

## CHAPTER 2

**Adat and Modernity:****The Postcolonial Situation in Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia****HISASHI ENDO***Introduction*

The state of Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia, is famous for its unique matrilineal customary law (*Adat Perpatih*) and has been paid much attention to by not only ethnologists, but also English lawyers and administrators since the colonial period. *Adat* is a Malay word that stands for customary behavior and law, tradition or way of life. For example, *Adat Temenggong*, or patrilineal customary law, is used in most areas of Malaysia. In contrast, *Adat Perpatih* is thought to be unique, for its matrilineality, even among the Malay people of the Malay Peninsula. In particular, the Rembau area has been said to hold such a strong *Adat* tradition. Therefore, M. B. Hooker, a famous English lawyer, included in his *Readings in Malay Adat Law* some of Taylor's long and detailed papers about the *Adat* system of Rembau (Hooker, 1970). We can say that *Adat Perpatih* is represented by the *Adat* of Rembau in colonial and postcolonial literature in English.

Hooker said in his introduction, "The author has attempted a description of Adat from the viewpoint of the courts and the administration. Until recently, these were the only examples of this method of approach which, with its emphasis upon the court process, has now become the dominant Adat form. This opinion is not merely the bias of a lawyer but is justified on the ground that Adat rules are now largely formulated and expressed in this way" (Hooker, 1970: vii). He insisted that Adat is a living system. This seems very meaningful when we consider the colonial and postcolonial contexts of Adat. From one perspective, Adat is a rigid, Malay tradition. However, from a postcolonial perspective, Adat was constructed through the interaction between the colonized and the colonizer. In this paper, I will try to shed light on the colonial construction of Adat from both the anthropological and historical perspectives.

In my previous paper, I dealt with several national and state level developmental discourses against Adat, and, conversely, some Adat discourses against them (Endo, 1999). National discourses define Adat as something old, antimodern, antidevelopmental. On the contrary, local discourses defend Adat as being consistent with modern development against national discourses. Adat (male) leaders equally insist that Adat is compatible with development. The situation has not changed to this day. For instance, the following is a summary from a newspaper article published in 1999:

Adat leaders of Rembau rejected the popular thinking that only Adat makes customary land (*tanah adat*) development difficult. On the contrary, they insist that the value contained in the matrilineal customary law is not incompatible with the '*shariah* Islam'(Islamic law).

The development project of customary land will be proceeded by buying products, which is a process regulated

by Adat. The leaders said that they are responsible for the use of customary land that way.

A leader of a certain clan told the newspaper reporter that there are no relations between the tendencies of land owners who are not willing to participate in development projects and the matrilineal customary law (Adat Perpatih). Other leaders insist that the law of Adat is clearly for the development of customary land. 'The Adat leaders play an important role to ensure the people harvest and are not exploited.' (Berita Harian, Jan. 25, 1999, author's translation).

As this news clearly indicates, Adat (male) leaders have frequently reiterated the same phrase that Adat is consistent with development and not against it. This fact shows, on the contrary, the situation that customary land in Negeri Sembilan has been left uncultivated for years after the 1970s when rice cultivation was almost abandoned and the federal and state governments have been conducting a campaign to develop the customary land. The national and state level discourses clearly represent Adat being against modern development. Is it true, however, that Adat is antimodern?

One reason why it is difficult to develop customary land is the fractionalization of land rights (Endo, 1999). In this paper, I will examine the historical process of land registration for the past hundred years and clarify how the system of colonial administration influences the fractionalization of customary land. Through this analysis, the colonial and postcolonial contexts of "Adat" will be clarified.<sup>1</sup>

In the next section, we are going to examine the colonial rule of the Malay Peninsula and the so-called "making of the race" (Hirschman, 1986) through the study of the population census.

*The Politics of Classification, Registration and Identity—  
The Social Space of Census*

Benedict Anderson points out that census is one of the important institutions to build “imagined communities” in Southeast Asian Nation-States (Anderson, 1991: 163-170). Arjun Appadurai similarly has paid attention to the “number in the colonial imagination.” His central question being “Is there any special force to the systematic counting of bodies under colonial states in India, Africa and Southeast Asia, or is it simply a logical extension of the preoccupation with numbers in the metropolis, that is, in Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries?” (Appadurai, 1996: 115).

I would like to consider in this section how the British colonial administration grasped, classified and controlled the population of the Malay Peninsula, by examining various census taken by the British and how the systematic counting, or the politics of number, was introduced to British Malaya.

1. *The 1881 Census*

It is said that the first census in the Malay Peninsula was conducted at Singapore (one of three Straits Settlements at that time) in 1824 (Shiraishi, 2000: 99). As this census is not available, the 1881 Census of the Straits Settlements will be examined. A slight difference has been noted on the classification of nationality between the 1824 and 1881 census according to the description of Shiraishi. This census is a brief report of the population of the three Straits Settlements, that is, Singapore, Penan and Malacca. The following are the categories (see Table 1):

Table 1 Nationalities of the 1881 Census

Europeans and Americans, Resident Population

Europeans and Americans, Floating Populations

Europeans and Americans, Prisoners

British Military

Armenians

Jews

Eurasians

Prisoners

Chinese

Prisoners

Aborigines of the Peninsula

Achinese

Africans

Anamese

Arabs

Bengalis and other Natives

of India not particularized

Boyanese

Bugis

Burmese

Dayaks

Japanese

Javanese

Jawi Pekan

Malays

Manilamen

Parsees

Siamese

Singhalese

Tamils

Prisoners

According to the note of the census, the administration made an announcement to the Chinese and Malay people that the intention of the census was not for imposing tax. On the contrary, this phrase was a reminder of the strong relationship between the registration of people and the tax (1881: 2). This census classified "Malays and other Natives of the Archipelago" as including Achinese, Boyanese, Bugis, Dayaks, Javanese, Jawi-Pekans, and Manilamen, and "Tamils and other natives of India," including Burmese, Parsees and Bengalis, as well as other Natives of India not specified (1881: 6). The "Malay" and the "Indian" people were not so represented as we know today in the Malay Peninsula. There were some fluctuations necessary for classification at this time. However, this was the beginning of the politics of classification and identity.

## 2. *The 1911 Census*

The classification of the 1911 Census almost resembles that of today. It was broken down into the following groups: Europeans, Eurasians, Indians, Chinese, Malays, and others. The characteristic of the 1911 Census was that the British administration tried to classify the people according to their religious affiliation. The author said that "this is the first time that a Religious Census has been taken so that no figures for comparison are available." The number of persons professing the different religions in each 10,000 of the population was (1911: 1):

Non-Christian and Non-Muhammadan	
Chinese	5,030
Muhammadans	3,729
Hindus	791
Christians	388
Buddhists (Non-Chinese)	41
Jews	11
Others	10
	10,000

Languages were also classified, and it was noted that "69 languages are represented but of these only 25 are spoken by more than 500 persons and only 10 by more than 5,000" (1911: 2). Malay languages were classified as "Malay," "Javanese" and "other Malay languages" (1911: 3). Occupations were also classified and registered. "This is the first time that an Occupation Census has been attempted and, of necessity, it is not as complete as could be desired. This is mainly due to the inability of the householders and enumerators to fill up the schedules properly" (1911: 4). People were thus classified

and registered through the census, and consequently, languages and religious affiliations were individually grasped in the early twentieth century.

### 3. *The 1931 Census*

The 1931 census concerned the population of British Malaya (The Colony of the Straits Settlements and the Malay States under British Protection, namely the Federated States of Perak, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, and Pahang and the States of Johore, Kedah, Kelantan, Trengganu, Perlis, and Brunei). This census was far more sophisticated in the techniques used than the previous ones. In this census, statistics of interstate migration were gathered. That is, those whose place of birth and domicile (place of present residence) were different were counted. In this census, the population was classified under six main racial groupings: Europeans (including Americans and all white races), Eurasians, Malaysians, Chinese, Indians, and "others," and this established a new precedent (1932: 74).

It is important to pay attention to the section in this census where the appropriateness of the term "race" was discussed:

The term "race" is used, for the purpose of a Malayan census, in a peculiar sense, which requires explanation. . . . the word "race" is used, for lack of a more appropriate term, to cover a complex set of ideas of which race, in the strict or scientific sense, is only one small element. It would be of little use to the administrator or the merchant to attempt a classification of the population by race in the ethnographic sense, to say nothing of the fact that any such tentative classification would be highly controversial. An attempt at classification by "nationality," or, more exactly, by national status or political allegiance, would be almost equally open to controversy, and of little, if any, greater practical value.

It is, in fact, impossible to define the sense in which term "race" is used for census purposes; it is, in reality, a judicious blend, for practical ends, of the ideas of geographic and ethnographic origin, political allegiance, and racial and social affinities and sympathies (1932: 73).

However, "more than rubber and tin, the legacy of colonialism was racial ideology" (Hirschman, 1986: 357). Racial ideology in the Malay Peninsula was influenced definitely by census classification. The discourse on race continued as follows: "The Malay, for instance, habitually regard adherence to Islam in much the same light as a European regards a racial distinction . . . as though the distinction between them were similar in nature and magnitude to that between a Frenchman and a German." (1932: 73-74).

The prediction of the author of this census was correct in that Islam has been the boundary to differentiate Malays from other "races."

#### 4. *The 1947 Census*

In the 1947 census, an important discussion about race was conducted by Del Tufo, the author of this census:

'It is,' observed Mr. Vlieland in the 1931 Report, 'impossible to define the sense in which the term *race* is used for census purposes.' His definition stands; but the fact remains that the use of the term in this context should be abandoned since it already has, for the ethnologist, a definite meaning totally different from the foregoing and is confined to describing groups of people who exhibit certain physical characteristics in common. Some other term should, therefore, be found for census use, but the problem of finding and securing the acceptance of one short word to replace *race* in the sense in which it has so far been used in connection



with vital statistics still awaits solution. Apart, however, from the difficulty of finding a suitable substitute for it, the expression *race*, however inappropriate, can only be replaced gradually because of its universal employment (1947: 70-71).

An important difference between the 1931 and 1947 census concerned religion. No inquiries as to religion was made on this occasion, past experience having shown it to be of little value in Malaya where the entire Malay population is Muhammadan (Muslim) (1947: 123).

Appadurai pointed out the differences between the British census and Indian census. The former, he said, was overwhelmingly territorial and occupational rather than ethnic or racial (Appadurai, 1996: 117-118). As we already examined, Malayan (Malaysian) census was basically ethnic and racial. Religious and occupational elements seemed to be of less importance for the British administration. Additionally, the census seemed to be male- (worker) oriented or gender-neglected, particularly in the beginning of its history.

We may conclude that the systematic counting and registration of people in the Malay Peninsula was formed in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. Similar systematic counting also appeared during the land registration in the Malay Peninsula almost at the same period. The meaning of this so-called Malaysian Torrens system or land registration system imported into the area by the British Administration will be examined in the next section.

### *The Idea Behind the Torrens System*

The so-called Torrens system introduced from Australia to Malay at the end of the nineteenth century is a very efficient land registration method for the prosecution of administrative affairs. The brief history of the system is as follows:

By "Australian" Torrens system is meant the system developed from the two statutes enacted by the South Australian legislature in 1858 at the instance of Sir Robert Torrens, and now in use in the six states of the Commonwealth of Australia. The "Torrens" system generally includes those systems of registration of transactions with interests in land whose "declared object . . . is, under governmental authority, to establish and certify to the ownership of an absolute and indefeasible title to realty, and to simplify its transfer. An important feature of the system is an indemnity fund to compensate any one who may be injured by the operation of the Act." The Australian system has been said to aim at combining security of title to land with facility in its transfer (Hogg, 1905: 1-2).

In a speech by Sir Robert Torrens, himself, he described the characteristics of the system as follows:

It is the cheapening of the law of conveyancing of real property. . . . I have for years felt that the law of England in that respect, which we brought with us, required amendment . . . I have come to the conclusion that the law of England is inferior to most of them (laws of other countries), both with regard to cost and security of title (Torrens, 1858: 5).

He spoke about the advantages of his land registration system: "The entry in the record is conclusive. There is nothing to deduce or infer, or in the conduct of ordinary dealings, to necessitate professional assistance. The time occupied in such dealings need not exceed that required for transacting the like dealings with railway scrip . . ." (Torrens, 1872: 3).

Hogg compared the differences between a feudal land owning system and the Torrens system: "It is the existence of its most

prominent feature in the Torrens system—the necessity for registration to the due creation or transfer of any interested in land—which causes the system to approximate to a system of allodial ownership; the superaddition of the ceremony of recording instruments, persons or occurrences, is foreign both to the spirit and the letter of the feudal system” (Hogg, 1905: 3).

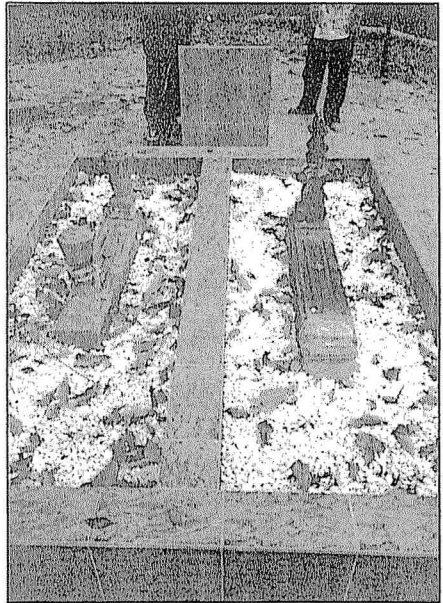
According to Salleh, there was already at that time a prevailing system of land law based on Malay custom and Islamic law when the Torrens system was first introduced in the Federated Malay States (FMS). In the early stage of the introduction of the Torrens system, the General Land Regulation was enacted in Negeri Sembilan in 1887, and the Registration of Titles Regulation was enacted in 1898. By 1911, these several yet separate States’ legislations finally gave way to two uniform laws, the FMS Land Enactment of 1911 and the FMS Registration of Titles Enactment, 1911 (Salleh, 1995: 9). He concluded that the system’s characteristics could be described as “registration,” “simplicity” and “certitude,” and finally that “the register is everything” (Salleh, 1995: 146-147).

It is important to recall the fact that the classification of “race” in the 1911 census resembled that of the existing census. Around 1911, both the registration of land and the classification of “race” were established in British Malaya. In fact, the Federated States Malay Reservation Enactment was enacted in 1913. “Malay reservation” refers to a special category of land which can only be owned or held by Malays (Salleh, 1995: 203). The category of “Malay” and the land registration system were intertwined in this enactment.

The following are also some other important information concerning land and rice cultivation in Negeri Sembilan. We can well understand the colonial situation from this (Colonial Office, 1952: 4-24):

- (1) Prohibition of the cultivation of crops other than rice in certain areas (Cultivation of Rice Enactment 3, 1917).
- (2) Consolidation of the various laws' relation to the matriarchal customary tenure among certain tribes in Negeri Sembilan. No customary land was to be transferred, charged, transmitted, or otherwise dealt with except in accordance with the custom (Customary Tenure Enactment 1, 1926; 1,1930).

(3) Provision for the holding of registered interests in land and charges and liens thereon for the benefit of the Government of the State [Land Registration (government interests) Enactment 5, 1939].



(4) Recommendation of regulations placed on the selling of rice. His Highness the Yang di per Tuan Besar of Negeri Sembilan in a

Grave of Rajah Melawar.

speech on the adjournment stated: "Rice is a necessity of life and should not be a means of gain" and asked for a bill to prevent Malays selling it to other races to obtain good prices (Federated Malay States 28, November, 1919).

(5) Completion of a survey regarding the rice situation in Malaya which recommended that steps to extend rice growing be undertaken by Malaysians rather than immigrants, to create a uniform legislation on land tenure, the resumption by

government of agricultural land after two years instead of years of noncultivation, that paddy lands shall be alienated at low rent, the creation of an irrigation board since water control is the most important question, the development of cooperatives to prevent debt and land mortgage and to encourage of mechanical cultivation (Report of the Rice Cultivation Committee. Kuala Lumpur: Government Printing Office, 1931).

- (6) Introduction of Asiatic applications for small land holdings and reservation of land for Malays (Negeri Sembilan Administration Report for the Year 1912, by A. H. Lemon. Kuala Lumpur: Government Printing Office, 1913).
- (7) Creation of reserves (at first thought unnecessary) for fear that customary lands so registered might be sold (Administration Report for the Year 1916, by A. H. Lemon. Kuala Lumpur: Government Printing Office, 1917).

According to the above information, we can understand that the government administration intervened in the sphere of Adat in both positive and negative ways for the "Malays" in early twentieth century Negeri Sembilan. Local people were encouraged to cultivate rice, and the administration took several measures to keep customary land within the Malay people.

### *Land Registration and Fractionalization of Land in Negeri Sembilan*

This section, covers some examples of land registration that have occurred during the past hundred years. Each lot of paddy land in the Rembau area, whether classified as customary or not, is now owned by many women landowners. Some still reside in the villages but others reside in such towns as Seremban, the state capital;

Kuala Lumpur, the national capital or Singapore. This fractionalization is said to be one of the main reasons development by the federal and state governments is difficult. The development project of uncultivated customary land, which was pushed strongly by the state government in accordance with the national policy of development (*kemajuan*), had been carried out in this area. The project staff asked female landowners to rent their land for planting cash crops. The paddy fields, some customary land and some noncustomary, were enclosed for development. According to Adat, each owner's consent is required to use a lot. However, practically speaking, only the consent of one or more of the female land owners who still reside in the village was collected. Through the examination of land records for the past hundred years, I would like to elucidate the fact that segmentation of customary land has been caused by a mixture of the registration system and Adat. The cases described hereafter also show that "the feminization of property relations" (Stivens, 1996: 6) that is, male-owned, newly acquired, noncustomary land has been gradually moved into the female-owned sector, and



Display of Adat Museum at Rembau (Installation of Undang, an adat chief of Rembau).

this feminization is also not rare in the villages I have studied thus far. Following are some cases of inheritance in a village in Rembau:

### Case 1 Inheritance of Customary Land (*Tanah Adat*)

This lot is a wet paddy field (*tanah sawah*) inherited successively only by women according to the Adat and was first registered on 25 January 1910 by one female owner. It was clearly classified as customary land on the registration. It was subsequently divided and inherited by her four daughters and registered on 2 November 1944. It was registered again on 30 June 1951 and 12 June 1984.

The following are the present-day landowners:

Sex	Width	Date of Registration (year/month/day)	Place of Stay
1 female	one sixteenth	1984/6/12	Residing in the village
2 female	one sixteenth	1984/6/12	Residing in Kuala Lumpur (1 and 2 are sisters of the same father)
3 female	one sixteenth	1984/6/12	Residing in the village
4 female	one sixteenth	1984/6/12	Residing in the village (3 and 4 are sisters of another man)

5	female	one eighth	1984/6/12	Residing in Kuala Lumpur (two sisters, but one sister's name was not registered)
6	female	one eighth	1951/6/30	Deceased. Having one daughter, but her name is not yet registered.
7	female	quarter	1951/6/3	Deceased.
8	female	one eighth	1944/11/2	Resided in Seremban, but is deceased.

A male relative of this family who 'married out,' but to a woman of the same village, still stays in this village. He told me that the land tax is paid by those women who reside in the village, and they gave consent to use this lot as a whole for a development project of customary land. This lot was first registered by one female in 1910 and divided into pieces until now.

## Case 2 Feminization of Land

This lot was originally state land. The lot was registered by a male owner on 8 September 1949, on the condition that the land be used only for wet paddy cultivation. According to the record of the registration, "the land hereby alienated shall be used hereby for the purpose of cultivation of wet paddy and for no other purpose." This lot was inherited equally by his two daughters on 2 February 1991. And is also used for a development project of customary land.





Adat leader (right) and the head of development project (left).

### Case 3 Feminization of Land

This lot, about one acre, was originally state land, as in Case 2, and was classified as *kampung* (village land). It was registered by a male owner on 16 October 1906. At that time, this lot was not customary land, and it was possible to be inherited by males as well as females. It was divided equally and inherited by two females on 8 October 1922. Then, each quarter of the lot was registered by four females on 20 July 1950. According to a civil servant of the Rembau Land Office, it is easy to transform newly acquired village and paddy land to customary land by simply transmitting the land from male owners to female owners and changing the registration details. This lot is also used for a development project of customary land.

### Case 4 Land Inherited by Females and Males

This lot, about one acre, was registered by a male owner on 28 April 1924 and classified as *kampung dan sawah* (village and wet paddy land). It was divided equally and inherited by one male and one female owner (1/2,1/2). Then, a half of the lot was inherited

by a male owner (1/2) and one tenth by five female owners (1/10, 1/10, 1/10, 1/10, 1/10). One of the fractions (1/10) was then inherited by seven females (1/30, 1/30, 1/150, 1/150, 1/150, 1/150, 1/150). In this way, this lot was divided into many small pieces. This lot is also used for a development project of customary land.

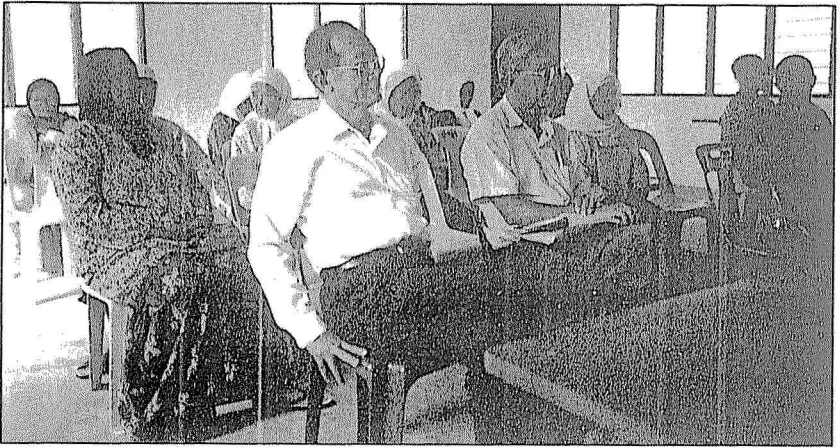
Stivens, who studied a village in Rembau, mentioned the tendency of land registration as follows:

Present-day Rembau kinship ideology sometimes tends to gloss the historical development of property relations in its stress on communal aspects of ancestral land ownership, although it also emphasizes female rights to land. But, the dialectic between colonial reconstitution and everyday practices has improved virtual individual ownership of *pusaka* (ancestral) land by a woman or a group of related women (Stivens, 1996: 105).

Stivens expressed her interest with the reality that “nonancestral rice land was in fact treated as if it were ancestral in relation to inheritance” (Stivens, 1996: 107). However, as she puts it, the



Customary land developed by the project at Rembau.



Meeting held by development project with female landowners, village head and investors.

distinction is clear that each lot was classified as either 'customary land' or 'noncustomary land' on the register. For purpose of development projects, these lots are enclosed without distinction. Moreover, national-level discourses for development do not distinguish them, and this indicates Adat as something against development or modernity.

The interested local persons of development projects collect agreements from female landowners (rarely from male owners) and plant several cash crops on the land, using immigrant, male workers mainly from Indonesia. Nonlocal business persons, some Chinese-Malaysians, have made investments in the project. This process can be called the Enclosure and Capitalization of Customary Land. The important point is that it is not necessary to change Adat. The land still remains within the clan; it is not sold to the private sector or non-Malays. In this way, local people have succeeded to prove that Adat is not against development.

The penetration of capital in the rural areas in West Malaysia

has already been reported widely. Cecilia Ng, who studies the rice production and the role of women, pointed out “the increasingly important role of the state, via formal rural institutions, in determining the direction of agricultural change” (Ng, 1999: 61). Her study area covers the whole of West Malaysia, and is not limited in Negeri Sembilan. However, her indication that female labor conceived as ‘women’s work’ has been taken over by the male family member and hired male labor was also applicable to the situation in Negeri Sembilan. Rephrasing her conclusion, “a masculinization of agriculture instead of a feminization of land” (Ng, 1999: 68), we can say that in Rembau the capitalization and masculinization of agriculture has occurred and changed the scenario on the feminization of customary and noncustomary land.

### *Conclusion*

The concept of “nationality or race (*bangsa*)” was being sophisticated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in the Malaya Peninsula (*cf.* Hirsheman 1987). As ethnology and cultural anthropology developed as fields of study, the concept of ‘race’ tended to be replaced by the concept of ‘culture.’ Abu-Lughod points out that “despite its antiessentialist intent, however, the culture concept retains some of the tendencies to freeze differences possessed by concepts like race” (Abu-Lughod, 1990: 144). Likewise, the concept of ‘Adat’ freezes the difference among ‘races’ and ‘cultures.’ Adat represents the Malay peoples’ (old) culture. However, the dichotomy between ‘Adat’ and ‘modernity’ seems to be nonexistent. The ‘Adat’ which we see today is something formed by interrelations between ‘vernacular ways’ and the ‘British way.’

The Rembau area in Negeri Sembilan has been said to maintain a strong Adat. However, younger generations seem to be unconcerned with Adat nowadays. Customary land inherited by female owners

according to Adat is fractionalized so much into small pieces, by 'systematic registration.' Furthermore, those people who are residing in the towns seem to have lost interest in the land. However, the federal and state governments have asked local Adat leaders to develop large, uncultivated customary lands. Such development projects lie at the point of articulation of macro-politics and micro-politics wherein the purpose of development projects is to enclose the fractionalized customary land, obtaining every female land owners' consent for use, and to ask developers to invest. Using foreign workers, mainly from Indonesia, villagers have begun to earn some profits from these projects. Most female landowners were contented with a yield of some hundred *ringgit* (about 4,000 yen) per acre. After the 1980s, when wet paddy cultivation was abandoned, customary land was left uncultivated and was not considered a means for a subsistence economy. Therefore, we can say that the "feminization of land" has lost substantial meaning for women nowadays.

Prime Minister, Dr. Mahatir told the people on the millennium eve to:

Learn from the lessons of history which require them to close ranks and be disciplined to face attempts to recolonize the nation in the new millennium through the globalization system of the west. We, especially the Malays, have the same old habits and culture that caused us to be colonized for four-and-a-half centuries. But the colonial masters have plans to recolonize us. This time a different method will be used to conquer our country. This method is introduced as globalization and a borderless world.

What's strange is that while the free flow of capital transcends borders, humans cannot. The poor will be imprisoned within their own borders so as not to tarnish the rich nations (*The Star*, 1 January 2000).

In fact, the capital flow crossing the border has been regulated in Malaysia after the "Southeast Asian Economic Crisis." Even still, foreign workers continued to transcend the border and work within Malaysia. But we should be very careful to deal with the 'globalization and a borderless world' in the postcolonial context, which has a negative meaning for ordinary people.

The examination of census and land registration clearly indicates that the systematic counting, or the politics of numbers, is a strong colonial institution. The establishment of 'race' in Malaya and the systematic land registration began almost at the same time. The articulation of colonial devices, such as classification and registration, and 'traditional' customary law, caused the systematic fractionalization of customary land. Paradoxically speaking, Adat is not an old, traditional, precolonial institution. The national and state level discourses that Adat is against development vis-à-vis the Adat-level discourse that it is not against development represent both sides of this delicate issue. The anthropological and historical analysis of these discourses indicate that the macro-politics, colonial and postcolonial politics deeply penetrate into the micro-politics; and micro-politics respond to the macro-politics in various ways. The intertwined Adat situation and that of the colonial and the postcolonial situation is viewed as 'modern' in the literal meaning of the word. It is not necessary to consider the Adat as being premodern and globalization, postmodern. Dr. Mahatir, the prime minister of Malaysia, correctly pointed out that globalization brings the people irresistibly to a postcolonial situation. The fact that the same thing already happened in the colonial situation sometime before should not be forgotten.

The development projects of customary land carried out in Negeri Sembilan contain very modern problems such as Adat and capitalism, globalism, colonialism, and so on. We can therefore

conclude that the sphere of development is a particular location where macro-politics and micro-politics are articulated. How they are articulated is thought to be one of the important subjects in the pursuit of the political cultures in Southeast Asia. The close examination of practical usages of 'race,' 'culture,' 'adat,' in the colonial and postcolonial contexts afford rich materials to consider various problems of a corollary of political cultures.

Many scholars have pointed out that the global and the local are intertwined deeply and cannot be separated (Ohtsuka, 1997; Yoshimi, 1998). The cases in this paper have shown the same. Yoshimi insisted that "the historical processes in which the global/local spaces have been articulated through the various social interactions should be studied" (Yoshimi, 1998: 100). This paper is the beginning of such a study of the historical process of the relationship between Adat and modernity. We can say that the Adat has been formed through the articulation of the global and the local political contexts.