

From Stranded Praos 'up to' People Trailed by the Sea Stream: A Study about the Maritime Oral Tradition as a Source in the Writing about the Migration History in the Region of the Sawu Sea in the Lesser Sunda Islands

Didik Pradjoko
Department of History, Faculty of Humanities,
University of Indonesia

Abstract

This research is about the migration history in the Sawu Sea Area, the Lesser Sunda Islands which made use of the oral tradition as its main source. For this purpose, this research can also be looked upon as a research in the maritime history which source is based on non-written sources. One can say that this topic has been much felt as not much important in the research on indigenous studies in particular in the areas outside Java so far. For this reason, this research is an effort to go beyond the conventional habit which is so far has been based on written sources (documents). In line with the applying of the oral tradition created a new genre the nonconventional historical genre which put the stress on the 'mentality' of the people (society) which it studies. Although it is concerned with the local environment, this study also contributes to the national Indonesian history which it is hoped could strengthen the national integrity.

The topic which has been studied is related to the process of migration and integration is a plural society in Sawu Sea area. The interaction between the society (people) and the people who came to this area from several areas of the islands of archipelago or nowadays Indonesia for sure have created social, economic, and cultural problems. These mentioned problems could be noticed in the oral tradition which is to be found everywhere in the area, from several oral stories which could be found everywhere in the area, one could know that the Sawu Sea area has developed into an area of the traffic and commerce, locally and regionally since hundred years ago. Methodological the oral sources played an important role as a source in written social history which has not developed and spread out its written culture.

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Corresponding author:
didik.prajoko@ui.ac.id

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Introduction

In his well-known study, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*,¹ Fernand Braudel studied the close relations between the waters and human activities in the Mediterranean Sea in the past. The study revealed that the sea and the coastal areas are the "heart" of civilization of the region which had united the regions in North Africa, Andalusia, Italy, Turkey, Balkan coast, Egypt, Greece up to the coast of West Asia. The integration of these different regions was not merely determined by their territorial waters physically but also by the mobility of the people in the area who utilized

¹Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, vol. 1, fourth edition (New York: Fontana /Collins, Harper & Row, 1981).

sea as their transportation and trading lane. Mediterranean region is an area which has a network of land, sea, coast and river, whether formed naturally or man-made which makes it possible for people to move and sail from one place to another

Based on the perspective, this planned research directs its attention on similar activities in the region of Sawu Sea, East Nusa Tenggara. The aspect to be studied is the migration process of the immigrants in the region and how they interact with the indigenous people to achieve integration. In other words, this research is the study of the migration focusing on territorial waters in the Eastern region of Indonesia. Thus, the research unavoidably deals with the discussion on maritime culture among the local communities. Concurring with the opinion of Indonesian maritime historian Adrian B. Lopian,² Indonesian history will be completely understood using the maritime approach which not only discussed the history of island respectively but also the waters among others; not only on the land issue but also the water that surrounds it.

According to the sea system, the Sawu Sea region consists of some large islands namely Timor, Alor, Sumba, Flores and other small islands namely Roti, Sawu, Raijua, Solor, Alor, Pantar, Lomblen, Komodo Rinca, and others. The seasonal wind system which blows consistently helps ships to sail the archipelago of the eastern part of Nusa Tenggara or from or to the outer area of the archipelago. On June, July and August the southeast wind pushes ships to sail towards the east and northern area towards the archipelago of Maluku, south Sulawesi or along Timor straight to Tanimbar. Sawu Sea is part of a large sea basin which connected the southern part of Flores, Sumba, Sawu, the southern part of Roti, Solor and the southern and western part of Timor. This condition makes the territorial waters generally very calm and safe to pass, thus making some areas such as Western Timor with Kupang port, North Sumba and Waingapu became a safe port for ships.³

With such background, it is understandable that the position of Sawu Sea is very strategic for shipping and commerce. For centuries the activities had taken place involving various tribes in the archipelago and other foreign nations thus creating the process of migration in a number of scale groups. Although it is difficult to determine migration prior to the colonial periods due to lack of data, sources of oral tradition from different tribes revealed the arrival of the migrants. The story of origin/asal usul (*Tutu usu maring asa*), for example recounted the *tena mau* tribe or (migrants from the eastern region) whose ships were stranded in East Flores coast. These stranded people originated from Seram Island and Lembata Island which are believed to be the ancestors from Flores. Besides that, there was a story on the arrival of "Sina Jawa" people who are said to originate from Java, Sumatra and Malay.

From the temporary study, it is discovered that there are many oral traditions in the Sawu Sea area which depict the unification process of the local community and culture. As aforementioned, the oral story recounted the origin of the ancestors which originated from the region around East Nusa Tenggara archipelago or from farther areas such as Maluku, South and Southeast Sulawesi, Majapahit Kingdom, Tanah Melayu peninsula and others. The arrival of the Chinese also enriched the oral story. As a collective recorded memory, the oral stories had an essential role as a bond to the variety of the elements in the Sawu Sea community. Amidst the scarcity of written documents, oral stories become the main source of the history of the people especially with regard to migration.

²Adrian B. Lopian, "Orang Laut-Bajak Laut-Raja laut: Sejarah Kawasan Laut Sulawesi Abad ke XIX" (Disertasi pada Program Studi S3 Ilmu-Ilmu Humaniora Program Pascasarjana Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, 1987).

³I Gde Parimartha, *Perdagangan dan Politik di Nusa Tenggara 1815-1915* (Jakarta: Djambatan-KITLV, 2002).

The importance of this research lies in the efforts of investigating the integrative factors of the people. It will be revealed, that the integration process of Indonesian people had actually been going on in the local levels as occurred in the migration in the Sawu Sea. The integration process went on for a long period of time, passing numerous obstacles, but in the end, forms a unity. In the perspective of Indonesia, it is shown that integration is a process of bringing together elements which were originally diverse and separated to be one complete unity, in this case manifesting a nation. Thus, from the research of the small area of Sawu Sea, it can be learned how one element of the nation embryo was formed through a long historical process.

Problems

In terms of sociological-historical aspect, the people who lived in the archipelago, in this case around Sawu Sea had long been interacting by means of media which they control, namely shipping and commerce. The story that was popular among this type of people was generally about the process of traveling and migration of people who were driven by social-economic factors and geographical factor itself. It was commonly heard of stories about stranded ships full of people and goods or a wanderer who stopped for a while and about preachers who stayed and made their destinations as the centre of his activities. These kinds of stories, as reflected in their oral tradition stories are part of the history which have been remembered collectively by the local community of the area.

In this relation, it is essential to study in details the concrete problems arising from the interactions between the indigenous people and the immigrants in the Sawu Sea area who had different social and cultural backgrounds. The migration movements of the people here are not seen in the formal context such as the transmigration at present, but through the spontaneous movements which were driven by natural and historical factors. Oftentimes, this migration movements were not planned well which in the end caused various problems in the "field".⁴ The main question is how the process occurred that made it possible for various elements of humans who interacted could withstand, adapt to one another and in the end integrated as they are now. Some of the questions that are going to be raised are: 1. What were the factors that cause the migration process of ethnic groups based on oral stories? 2. How were the processes of cultural interactions between the migrants with the indigenous people or other migrants? 3. How were the adaptation and integration strategies of the immigrants and the other migrants?

Methodological Problems

It has been mentioned that the important problem in historiography on community who do not or has not developed the writing culture is the lack of written resources produced by the people themselves. This scarcity, in the end complicates historical research. To overcome this problem, other means are taken, namely by utilizing oral sources circulating in the community concerned. The writing of the history of Sikka Kingdom in Central Flores carried out by E. Douglas Lewis in *The Strangers-Kingdom of Sikka*,⁵ for instance, recounted the oral tradition in Sikka which were then transcribed by two culturalists of Sikka since 1920s up to 1950s. Besides that, the research on the political dynamics of the

⁴Susanto Zuhdi and Didik Prajoko, et.al., "Diaspora Orang Buton Sebagai Faktor Integrasi Bangsa" (Laporan Penelitian Hibah Riset Strategis Nasional-DRPM UI-DIKTI, 2009).

⁵E. Douglas Lewis, *The Stranger-kings of Sikka, with an Integrated Edition of Two Manuscripts on the Origin and History of Rajadom of Sikka by Dominicus Dionitus Pareira Kondi and Alexius Boer Pareira* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2010).

Larantuka Kingdom in Flores during the 19th century through the 20th century also used many ethnographical resources, especially those that were originated from the writings of the missionaries (imam or pastor) Catholic. Many of these ethnographical works were made by the priests from the *Societas Verbi Divini ordo* (SVD) or *Sarekat Sabda Allah*.⁶ These writings are precious contributions to reconstruct the local history.⁷ The usage of auxiliary science of anthropology (ethnology) in historical researches are also supported by Dutch historian J. Huizinga who stated that history needs auxiliary sciences such as theology, languages, economics, sociology and also *volkenkunde* or ethnology⁸ to fill the background.

The contributions of data and methodology method which are useful for the writing of history had been described by Koentjaraningrat. The methods which explained the method of assimilation among others are foreign elements in cultural contact and study on mythology. With regard to the research on mixed community which was formed in Larantuka East Flores that is *Tupasi* people or black Portuguese, it is interesting to trace the origin and their dynamics related with the process of adaptation and assimilation of foreign cultural elements with the indigenous people and culture in East Timor. By noticing the problems of why the elements of foreign culture (Portuguese) were easily assimilated into the local culture of the indigenous people of East Flores (*Ata Kiwan* people) is interesting to be observed. In this process, assimilation occurred among different groups of community and individuals.⁹

Besides that, it is also necessary to pay attention to the form of organization and the world view of the part of community group. Some of the methods that were raised by Koentjaraningrat on anthropological approach in the research in history among others are the method of pedigree which is an interview explaining the origin of a number of individuals in the society. In the beginning, the approach was to know the kinship pattern of the people, but oftentimes, respondent also gave information about their descendants and the events experienced by their ancestors. Among the many methods in anthropology, the ethnography method has produced a lot of books and articles on numerous ethnic groups in Indonesia. The writings had been compiled by The ministry of Colonial Matters in the *Netherlands in Repertorium op de literatuur betreffende de Nederlandsce kolonien* which contains writings between 1595-1932.¹⁰ For the Flores and the surroundings islands the ethnographic writing had been produced by Catholics pastors who were assigned in the area. Since 1900s the ethnographical writings became part of the activities of the Catholic mission especially from the ordo of *Societas Verbi Divini* (SVD).

It is necessary to explain that the sources of historical writings in the Nusa Tenggara Timur region besides relying on the written documents from the Portuguese since the 1510s and the Dutch since 1610s, they also depend on the ethnographical researches

⁶SVD as an order in catholic church in the beginning was developed in The Netherlands in 1875. Established by Pastor Arnold Janssen from Germany in 1909 with the members of 470 priests and 700 religious brothers, this order is very active in publishing books and magazines. Since 1919, the SVD order started to work to Timor and Flores. This organization believes that the spread of Catholic must be supported by knowledge of the language and culture of the local communities by carrying out anthropological research like what had been done by Pastor Paul Arndt, J. Verheijen and Bernard Vorklage. See Karel Steenbrink, *Orang-Orang Katolik di Indonesia 1808-1942: Sebuah Profil Sejarah Pertumbuhan yang Spektakuler dari Sebuah Minoritas yang Percaya Diri 1903-1942*, Jilid 2 (Maumere: Ledalero, 2006), p. 242-249, 878-881.

⁷Koentjaraningrat, "Penggunaan Metode-Metode Antropologi dalam Historiografi Indonesia," in Soedjatmoko, dkk., ed. *Historiografi Indonesia: Sebuah Pengantar* (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 1995), p. 270.

⁸Koentjaraningrat, "Penggunaan Metode-Metode Antropologi", p. 277.

⁵Koentjaraningrat, "Penggunaan Metode-Metode Antropologi", p. 266-267.

¹⁰Koentjaraningrat, "Penggunaan Metode-Metode Antropologi", p. 266-267.

which had been produced since the end of the 19th century, including the use of oral traditional source by the researchers or ethnographers.

Thus, the research on ethnical history needs to be described here to clarify the framework of thought and the method of research which needs to be carried out. Ethnic historical researchers combine their historical sources with ethnographical field work of the community whose past is being reconstructed. The purpose is to create a whole history which also takes into account the social system and the cultural values of the tribes. Besides that, Ethnic history tries to see the historical events from the view point of the indigenous people and not from the point of view of the European rulers. Although documents sources from colonial workers were also used but ethnical history is more interested in the influence of colonial policies and their practices rather than exploring the reasons behind the policies. Ethnical history writings usually range on local history and disregard big events in colonial history but more to problems around power and local community.¹¹

The writing on the immigration history in the Sawu Sea can be attained through archives study, bibliography and local oral traditional sources which were explored in the National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia, Jakarta and Regional or local archives offices. The bibliography sources were attained through oral tradition as a source of history.

The research on the important meaning of oral tradition as a source of local historical writing is an effort to provide a place for the diversity of historical sources. All this time, the writing of history does not pay much attention to the aspect of oral tradition as a source of history. The meaning of oral tradition according to the formula of UNESCO is a tradition which is transmitted through space and time with a statement and action.¹² In the formulation, oral tradition covers oral literature, traditional technology, folk knowledge outside the palace and city, religious aspect and folk belief outside the palace and city center.

Thus, oral tradition is a discourse which is communicated orally following the custom which has formed a pattern in a community. Usually, the story is communicated orally through genealogical explanation, myth, legend fairy tale and heroic stories. The oral tradition covers the aspect of literature and culture which encompasses genealogical, cosmological, historical, philosophical and science. According to James Dananjaya, the meaning of folklore is a group of people who have physical identity, social and culture features, thus make it possible to be distinguished from other groups. The most important folk is the community which has a tradition which are passed on from one generation to another which are acknowledged as general possession and are aware of its own group identity¹³ Whereas, lore is a folk tradition that is part of the culture which is inherited orally from generation to generation or through an example followed by signal movement or memory tools. The other features of folklores among others are that the dissemination and inheritance are done orally, they have usefulness in its collective life and they are pre-logic. Related to the relation of study of oral tradition and history, James Danajaya referred to Sutarto dissertation on Tenggerese traditional community as a better study compared

¹¹Bernard S. Cohn, "Sejarah Etnis" in Taufik Abdullah and Abdurrachman Surjomihardjo, ed., *Ilmu Sejarah dan Historiografi: Arah dan Perspektif* (Jakarta: YIIS-Leknas LIPI, Gramedia, 1985), p. 229-232.

¹²Trisna Kumala Satya Dewi, "Penggalian 'Tradisi Lisan' sebagai Sumber Penulisan Sejarah Lokal" (Laporan Penelitian Lembaga Penelitian Universitas Airlangga, DIKTI-Depdikbud, 1997), p. 4.

¹³Opinion of Alan Dundes, quoted by James Danandjaja, "Pendekatan Foklor dalam Penelitian Bahan-Bahan Tradisi Lisan, in Pudentia, ed., *Metodologi Tradisi Lisan* (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor, 1998), p. 53-54.

to other studies on oral tradition as it has the historical-geographical, morphological and ethnographic approach.¹⁴

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The close relationship between oral tradition and historical research has been studied by Jan Vansina, a researcher in maritime history, in his book *Oral Tradition: A Study in Historical Methodology*. According to him, oral tradition is a source of history which has a special form namely that the facts are acquired in the non-written form. This stirs up problems among historians who questioned whether this kind of source is valid. In the community which has not recognized the written culture, oral tradition becomes the main part that can be used to reconstruct the past. This also goes with the community who has recognized written sources. Their historical sources including those related to the ancient times are based on the oral tradition which has been transcribed.¹⁷

In such conditions, many traditions and history recorded and gave information about the migration of people among islands. The drive of people in the islands to leave was revealed in traditional stories such as in folklore, myth, oral tradition. One of the communities in the archipelago who moved a lot was the people of Buton. In the historical perspective on the spread of migration to numerous islands in Indonesia is a donation to the process of the nation's integration. It seems that works on history using data from oral history and oral tradition has not been widely made.

In his other work, Jan Vansina stated that in expressing oral tradition, two things are used, namely process and the product of the process itself. The products from oral tradition are based on past oral messages which were transmitted through words that came out of the mouth until the message disappeared.¹⁸

Oral tradition has a part that can play a role in reconstructing the past. Along with written sources, oral tradition has the same role with written sources because both of them contain messages from the past to the present time and messages are the key elements in reconstructing history. In areas where written sources are not available or scarce, oral tradition lift the most difficult part of reconstructing history. The limited study on oral tradition has to be greatly considered because it has been set aside in historical researches for quite a long time. The records of data collected from oral tradition can be used as a source for historical reconstruction. The facts are extracted from oral traditions which are acquired from the field through recording and critics of the source. Thus, local

¹⁴Sularto, "Legenda Kasada dan Karo Orang Tengger Lumajang: Dokumentasi Historis, Analisis Morfologis dan Etnografis untuk Mengetahui Konvensi dan Fungsinya" (Ph.D. Dissertation in Faculty of Letters University of Indonesia, 1997), p. 58-62.

¹⁵Sularto, "Legenda Kasada dan Karo Orang Tengger Lumajang", p. 4-5.

¹⁶Dewi, "Penggalian 'Tradisi Lisan' sebagai Sumber Penulisan Sejarah Lokal", p. 8.

¹⁷Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition: A Study in Historical Methodology* (Chicago: Aldine, 1965), p. 1.

¹⁸Vansina, *Oral Tradition*, p. 3.

researchers need to be involved because they understand the local language of the community who has the tradition. The discipline on history needs current event data badly because the acquired data are usually outdated. So, oral tradition can take part in the process of historical research. In the end, Vansina stated that the rich oral tradition source cannot be studied only in a short term, but it requires a long term and profound study. Even his book is not enough to study oral tradition. He even admitted that the book was still incomplete but his study can be used for field study including for those interested to study oral tradition to find historical evidence.¹⁹

Maritime History and Migration of People

There are some advantages from the archipelago maritime research which deals with the history of shipping, commerce, port and harbor and stories on people or ethnic groups who has maritime tradition. The depiction of the hustle and bustle of people carrying out transactions in the markets in the harbors, trading ships passing through and the port of people and goods is part of the reconstruction of maritime history. The presence of sailors and people from numerous ethnic groups and many nationalities in the many of ports of the archipelago caused cross-cultural communication to occur. Besides that, the process of sailing and commerce enticed various ethnic groups to carry out trading in the region.²⁰ This process directly or indirectly attracted people from far away places. The activities were done in a small scale involving people who specifically sailed then moved in a larger scale and created the process of migration. In a certain scale, people from various ethnic groups then interact with the local people. This enriches the cultural repertoire of the local people. The migration of various ethnic groups throughout the archipelago had created social and cultural integration among the ethnic groups in the region which was rife with sailing and commerce.

Although it is difficult to know the migration process in the colonial era due to the lack of data, but Maritime historian, J.C. Van Leur classified three types of migration during the pre-colonial period. The first type of migration is the migration by a large number of people namely the migration done by the Minangkabau people who lived in the mountainous area in West Sumatra to empty areas in the eastern part of Sumatra such as in Riau, Jambi and Bengkulu. They also occupied areas in the west coast of Sumatra It is estimated that this type of migration had occurred since the 6th century up to the 14th century. Besides that, since the 14th century, areas in East Sumatra and Riau islands were occupied by Banjar people from southeast Kalimantan and also Bugis people from South Sulawesi. Bugis people also had migrated to Kalimantan (West and East) and also to North and Central Sulawesi.²¹

The second type of migration is individual migration which was done by the Chinese, Indians and Arabic people. They traveled as traders and sailors who sailed to the archipelago especially to buy spices. They usually stayed with national traders in coastal and port areas in the archipelago. As traders they established cooperation with local traders and even local rulers, including marrying local women. The third type of migration is related to the policy of the local Kingdom. As an example of this type of policy was when the sultanate of Aceh tried to control the area along the west and east coast of Sumatra since the 16th century up to the 17th century. Another example was with the establishment of Malay kingdoms in the coastal areas of West Kalimantan during the 16th up to the 17th

¹⁹Vansina, *Oral Tradition*, p. 199-201.

²⁰Adrian B. Lapian, "Peta Pelayaran Nusantara Dari Masa ke Masa", *Jati*, Bilangan 2, Desember 1996.

²¹Hans Goozen, *A Demographic History of The Indonesian Archipelago 1880-1942* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1999), p. 27.

century. While during the 17th century Gowa/Makasar Kingdom expanded its territory to Bali, Lombok, Sumbawa and Flores. The Sultanate of Ternate and Tidore also expanded its territory to the region of Halmahera, Seram, Buru and Ambon since the 16th century. But, there were also people of Java, Malay and Bugis and Makasar who sailed and do trading throughout the archipelago as a factor that caused migration.²²

As the Dutch got stronger since the 17th century, they were able to defeat the local traditional powers. The defeat of the Ternate caused the Sultanate to be defeated South Maluku, while the defeat of Gowa Sultanate in the Makasar war against the VOC resulted in the freedom of the rulers and people of the regions which it controlled to determine their own fate, such as the Sultanate of Buton and Bugis Kingdoms in South Sulawesi. Since the 17th century both groups of people gained many benefits especially in the activities of shipping and commerce throughout the archipelago. There is an interesting fact that since the defeat of Makasar against the VOC and since the Bongaya Treaty of 1667, there were many Makasar noblemen and their people who migrated from its country and try to find new areas in Java, Kalimantan, Nusa Tenggara, Riau islands and the Malaya strait.²³

In terms of Sociological and historical aspect, the people who lived in the islands had interacted with the media and means which they master: Shipping and commerce. The movement of the community in the aspect of social, cultural and economy with the sea media as a system made it a factor that integrated the islands. Thus, the most commonly known stories were that of people who travelled and migrated. It was commonly heard of stories about stranded boats with people and their load or a traveller who only passed through and also preachers who stayed in a certain place and made the destination as the center of their activities. Hence, actually before the community in the archipelago form a community with the platform of nationalism or even national integration, it had been preceded by earlier development stages.²⁴

Thus, actually the nation's integration process after the independence actually had been preceded with the integration process in the local level since centuries ago. The dynamics of shipping and commerce and also the migration of people which occur due to numerous causes had made integration since the low level of society and became stronger centuries afterwards. Actually, the research on stories of the origins of ancestors in the maritime oral tradition in East Nusa Tenggara shows the picture of the existence of migration and the arrival of people from numerous areas in the archipelago and the surrounding islands. The stories in the oral traditions are also part of history which had been remembered collectively by the local communities in the region. It is necessary to keep in mind that somehow oral tradition can also be made as source of historical writings, like what was done by Jan Vansina when he did a research in Africa.

In this context, it is actually important to see the small processes on the occurrence of interactions of the people in the island with the varied culture like in Indonesia. The people's movements here are not seen in the formal context like in the migration program, but more to a spontaneous movement which were driven by natural and historical factors. The two aforementioned factors should be placed in the study of history with structuralist approach. The geographical and historical factors became the driving force for the spontaneous migration and generally not well planned.²⁵ In the perspective of maritime history, it can be said that the means for integration for a maritime nation like Indonesia is

²²Goozen, *A Demographic History*, p. 27-28.

²³Susanto Zuhdi, Didik Pradjoko, Agus Setiawan, "Diaspora Orang Buton sebagai Faktor Integrasi Bangsa" (Laporan Penelitian Hibah Riset Strategis Nasional, DRPM UI-DIKTI, 2009), p. 17-18.

²⁴Zuhdi, Pradjoko, Setiawan, "Diaspora Orang Buton", p. 7-8.

²⁵See Kathryn Woodward, ed., *Identity and Difference* (Walton: The Open University, 1999) in Susanto Zuhdi, Didik Pradjoko, Agus Setiawan, "Diaspora Orang Buton", p. 8.

the sea, thus the migration through the sea, shipping and commerce give contribution to the process of the integration of the people and later on as a process of the nation's integration. In a more Indonesian meaning thus integration borrowing to the term used by Wriggins is "... bringing together on the desperate parts of a society into a more integrated whole, or to make out of many small societies a closer approximation of the nation" That integration which is more nationalistic is a process to assemble the parts which were at fist in parts and separated whole unity, one united nation.²⁶

The Reconstruction of the History of Migration Based on Oral Tradition Stories in Laut Sawu Region

The shipping and commerce activities in Nusa Tenggara touched the Eastern area which was rich in sandalwood. In the oral tradition of the people of Timor especially those who lived in Belu, it is said that the arrival of their ancestors was related to the country of Malacca and China. The Belu folk story mentioned that *Sina Mutin Malaka* (white Chinese Malaka) as the origin of the Belu people. As for the name *Sina Mutin Malaka*, it was originated from the opening of the tribal poetry which start with "Hutun rai hat-bobu rai hat-huttun Sina Mutin-bobu Malaka" (people of the four tribes, four land-people of the white Chinese Malaka). The origins of the Belu people is estimated to come from Malaka or white skinned Chinese, other interpretation is that the arrival of the white Chinese who previously stayed in Malaka. The group of ships of *Sina Mutin Malaka* is said to be sailing by stopping over to Makasar (Nibone rai henek) due to damage in the ship. After making a new ship, they set off to Kusu island, Kai, Lae and Larantuka Boubin and ended in Timor.²⁷ In the writing of an East Indies staff in Belu named H.J Crizjen, it was reported that in 1904 there existed a belief of the Belu people on their ancestors land (hoetoen rai hat) that was *Sina Moetin Malakan* which originated from Malaka peninsula.²⁸ This folklore depicted the tradition of shipping and commerce mastered by the Belu people including the tradition of making ships. Meanwhile, the trade relations between Malaka and Timor had occurred since the 14th century. Based on Chinese sources, it was mentioned that the trade ships of China had already entered Timor to acquire sandalwood since the 15th century.²⁹

Just like the people of Belu, the people in East Flores also posses stories or folklores on their origin which is named *Tutu Usu Maring Asa* (the story of origin), one of which is the strory of *Wato Wele-Lia Nurat*. In the East Flores community, the oral tradition cannot be separated from the historical condition and culture of the supporting people, that the oral tradition of Flores people related to the stories of their origins in general related to the historical aspect of the past.³⁰

The community of East Flores recognized the term *Tena Mau* people or groups of immigrant tribe which comes from the word *tena* (ship) and *mau* (stranded). This term referred to the immigrants originated from the Eastern part of the archipelago (Seram and Lembata) who went to East Flores using boats. Whereas, the term Sina Jawa is a term to

²⁶Woodward, ed., *Identity and Difference* in Susanto Zuhdi, Didik Pradjoko, Agus Setiawan, "Diaspora Orang Buton", p. 5.

²⁷ADM Parera, *Sejarah Pemerintahan Raja-Raja Timor* (Sinar Harapan, Jakarta: Sinar Harapan, 1994), p. 139-141.

²⁸H.J. Crijzen, *Mededeelingen Omtrent Beloe of Midden Timor*, VBG, Deel LIV 8e Stuk (Hoofdstuk VI, Oorsprong en Beteekenis van Waihale, 1904).

²⁹H.G. Schulte Noordholt, *The Political System of The Atoni of Timor* (Verhandelingen van Het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land-en Volkenkunde, The Hague-Martinus Nijhooff, 1971), p. 159.

³⁰Yoseph Yapi Taum, *Kisah Wato Wele-Lia Nurat dalam Tradisi Puisi Lisan Flores Timur* (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor dan ATL, 1997), p. 4.

mention an area West of the archipelago, encompassing Java, Sumatra, Malaka and Sumbawa At present time, Sina Java is a term to mention a far place.³¹ According to Catholic missionary, Ernst Vatter, there exists an oral story which relates Sina Java with Malaka.³² Indeed that in the tradition of people from Belu, it was told that the group of Sina Mutin Malaka stopped briefly in the East of Flores (Larantuka). A fact was discovered showing that since the fall of Malaka to the Dutch in 1641 there were many people from Malaka including those of Portuguese origin who emigrated to Larantuka, East Flores.

In an oral tradition story told by Markus Ratu Bodin (68 years old, 1994),³³ who originated from Larantuka it was recounted that the ancestors of East Flores originally come from Sina Java, that is the birth of the twins Wato Wele and Lia Nurat from an egg of an eagle which was also the parents of Emma Watu Sem and Bapa Modu Ma who lived in Sina Java. The excerpt of the lyrics is as follows:

No	Original Text	Translated Text
001.	Tutu pe me-niku, tutu newa matan, maring mo-hulu laran	This story is the beginning of garden, the story of the guide
002.	Tutu nia kaka bapa, maring nia ama nene	Story from the ancestors
003.	Puken nia Ema wato sem, Nimun nia Bapa madu Ma	Started fromi Ema Wato Sem, started from Bapak Madu Ma
004.	Sina Puken Jawa Nimun, doan lali Sina puken, lela lali Jawa nimun	Originated from Sina Jawa far away in central of Sina, Far away in the Javanese civilization (Taum, 1997: 49-50)

Meanwhile, narrator Gregorius koten from Flores regency recounted some things on the commerce of sandalwood which were rife at the time. War, which was started by the King of Larantuka (Raja Pati Golo Arakiang) even broke out to control the commerce of sandalwood.

No	Original Text	Translated Text
111.	Raja Pati Golo, Tuang Arakiang	Raja Pati Golo, Tuan Arakiang
112.	Buak dagang timu tana one, Hope helung gue wulang gitang	Went trading to tanah Timur, went to exchnage goods in the eastern horizon
113.	Gening noOng kajo cendana, Pewuno noOng tale gaharu	Snaching sandalwood, fighting over 'eagle wood rope'
114.	Opo nuho tawa bele, Ope katang gere belola	Causing a big war, Causing a great battle
115.	Raja hena tupo nuho, tuang hena gowa kata	The King himself face the war The King himself fight in the war (Taum, 1997:102-103)

In the history of sandalwood commerce in the Sawu Sea region in the East, The rulers of Larantuka in the 17th century controlled the sandalwood commerce in Timor and other Sawu Sea regions such as in Solor and Sumba. The ruler of Larantuka even had fleets of

³¹Taum, *Kisah Wato Wele-Lia Nurat*, p. 5.

³²Ersnst Vatter, *Ata Kiwan*, translated by S.D. Djah (Ende: Nusa Indah, 1984), p. 7.

³³Taum, *Kisah Wato Wele-Lia Nurat*, p. 49-50.

gunships and armies with guns to attack the regions which refused to be under the rule of Larantuka kingdom.³⁴

The culture that is related with maritime also appeared in the rural areas of Flores, in the form of "boat culture." The depiction of the origin of ancestors originated from far away place and came to Flores by sailing using boats were clearly seen in the making of boat-shaped coffins (Lasara) as a symbol of the spirit of the dead sailing to the country of their ancestors which was located in a far away place. Their houses were also in the shape of boats, with stern and bow as a symbol of the front and the back part of the house with stilts.³⁵ It was told in the folklore of Ende, South Flores that their ancestors came from the ancestor of Roroe and Modo, whose son got married to the daughter of Tuan Tanah Amboe Ngobe, while the daughter got married with a young man from Majapahit who works as the puller of whales Ngamboe (toothed). Besides that, it was also mentioned that the daughter of Tuan Amboe Ngobe got married to a Chinese man. In the story, they were all mentioned as the ancestors of the people of Ende until the present time. In the report of S. Roos in 1877, it was written that:

... so Roroe, Ambo Ngobee, the whale puller from Modjopahit and a Chinese (the names of the two people mentioned are not known), were the ancestors who started the genealogy of the Ende people.³⁶

Since the 18th century, the people of Ende consisted of those from the rural areas and the people from the coastal areas. The people of coastal Ende were a mixture of the indigenous people and the immigrants from Bugis and Makasar. They embraced Islam. The community of Sikka which is located in the East of Ende also had oral story which mentioned that their ancestors came using big ships to Sikka, The ships came from Siam (Southern Thailand/patani?). In the oral tradition, it was told that:

Rancangannya, Wawa Siam Mai	We sailed from Siam
Siam sipa jong wutung, Sipa jong wutung,	From Siam with the agility on the ship
Lema Nidung Mage Gahar	Then landed us in Nidung Mage Gahar

This story told us about the ships from Siam which landed in Nidung Mage Gahar, a place located between Sikka and Lela. They then gave birth to the indigenous ancestors of the people of Sikka. Other immigrants were also considered to be their ancestors were a ship's captain who was stranded in the East of Tanjung (Wutung ni'i) near Sikka, the name is Rae Raja his family and his guards.³⁷

In the West of Flores island, there is Komodo island which only has few inhabitants. This island along with Rinca island in the East lines in the Sape peninsula, between Sumbawa island and Flores island. The journey to Sumbawa island was done by boats

³⁴Didik Pradjoko, "Perebutan Pulau dan Laut: Portugis, Belanda dan Kekuatan Pribumi di laut Sawu Abad XVII-XIX" (Paper presented on Konferensi Nasional Sejarah VIII organised by Direktorat Nilai Sejarah, Direktorat Jenderal Sejarah dan Purbakala, Departemen Kebudayaan dan Pariwisata, Jakarta, 14-16 November 2006).

³⁵B.A.G Vorklave S.V.D., *De Prauw in Culturen van Flores*, Cultureele Indie, Tweede Jaargang (Leiden: E.J. Brill-Leiden, 1940).

³⁶S. Roos, TBG deel XXIV (1877: 482-483), cited from Friska Indah Kartika, "Pelabuhan Ende dalam Jaringan Pelayaran di Kawasan Laut Sawu dan Sekitarnya 1839-1930" (Thesis on Department of History Faculty of Humanities University of Indonesia, 2009).

³⁷E.D. Lewis dan Oscar Pareira Mandalangi, *Hikayat Kerajaan Sikka: Edisi Gabungan dari Dua Tulisan Tangan Tentang Sumber dan Sejarah Kerajaan Sikka oleh Domonicus Dionitas Kondi dan Alexius Boer Pareira* (Maumere: Ledalero, 2008), p. 7, 10-13.

passing through smaller islands such as Girilawa, Lulu, Bandera and Gilibanta and needed one day of sailing. Meanwhile, to sail to Labuhan Bajo in Flores requires requires half a day, by passing through Messah island.³⁸

The inhabitants of Komodo island are known as *Ata Modo* and their islands is known as Tana Modo, which has small number of villages. According to Zollinger, in around 1850, the people who lived in Komodo island in the past moved to Bima due to pirate attacks.³⁹ Based on the report of the Dutch Resident of Kupang, Gronovius who sailed to Komodo island and Sape region in East Sumbawa in the year 1846, it is a place which is used as a base for the pirates to attack the villages in the northern coast of Sumba and to capture the inhabitants to be made as slaves who are traded. Most of the ships of the pirates originated from Bugis and Makasar. One of the legend of the people of Komodo even mentioned that the pirates originally come from the island of pirates (Buton) in South East Sulawesi.

Reports in the 19th century mentioned that Komodo island was a place for people who are outcasted due to their crimes. They are the people who became slaves due to their debts and people who are punished under the supervisory of the envoy from the Sultanate of Bima. In the 19th century, the boats from Manggarai, the dominion of Sulatanat of Bima, which would like to send tributes annually stopped in the port of Komodo island. The tributes are give in the form of crops, slaves, bee lilin, gold, lontar and tamarind (*tamarine indica*).⁴⁰ Besides the indigeous people, Komodo island was also inhabited by people from Sumba, Manggarai, Ambon, Kapu (from West Manggarai), Sape (East Sumbawa), Bugis, Ende (Central Flores and people of Welak (West Flores)).⁴¹

The location of Komodo island in the Sape peninsula turned out to be the sailing route and commerce from other regions especially with Ende, Flores and Sumbawa. The trading boats and fishermen from Ende even caught sharks up to the Komodo island waters or buying crops such as tamarind, palm sugar, and sagu. This was also the same case with the arrival of the boats of fishermen and traders of Bugis who used patorani boats or padekawang boats. The story of the arrival of Bugis sailors was also mentioned in the folklore in Komodo island. The aforementioned about Gili Motong or people from Gili Montang. It was told in Komodo language,

Our ancestors came from Bugis land, travelled to Gili Motang. Arriving in Gili Mitang, he met the people of Gili Motang, "Where do you come from?" Our ancestors answered, "from the land of Bugis" "Where are you going?" "No, we sail to this land." They said, "Don't depart then. Please stay and be our friends." Our ancestors answered, "yes."

After that the people of Gili Motang asked our ancestors to build a ship. Then our ancestors built a ship. They tied the ship in a tamarind tree. After finishing the ship, Tuanku Sangaji Mbojo (Bima-the writer) sent a message to us to come. Then, our ancestor went to Mbojo.⁴²

The folklore depicted the arrival of the Bugis sailorss who are considered to be the ancestors of the people of Komodo island. It is even considered that the tradition of making boats in Komodo island originated from the Bugis imigrants.

³⁸J.A.J. Verheijen, *Pulau Komodo: Tanah, Rakyat, dan Bahasanya* (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1987), p. 2.

³⁹Verheijen, *Pulau Komodo*, p. 4-5.

⁴⁰Verheijen, *Pulau Komodo*, p. 4-5.

⁴¹Rodney Needham, "Sumba and the Slave Trade" (Paper presented on Seminar Center for Comparative Studies on Southeast Asia, Oxford, working Paper No. 31, Januari 1983), p. 54.

⁴²Verheijen, *Pulau Komodo*, p. 77.

From the rows of islands in the East of Flores there is Lembata island which have mountaneous areas and steep ravines. The condition of the land in this island is dry and rocky, but in some areas in the seaside the condition of the land is flat thus making it a good place for ships and boats. The palnts that grow there are mostly lontar, kayu putih, asam dan kesambi. The main occupation are fishermen or in the Lamalera language is refereed to as *olanua*, from the word *ola* meaing cultivate and *nua* meaning sea.⁴³ One of the famous village in Lembata is Lamalera village. The inhabitants of Lamalera were well-known to be whale hunters. The whales often passed Sawu Sea when they emigrated from ther South Pole towards the Pacific Ocean. In catching whales, they used ships wich were named as *peledang*. This kind of ships were 9 -10 metres log and 2 metres wide with the heigh of 1-1,5 metres. The people of Lamalera had been able to make ships using walls from wooden board (ara blikeng). The tradtion of making ships for the people of Lembata, Solor and Adonara was influenced by kora kora ships which were used by the people of Buton and Ternate. To aid them in catching big fish, the fishermen equipeed themselves with long spears with handlei made of bamboo between 4,5 and 6 metres long with the eye of the spear made of iron which is called tempuling. The length of the spear is adjusted with the kind of fish which is going to be caught, starting from small stingray, small dolphins or big stingrays and whales.⁴⁴

The Lamalera community had a legend on the origin of their ancestors which was told to be from Negeri Luwuk in Central Sulawesi who made a journey to the south coast of Lembata island. It is recounted in their oral story known as Lia Asa Usu (the poetry of origin) that the voyage of the fleets of Majapahit lead by Gajah Mada had conquered some ares in the East of the archipelago. In their voyage, the fleet stopped by at Luwuk and carried the people of Luwuk as forced soldiers. After sailing towards Halmahera, Seram, Ambon Kei islands, Tanimbar Islands, they then sailed along Timor island and in the end arrived in the island of Lenganbatan. The people of Luwuk were dropped off in the island and Gajah Mada fleet continued their voyage to Flores, Sumbawa, Look and Bali. One day, Lenganbatan island sinked due to natural disaster making the people of Luwuk to move to Lembata island. As they sailed leaving Lembata, they used ships/peledang kebakopuka and also carried the frame of the boat which later was used to make buipuka boats. These boats are still used until now by the fishermen in Lamalera, Lembata island.⁴⁵ The story which was told in Lia Asa Usu (The poetry of origin) which was done orally can be read in theis excerpt as follows:

Feffa belaka Bapa Raja Hayam WurukPasa-pasa pekka lefuk lau Luwuk Fengngi baata Gajah Mada lali Jawa Hida-hida hiangka tana lau Beru	By the requirement of the King Hayam Wuruk (the famous king of Majapahit-author) I had to leave my village in Luwuk sana On his order through Patih Gajah Mada from Java (the famous Patih/Prime minister of king Raja Hayam Wuruk-author) I redeem my prosperous home Tanah Beru
Geri tena, bua-bua laja Kai lullu laja teti Sera Gafi lefa Halmahera Kai kebongka teti Gora...	Taking a boat and start sailing, then lowering the mast in Seram island cruising Halmahera Sea in the end anchoring in Gorom Island

⁴³Ambrosius Oleona dan Pieter Tedu Bataona, *Masyarakat Nelayan Lamalera dan Tradisi Penangkapan Ikan Paus* (Depok: Lembaga Galekat Lefo Tanah, 2001), p. 6-7.

⁴⁴Oleona and Bataone, *Masyarakat Nelayan Lamalera*, p. 43 -48, 59-60.

⁴⁵Oleona and Bataona, *Masyarakat Nelayan Lamalera*, p. 9, 14-17. Also see R.H. Barnes, *Sea Hunter of Indonesia: Fishers and Weavers of Lamalera* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), p. 56.

Gafek lau fatta papa Lamabata Sapek teti Tobi Landekke Sigak teti Fato Bela Bakku Loddo dai kabe hone hollo	I crossed the South coast of Lembata island While I stopped in Tobi Land Far away in the East Anchored for a while in Fato Bela Bakku Get off the boat to the land and build a hut
Geri tena narang Tena Sera sapek teti Abbo teti Moa hekka lajak diketebu koli mea sigak teti Nua Fatu Bela ⁴⁶	I boarded a boat which was named "Seram boat " I stopped in Ambon island and Moa island I changed the my sail with Gebang leaves the red papyrus also stopped in the Fatu Bela islands

That was the verse from Lia asa usu, which recounted the origin of the ancestors of the people of Lamalera from Luwuk in Central Sulawesi who followed the voyage of Majapahit fleet to the Eastern part of the archipelago. While people of Luwuk then stayed in Lembata.

These people who came from Luwuk were the ones who pass on family names in Lembata, such as Bataoa, Blikolo, Lamanudek, Tanakrofa and Lefotuka. While the people of Lembata also originated from Sikka region, and the people of Lamakera (Kerap), Tapaona tribe who originated from Solor, Hariona tribe who originated from Adonara, or Oleana tribe who originated from Timor. According to the stories the Oleana tribe was carried by the current to the Swau Sea and were helped by the boats of the Lamakera people. In the end, these people from Timor call their clan Oleana which means in the current (*ole*=current, *ona*=in).⁴⁷

While the people of Lamalera were Catholic, the majority of the people of Solor who lived in the eastern part of Lembata island were Islam. In the past the Islamic kingdom of Lohayong was even the largest Islamic kingdom in the 17th century. In the oral story of the people of Solor, their ancestors originated from Seram island and Ternate.⁴⁸

In the custom poetry of the people of Sawu it was told that the origin of their ancestors was from a place named Jawa sae or mentioned as Jawa Dida. Sometimes, the people of Sawu called the island as Jawa Wawa. There was even a village in the Mesara region that was called Tanah Jawa. The name Majapahit was also mentioned as a kingdom which was influential in the island of Raijua with the existence of a region called Negeri Maja with the leaders being called as Niki Maja.⁴⁹

Conclusion

The dynamics of shipping and commerce in the archipelago which were very hectic made the traders and the immigrants in many parts of the archipelago to meet with one another and visited the many ports which were scattered in all parts of the archipelago. Even traders from outside of the archipelago such as Arabia, India and China also actively traded to try their luck.

The shipping of crops from Maluku, Java, South Sulawesi-Malaka made the region of Flores Sea and Java to be very hectic. Meanwhile the Sawu Sea region in the South of Flores Sea also became the transit area for trading ships from all parts of the archipelago

⁴⁶Oleona and Bataona, *Masyarakat Nelayan Lamalera*.

⁴⁷Oleona and Bataona, *Masyarakat Nelayan Lamalera*, p. 18-19.

⁴⁸Steenbrink, *Orang-Orang Katolik di Indonesia*, p. 143.

⁴⁹Robert Riwo Kaho, *Orang Sabu dan Budayanya* (Yogyakarta: Yogya Global Media, 2005), p. 8-14.

and other Asian regions. Besides that, the Sawu region in its history since before the 10th century and its golden era in the 15th century was the destination for the shipping and commerce because it produces sandalwood which were much in demand and expensive.

It was the presence of these people who came from different regions which were then saved in the memories of the people in the Sawu Sea region in their oral tradition, as depicted in the explanation of the paper aforementioned. The most interesting one is that the immigrants or the traders were then mentioned by the indigenous people as their ancestors. There is a profound meaning that the writer can catch in their oral tradition namely that there was an aspect of integration among the indigenous people and the immigrants. The immigrants were even given the honor as their ancestors of their place of origin. Besides that, the oral traditions in the region were also influenced by maritime tradition, Also with the many people who lived from managing the sea (*ola nua*), the name of the tribes who originated coming from stranded ships (*Tena Mau*), also of tribes who came because they were dragged by the current (*Oleona*), including the making of ships.

In the world of shipping and commerce many aspects of interrelated influence dealing with the existence of cross-cultural communication which occurred many centuries ago through interaction of trading in many ports. It is not surprising that in many ports there were always villages which were formed based on ethnical groups originated from outside the region.

The stories of oral tradition were closely related with the maritime tradition of the people around Sawu Sea. Besides that, the shipping and commerce between Sawu Sea region and other areas of the archipelago were done intensively, thus making it possible for the occurrence of cross cultural communication. So it was not often that they mentioned the immigrant sailors to be their ancestors in their oral tradition stories. By carrying out a profound research on the maritime oral tradition in the region of Sawu Sea, it is expected that the writing on the history of migration can use oral tradition to strengthen the narration that there had already occurred an integrated relation among the ethnic groups from numerous regions in the archipelago, especially in the East Nusa Tenggara or in the Sawu Sea area.

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