

CHAPTER II

DESCRIPTION OF GENERAL CONDITION IN THREE PROVINCES SOUTHERN OF THAILAND

The three provinces southern of Thailand including Yala, Patani, and Narathiwat are located at the southernmost or deep south of Thailand country. Three provinces in southern of Thailand have a total area of 6.79 million hectares, or 10,936 square kilometers, and population of about 1.78 million.¹ These areas are special areas under the Notification of Government and there are diverse aspects in the areas including races, religions, languages, traditions and cultures. Most people in the areas are Thai Muslim. They are using Malayu Language to make communication. The area is Islamic society using Malayu-muslim culture. It makes their lifestyle is unique and looks different from Buddhist society including daily life and carries on an occupation.

A. The Political History of Pattani Kingdom

The social conflict in three provinces southern of Thailand is mostly related to history of Patani Kingdom or Patani darusslam and Tanah Melayu (Melayu land). Malaya is a peninsula which stretches southward from and is situated at the southeastern part of the continent of Asia, possessing an extensive

¹ Yongjaiyut. 2004. *Hetkarn Samjangwad Chaidantay* (A case on three southern border provinces). SBPAC.Yala. (Access on 12-10-16)

area. It stretches from the Kra Isthmus to the top of Malaya, including Singapura to the south. In the north this peninsula joins Siam which is located between two kingdoms, on its left the kingdom of Burma and on its right the kingdom of Annam which is called French Indochina. The kingdom of Siam, Annam and Burma are located in large peninsular, the peninsula of Indochina.

The peninsula of Malaya has two parts, the northern part and the southern part. Its northern part begins at the Kra Isthmus and reaches to the provinces of Setul, Singgora, Yala, and Benggera. Currently the people of these provinces are included among the subject of the kingdom of Siam or Thailand. A large number of the inhabitants of the northern part of this peninsula are Siam-Thai, but in the six provinces of Setul, Cenak, Tiba, Patani, Yala, and Benggenara the majority are Malays. The southern part of this peninsula begins at the border of the Siam-Thai provinces previously mentioned down to the tip of the Malay Peninsula, including the island of Singapura. In this part, several Malay kingdome exist today: Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan, Terengganu, Perak, Pahang, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, Johor, Melaka, Pulau Pinang, and Singapura. Although this peninsula has been called Malaya, the Malays were not the original people to inhabit it.

The Malays were the last people to settle and reside in the peninsula after it had first been inhabited by several other peoples. The first people to inhabit the peninsula of Malaya, according to information in history books, were people of a

primitive type. Later it was settled by Hindus who came from India, after which is ruled by the Siam-Asli who came from Siam. Only later did the Malays arrive.²

The main causes of social conflict in three provinces southern of Thailand problem are a complex mix of history, ethnicity, and religion, fueled by socio-economic disparities, poor governance, and political grievances. The three provinces southern of Thailand are wracked by violence, Yala, Narathiwat, and Pattani, originally formed part of an independent entity called the Pattani Kingdom or Pattani Darussalam which was slowly subsumed by the Thai state (then called Siam) from the late 18th century onwards.

Thai-Muslims of Malay descent have settled in the Malay Peninsula for several hundred years. Records about “Khaek Malayu” can be traced back to the Ayutthaya period, where trade relations with Muslims had been established and some Muslims also served as state officials overseeing foreign trade. At that time, areas which are presently Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat were part of the Pattani State which was under control of the Siamese Kingdom of Ayutthaya. Siam did not send its own people to rule Pattani but required the state to pay tribute to it three times a year. Muslims were then perceived as foreigners who could govern themselves. These people, however, periodically staged a war for full independence from Siam and Malaysia which took turn occupying the Pattani

² “History of Malay kingdom of Patani” By Ibrohim Syukri (Assess on 18-10-2016)

State. In every battle, Muslims were taken captive and taken to different regions of the country where they had resettled until these days.

It was in the Rattanakosin era that Siam appointed its officials to govern different provinces, including the Pattani State. Pattani became less autonomous after the administration restructuring in the reign of King Rama V. The state had been divided and part of it became Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat provinces.

After the signing of Anglo-Siamese treaties in 1902 and 1909 resulted in the formal incorporation of the three provinces into Thailand, while the rest of the Pattani Kingdom became part of British Malaya. Patani was no longer a Malay Kingdom, but merely a number of Malay provinces under the Thai subjugation. The majority of the populations of Thailand's three newest provinces were Malay-Muslims: ethnic Malays who spoke Malayu and adhered to Islam.

Beginning in the 1920s the Thai government initiated a policy of forced assimilation with the aim of turning these Malay-Muslims into Thai-Muslims. In reaction, an armed separatist movement emerged in the early 1960s that campaigned for a separate homeland for Malay-Muslims. By the late 1980s, however, the Thai authorities had essentially defeated the separatist insurgency in the south through a combination of improved governance, economic development projects, blanket amnesties for the insurgents, and stepped-up security cooperation with neighboring Malaysia.

In 2000, however, separatist sentiment had reemerged in the south. Many of the causes were the same as before. Malay-Muslims felt politically

marginalized by Bangkok, and perceived that their ethnic, cultural, and religious identity were under threat from the predominantly Buddhist Thai state. The population felt deprived of the socio-economic and educational opportunities afforded to other parts of the country.

Yala, Narathiwat, and Pattani are among some of the poorest provinces in Thailand, with high numbers of unemployed, young Muslim males. Educational standards are low, which means that few Malay-Muslims can pass the entrance exams for government positions, including the local police. These positions are invariably taken by Thais from outside the region who do not speak the local language nor understand the cultural mores. This breeds frustration and resentment among the local population. The police have a particularly poor record of community policing in the south, and are widely perceived as corrupt, incompetent, and able to abuse their authority with impunity.³

B. The Structure of Socio-Culture in Three Provinces Southern Thailand

There are five million Muslims in Thai society with approximately 3 million live in three provinces southern of Thailand. The language used for communication is Bahasa Malayu. They try to preserve their identity as the people of the Malay race. Whoever you are young children, adolescents, workers or

³ "The Dynamics of Conflict in Southern Thailand"
http://dspace.mah.se/bitstream/handle/2043/18170/ASEP_a_00303-Andersson_proof1.pdf;jsessionid=2D24F1BA28C1CCE26DA43D80E282FE92?sequence=2 (Access on 13-11-16)

elderly people both in urban and rural areas still adhere to their religion and culture. Currently there are a few hundred mosques in these three provinces southern Thailand, which indicate that the Muslims in the region are serious practitioners of Islam. They also have 1,343 Tadikas, (Islamic school) which stands for “Taman didikkan kanak kanak”, an informal institution. There are 249 Islamic traditional Learning called Pondok, the “residential institution”. In addition, there are well over 800 schools, private and public, teaching Islamic studies.

The people in three provinces southern Thailand are practicing Islamic and Malay traditions customs in special events such as birth, marriage and death. Majority of Muslim women wear Hijab and Baju Kurung while men have Nyagu and wear Talo Blago or Tob and Kapiyoh. Some adolescents may feel embarrassed to wear the complete traditional dress because of its formality. This dress serves as a symbol of recognition that the person is Orae Nayu (Malayu citizen). Kecek Nayu (speak Malayu) is another example which identifies simply that a person comes from this region.⁴

⁴ “The social structure and culture of the deep south”
<https://kyotoreview.org/issue-7/from-adek-to-moji-identities-of-southern-thai-people-and-social-realities/> (Access on 15-11-16)

C. The Economic Structure of Three Provinces Southern Thailand

Since the old time, people in three provinces southern of Thailand have made a living by growing rubber, rice, fruits as well as fishing they have worked in the mines or traded with Malaysia, sold rubber and fresh fruits to that country and brought in tea, milk and coffee.⁵

Today, the economic structure of this region is basically agricultural There are a few factories related to seafood processing, owners rubber of plantations or rubber tappers if they do not have their own land. Some others grow rice and some are fishermen. Mining, however, has fallen into a decline as mineral sources have depleted. Fruit planting is also another major occupation of Muslims. In some urban bordering towns, like Betong in Yala and Su-ngai Kolok Districts in Narathiwat, tourism is one of the main income generating activities due to the popularity of the places among a great number of Malaysians and Singaporeans. As the statistics from NESDB in 2001 show agriculture accounts for 47.1 %, Manufacturing 6.9 %, trade 14.6 %, services 10.3 %, banking 1.6 %, and others 19.5 % of the production structure.⁶

However, it is reported that there are various kinds of so-called ‘shadow’ economies, for example, the cross-border smuggling of goods from Malaysia,

⁵ “Economic social and cultural aspects”

<http://www.fpps.or.th/news.php?detail=n1149480173.news> (Access on 15-11-16)

⁶ “Economic structure in three provinces southern of Thailand” by UNDP, 2005, (Access on 12-11-16)

illegal petroleum trade, drug trade, gambling and prostitution. Therefore, there are different kinds of organized crime groups working in this region. It is also reported that the “influential people” in this region are directly or indirectly backed up by either the high-ranking officials, civil, police as well as military or by the politicians, local and national.