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PRE-COLONIAL STATE SYSTEMS
IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

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PRE-COLONIAL STATE SYSTEMS
IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

**The Malay Peninsula, Sumatra,
Bali-Lombok, South Celebes.**

Edited by
Anthony Reid and Lance Castles

These Papers were presented at a Colloquium sponsored by the
Department of Pacific and Southeast Asian History,
Australian National University, Canberra, in April 1973.

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Tan Sri Datuk Mubin Sheppard

INTRODUCTION

The inadequacy of scholarly knowledge of pre-colonial political systems in Southeast Asia is too painfully apparent to need labouring here. In looking for helpful insights into the nature of traditional states, non-specialist students have usually been driven to the work of social scientists and pre-historians. Until very recently Southeast Asian historians have been too preoccupied with clarifying the most basic political developments, particularly as recorded in colonial archives, to contribute to this discussion. There are some distinguished exceptions as regards the larger states of mainland Southeast Asia¹ and Java². For the smaller political systems of the Malay Peninsula and Archipelago, however, the systematic work is still limited to Gullick,³ and some able recent theses on particular states.⁴

The complexity of the task of sketching the structure of even one such system from literary, colonial, and anthropological sources is sufficient to discourage most researchers from venturing into generalisation. Yet the number of particular studies currently in progress does seem to call at least for a periodic comparing of notes and searching for common ground. To this end a colloquium was sponsored by the Department of Pacific (now Pacific and Southeast Asian) History of the Australian National University on 13-15 April 1973. The contributors would like to record their gratitude to the A.N.U. for making this possible, and to members of the Department, Barbara Hau'ofa, Rita Mathews, Rose Mustapha, Robyn Walker and Rosamund Walsh for assistance in editing and typing.

To promote meaningful discussion we felt it essential to concentrate on a limited range of societies on which work was in progress and expertise available from a variety of disciplines. This appeared to apply particularly to the Malay Peninsula, North and Central Sumatra, South Celebes, and Bali-Lombok. Of the contributors, Lode Brakel, Virginia Matheson, and Peter Worsley are students of S.E. Asian literatures,

1. Notably H. G. Quaritch Wales, *Ancient Siamese Government and Administration*, London Bernard Quaritch, 1938; Walter F. Vella, *Siam under Rams III, 1824-57*, Locust Valley, N.Y., J. J. Augustin, 1957; Akin Rabibhadana, *The Organisation of Thai society in the early Bangkok period, 1782-1873*, Ithaca, Cornell S. E. Asia Program, 1969; Alexander Woodside, *Vietnam and the Chinese Model. A comparative study of Nguyen and Ch'ing civil government in the first half of the nineteenth century*, Cambridge, Harvard U.P., 1971.

2. B. J. O. Schrieke, 'Ruler and Realm in Early Java', in *Indonesian Sociological Studies Part 2*, The Hague, Van Hoeve, 1957; H. J. de Graaf, *De regering van Sultan Agung, vorst van Mataram 1613-1645, en die van zijn voorganger Panembahan Seda-ing-Krapjak 1601-1613*, VKI 23, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1958; Soemarsaid Moertono, *State and Statecraft in Old Java. A study of the later Mataram period, 16th to 19th century*, Ithaca, Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, 1968.

3. J. M. Gullick, *Indigenous Political Systems of Western Malaya*, London, Athlone Press, 1958.

4. Of these few have reached publication at the time of writing: Denys Lombard, *Le Sultanat d'Atjeh au temps d'Iskandar Muda 1607-1636*, Paris, Ecole Française d'Extreme-orient, 1967; Reynaldo Ilete, *Magindanao 1860-1888: The career of Datu Uto of Buayan*, Ithaca, Cornell S. E. Asia Program, 1971; and D. E. Brown, *Brunei: The structure and history of a Bornean Malay Sultanate*, Brunei, Brunei Museum, 1970. A limited step in the direction of the present exercise is the collection of notes on 'Traditional States of Borneo and the Southern Philippines' in *Borneo Research Bulletin* 3, no. 2 (Dec. 1971), pp. 45-66.