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## **HISTORICAL STUDY OF MALAY AND CHAM: Relations in Social, Cultural, Political And Religious Contexts**

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### **ABSTRAK**

Kontak historis antara dunia Indocina dan Melayu sudah ada sejak peradaban awal Zaman Perunggu di Nusantara. Hubungan ini terus berlanjut selama periode perdagangan yang intens di nusantara. Hubungan diplomatik antara bangsa Champa dan Melayu tidak hanya sebatas pada bidang ekonomi, tetapi telah memasuki ranah yang lebih intens, seperti politik, dakwah Islam hingga ke tingkat yang lebih kecil, yaitu kekerabatan. Artikel jurnal ini bertujuan untuk membahas sejarah hubungan antara Muslim Melayu dengan masyarakat Cham, khususnya dalam membangun dan memberdayakan masyarakat Muslim Cham di Vietnam pada masa lalu. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian sejarah. Studi pustaka dijadikan sebagai teknik pengumpulan sumber data, kemudian dianalisa menggunakan pola interaktif. Analisis dilakukan sejak awal penelitian maupun selama proses analisis sumber data penelitian hingga proses penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa studi mengenai hubungan historis antara Champa dan Melayu telah memberikan wawasan mengenai hubungan yang intens antara kedua bangsa ini. Hal ini dapat dilihat dari bagaimana Champa dan Melayu bekerja sama untuk memberdayakan komunitas Muslim Cham dari segi sosial, ekonomi, agama, dan politik. Hubungan antara Melayu dan Champa tidak hanya diromantisasi di masa lalu, tetapi hubungan ini terus terjalin dan dipertahankan atas dasar budaya, kemanusiaan, dan agama.

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### ABSTRACT

Historical contact between the Indochinese and Malay worlds dates back to the early Bronze Age civilisations of the archipelago. It continued throughout the period of intense trade in the archipelago. Diplomatic relations between the Champa and Malay nations are not limited to economics, but have entered a more intense realm, such as politics, Islamic preaching to a small level, namely kinship. This paper aims to analyse the historical relationship between Malay Muslims and the Cham community, especially in building and empowering the Cham Muslim community in Vietnam in the past. This is a historical research. Literature study is used as a data source collection technique and then analysed using an interactive pattern. The analysis was carried out from the beginning of the research as well as during the process of analysing the research data sources up to the process of drawing conclusions. The results show that the study of the historical relationship between Champa and Malay has provided insights into the intense relationship between these two nations. This can be seen in how Champa and Malay work together to empower the Cham Muslim community in terms of social, economic, religious and political aspects. The relationship between Malay and Champa is not only romanticised in the past, but this relationship continues to be established and sustained on the basis of culture, humanity and religion.

Keywords : *Champa, Indochina, Islamic History, Muslim, Malay, Southeast Asia.*

### INTRODUCTION

Dating back to the early Bronze Age in the archipelago, historical contact between the Indochinese<sup>1</sup> and Malay regions is well documented. This is evidenced by the discovery of bronze tools from the Dong Son culture in the Malay region. Other evidence comes from the records of Malay traders who traded as far as the southern region of present-day Vietnam (Champa).<sup>2</sup> It is known that the Champa region itself became a stopover for traders before they reached China. This is because Champa merchants formed a trading partnership with Malay merchants to make a stopover there, and it is rumoured that merchants from Banten and Brunei often stopped there as well.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Indochina is a term for the former French colonies in Southeast Asia (Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam), where historically, the region experienced the influence of two major civilization cultures, India and China.

<sup>2</sup> Danny Wong Tze Ken, "Changing Perception of the Malay World and Indochina as Seen from Vietnamese Sources", *SEJARAH: Journal of the Department of History*, Vol. 9, No. 9 (2001), pp. 107–131.

<sup>3</sup> Wan Zailan Kamaruddin Wan Ali, Ahmad Zuhdi Ismail, "Masyarakat Muslim Melayu Cham Di Vietnam: Kajian Mengenai Isu

In later developments, the discussion of Champa-Malay relations cannot be separated from the political competition and conflict between the Kingdom of Vietnam and the Kingdom of Champa. The context of this conflict itself is that the Champa kingdom also has a Muslim population composition dominated by Muslims of Malay ethnicity. To begin this paper, we will briefly look at how Islam entered Indochina and what the initial picture of Malay-Muslim relations in the region was.

The introduction of Islam into Indochina is believed to have occurred during the reign of Caliph Uthman bin Affan, who was initiated by traders trading on the coast of the Champa kingdom in the 7th century. These traders came from Gujarat, Persia and Arabia. In later developments, based on records found in the Song Dynasty (China), it is rumoured that Islam did not develop in the Champa kingdom until the 10th to 11th centuries. This is supported by the archaeological findings of two Muslim merchant dinners at Phan Rang (Paduranga, southern Champa). The discovery of the merchants' tombs is an

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dan Cabaran Dalam Pemikiran Islam Era Globalisasi", *Jati*, Volume 18, December (2013), pp. 129-143.

indication of a thriving Muslim community that probably settled there. Islam also gained a prominent position where historically there were several Champa kings who converted to Islam, i.e. King Che Bo Nga was Islamised by Sayyid Hussein Jumadil Kubro and then changed his name to Sultan Zainal Abidin (1360-1390).

After this conversion to Islam, the Champa kingdom, which at the time controlled the lands of Indochina (especially southern Vietnam and Cambodia), allowed Islam to develop there, especially as they had good relations with Islamic kingdoms in the Malay Peninsula such as Malacca. It can be concluded that Islam probably arrived in Champa country in the 7th century, but developed over the next 3 centuries. The peaceful development of Islam in Champa was also due to the 'greatness' of the Malay culture itself at that time as the 'standard' of trade interaction in the archipelago. The mastery of Malay itself seemed to be a language and a mandatory requirement to be able to interact socially, politically, economically and religiously with Islam in Nusnatara at that time.<sup>4</sup>

The development of Islam in Indochina during the heyday of the Champa kingdom began to falter when the Minh Mang of the Vietnamese empire attacked in the 19th century. This attack weakened the Champa kingdom and led to a mass exodus of the Champa Muslim population, once dominant in the Mekong delta region, to Cambodia and southwest Vietnam, where Muslims still exist as a minority in southwest Vietnam today.<sup>5</sup>

The Nguyen invasion of the Champa region in 1693 led to the wholesale

destruction of Cham ethnicity and culture until the mid-19th century, prompting a Cham resistance reaction to break free from the shackles of Nguyen colonisation. Several Cham rebellions in 1693, 1728, 1796 and 1832-34, led to the emergence of the anti-Vietnamese movement, generally motivated by the unequal socio-economic status of the Cham community.<sup>6</sup> Champa groups continued to wage armed resistance against the invaders. The strategy of the Champa king was to form an alliance with the Kingdom of Siam to attack Vietnam. The Cham attack on the Vietnamese empire itself resulted in defeat, leading to the renaming of Champa palaces to prevent further rebellion. As the Cham continued to suffer defeats, from the late 17th to the 18th century, the Vietnamisation of the Cham people was implemented. The Cham kingdom did not stand alone, but had to assimilate into the Nguyen culture.

This process of integration itself created major problems for the socio-economic-political life of the Cham, as it was undermined by the large number of ethnic Vietnamese who moved into the area formerly controlled by the Cham. Po Dharma describes the remaining areas of the Champa kingdom as being like the spots on a leopard's skin. The Vietnamese also began to dominate the traditional economy, taking over the collection of forest products such as the important commodity of agarwood (calambac).<sup>7</sup> The Cham people began to struggle to make ends meet and were forced to take loans from the Vietnamese at unreasonable interest rates, resulting in the sale of their wealthy assets such as land, rice fields and even their families into slavery. This sad state of affairs led them to seek

<sup>4</sup> Kanji Nishio, "The Cham and The Malay World." in *Islam at the Margins: The Muslims of Indochina*, by Omar Farouk & Hiroyuki Yamamoto, (Kyoto: Center for Integrated Area Studies, Kyoto University, 2008), pp. 86-93.

<sup>5</sup> Saifullah, *Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Islam di Asia Tenggara*, (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajaran, 2012), p. 183

<sup>6</sup> Po Dharma, *Le Panduranga (Champa) 1802-1835 : ses rapports avec le Vietnam, Vol. I*, (Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient, 1987), p. 81.

<sup>7</sup> Jay Willoughby, "The Cham Muslims of Vietnam", *ISIM Newsletter*, Volume 2, Issue 1 (1999), p. 14.

political asylum and help from the Malays on the peninsula.<sup>8</sup>

The original Muslims of the Champa Kingdom area are descendants of the Cham ethnicity, and in their development they are divided into two groups due to influences in the acceptance and practice of Islam, including:<sup>9</sup> 1) Muslims living within southern Vietnam (Ninh Tuan and Binh Thuan), coastal central Vietnam (Old Annam, Thun Hai, Phan Rang, Nha Trang), and other areas such as Chau Doc and Phan Thiet, they are known as the "Old Islamic Group" or "Cham Bani";<sup>10</sup> 2) The "New Islamic Group" or "Cham Muslims" are scattered in the regions of Vietnam (An Giang, Tay Ninh, Dong Nai provinces around the Mekong Delta, Ho Chi Minh City), Cambodia and Laos (refugees from the Pol Pot regime in Cambodia). In Cambodia, there is no distinct term for the Muslim community. Both Cham and Malay Muslims are lumped together as Khmer Muslims. As a result, the existence of Malay Muslims remains unexplored in the study of Islamic literature in Cambodia.<sup>11</sup> As for the Muslims in the southern region of Vietnam and the An Giang area, they are a Muslim community formed by two main sources: 1) the first group are immigrants from central Vietnam who moved directly to the south; 2) the second group are Champa Muslims

who returned from overseas, both from Cambodia and the Malay region (Indonesia-Malaysia), and who spread throughout An Giang, Tay Ninh and southern Indochina. This second group already has strong historical links with the ethnic Malays.<sup>12</sup>

But in another version, explained by Farina So<sup>13</sup>, Cham Muslims are spread across Indochina (Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos), Malaysia to Thailand: 1) Cham Muslims within Thailand are recognised as Cham Ka-ek (immigrants) or Thai Muslims; 2) Cham Muslims in Indochina and Malaysia, who are called Cham Muslims or Malay-Champa. Those in Malaysia and Thailand recognise that they are Cham people born in Cambodia, Malaysia or Thailand, but not Cham people from the former kingdom of Champa, once a dominant kingdom, which is now South and South and Central Vietnam. Although different in the presentation of historical facts tailored to the collective memory they receive, one thing is certain, Malay and Cham both have historical entanglements from the historical facts presented.

Malay links with Champa Muslims also exist in Cambodia. The Malay community in Cambodia is divided into several sub-ethnic groups based on the history of their ancestors' arrival in the Champa land. Thus they are divided into 1) Jva Krapu, are the Malays from Sumatra, especially Aceh and Minangkabau; 2) Jva Iyava, are the Malays from Java; 3) Jva Melayu, are the Malays from the Malay

<sup>8</sup> Danny Wong Tze-Ken, "Vietnam-Champa Relations and the Malay-Islam Regional Network in the 17th–19th Centuries", *Kyoto Review of Southeast Asia*. Issue 5 (March 2004): *Islam in Southeast Asia*.

<sup>9</sup> Yasuko Yoshimoto, "A Study of the Hôi giáo Religion in Vietnam: With a Reference to Islamic Religious Practices of Cham Bani", *Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 3, December (2012), pp. 487–505.

<sup>10</sup> Zulkifli, *Islam Asia Tenggara, Peran Mayoritas dan Problematika Minoritas*, (Pekanbaru: Al-Mujtahida Press, 2014), p. 109.

<sup>11</sup> Anthony Cabaton, "Orang Cham Islam di Indo-China Prancis." in *Kerajaan Champa*, by École française d'Extrême-Orient, (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1981), pp. 242-243.

<sup>12</sup> Vo Van Thang, Nguyen Thi Ngoc Tho, Nguyen Thi Dung, "An Overview of Cham Islam in An Giang Vietnam", *Proceeding Book 7th Asian Academic Society International Conference 2019*, pp. 536-541.

<sup>13</sup> Farina So, "Cham Muslims in Malaysia and Thailand: Then and Now." *Encountering Asian New Horizon: Contesting and Negotiating in Fluid Transitions, The 12th API Regional Workshop* (2013), pp. 228-239.

Peninsula, such as southern Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia.<sup>14</sup>

There is quite a difference between these two communities, both born of the Champa ethnicity, this difference lies in their spiritual honesty. Champa-Bani Muslims are deeply influenced by indigenous and conventional traditions and values, and contain integrated elements of Brahmanism and ancestor worship. When Islam arrived and flourished in the Kingdom of Champa, they tended to be closed to the immigrant Muslim community. As for the New Cham Muslims, they are a Sunni group that from the beginning has been open to social and religious activities with immigrant Muslims, both Malay Muslims, Muslims from Java and Muslims from the Arab region.<sup>15</sup>

The presence of two Muslim groups is thought to be the result of differences in the practice of Islamisation. The Islamisation of the Champa is thought to have occurred through contact with Islamic Arab and Persian traders from the ninth to eleventh centuries, and by the Malays from the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries. The Cham Bani may have had contact with Muslim immigrants (evidence of their conversion to Islam), but they retained their traditional beliefs.<sup>16</sup> Historically, the intensity of the relationship between the Cham Muslims and the Malays has been closer than that of the Bani Muslims. With this in mind, this journal article will discuss the history of the relationship between Malay Muslims and the Cham community, particularly in the building and empowerment of the Cham Muslim community in Vietnam in the past.

This research is of a qualitative nature with analytical descriptive reporting. The approach used is multidisciplinary social

history to analyse all the socio-cultural phenomena of society.<sup>17</sup> The research method used in this study is the historical research method. It consists of several stages, namely:<sup>18</sup> 1) Heuristics or collection of sources. The sources collected are selected by reading the literature; 2) Source Criticism is the activity of selecting sources according to their strength; 3) Interpretation or this stage of analysis is carried out interactively, where the analysis is done from the beginning of the research and during the process of analysing research data sources, until the process of drawing conclusions;<sup>19</sup> 4) Historiography or the final stage of this research in the form of historical-scientific papers.

In addition to explaining the analytical process of this research, some scholars have argued that diasporic people often find themselves in situations where it is difficult to maintain their identity,<sup>20</sup> such as when the Champa nation was invaded and colonised by the Nguyen. The Cham community was eroded into the mainstream of the dominant civilisation, the Nguyen, who practised cultural assimilation on the Champa people. As a tool to analyse data sources and compile the findings of this research, the author uses the constructivist and primordialist approach offered by Bayar

<sup>17</sup> Sartono Kartodirjo, *Pendekatan Ilmu Sosial dalam Metodologi Sejarah*, (Jakarta: Gramedia, 1993), p. 50.

<sup>18</sup> Louis Gottschalk, *Mengerti Sejarah*, Terjemahan Nugroho Notosusanto, (Jakarta: UI Press, 1986), p. 35.

<sup>19</sup> H. B. Sutopo, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif Dasar Teori dan Penerapannya Dalam Penelitian*, (Surakarta: UNS Press, 2006), p. 120.

<sup>20</sup> Peter Kivisto, "Theorizing transnational immigration: a critical review of current efforts", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Volume 24, Issue 4 (2001), pp. 549-577; also look at Farina So, "Cham Muslims in Malaysia and Thailand: Then and Now." *Encountering Asian New Horizon: Contesting and Negotiating in Fluid Transitions, The 12th API Regional Workshop* (2013), pp. 228-239.

<sup>14</sup> Saifullah, *Sejarah*, p. 223.

<sup>15</sup> Yoshimoto, "A Study", pp. 487-505.

<sup>16</sup> Rie Nakamura, "The Coming of Islam to Champa", *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. 73, No. 1 (2000), pp. 55-66.

(2009),<sup>21</sup> to understand the history of Malay and Champa cultural relations themselves. This cultural identity can be seen in the aspects of religious distinctiveness, language and tradition. The construction of cultural identity is very important because it is a product of human cultural history that is passed down from generation to generation. The process of cultural identity construction will certainly involve a complicated and long process in history..

### **MALAY AND CLASSICAL CHAMPA: POLITICAL, CULTURAL AND ISLAMIC TIES**

During the 14th and 15th centuries, trade contacts and Islamic proselytisation increased between Champa and the Malays. The Malays who traded and proselytised in Champa came from the Malay Peninsula, Tumasik (Singapore), Borneo, Sumatra, Java and Pattani.<sup>22</sup> Since the Malays came to live in Champa, many of them have participated in the economic affairs of the kingdom as farmers, herders and businessmen. Others have also been involved in the political affairs of the Kingdom of Champa from the village level. The positions held by the Malays in Champa are Chumtup, Mekhum, Mesrok and Chauvay Srak, and some attain high positions such as the post of Governor and Minister of the Kingdom of Champa. Others were also involved in the political and military affairs of the Champa Kingdom.<sup>23</sup> It is important to note,

however, that this reciprocal relationship only applies to Champa Muslims living in the Champa Kingdom of present-day Cambodia. The Champa Muslim community living in the Nguyen region at this time suffered oppression and setbacks.<sup>24</sup>

This relationship is reciprocal. The Cham-Malay relationship continued with the settlement of Cham refugees in the Malacca region since 1471. They were welcomed by the Malays and even some Cham nobles were appointed to official positions in the palace. This good relationship encouraged Malay-Cham intermarriage among the Cham people living in the peninsula. The good relations established in the early 15th century continued until the late 18th and early 19th centuries, when the Malays were willing to help the Cham fight against Vietnamese domination.<sup>25</sup> Since 1954, to counter the Portuguese invasion of Malacca, the ruler of Champa has sent military support to the Sultanate of Johor, signalling how their socio-political relationship was intertwined.<sup>26</sup>

This interaction continued in areas other than politics, one of which was the progressive conversion of the Cham community to Islam during the 17th century, although there were already some Champa Muslim communities in southern Champa in the 10th century, but in terms of numbers this religious conversion only intensified as Malay-Champa political relations grew closer.<sup>27</sup> Subsequently, there

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*Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. 74, No. 2 (2001), pp. 1-21.

<sup>24</sup> Willoughby, "The Cham", p. 14.

<sup>25</sup> G. E. Marrison, "The Chams of Malacca", *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (1954), February (1951), pp. 90-98.

<sup>26</sup> Pierre-Yves Manguin, "ÉTUDES CAM: II. L'INTRODUCTION DE L'ISLAM AU CAMPĀ", *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient*, Vol. 66 (1979), pp. 255-287

<sup>27</sup> G. E. Marrison, "THE CHAMS AND THEIR LITERATURE", *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. 58, No. 2 (249) (1985), pp. 45-70

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<sup>21</sup> Murat Bayar, "Reconsidering primordialism: an alternative approach to the study of ethnicity", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Volume 32, Issue 9 (2009), pp. 1939-1957.

<sup>22</sup> Mohamad Zain Musa, "History Of Education Among The Cambodian Muslims", *Jebat: Malaysian Journal of History, Politics, & Strategic Studies*, Vol. 38, Issue 1 (2011), pp. 81-105.

<sup>23</sup> Mohamad Zain Bin Musa, "Malay And Cham Relations With The Kingdom Of Cambodia During And After The French Protectorate Period (1863-2000)", *Journal of the*

was mutual Malay-Champa interaction. Malay migration to Champa played a role in the spread of Islam, with the Champa Muslim community generally adopting the Sunni and Shafi'i schools of thought, although a minority practised the Shi'a school.<sup>28</sup>

Thirty years before Vietnamese rule, the Malays held important positions in the Champa court, both in public affairs, politics and in proselytising Islam. The Malays also helped stir the Champa spirit to fight against Vietnamese Nguyen imperialism. Some Malay nobles and Islamic preachers also took part in the Champa rebellion against the Vietnamese. However, all these rebellions were crushed by the Vietnamese military.<sup>29</sup>

Like the Cham rebellion in Binh Tuan in 1832. This rebellion was due to oppression resulting from the Cham group's political favouring of the young king Le Van Duyet in Gia Dinh in the south. After Le Van Duyet's death in 1832, his adopted son Le Van Khoi rebelled against the Nguyen kingdom. This rebellion was also supported by Malay troops from Kelantan led by Khatib Sumat.<sup>30</sup> This war lasted until 1834. Champa troops also received military support from Sultan Muhammad I of Kelantan. This support was ostensibly a form of Muslim jihad, defending their brothers who were believed to be of the same descent as the Po Roma.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, p. 13.

<sup>29</sup> Tze-Ken, "Vietnam-Champa", p. 114.

<sup>30</sup> Po Dharma, "Peranan Kelantan dalam Pergerakan Islam di Campa 1833-1834", *Majalah Warisan Kelantan*, VIII (1989), pp. 85-86.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*; Furthermore, the belief in the genealogical link between the Cham and Kelantan groups is based on Babad Kelantan. See Abdullah bin Mohamed (Nakula), "Keturunan Melayu di Kemboja dan Vietnam: Hubungannya dengan Semenanjung dengan Tumpuan Khas kepada Negeri Kelantan", *Majalah Warisan Kelantan*, VIII (1989), pp. 24-27; Po Roma's son and Champa's

Then came the 1876 rebellion, led by a Kelantan Malay aristocrat named Tuan Phaow. As well as ethnic Malays, Tuan Phaow's followers came from the Cham ethnic group in the Binh Tuan region. The movement was religious in nature, with Tuan Phaow proclaiming himself a figure sent by God to liberate the Cham from Vietnamese control. The two-year war was won by the Nguyen group, which had collaborated with the pro-Nguyen Cham group. It is rumoured that Mr Phaow fled to Mecca. Mecca itself has many interpretations: some say the actual city of Mecca, or the 'Little Mecca' of Kelantan.<sup>32</sup>

During the wars in Indochina, the Cham also helped the Malay kingdoms of Nusnatara to repel Western invasions that sought to control the trade routes of the Straits of Malacca and the Malay Peninsula. This support was also based on religious interests in fighting Christian missionaries. This spirit of jihad and 'religious war' was already a 'hot' phenomenon in the archipelago, where, according to Anthony Reid, at the beginning of the European invasion and Christianisation of Southeast

ruler at the time, Po Saut (1660-1692), had already embraced Islam as a result of intense interaction with the Kelantanese. From his time onwards, the Muslim kings of Champa began to adopt the title 'Paduka Seri Sultan', after the Malay political title. Despite their Muslim identity, it is known that these Champa kings did not completely abandon Hindu values. For example, the concept of Po Allah was incorporated into the Champa pantheon of gods. There are various theories as to why this happened. One is that Po Roma's original intention in going to Malay land was to study Malay magic, which was known to be very powerful at the time. Gradually, during his time in Kelantan, he also learnt about Islam. See Tze-Ken, "Vietnam-Champa", p. 114.

<sup>32</sup> Danny Wong Tze Ken, "The Cham Arrivals in Malaysia: Distant Memories and Rekindled Links", *Archipel*, volume 85 (2013), pp. 151-165.

Asia, many Cham Muslim groups helped Muslims fighting against Europe in the Melaka and Demak regions of Java.<sup>33</sup>

The wartime coalition between the Malays and the Cham is not only interpreted as a political coalition and gene, but has penetrated into the form of Muslim solidarity in upholding the banner of religion. fired by a sense of obligation to protect and help fellow believers in trouble. The historical significance of the relationship between these two nations is therefore not only about descent, culture and politics, but also about the bond of brotherhood. From this we can see the motivation of the Malay Muslims in Champa to participate in the Champa movement, apart from being a form of solidarity, this movement is also a form of defence mechanism for the Muslim groups who have been living in Champa for a long time and could be a moment of jihad for the Muslim community to fight against those who are colonising them.

After being overrun by Vietnam in the mid-19th century, Cham's ties to the outside world were severed. This led to the migration of Cham Muslims to Kelantan and the Vietnamese-Cambodian border areas. The end of this classical era is not the end of the relationship between these two nations, but rather the beginning of a new relationship in a new era and with new problems to face together.

#### **MALAY AND CHAMPA DURING FRENCH COLONIALISM IN INDOCHINA: CHAM MUSLIM EMPOWERMENT CENTRE IN KELANTAN**

With the end of the rebellion in 1834, the Cham's contact with the outside world was also severely curtailed. This situation lasted until the end of the Franco-

<sup>33</sup> Anthony Reid, "Islamization and Christianization in Southeast Asia: The Critical Phase 1550–1650", in *Southeast Asia in the Early Modern Era*, by Anthony Reid, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), pp. 316-317.

Vietnamese war of 1858-1861, when Nguyen ceded the Binh Tuan region and five southern provinces to the French, ushering in a new phase of the Cham movement. Efforts to re-establish international relations, including with the Malays of the peninsula, were resumed by Champa warriors when they saw a Vietnam defeated by the French. From the early 20th century, Malay scholars began to return to the Champa region to preach, marry local women and rebuild communities in the former Champa region, including in Cambodia. It was as if they wanted to re-establish their former identity and social relations with the Cham people, which had been closely intertwined for centuries.<sup>34</sup>

French colonialism also had a positive impact on reviving the Cham people's memories and cultural identity, which had been eroded by Vietnamisation in the past. Unlike the Dutch and British, who for the sake of colonialism took away all the ancient artefacts and manuscripts of the identity of the natives they colonised, the French study of Cham culture helped the Cham people to realise their ancient identity. This can also be seen as a way for French policy in Indochina to displace Vietnamese influence. Not only did they regain recognition and knowledge of their history and cultural identity, which had been 'genocided' by Nguyen, but they also reconnected with the Malays. The meeting of these two groups in the 20th century extended beyond religious factors to the smallest level, such as the family.<sup>35</sup>

With this newfound freedom, the Cham community sought to reconnect with the Malay world. The Malays played a major role in 're-Islamising' the Cham community in the 19th century. This 're-Islamisation'

<sup>34</sup> Tze Ken, "The Cham".

<sup>35</sup> Danny Wong Tze-Ken, "Historical Relations between the Chams and the Malays: Sustaining Common Identity, Culture and Ethnicity through Two Millennia of Relations", *Southeast Asia: History and Culture*, Issue 37 (2008), pp. 127-128.

was done in the classical way, by approaching through surau and building madrasahs. Cadres of preachers were trained and eventually a 'reciprocal' path in social, economic and religious affairs was established between the Malays (especially from Kelantan) and the Cham. Cham youth are also regularly sent to Kelantan to study Islamic teachings.<sup>36</sup> Pattani and Kelantan became one of the main destinations for Southeast Asian Muslims to obtain higher Islamic education in the 19th century. As a result, many Champa Muslims sent their children to Pattani or Kelantan to study religious knowledge, even calling these two areas "Little Mecca".<sup>37</sup>

For Champa Muslims in Kelantan, they have intermarried with ethnic Malays. For example, people living in the Chepa base area and Chepa village associate all clothing materials and identity with Champa culture, such as the Chepa tanjak (headdress), silk, cloth, hair ornaments, buns and even a type of rice plant. A mosque in the Kampung Laut area was also built by Cham seafarers who often visited Kelantan. According to the Hikayat Kelantan, the ancestor of the founder of the Sultanate of Kelantan, Long Yunus, came from Kembayat Negara, which is believed to be the Champa region.<sup>38</sup>

#### **MALAYS AND CHAMPA IN WESTERN POSTCOLONIALISM: CONTINUING THE SWEET RELATIONSHIP OF THE EARLY MODERN PERIOD**

During this period, Malay Muslim religious leaders in southern Vietnam continued to preach to the Cham, especially

the many Muslims born in the Binh Tuan area. Binh Tuan Muslims represent Vietnam and often take part in the annual international Qur'an recitation competition in Kuala Lumpur. But unfortunately they were unable to attend after the Vietnam War began to heat up. During the 1975-1993 war, Malaysia had received 7000 Cham refugees from Vietnam and Cambodia. They became one of the refugee groups protected by the Malaysian government.<sup>39</sup>

It is necessary to give a glimpse of the atrocities committed by the Khmer Rouge during the massacre of the ethnic Cham. The Khmer Rouge led by Pol Pot. The Khmer Rouge, led by Pol Pot from 1975 to 1979, were radical and ruthless communists. In carrying out their policies, the Khmer Rouge mobilised strong xenophobic sentiments. This sentiment is a form of fear of foreigners (which can be interpreted as ethnic foreigners and migrants). Pol Pot legalised discrimination against non-Khmer ethnicities and committed atrocities against religious believers. Pol Pot's main targets were the Cham and Viet ethnic groups. Cham Muslims were the most frequent victims of harassment by Pol Pot and his troops.<sup>40</sup> They were forbidden to wear religious trappings such as headscarves and beards, and were prohibited from worshipping, including praying in mosques or at home. The communist regime also carried out mass Qur'an burnings, used Qur'an paper as toilet paper and destroyed places of worship belonging to other religious communities. The brutality of the communist regime meant that Champa and other ethnic minorities often identified

<sup>36</sup> Mohamed (Nakula), "Keturunan", pp. 24-27.

<sup>37</sup> Philipp Bruckmayr, "The Cham Muslims of Cambodia: From Forgotten Minority to Focal Point of Islamic Internationalism.", *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, Volume 23, Issue 3 (2006), pp. 1-23.

<sup>38</sup> Tze-Ken, "Vietnam-Champa".

<sup>39</sup> Mohamed (Nakula), "Keturunan", pp. 24-27.

<sup>40</sup> Ben Kiernan, "Orphans of genocide: The Cham muslims of Kampuchea under Pol Pot", *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, Volume 20, Issue 4 (1988), pp. 2-33.

themselves as Khmer in order to avoid being tortured or brutally killed.<sup>41</sup>

After the fall of Phnom Penh and Saigon in 1975, the number of refugees from Vietnam and Cambodia continued to grow as they fled the oppression of the ruling communist regime. Malaysia became the main destination for the refugee exodus. The Malaysian government was willing to accept these refugees because of the historical socio-political relationship between the Malay and Cham ethnicities, apart from the fact that they were Muslim brothers. They were generally evacuated to the state of Kelantan.<sup>42</sup> The education system implemented by the Champa Muslim community itself adopts the modern Islamic curriculum implemented by Muslim educational institutions in Thailand (Pattani) and Malaysia (Kelantan).<sup>43</sup> The close relationship between Champa Muslims and Malays is historically recorded in Kelantan, Malaysia. Kelantan has long been a centre of Islamic learning<sup>44</sup>, and many ethnic Malays and Cham intermarried and formed communities in Kelantan. Until the present day, most Indochinese Muslims, as well as Pattani Muslims, recognised their kinship in Kelantan.

<sup>41</sup> Farina So, *The Hijab of Cambodia Memories of Cham Muslim Women After the Khmer Rouge*, (Phnom Penh: Document Center of Cambodia, 2011), p. 85.

<sup>42</sup> Mohamed (Nakula), "Keturunan", pp. 24-27.

<sup>43</sup> Omar Farouk, "The Re-organization of Islam in Cambodia and Laos." in *Islam at the Margins: The Muslims of Indochina*, by Omar Farouk & Hiroyuki Yamamoto, (Kyoto: Center for Integrated Area Studies, Kyoto University, 2008), pp. 70-85.

<sup>44</sup> Erasiah Erasiah, Fikri Surya Pratama, Farid Mat Zain, Muhammad Syauqy Ardy & Resi Dalela, "Kelantan The Little Mecca: Its Influence On The Archipelago's 15th-19th Century Islamic Civilisation To The Present Day." *Jurnal lektur keagamaan* 21.1 (2023): 125-156.

Empowerment movements have been undertaken by Muslim organisations PERKIM (Persatuan Kebajikan Islam Malaysia), ABIM (Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM), and Gerakan Pemuda Islam Malaysia (GPIM). These organization are also giving religious teachings to restore the religious practices of these Cham Muslims.<sup>45</sup> The empowerment of Cham Muslims or other Muslims in Indochina also involves other Malay Muslim brothers and sisters outside Malaysia, such as Brunei Darussalam and Muslims in Thailand, through communication with NGOs (Non Government Organisations).<sup>46</sup> Several NGO organisations from all over the world have established relations with the Muslim community of Champa, such as Rabithah Alam Islami from Mecca (Saudi Arabia), Organisation of Islamic Conference and Darul Arqom (Malaysia), Revival of Islamic Heritage Society - RIHS (Kuwait) and so on.<sup>47</sup>

The Malay-linked identity of Champa Muslims is also affirmed by the current Vietnamese government, which groups all Muslims in Vietnam under one identity, Malay Cham Muslims. Representing 1% of the total population of Vietnam, the Champa-Malays themselves are divided into 3 subgroups by the Vietnamese government: 1) Cham Balomon, Hindu and Buddhist (15-20% of the total Cham Malay population); 2) Cham Bani; 3) Cham Malay Muslims (80-85% of the total Cham Malay population in Vietnam).<sup>48</sup> In terms of religious practice from the perspective of Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah, Mubin (2019) divides Cham Muslims into two groups, including: 1) Cham Bani. They used to be a Sunni group, but gradually they mixed Islamic teachings

<sup>45</sup> Tze-Ken, "Historical", p. 129.

<sup>46</sup> Philipp Bruckmayr, "Cambodian Muslims, Transnational NGOs, and International Justice", *Peace Review: A Journal of Social Justice*, Volume 27 Issue 3 (2015), pp. 337-345.

<sup>47</sup> Saifullah, *Sejarah*, pp. 228-229.

<sup>48</sup> Wan Ali, *Masyarakat*, pp. 129-143.

with elements of other religious teachings and ancestral values; 2) Cham Sunni (Malay) is a group that adheres to the teachings of Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah. These two groups are still descendants of the Cham Balomon group.<sup>49</sup>

It is interesting to see the Vietnamese government's idea of grouping all Cham ethnicities into a unified 'Malay Cham', despite their different religions. Because, as we all know, ethnic Malay itself is associated with Islam, even if it leaves Islam then it is no longer Malay, as is the case with the Malays in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Brunei Darussalam. While what happens in Vietnam is the opposite, perhaps this is a form of generalising ideas based on the results of the analysis of historical facts that they know, where history itself tells of the close relationship between Cham and Malay in the past. According to the United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations in its 2002 Annual Report on International Religious Freedom, for the southern Vietnamese region of An Giang, Cham Malay is a combination of Cham Muslims, Malay Muslims and Indonesian Muslims living there.<sup>50</sup>

The acceptance of the Champa people for refuge and empowerment in Malaysia was not just a matter of political expediency. The Cham refugees have articulated and reinterpreted their history and cultural identity in Malay terms. This allows them to participate in discussions about the Malay world and to engage with Malay authorities.<sup>51</sup> The idea of Cham as

part of Malay is also promoted by Malay organisations such as GAPENA (Gabungan Penulis Melayu). It works with government organisations such as the Language and Library Council, state governments and French research institutions such as the *École Française d'Extrême-Orient*. GAPENA has organised various meetings, conferences and study tours to promote Champa as part of the Malay world living in the Indochina region.<sup>52</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The study of the historical relationship between Champa and Malay has opened up a new paradigm of understanding that the kingdoms of Indochina also had an intense relationship and played an important role in the unity of the Southeast Asian kings who felt the 'same identity' to unite. This can be seen in how Champa and Malay worked together to empower the Cham Muslim community socially, economically, religiously and politically. A sense of brotherhood was also created through 'fraternity' where Champa did not hesitate to help the kingdoms of the Malay Peninsula as far as Demak against European attacks in the archipelago. This reciprocal relationship between Champa and Malay extended to the smallest level of family. Kelantan is a silent witness to how the histories of social interaction between these two peoples are intertwined at the family level of the community. The intimacy of the past relationship between these two nations also has an impact on the present. Look at how Malaysia welcomed Cham refugees, not all of whom were Muslim, when they were forced to flee their homeland after the civil war in post-Cold War Indochina. The relationship between Malays and Cham is not only romanticised in the past, but continues to exist in the name of culture, humanity and religion.[]

<sup>49</sup> bin Ahad, Nazirul Mubin, "A Study on Religious Strands of Malay Muslim Cham in Cambodia." *AR-RĀ'ĪQ* 2.2 (2019): 1-41.

<sup>50</sup> Committee on Foreign Relations of The U.S. Senate & International Relations of The U.S. House of Representatives Respectively, *Annual Report on International Religious Freedom 2002*, (Washington DC: Department of State, 2002), pp. 291-295.

<sup>51</sup> Rie Nakamura, "Becoming Malay: The Politics of the Cham Migration to Malaysia",

*Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, Volume 19, Issue 3, December (2019), pp. 289-306.

<sup>52</sup> Tze-Ken, "Historical", p. 129.

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