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ISLAM'S ADVENT AND EXPANSION IN THE PHILIPPINES

Cesar Adib Majul

The arrival and growth of Islam in the Philippines was a function of Islam's expansion in the lands of the Malays and kindred peoples in Southeast Asia. It might be said that the Islamization of the Philippines would have represented, had no major obstacle intervened, a geographical end process in the Islamization of the Malay peoples. The 'advent of Islam' may have various meanings. It can refer to the coming of Muslim traders 'from above the winds', to the arrival of Muslims with missionary aims or Sufi tendencies, or to the intention of Muslim leaders or adventurers to found political communities among an already settled population. However, the 'expansion of Islam' may connote intermarriage between Muslim traders and the local population as well as the adoption of Islam by local chiefs or the ability of Muslim rulers to effect their rule – all bringing about the progressive adoption of Islamic practices among their followers. Religious success would then be judged not only by the practice of basic Islamic rituals but, more importantly, by the increasing application of the Sharia. Some scholars have tended to emphasize the role of Muslims from Arabia, Persia and India in the introduction of Islam to Southeast Asia. What is just as important, if not more significant, is the role that the Malays had played and continue to play in the spread of Islam among themselves.

Islam in Southeast Asia: the earliest stages

Initial contact between Malays and Islam were through the maritime trade routes that extended from the Bay of Bengal to the Strait of Melaka. Even before Islam, there was already sea trade between Arabia and China. According to Chinese records, Arabs had a counting house in Khanfu (Canton) as early as C.E. 300. Indeed, the Arabs of the Arabian peninsula were 'the first known navigators of the Indian Ocean; their mastery of it fell to the Romans and Persians; and then reverted to the Muslim Arabs until the Portuguese rounded Africa and obtained the command.'¹ With the rise of Islam as a world power, especially under the Abbasids, the Arab lands became a centre of empire, power, wealth, population, civilization and culture. By the beginning of the 9th century, Arab merchants and

¹ Roland Bradell, 'Notes on Ancient Times in Malaya', *JMBRAS*, 20: 2 (1947), p. 10.

sailors (with other Muslims from Persia and India) had started to dominate the Nanhai or Southeast Asia trade.² Arab merchants served as intermediaries between European and other Asian traders.

It was in 878 that an event with economic consequences for Muslim traders, as well as far-reaching religious implications for Southeast Asians, took place in Khanfu. A Chinese rebel leader, Huang Ch'ao, with his followers, besieged and then sacked the city and, according to Muslim reports, massacred thousands of foreign Muslims. Because of this, as well as the avarice of local officials, the chaotic political situation and increased piracy in the region, most of the remaining foreign merchants fled to Kalah on the western coast of the Malay peninsula. Shut off from China, they started to concentrate more on new products from the Malay peninsula and Indonesian islands, especially spices. A local Southeast Asian trade thus developed and became profitable. Consequently, even when Muslim merchants were invited to return to China by the second-half of the next century, Kalah remained for them an important commercial base for the trade in spices. The monsoon pattern and the maritime technology of the time led the Muslim merchants to establish more local settlements to enhance trade. This resulted in increased contact between foreign Muslims and local inhabitants. According to G. R. Tibbets:

The inhabitants of these settlements, besides acting as agents for traders at home, must have interested themselves in local trade, particularly in the trade between China and various ports in South-East Asia ... This local trade was a cause of a slow but steady penetration of South-East Asia, reaching as far as eastern Java by the eleventh century.³

This trade is probably what led Muslims to become more closely acquainted with Pu-Ni (Brunei or Borneo, or the west coast of Borneo opposite the Karimata islands) by the 10th century. It was in 977 that Pu-Ni sent an embassy to China headed by a certain P'u Ali (Abū 'Alī). Earlier in the same year, a Muslim trader named P'u Lu-hsieh (Abū Rāshid?) came from China to Pu-Ni.⁴ According to Hirth and Rockwell, it was to the 'enterprising Arab traders of Canton ... that belongs that credit of opening relations between China and Borneo'.⁵ Once acquainted with Borneo, Muslim traders could not but know about neighbouring

² Wang Gungwu, 'The Nanhai Trade: A Study of the Early History of Chinese Trade in the South China Sea', *JMBRAS*, 31: 2 (1958), p. 107.

³ G. R. Tibbets, 'Early Muslim Traders in South-East Asia', *JMBRAS*, 30: 1 (1957), p. 43.

⁴ Cf. Tibbets, *JMBRAS* 30: 1 (1957), p. 36; and S. Q. Fatemi, *Islam Comes to Malaysia* (Singapore, Malaysian Sociological Research Institute, 1963), pp. 67-8.

⁵ Quoted in Fatemi, *Islam*, p. 67, n. 79.

Sulu with its famous pearls and other products. Again, according to Chinese sources, in 982, a ship owned or captained by an Arab and loaded with valuable merchandise arrived in Canton from Ma-i or Mo-yi (known to the Arabs as Mayid). It is now generally accepted that Ma-i is an island in the Philippines (either Mindoro or Luzon). At any rate, this trip from Ma-i to Canton reveals a new route from the Strait of Melaka to China through Borneo and the Philippines – a route different from that passing along the Indochina coast.

The increase in local trade, the introduction of new products and the coming of more foreign Muslims resulted in a further increase in well-defined Muslim settlements among the local populations. By the year 1000, there were settlements in Champa, Indochina; in Leran in eastern Java in 1082; in Trengganu around 1303, among others. Although such settlements do not necessarily imply the Islamization of the area, they do indicate that there were Muslims in permanent residence. Intermarriage between Muslims and the local populations must have ensued, with the raising of Muslim families and possible conversions. It is important to note at this point why more intimate social contact between locals and Muslim traders was inevitable. The traders had economic prestige and represented a high civilization and culture. The local chiefs had much to gain by alliances of various forms with them. Moreover, participation in international trade must have resulted in economic changes, which, in turn, do affect values in society. Islam was there to fill any ideological vacuum. Indeed, there would have been many factors predisposing the local inhabitants to eventually adopt Islam.

By the 13th century, Islam had secured some political power in the sense that some rulers of port principalities had adopted Islam. Marco Polo who was in Perlak, Sumatra, in 1292 described how the people there had been converted to Islam by Muslim merchants. One of the earliest coastal principalities to embrace Islam was Samudra-Pasai in Sumatra. Its first Muslim ruler al-Malik al-Şāliḥ, who died in 1297, is said to have married a Muslim princess from neighbouring Perlak. With Islam putting down roots in northern Sumatra, it would not be long before it gained a beachhead in the south of the Malay peninsula. The founding of Melaka around 1400 and the adoption of Islam by its ruler less than a decade after that were events fraught with dramatic consequences for Islam's rise in the region. The founder of this principality, who was of Palembang origin, was persuaded by Muslim merchants as well as a marriage alliance with a Muslim princess of nearby Pasai to embrace Islam. Adopting the Muslim title Iskandar Shāh, he was responsible for laying the foundations to make Melaka the key for the eastern trade in spices and thus the greatest emporium of the region. This was made possible by the patronage of wealthy and powerful Muslim merchants who

made Melaka their base. In time Melaka became a centre of Muslim legal and theological studies as well as missionary activity. During the reign of the learned and pious Maṣṣūr Shāh (1458-77), missionaries, among them Malays, left for neighbouring areas, principally Java and Borneo. The ensuing conversion to Islam of many rulers of port principalities in northern Java, due largely to such missionary activities, spelled the final disintegration of the Hindu Majapahit empire by c. 1478. By the middle of the 15th century, if not earlier, the rulers of Brunei had already accepted Islam.

All this indicates that we can trace a 'line of Islamization' in the west of the region, starting from northern Sumatra to Melaka and running down to western and northern Java. However, the findings of Professor Sayyid Q. Fatemi reveal that there was another line that ran 'all through the eastern coast facing the China Sea: Phang-rang, Patane, Trengganu, Pahang and Leran'.⁶ Professor Fatemi believes that this eastern line predates the western one and that Muslim merchants based on China had participated in the eastern Islamization.⁷ This may well be so, but what is important to observe at this point is that both lines, regardless of which was earlier, were complementary and fused in Java and Borneo by the middle of the 15th century.

But the steady spread of Islam to other coastal principalities was to meet a severe challenge with the fall of Melaka to the Portuguese in 1511. Blocked by a Muslim-controlled zone stretching from Morocco to points in the Balkans, the Portuguese, in their search for spices, sailed around the Cape of Good Hope, encountered and defeated a Muslim fleet in Dui in 1509 and finally captured Melaka – thus destroying the centuries-old Muslim dominance of the Nanhai trade. Although the coming of the Portuguese to India and Southeast Asia was primarily economic in nature, it was, nevertheless, accompanied by a religious fervour that served to rationalize the looting of Muslim vessels and subjecting Muslim principalities to Christendom. This intermingling of commercial and religious motives is reflected in the account of Tome Pires who was in Melaka and China and who was acquainted with contemporary events in the area. Writing in 1515, he explained:

Malacca is a city that was made for merchandise, fitter than any other in the world ...And since it is known how profitable Malacca is in temporal affairs, how much the more it is in spiritual (affairs) as Mohammed is cornered and cannot go further and flees as much as he can. And let people favour one side.

⁶ Ibid., pp. 66-7.

⁷ Local tradition in Kelantan has it that Islam came there through traders coming from the east before it came to Melaka.

while merchandise favours our faith; and the truth is that Mohammed will be destroyed, and destroyed he cannot but be.⁸

But the Portuguese wish or expectation that, with Melaka in their hands, they would not only control the spice trade from Asia to Europe, but also destroy Islam in their path, failed to materialize. Due to Portuguese discrimination against them, while encouraging Hindu traders to come to Melaka, Muslim merchants started to once again patronize nearby Pasai which had not only become a Muslim centre of learning but provided them a haven. Consequent Portuguese efforts to exercise political or military pressure on Pasai were unsuccessful. In 1524, the emerging principality of Aceh annexed Pasai and had become strong enough to threaten Melaka on various occasions. Aceh during the 16th and 17th centuries became one of the most important ports for Muslim merchants, who still came to the area but in decreasing numbers, and it served as a vital channel through which Muslim spiritual life was given nourishment by Muslims from India and the Arab world.⁹

Another result of Melaka's fall was that many Muslim merchants and local Muslim nobles sailed to Brunei for refuge. By this time Brunei had become an important stopping place for the spice trade from the Moluccas and Banda to Melaka. Brunei and Java Muslim traders and preachers continued to frequent the Moluccas and were responsible for Islam gaining a foothold there as early as the 1450s. Indeed, Brunei was beginning to be a leading commercial and naval power in the region. The Portuguese never really dared to capture it and did their best to maintain good relations. One reason for this was that the maritime route from the Moluccas to Melaka, passing through Brunei, was safer and more convenient than that passing by southern Borneo. It was after Melaka's fall that Brunei's commercial and religious activities in the Philippines became more apparent.

The arrival of the Portuguese and their capture of Melaka forced the rulers of the Muslim principalities into a struggle to resist the invaders. Portuguese efforts to harm Islam, if not to extirpate it, caused a violent response among those Malays who had come to value and cherish their Muslim religion. Fearing that they might have much to lose by the Portuguese incursion, Muslim merchants and the Malay traders had to forge an alliance. In 1515, due to the efforts of Muslim Malay traders, Ambon finally accepted Islam. In 1521, Brunei exerted efforts to

⁸ Tome Pires, *The Suma Oriental of Thomé Pires: An Account of the East...* ed. and trans. A. Cortesão. works issued by the Hakluyt Society, 90 (2 vols., London, Hakluyt Society, 1944), 2: 286.

⁹ Cf. Bertram Schrieke, 'Ruler and Realm in Early Java' in his *Indonesian Sociological Studies*, Selected Studies on Indonesia by Dutch Scholars, 3 (2 vols., The Hague and Bandung, van Hoeve, 1957), 2: 248-9.

convert neighbours to Islam. In 1539, 'Alā' al-Dīn Ri'āyat Shāh, the Acehese sultan, waged a war against the still-pagan Bataks. In 1550, Islam entered Banjarmasin with some success. In 1575, Bāballāh, the Sultan of Ternate, completed the task of his father, Sultan Hārūn, to frustrate the efforts of Portuguese missionaries in the Moluccas. By the early 1600s, the rulers of Sambas, Bima and Makassar were Muslims. Indeed, trade and religion had become intertwined. To be noted also is that the exodus of Muslim religious functionaries and learned men from Melaka, after its conquest, to other parts of Southeast Asia, principally Java, must have strengthened Islam in these parts.¹⁰ But what is most significant is that the task of Islamization had fallen by now to Malays. Islam had ceased for some time to be the religion only of foreign Muslim merchants. However, this is not to deny the occasional presence, if not aid, of the Arab or Indian trader in this Malay religious pursuit.

Islam and its arrival in the Philippines

The identity of the first Muslims to arrive in the Philippines and the date of their arrival are, so far, unknown to scholars. On the basis of the historical discussion above, it can be stated that as early as the last-quarter of the 10th century, Muslim traders were already acquainted with Sulu and other islands in the Philippines, such as Mindoro and Luzon. The presence of Muslim traders does not imply their settling in the area or the preaching of Islam. However, there is archaeological data which can be used in determining the period in which the Islamization of Sulu took place. On a mound on the slopes of Bud Dato, a few miles from Jolo town in Sulu, is a tomb that has been respected for centuries, although recently damaged.¹¹ The tombstone has an Arabic inscription in beautiful calligraphy on one side. Its translation is as follows:

Said the Prophet, peace be upon him:
'Whoever dies far away, dies a martyr.'
Allah has taken away the late blessed martyr,
Tuhan Maqbalu on the date: the sacred, holy month
of Rajab. May Allah increase its holiness. The
year ten and seven hundred.

The year A.H 710 is equivalent to C.E. 1310. Who was Tuhan Maqbalu? Firstly, he was a foreign Muslim who had died far away from his land of birth. That is

¹⁰ This situation is not unlike the Mongol invasions and fall of Baghdad to them in 1258, which led to an exodus of Muslim theologians and thinkers to India and other parts of Asia, thus strengthening Islam there.

¹¹ This tombstone came to be broken into various fragments about 30 years ago. However, good photographs were taken of it before this occurred.

why he is called a martyr (*shahīd*) in accordance with the *ḥadīth*. In spite of his Arabic name, his ethnic origin cannot be ascertained. That he was titled 'Tuhan' reveals that he was of some importance, if not a chief, for this title is found in an almost contemporary Sumatran inscription of 1347 as part of the title of a state minister.¹² It is likewise found in the famous Trengganu Stone dated A.H. 702 (C.E. 1303). This was erected by a certain Seri Paduka Tuhan who was probably another minister of state and whom Professor Fatemi believes succeeded in founding a Muslim principality in Trengganu.¹³ That Tuhan Maqbalu was a chief or person of some importance is attested by the fact that many Sulu sultans were crowned near the site of his tomb. Bud Dato means the hill of *datus* (chiefs). It is reasonable to infer at this point that the tombstone, having been made outside Sulu and then brought to Bud Dato, implies that there were already Muslims present in Sulu or who knew it well enough to return to.

Some of the earliest known Chinese accounts of Sulu belong to the Yuan or Mongol dynasty (1278-1368) and they reveal a high regard for Sulu products, notably pearls. But none of these accounts state that Sulu had Muslim rulers. Between 1405-35, the Ming emperor Yung Lo (Chu Ti) sent a series of naval expeditions to destinations in Southeast Asia and as far as Arabia. They were under the command of the Muslim admiral Cheng Ho (entitled Sam Pao Kung). These expeditions accelerated commercial relations between China and neighbouring islands, including Sulu. Although there is no evidence that the fleet went to Sulu, local traditions narrate, nevertheless, that some of the Chinese Muslim sailors of the fleet eventually came and settled in Sulu. Other traditions add that these sailors were accompanied by Arab merchants or preachers. The sites of the tombs of one such preacher and his Chinese companion are still known in Bud Agad, in the interior of Jolo Island.

The *Ming Annals* relate how a Sulu ruler entitled Peduka Batara (a title used by Sulu sultans up to the 17th century) went to China in 1417 to render tribute to the Emperor and died there. But, again, the *Annals* do not mention anything concerning the religion of the Sulu rulers. There were succeeding Sulu tributes in 1421 and 1424. Sulu tradition has it that the Sulu ruler who died in China was a Muslim and Chinese records tell us that his descendants in China after a few generations were known to be Muslims. In fact, Sulu sultans, after the resumption of the tribute in the first-half of the 18th century, did not fail to remind the Celestial Throne that the Sulu ruler who died in China in 1417 was their ancestor.

¹² H. S. Paterson. 'An Early Malay Inscription from Trengganu'. *JMBRAS*, 2: 3 (1924), p. 262.

¹³ Fatemi. *Islam*, pp. 64-6.

For a more comprehensive picture of Islam's advent and expansion in Sulu, we must depend in part on the so-called local *tarsilas*. *Tarsila* (Arabic, *silsila*, 'chain' or 'links') is a term referring to written genealogical accounts. One of its functions is to trace the ancestry of an individual or family to a famous political or religious personality of the past. As such, it serves to support the claims of certain persons to wield political or religious power. Thus, all Sulu and Maguindanao sultans and important *datus* had their closely guarded *tarsilas*. But not all *tarsilas* are purely genealogical accounts. Some contain descriptions of individuals and their activities, place names and allusions to historical events. As such, they retain the character of quasi-historical documents. A few *tarsilas* may include mythological events in their introductory sections; the meanings of these are generally now lost to us.

Scholars are indebted to Dr Najeeb M. Saleeby, a Lebanese physician and scholar, for the publication of many important Sulu and Mindanao *tarsilas* in the first decade of this century. Most of them belonged to former sultans and *datus* and have been since destroyed by war. Saleeby published and annotated the so-called 'Genealogy of Sulu', which he conveniently divided into four sections under the sub-titles: 'Sulu author's introduction', 'Descendants of Asip', 'Descendants of Tuan Masha'ika' and 'Original and later settlers of Sulu'. These he supplemented by other *tarsilas* under the title 'Sulu Notes'.

Disregarding minor differences among these *tarsilas* as well as portions not relevant to the present inquiry, the purpose of which is to gain further insight into Sulu's acceptance of Islam, what follows is an integrated summary of all the *tarsilas*:

During the time of Raja Sipad (Raja Sri Paduka) the Younger, a son or descendant of Raja Sipad the Older, a certain Tuan Masha'ika (*mashā'ikh*) arrived in the Maimbung area of Jolo island at a time when the people were still worshipping idols. Due to his superior knowledge and skills, he gained the esteem of the people and eventually married a daughter of Raja Sipad the Younger. She bore him children who are given Arab names: Tuan Ḥākīm, Mu'min and 'Ā'isha. Tuan Ḥākīm, in turn had four sons: Tuan Dā'im, Tuan Buda, Tuan Bujang and Tuan Muku, as well as a daughter. Later on, Basilan islanders (known as Tagimahas) and another group known as Baklayas came to settle in Sulu. They are then followed by Badjaos originating from the Strait of Melaka. The Badjaos scattered themselves around the Sulu archipelago. Some time later, a certain Karīm al-Makhdūm, later on titled Sharīf Awliyā', came to Sulu to preach Islam and eventually settled among the Tagimaha chiefs in

Buansa where he continued his religious instruction and constructed a mosque. The people started to adopt Islam. Ten years later (after the arrival of the *makhdūm* or the building of the mosque), a certain Raja Baguinda from Minangkabau, appeared with his ministers and followers in Buansa. A fight ensued between the Tagimahas and the Raja with his followers. The battle ended with Raja Baguinda recognized as a Muslim. Some of the leaders of the Tagimahas are given the title 'Sayk' (Arabic, *shaykh*). Raja Baguinda then settled in Buansa where he married the daughter of a local chief. He became ruler there. Five years after his arrival he was of sufficient importance to receive a gift of elephants from the Raja of Java (probably from a vassal of the Javanese ruler in Borneo). Raja Baguinda is reported to have arrived at a time when the grandsons of Tuan Masha'ika were chiefs in Sulu.

It was during the reign of Raja Baguinda that a certain Sayyid Abū Bakr, after passing through Palembang and Brunei, appeared and preached Islam. More people become Muslims. The Sayyid then married a daughter of the Raja. On the death of the Raja, Sayyid Abū Bakr became ruler and assumes the title of Sultan Sharīf. He lived for 30 years in Buansa and after his death, his son, Kamāl al-Dīn succeeded him as sultan. A *tarsila* enumerates a succession of 17 sultans beginning with Abū Bakr.

The above summary invites some observations and conclusions:

1. Tuan Masha'ika was one of the first foreign Muslims to come and settle in the Maimbung area of Jolo island. Judging by their names, he left Muslim descendants. His grandsons became leaders and at least one great-grandson was known as *shaykh*. In southern Arabia, the term *mashā'ikh* has been used to denote pious men or religious leaders to distinguish them from *sayyids* or *sharīfs* deemed descendants of the Prophet Muhammad. The probability is that Tuan Masha'ika was an Arab from southern Arabia.
2. The coming of Karīm al-Makhdūm indicates a conscious effort to preach Islam. Whereas in the Arab world the term *makhdūm* means 'master' or 'one who is served', in Malay it was used to denote a religious scholar or teacher. That Karīm al-Makhdūm was titled *awliyā'* suggests that he was considered a pious man. That he was called *sharīf* indicates that he was considered a descendant of the Prophet.
3. The coming of Raja Baguinda, with his court, implies that he had come to found a principality. He had come to Buansa where there were already Muslims. That fighting against him ceased when he was recognized as a Muslim implies

that the *tarsila* wanted to emphasize continuity with the Muslim past. His marriage to a local princess meant that his descendants had some rights to the land. The *tarsilas* also establish an historical link between Sulu and an older empire – that of Srivijaya in Sumatra.

4. Sayyid Abū Bakr, also known as Sultan Sharīf, was thought to be a descendant of the Prophet as connoted by the terms *sayyid* and *sharīf*. This descent, according to some jurists, could entitle him to rule over Muslims. His marriage to a local princess strengthened the position of his descendants to claim power.

As can be seen, the *tarsilas* discussed are not merely genealogical accounts. They are documents supporting the claims of Sulu sultans to rule over Muslims as well as have rights to the land. Moreover, they give evidence of dynastic links with older centres of empire – thus showing a continuity with the past. But what is important is that they reveal the arrival of Muslims, their role in the spread of Islam and the establishment of Muslim institutions. As such, they show how Sulu came to be part of *dār al-islām*. The problems at this point have to do with the authenticity of the persons mentioned, the historicity of the events narrated and problems of chronology. Unfortunately, none of the *tarsilas* contain a single date.

One need not doubt the existence of Sayyid Abū Bakr. His elaborate tomb still exists undamaged on the slopes of Bud Turmangtangis facing Buansa. The tombstone carries his complete title as: Paduka Mahasari Mawlānā al-Sulṭān al-Sharīf al-Hāshimī. It is undated. Nearby is a marker, which, according to tradition, marks the grave of his son, Kamāl al-Dīn, the second sultan. The *Genealogy of Sulu* enumerates 17 sultans starting with Abū Bakr. All but the first three sultans are known to have existed and dates of their reign are known by reference to European and other sources. There is therefore no compelling reason to doubt the existence of the first three sultans. However, it should be said that some sultans known to have reigned are not found in the list. They were probably omitted for dynastic reasons.

Similarly, one need not doubt the existence of Raja Baguinda, the reputed father-in-law of Sayyid Abū Bakr. In fact, the assumption of his authenticity can explain a great deal of Sulu history. The Raja was probably involved in one of the most important transformations in Southeast Asian history. Oliver Wolters, in his important work *The Fall of Srivijaya in Malay History*, describes an event in the history of Southeast Asia in 1397 which coincided with the final dissolution of Srivijaya. He narrates how at around this time, a prince of Palembang abandoned his allegiance to the Javanese Majapahit, causing the latter to retaliate by invading his territory. This Sumatran prince is reported to have escaped with a

small band of followers to eventually found the principality of Melaka. However, according to Wolters, another source describes how this evacuation was of such a magnitude that the sea seemed to be nothing but ships. The source continues: 'So vast was the fleet that there seemed to be no counting. The mast of the ships were like a forest of trees; their pennons and streamers were like driving clouds and the state umbrellas of the Rajas like cirrus.' Referring to this incident, which appeared to have been a mass exodus of rajas and their followers, Wolters concluded that '... the years before 1400 were a disturbed time in the western archipelago, and this is another, and perhaps more likely, time when small groups of adventurers migrated to Borneo and elsewhere.'¹⁴ In effect, the conclusion is that fleeing rajas went to other islands for refuge or to establish principalities – a frequent occurrence in Southeast Asian history. Among them could have been Raja Baguinda, who is reported to have stopped at various islands before finally deciding on Buansa. That he is reported to have originated from Minangkabau and not Palembang is not important, since the centre of power in Sumatra before the end of the 14th century had shifted to Palembang. Thus, in the same manner in which a Palembang prince eventually founded the principality of Melaka around 1400, which was to become a great emporium and theological centre, another raja was to establish a principality in Sulu around the same time – with both principalities claiming continuity with Srivijaya, an older empire. That Raja Baguinda appeared in Buansa around 1400 can be further substantiated by a *tarsila* account that he had received a gift of elephants from the Raja of Java. This event can be calculated to have taken place sometime before 1410.¹⁵

One *tarsila* reports that Karīm al-Makhdūm came about ten years before Raja Baguinda. Dr Saleeby calculated this event to have taken place around 1380. For want of an alternative, this date can be provisionally accepted. Actually, it was around the end of the 14th century and the beginning of the next that various *makhdūmīn* started to appear in Java and northern Borneo. This phenomenon has led some scholars to investigate possible kinship relations, if not to posit the identity of some of them with Karīm al-Makhdūm. But, if traditions are reliable and some tombs in Sulu authentic, it is to be inferred that various *makhdūmīn* had visited Sulu and died there. One of them is buried in Tandu Banak, Sibutu island; another named Mohadum (Makhdūm) Amīnallāh lies buried in Bud Agad, in the interior of Jolo island. Amīnallāh is the *makhdūm* which tradition

¹⁴ O. Wolters, *The Fall of Srivijaya in Malay History* (Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 76 and p. 190.

¹⁵ See Cesar A. Majul, 'An Analysis of the "Genealogy of Sulu"' in A. Ibrahim, S. Siddique and Y. Hussain (eds.), *Readings on Islam in Southeast Asia* (Singapore, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1985), p. 53 for this calculation.

associates with Chinese traders or sailors belonging to the fleet of Cheng Ho and who must therefore have arrived in the early 1400s.

A great deal of 'magical' power had been attributed to these *makhdūmīn*, such as the ability to walk on water, communicating by bits of paper, etc. One is led to speculate that they were pious preachers with Sufi inclinations. For example, the report that Karīm al-Makhdūm walked on water may be simply a cryptic indication that he was a member of the Qādiriyya *ṭarīqa* reputedly founded by 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (1077-1166) to whom it was believed Allah had given the power to walk on water. As such, he remains to this day the 'patron saint' of fishermen and sailors in some parts of the Muslim world.

Islam in Mindanao

Maguindanao *tarsilas* are mainly genealogical documents purporting to demonstrate the legitimacy of ruling *datus*. But some of the oldest ones contain references to the arrival of Islam. Again, like the Sulu *tarsilas*, no dates are found. A *tarsila* reports the arrival of a certain Sharīf Awliyā' in western Mindanao, who married there, had a daughter and left the country. That his daughter was called *paramisuli* indicates that he had married the daughter of a chief. That he was called Awliyā' shows that he was a pious man or had taught Islam. The *tarsila* then narrates how two brothers, Sharīf Ḥasan and Sharīf Maraja appeared from Johore (Melaka?); Sharīf Ḥasan went to Sulu while his brother went to the area of Slangan, along the northern branch of the Pulangi river, now part of Cotabato. Sharīf Maraja reared a family. After this, Sharīf Muḥammad Kabungsuwan appears in western Mindanao.¹⁶

The most important Maguindanao *tarsilas* describe how Muḥammad Kabungsuwan, a scion of the royal family of Johore, arrived with his followers and with the aid of many Salams (*Orang Selat*), and founded a principality in the Pulangi estuary – other accounts specify the Malabang area further north. To Kabungsuwan is attributed the effective conversion of many inhabitants to Islam. He was not only a warrior, but a religious preacher.¹⁷ Since Johore was not founded until after 1511, the fall of Melaka, it is estimated that Kabungsuwan arrived in Mindanao after this event – probably around 1515. The *tarsilas* relate that his successor as ruler was his son, named Sharīf Maka-alang Saripada. This son was known to the Spaniards of the Villalobos expedition to Mindanao in 1543. Kabungsuwan was indeed an historical figure and all Maguindanao sultans

¹⁶ Najeeb Saleeby, *Studies in Moro History, Law and Religion*, Department of the Interior Ethnological Survey Publications, 4/1 (Manila, Bureau of Printing, 1905), 'Manuscript No. IV' pp. 29-30.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 'Manuscript No. II', pp. 23-4; 'Manuscript No. IV', p. 30 and 'Manuscript No. V', p. 34.

claimed descent from him. His coming to Mindanao, after stopping in Borneo and other islands, represents an instance of the general exodus of Malay nobles from Melaka, after its fall in 1511, for other parts of the Malay world. According to David Sopher:

Following the Portuguese conquest of Malacca, and its harassment of Johore, there was a considerable exodus of Moslem Malay nobles and merchants to Brunei, which was then a well-established and busy port; probably some of the Johore people drifted along with this later migration.¹⁸

Here one is reminded of an incident in the *Sejarah Melayu* in which Maḥmūd Shāh, the last Melaka sultan, was persuaded by a faithful minister to flee the falling city with the prophetic assurance that 'Every country has a Raja, and if your Highness is granted length of days, we can find ten countries for you.'¹⁹ Indeed, the founding of a principality by Sharīf Muḥammad Kabungsuwan, reputedly a scion of the Melaka royal family, was part of the general pattern whereby members of a royal family depart to found kingdoms of their own. Just as Sulu *tarsilas* attempt to forge a link between Sulu and an older centre of empire like Srivijaya, Maguindanao *tarsilas* point to links between Maguindanao and Melaka or Johore.

Brunei and the Philippines

The fall of Melaka, besides leading Pasai and soon after Aceh to become the most important *pieds-à-terre* for Muslim merchants in the western archipelago, also accelerated the rise of Brunei. Brunei was a convenient stopping-place for the movement of spices from the Moluccas and Banda to Melaka and other ports. It was around the end of the 15th century or the beginning of the 16th century that Brunei's political and commercial influence in the Philippines increased. It is likely that Brunei's rulers had already adopted Islam before the Sulu sultanate was established around 1450. In spite of occasional dynastic tensions, kinship relations between the rulers of Brunei and Sulu had been intimate. Well-known and reliable Spanish contemporary sources reveal that the Brunei sultan in 1521, Raja Seri Pada, had married a daughter of the Sulu *batara* or ruler. Her name was Putri Laila Men Chanei. A Portuguese letter of 1540 attests that the Sulu ruler of the time (Maharaja Upo?) was married to a sister of the Brunei sultan 'Abd al-Qahhār. Other Spanish sources say that in 1578, Pangiran Buddiman (Raja Iro, Muḥammad al-Ḥalīm), the ruler of Sulu, was not only of Bornean origin but was

¹⁸ David E. Sopher, *The Sea Nomads: A Study Based on the Literature of the Maritime Boat People of Southeast Asia* (Singapore, 1965), p. 313.

¹⁹ C. C. Brown (trans.), 'Sejarah Melayu', *JMBRAS*, 25: 2-3 (1952), p. 189.

a cousin as well as brother-in-law of Sultan Sayf al-Rijāl, having married a daughter of Sultan 'Abd al-Qahhār. Brunei sources also state that Sultan Hasan of Brunei had married a Sulu princess (a daughter of Pangiran Buddiman), with whom he had a son named Pangiran Shahbander Maharajalela, who is said to ruled in Sulu. This son is probably the Batara Shāh Pangirah Tengah who was the ruler of Sulu in the first decade of the 17th century.²⁰ Sulu and Maguindanao traditions to the effect that the Arab founders of the Brunei and Sulu were brothers simply indicate the close kinship between their respective royal families. That the older brother had founded the Brunei sultanate may also imply that the Brunei sultanate was simply older. At any rate, once rulers of principalities had become Muslims, there would be a general tendency for their followers to follow suit.

From time immemorial there had been close commercial relations between Brunei and Sulu. Often, spices from Banda and the Moluccas would be collected in Sulu for transport to Brunei, and thence to other ports.

The Bruneians in Manila and Tondo in the 16th century

At the start of the 16th century, there were already two Brunei Muslim settlements on either side of the Pasig river in Manila Bay: Manila (Maylina) to the south and Tondo across the river. These settlements were established among an older Tagalog population. Local Tagalog traders would bring products from the area now known as Laguna Bay as well as nearby areas to these settlements, in exchange for products brought by Bruneian traders from other islands. Manila, too, had become a strategic point as a base for the Brunei-China trade. The Bruneian rulers of the principalities of Manila and Tondo, like their counterparts in other parts of the Malay world, were themselves traders.

In 1521, the Spanish vessels of the ill-fated Magellan expedition, as they neared Brunei, saw hundreds of boats coming in their direction. Fearing that they were to be attacked, the Spaniards captured some of the larger junks. In one of them, a flagship, they found the son of the ruler of Manila, who was not only a grandson of Raja Seri Pada, the Brunei sultan, but also a high-ranking military officer of the Sultan. This young prince, who was later on freed by the Spaniards, had come back from an expedition and had hoped to marry a cousin, a granddaughter of the Sultan. It was upon his return to Manila, where he was able to thwart the political ambitions of a very close relative who was the ruler of Tondo, that the Sultan of

²⁰ For the Portuguese letter dated 1540, see Robert Nicholl, "The Letter of Bras Bayao", *Brunei Museum Journal*, 5: 3 (1983), p. 54. The title of *Pangiran* among Sulu rulers connoted kinship relations with the Brunei rulers. The Bruneians also referred to Sulu rulers as *Batara*.

Brunei gave him his cousin in marriage. This young prince became the ruler of Manila and was known to the Spaniards in 1570 as Raja Matanda, 'the old king', also known as Raja Ache.²¹ However, by this time political control of Manila had passed to his nephew, Raja Sulaymān (also known as Raja Bago or Raja Muda) who was married to a Bruneian princess. In 1570, the ruler of Tondo was Si Bunao Lakandula (also known as Alcandor) who was related to the Brunei sultan. His nephew, who later on came to adopt the Christian name of Agustin de Legazpi, came to marry a daughter of the Pangiran Sri Lela, a close relative of Sultan Sayf al-Rijāl. The sultan was angered by the marriage, of which he had not known and to which he had not given his consent. In addition to which, the marriage was between a Muslim relative and a recent convert to Catholicism. In brief, the rulers of Manila and Tondo during the coming of the Spaniards under Legazpi in 1565 to the Philippines were of Bruneian origin and related to the Brunei royal family. It was they who introduced the elements of Islam to Luzon, principally in the Manila Bay area.

Spaniards and Moros in 1565

The Spanish returned to the Philippines in 1565 with definite instructions to extend the domains of the Spanish crown as well as to convert the inhabitants to Catholicism. While noting the common presence of Bruneian traders all over the Philippines, they observed with dismay that there were also Brunei Muslims preaching Islam. Initially, on the assumption that the inhabitants of the Philippines were all Muslims, they called them 'Moros' until they realized that many natives were not Muslims at all.²² A 1572 Spanish report on the religious situation in Luzon commented:

It is quite certain that the natives of this island of Luzon, whom we Spaniards commonly call Moros, are not so; for the truth is that they do not know or understand the law of Mahoma – only in some of the villages on the sea-coast they do not eat pork, and this for the reason that they have had dealings with the

²¹ For details of Raja Matanda's story see Rodrigo de Aganduru Moriz, 'Historia general de las islas occidentales a la Asia adyacentes llamadas Philipinas' in Marquez de la Fuenesanta de Valle, D. Jose Rayon and D. Francisco de Zabalburu (eds.), *Colección de documentos inéditos para la historia de Espana* (Madrid, 1882), 8: 59-60; and Antonio Pigafetta, 'First Voyage Around the World' in Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands 1493-1898* (55 vols., Cleveland 1903-1909), 33: 223.

²² When they arrived in Philippine waters in 1565, the Spaniards initially used the term *Moro* (from Mauro) to denote inhabitants of the islands due to their impression that they were mostly Muslims. It was a term that they had previously used to refer to the Muslim Arabs and Berbers in Spain and North Africa. In time, non-Muslim inhabitants were called *indios*, especially those who became Christians.

Moros of Burney, who have preached to them a little of the teaching of Mahoma.²³

The report went on to say that there were, however, some Moros who were able 'to read a few words of the Alcoran' but that they were few.²⁴ Another Spanish report of 1573 commented: 'In this island of Luzon are three settlements of Moros, who do not know the law of Mahoma in its entirety. They eat no pork, and pay reverence to the said Mahoma.'²⁵

The preaching of Islam by Bruneians in other parts of Luzon, principally in Balayan, south of Manila, was a regular feature that appeared to form part of an organized missionary effort. The testimony of Magat-China, a notable of Balayan, in 1578, in response to Spanish inquiries, claimed that the people of Brunei (its rulers) were of Meccan ancestry and that the people of Manila, Balayan and Mindoro had no previous knowledge of Islam before the Bruneians introduced and explained it to them. He claimed to have seen a copy of the Qur'an and witnessed its preaching by a 'catip' (Arabic, *khaṭīb*). 'Likewise he has heard his relatives and other Moros tell how in former times the king of Borney has sent preachers of the sect of Mahoma to Cebu, Oton, Manila and other districts, so that the people there might be instructed in it as were those of Borney. And this witness, in his own time, has heard the said doctrine preached in Balayan, by a Moro regarded among them as a priest, by name Siat Saen [Shaykh Zayn?].'²⁶ This testimony by a local *datu* was corroborated by Spanish friar missionaries who went to preach in Balayan around 1580 to counteract the preaching of Islam by Bruneians. The friars testified that Bruneians had preached there and that their converts had shown such enthusiasm for the new faith that many of them wished to undertake the pilgrimage to Mecca.²⁷

Although the Spanish did correctly identify some people as deeply Islamic in behaviour and others as still in the stage of animism, some of their statements about Islam being superficial among most inhabitants in the Manila Bay areas are unreliable and therefore questionable. In the first place, one can question their knowledge of what constituted Islam as well as the intensity of Islamic practices. They also did not fully comprehend that Islam had come in a generally peaceful

²³ 'Relations of the Conquest of the Island of Luzon' in Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, vol. 3, pp. 141-2.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 196.

²⁶ 'Expeditions to Borneo, Jolo and Mindanao' in Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, vol. 4, pp. 150-1.

²⁷ Marcelo de Ribadeneria, *Historia de las islas del archipelago Filipino y reinos de la gran China*. Tartaria. Cochinchia, Malaca, Siam, Cambodge y Japon, ed. Juan R. de Legisima (Madrid, 1947), p. 91.

manner to Luzon and nearby islands, so that many inhabitants were passing through a transitory stage or acculturation process in their progressive acceptance of Islam. Yet some of the Spanish descriptions of the nobles of Manila and Tondo, as well as their followers, reveal that these Muslims had a sophisticated knowledge of Islam – although the Spaniards probably did not appreciate what they were describing. Two examples will suffice: one has to do with a hunting scene, while the other concerns the funeral of a Muslim lady of high rank.

Around 1590, a Spanish account of a deer hunt described how the hunters would make efforts to reach a felled deer before it was killed by dogs. They also noted the careful bleeding of the deer before it was prepared for consumption. This behaviour demonstrates a knowledge of related Qur'anic prescriptions (2: 173 and 5: 3-4).²⁸ In 1585, a Spanish official described the funeral of the aged mother of nephews of Lakandula, the ruler of Tondo. The description of the burial of this lady, who was said to have died a Muslim, is a recognizably Muslim funeral not much different from that practised today in Sulu or Mindanao.²⁹ The Spanish official commented in his report that such burial practices were taught by former 'alfaqies' (Arabic, *faqīh*) from Brunei called 'siac' (Arabic, *shaykh*). In general, Spanish officials and ecclesiastical authorities often tended to underrate the Islamic consciousness and practices of the Moros of Luzon, if only to rationalize their aims or find an excuse to convert them to Christianity.

But the Spanish were correct in recognizing that Islam had a longer history in Sulu and Mindanao than in Luzon. In spite of ignorance of or possible prejudice against Islam, some Spanish Jesuits, themselves imbued with a religious spirit, were able to appreciate the high state of religiosity of Moros in Mindanao where a system of *madrasas* and mosques already existed. Melchor Hurtado, a Spanish Jesuit who became prisoner of Mindanao Moros for about a year, wrote that Sirungan, the Raja of Buyan, knew the Sharia, held frequent discussions on religion, kept his prayers and avoided wine and pork. His tolerance was such that he never forced his Christian native captives to become Muslims. Hurtado also mentioned the existence of local ulema as well as itinerant Muslim preachers. Although he did not believe in their religion, rites and practices, this is what Hurtado observed as a prisoner of the Moros:

²⁸ Carlos Quirino and Mauro Gancia, 'The Manners, Customs and Beliefs of the Philippine Inhabitants of Long Ago; being chapters of "A late 16th-century Manila Manuscript", transcribed, translated and annotated', *The Philippine Journal of Science*, 87: 4 (1958), p. 440. This work is part of the so-called Boxer Codex.

²⁹ Melchor de Avalos, 'Dos cartas al rey contra los moros de las Filipinas' in Agustín Millares Carlo (ed.), *Cuerpo de documentos del siglo XVI sobre los derechos de España en las Indias y las Filipinas* (Mexico City, 1943), p. 94.

Although their ...beliefs are false, they give to their vain rites and rubics a seriousness of attention which we ordinarily fail to give to those of our true religion. An inspector-general who had been sent from Jolo reprimanded the young men because when they were at worship in their mosque (a worship performed after their custom with many prostrations and genuflections and bows of the head towards the west), they did it with little reverence, turning their faces this way and that in a way that detracted from the attention and respect with which they ought to address God. For this reason, when the hour of worship sounded, even a slave was permitted to take his master by the shoulders and turn him towards the west. They say of a brother of Sirongan ... that one day while performing this vain worship he was bitten by a poisonous centipede. It was a painful bite, but it moved him as little as though he were a piece of stone. Only after he had finished his prayer did he put his hand inside his clothes; for, he said, he considered it a lack of reverence to scratch oneself while speaking with God.³⁰

In the pursuit of their economic and religious aims in the Philippines, the Spanish perceived the Muslims of Brunei as their main obstacle. Certainly, the Muslims would not easily give up their commercial advantages and religious practice. To the people of Brunei, Manila and Tondo had become important trading posts where they exercised political influence. In addition, the Spanish feared what might result should disgruntled nobles in Manila or Tondo seek help from Brunei against the Spanish. In 1572, the Spaniards had actually faced a threat from the Brunei fleet. In this action, the Sultan of Brunei had been encouraged by the Portuguese who were at that time fierce commercial rivals of the Spaniards in the Moluccas. The Bruneians later on even contacted Raja Sulaymān and Lakandula assuring them of support should they revolt against the Spanish.³¹ Brunei records suggest that the Sultan considered the loss of Manila to the Spaniards as a personal setback and had once entertained the idea of recapturing it.³² However, the fear of leaving Brunei unprotected is what probably prevented him from taking this step.

The decision to eliminate the Bruneians as commercial rivals as well as to bring an end to their religious activities in the Philippines was made as early as 1565, the very year the Legazpi expedition arrived. Spanish officials wrote to the

³⁰ Horacio de la Costa, S.J., *The Jesuits in the Philippines: 1581-1768* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1961), p. 301.

³¹ Cf. 'Affairs in the Philippines after Death of Legazpi' in Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, vol. 3, p. 182; *Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 151.

³² See 'History of the Sultans of Bruni: and of their descent from Sultan Abdul Kahar to Sultan Abdul Jelil-ul-Jebar', *JSBRAS*, 5 (1880), pp. 22-3.

Audiencia in New Spain for authorization to enslave Muslims from the Philippines and Borneo:

We beseech his majesty [the Spanish King], and your highness [the Viceroy] in his royal name, that, inasmuch as the said Moros and others take all the gold, pearls, jewels, precious stones and other things of which we have no information – thus injuring the natives, both by giving us no opportunity to plant our holy faith among them, and by taking the said gold, they should, if they continue the said trade, lose their property and be made slaves, for they preach the doctrine of Mahomet.³³

The Spanish monarch's response was that Muslims were not to be enslaved unless they waged war against natives who had become Spanish subjects or continued to preach Islam. However, he ordered the officials by 'kind and lawful methods' to persuade the Muslims to convert to Catholicism.³⁴

The Spanish expedition to Brunei under Governor Francisco de Sande early in 1578 was primarily to capture Brunei with its strategic harbour on the route to the Moluccas and gain control of the whole island of Borneo. Once accomplished, it would be much easier for the Spanish to subjugate the sultanate of Sulu as well as those of Maguindanao and Buayan in Mindanao. Moreover, Brunei's political and religious influence in Luzon would be dealt a fatal blow. A letter of the Spanish Governor to Sultan Sayf al-Rijāl of Brunei was clear:

What you are to do is to admit preachers of the holy gospel, who may preach the law of the Christians in your lands in all security... Further, I desire that you shall send no preachers of the sect of Mahoma to any part of these islands, nor to the heathen among the Tingues [hill people in Mindanao], nor into other parts of your own island – inasmuch as the doctrine of Mahoma is a false and evil law, and the religion of the Christians alone is true, holy, and good.³⁵

Brunei was captured without much difficulty although Sultan Sayf al-Rijāl was able to escape with his father, the aged 'Abd al-Qahhār, to another territory to wage a campaign of guerrilla warfare. In Brunei, the Spanish burned the great Mosque. It was reported to have been five stories high, built of dark hardwood

³³ 'A Letter from Royal Officials', Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, vol. 2, p. 187.

³⁴ Quoted by Melchor de Avalos, 'Dos Cartas' p. 92. Also found in 'Letter from Melchor Davalos to Felipe II', Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, vol. 6, pp. 57-8.

³⁵ 'Expeditions to Borneo, Jolo and Mindanao', Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, vol. 4, pp. 153-4.

and adorned with gold and carvings. It took a whole night to burn.³⁶ Meanwhile, de Sande ordered part of the Spanish fleet to sail to Sulu and Mindanao, whose rulers were likewise told to cease admitting Muslim preachers to their domains while admitting Spanish priests to preach.

While in Brunei, an epidemic broke out among the Spanish. Before the fleet's return to Manila, de Sande announced that he would be returning the next year and expected to receive the submission of the Brunei sultan. He failed to return. The second Spanish expedition to Brunei in 1581, which had among its aims the establishment of a colony in Brunei, in fact accomplished little.

The destruction of the magnificent Brunei mosque was to become a pattern in Spanish attempts to extirpate Islam in Borneo and the Philippines. In one of de Sande's instructions to a captain sent to conquer Mindanao, the latter was ordered to inform the Moros of the burning of the Brunei mosque and to instruct them to stop admitting Bruneian preachers and, instead, to burn their own mosques.

In 1588, the Spanish authorities uncovered a plot, called the Magat Salamat Conspiracy, led by members of the disgruntled Tondo aristocracy, to throw off the colonial yoke. Among the leaders were a son and a nephew of Lakandula as well as other *datus*. They tried to contact the Brunei sultan and some Japanese elements for support and material aid. But the discovery of the plot and the resulting execution of its leaders spelled the end of further attempts to contest Spanish rule in Manila and Tondo.³⁷

The Spanish conquest of the Philippines was a piecemeal affair. However, by 1600 Spanish colonial rule was consolidated by a political and ecclesiastical structure. Manila had become an archdiocese. Tensions with Brunei decreased and a few Bruneian traders occasionally appeared in Manila, but in decreasing numbers. Islam in the Manila Bay area was relegated to memory but would continue to flourish in Sulu and western Mindanao. In spite of intermittent warfare that continued for the next three centuries, the Spanish colonial government in Manila failed to conquer or convert the Moros of the Philippines. By the end of the 19th century, the sultanates of Sulu, Maguindanao and Buayan had survived – but as shadows of their former glory.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 234. See also 'Relation of the Philipinas Islands', Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, vol. 34, pp. 388-9; and John Carroll, 'Francisco de Sande's Invasion of Brunei in 1578: An Anonymous Spanish Account', *Brunei Museum Journal*, 6: 2 (1986), p. 54, for details of the mosque and its destruction.

³⁷ Santiago de Vera et al, 'Conspiracy against the Spaniards, Manila'. Blair and Robertson. *The Philippine Islands*, vol. 7, pp. 95-111.

Summary, Observations and Conclusions

What follows describes the general pattern of Islam's introduction to and spread in the Philippines:

1. Around the last quarter of the 10th century, Sulu and northern Borneo begin to participate more in the local Southeast Asia trade with increasing contacts with China. By the end of the 13th century, if not earlier, there was already a settlement of Muslims in Sulu. Personalities like Tuan Masha'ika and Tuhan Maqbalu belong to this stage. They raise Muslim families and introduce Islamic elements. Their descendants have prestige and some exercise political power.

2. The existence of Muslim settlements in Sulu must have served in spreading Islam among the local inhabitants by intermarriage as well as an increased receptivity to a higher form of culture and civilization. Around the second-half of the 14th century, Muslim preachers, with possible Sufi inclinations, appear in Sulu settlements as part of a missionary movement covering Java and Borneo. This is the stage of the *makhdūmīn* and the *mawlanās*. To this era belongs Karīm al-Makhdūm.

3. Around 1400, with the downfall of Srivijaya, Malay rajas from Sumatra sail to other islands to found principalities. This is the era of Raja Baguinda who, with courtiers, travels widely until deciding on Buansa, Jolo island. The Raja marries a local girl from a *datu* family and ends up as ruler. At this time many Sulu leaders are Muslims – some are known as religious leaders. They are descendants of the Muslims belonging to the first stage.

4. With the spread of Islam, a prestigious *sharīf* marries a daughter of Raja Baguinda and becomes the ruler upon the death of his father-in-law. Sayyid Abū Bakr declares himself sultan in Buansa and takes the title of Sultan Sharif. This event may have taken place around 1450. More Islamic institutions are being implemented. More inhabitants, including those in the interior of Jolo island, begin to adopt Islam.

5. After a few decades, additional Muslim preachers appear in Sulu, Basilan and western Mindanao. Some marry daughters of local chieftains and raise families. Others return. At any rate, there are now Muslims in Mindanao. This is the period of Sharīf Awliyā', Sharīf Ḥasan, and Sharīf Maraja, coinciding with the policy of Manṣūr Shāh (1458-77) of Melaka of sending missionaries to Java, Borneo and other islands.

6. The fall of Melaka in 1511 leads to scions of its ruling family setting sail to other islands to establish principalities. This is the era of Sharīf Muḥammad Kabungsuwan. With mariners from the Strait of Melaka and followers, and after travelling to various islands, he arrives in western Mindanao around 1515 and establishes a principality. By a series of marriage alliances as well as preaching, Kabungsuwan helps spread Islam. All Mindanao sultans and important *datu*s claim descent from him. By the end of the 16th century, mosques and *madrāsas* are to be found in many parts of Mindanao.

7. The rise of Brunei as a commercial and religious power results in the creation of Brunei settlements in Manila and Tondo by the start of the 16th century. Their rulers are closely related to the Brunei sultans. By means of intermarriages as well as other forms of contact with Bruenians, elements of the older Tagalog population start to progressively adopt Islamic beliefs and rituals, including dietary habits. By the second-half of the 16th century, Brunei Muslim preachers are found in islands on the route from Brunei to Manila. Bruneian and Javanese preachers are now accelerating their activities in the Moluccas. Ternatan and Bruneian religious teachers are also found in Mindanao. Meanwhile, dynastic alliances or kinship relations between the Muslim ruling families of Brunei, Sulu, Manila, Tondo and Mindanao as well as with those in the Moluccas start to indicate the consolidation of Muslim power as a force against western intrusion.

8. The Spanish presence in Philippine waters in 1565 serves to block Islam's development in the northern Philippines. In 1571, the Spaniards establish a city in Manila, which becomes their colonial and religious centre. Spanish expeditions against Brunei in 1578 and 1581 and the sure consolidation of their power in the Philippines slowly erode Brunei's commercial and religious relations with Luzon. The attempt of disgruntled nobles from Tondo, with local assistance, to throw off the Spanish colonial yoke with Brunei's help does not materialize. Islam in the Philippines retreats to its fortresses in Sulu and Mindanao. Although in the first few decades of the 17th century, Bruneian and Ternatan aid, in the form of manpower and *matériel*, to the Sulu and Mindanao resistance was extended; such help by the middle of the century had almost stopped.

At present, there are about five million Muslims in the Philippines out of an estimated population of 54 million. They see themselves as a significant element of *dār al-islām*. Islam had transformed their lives by giving them new laws and social institutions. Above all it had offered them a new and pure conception of the Deity coupled with a moral code to order their family and social lives. Islam

is now deeply rooted in their history, traditions and way of life. Many of them view the coming of Islam to the Philippines as a manifestation of Allah's Mercy and Providence. They reflect with admiration and gratitude on the labours of those Muslims of old from 'above the winds' Arabs, Persians, and Indians, who initially introduced the elements of Islam to the lands of the Malays, and on how subsequently the Malays themselves – Sumatrans, Javanese, Borneans, Ternatans and others – bore the torch of Islam. Indeed, in spite of political divisions and geographical barriers, Muslims in the Philippines view the other Muslims of Southeast Asia as partners in a common historical and religious destiny.