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Recreating a Vision

Daratan and Kepulauan in Historical Context

What makes the province of Riau distinctive in the water-linked, island-rich Indonesian environment is not so much the combination of hinterland, island, rivers and ocean covered by its 94,562 square kilometers as the fact that this area falls naturally into two major divisions. On the one hand is Riau *daratan*, which comprises the watersheds of four important river systems on the east Sumatran mainland (the Rokan, Kampar, Siak, and Inderagiri) as well as the immediate offshore islands; on the other is Riau *kepulauan* made up of more than three thousand small islands, many uninhabited, that stretch from the Strait of Malacca across the South China Sea to Borneo. So pronounced is the contrast between these two divisions that a casual observer would be justified in considering the creation of Riau to be a kind of afterthought, perhaps the remnants of some colonial division brought together to satisfy the administrative requirements of a contemporary nation state.

The impression that Riau was put together rather hastily is in fact quite incorrect, for the conception of a cultural-economic unity that would bring together *daratan* and *kepulauan* under one allegiance is very old, being originally formulated in the fifteenth century. Although the last four-hundred years have repeatedly demonstrated the difficulties of holding such a dispersed and disparate area together, this vision was resurrected by the Republic of Indonesia as the basis for Riau's contemporary boundaries. Indeed, the region's recent economic boom has given the *daratan-kepulauan* association a new cachet. Politicians and businessmen will now readily mention the names of Melaka and Johor, past kingdoms that spanned this world of water and land, invoking history to legitimize the notion of a 'Growth Triangle' that links Riau to the southern Malay Peninsula and Singapore.

Yet while history may provide a justification for economic or political decisions, the lessons and warnings of the past are rarely invoked. It is certainly worth remembering that Riau's current economic vitality has its own heritage, being built on cultural and commercial linkages developed well over five centuries ago. But it is also relevant to point out that these linkages were often tenuous and that they led to recurring questions regarding local loyalties and cultural affiliation. In many respects the current co-operation between Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia seems to hold out a promising future for the province of Riau. The well-being of its

inhabitants in the twenty-first century, however, will demand more than economic profits; it will also require an understanding of the difficulties posed by the *daratan-kepulauan* association, and a sustained effort to resolve them.

Conceptualizing Contemporary Riau

The early Malay kingdoms that arose in the Strait of Malacca came to prominence primarily because they provided a focus for both regional and international trade. Studies of Srivijaya and its successor entrepot, Melaka, have demonstrated that the interaction between Sumatra, the Malay peninsula and the surrounding islands was critical in the successful functioning of trading networks. The importance of the *daratan-kepulauan* association is dramatically demonstrated in the story preserved in a sixteenth-century Portuguese source that tells of Melaka's founding by a Palembang prince. The first ruler brought with him not only his followers from Sumatra, but also a band of Orang Laut, Sea People from Palembang's offshore islands. So important was Orang Laut loyalty that the first Melaka ruler asked for the daughter of their leader as a wife for his son (Pires 1944, II: 233-38).

The most important document for understanding the origins of the *daratan-kepulauan* association in contemporary Riau is the great Malay epic that has come to be called the *Sejarah Melayu*, and which is best known from a version dated 1612 (Winstedt 1938; Brown 1953). Historians generally acknowledge that the *Sejarah Melayu* is a work of literature rather than a historical document in the Western tradition. Nonetheless, in presenting a Malay perception of their past it also provides insights for scholars seeking explanations of historical developments. The text's dominant theme is the greatness of Melaka, and considerable attention is therefore accorded to the kingdom's widening territorial authority. A series of episodes explains how the first five rulers extended their suzerainty over adjacent areas and the islands of the southern Strait, and how they were accepted as overlords by several peninsular kingdoms. But apart from a brief reference to Rokan, which had become a vassal of Melaka through a royal marriage (Brown 1952:55, 61; Pires 1944 II:149), there is no mention of efforts to assert control over the east coast of Sumatra until the reign of Sultan Mansur Syah (1458?-1477). The *Sejarah Melayu*'s depiction of the east coast as a region where local autonomy had developed largely unchecked by Melaka's proximity is supported by other sources. For example, local legends remember Kampar as a powerful kingdom, and the area has been identified by archaeologists as an important exchange center, able to rival its neighbors because of supplies of gold from its upstream areas. In the twelfth century the Chinese saw Kuantan, in upstream Inderagiri, as a distinct 'city', and in later times the *maharaja* of Inderagiri, though friendly to Melaka, still considered himself an

independent king (Hirth and Rockhill 1966:67; Shuhaimi 1990:69, 73, 78; Schnitger 1964:37-45; Brown 1952:83).

The *Sejarah Melayu* suggests that the area covered by 'Melaka *kepulauan*' was also limited. The Orang Laut groups who were so crucial in Melaka's control of the Straits were associated mainly with the Riau-Lingga archipelago, and the *Sejarah Melayu* indicates that the connections between their leaders and the rulers of Melaka remained close. As one of the most important of Melaka's territories, Pulau Bintan was placed under the *bendahara* (prime minister); according to legend, the first *laksamana* (admiral), Hang Tuah, was also said to have come from Bintan. However, the islands of the South China Sea, numbering around three hundred but collectively known as the Pulau Tujuh, were far removed from Melaka's purview. Though Orang Laut from this area almost certainly delivered ocean products such as pearls, fish and corals, they would have lacked the personal links with the Melaka ruler that were typical of their fellows in the Strait. According to the *Sejarah Melayu*, the first official Melaka mission to cross the South China Sea bound for China did not occur until after the accession of Sultan Mansur in about 1458.

Thus, though Malay memories saw the *daratan-kepulauan* association as integral to Melaka's greatness, independent areas like those along the east coast of Sumatra and the geographically distant Pulau Tujuh were not part of the original core. In searching for the bases of contemporary Riau it is therefore significant that the expansion of Melaka's territory to encompass these territories was seen as a memorable event. The author of the *Sejarah Melayu* describes how Sultan Mansur paid a visit to Majapahit, during which time he married the daughter of the *batara* of Majapahit. As a parting gift, Sultan Mansur Syah requested and was granted overlordship of Inderagiri. Immediately afterward, the delighted Sultan Mansur instructed his favorite, *Laksamana* Hang Tuah, to ask the Majapahit ruler for another territory, the island of 'Siantan' (Brown 1952:82-3).¹

If the theme of Melaka's expansion as depicted in the *Sejarah Melayu* is singled out, the mission to Java can be seen as a significant enlargement of the *daratan-kepulauan* concept. From this time onward, Melaka saw itself as the rightful overlord along the east coast of Sumatra. Siak, whose ruler had adopted the title *maharaja* and who 'refused to admit the overlordship of Melaka' was conquered, with 'a vast amount of booty' captured by Sultan Mansur's forces. Sultan Mansur's successor, his son Sultan Alauddin Syah (1477-88), 'thoroughly looted' Kampar, where the ruler had similarly indicated his claims to independence by using the title *maharaja jaya*. At the same time, the *Sejarah Melayu* clearly expresses the view that Melaka's claim over Siantan was inalienable, for it states clearly 'that Siantan became the territory of the *Laksamana* [of Melaka], for

¹ The name Anambas was not used by local people and 'Siantan' should be therefore taken to refer to the entire island group.

himself and those that came after him' (Brown 1952:82-3, 96-7, 123).

With an understanding of the shifting patterns of international commerce, Melaka's expansion of its territorial claims becomes eminently explicable. When Sultan Mansur Syah succeeded to the throne around 1458, trade with India and China was thriving. Much of this commercial success was due to the exchange of Indian cloth for gold brought in from Minangkabau and the upper reaches of the east-coast rivers. In the mid-sixteenth century the Portuguese chronicler De Couto noted that Minangkabau traders sometimes delivered as much as 8 *candil* (a variable weight, about 500 lbs.) of gold at a time to Melaka (Pires 1944 I:244-5, 263; Boxer 1968:94). Without the Minangkabau connection, Melaka's economic prosperity would have been severely undermined; control of the east-coast rivers would help guarantee access to Sumatra's interior. As one modern authority has put it, 'There are three rivers which hold the keys to the Minangkabau highlands: the Siak, the Kampar and the Inderagiri' (Dobbin 1983:6). Furthermore, these rivers were important economic resources in their own right, with Kampar and Inderagiri in particular enjoying a reputation as 'rich' places because of the gold found in their upper reaches. Numerous other forest and ocean products available here could be as valuable as precious metals. Kampar, for example, was famed for its aromatic aloeswood (*gaharu*), said to be worth its weight in gold in India (Castanheda 1979:651). Neighboring Siak was similarly known for bezoar stones, found in the stomachs of wild pigs, monkeys, porcupines and another animals. Valued because of their alleged medicinal and magical properties, bezoar stones could reputedly be worth ten times their weight in gold.² The rivers and offshore islands of east-coast Sumatra were also the domain of numerous Orang Laut groups, whose knowledge of the seas and coastal mangrove swamps made them an important economic resource. It was they who brought the exotic products of the oceans to market, and whose raiding ability fed thriving slave markets, like that in Rokan (Pires 1944, II:149; Sopher 1965:110-13).

The sequence of episodes presented by *Sejarah Melayu* suggests that the extension of Melaka's influence into the South China Sea was equally significant. Shortly after his return from Java, following the transfer of suzerainty over Siantan, Sultan Mansur despatched a mission to China. The text then describes how Sultan Mansur sent a force to defeat Pahang (Brown 1952:89-92, 95-6). Placing this in a historical context, one can see that control over Pahang and its offshore islands Tioman, Aor and Tinggi had now been added to the Siantan archipelago. It can be argued that the assertion of Melaka's authority, in what Adrian Lopian has called the region's 'heart-sea' (Lopian 1994), was as calculated as the move into eastern Sumatra. Commercial contacts between China and Southeast Asia

² Charles Lockyer, *An Account of the Trade in India etc.* (London: 1711:49); cited in Andaya 1975:52.

appear to have increased considerably through the fifteenth century. From about 1457 the ban on private trade previously imposed by the Chinese emperor was less rigidly enforced, and it has been suggested that this, combined with disturbed conditions in Java, led to an increase in Chinese trade to Melaka (Reid 1992:179, 194-5). The most common route used by the Chinese and later Europeans went up the east coast of the Malay peninsula via Pulau Tioman, which had developed into an important stapling and exchange port (Ma Huan 1970:192, 222, 349; Mills 1974:33-39; Martin 1985:81-90). However, use of routes east of Tioman and increased communication with Borneo may have been facilitated by technological innovations in shipbuilding that produced vessels specifically adapted to navigation in these seas.³

Although the Anambas and Natuna islands acted as natural navigational guides, being 'very high and easily seen in a clear day above fifteen leagues' (Hamilton 1930 II:80), greater use of routes across the South China Sea could not have been undertaken without pilots, the Orang Laut who inhabited the scattered islands of the Pulau Tujuh. Known also as fearsome raiders, the allegiance of these Orang Laut would have guaranteed shipping freedom from attacks and safe passage across seas that were notorious for hidden reefs and submerged rocks. Moreover, friendly relations with the inhabitants of islands in the South China Sea gave access to sheltered anchorage in adverse weather, and mountain streams on the larger islands provided incoming ships with supplies of fresh water all year round. Supplies of good timber were also available for repairing and building boats. The islands of Jemaja and Siantan in the Anambas group, for instance, yielded valued hardwoods like *meranti pahang* and *balau* from the genus *Shorea spp*, which were ideally suited for the construction of boats. No significant archaeological work has been undertaken on these islands, but it is possible that finds of Chinese pottery could provide a broad chronology for trade in this area, as has been done on nearby Pulau Tioman (Martin 1985:85-89).

The *Sejarah Melayu* also hints at other significant elements in the acquisition of Inderagiri and Siantan. These territories had previously been under Java, and their transfer to Melaka occurs within the context of Malay rivalry with the Javanese. During the Melaka mission to Majapahit the young Malay nobles persistently overshadow and humiliate their Javanese counterparts because of their greater cunning and courage. The *batara* of Majapahit himself acknowledges that 'These men of Melaka are far sharper than those of any other country! No one would stand a chance with them at any game' (Brown 1952:81).⁴ Aware of the benefits obtained from linking east Sumatra and the South China Sea, seventeenth-century

³ See the views of Dr. Pierre-Yves Manguin, as cited in Reid 1992:179-81.

⁴ 'Ada pun akan orang Melaka ini terlalu-lah cherdik-nya daripada segala orang di-negeri lain' (Winstedt 1938:188-9).

Malays would have seen Melaka's success in persuading Majapahit to relinquish control over Inderagiri and Siantan as further evidence of their ancestors' shrewd intelligence. The importance of this event is also suggested by the fact that legends recalling the transfer of overlordship from Java to 'Johor' were still found among the Pulau Tujuh islands in the late nineteenth century (Van Hasselt and Schwartz 1898:72).

The *Sejarah Melayu* should not be treated as a repository of factual information. Nonetheless, it does provide some clues regarding the genesis of contemporary Riau and the original conception of a territory that united islands and hinterland and was above all oriented to international trade. A well-sited entrepot brought together outsiders that were of vital economic and strategic significance. While the full story behind the evolution of this vision will never be known, Malay memories of the early seventeenth century were unambiguous in attributing its inception to the fifth ruler of Melaka, Sultan Mansur Syah. The maintenance of his vision, however, was to prove a formidable task. More particularly, the ambitious extension of Melaka's original *daratan-kepulauan* base bequeathed enduring problems of coherence and unity that are still evident today.

Maintaining the Vision: Daratan

The difficulties involved in maintaining a hold over this extended territory soon became apparent in regard to east-coast Sumatra, where numerous small kingdoms had a long history of independent development, and fretted under the imposition of Melaka's overlordship. Sultan Mansur and his successors, clearly aware of these resentments, apparently hoped that marriage alliances would in time lead to reconciliation. Immediately following his return to Melaka, Sultan Mansur married his daughter to the Inderagiri ruler, while the son of the Siak ruler was married to another daughter. Subsequently the elder son of Sultan Alauddin of Melaka (1477-1488) was installed as Sultan of Kampar. Nonetheless, such measures alone were not sufficient to establish Melaka's unquestioned superiority. The *Sejarah Melayu*, for example, records an incident when the ruler of Siak put a man to death without receiving permission from Sultan Alauddin. Infuriated, the latter ordered swift punishment, angrily asking 'Are you going to be a law unto yourself here in Siak?' At the Melaka court, the young nobles lost no opportunity to humiliate their Inderagiri counterparts, which 'was more than the men of Inderagiri could stand' (Brown 1952:117, 139, 214). In later years the ruler of Kampar must have found it galling to acknowledge his younger brother as superior, and the two were constantly 'at loggerheads' (Hashim 1992b:214). These tensions were openly exposed when Melaka fell to the Portuguese in 1511. European sources demonstrate that several kingdoms saw the defeat of their overlord as an opportunity for a new independence. Indeed, in 1514 the ruler of Kampar offered his services to the Portuguese, rejecting his Melaka kinsman who had taken refuge on

the island of Bintan in the Riau-Lingga archipelago (Brown 1952:172; Tiele 1877:366; Andaya 1975:21).

These developments did not mean, however, that the bonding of family and Malay-based culture was set aside. It is noteworthy that the former ruler of Melaka, Sultan Mahmud, fled to Kampar in 1526 when a Portuguese expedition destroyed Bintan, and Johor princes, as Melaka descendants, continued to be installed as rulers in places such as Kampar and Siak. Johor kings still looked to their kinsfolk in eastern Sumatra in times of danger, and in later years Inderagiri, Kampar and Siak all lent their assistance when Johor was threatened by Aceh (Andaya 1975:21-5; Ali Haji 1982:18). By the early seventeenth century economic links were strengthened because Johor had recovered commercially, and was again acting as a major exchange center in the region. According to folk etymology its center on Bintan, 'Riau', was named for its bustle and liveliness (*rioh-rendah*). Nonetheless, the loyalty of the *daratan* could never be assumed, in part because of its economic independence and the ambitions of local leaders. For example, access to upstream gold meant Kampar traders were welcomed throughout the archipelago, and in late sixteenth-century Makassar they were clearly identified as a separate group (Villiers 1990:150).

Even more fundamental in the *daratan-kepulauan* tensions was the changing 'Malay' character of the east-coast states because of increasing Minangkabau migration down the Kampar, Siak and Inderagiri rivers. This migration gave rise to a hybrid society which combined both Malay and Minangkabau values. But while Malays regarded the Minangkabau heartland with respect, there was always a sense that the mixed cultures developing from Malay-Minangkabau interaction were not 'truly Malay'.⁵ For the migrant or *rantau* communities, the proximity of the immensely prestigious Minangkabau ruler remained a powerful cultural magnet; the pull of Minangkabau overlordship is apparent in a Portuguese report from 1561 which noted that a son of the king of Kampar was then in Minangkabau (Boxer 1968:94). Minangkabau newcomers were quite willing to ignore Johor if they considered its overlordship to be economically disadvantageous, and their emotional allegiance was to the rulers of Pagaruyong in the Minangkabau heartlands, not to a Malay king. Johor might thus claim authority over Siak, Inderagiri, Rokan and Kampar, but recognition of this authority never reached far beyond the lowlands.

A number of authors have commented on upstream-downstream (*ulu-ilir*) tensions in Sumatra, and this was particularly apparent on the east-coast river systems, where the inhabitants of Minangkabau's *rantau* world constantly questioned Johor's overlordship. For example, the gold-

⁵ See the comments made in the *Hikayat Hang Tuah* regarding Inderapura, on Sumatra's west coast (Ahmad 1971:382, 175). See also the contributions by Al azhar and Henk Maier to this volume.

producing area of Patapahan in upstream Siak, settled by Minangkabau migrants, only accepted Johor's suzerainty in 1643, and was always a restless vassal (Andaya 1995:537-32; Andaya 1975:133, 146, 178). The discovery of tin in *ulu* Rokan and Siak gave local inhabitants an added independence, and despite Johor's overtures they indicated their preference for trade with Melaka, since 1641 under Dutch control. Efforts by Johor to enforce the loyalty of Minangkabau traders on the Siak river and elsewhere only served to fuel hostility. Inderagiri, another of Johor's vassals, was raided repeatedly by the upstream Minangkabau of Kuantan. The growing hostility to Johor among the Minangkabau communities in Siak was made glaringly apparent in 1682 when *ulu* communities sought to establish a kingdom of their own. Though Johor successfully crushed this rebellion, it was achieved in a manner that must have left bitter memories (Andaya 1975:90, 106-7, 108, 110, 112, 131-2).⁶

The murder of the Johor ruler by his nobles in 1699 exacerbated these centrifugal tendencies, fundamentally undermining the fragile economic and cultural allegiances which had been established with the east-coast states. The succession of the former *bendahara* was never accepted by many Malays, who accused him of *derhaka* (treason), a heinous crime. Many Orang Laut, the most loyal of Riau's subjects, abandoned Johor, and in Sumatra its prestige clearly suffered. The early eighteenth century thus saw recurring revolts, notably among the Minangkabau of interior Siak in 1705 and in Inderagiri in 1706. The *raja muda* of Johor was compelled to use force to maintain his own nominee as Sultan of Inderagiri (Andaya 1975:211, 227).

For a brief period after 1718 it seemed possible that a new Riau dynasty under a Minangkabau leader might impart a new legitimacy to Sultan Mansur's *daratan-kepulauan* vision. Raja Kecil, who claimed to be son of the murdered Johor ruler, had the imprimatur of the Pagaruyong queen, and his claims were widely accepted among both Malays and Minangkabau. Furthermore, both European and indigenous material demonstrate that he was hailed as Johor's legitimate ruler by the Orang Laut, whose borderless domain stretched from the east Sumatra to the South China Sea (Andaya 1975:256-7, 263-71).

The history of Riau could have been quite different had Raja Kecil been able to maintain his control over Bintan and the Riau-Lingga archipelago. However, at this point new players appeared on the scene. A group of Bugis princes, refugees from troubles in Sulawesi who were seeking a new homeland in the west, saw the Riau situation as an opportunity that could be turned to their advantage. Though Raja Kecil was in a strong position, he apparently decided against pressing his advantage because his Malay wife and her relatives fell into Bugis hands. By 1728 the Bugis were in

⁶ The leader, Raja Hitam, was killed when he surrendered despite guarantees that his life would be spared.

control of Riau, and had reached a *modus vivendi* with the Malay ruler, Sultan Sulaiman. Retreating to Siak, Raja Kecil was eventually forced to give up hope of a return to Riau. Building on the support of Minangkabau communities along the east coast, a new dynasty was established in Siak. In the ensuing years Raja Kecil's two sons, Raja Alam and Raja Mahmud, contended for control, each seeking to obtain the support of Sultan Suleiman, and periodically returning to a base in Siantan where they joined with Orang Laut in raiding activities. Though Sultan Suleiman continued to claim overlordship in Siak, his effective influence was limited. This influence was further reduced in 1746, when he ceded Siak to the Dutch in return for assistance against Bugis and Minangkabau incursions.

The latter part of the eighteenth century saw a progressive detachment of Siak and the other east-coast areas from Johor. In 1761 the Dutch assisted Raja Alam, Raja Kecil's eldest son, to take control of Siak, but there were continuing struggles for control between his branch of the family and that descended from Raja Mahmud. Though these disputes continued into a third generation, the marriage of Raja Alam's daughter to an Arab Sayid substantially increased the prestige of the Siak family, while Arab settlement in east-coast ports, notably Kampar, increased their economic prosperity. Meanwhile, Siak's territorial control was steadily expanding up the east coast, and by 1780 had reached as far as Deli. An alliance with the VOC (Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie) brought European favors; Sultan Muhammad Ali of Siak was even installed as ruler of Selangor following its defeat by the Dutch in 1785. None of these developments, however, fostered a restoration of the old links with Johor, which were effectively forgotten by the time Raja Alam's grandson, Sayid Ali (1791-1821), succeeded as ruler over an independent Siak Sri Inderapura. Sayid Abdullah, a brother of Sayid Ali, became Tengku Besar of Kampar, with its lucrative routes leading up to Minangkabau. Siak's economic challenge to Riau was clearly evident in its thriving trade with Dutch-ruled Melaka and the British port of Penang, a success that was the more galling since previously prosperous Riau had declined markedly after a Dutch attack in 1784. In 1761, for instance, only four ships arrived in Melaka from Siak; by 1783 this number had reached 171 (Lee 1986:62-3). The resentment by the Riau elite felt toward Siak is apparent in the hostile attitude adopted by the *Tuhfat al-Nafis* when describing the Siak leaders as 'men who lusted after the riches of this world' (Ali Haji 1982:173).

Under the rule of Sultan Abdul Jalil Saifuddin (Sayid Ali), Siak developed into a loose confederation of locally governed entities that stretched from Kampar as far north as Asahan and Deli. During the British occupation of Melaka (1795-1816) trade with Siak remained vigorous, and, in the words of Munshi Abdullah, '[brought] in golden rewards of ever-increasing richness' (Hill 1971:7, 38). The development of pepper plantations also enhanced Siak's trading network. Indeed, for a brief time it seemed possible that Siak might recreate a new *daratan*-based state, with its own

vassal system; in 1811, for example, Kampar was accorded a new status with its own capital at Pelalawan (Faes 1882:507, 511). Given these ambitions, the presence of the Siak ruler at a court installation in Riau in 1804 and his marriage to a Riau princess did not ease the tension between former overlord and vassal. A Riau envoy to Siak was thus given strict instructions: 'Do not make obeisance to the Yang Dipertuan of Siak' (Ali Haji 1982:213). Yet the hard fact remained that Johor's only hold along the east coast was in the peripheral area of Retih and in Inderagiri; however, even here there was pressure from upstream Minangkabau groups, and the *Tuhfat al-Nafis* describes the ousting of the Inderagiri ruler by 'four princes from Minangkabau'. Johor's authority in Inderagiri was restored through the efforts of the Bugis leader of Riau, Yang Dipertuan Muda Raja Haji (1777-84), but despite royal marriage alliances, the Inderagiri-Retih area remained restless. Retih itself became a base for Ilanun pirates in the late eighteenth century, and in Inderagiri the evidence suggests considerable resistance to Riau overlordship. Periodically religious leaders sought to establish independent power, and military campaigns were necessary to maintain Riau's suzerainty (Ali Haji 1982:118-9, 194, 217).

Maintaining the Vision: Kepulauan

The relationship between the Riau-Lingga Orang Laut and the Melaka-Johor ruling house had always been very close, primarily because of geographical proximity. The traditional duties assigned to these Orang Laut, such a paddling the ruler's fleets, making weapons, acting as envoys and transporting letters, kept them in close communication with the Sultan and his family. But they were also part of a much larger maritime world linking them with other sea peoples in the South China Sea. Over the years the Orang Laut who frequented the Pulau Tujuh had been drawn into a similar relationship with Melaka-Johor rulers, and the evidence suggests that their descendants were confident of a welcome in these far-flung but loyal territories. When Johor was under threat from Aceh in the early seventeenth century, Sultan Hammat Syah thus took refuge from his enemies in the island of Tambelan, the most distant of the Pulau Tujuh groups (Andaya 1975:25). These links were especially evident in Siantan, which had the longest association with Melaka-Johor. According to one authority, there are 'many indications that the boat people of the Anambas group in particular were closely related to the Orang Laut of the Riau-Lingga archipelago and continued to have close contact with them' (Sopher 1965:115). Like their counterparts in the Riau-Lingga area, the Pulau Tujuh groups delivered ocean products such as pearls and *teripang* (seaslug) to their overlord's markets, but they were equally valued as pilots and bearers of news. A court notebook from Johor thus lists numerous occasions when Orang Laut arrived from places such as Siantan or Tambelan 'bringing

news' (Kratz 1973:54). Perhaps the primary task of these skilled seafarers, however, was to supply manpower in case of war and the contribution of these 'islands to the east of the Pahang coast' is suggested in 1714, when they furnished twelve to fourteen *perahu* (boats) and seven hundred men, well over 10 percent of Johor's entire force of around 6500 men (Andaya 1975:332-3). Fifty years after the Dutch attack in 1784 people still remembered the courage of the Siantan warriors who fought in Riau's defense (Ali Haji 1982:168, 170).

With the expansion of maritime trade across the Malay Indonesian archipelago and to China, the strategic importance of the South China Sea was steadily enhanced. Small communities of Malays and Minangkabaus sprang up on the islands of the South China Sea, providing half-way stations and secondary distribution points along the trade routes to Borneo and the east. While Pulau Tioman retained its importance as a stapling point, the absence of pottery shards and written historical references indicates that by the eighteenth century it was no longer a major focus of trade exchanges (Martin 1985:82, 89). Much more frequented was the island of Siantan, which, advantaged by a good harbor, was also well placed in relation to China, Siam, Vietnam and Java. By the early eighteenth century Siantan and the intervening islands between Borneo had become incorporated into the expanding trading network of the Bugis and Makassarese. The great Bugis-Malay text, written in nineteenth-century Riau, the *Tuhfat al-Nafis*, shows that Siantan, with the availability of wood and the shipbuilding skills of local people, developed into a center for the preparation of warships (Andaya 1993:124-5; Ali Haji 1982:28, 50, 97).

During the eighteenth century the distance of the South China Sea islands from any large center, their growing importance in commercial exchanges, and the possibility of exploiting local fleets for raiding and piracy brought the region to the attention of several key players on the Malay stage. While the Johor ruler and his Bugis associates were anxious to affirm their claim to this area, other princes saw opportunities to carve out their own empires. For a short time a Palembang prince established his overlordship here, and after the ruler of Palembang married a Siantan woman, a number of Siantan people were settled on the island of Bangka (Kratz 1973:51, 54; Andaya 1993:180, 188). However, the most direct challenge to Johor's overlordship came from the descendants of Raja Kecil. The latter had himself spent some time in Siantan and his son, Raja Alam, married a woman of Siantan descent.⁷ Without a kingdom of his own, in search of funds to support himself and his following, it was natural that in 1748 Raja Alam should retreat to Siantan where he ruled as master. Johor forces attacked the island for five months, but Raja Alam was able to call on support from Siak and was only forced out when Sultan Suleiman

⁷ Mr. Tim Barnard reminded me that Raja Kecil had also been circumcised in Siantan. See Hashim 1992a:18.

obtained Bugis assistance (Ali Haji 1982:97-100). Nonetheless, the association between the Siak family and the Orang Laut of the South China Sea remained strong. When Raja Ismail, grandson of Raja Kecil and son of Raja Mahmud, was evicted from Siak some years later, it was to Tambelan that he fled. After building up a war fleet there, he moved to take control over Siantan, a task that was facilitated because local Orang Laut regarded him with awe as a descendant of their old lord, the murdered Johor ruler, Sultan Mahmud. According to the *Tuhfat al-Nafis*, Raja Ismail's wishes 'were followed throughout the Pulau Tujuh [...]. The people of Siantan paid a poll tax, in money and those who had no money paid in goods or kind [...] Raja Ismail obtained anything he wanted from them' (Ali Haji 1982:126-7, 40-142).

The capture of Riau by the Dutch in 1784, the subsequent departure of the Bugis, and the flight of the Johor ruler brought an end to Riau's commercial vitality and further undermined the ability of its leaders to maintain effective control in the South China Sea. It is not difficult to see why the Pulau Tujuh groups became notorious for their raiding and piracy. Adventurers, including several Siak princes born of unions between Malay mothers and Arab migrants, took up temporary residence on one or another of the islands, with Tambelan being particularly favored. From here they were able to ally with local Orang Laut leaders in both trading and raiding activities (Ali Haji 1982:191, 195, 361 note 1).

The first appearance of the renowned Ilanun fleets from Magindanao in the mid-1780s thus occurred when the authority of the Johor overlord in the South China Seas had been seriously eroded. The islands of the South China Sea became essential to an Ilanun raiding network that stretched from their homeland to Sumatra and the east (Warren 1981:153-4). Some of the Orang Laut groups, like their counterparts in the Riau-Lingga areas, probably allied with these fearsome raiders, but many others were among the cargoes of slaves transported back to Sulu. Though the Ilanun linked this web of islands with their bases in the Riau-Lingga archipelago and along the east coast of Sumatra, their *kepulauan-daratan* vision was very different from that conceived in fifteenth-century Melaka.

The Fragmentation of the Colonial Period

There can be little doubt that the extensive economic and political changes which accompanied increased European penetration during the nineteenth century exacerbated the divisions between *daratan* and *kepulauan*, and made the maintenance of links infinitely more difficult. Two factors were critical. The first was an undermining of Riau's indigenous leadership, which had been instrumental in initiating and nurturing the island-mainland association. The second was the atrophy of the commercial exchanges that had been a primary stimulus in promoting links between Riau's center and neighboring areas. This economic and political decline

can be attributed to the founding of Singapore in 1819, the subsequent Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1824, and the gradual imposition of colonial rule.

History is often a listing of 'might-have-beens', but it is worthwhile remembering that the British had initially planned to establish their new post in Riau, and that William Farquhar had already made a treaty with the Riau Sultan in 1818. However, events worked against Riau's resurgence as an entrepot. The treaty with Farquhar was completely rejected by the Dutch, who claimed authority over all Riau's dependent territories and who were clearly prepared to back their claims with force. Raffles then chose Singapore as an alternative. Taking advantage of disputes within the royal family, he was able to detach the island from Riau's authority, his agreement with a newly created 'Sultan of Singapore' giving the British occupation a putative legitimacy. With its convenient location, free trade policies and generally ordered administration, Singapore quickly captured the bulk of the trade that had formerly gone to Riau, particularly from eastern Sumatra (Dobbin 1983:104, 176, 219). By the time the Dutch also declared Tanjungpinang toll-free in 1828, commercial patterns had been permanently redirected. In the years that followed observers frequently commented on the contrast between the bustling port of Singapore and the quietness of Riau, such a short distance away ('Vrijhaven van Riouw' 1857:48-57; Bruijn Kops 1855:97-8; Thomson 1847:69).

The loss of territory resulting from the 1824 treaty between Britain and the Netherlands brought a further decline in Riau's status. The division of the old kingdom of Johor meant that the Malay peninsula, Singapore, and the intervening islands now lay in the British 'sphere of influence', while the Riau-Lingga archipelago, eastern Sumatra and the Pulau Tujuh fell in the Dutch zone. The shift of political power into European hands was made increasingly apparent in 1830, when a treaty between the Dutch and Riau made the ruler into a *leenman* (vassal) and the kingdom into a *leen-rijk* (vassal state). Because the Dutch were obsessed with maintaining their sphere of influence in the face of British expansion, the retention of the indigenous court structure was simply a facade for colonial control (Netscher 1870:lxviii). This was made patently apparent in 1857, when Sultan Mahmud was deposed because of his predilection for the lifestyle of British-controlled Singapore. While many of the elite had also been critical of Sultan Mahmud, the installation of a Dutch nominee as successor raised fundamental questions of legitimacy. Debates were particularly pronounced in Inderagiri, where the Yang Dipertuan could also claim genealogical rights to the Riau throne. Eighty years later people recalled that the new Riau Sultan felt a sudden paralysis in his hand as he signed the Dutch-dictated contract, a sign of impending disasters to come (Matheson 1986:27).

The expansion of Dutch authority over Riau's remaining territories steadily drained status away from the center. The Riau elite may have hoped that co-operation with Dutch expansionist aims in Inderagiri would

help bolster their fading authority, but the treaties signed with Inderagiri in 1838, 1843 and 1858 in the name of the Riau Sultan advanced Dutch interests rather than those of Riau. The *Tuhfat al-Nafis* presents the suppression of a rebellion that broke out in Retih in support of the deposed Sultan Mahmud as a triumph for the new ruler, but in fact it represented another step in the spread of Dutch control (Locher-Scholten 1994:96; Ali Haji 1982:304). A further blow to the prestige of the Riau-Lingga leadership came in 1899 with the abolition of the position of Yang Dipertuan, followed by the ending of the sultanate itself in 1911. When a Lingga noble composed a local history in 1930, he remarked that it was this latter event which brought the story of the kingdom of Riau-Lingga to an end. 'All that is left are merely relics and traces' (Matheson 1986:11).

Of course, the picture is bleakest when viewed from the point of view of political control. There were some areas where Riau was able to maintain significant influence, for among the ruling class a small circle of Islamic intellectuals, mainly descended from the Bugis-Malay elite, enjoyed considerable status as religious authorities, writers and specialists on tradition and custom (Andaya and Matheson 1979:108-28; Barnard 1994:17-46). In 1868, for example, when Temenggung Abu Bakar of Johor wished to assume a grander title, he despatched envoys to Riau to ask for advice. Ironically, however, the ambitions of the Johor ruler and his arrogation of the title of Sultan of Johor in 1885 further undermined the position of the Riau rulers. When in London the following year, Abu Bakar even put forward a claim to the Pulau Tujuh, although this was never given serious consideration because of the 1824 agreement. In fact, despite their strong economic links with Singapore, the inhabitants of *kepulauan* Riau remained remarkably loyal to the old regime. Members of the court elite accompanied the periodic Dutch patrols in the South China Sea, and on such occasions were accorded considerable respect because of their knowledge of religion and law (Barnard 1994:32). Personal ties thus helped counter the commercial dominance of Singapore, since several members of the Riau-Lingga hierarchy had coconut plantations among the Pulau Tujuh islands and inspected them regularly. It is therefore not surprising that the Sultan strongly resisted Dutch efforts to take over direct control of the Pulau Tujuh archipelago.⁸ Until 1911 Riau princes were in effect to continue to act as 'overlords', and when efforts were being made to solicit financial support for a restoration of the sultanate, the greatest contributions came from among the Pulau Tujuh.⁹

Across the Strait in Sumatra a semblance of the old regime survived until World War II, but here too the limitations imposed by Dutch colonialism undermined indigenous leadership. After the death of Sultan Abdul Jalil in

⁸ ARA V 4 Feb. 1905 A4, Riau Resident to Batavia 28 Oct. 1902, fo. 1.

⁹ ARA V 12 April 1913, Mailreport 481, fols. 1-6; V 21 July 1913, No. 5, Mailreport 1104, 1913; V 15 Sept. 1913, 52; Mailreport, 1598, 1913.

1821, the ability of Siak rulers to act independently progressively shrank as economic decline was accompanied by increased European pressure. The rise of the militant Padri movement in Minangkabau disrupted commerce with the interior, and in 1823 at least one observer considered that Siak was 'no longer the powerful and independent state it was only fifteen or twenty years ago, when it was a place of great trade' (Anderson 1971: 343). *Ilir* control over the upstream Minangkabau communities had always been difficult, and without a strong individual at the helm it was much more difficult to maintain authority over Siak's diverse territory, with its numerous aspirant *raja* and district heads. Hostilities between princes were also exacerbated by the involvement of the Dutch and English, and the encouragement they gave to local desires for greater independence.

Considering the pressures for imperial expansion, the situation was ripe for European intervention, especially as most colonial Dutch believed that confirmation of control over east-coast Sumatra was essential if their interests were to be protected. A weakened Siak with territorial claims that stretched as far north as the Acehnese border presented an open invitation for exploitation. Hoping for support against a militant Aceh, the Siak leaders signed a treaty with the Dutch in 1858 in which they, like their Inderagiri counterparts, declared their country to be a part of Netherlands India and under Dutch sovereignty. Though the traditional governmental structure remained, effective power rested in Dutch hands and Siak became 'a classic state of nineteenth-century Dutch indirect rule' (Reid 1969:28-35). A shadow of the old connections with the island world was maintained because until 1873 Siak was under the administrative supervision of the Resident of Riau, but in that year the Dutch created a new province, East Coast Sumatra, which included most of what had once been the hinterland of the Riau-Johor empire as well as the territory covered by Siak's tenuous claims. Since it was apparent that the economic focus of this new province lay in the fertile areas to the north, the Dutch administrative center was moved from Bengkalis to Medan. In 1888 Siak's claims to overlordship in Deli, Serdang, Asahan and Langkat were bought out by the Dutch, and the Sultan of Siak now lived in the shadow of princes whom he had previously regarded as his inferiors. Meanwhile, the colonial policy of legitimizing their own position by signing treaties with individual states lessened Siak's hold over the small, economically underdeveloped and sparsely populated Malay territories in the basins of the Kampar, Siak and Rokan rivers. In this context, a primary concern of a ruler such as Sultan Sjarif Kasim (1915-46) was to maintain a tenacious grip on what little autonomy remained to him. In so doing, he could claim a modicum of superiority to his smaller neighbors, most of whom had by 1912 signed the Korte Verklaring (Short Declaration) which gave all power to the Dutch except for what they chose to delegate to the ruler (Reid 1970:49. 52).

The emasculation of the old governing forms and the loss of economic initiative under colonial rule was common across all the territories of the

old Riau empire. In some circumstances, shared grievances might have been sufficient to weld a common unity in the face of European domination. That this was not the case can be attributed to many reasons – memories of historical differences, geographical separation, lack of leadership, an absence of strong nationalist organizations. A further complication was due to demographic contrasts. When viewed from Siak, *kepulauan* Riau appeared very ‘Chinese’, and indeed the Chinese had long been a significant presence. During the late eighteenth century as many as 10,000 may have settled on the island of Riau to grow pepper and gambier, and when the Dutch attacked in 1784, the Chinese remained while most Malays and Bugis left. The effect of the Chinese involvement in local commerce becomes apparent when Riau’s trading figures are compared with those from Siak and its neighbors. Of the 30 vessels which arrived in Melaka from Riau in 1785, 12 (40 percent) were Chinese, but only 21 (17 percent) of the 118 ships from Siak, Rokan, Kampar and Inderagiri were in Chinese hands. Outside visitors to Tanjungpinang and neighboring islands were consistently impressed by the commercial dominance of the Chinese and the influence they wielded in the community.¹⁰ Although many ‘Chinese’ were in fact of mixed birth and locally born, the Dutch still described the Chinese as transients who ‘as soon as possible would return with a small fortune to their fatherland’ (Van Hasselt and Schwartz 1898:38). This tendency to view the Chinese as a separate community lacking emotional roots in the area was also fostered because they seemed ready to leave Riau when they perceived economic advantages elsewhere. Singapore was a powerful magnet; in early 1846, for example, 3,000 Chinese arrived there from Riau (Turnbull 1972: 90; Trocki 1979:30; Reid and Fernando 1994:16).

Nonetheless, in the Riau archipelago the number of Chinese migrants continued to grow through the late nineteenth century. The expansion of tin mining on Singkep from 1891 attracted many Chinese laborers, as did the opening of bauxite mining on Bintan, when numerous miners from Bangka and Billiton moved to Kijang. Other Chinese moved from the estates in Sumatra to rubber planting and coconut growing on Riau’s numerous islands. In the late nineteenth century there were around five hundred living in the Anambas group alone, while in 1910 Chinese made up 58.86 percent of the population in Tanjungpinang (Van Hasselt and Schwartz 1898:38; Ali Kelana 1986:84). By 1930 two-thirds of Tanjungpinang was Chinese, and in the province generally only 30 percent were locally born (Ng Chin Keong 1976:18, 21-4).¹¹ These patterns were exacerbated just before the Japanese occupation when another influx of

¹⁰ See for example, the description of the Chinese captain in Earl 1971:140. The lieutenant of the Chinese in Siantan was also a man of great wealth and influence. See Van Hasselt and Schwartz 1898:38.

¹¹ In Java, 79 percent of the Chinese population was born locally.

Chinese migrants occurred, especially into Tanjungpinang. Under the Riau sultanate the Chinese did well, and it is understandable that after World War II Chinese merchants in Singapore were particularly active in raising funds to have the former Sultan of Riau restored to power.¹² However, the Chinese were not a united group, being divided between Hokkien and Teochu, with smaller numbers of Hakka, Cantonese and Hailam. Furthermore, newcomers had often been educated in Mandarin, and were more deeply affected by the growing sense of nationalism that was infusing Chinese society (Ng Chin Keong 1976:33-4).

In the former Riau dependencies in Sumatra the Chinese presence was not as evident. Though the Chinese represented a significant commercial group, their migration into Siak territories had been less marked than elsewhere in east-coast Sumatra because foreign estates were fewer and there were no large urban centers such as Medan (Reid 1979:49). The commercial dominance of the Chinese in the towns had also been checked by the economic activities of the Minangkabau. For example, in 1924, although Minangkabau comprised around 30,000 of Siak's 117,000 inhabitants (around 25 percent), they represented the only substantial Indonesian merchants, trading in smallholder rubber and copra. Minangkabau involvement was especially marked in the traditional *rantau* districts, where migrant numbers increased markedly following the rubber boom of the 1920s and the improvement of road connections between Bukittinggi and Pekanbaru (Reid 1979:49; Kato 1982:84, 93 note 24, 108). This very increase, however, heightened Minangkabau tendencies to operate as a separate group, maintaining customs that set them apart from the Malays. A Malay sense of being swamped by their Minangkabau neighbors was intensified because the latter were widely used by the Dutch to fill lower levels in the bureaucracy (Kato 1982:109). Furthermore, Minangkabau migration into upstream areas perpetuated the *ulu-ilir* tensions that had long been characteristic of the region, in some cases being resolved only by the formation of separate 'states' like that of Kampar Kiri, which emerged sometime in the nineteenth century (Lutfi 1977:355).

By 1938 the contrast between Siak and its neighbors and the northern part of the residency were so pronounced that the Dutch faced a real problem of effective administration. A radical decision was made: something akin to the old Johor-Riau residency was to be reconstituted, with three administrative divisions (*afdeelingen*) – Tanjungpinang which would include the Riau-Lingga archipelago and Pulau Tujuh; Bengkalis, to comprise Siak, Kampar Kiri, Bagansiapi-api, Selat Panjang and Rokan; and finally Inderagiri, with its subdivisions (*onderafdeelingen*) of Rengat, Kuantan, and Tembilahan. Despite the discovery of oil by Caltex in the

¹² 'Movements from Singapore to Restore Riau Sultanate, 1940 and 1945-6', ANP Aneta IDD 1947, 18 Aug. 1947, pp. 358-9. Reference kindly supplied by Professor A.J.S. Reid.

area, Pekanbaru was still a small town without any obvious claims to regional leadership.¹³ As heir to the traditions associated with 'Riau', Tanjungpinang would be the center of this new administrative unit. What might have been the eventual results of this division are unclear, since the outbreak of hostilities in Europe and the possibility of war with Japan brought a halt to any implementation of the proposed changes.

World War II and Independence

By the outbreak of the Pacific War in 1942 there was little remaining of Sultan Mansur's vision of a kingdom that drew islands and mainland together by linking them to a central entrepot and a common overlord. Constructing an administrative framework that successfully united these vastly different areas had baffled the Dutch, and it proved equally problematic for the next colonial power, Japan. The Japanese launched their initial attacks on Siantan on 14 December 1941, and by late January 1942 they had penetrated Riau waters, taking Tanjungpinang on 15 February. A month later a landing was made in northern Sumatra, and soon afterward all the east coast was under Japan's control.

Initially, the Japanese administered Sumatra and the Malay peninsula together, believing that they would then become 'the nuclear zone of the Empire's plans for the Southern Area'. Japanese specialists contended that there was a 'natural ethnic bond' between these areas which had been broken by British and Dutch colonialism. The Japanese 25th army, as the supervising authority, was based at Singapore, which was seen as the logical center (Turnbull 1977:198, 212). By May 1943, however, Japan was under pressure from allied advances, and a reorganization of military administration was considered necessary. Malaya, the Riau-Lingga archipelago and Pulau Tujuh were separated from Sumatra and placed under the administration of Singapore (Syonan-to). Appropriating a name that had always been associated with the island of Bintan, the Japanese decided that the new 'Riau-syu' would refer to Siak, Kampar, Bengkalis and Indragiri, and would be administered by a military governor based at the oil-rich town of Pekanbaru. The 'Minangkabau' nature of the residency was subsequently emphasized with the addition of Bangkinang, which had previously formed part of West Sumatra (Lutfi 1977:404-9).

The full history of the Japanese occupation in Riau has yet to be written, but it is obvious that administrative divisions sharpened existing differences between mainland and island. In the island areas the tightening of links between Singapore and the Riau archipelago was heartening for those Malays who looked back to their past greatness, and raised hopes of a permanent restoration of old unities and a revival of Malay prestige (Matheson 1986:16). Little of the nationalist feeling so pronounced in

¹³ In 1930 Pekanbaru consisted of 2990 people; see Kato 1982:135.

Sumatra was felt in the *kepulauan*, where geographic distance worked against communication and where there was little contact with developments in the rest of Indonesia. Because of the extent of intermarriage between Chinese and locals, Japanese officials were wary of recruiting *romusha*, or 'voluntary' workers in this area, and though a special 600-strong patrol unit, the *Giyutai*, was formed in November 1942, its members were not deployed outside the islands (Lutfi 1977:418-20).

The situation was very different in 'Riau-syu', where the importance of Sumatra to Japanese interests meant that military self-sufficiency was accorded particular importance. From 1943, when the likelihood of an Allied attack was mounting, recruitment and training of 'volunteer soldiers' (*Giyugun*) from the local populace was given great priority. Many of those caught up in these activities were Minangkabau migrants, whose sense of cultural-ethnic loyalty was often intensified because the officer school for the *Giyugun* was at Bukittinggi. Although the Japanese carefully cultivated Malay rulers such as Sultan Syarif Kasim of Siak, the war also saw a growing demand for social change, especially among those groups who felt no loyalty to the old feudal order. When Japan was finally defeated and a Republic declared, there was little evidence of nostalgia for a restoration of a past associated with Malay cultural and political values (Lutfi 1977:417-8; Reid 1979:221). By this time the commercial and political dominance of Pekanbaru and the influence of Minangkabau leadership in *daratan* Riau was well established.

Recreating the Vision

The separate administrative experiences of island and mainland Riau during World War II did not help to draw the two areas together, and these differences were enhanced during the struggle for independence and the establishment of the new Indonesian Republic. When news of the proclamation of Indonesian independence in August 1945 and the defeat of the Japanese finally reached Sumatra and the Riau islands, there was no clear understanding about how the new Indonesia would be governed. The inhabitants of the *daratan* were reasonably well informed about the issues, and the red and white flag of independent Indonesia was raised at most district centers. The Sultan of Siak himself declared his support for the republic (Reid 1979:221). At the same time, there was considerable apprehension at the limitations government from Jakarta might impose on regional autonomy, especially in the Minangkabau-dominated city of Pekanbaru, where the newly installed Resident of Riau and the National Committee were based (Lutfi 1977:455-6). In the islands, which were quickly reclaimed by the returning Dutch, there was little understanding of what the new Indonesia would mean and little historical loyalty to Jakarta. Nervous of the future, some Chinese were even inclined to favor continuing Dutch rule, while local republican groups had limited opportunities for

interaction with their fellows in Java and Sumatra because of the Dutch presence. The armed struggle for independence that could have provided shared accounts of heroism and courage so important to the evolution of local identity are thus largely associated with the mainland.¹⁴

The Dutch recognition of Indonesia's independence on 27 December 1949 did nothing to resolve the long-standing difficulties of administering the old Riau empire. The former Residence of Riau was now reorganized into four *kabupaten*, that is, Kampar, Bengkalis, Inderagiri, and Kepulauan Riau. Together with Jambi and West Sumatra, these areas were subsumed under Central Sumatra, with its center at Bukittinggi. While the transformation of Riau into a 'Minangkabau' province undoubtedly fueled existing tensions between Malays and Minangkabau, it also raised questions regarding the degree to which boundaries of provinces and military districts should coincide with those of ethnicity. At the same time, local army leaders, many of whom were Minangkabau, were themselves demanding some kind of autonomy from Jakarta. The outbreak of the PRRI (Pemerintah Revolusioner Republik Indonesia) rebellion in 1958 initiated a struggle between Jakarta and the PRRI leadership for control over the former Riau residency. For instance, the local naval commander apparently agreed that the revolutionary leaders would be able to take over governmental functions in Riau, while the national leadership ordered the Riau resident to report directly to Jakarta. Aware of the economic importance of mainland Sumatra, Jakarta made vigorous efforts to combat revolutionary influence in Riau, and the PRRI even claimed that ethnic hostilities between Malays and Minangkabau were deliberately exploited. However, in military terms the revolution was relatively short lived. Troops from Jakarta landed at Bengkalis in March 1958 and shortly thereafter Pekanbaru was taken. By early April all of Riau *daratan* was under Jakarta's control (Feith 1962:520-38).

Jakarta had already responded to the growing tensions in Sumatra with its 1957 decision to redraw Riau's boundaries once again, this time including only Bengkalis, Kampar, Inderagiri, Kepulauan Riau and Kotapraja Pekanbaru. Coinciding with Jakarta's offensive against the PRRI, the first governor took office in March 1958. Although the Malay Peninsula and Singapore were of course excluded, the new boundaries recalled the old kingdom of Melaka; as such, they have proved remarkably resilient, even in the difficult economic times of Konfrontasi and the final years of the Sukarno regime. There is, however, a radical difference in the location of the center, for with the return of peace in 1959 Riau's capital was moved from Tanjungpinang to the booming oil town of Pekanbaru (Lutfi 1977:691, 696). The message was clear. As far as Jakarta was concerned, the *kepulauan's* historical claims to leadership had been superseded, and

¹⁴ For example, compare Lutfi 1977:429-589 with Lutfi 1977:593-608.

the future center of Riau should be in the economically dominant *daratan*. Underlying this attitude may well have been suspicions regarding the loyalty of non-citizen Chinese, who in 1971 made up 11.7 percent of the Riau archipelago's population. Chinese schools had been closed down in 1956, and Chinese voluntary organizations were also abolished after 1965. Doubts about Chinese loyalty may also have been fed by the continuing communication between island Riau and Singapore-Malaysia. These links were older and more effective than those with Jakarta, and became very apparent during the period of Konfrontasi with Malaysia, when many Chinese left for Singapore in the wake of anti-Chinese feeling (Ng 1976:26, 41-2). However, although the shift to an administrative center on the mainland reflected Jakarta's view of strategic and economic priorities, there was no question of redrawing boundaries. As recently as 1994 suggestions that a separate province should be created from island Riau were quickly suppressed.¹⁵

The longstanding rivalries between *kepulauan* and *daratan* in Riau have been made more complex by the intricacies of upstream-downstream tensions that also have deep historical roots. As in the past these relationships have been fueled by migration. Attracted by Riau's growing prosperity, new settlers have come from other parts of Indonesia, but the greatest infusion has predictably been from Minangkabau. Before 1942, only 8 percent of Minangkabau migration was to Riau; between 1942 and 1961 it was 19 percent, and from 1961 it was 21 percent. Along with Jakarta, Pekanbaru was the favored Minangkabau destination, helping to swell the town's population. By 1971 Pekanbaru consisted of 70,821 people; ten years later the number had reached 145,030. Although there were also Chinese, Malay, Batak and Javanese migrants, around 65 percent of this population was Minangkabau, primarily involved in small businesses. Consequently, noted a government team in 1989, 'in every alley and lane one can hear people speaking Minangkabau [...]. Even non-Minangkabau use this language as a means of communication.' While it is clearly Riau's most important urban center, Pekanbaru's acceptance as the capital has been problematic because of the lack of emotional and historical links with downstream and *kepulauan* inhabitants. For them, Pekanbaru remains linked to the familiar but nonetheless separate Minangkabau cultural world (Kato 1982:135, 146; Suparlan et al. 1989:89, 100, 117).

In recent times the *daratan-kepulauan / ulu-ilir* opposition that is a continuing theme in Riau's history has assumed a new relevance because of the expanding economic activity in the islands and coastal areas. The oil fields in Minas and Duri (Bengkalis district), for instance, are one of Indonesia's largest sources of crude oil and are now producing something in the vicinity of 700,000 barrels per day (Yeoh et al. 1992:12). The most sig-

¹⁵ See the contribution by Will Derks to this volume.

nificant developments, however, have been in the Riau-Lingga archipelago. For so many years a commercial backwater, this area received a fresh injection of energy in 1978, when the island of Batam was proposed as a free trade zone that would compete with Singapore. While this plan obviously had little chance of success, from 1989 it stimulated negotiations between Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia aimed at developing an economic zone that would link all three countries, eventually incorporating all of the surrounding Riau province. National leaders and investors alike were enthusiastic about the potential for large-scale development in tourism and trade. For the first time for many years, Sultan Mansur's vision gained a currency among people with international influence. Seen as providing Singapore with the hinterland it lacks, the Growth Triangle proposals were hailed as 'a throwback to the historical period when these three areas were part of the same empire' (Lee 1991:24). Combined with the strategic significance of the South China Sea, one can already see that these economic developments will have far-reaching ramifications because they are helping to restore a more equitable relationship between *daratan* and *kepulauan* Riau. At the same time, however, economic growth has raised issues regarding co-operation and provincial loyalty which pose formidable challenges for the future.

Conclusion

Although for most Indonesians the name of Melaka has become merely a footnote to their national history, its heritage lives on in the modern province of Riau. Five hundred years ago a Melaka ruler extended the *daratan-kepulauan* basis of his territory to include islands in the South China Sea and the coastal areas of east Sumatra. While this conception was not revolutionary, it represented a significant enlargement of Melaka's core area into areas where overlordship had previously been claimed by Javanese rulers. Despite the cultural links supplied by Malay culture and the Islamic faith, it was soon evident that forging ties of allegiance between the center and the outlying regions would be extremely difficult, especially in Sumatra.

The Portuguese conquest of Melaka and the subsequent flight of its rulers to Bintan created further difficulties in the maintenance of this union because it lessened the economic advantages that had previously induced the east-coast states to accept Melaka's overlordship. In the seventeenth century the activities of the Dutch East India Company brought added opportunities for ambitious leaders anxious to assert their independence. A division of the Riau/Johor kingdom, Melaka's successor, was always a possibility, and in the eighteenth century this became a reality. In the wake of the disruption following regicide and the incursion of Bugis adventurers, a new Malay-Minangkabau kingdom was established in Siak. Its leaders then sought to extend their control over much of the territory

previously under Riau/Johor's control. But the emerging Sumatran polities were themselves plagued by *ulu-ilir* divisions that are a motif in Sumatran history, and were particularly pronounced because the east-coast of Sumatra was firmly located in the Minangkabau *rantau* world.

The nineteenth century saw further loss of territory when the 1824 treaty between Britain and the Netherlands permanently severed Riau *kepulauan* from the Malay Peninsula. Meanwhile, the rise of Singapore and short-sighted Dutch trading policies denied Riau the chance to regain its former position as a regional entrepot. Although certain individuals continued to arouse respect across the region, the increasing dominance of Dutch colonial power, culminating in the abolition of the sultanate in 1911, helped drain away the prestige that Riau had once enjoyed. But the standing of the other claimant to the old Riau-Johor mantle, Siak, had similarly been undermined by Dutch domination and by its incorporation into a new Residency, East Coast Sumatra, where it was largely ignored by European economic priorities. The coming of World War II and the Japanese occupation did nothing to restore the bonds between *daratan* and *kepulauan*; if anything, the experiences of this period widened the differences between them. Nor did the revolutionary struggle against the Dutch supply a pool of shared memories that might have helped bridge the gap created by historical circumstances.

Against this background, the recreation of a Riau that once again included *daratan* and *kepulauan* might be considered unjustifiably optimistic. Nonetheless, a historian can point to the fundamental pragmatism that has always characterized the people who live in this region, and their willingness to adapt to the demands of reality. They will certainly understand the advantages of a genuine partnership between island and mainland, especially in regard to the ongoing maneuvering necessary to maintain a degree of autonomy in the face of Jakarta's increasing involvement in Riau affairs. But given the historical divisions that have plagued its history, the promotion of a sense of unity and commonality among Riau communities will be no easy task. It would be unfortunate if the primary basis for such unity was resentment at the effects of social and economic restructuring which is directed from Jakarta and appears indifferent to local concerns. Interactions and conversations within Riau province itself certainly need to be fostered and encouraged; however, as the essays in this collection suggest, a more fundamental need is for the people of Riau, wherever they live, to be treated as valued participants in the nation-building process.

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