

Dynamics of the Frontier World in Insular Southeast Asia: An Overview

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Introduction

For three years from FY1992 to FY1994 we carried out a joint research project titled "Dynamics of the Frontier World in Insular Southeast Asia," funded by special overseas research grants from the Japanese Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. Although the list of project participants underwent slight alterations over the three-year period, we managed to maintain an interdisciplinary team of some dozen researchers every year, who came mainly from our Center for Southeast Asian Studies, with a few from Japanese universities and Southeast Asian academic institutions. The team consisted of scholars in diverse disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, human ecology, forest ecology, tropical agriculture, demography, geography, education, and Southeast Asian history. We visited different areas of Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei and the Philippines for our research project.

In the present paper, I try to outline some of the backgrounds of the project and its main activities.

Over the years, we at Center for Southeast Asian Studies of Kyoto University have been concerned with the question "what is Southeast Asia?" In tackling this question, some of us have carried out various research projects in Insular Southeast Asia. They include "The Movement of People and the Process of Environment Formation in the Tropical Archipelago" (FY1980~FY1984), "Geneology of the Malay Agricultural Culture: The Interaction between Indigenous Evolution and Exogenous Transformation" (FY1986~FY1988), and "An Integrated Study on the Dynamics of the Maritime World of Southeast Asia" (FY1990~FY1991).

By looking at some of the key terms used in the previous project titles, e.g., the movement of people, the process of environment formation, the interaction between indigenous evolution and exogenous transformation, and the dynamics of the maritime world, one may say that we entertain a certain image about what Insular Southeast Asia is like.

I Image of Insular Southeast Asia

The image of Insular Southeast Asia evoked by this collection of key terms is that Insular Southeast

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Asia is a maritime world full of movement where indigenous dynamism and exogenous influences converge. Insular Southeast Asia, in short, is a frontier world. Amino Yoshihiko, a well-known historian of medieval Japan, once noted that the Japanese, whether contemplating their own history or that of other societies, were prone to be obsessed with such notions as land, agriculture, center, and sedentary settlement. We tend to rely on these notions as the norms in evaluating historical events and periods. He points out, however, that sea, fishing, commerce, periphery, and movement are as important as their counterparts in understanding the history of Japan, especially that of pre-medieval Japan, and, by implication, the history of other societies [Amino 1991].

Insular Southeast Asia even today embraces many of these latter characteristics which diverge from our preconception of what society is, or should be, like. For example, we are inclined to think that peasants form settled populations and are conservative and non-adventurous by inclination. On the contrary, it is not unusual in Insular Southeast Asia to encounter “mobile peasants” who move from one area to another and speculate on land reclamation and the cultivation of commercial crops including rice [Takaya 1990].

Without question, Insular Southeast Asia of the late-twentieth century has witnessed an increasingly high degree of political centralization, the development of land transportation systems and the advancement of the “green revolution,” together with industrialization and urbanization. In step with these changes, the “forest people” and “sea people,” the proto-typically mobile inhabitants of Insular Southeast Asia, are often forcefully herded into government-sponsored resettlement projects. Sometimes we wonder if we can find contemporary “mobile peasants” only in the guise of migrants from over-populated Java and Bali to the outer islands under the central government’s transmigration projects. Nevertheless, if we look more closely, we can still encounter, even in areas heavily populated by transmigrants, “spontaneous migrants” or “*spontan*” from Java and elsewhere who, without any government assistance or encouragement, live as peasants, merchants, peddlers and manual laborers.

The frontier world of Insular Southeast Asia still lives on under changing conditions and circumstances. Yet nobody knows for how long and in what way this world might be viable in the future. It is the aim of our project to contemplate the past, present and future of ever-changing Insular Southeast Asia through the key concepts of movement and frontier world.

II The Outline of the Project

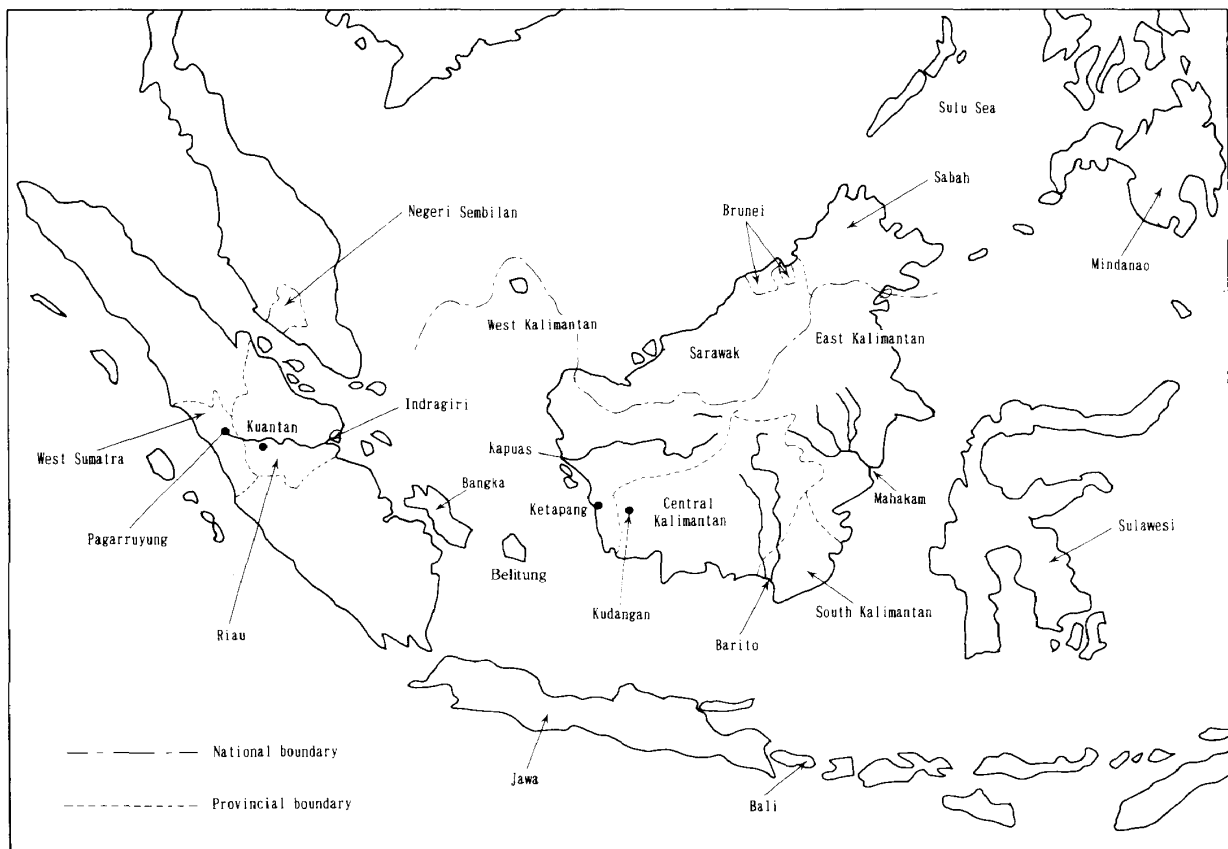
The current joint research project is outlined succinctly in our research proposal. Let me quote a passage from it.

Historically, Insular Southeast Asia had much lower population density than some other parts of Asia, specifically China and India. Demographically, it has also long been noted for the frequent movement of people in terms of population dispersion and population concentration. Destinations of both population dispersion and concentration can be characterized as frontiers in this world of movement and fluidity. In particular, we may identify two types of frontier there, namely, urban frontiers and rural frontiers.

In the present research project we focus on the rural frontier and the urban frontier in contemporary

Insular Southeast Asia, taking these as a unit and a framework of analysis. Specifically, we select a relatively well-defined geographical unit, i.e., a riverine system, and examine how the rural and urban frontiers have each developed and how they have interacted within the said geographical unit. Some of the specific questions we ask concern the historical process of population movement, the interaction between man and environment in the frontier, and the process of social formation in the frontier community. As an interdisciplinary team of scholars, we plan to carry out our research project in an historically, sociologically and ecologically informed manner in selected areas of Insular Southeast Asia.

The project consists of two parts. The first is research carried out jointly by most project participants. The second is long-term research conducted by individual project participants in their selected localities. The sites of the joint research are three major riverine systems of Indonesian Kalimantan, while those of individual research spread out over Insular Southeast Asia and are especially concentrated in Indonesia (Map 1).



Map 1 Insular Southeast Asia

III The Joint Research in Kalimantan

From time immemorial up until very recently, rivers and the sea constituted the major arteries of population movement in Insular Southeast Asia. Human settlements there were also mostly found along the rivers and coasts. It is precisely for this reason that we selected riverine systems as the

sites of the joint research. In addition, riverine systems constitute relatively well-defined geographical units within which different socio-ecological zones are meaningfully interrelated. We decided specifically to concentrate on Indonesian Kalimantan since it presents three contrasting major riverine systems, namely, the Kapuas, Barito, and Mahakam, and, not unsignificantly to our personal interest, none of the team members had spent much time in Kalimantan in the past.

It was not the first time that researchers at our Center had concentrated on a particular riverine system in order to understand the interactional processes between man and environment in the tropical archipelago. In 1978, research with a similar design and intention was conducted along the Komering river of South Sumatra. Its results were published by our Center in 1980 in the research report entitled *South Sumatra: Man and Agriculture* edited by Tsubouchi *et al.* [1980].

The research method in the joint project might be called a “landscape observation” method. It consists of wide-ranging travel, landscape observation or ecological observation, and impromptu interviews with local people whenever and wherever the need arises. Impromptu interviews were held, for example, with an aristocrat at one of the palaces in West Kalimantan, a Chinese merchant carrying and selling goods by *kapal bandong* (a relatively large, flat-bottomed ship) along the Kapuas, Javanese collectors of *gaharu* (incense wood) in East Kalimantan working for a Chinese merchant, and a transmigrant in Central Kalimantan.

On-the-spot exchange of ideas among the traveling project members is another important component of the “landscape observation” method. Sharing common travel experiences and exchanging observations and ideas gained from the vantage points of our respective disciplinary backgrounds help us, both as a team and as individual project participants, to develop overall, comparative perspectives on the ecology and society we encounter in our travel.

The “landscape observation” method is primarily meant to stimulate intellectual cross-fertilization among the research participants, rather than to produce any detailed, conclusive findings on the research areas. It is probably better suited to the ecologist’s interest than the social scientist’s. Ecologists can augment their field observations with maps, aerial photographs, satellite images, and so forth, either before or after the research. First-hand field-observation experience at various locations, in fact, enhances the ecologist’s ability to interpret maps and other secondary sources more perceptively. Social scientists, in contrast, usually prefer long-term, sedentary research to the peripatetic “landscape observation” method. Nevertheless, we at Center for Southeast Asian Studies believe that we are students of area studies irrespective of our disciplinary backgrounds and that the “landscape observation” method helps to instil ecology-mindedness, which is extremely important in area studies.

In the joint project, we traveled along the Kapuas of West Kalimantan in FY1992, along the Barito of Central Kalimantan and part of its major tributary, the Negara, of South Kalimantan in FY1993, and along the Mahakam and the upper reaches of the Kayang in FY1994. We spent at least one month for this purpose each fiscal year. The modes of transportation were speed-boats, long boats, *ketinting* (small, flat-bottomed boats with an outboard engine), cars and, at one time, a small plane. Most of the time we chartered them in order to travel from the mouth of a river to the mountainous region upriver in our limited time schedule. Improvement in road conditions has been

remarkable in Kalimantan since the early 1980s. However, except in South Kalimantan, rivers still constitute a major means of transportation. It would have been impossible for us to travel extensively in Kalimantan in a limited period unless we had pooled our research funds for this purpose.

As described above, we traveled Kalimantan from the west to the east of the island in three years. Our impressions of Central, South and East Kalimantan may well have been greatly influenced by our initial exposure to West Kalimantan, and it is conceivable that our impressions of Kalimantan in general would have been different had we started our travel of the island from the east.

Schematically, the riverine systems in Kalimantan may roughly be divided into four eco-social zones. Near the mouths of the rivers lie urban commercial centers that also function as politico-administrative centers as well as harbors. A major exception in this respect is Palangkaraya, the inland provincial capital of Central Kalimantan, which Sukarno created for political reasons in 1957.

Other than downriver urban centers, the areas around the lower reaches of the rivers and along the coasts have been developed relatively recently. Aquaculture (e.g., shrimp farms), commercial logging, and agriculture here are mainly carried out by people and capital originating from outside Kalimantan, for instance, from Java and South Sulawesi. The areas along the middle reaches are where people from upstream and those from downstream traditionally met. Logging and government-sponsored transmigration projects for commercial crops called PIR (Perkebunan Inti Rakyat) are of relatively recent introduction to these areas. In contrast, agriculture, intensive fishing, and sometimes large-scale animal husbandry by local people are long-established modes of existence. The areas along the upper reaches are mountainous. Swidden agriculture, hunting, fishing, collecting forest products (e.g., rotan) and gold-panning are among the local people's mainstays. However, logging, government-sponsored transmigration projects, official relocation programs of local inhabitants, and the advent of outsiders searching for gold or swallows' nests have been profoundly disturbing the pre-existing lifestyles of the local inhabitants.

In each of these eco-social zones we find immense changes instigated by the movement of people. The aim of the joint research project is precisely to understand the general nature of the ever-changing frontiers by comparing the three main riverine systems in Indonesian Kalimantan.

Distribution patterns of ethnic groups may roughly be identified in the four eco-social zones in the following way. In the upriver areas live the "Dayak," who formerly practiced swidden agriculture and upheld the "animistic" "Kaharingan" religion. Unlike their counterparts in the lower and middle reaches of the river, who are mostly assimilated into "Melayu" after becoming Muslims over the last several generations, these people are now generally converted to Christianity. Interestingly, their lingua franca has been Indonesian for some time as it is used by missionaries and priests at church. The middle reaches of the river are settled by the mixed population of Melayu, Dayak, and some other ethnic groups. Population compositions of the downriver areas and urban centers are more variable, encompassing a wide range of ethnic groups: Melayu, Javanese, Chinese, Arabs, Bugis, Banjarese, Minangkabau and so on. There are some regional variations in the ethnic compositions of downriver areas and urban centers between the three riverine systems. We find many more people of Chinese descent in West Kalimantan than elsewhere, due to its geographically and

historically closer relationship to Singapore. In contrast, there are many of Bugis and Banjarese origin in East Kalimantan, which is situated close to Central Kalimantan and South Sulawesi. There is a sizable community of people of Arab descent in Banjarmasin, which seems to be related to the existence of the powerful sultanate of Banjarmasin in time past.

Another ethnic group which cannot be ignored in Kalimantan are the Javanese. Early Javanese influence can be traced to the Majapahit period. One notable example of this is found in West Kalimantan. Most minor *raja* who established their centers of power at river junctions along the Kapuas have stories tracing their ancestry to Brawijaya of the Majapahit. The *gameran* instruments are an important part of court regalia in West Kalimantan and elsewhere in Kalimantan. More recent Javanese influence or presence is attested by the many Javanese who now live and work in various parts of Indonesian Kalimantan. More than twenty or thirty years ago, the only Javanese one was likely to encounter in Kalimantan would have been policemen, soldiers or government officials. Since then, the transmigration projects from Java have been expanded to Kalimantan. Now many also migrate there as merchants and peddlers. Traveling along various rivers of Kalimantan today, one is bound to see Javanese laborers, *warung* (stall) keepers, owners of ready-made clothes shops, *bakso* (meatball) sellers, *jamu* (herbal tonic) peddlers, *kain* (cloth) peddlers, *pemulung* (scavengers), and collectors of gaharu or swallows' nests, in addition to transmigrants, soldiers, policemen, and government officials. There are many and frequent shipping connections between different ports of Kalimantan and Java, especially Semarang and Surabaya. We noticed that *Jawa Pos*, published in Surabaya, was probably presently the most widely circulated newspapers in Kalimantan. After traveling through Kalimantan for three years, we believe that the Javanese, far from being a sedentary people, are currently one of the most mobile ethnic groups in Indonesia.

The research report from the joint research project is published under the title *Studies on the Dynamics of the Frontier World in Indonesian Kalimantan*. It is expected to include seven contributions. Some of the topics discussed in the report are an eco-historical overview of Kalimantan, people's attitudes toward forest products, petty states in West and East Kalimantan, and school education in the border areas between Indonesia and Malaysia.

IV Minangkabau Society in a Comparative Perspective: An Example of Individual Research Projects

Some individual research projects were carried out with similar research interest and framework to the joint research project. Their locations include South Sulawesi, Bali and Riau in Indonesia, Negeri Sembilan and Kelantan in Malaysia, and Mindanao in the Philippines. In these locations, long-term research has been carried out by individual researchers into such topics as the history of migration, patterns of settlement formation, environmental transformation, organization of riverine networks, and development of regional urban centers.

I myself have been carrying out research in one village each in Riau, Indonesia and Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia. Due to funding situations and my job-related obligations in Japan, I can only spend one to at most three months in each village in any visit. Partly to compensate for this

shortcoming, I have been carrying out research on and off in these villages for the last ten years.

Reports on individual research projects are published in the present volume. Since no report on my individual research project is published in this volume, let me explain this project briefly here.

The Minangkabau, whose homeland is generally associated with the present province of West Sumatra, are known for their strong adherence to Islam and their unique matrilineal *adat* (custom and tradition). Their cultural core areas are located on a few plateaus around Mt. Merapi, Mt. Singgalang, and Mt. Sago, which form part of the Barisan mountain range. Four important rivers flow eastward from around the Minangkabau cultural heartland toward the Straits of Malacca, namely, the Batang Hari, Kuantan-Indragiri, Kampar and Rokan, in that order from south to north.

Starting from the legendary period when “the top of Mt. Merapi was as big as a chicken’s egg,” the Minangkabau began to settle in and around these plateaus of Tanah Datar, Agam, Limapuluh Kota, and Solok. Some of them eventually migrated westward to the *rantau pasisir* or coastal frontiers. Others, in the meantime, migrated eastward, opening and settling in the *rantau hilir* or downstream frontiers to the east of the Bukit Barisan. The main routes of this eastward population movement were the four major rivers mentioned above. Most of the areas along the four rivers now do not belong administratively to the province of West Sumatra. However, I am in no doubt that these areas were once culturally and ethnically Minangkabau.

Minangkabau eastward population movement, which must have been going on for at least several centuries, spills over beyond the eastern coast of Sumatra. There are local stories retelling the coming of Minangkabau migrants in Sarawak, Brunei, South Sulawesi, and the Sulu archipelago of the Philippines. Many of these stories involve the arrival of royalty from Pagarruyung or Minangkabau Islamic teachers-cum-proselytizers. Pagarruyung was the Minangkabau royal center where a *raja* resided from the latter half of the fourteenth century to the early nineteenth century. Raja of Pagarruyung were famous for their supernatural power inside and outside Sumatra.

The Malay Peninsula also shows traces of Minangkabau population movements and settlements. The most famous case is that of Negeri Sembilan, which was largely colonized by ancient Minangkabau migrants. The Minangkabau migration to Negeri Sembilan is believed to have started as early as around 1400 AD. Succeeding waves of migration from Sumatra to the Malay Peninsula eventually led to the establishment of Islam and matrilineal Adat Perpatih among the mixed population of largely indigenous people and Minangkabau migrants in Negeri Sembilan.

In my individual research project, I have been conducting research at one village each in the Kuantan area along the Kuantan-Indragiri and in the district of Kuala Pilah in Negeri Sembilan. Consciously or unconsciously I tend to juxtapose these villages in my thinking with another Minangkabau village which I studied in the early 1970s in the district of Agam in West Sumatra. In the individual research project, I am trying to reconstruct a village social history which spans more or less one hundred years, from around 1900 up to the present time (for some of my past works on these areas, see Kato [1982; 1990; 1994; 1996]). I also hope eventually to compare the matrilineal systems in these three areas of West Sumatra, Riau, and Negeri Sembilan.

Ecological environments and settlement patterns in West Sumatra on one hand and, on the other, those in the Kuantan area and Negeri Sembilan are different. In the Minangkabau cultural

heartland of West Sumatra, relatively densely settled and compact settlements are mainly found at the foot of volcanic mountains or on highland plateaus. These settlements are surrounded by rice fields. The typical scenery in the cultural heartland of West Sumatra consists of clusters of houses surrounded by coconut trees and rice fields. Beyond them, in clear view, high volcanic mountains rise over 2,000 meters above sea level.

In contrast, the typical scenery in the Kuantan area and Negeri Sembilan consists of bands of rice fields along the river at the bottom of a valley and houses lined up on the natural levees or at the foot of hills. If houses in rural West Sumatra are densely packed in a settlement, those in the Kuantan area and Negeri Sembilan are dotted along the rice fields or river in a relatively linear fashion. Looking up from the band of paddy fields, one can see the ridges of low hills on both sides of the river. On the hill-slopes are rubber trees, which have been planted there by smallholders since the beginning of this century. Before the arrival of rubber seedlings, these hilly regions were visited by people seeking construction materials, forest products, edible plants, and games. One important difference between the Kuantan area and Negeri Sembilan is the size of rivers. The Kuantan-Indragiri, together with the Batang Hari, Kampar, and Rokan, are much larger and longer than the rivers in Negeri Sembilan. Accordingly, the sawah in the Kuantan area are more extensive than those in Negeri Sembilan. Nevertheless, the ecological characteristics and settlement patterns in the Kuantan area and Negeri Sembilan share many common features which are distinct from those in the cultural heartland of West Sumatra.

Actually, even within West Sumatra, areas which fit the above ecological model of the cultural heartland are limited to the plateaus and areas around the foot of a few mountains in West Sumatra. Many places in the rest of West Sumatra, although not in the rantau pasisir (coastal frontiers), approximate the ecological features of the Kuantan area and Negeri Sembilan. In these places one basically finds stretches of houses and sawah along the valleys. I surmise that once areas around the foot of volcanic mountains and the plateaus in the heartland were settled, the Minangkabau who migrated eastward did so in search of frontiers essentially along the specific ecological niche of valleys. This characteristic mode of population movement eventually must have taken some Minangkabau across the Straits of Malacca and to Negeri Sembilan. It is interesting that ancient Minangkabau migrants did not settle around the mouth of a river or along the coastal areas of the western Malay Peninsula. Unlike some other Malay populations of the peninsula, they took the trouble of going upriver along the Rembau and Linggi to settle in the interior of the peninsula, where they could establish a lifestyle similar to that in the Minangkabau rantau hilir (downstream frontiers) of central Sumatra. It is as if the orientation toward the valleys as passages of movement as well as areas of settlement had already been programmed into the mode of Minangkabau eastward population movement in search of agricultural frontiers.

It is curious and interesting in this connection to realize that there are almost no remnants of former Minangkabau colonies along the coastal areas of Insular Southeast Asia. Possible exceptions are Tapak Tuan and Meulaboh on the western coast of Aceh. There is, however, no evidence of establishment of matrilineal adat in these areas. The same observation applies to the coastal areas of eastern Sumatra, e.g., Batubara. It is only in the interior where the ecological niche of valleys

predominates that we find “Minangkabau colonies” which are distinguished by Islamic religion *and* their matrilineal adat.

In clear contrast to the Minangkabau eastward population movement in Sumatra is the migration pattern extrapolated from various local stories about ancient Minangkabau migration that are primarily found in coastal areas of Sarawak, Sulawesi and the Sulu archipelago. These stories seem mainly to recount Minangkabau migration to these places in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Despite the wide distribution of these local stories, it is practically impossible to find remnants of stories about Minangkabau communities in these areas. No local stories refer to the introduction of matrilineal adat, either. They generally connect the coming of Minangkabau with the arrival of a new religion, i.e., Islam, or the acceptance of a royal figure from the Minangkabau court of Pagarruyung as a raja. It is curious that the coming of Islam to these areas was related with Minangkabau proselytizers in this early period, for example, in 1605 in the case of South Sulawesi, when, with the exception of certain notables, the interior of West Sumatra was probably yet to be converted.

As my tentative conclusion, I suggest two types of Minangkabau population movement in time past. One was through the riverine regions and valleys; the other through open sea and along coastal areas. The former was associated with village segmentation, collective migration, agriculture, Islam, and, more than anything else, matrilineal adat; the latter seemingly with more individualized migration, Islamic proselytization, commerce, shipping, “piracy,” and transplanting of Pagarruyung power. (It is of course possible to speculate that the reputation of Pagarruyung, specifically its royalty’s supernatural power, traveled without the actual accompaniment of a royal figure.)

It is important to document in the future these two types of Minangkabau population movement and the possible historical interrelationship between the two. For this purpose, we need systematically to collect local stories about ancient Minangkabau migration both inside and outside Sumatra. In this endeavor it is essential to distinguish if the stories refer to migration from Minangkabau or from Pagarruyung, for the two terms may stand for completely different symbols in local stories.

V A “Minangkabau” Colony in Kalimantan

In FY1994 I had a very interesting experience in Central Kalimantan. Two of my colleagues who had stayed behind after our joint research in Central Kalimantan in FY1993 came back to Japan in December of 1993. They told me of their curious experience in the border area between Central Kalimantan and West Kalimantan, where they claimed to have run into a Minangkabau community. Naturally I was much intrigued by this story and decided to visit the community in FY1994. Though only for a few days, in October 1994 I visited Kudangan, the “Minangkabau community” which my colleagues had “discovered.”

I report on this experience more extensively in my article “A Journey to a ‘Minangkabau’ Community in Central Kalimantan: In Search of Missing Links Across Time and Space” in *Studies on the Dynamics of the Frontier World in Indonesian Kalimantan*. Let me briefly explain my

experience during this visit.

Kudangan is the capital of Kecamatan Delang in Kabupaten Kotawaringin Barat, Central Kalimantan. It is about 150 km due north of Pangkalanbun, the kabupaten capital. Until April 1994, when a twice-a-week bus service began between Kudangan and Pangkalanbun, there was no regular public transportation service to Kudangan. When my colleagues visited in late 1993, they had to charter a truck from a logging company, which took them to the village along a logging road. When I rode the bus in early October 1994, it was still uncertain if the road conditions would allow the service to be maintained during the rainy season. The bus took 13 hours to reach Kudangan from Pangkalanbun.

Let me summarize some of my findings during my three-day visit to Kudangan. An adat leader of the village told me that the villagers were descendants of Datuk Perpatih, one of the Minangkabau cultural heroes, who had come from Pagarruyung in Sumatra to Kalimantan when most of the island was still under sea. According to the chart of the family tree in his possession, his family goes back 22 or 23 generations to the arrival of Datuk Perpatih and his retinue. Descent is traced patrilineally, not matrilineally. Moreover, the villagers' religion was formerly "Kaharingan," but now most of them are Christians. In these respects, they are different from the matrilineal and Muslim Minangkabau.

Their language, as far as I can tell, is similar to Melayu or Minangkabau. A Minangkabau linguist in Padang listened to a tape of a Kudangan funeral ritual in their local language which I had recorded. He told me that he understood more than 90 percent of the content of the tape. The architectural style of their adat houses is not unlike the Minangkabau adat house, although the position of front door and the interior arrangements are different.

Despite some glaring contrasts between Kudangan and Minangkabau, we cannot simply dismiss the villagers' story as an empty attempt to shore up their prestige by using the name of Pagarruyung. They do know of Pagarruyung in West Sumatra. But I wonder if they heard of it from recent Minangkabau migrants who have settled in Pangkalanbun as merchants and government officials. As far as I know, "Pagarruyung" seldom, if ever, appears as a prestigious name in local stories of Indonesian Kalimantan.

It is not so difficult to travel from Kudangan to Ketapang in West Kalimantan, by crossing over a hill and going down a river. Interestingly, there is a *keramat* (holy grave) called Keramat Pagarruyung near Ketapang. The name is also now used as the name of a *dusun* or hamlet. Nobody I talked to in the hamlet of Pagarruyung knew the origin of Keramat Pagarruyung nor the existence of Pagarruyung in West Sumatra.

It is said that there was a kingdom called Tanjung Pura around Ketapang, possibly during the time of Majapahit. From Ketapang, it is not so far to sail to the islands of Belitung and Bangka and then to Palembang. According to *Sejarah Melayu*, three princes once descended on Bukit Siguntang-guntang near Palembang. The eldest of them eventually became the *raja* of Pagarruyung, the youngest the founder of Melaka, and the middle brother the raja of Tanjung Pura [Brown 1970].

I do not know whether these pieces of information connect with each other and, if they do, how

they connect. Nevertheless, they certainly stimulate speculation about ancient Minangkabau population movement in the frontier world of Insular Southeast Asia.

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