

The Mobility of Bakumpai Ethnics along Barito River in the Perspective of Trade and Spread of Islam (from 15th to 19th Century)

Yusliani Noor

History Education Department
Faculty of Teacher Training and Education
Universitas Lambung Mangkurat
Banjarmasin, Indonesia

Abstract—Bakumpai ethnic was the ethnic inhabiting the area of Muara Bahan which was located on the riverside of Barito River. Bakumpai ethnic was the first ethnic who embraces the arrival of Islam in the fifteenth century. Its geographically strategic position was the reason why Muara Bahan had become a trading post that was frequently visited by Muslim traders. The embracing of Islam from Bakumpai ethnic was indicated by the appearance of Raden Sira Panji Kesuma who accepted Islam along with the arrival of Sunan Giri and Sunan Bonang in Muara Bahan. The trading post of Muara Bahan as the center of Negara Daha had given an enormous impact towards the spreading of Islam in the trading post area and had also shaped the character of Bakumpai tribe both as the guardian and as the propagator of Islam. The dynamics of the Bakumpai ethnic's trading networks had expanded vastly to the other river flow areas such as Margasari River, Negara River, Amuntai River, and Tabalong River. The trading interactions in those estuaries had built good relationships between Bakumpai ethnic and several other ethnics such as Bukit ethnic, Maanyan ethnic, and Lawangan ethnic, including the Ngaju ethnic. The process of interactions, relationships, and trading networks had caused a consent and dissemination of Islam towards the other Dayak ethnics.

Keywords— *mobility, Bakumpai, Islam religion*

I. INTRODUCTION

Networking through the rivers in Kalimantan (Borneo) such as in Barito River had been found since the years of Negara Dipa Kingdom, Amuntai in the 12th century. The Muara Rampiau and Muara Hulak trade ports had been visited by traders from various countries, such as China, Malay, Johor, Aceh, Melaka, Minangkabau, Patani, Mangkasar, Bugis, Bali, Java, Bentan, Palembang, Jambi, Tuban, Madura, Walanda, Makkau, as well as people from Keling [1][2]. However, as time and geomorphology changed, the trading activity in both trade ports was declined. Both were replaced by Muara Bahan trade port in Rantauan Bakumpai. The development of Muara Bahan grew along with the progress of Islamic trade in *Nusantara* or contemporary Indonesian term for the Indonesian archipelago in the 15th century [3]. The movement of the trade center from Bandar Muara Rampiau to Muara Bahan exemplified how strategic Barito River was.

Throughout the commercial period of Hindu-Buddhist kingdom from the 8th to 15th century, Barito River and other rivers in the area of Hulu Sungai had been visited by traders from outside South Kalimantan and Central Kalimantan. Based on the story of *Hikayat Banjar* or The Tale of Banjar, the trade port in Muara Bahan had been a busy trade port that had been visited by traders from various nations.

Due to the rapid progress of Islamic trade in the Indonesian archipelago, Muara Bahan had become an inseparable part of the shipping line of Muslim or people who embrace Islam traders from Java, Sumatera, Johor, Gujarat (India), and China. The rapid growth of the Muara Bahan cannot be separated from the interaction made by Bakumpai ethnic with Muslim traders who came from foreign lands. Even further, Bakumpai ethnic also traded with other ethnic communities, especially with Malay, Java, and Bugis. They also traded with other Dayak ethnics such as the Maanyan, Biaju (Ngaju), Bukit, and Lawangan ethnic. The attention of this paper is put on how the mobility of Bakumpai ethnic in Barito River affected other Dayak ethnics in accepting the arrival of Islam. Dayak ethnic, who had to hold Kaharingan belief with some embracing Hindu and Buddha, later hold Islam as their religion and became Dayak Islam.

The dynamic mobility of the Bakumpai community trade should thank to the bravery of the Bakumpai traders who rowed their deep down to the Hulu Sungai area. The growing intensity of other Dayak communities in welcoming the traders from Bakumpai had a big influence in the changing of belief in the other Dayak counterparts such as Dayak Maanyan, Bukit, and Lawangan. The most vivid change was marked by the emergence of settlements of Dayak Islam in almost every part of the riverbanks from Hulu Sungai to Tabalong Kiwa and Tabalong Kanan.

II. METHOD

This research used qualitative research methods to gain a deeply understanding of the Bakumpai Ethnic along Barito River. This qualitative research used deeply, long and open interviews for informant. Such a way, allowed researchers to

provide broad opportunities for informants to express their views according to the perspectives they believe in.

III. RESULT

A. *Rantauan Bakumpai: The beginning of Islam in Central and South Kalimantan*

The Rantauan Bakumpai is a settlement that is located on the banks of Bahan River to the Kuripan area. The estuary of the Bahan River is directly connected to the Barito River. The city of Muara Bahan, now it is called as Marabahan, is located on the banks of Barito River. This place is very strategic as it connects Muara Banjar to Hulu Barito and Hulu Sungai area. The community inhabiting the Rantauan Bakumpai is Ngaju or Biaju. Moreover, according to the news from Ming Dynasty (1368-1643), book 323, it was explained that Be-oa-jiu was a major tribe in Dayak [4].

The most meritorious person in developing the trade port of Muara Bahan was the king of Negara Daha, Raden Sekar Sungsang. He appointed his son, Raden Sira Panji Kesuma as *Syahbandar* or harbour master in Muara Bahan. The description of Bakumpai was reported by Schwaner in his trip in Marabahan as part of a series of voyages along the Barito River between 1845 and 1847 [5].

Most Biaju or Ngaju people resided on the edges on the banks of major rivers. Among these, the Ngaju-Biaju ethnic lived near Kapuas River, Kahayan River, Barito River, and Bahan River. The support given by Muara Bahan community, who had been familiar with living on the banks of major rivers, played a great role in the development of the Muara Bahan. The development of Muara Bahan, that of Bakumpai ethnic and that of other Dayak ethnics were portrayed as a *Kota Perahu* or The City of Boats [5].

The dynamic life of the people in Muara Bahan in the 19th century could explain the phenomenon of Muara Bahan trade port in the early 17th century that had portrayed the interaction of its women with the Chinese trade ships. Based on the Chinese news of *Dong Xi Yang Kao* (1618), Book IV, vol.20, it was written that the women from the settlement used a small boat to get closer to the anchored ships to sell food. However, the trades, in general, were done by the men. Additionally, the currency used back then was the coin made of black lead [4]. The development of trading in Muara Bahan was also mentioned in *Hikayat Banjar* [1].

The Dayak Bakumpai was a community that was ready to accept changes, and this could be seen from how the community welcomed two *Sunans* or cleric who spread the teaching of Islam from Java, Sunan Giri and Sunan Bonang. The arrival of Sunan Giri to Muara Bahan was written in *Riwayat Sunan Giri* or The Tale of Sunan Giri [6] [7] [8]. The trades made by Sunan Giri or Raden Paku and Sunan Bonang or Makhdom Ibrahim in Muara Bahan were spread Islam. They spread the teaching of Islam by providing loans and goods from Java to the local traders, mostly from Dayak Biaju-Ngaju, who had financial problems. Thus, the community welcomed the Sunan Giri and Sunan Bonang to spread Islam in Muara Bahan.

B. *The Mobility of Bakumpai Traders and the Spread of Islam along the Barito River (Hulu Barito and Hulu Sungai)*

The pattern of river trading in the 16th century, especially from the headstream community of Hulu Sungai and Hulu Barito with the traders of Muara Bahan trade port, was by barter trade. The traders brought along a variety of goods such as Javanese tamarind, salt, shrimp paste, rough textile, porcelain, and many more. The residents from the deep of Barito Rivers bought the goods by bartering them with other items such as gold, diamond, resin, honey, candle, rake wood, and gum. In fact, based on the news from Ming Dynasty (1368-1643 AD) mentioned that people of Baiju Ngaiju had much gold dust [4]. The exchange of goods with gold dust attracted the foreign traders to trade with the local traders.

In the middle of 16th century, Khatib Banun, a figure from Bakumpai, appeared. He was the father in law of Sultan Hidayatullah who led the Banjarmasin Empire from 1570 to 1595. Khatib Banun, who was titled as *Kyai* or Leader of Islamic boarding school in Podok was assumed to be the member of a foreign merchant who had been given a chance to study the Qur'an in Pesantren Demak [9]. The title *khatib* in the name of this Bakumpai figure showed the importance of his position in the spreading of Islam along the Barito River. In fact, Khatib Banun was the religious advisor of Sultan Hidayatullah (1570-1595). Thus, he was an important figure in the spreading of Islam from Kuala Banjar to Hulu Barito and Hulu Sungai in the quarter of 16th century.

Based on the local literature such as *Hikayat Banjar, Tujur Candi, Hikayat Lembu Mangkurat, and Cerita Datu Bakumpai*, the phenomenon of accepting Islam by Bakumpai community has been there since the 15th century. They, then, took part in the network of Muslim traders of Bakumpai and spread Islam from the headstream of Barito River up to Dusun Hulu, continued from Muara Bahan, South Barito, to the banks of the Kapuas River, Dadahup, Katingan, to Buntok (Dusun) Pasar Lama, to the Penda Asam, Pendang, Muara Tewe, Muara Tuhup, and Tuhup [10].

The success of Islamization by the Bakumpai was fantastic at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. Helius Sjamsuddin mentioned that almost every year from the 1870s, Colonial of Verslag reported an increasing number of Dayak people who embraced Islam compared to evangelization by the Rheinische Missionsgesellschaft, that was deemed "underdeveloped" or "not much of a progress", or "unimportant" or "small" [5]. Weber believes that there was a historical fact of the role of Bakumpai community, Islam, and trades. He believes that among ideas, religious doctrines, and the imperative of material necessity does a meeting occur. They discover and strengthen each other [11].

One of the examples of trading done by a Bakumpai person came from a person named Wangkang. Wangkang, 1859, from Bakumpai, was a merchant who did his job in Barito, Tanah Dusun [12]. Based on Dutch sources, including the reports from Verspijck, the phenomenon explains that in the 19th century, an Islamic community was established. The powers of Dayak Islam influenced the struggle of Prince

Antasari. This was an important point that explained the strong and long-lasting spread of Islam throughout the headstream of Barito River, including Puruk Cahu. The trade done by people of Dayak Bakumpai, who were still related with Dayak Biaju-Ngaju, became the undeniable power of history, notably in its role in Islamization along the Barito River, and the branching of its tributaries.

From Muara Bahan Bakumpai, the goods that had been commonly found in trade since the 14th and 15th centuries were increasingly easy to obtain. Along with the rising value of commodities of forest products and pepper plantations, people began to recognize the Chinese Pichin currency. As a result, the process of incoming goods from the upstream of the Barito River to the trade port of Bandar Masih was growing to be more dynamic. The similar phenomenon also occurred from Bandar Masih, Muara Bahan, Margasari, and Muara Hulak, in Batang Negara. These areas were inhabited by Maanyan community. The change in the religiosity of this region was marked by the presence of Islamic leaders such as Haji Sahabuddin and Haji Muhammad Taher, Negara. The *Cerita Rakyat Daerah Kalimantan Selatan* or The Folklore of South Kalimantan explained that there had been Islamic traders from Negara who underwent a *Haj* or Islamic Pilgrime done in Mecca in the early 18th century, namely Haji Sahabuddin and Haji Muhammad Taher [13].

Based on the *Cerita Rakyat di Hulu Sungai Utara* or Folklore in Hulu Sungai Utara, from the Negara area to Alabio and Banar River (Alabio) in South Amuntai, there were come a group from Demak led by Malik Ibrahim. Previously, Malik Ibrahim had built a mosque in Palajau through the Palayarum River in the 16th century [14][15]. From Amuntai to Batang Alai, Batang Balangan and Batang Tabalong, the activity in the port station of Murung Pudak had been shown by the Maanyan ethnic accepting basic commodities. In this trading network, through Batang Balangan to Batang Tabalong, they got supplies from Bakumpai traders at the mouth of the river. In Batang Balangan, early in the 17th century, there had been a great Muslim scholar who was assumed coming from the ethnic of Bukit named Datu Kandang Haji. His real name was Surya Sakti Mangku Alam, and his Islamic name was Tuan Guru Haji Zainal Abidin [15].

According to Helius Syamsuddin, Bakumpai people played a major role in the Islamization of Banjarmasin (South Kalimantan, Central Kalimantan, and parts of East Kalimantan). They became intermediary traders between merchants from Banjar estuary who came to Muara Bahan's trade port and the merchants from the Hulu Barito and Hulu Sungai [5]. Islam in South Kalimantan formed the community of Banjar Pahuluan, Banjar Batang Banyu and Banjar Kuala [16].

IV. CONCLUSION

Besides trading, Dayak people of Bakumpai participated in building villages on the edge along the Barito River. While

spreading Islam, they mingled through marriage and friendship with other Dayak communities along the Barito River area. Dayak Bakumpai also helped build agriculture and plantation by, as the local community called, *bahuma* rice fields (building rice fields), looking for river fish, cutting wood, and other activities. They became an important part of building Islamic collectivity. They were very flexible in interacting with other Dayak tribes. This showed that Dayak Bakumpai really understood the religious tolerance. Therefore, Islam in South Kalimantan and Central Kalimantan is now very familiar with the Islamic concept of *Rahmatan Lil 'alamin* or Islam that is full of love for the universe as the Bakumpai traders introduced Islam with their idea of *bil-hikmah wabil-maujatil hasanah* or using wisdom and putting good ways above all.

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