to the golden triangle relationship between Aceh, Minangkabau, and Malay peninsula.

As it is noted above, Aceh played a role as “King of Kings of Malay” who was responsible for securing his area from the influence of the invaders. Just like a house, Aceh’s position as “barbed wire” that made the barricades over a wide range of luxury goods in the house. This course required a variety of supporting factors such as political freedom, economic independence, and, in the context of that time, the sophisticated military force. Another thing, that stuck out in the flowering of the phenomenon of unification of the Malay race at the time, was the position of Malay as a *lingua franca* which was commonly used in the regional association, even on several occasions, including global trade, that became international language (Hadi, 2010:284). The crowd of foreign trade armada in Malay trading ports dotted with the use of Malay language by both local residents and foreign merchants from both West and East, became irrefutable evidence, the role of culture and language as the elementary factors elevating the dignity of the Malays in the world.

Not only dwelling in trade, the use of Malay language was also spreading used by the royal society, the administration, and the academic world. By establishing Malay language as the language of the kingdom, then naturally, Aceh had become the kingdom of “Malay” in culture. So, how was the development of the Acehnese language? Amirul Hadi (2010:284) said that the Acehnese language was only used in rural communities, while the Malay language became the language commonly used in urban areas that characterized modern and cosmopolitan society. Looking at this phenomenon, it is right to categorized Aceh as one of the Malay kingdoms like other kingdoms in Southeast Asia level. In fact, one of the glories of Aceh was to accommodate the Malay language and culture with the values of the Aceh – which of course enhanced by an adjustment to the teachings of Islam (Andaya, 1999).

Aceh, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, had reached a steady state level, especially when viewing other territories of Aceh which were not less steady. Minangkabau was one of those areas called as the mother of the old Malay civilization by Thomas Stamford Raffles (2008). When Henrique Diaz and another Portuguese ship crew stranded in the territory waters of western Sumatera, he sent his crew accompanied by a Javanese slave as an interpreter. Having come face to face with local residents, the slave used the Malay language that was already agreed by the countries of Malay

as the “national language” (Diaz, 1968:97-102). Minangkabau’s position, as the womb of Malay civilization, just like what was said by Thomas Stamford Raffles (2008) and J.C. Van Leur (1983), became a major modality to formulate the identity of Malay across Southeast Asia.

R. Moh. Ali (2005:352) put forward the following opinion: “*the essence of history is human*”. This means that reading the stretch of the Malay civilization, particularly initiating a reform in the future, cannot be separated from the role of the characters as intellectual actors who took part in building from *gampong* (village) to palace in Malay. More importantly is the strong central governance system which relies heavily on how to care for life at the grass roots.

Its relation with the Malay peninsula was tangent with strengthening of the unification and the Malay civilization that has been initiated by the Acehnese. Sultan Iskandar Muda may be said to be the figure of the time as the archetype, borrowing Carl Gustave Jung’s paradigm,<sup>12</sup> who initiated “the Pax Malay”. This was evidenced by the persistent of the Sultan to reconstruct the Malay association which previously was free, making it easier for the Portuguese influence to go through and grow influence, to a more “bound” simply to dispel the efforts of mending (*penukangan*) conducted by the Portuguese.

The great idea of the allied Malay was initiated by Sultan Iskandar Muda as a prototype of national Malay consciousness. In this contemporary era, even though administratively the Malay countries had been separated, but the spirit of unity of the allied Malay that emerged in the past can be used as a compass reference of the present civilization to wade through the rigors of the ocean.

Looking at the complexity of the crisis that hit most of the countries of Southeast Asia is like facing on the dry and hot desert. These circumstances should cause the deepest consciousness of the nation’s leaders of the Malay to sit together in order to produce a creative idea that reposition socio-culture fields become more relevant and targeted. It is commonly known that the chaos that often plagued the countries of this Malay-based roots was a manifestation of the fragility of our self-confidence and the scarcity of visionary thinking as reflected in the splendour of the development that

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<sup>12</sup>In its original meaning, “archetype” is the basic form taken from myth, *wiracarita* (heroic stories), as well as tale. Carl Gustave Jung (1877-1855), a psychologist of Swiss by origin, named this basic forms archetypes opinion which precipitated inside human soul. See Carl Gustav Jung (1970:139). In the context of Iskandar Muda, this Acehnese kingdom became the archetype opinion having charisma for his nobility and his bravery to oppose the colonizer that established high charisma and reluctant among other Malay kings to miss his policies.

etched the Malay sultans. This view is not intended to bring into a maze of romantic (echoed to the past glory and future low resolution), but to internalize the spirit of greatness of the nation's 17<sup>th</sup> century Malay, as *elan vital* to do something better in order to repair the body reconstruction of Southeast Asia that had fallen by multi-sector crisis, mainly Indonesia's social storefront was increasingly messy.

The cross-wrapped political chaos, to borrow Nietzsche's term "the will to power" (cited in Jung, 1970), is like a row of missiles that bombed common sense, so that the disposition, descrediting, and sense of mutual suspicion burst like a pestilence that strangle the spirit of collectivity that has rooted since the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Like or dislike, accept or not to accept, this is what happened at present. The wonderful memory of Pax Malay admired by the recent historian is now like a piece of wood eaten by termites. The country exists but the *zeitgeist* is gone with the wind.

As a child of the clan-tribe nation of Malay culture, all of us are summoned to reconstruct *lebenswelt* (public space) of the Southeast Asia hitting by various problems. It is time for the maturity of the artwork of the civilized artists that had previously harvested, now is presented back, of course, with contextualization or alignment with contemporary life and more revolutionary.

The community of the allied Malay embodied by the ASEAN (Association of South East Asia Nations) is an "empty house" if not irradiated with illuminating and solutive ideas. Unity of the allied countries had been instituted, what remains now is generating the allied Malay as the *raison d'etre*, as a modality that knit the threads of progression both in the realm of ideas as well as on the field one day, to cover injuries of misunderstandings which resulted in counter-productive opposition. The idea of Malay as a symbol of physical similarities, the height of civilization, commitment toward plurality, and tenacity of work should be socialized in order to crystallize philanthropic climate in which justice, regularities, modernity, and welfare are interrelated. Great ideals will be done easily, if peace becomes the conceptual framework.

## CONCLUSION

The historicity of Aceh – Minangkabau – Malay Peninsula became the concrete evidence that the unity in taking step and work could be the *blue print* for picking up modernity and wealth. Malay civilization which became the tradition of the kingdoms of Malay-Aceh-Pagaruyung and the kingdom of Malay peninsula emphasized that the history will always be contextual. The events happened in the past, but the spirituality can be nurtured and

developed in every passage of time.

Glories depicted in paintings of the 17<sup>th</sup> century Malay, in which the spirit of the “Anti-Imperialism” and “Pax Malay” were sounded, a collective memory which crystallized into a paradigm of thinking and steel mentality in-action space as well as modalities to meet the dawn restorative to redesign the social architecture both in the political, economic, cultural, religious, and social grounds became more constructive and played active role in regional and international stage.

The communities of the Malay society have been approached by a wide range of issues that are increasingly complicated and complex. Therefore, the commitment of togetherness and peace embroidered and preserved solely in the public eye to show the world that the Malay nation is a nation that is able to stand up and contribute to the future survival of mankind. Deterioration and underdevelopment which are associated to Southeast Asia should be the momentum to pick up a bright light in the dense fog whacking in almost all segments of life.

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