

P E K A N R A B U

By

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A HISTORY OF  
THE MALAY TRADING COMMUNITY OF  
ALOR SETAR

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UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA

PULAU PINANG

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PEKAN RABU

A HISTORY OF  
THE MALAY TRADING COMMUNITY OF  
ALOR SETAR

The Foundation

EADZILLAH BIN JAMIL @ MOHD. JAMIL

(HUMANITIES - 3RD YEAR)

PRACTICUM OF HISTORY

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P R E F A C E

The story about the growth of the Malay trading community in this country, has been a subject hardly touched upon. Whereas, one can find reasonable number of reading materials on such subject as Malay magic, superstitions and folk-beliefs, Malay handicrafts and folk-lore. With regard to history, the area of concentration had been mainly politics. Such a development makes one to wonder is that all there is about the Malays. So in this little exercise, as part of my history course (3rd year, Humanities), I have made an attempt to look at the Malays in the historical context, but with a blend of economics and sociology. Nonetheless, I have devoted a small section of this study to the question of politics, which is a part of mankind and cannot wholly be separated from life.

Having set the goal, I had of course to choose one particular locality for my study. For this, I traced the development of Malay trading community in Alor Setar in order to see how it fared, what has been its problems of what category, and Malay sub-groups (Suku), it has originated from, what made these Malays take up business, their attitude towards this profession and the role of government and other related bodies. In addition, I have also assessed its future well-being in the competitive business world.

For the purpose of my study, I have deliberately chosen Pekan Rabu, because it stands out as the most prominent of all Malay business complexes in existence in Alor Setar to date.

To help make my point clear, I have inserted, a few illustrations and tables. As a supplement, particularly on the political background I have also made use of the informations available in such books as "The Origin of Malay Nationalism" and "Government and Politics in Malaysia".

I do not pretend that it is a complete work. As a matter of fact, I have quite a difficult time, trying to collect facts and figures, especially on the early development of Pekan Rabu. This is mainly because, there has been no record or very little indeed has been documented about the trading activities of the Malays. For most part, I had to depend on interviews. Owing to the skeptical nature of the data given, on the capital situation, I have omitted them when dealing with the matter. At times I have to exclude certain information disclosed, if it happens to vary with the views expressed by the majority. For the latter part I have made use of the various primary sources like reports on meetings, financial statements, correspondences and newspapers, as and when, they are available. This has its problems, too. Some of the earlier records (letters and files) have either been lost or spoiled through negligence.

I hope a more detail study of this nature will be made in future.

Penang.  
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