

# The Struggle of The Aceh Society in The Historical Framework of Malay and Nusantara

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## ABSTRACT

This study describes the attitude of the struggle of the people of Aceh from the historical point of view as well as the form of the contribution of the fighting of Aceh to Nusantara and the culture of Aceh. This qualitative research data is collected by means of the study of the library by collecting the reading materials that correspond to the discussion. The data is then done reading techniques and recorded from the reading results of the materials related to the struggle of aceh and contribution to nusantara and culture. The results of reading and recording techniques, will answer the form of the problem is how to fight aceh against nusantara, and how the fight of Aceh in culture. Thus it can be concluded that the aceh's historical championship is very great against Nusantara and culture also from the point of view of Islamization in Nusantara. It is based on the territory of the Aceh and the attitude of the aceh monarchy as well as the diplomatic relations carried out by the Aceh kingdoms.

## ABSTRAK

Kajian ini mendeskripsikan tentang sikap perjuangan masyarakat Aceh ditinjau dari sejarah serta bentuk kontribusi perjuangan masyarakat Aceh terhadap Nusantara dan kebudayaan Aceh. Data penelitian kualitatif ini dikumpulkan dengan cara studi kepustakaan dengan mengumpulkan bahan-bahan bacaan yang sesuai dengan pembahasan. Data tersebut kemudian dilakukan teknik membaca dan dicatat dari hasil pembacaan materi-materi yang berkaitan dengan perjuangan aceh dan kontribusinya terhadap nusantara dan kebudayaan. Hasil dari teknik baca dan rekam, akan menjawab berupa permasalahan bagaimana perjuangan aceh melawan nusantara, dan bagaimana perjuangan aceh secara budaya. Dengan demikian dapat disimpulkan bahwa keutamaan sejarah aceh sangat besar terhadap nusantara dan budaya juga dari sudut pandang islamisasi di nusantara. Hal ini didasarkan pada wilayah Aceh dan sikap monarki Aceh serta hubungan diplomasi yang dilakukan kerajaan-kerajaan Aceh.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Given the history of Aceh which has taken place over a very long period of time, as long as we speak the history connected with the struggle of Aceh is very long and extensive. The history of the struggle of Aceh in it discusses matters relating to the contribution of the Aceh people to the Nusantara people in particular Indonesia, so that the convention of the people against Indonesia is worth the monumental struggles. Among the contributions of Aceh to the struggle are: First, Aceh was the beginning of Islamization in Nusantara. Secondly, Aceh (especially the Pasai Ocean) was the first place where the Jawi and Malay languages were used in scientific activities so that the Malay language changed its role from

a simple lingua franca to a language of science, and in fact the Malay Pasai language was also the ancestor of the Indonesian language.

Thirdly, the Pasai Ocean and Aceh Darussalam have once been the cultural centers of Malay Islam which gave birth to the productive scholars and academics so that their works serve as a reference for the development of Islamic science throughout Nusantara. Fourthly, the patriotism of the Aceh community, driven by the beliefs of Islam, the Qur'an and the Hadiths, as well as the texts of the poets expressing the spirit of struggle that makes the people willing to rise and fight risking their soul, wealth, or even their lives in the fight against the colonization all the time so that in the Aceh society appeared many heroes, whether recognized by the State or not.

Fifth, When Indonesia gained independence, the struggle of Aceh was also demonstrated by its inclination to join the Republic of Indonesia and defend the territory of Aceh from attempts at re-colonization by the Netherlands and its Allies so that Aceh became the Capital Territory of the State of Indonesia. Sixth, when the Republic of Indonesia was hard-built but lacking capital, the people of Aceh volunteered to donate their assets over and over again, either to buy airplanes for the smoothness of Indonesian diplomatic activities, or to build prestige and national monuments, or donate to the country because of the country's bankruptcy.

Seventh, the Aceh Struggle forms the nation and preserves the dignity of the nation not only in its physical form, but also in its non-physical form, in which the wisdom of the Aceh locality becomes the useful national Wisdom of Indonesia. It is a form of some Aceh struggle both in form of fragments of attitudes and actions that are valuable in the form of Aceh society struggles.

Based on the explanation above, it can be seen that the contribution of the Aceh community to Indonesia was seen long before Indonesia became independent, or in other words still in the form of Nusantara. The contributions mentioned above are not limited to these points. There are many more that have not been mentioned in the points above. Therefore, in this article will be discussed based on the points that have been mentioned about the struggle of the Aceh community.

## **2. METHOD**

This qualitative research describes the struggle of the people of Ash and their contributions to the culture of Ash as well as Nusantara. This research looks at how the forms of the struggles of the society of Ash against Nusantara and how the community of Ash contributes in the culture by looking from the point of view of history. The method of research is the study of the library. with the technique of compilation of data on reading materials related to the history of Ash. and doing reading and copying techniques by drawing conclusions from the reading-read materials.

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **a. Strategic Position, Cosmopolitan Nature of Aceh, and Title of Mecca Serambi**

Aceh, located at the northwestern end of Sumatra Island, between 2-6 degrees north latitude and 95-98 degrees south latitude, with an average elevation of 125 meters above sea level, is the westernmost and most northern part of the Indonesian Islands. The area of 57,365,57 square miles, which is bordered by the Indian Ocean to the west and the Strait of Malacca to the north and east, has been an important and highly strategic area as a gateway to shipping traffic and the intersection of merchants from the east and west for centuries (Ahmad, 1972). mentions that since the Neolithic period the Strait of Malacca has been a very important channel in the migration of nations in Asia, in the movement of cultural

expansion from India and as a world trade route that connects the cultural centers of China and India (Zakaria 1972:16).

Therefore it may be understood that the Strait of Malacca has become a place of encounter of international traffic networks, where places along the waters have alternately occupied important positions as ports of transit or ports for taking water and supplies (Zakaria 1972:17). In its position as a gateway to international traffic that has been opened by the nations of the world, it has made Aceh a very open territory for cosmopolitan international association. Reid (2005) mentions that Aceh was once very cosmopolitan, and that it was something inherent in the culture of Aceh that brought together nations from the east and west, both in the trade of land and for other purposes. The cosmopolitan nature of Aceh is more striking than any other region in Indonesia that shows its uniqueness in language, culture, art, craftsmanship, and religion, where the relationship between religion and customs is very harmonious, unlike in other areas of Sumatra (Reid, 2005). This can happen because religion and custom in Aceh are united and inseparable, as matter and nature.

In a very strategic position, it has made Aceh the first region to receive cultural and religious influence from outside Nusantara, including Islamic religion and culture. Therefore, in the area now inhabited by the Malay, Gayo, Alas, Aneuk Jamee, Kluet, Simeulue, Singkil, and the Aceh ethnic groups, it is estimated that Islam began to spread since the 7th century (Iskandar 1996:100), although the Islamic empire in the region appeared only in the 13th centuries, namely with the establishment of the Pasai Ocean Kingdom by Sultan Malikus Saleh who died in the year 696 H/1297 A.D (Sangidu 2003:25).

In addition to the Kingdom of the Oceans of Pasai (1250 - 1524 M) (Iskandar 1996:99), in the area where the entire population is now originally Islamic, it was also built by Sultan Ali Mughayat Shah in 1514 M. The Kingdom of Aceh Darussalam (1514 - 1912 M) which is the capital of Bandar Aceh Darussalam (Banda Aceh now), then developed into a very influential Islamic kingdom in Southeast Asia so that it reached the peak of its success during the reign of Sultan Iskandar Muda Meukuta Alam (1607-1636 M), which made Aceh the nickname *Seuramoe Mecca* (Serambi Mekkah).

The vision and mission of the Islamic kingdoms in Aceh was to advance education and civilization. Therefore, Hasjmy (in Sangidu, 2003) mentions that the Islamic kingdoms that have emerged in Aceh have declared war on the illiterate and the blind of science (Sangidu 2003). The determination to advance science and civilization was initiated by the Pasai Ocean Kingdom, then continued by the Aceh Darussalam Kingdom by making the Kingdom capital a centre of education and teaching so that prominent scholars emerged who encouraged young people from all corners of Southeast Asia to come to Aceh (Sangidu 2003) to pursue science.

Pascaleburno Oceans passed into the Kingdom of Aceh Darussalam, the city of Aceh, which became the capital of the kingdom of Aceh darussalam continues to grow into an international city, even becoming a center of scientific and cultural development (Sangidu 2003). In its position as a centre of education and teaching, Aceh became the last terminal for many prosecutors from all over Southeast Asia who had graduated from various training centres in their region to study further in Aceh, before they continued their education to the Middle East (Yaman, Mecca-Madinah, and Egypt), and that's why Aceh was called the "*Serambi Mecca*" (Azra 1994).

#### **b. Islamization of The Aceh Community**

In the westernmost part of Sumtera, before Islamization, the Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms stood in the position of "*Aceh Lhee Sagoe*" (three senses): Indrapurwa, Indrapatra, and Indrapuri, who were later revitalized in the time of Sultan Nurul Alam Naqiyatuddin

(1676-1678) into Sagoes XXV, XXVI, and XXII, each led by the Uleebalang Commander of Sagoas (Snouck 1996).

The existence of Hindu-Buddha in Aceh before Islam, for example, the presence of pre-Islamic buildings such as the Indrapatra Fortress in Ladong-Aceh Besar, the Old Indrapuri Mosque on the ruins of the Temple, found the head of the Boddhisatwa Awalokitesh vara in Indrapurwa in 1881, which is now one of the collection of the National Museum of Jakarta No. Inv. 248, found Prasasti Neusu Aceh (1990) ancient Tamil texts of the 11th century that are now the archaeological collection of the Museum of Aceh, found Buddha's head in Lampriet on 21 October 2019 and other both in physical form (tangible), and non-physical (intangible) that have become elements of culture or vocabulary and terms in the language of Aceh.

After the arrival of Islam in the first century of Hijriah in the region known as Lamuri which is the capital of Bandar Darussalam (Portuguese called Argyra: City of Silver (Said, 2007: 18), then the beliefs of Hindu-Buddha also declined and replaced with the belief that then all the people were Islamic until the establishment of the Kingdom of Aceh Darussalam with its capital city of Bandar Aceh darussalam (1514 - 1903), which later became the third center of Malay Islamic culture, after the Centre of Malay Muslim Culture Samudera-Pasai (1250 - 1524) and the Center of Melayu Islamic Culture Malaka (1400 - 1511)(Iskandar 1996: 99, 183).

Many truly serious theories are accompanied by various dialectics and debates about the process and origins of the spread of Islam or Islamization in the Malay Nusantara Islands which scholars from various backgrounds have put forward with their own evidence and arguments since ancient times. Of the theories presented among them can be summarized as follows.

1) that Islam spread due to the factor of trade; 2) that Islam was spread because of the factors of the merchants and his employees, such as the Syahstad marriage between Muslims and non-Muslims and Islamization among local communities; 3) that Islam is spread as a factor of hostility between Muslim and Christian, which accelerated the spread of Islam, especially in the 15th century to the 17th C.E. as a continuation of the Crusades; 4) that Islam has been spread for the facility factor and political interests that are considered as a motivation to embrace Islam; 5) that Islam differs because of an appreciation factor of the ideological values of Islam is considered as the primary factor for embracing it; 6) that Islam extends due to an otoc tonic factor or circumstances in which something that has long been considered as its property and culture, the science of tasawuf and mystic Islam is regarded as similar to previous beliefs so as to facilitate the acceptance of Islamic religion by the local community (Israr, 1958: 118; Al-Attas, 1990: 42 – 43; Damais, 1995: 171; Chamamah 2002: 38 – 42; Sangidu, 2003: 23 - 25).

Referring to the opinions of experts, both archaeological and literary data, it is estimated that Islam has begun to spread in the Malay Nusantara Islands since the 7th century AD (bdk. Hasjmy, 1983: 36 - 41 and Iskandar, 1996: 100) or the first century of Hijriyah. It is given that the Malay Nusantara Islands were invaded by Arab traders who connected with China through the Strait of Malacca since the 5th century B.C.(Iskandar 1996:100). These estimates are confirmed by Azra (1994) based on the history of the T'ang Dynasty visited by Ambassador Tan-mi-mo-ni' (Amirul Mu'minin) Usman bin Affan in 655 A.D. and later, the regular navigation of Muslim sailors to the Far East by the 7th century turned out to be documented not only by Chinese palaces, but also by Chinese Buddhist pilgrims who frequently navigated the route by boarding ships belonging to Muslim seafarers to India (Azra, 1994: 37). Azra (1994) also mentions that then, during the 90 years of the Umayyah dynasty with 17 ambassadors followed by the Abbasiyyah dynasties with 18 duties appeared

in Chinese palaces until 798 M, has shown the intensity of the relationship of these Islamic caliphates with China so high that it gives the possibility to assume that Arab Muslims are offended and know a lot about the Malay Nusantara Islands (Azra, 1994: 38).

Therefore, after Islam appeared and developed in Haramain (Mekkah and Medina) two centuries later, it is not impossible that Muslim Arab merchants have also landed in the old ports at the western end of Sumatra Island, such as Barus, Singkil, Lamuri, Poli (Pidie), Pasai, and Peureulak, and have also begun to spread Islam in those places gradually (ibid.Hadi W.M, 1995: 9-10) as it is prophesied in an Achaean proverb that Islam was brought to Aceh by Sheikh Abdullah Arif around 1112 AD, Sultan Johan Syah ascended to the throne in 1204 AD (Iskandar, 1996: 100), and he founded the City of Darussalam in 1205 M (Hasjmy,1983). After that, Islam continued to flourish in the region for the following centuries. Referring to the opinions of experts, both archaeological and literary data, it is estimated that Islam began to spread in the Malay Nusantara Islands since the 7th century BC (bdk. Hasjmy, 1983: 36 - 41 and Iskandar, 1996: 100) or the first century of Hijriyah. (Iskandar, 1996: 100).

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Archaeological data on the early traces of Islamization can be submitted, Fathimah binti Maimun nisan in Leran East Java dated 7 Rajab 475 H or 2 December 1082 M, Sultan Sulaiman nisan at Kuta Leubok-Lamreh (Lamuri) Aceh Big years 680 H or 1234 M, and Sultan Malikussalih nisan on Pasai 696 H or 1297. Found the nisan Sultan Malikuussalih above followed by archaeological data such as gold currency or derham (Aceh: deureuham) circulated when Sultan Muhammad Malikuzzahir (son of Sultan Malikaussalih) ruled and inscriptions on the nisan Princess Nahrasiyyah showing the sultan-sultan of Samudera Pasai, as well as in his manuscript Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai which is a literary data, have become proof that since the 13th century the first Islamic kingdom of Mauul in Kepulamiri, means that the Islamic rule has officially emerged. It is consistent with what Damais (1995) meant that Islamization is considered official where there has been Islamic political power and government, when the leaders of a region, especially the king, family, and the prominent people, embrace Islam, which results in the majority of its people also embraces Islam, although some of them have first embraced the religion. (Damais, 1995: 171 dan Sangidu, 2003: 23). Archaeological data on the early traces of Islamization can be submitted, Fathimah binti Maimun nisan in Leran East Java dated 7 Rajab 475 H or 2 December 1082 M, Sultan Sulaiman nisan at Kuta Leubok-Lamreh (Lamuri) Aceh Big years 680 H or 1234 M, and Sultan Malikussalih nisan on Pasai 696 H or 1297. Found the nisan Sultan Malikuussalih above followed by archaeological data such as gold currency or derham (Aceh: deureuham) circulated when Sultan Muhammad Malikuzzahir (son of Sultan Malikaussalih)

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### **c. Aceh as The Centre of Malay Islamic Culture and Intellectual Heritage**

The Malay cultural centers began to emerge from the Sriwijaya era (7th - 12th century AD) followed by the Malay cultural center of Singapore (abad ke-13 - 14 M). Both cultural centers produced still Hindu-Buddhist works, such as the Mahabharata, Ramayana, and Sri Rama Hikayat (Iskandar, 1996). Later, at the beginning of the Islamic era, the Pasai Ocean became the centre of Malay Islamic culture (1250 - 1511 A.D.), where the Jawi script and Malay language began to be used and Malay works from the Hindu era were given Islamic colour, Arabic and Persian Islamic works were translated into the Malay language, and Melayu works with Islamic characteristics were produced. Some of the written works from the Pasai ocean can be mentioned, such as the translation of Hikayat Amir Hamzah, the Translation of the Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiah, the translations of the Book of Durrul Manzhum, Hikayat Bayan Budiman, the Parisi Nun Hikayat, the King-King Hikayat of Pasai, the Life of Prophet Muhammad SAW, the epos of Islam, and other books of Islamic doctrine (Iskandar, 1996: 99 -182).

The success of the Pasai Ocean was followed by the emergence of other centers of Malay culture, such as Malaka (1400 - 1511 AD), Johor (1511 - 1798 AD), Aceh (1514 - 1900 AD), Palembang (1650 - 1824 AD), Riau (1798 - 1900-AD), Brunei, Banjar, and Patani. (1996: xxiv - xxvii).

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The role of the Pasai Ocean as the centre of Malay culture was once shifted to Malaka in line with the rise of Malaka as a political and economic centre (1400 -1511 AD). However, during that time the Passai Ocean still held an important role as the center of Malay Islamic culture until the fall of Malacca into the hands of the Portuguese (1511 AD), which caused

the resurrection of the Pacific Ocean as a centre of Malayan culture, before such a role was taken over by the City of Aceh Darussalam (1514 -1900 AD) (Iskandar, 1996:xxiv-xxv) following the transition of the trade and political center to the city after the Passay Ocean was merged into the territory of the Kingdom of Aceh.

The transfer of Malay cultural centers from the Pasai Ocean and Malaka to the city of Aceh Darussalam above, can be seen as a shift in the concentration of intellectual, cultural, and literary activities to the town. It was marked by the gathering of merchants, brilliant intellectuals, scholars, and literates from inside and outside the Indonesian islands of Aceh (Yock Fang, 1993:42; Iskandar, 1996) until the Kingdom of Aceh Darussalam had advanced in literature (Steenbrink, 1988: 113; Daudy, 1978: 6). The scientific and cultural heritage of the cosmopolitan Ocean of Pasai, absorbed by the newly emerging Kingdom of Aceh Darussalam, continues to develop to give birth to great and productive poets with their high-quality works. Productive scholars emerged as they alternated over time until the beginning of the 20th century. They have produced and left their most monumental intellectual cultural heritage in the form of manuscripts containing various sciences and cultures, especially knowledge of Islam and Islamic culture (Sangidu, 2003). The position of Aceh as the center of Islam (Fang, 1993) peaked between the late 16th century and the late 17th, when successively emerged the most influential leading scholars in the region of Southeast Asia, namely Syeikh Hamzah al-Fansury (estimated to die 1590 M), Shaykh Syamsuddin bin Abi Abdillah as-Sumatrany (died 1630 M), Syekh Nuruddin ar-Raniry (dead 1658 M), and Shayikh Abdurrauf bin Ali as-Singkily (dead 1693 M) (Daudy, 1983: 1; bdk. Ricklefs, 1992: 77; Yock Fang, 1993).

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The Aceh Territory is an important and highly strategic area that makes Aceh a very open area for international cooperation. This highly strategic position has made Aceh the first region to receive cultural and religious influence from outside Nusantara. The Islamic religion that entered the first century of Hijriah marked the beginning of the Islamization in Aceh which eventually spread to the territory of Nusantara. In addition to the spread of Islam from Aceh to Nusantara, Aceh is also a cultural hub. This cultural center came after the transition from the Pasai and Malaka ocean kingdoms to the city of Aceh Darussalam. It is also supported by the strategic territory of Aceh for the gathering of merchants and brilliant men, scholars, and literates from inside and outside the Indonesian islands in Aceh. The region is strategic and Aceh is a place of gathering of pedagans and scholars and other cultural and intellectual figures. The contribution of the Aceh struggle also shows how the Aceh kingdom is connected with some parts of Asia and Europe.

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