'Cultural Diversity among Muslims in Thailand and Cambodia and Its Implications for National Integration'

Omar Farouk (Universiti Sains Malaysia/ILCAA Joint Researcher)

The tendency to portray Thailand and Cambodia as ethnically homogenous Buddhist countries defined by the dominance of Thai and Khmer ethnicity respectively conceals more than it reveals especially in terms of the actual ethnic mosaic which characterizes both these Southeast Asian states. The majority-minority dichotomy often used to describe their demographic profile can also be misleading. Lumping the Muslims as a single minority community in Thailand or Cambodia may be convenient but is certainly not helpful in facilitating our understanding of the complexity and vitality of their respective Muslim communities. The role of minorities within minorities has not been adequately explored. This paper is an attempt to examine the cultural diversity that characterizes the Muslim communities of Thailand and Cambodia and the way it impacts the processes of National Integration in both these countries. The paper begins with a description of the role of the Muslim communities in Thailand and Cambodia. It will highlight the particular contexts in both Thailand and Cambodia.
which have created the opportunities for the Muslims to relate much more directly to their respective polities. The paper concludes that the cultural diversity of the Muslims in Thailand as well as Cambodia is not necessarily a hindrance to National Integration as it can be harnessed to strengthen national unity and the foundations of civil society. Cultural diversity or multiculturalism has to be viewed positively for what it promises to offer in respect of the complementarity of cultures and interests.

報告 2

*The History of Educational Development in Sabah: The Age of "Sabah Nation"*

Kaneko Nao (Tokyo University of Foreign Studies/ILCAA Joint Researcher)

This study examines the process in which education in Sabah had developed and adapted to National education system, especially paying attention to the relations between the Federal government and the Sabah government from the 1960s to the 1970s.

Before Sabah joined to form Malaysia in 1963, Sabah had its own educational system that had been established during the colonial period under the rule of the North Borneo Chartered Company and British Crown. Furthermore, just before its independence, Sabah demanded the 20 points agreement with the Federal government and the matter of education was included as one of them. Under the agreement of 20 points, Sabah had continued to keep its own education system until the beginning of the 1970s. After the 1970s, the education system in Sabah gradually had been adapted to the national system. It was the decision of Sabah state government under the regime of Mustapha Harun, the then chief minister. It was clearly related to Mustapha’s vision on how they would achieve Sabah’s development as one of parts of Malaysia, a modern nation state.

This study describes the transition concerning education of Sabah especially from the 1960s to the 1970s. During these 20 years, the change from the period when Sabah had own education to when education in all states became centralized by the Federal government occurred. Therefore, this study examines how Sabah regarded their own
purview that started as “Bangsa Sabah (Sabah Nation)” through considering the process in which education in Sabah had developed and adapted to National education system.

報告 3
'Irritants in Muslim and Non-Muslim Recent Interface: Alarm Bells for National Unity in Malaysia?'

Azizah Kassim (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia/ILCAA Joint Researcher)

Malaysia has a multi-ethnic and multi-religious population. Since the race riot in 1969 relations between the various ethnic groups appeared peaceful for over three decades. However, by the new millennium discord in ethnic relations began to appear such that in 2006 one of Malaysia’s leading academics described it as in a “worrying and fragile state”. In 2011, another leading academic described it as in a “state of stable tensions”. In recent years relations between Muslims and non-Muslims appear to have hit a bad patch. The fight over the word “Allah” that started in 2008 and the controversies on the rights of Muslim converts under the dual judicial system of family law are examples of long standing unresolved issues that draw them apart. It is worsened in the last two years or so by the increasing number of provocations against Islam by non-Muslim groups and individual and vice versa especially in the social media and national dailies. These public provocations which are “irritants” to both parties in the current Muslims and non-Muslims interface are of great concern to some sections of the public and the government as they have strong potential to cause ethnic conflicts that can pose a serious challenge to internal security.

The Malaysian population consists of two major official categories: The Bumiputera (lit. Sons of the Soil) and the non-Bumiputera. The former forms a majority which in 2010 is at @67%. The Bumiputera consist of Malays and other indigenous groups in the Peninsula (such as the Orang Asli), and those in Sabah (such as the Dusuns, Kadazans, Bajau, Rungus, etc.) and in Sarawak (such as Iban, Melanau,
Kedayan, Kelabit, etc). In the Non-Bumiputra category are Malaysians of Chinese and Indian descent and “others”. Major religions being practiced are Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity and Sikhism. However, ethnic groupings and religious affiliations do not always overlap. While all Malays are Muslims, the other ethnic groups do not adhere to a single religion. Chinese can be Buddhists, Christians, or Muslims; and while Indians are largely Hindus, there are also Christians, Buddhists and Muslims among them. The same case applies to other ethnic groups such as the Bumiputera of Sabah and the Orang Asli of Peninsular Malaysia. Islam as the official religion of the country is adhered to by over 59% of the Malaysian population. As all Malays are Muslims and they form 90.5% of the Muslim population in Malaysia, Islam is always seen as synonymous with Malays.

Presently relations between Muslims and non-Muslims in Malaysia appear strained. This paper will highlight the various provocations and counter provocations between the two parties which are on the rise in the last two years or so. What kind of provocations are these? Who are responsible for them and how are they expressed and made public? As for provocations on Muslim and Islam, are these attacks on Malays who are all Muslims and on the position of Islam as the official religion as enshrined in the constitution? Or, could it be simply an expression of naiveté on the part of the provocateur? How do Muslims in general and Malays in particular response to these? What kinds of provocations are made by Muslims to Non-Muslims and how are these manifested? Are these in response to those made against them or otherwise? These are some of the questions the paper hopes to answer. It will also examine the implications of these controversial exchanges to national unity and interrogate the concept of “stable tensions” as mentioned earlier.

Most papers on ethnic groups and ethnicity in Malaysia are concerned with problems of ethnic identifications and on ethnic relations in respect of economic and social inequality before or after the introduction of the new economic policy. This paper diverts from this norm: it takes ethnic category as officially defined and examines the religious dimension of ethnic relations.

The paper, which is exploratory in nature, is based largely on secondary materials especially reports in two national dailies viz. The New Strait Times and
Utusan Malaysia from 2012 to 2014 as it is concerned with recent events which saw the rise in these provocations. It also benefits from other publications and reports by various agencies. The paper would greatly benefit from interviews and discussions with Muslim and non-Muslim religious functionaries and others as well as other newspapers especially those that are considered not pro-Malay. However, due to shortage of funding and time, it was not possible to do so.

討論
報告に続いて、マレーシア国民大学のシャムスル教授によりコメントがなされた。シャムスルは、三編の報告がいずれも多民族社会における国民統合を論じたものであったことをふまえて、植民地的な知、国民国家、政治、紛争、アイデンティティなど、その分析の枠組みそのものを問い直す必要性を提起した。
その後の総合討論では、報告者およびコメンテーターにより、タイ・カンボジア、サバ、半島部マレーシアのそれぞれの社会における民族・宗教集団の同化・統合のあり方の違いが論じられ、その多様性が明らかになった。フロアの参加者からも日本や中東の社会との比較の視点が提示されるなど、活発な議論がかわされた。