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ISLAM AND RIAU MALAY CULTURE: Revisiting the Spreading of Islam in Riau

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Abstract

Islam and Riau Malay are inseparable entities. This paper aims to explore how Islam and Riau Malay are connected into one identity and culture. Using the historical discourse analysis, this paper tries to explain the historical background where the strong connection between Islam and Riau Malay were built. In order to unpack this puzzle, the history of economic condition, religions and beliefs prior to the Islamization were further explored in this paper. Besides, this paper also focusing on the Petalangan people and how Islam had influenced their cultures and way of life. This paper found that the great conversion to Islam occurred in Riau was along with the great conversion in Nusantara that emerges several theories of conversion. Even though Islamization in Riau were massive, a part of Riau people continues to express their ancestors' cultures and belief as they believe that Islam and their cultures are somehow not contradicting. This shows the process of contextualization of culture and beliefs.

Keywords: Islam, Riau Malay, Islamization, Cross-cultural belief

1. Introduction

Islam for Riau Malay people is not only a religion but also an identity. To be Malay means to be Muslim, Malay and Muslim are inseparable identity. This fact leads to several questions such as how did Islam spread in Riau Malay world. What are the

previous religions and beliefs in these areas? How does the Riau Malay society react toward the encounter of Islam and their previous cultures and beliefs?

This paper aims to answer such questions above by exploring the spreading of Islam in Riau and viewing its influence on Riau Malay cultures especially in Petalangan society. For that reason, this paper is divided into two major sections. The first section discusses about the spreading of Islam in Riau, which contains the reality of economy, religion and belief before the coming of Islam in Riau, and the coming of Islam and the process of Islamization. The second section focuses on the encounter between Petalangan people and Islam in addition, the influence of Islam in Petalangan culture.

2. The Spreading of Islam in Riau

In viewing the spreading of Islam in Riau, at least two realities need to be explored, that are the economic development and beliefs and religions before the coming of Islam.

2.1 Economic Reality

From the first century, the relationship of trade among China, India, Arab and Nusantara had been begun. Therefore, many writings about Nusantara can be found in the old history of China, India, and Egypt.

The fact above brought the development of the status of sail route. The first route was through Malacca Strait, to East Coast of Malay Peninsula, to Siam Bay, then to Canton. If the sail was impossible because of the season in the South China, it moved to the second route that was through Malacca Strait, to East Coast of Sumatra, to North Coast of Java, to Makasar Strait, to Philippine, and to Canton (Team, 1976, p. 76). From these routes, it is understandable that the position of Riau was truly strategic for the trade. Riau located in the center of the traffic of the trade.

Before the arising of Sriwijaya, there was Ketangka kingdom in Riau. Ketangka, located near Muara Takus, dominated sail in Malacca Strait and the seashore areas of East Sumatra. Meanwhile, Muara Lahat port, near the center of Ketangka kingdom, became the center of trade where traders' ships from Persia, China, and Arab docked. Here, the traders of the producer of pepper from Left Kampar and

Right Kampar, Rokan and Kuantan, were gathered. However, the information and data on Ketangka are limited in terms of years, king, social condition, etc.

The significance of the Malacca Strait as the center of trade led nations to the competition on dominating the traffic of trade, which was developed rapidly. This not only led to positive competition among the traders but also brought negative consequence: many pirates in the route of the trade. Fa shien stated that in the 415, the sea was full of pirates, and people who met them would die. In addition, Wan-Tay wrote that the traders used shield clothes because they knew that there were at least two or three hundreds of pirates would attack them for days. Nevertheless, the traders continued their voyage (Team, 1976).

In VII-XIII centuries, the trade was dominated by Sriwijaya kingdom. The route of sail was through Sriwijaya and this, certainly, provided the advantages for developing the kingdom rapidly. In addition, Sriwijaya itself was the sources of pepper and bronze (Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 1986, p. 31). Riau, which was believed as a part of Sriwijaya government, had also the important role in developing the trade. As stated above, Ketangka was the economic center of Malacca Strait before; this position still had an influence in the Sriwijaya era. Beside that, Riau was the sources of pepper, tin, tusk, resin, forest liquid, geliga, rhinoceros' horn (Team, 1976, pp. 86–87). Thus, it was impossible for Riau people not to involve in the trade.

Related to the trade, Sriwijaya could be divided into three areas: 1. Central Sumatra, Riau islands around Malacca Strait and North Sumatra centered in Muara Takus, 2. South Sumatra including Tanah Sunda, West Kalimantan centered in Palembang, 3. Tanah Melayu Peninsula including Riau islands in South China Sea centered in Kedah. These three areas were the center of trade where many traders came. Therefore, it is not surprise that the main source of Sriwijaya economy was the result of the trade, while the political policy was based on the interest of the trade (Team, 1976, pp. 103–104).

From the description above, two factors supported Sriwijaya to dominate the trade. First, Sriwijaya was the producer of pepper from Riau: Left and Right Kampar, Kuantan Singingi and Batang Hari. Besides, the resources of nature which were available in Sriwijaya invited other countries to involve in the trade. As the result, it

became an international trade (Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 1986, p. 33). Second, Sriwijaya was the great kingdom thus it was possible to dominate the area of Malacca Strait which was the main route for the traders from Arab, Persia, India, and China. Thus, Sriwijaya was not only the place where ships docked, but also involved directly in the trade. In addition, as a great kingdom, Sriwijaya had armadas that supported the economic development. To abolish parities, for instance, Sriwijaya replaced the security in Padir Panjang pulau Karimun Riau (Team, 1976, p. 105).

For the sake of its domination on the trade, Sriwijaya made an expansion to Tarumanegara (Sunda) and Malay in Jambi. This expansion was successful and as the result, Sriwijaya became the winner of the trade. In the end of VIII century, Sriwijaya dominated all Sumatra Peninsulas and all routes of India-China trades vice versa, beside was successful in abolishing parities (Team, 1976, p. 106).

2.2 Religion and Belief before the Coming of Islam

Before the coming of Hinduism, there were two beliefs in Riau: Animism and Dynamism. The people of Riau believed that each creation has *mana* and this *mana* could be moved into other things or persons. If people died, although their bodies were destroyed, the souls were still alive. Therefore, this world also became the world for the spirit of ancestors and other creations, which cannot see by human eyes (Team, 1976, p. 78).

Later generations maintained the ancestors' cultures because they were afraid of them. They did not want the spirit of ancestors angry to them, and then disturbed their lives. They believed that the anger of ancestors not only for a person who did not honor them but also for all societies.

Not all people could make a relation to the ancestor's spirit. Bowo and Pawang were persons who could make relation with the spirits. Bowo were respected since he had a power and could heal people (Team, 1976, pp. 23–30). There is no information how this Bowo and Pawang were elected whether they became Bowo or Pawang because of their talent or their blood.

In Riau society, it can be found the terms of *cenaku*, *harimau jadi-jadian* (unreal tiger), *gunjo* (died people who lived again and borrowed other body to revenge). This belief arose the religion of "lycanthropy" which was guided by Bomo (Team, 1976).

Bomo were regarded as a person who knew everything besides his ability to connect to ancestors' spirit. Bowo were who determined what taboo is for people. Usually, people asked something and put their hopes to Bowo and Bowo would give people the things which he put an incantation to help people. Beside that, Bowo also determined the form of ritual such as dance and incantation. The incantation usually contained a salutation, the origin of things, the spirit in the bodies and other things. Thus, Magic and Magi were the paths for this belief (Team, 1976, p. 78).

The people of Riau recognized other religions as the result of the fact that Riau became the area of trade. The encounter between native people and the traders was inevitable. Indian traders more concerned about the development of their cultures and belief to the people of Riau than China that was more concerned on the diplomatic relation. The evidence of the encounter can be seen from the artifacts of Hindu cultures such as the using of incense and the worshipping of deities such as *mambang* and fairy. Meanwhile, there are artifacts in Sintung and Siarang-arang that tend to prove the existence of Hinduism in the area although it cannot be proved exactly. However, the using of Dewanagari alphabet proves that Hinduism had held a significant role in the fifth century in Riau (Team, 1976, pp. 81–82). The lack of information arises several questions, such as how did the people of Riau accept Hinduism, was there any Hindu kingdom in Riau? Was there a tension between the religious figures in Riau and Hindus? Is there the process of Hindunization in Riau? Etc.

Many people believe that the disappear of Hinduism in Riau is caused by the coming of Buddhism. Different with Hinduism, many artifacts and proofs can be found in viewing the existence of Buddhism in Riau. For instance, there is the inscription in Pasir Panjang in Tanjung Balai Karimun found by Holle in 1873. According to Moh. Yamin, the inscription contains the nature of Buddha, Mahayana Cola Yantrita, Sri Gautama, Sri Pada, meanings the followers of Mahayana, the shining globe and Shining Gautama (Team, 1976, p. 82). Beside the inscription, the history of Sriwijaya glory was the main source to view the spreading of Buddhism in Riau.

The kingdom of Sriwijaya was not only the center of trade but also that of religion and culture. It was the center of Buddhism of Mahayana came from the Indian traders. In his writing (671), I-tsing stated that he lived at Sriwijaya for 6

months to learn Sanskrit and he found that more than thousands of Bikkhus there. He also stressed that the rules and rituals were the same as that in India. Moreover, in that time, Cakyakirti was the famous Buddhist teacher who taught in a Buddhist university (Team, 1976, p. 112).

The real and indebatable proofs that Buddhism had spread in Riau is Muara Takus temple, which has the same style with Borobudur. Even, in the debate of the center of Sriwijaya, one of theory believed that the center of Sriwijaya was Muara Takus. Another artifact was Talang Tuo inscription (685) which shows that Mahayana Buddhism was the religion of Sriwijaya. From the vows and rituals can be concluded as Mahayana sect (Team, 1976, p. 113).

2.3 The Coming of Islam and the Process of Islamization

From the reality of economy above, the encounter between the people of Riau and Arabian traders is inevitable. As mentioned above, the people of Kuntu Kampar involved directly and even had the important role in the process of trade among Arabian, China, Indian traders. Therefore, it is reasonable if Kuntu Kampar was the first area where Islam spread (Team, 1976, p. 77).

Islam came to Riau in the 7th and 8th centuries, but the followers were still limited in traders and citizen of the seashore because Buddhism was the government religion of Sriwijaya in that time. In addition, there was a counter action from China in the competition of trade which caused Arabian traders went out of the area so that Arabian traders did not have relation with Kuntu-Kampar (Team, 1976, p. 87).

The Arabian traders were involved in the trade again in the 12th century when Fatimiyah obtained the top position, while the power of Sriwijaya had decreased. In that time, in Aceh, Islamic Kingdom of Daya was established as a branch of Fatimiyah Court. The two kingdoms had a closed relation to Kuntu Kampar in trade especially after the establishing of Pasei Kingdom. This led the increasing of the followers of Islam (Team, 1976, pp. 78–79).

From Kuntu Kampar, Islam was predicted to spread to Rokan in 738/1349. Nevertheless, several theories of the coming of Islam to Rokan emerge. The first theory states that Islam came to Rokan from Kuntu Kampar. The coming of Kuntu Kampar people was caused by the attack of Adityawarman. This attack led Muslims

went out from Kuntu Kampar and moved to Rokan. In that time, Rokan had had a good government under the King of Said. In this area, Muslims were successful to invite the people of Rokan became a Muslim, even the king of Said also converted to Islam (Team, 1976, p. 82). This theory seems to show that the conversion into Islam in Rokan occurred in peaceful actions; even the King supported and protected Muslims to spread Islam. Nevertheless, several questions still arise, such as how was the King so easy to convert to Islam from the Muslim refugee? How did the great conversion of the people of Rokan occur? Were there tension and conflict between Muslims from Kuntu Kampar and the local people?

The second theory stresses that Islam came to Rokan from Limo Kuto, *five cities*, (Bangkinang, Kuok, Salo, Rumbio, and Air Tiris) located at Right Kampar River. In the 12th century, Islam had entered Limo Kuto brought by Dayah Soldiers. Then, from Limo Kuto, Islam was spread to Rokan (Team, 1976, p. 81). From this theory, there is no information whether Dayah soldier pushed the people of Limo Kuto to convert to Islam or not. In addition, the information on the actors of the process of Islamization in Rokan is insufficient.

Third theory shows that Islam came to Rokan from Malacca in the middle of the 15th century. In his period, Sultan Mansur Syah asked two Muslim missionaries (*mubaligh*) to spread Islam in Riau including Rokan.

The fourth theory states that Islam came to Rokan from Aceh in Samudra Pasei period. Pasei Kingdom sponsored the establishment of the kingdom of Kunto Dar al-Salam in Rokan, but in the 14th century, Majapahit attacked the kingdom. Part of people run to Kuantan (Team, 1976, p. 82).

From the last theory, it can be concluded that Islam came to Kuantan and Inderagiri from Kunto Kampar and the Kunto of Dar al Salam. Nevertheless, the process of Islamization obtained the obstacle because of the attack of Adityawarman to Kuantan 1349. Adityawarman wanted to monopolize the trade. Because of this attack, the process of Islamization could not continue until the 17th century when several *ulamas* came to Kuantan (Ishaq & Rahman, 2003, pp. 33–38). One of the famous *ulamas* named Uti. He often interacted to the figures of the society who still believed in their ancestor's beliefs. Tension and conflict between the two occurred and took a long time which ended by the conversion of the local figures

into Muslim (Mahdini, 2003, p. 83). However, not all local people could accept Islam. In Inderagiri, for instance, a group of people rejects Islam since they view that the Islamic teachings were contradictive to their ancestors' belief. These people were called Talang Mamak people who now live in the forest of Belilas and Indonesian government identifies them as isolated society (Ishaq & Rahman, 2003, p. 37).

The short description above is, certainly, insufficient in obtaining a perfect description of the spreading of Islam in Riau and of the great conversion into Islam in Riau. However, in understanding the phenomenon of conversion in Riau is inseparable with the conversion into Islam in Nusantara. According to Benda, the coming of Islam in Nusantara was the city phenomenon. Therefore, the early followers of Islam were traders and the citizens of city both from low and high class (Benda, 1980, p. 28). Meanwhile, the process of Islamization in Nusantara has arisen several ideas or theories.

Some scholars believe that the process of Islamization was through marriage. Muslim traders were married with local women so that Muslim family was created. The formation of Muslim family had a role in spreading of Islam because it was also possible for the forming of Muslim society. Beside that, the scholars predicted that Muslim traders also got married with nobleman's daughters so they had the opportunity to have political powers. On the other hand, a local government accepted Islam to make them easy in interacting with the Arabian traders and this led them to monopolize the traffic of the trade (Mahdini, 2003, pp. 40–41). Nevertheless, as A. H. John asserts, if the spreading of Islam in Nusantara from the traders, why did not the great conversion occur in the 7th and 8th centuries? In addition, why was after the 12th century, the spreading of Islam in Nusantara obvious (Azyumardi, 1995, pp. 31–32).

The strong refusal on the idea that the marriage between Arabian traders and local nobleman's family can result the great conversion into Islam in large numbers comes from Schrike. He also rejected that the local people converted to Islam because of their leaders or government had been the followers of Islam. He proposed that the fact of colonialization encouraged the people of Nusantara to convert into Islam. The Islamic views of colonialist as *kafir* motivated the local people to fight against the colonialism. In other words, Islam had a function as the defense mechanism (Mahdini, 2003, p. 42). I agree to Mahdini to argue that the conversion

occurred only to fight colonialism. If Nusantara people needed a defense mechanism toward colonialism, it is better for them to choose their own tradition, culture and belief, which are truly potential in providing a motivation on defending their islands.

Another theory of conversion comes from A. H John and Fatimi who view the similarities between Islamic teachings and local tradition are the main factor of the acceptance of Islam in Nusantara. Islamic teachings which came to Nusantara in early period was mysticism, thus the syncretism between Islam and local culture was possible (Mahdini, 2003, p. 43). According to Mahdini, this view is the most possible than the other theories especially for the early Islamization in Nusantara. In the beginning of the 11th century, *tasawuf* had an international network that was very effective in the process of Islamization. In addition, an urbanization and migration among *ulamas* and *tareqat* leaders occurred. This led the dramatic increasing of conversion into Islam in the Middle East, which influenced the Islamization in the traffic of international trade: Malacca Strait (Mahdini, 2003, pp. 44–49). As Azra emphasizes, *Sufi* who were successful in converting the Nusantara people (Azyumardi, 1995).

3. Viewing the Influence of Islam in Malay Culture: the Case of Petalangan People

Although there are several different theories of the conversion into Islam in Nusantara, including Riau, the great conversion truly had occurred. Even, in the later developments, Islamic kingdoms grew rapidly in Riau such as Courts of Siak, Pekantua, Inderagiri, and Pelalawan. The conversion certainly changed the identity of Riau people. For them, to be Malay is to be Muslim. This conviction leads to several questions. For instance, where is the position of their culture and belief that became their identity before? If there is a negotiation between the Islamic teachings and their culture and belief, how does the negotiation occur? Etc. The following section is aimed to answer such questions. To make it more focused, I take the Petalangan People as an example.

3.1 *The People of Petalangan*

The people of Petalangan live in forest areas, hinterland of Kampar River, Riau. Petalangan communities are a part of Pelalawan district. They usually live in the forest and around of river in which they depend on. Nowadays, industrial world pushes them to leave the inheritance forests.

There are two views concerning the origin of Petalangan people. The first view states that the ancestors of Petalangan people are Malay Proto who arrived to the land around 2500-1500 CE. The second view maintains that the ancestors of Petalangan People are Malay Deutro who came in 300 CE (Effendy, 1995). Their *tombo*¹ mentions that their ancestors come from Johor symbolized by sea. The ancestors came to the land for the forest. They built a village and formed their local culture (Effendy, 1995). Linguistically, they speak various dialects of Pelalawan (Coastal Area), Daerah Limo Kuto (Kampar), Kuantan, and Minang Kabau (Shomary, 2004).

Compared to the people of other areas in Riau, the people of Petalangan are almost not touched by Indonesian government although they are not categorized as *Suku Terasing* (isolated tribe) based on the characteristics of isolated tribes. Social Department states that one society categorized as an isolated tribe because of a geographical distance, the lack of the facilities of communication and of modern technology, the lack of social interaction to other society, and the followers of ancestor beliefs and primitive reasoning (Hamidi, 1991). Based on these characteristics, five tribes in Riau are categorized as isolated tribes i.e. Sakai, Bonai, Talangmamak, Kubu, and Hutan. Although Petalangan people are not categorized as an isolated tribe, as Kang wrote, they are potential for marginalized because on the one hand, they are regarded as hinterland and on the other; they are excluded from a discourse of marginalization (Kang, 2005).

According to Effendy, Petalangan people increase their efforts to perform themselves as inheritor of Malay cultural values to face the marginalization (Effendy, 1995). They try to revitalize their oral tradition to show their identity: original Malay. The revitalization of ancient rituals becomes the main effort to show their Malay identity by associating historically to other Malay groups (Kang, 2005).

1 Epical song

3.2 *The Encounter between the People of Petalangan and Islam*

The people of Petalangan state that they are Muslims and 100 percent of population are the followers of Islam (Shomary, 2004). As mentioned before, for Malay people, becoming Malay means becoming Muslim (Kang, 2005). Thus, the fact that they are Muslims emphasizes their identity as Malay People.

Most of Malay people have the relation to Malay kingdom (*Kesultanan, Court*). Petalangan people are a part of Pelalawan kingdom. Pelalawan was the continuity of Pekantua kingdom which was built by Maharaja Indera (1380 M), a nobility from Temasik kingdom (Singapore). When Temasik kingdom was conquered by Majapahit in the late of the 14th century, Maharaja Indera went to Kampar, Pekantua kingdom.

Maharaja Indera is the follower of Hinduism. He built Hyang temple as his thankfulness to Pekantua kingdom. It is not known definitely the religion of the local society, whether they were animism, dynamism, Hinduism or Buddhism. However, as describing in the previous section of this paper, Buddhism was the possible for their religion if we view the year. In addition, in that area, there is Muara Takus temple. Many people believe that it is a symbol of the glory of Sriwijaya, but some people believe that Muara Takus temple is the first Buddhist kingdom before it moved to Sriwijaya.

Pekantua kingdom put many efforts to build Tolam Port to increase its role in Malacca Strait and this effort was successful in Maharaja Jaya era (1480-1505 CE). This port was heard by Malacca kingdom that then wanted to conquer Pekantua. In Mansyur Syah era (1459-1477 CE), Malacca kingdom successfully attacked Pekantua. From this moment, Pekantua became a part of Malacca kingdom that was famous as the pioneer of the spreading of Islam. The Islamization of Nusantara became intensive and developed significantly in Malacca kingdom. Malacca kingdom spread Islam to all of the conquered areas such as Pahang, Treggau, Kelantan, Malacca Strait, Rokan, Kampar, Siak, Riau Lingga and Inderagiri (Mahdini, 2003). Islamization also occurred through marriage although as we discuss above that the marriage seems not to bring the great conversion. For example, Malacca princesses were married with the kings from Pahang, Kedah, Siak, Kampar, Indergiri and Jambi (Mahdini, 2003). The first king of Pekantua kingdom is Munawar Syah. In 1761 CE, Pekantua kingdom moved to Pelalawan.

According to the story of the origin of Petalangan people, *Bujang Tan Domang*, the ancestor is described as Johor nobleman who grew in Pelalawan Kingdom. He empowered Johor in Malaya Peninsula, Lingga in Riau Island, dan Siak (Andaya, 1975). The story also shows that the leaders of Petalangan tribes were bestowed a title '*monti ajo*' (minister of king) by Pelalawan Kingdom, as a reward for their giving of land to the King (Effendy, 1995). They gave various commodities and services to maintain their position and honor in the kingdom (Turner, 1997).

When Pelalawan kingdom stated that Islam was the formal religion, Petalangan people adapted and harmonized their cultures to Islamic teachings. The process of Islamization, as *Sejarah Melayu* and other works wrote, seems to show that the conversion to Islam begun from the King, to other elite rulers and then to common people who were commanded to have the same religion. In other words, Islam came from top to down. The opinion may be true but we cannot ignore the fact that before the King converted to Islam, many people had been Muslims because they had relationship with Muslim traders. Koto Kampar is the first continental Riau which had relationship with Muslim traders. As mentioned before, this is possible because from the beginning this area had had relationship with foreign traders from China, India, and Persia-Arab. This relation is based on the trade interests because Right and Left Kampar River was the most important producer of pepper in the world in 500-1400 CE.

Al Atlas concludes that Islamization in East Asia began from down to top based on the fact of the relationship between local people and the traders (Al-Attas, n.d.). However, it is uneasy to imagine how common people influenced the religion of government, down to top.

The description above shows that the dwellers of Pelalawan included Petalangan people experienced changing or mixture of belief and religion, i.e. animism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam. This also influences the cultures related to various groups that come to the land. In the following section, we view the relationship between Islam and culture in Petalangan People.

3.3 *Islam and Petalangan Culture*

Riau Malay groups view differently the relationship between Islam and their local cultural system. For urban population, “*adat bersendi syarak, syarak bersendi kitabullah*,” (culture based on the law of Islamic teaching, and the law based on the scripture). For marginalized Malay people, “*adat bersendi syarak*” (culture based on the law of Islamic teaching) (Kang, 2005). The people of Petalangan emphasize that Islam is the basic system of their culture (Mahdini, 2003).

In daily life, Petalangan people interpret their Islamic identity by not eat pig and do sholat, fasting, and Islamic ritual such as circumcision and marriage. Kang found that many Petalangan people do not practice sholat and fasting. Nevertheless, Islamic teachings start to be emphasized for young generation; they have to learn Qur'an and sholat at the mosque (Kang, 2005).

Although they state that they are Muslims, in cultural aspects, animism, dynamism, and Hinduism influence them (Effendy, 1995). They believe in spirits that protect them. There are four types of spirits 1. *jengkodi* (angel), the spirit for animal and human, 2. *mambang* (fair), the spirit of plant, 3. *semangat insane boe padi* (rice-plant spirit) and 4. *ajo ikan* (Fish King) (Kang, 2005). They ask protection and welfare to genie and other invisible creatures by conducting a sufficient ritual to show their honor. This conviction, of course, is contradictive to Islamic teachings that emphasizes that there is no place to ask protection and hopes but God. In addition, if a Muslim asked protection to other things or creatures, he was a *musyrik* that are categorized as great sin. Nevertheless, in Petalangan people's point of view, these daily beliefs are not opposite with Islamic teachings, and even, Islam becomes the source of other power that supports their spiritual power as seen in incantation (Kang, 2005).

In Petalangan society, incantation is used in daily activities. Petalangan people believe that invisible creatures such as genie have their own place in this world and humans have to realize their existence in order to create a good coexistence. Petalangan people view incantation as a cultural language to build the relation with invisible creatures. They believe that the ancestors have the particular ability to communicate to gods, nature, and invisible creature. Then, the ancestors taught the

incantation that has spiritual power to the next generation. For present generation, the incantation, as ancestor's words, has a magical power (Kang, 2005).

According to Petalangan people, incantation, which is addressed continuously to a body, can make words penetrate bone and flesh because magical words move the content to influence the body (Kang, 2005).

Example of incantation

*Wah humma kamma billhaili
 Sekali ke umah
 sekali ke tanah
 Aku mengambil cahaya mataha'i
 Bulan dengan bintang
 Sa'o malilup di pinggangku
 Bintang temabu di dada aku
 Bulan mengambang di muka aku
 Matahari terbit di ubun-ubun aku
 Sengaja aku memakai
 Cahayo bulan bintang mataha'i
 Dalam batang tubuh badanku ini
 Kabul Allah, Kabul Muhammad
 Kabul Bagindo Rasulullah*

Incantation above is called as the incantation of beauty (*pemani, pekasih*). The incantation aims to make person who used the incantation beautiful or good looking. This incantation is usually used to make an addressed person fall in love to the user of incantation. Petalangan people believe that through incantation, they can communicate with the spirits of ancestors, invisible creatures such as genie, and that both spirits of ancestor and invisible creatures have ability to help them. In many incantations as also shown above, God and Rasulullah Muhammad were mentioned in the beginning and the end. Thus, they regard the highest power is God but there are also many invisible creatures who have the power to help them.

The description above shows that the People of Petalangan continue their ancestors' cultures and beliefs. Their encounter with Islam does not lead them to leave their cultural identity. They make a negotiation between the two although the result cannot actually be accepted by the mainstream of Islam. There is no information

whether the wave of purification touched this area. From this phenomenon, it seems that the People of Petalangan try to contextualize their culture and beliefs.

4. Conclusion

From the discussion above, there are several concluding remarks to end our discussion. First, the reality of economy in Malacca Strait brought the encounter between Riau-Malay people and Arabian traders. Riau not only become the place of docking of ships but also involve directly in the trade since Riau was the producer of pepper, tin, etc. This encounter in turn led the citizen of city converted to Islam. Thus, the traders began the spreading of Islam in Riau but this is insufficient to say the traders conducted the great conversion. Second, throughout the history, Riau people encounters various religions such Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam. The great conversion to Islam occurred in Riau along with the great conversion in Nusantara that emerges several theories of conversion. Third, after becoming the followers of Islam, a part of Riau people continues their ancestors' cultures and beliefs. They adapt and harmonize Islamic teachings and their cultures. They believe that the result of these efforts is not opposite with Islam. This shows the process of contextualization of culture and beliefs.

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