



FOREWORD

CONTEXTUALIZING NUSANTARA STUDIES

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JONUS stands for *Journal of Nusantara Studies*, a university journal of Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin (UnisZA), Malaysia. This journal is not a mere study about Nusantara, instead it encompasses a wide range of academic disciplines in humanities and social sciences, embracing (but not limited to) culture, history, language, education, social, politics, communication, psychology, development, tourism, arts, economy, science and technology (in sociocultural terms) and international relations in the region currently belonged to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Even though clearly stated in ancient native sources—especially in *Nāgara-Kērtāgama* (a 14th century Javanese-Majapahit poem dated 1365), *Pararaton* (a writing of the 14th century Majapahit-Javanese kingdom), and *Sejarah Melayu* (Malay Annals - the historical record of Old Malay Sultanate during their reign in Melaka)—and also bears very significant meaning to the indigenous communities, the word ‘Nusantara’ is yet universally used. In addition, understanding about it is still very vague and misleading. Therefore, it is worthy to give a brief account of what the term ‘Nusantara’ means based on the native primary sources. Nusantara is a unified geographical region of indigenous communities that covers the entire part of Southeast region of Asia. In fact, its geopolitical coverage is almost identical to Southeast Asia. Even though in the 13th and 14th centuries (during Kertanegara and Majapahit kingdoms) it centered at Javanese, in our contemporary times, the term ‘Nusantara’ has become common among the indigenous communities in the region. While ‘Southeast Asia’ is a foreign term, ‘Nusantara’ deeply conveys historical, cultural and sentimental values of the natives of this region. It fertilizes a form of sense of belonging that is often pronounced as ‘a compatriot kin’ (*bangsa serumpun*) based on their common ancestors, spoken language, beliefs, way of life, and skin colours, besides their domiciles. It is within this spirit that ‘Nusantara’ is chosen as the title of this journal.

Within this scope, all scientific disciplines in the field of Humanities and Social Sciences will be nurtured, developed, and promoted with hope that this would evolve into a shady tree for intellectual advancement.

‘NUSANTARA’ FROM NATIVE HISTORICAL SOURCES

The reason for the word ‘Nusantara’ being less reckoned is due to the contemporary observers, both the foreign as well as the natives, who do not acquaint with historical sources. Although it was clearly documented in native literatures, the exact term ‘Nusantara’ has continuously hovered the minds of observers. To date, it seems common among observers to assume that ‘Nusantara’ is a combination of two words: *nusa* and *antara*, where *nusa* means ‘nation’ or ‘island’, and *antara* as ‘in between’ or ‘intermediate’. They satisfy themselves with their own logical configuration that the meaning of ‘Nusantara’ is ‘between the islands or nations’ or ‘the islands or nations lying between’.

However, that conceptualization of ‘Nusantara’ totally contradicts various indigenous sources. In the tradition and history of the region, there are two entities that have a similar matching name; ‘Nusantara’ and ‘Nusa Antara’. This information was supplied by the Javanese natives to Raffles during his time as the Governor of Java in early 19th century. Raffles (1994, Part II, 92) exerts that in ancient Javanese traditions, ‘Nusa Antara’ refers to Madura or ‘the Island lying between’. The information from Javanese communities is relatively substantial as it was extracted from the pre-industrial community that still deemed their belief from their great ancestors’ legacy.

It needs to be emphasised that though Raffles (1994) relates ‘Nusa Antara’ with ‘between the islands or nations’, his statement cannot be considered as an elaboration of Nusantara. Instead, his statement is a descriptive statement about the location of Madura, not a description of a proper name of a specific island. Anyway, Raffles was telling about ‘Nusa Antara’, and not ‘Nusantara’. Hence, ‘Nusa Antara’—though supposed to be the closest word to the meaning of ‘between the islands or nations’ because, literally, the word ‘Nusa’ means ‘nation’ and ‘Antara’ means ‘between’—it has nothing to do with ‘between the islands or nations’ because it refers specifically to Madura, a name of an island between Java Island and Kalimantan.

The most important indigenous source that explains the meaning of Nusantara is *Nāgara-Kērtāgama* (1365). This 14th century Javanese Majapahit source states:

All houses shining glittering colors, matching the moon and the sun, incomparable beautiful, countries under Nusantara with Daha as the leader, solemnly bowing and sheltering under Wilwatikta. The elaborated detail of each of the island of the countries subordinated under Nusantara are: first and foremost *Melayu* ... and then followed by Tanjungnegara, Hujung Medini, Jawa, Makkasar dan *Dwipantara* (archipelago partners)

(*Nāgara-Kērtāgama*, *Pupuh XII-XIII*).

The phrase ‘subordinated under Nusantara’ tells about the smaller countries under Nusantara. The information about geopolitical territory of Nusantara is embedded in passages (*pupuh*) 13th and 14th of *Nāgara-Kērtāgama*. The whole coverage of Nusantara region from historical sources is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Nations that constituted Nusantara in the 13th-14th centuries

| CORE NATIONS | SUBDIVISIONS |
|--|---|
| <i>Melayu</i> | : Jambi, Palembang, Toba, Darmasraya, Daerah Kandis, Kahwas, Minangkabau, Siak, Rokan, Kampar, Pane Kampe, Haru, Mandailing, Tamihang, Perlak Padang Lwas, Samudra, Lamuri, Batan, Lampung and Barus |
| <i>Tanjungnegara</i> | : Kapuas-Katingan, Sampit, Kota Lingga, Kota Waringin, Sambas, Lawal, Kadandangan, Landa Samandang, Tirem, Sedu, Barune (Brunei), Kalka, Saludung, Solot, Pasir Barito, Sawaku, Tabalung, Tanjung Kutei, Malano |
| <i>Hujung Medini</i> | : Pahang, Langkasuka, Saimwang, Kelantan, Trengganu, Johor, Paka, Muar, Dungun, Tumasik, Kelang, Kedah, Jelai, Kanjapiniran |
| <i>Jawa</i> | : Bali, Badahulu, Lo Gajah, Gurun, Sukun, Taliwang, pulau Sapi, Dompoo, Sang Hyang Api, Bima, Serantau, Hutan Kendali, Pulau Gurun, Lombok Merah, Sasak, Bantayan Bantayan, kota Luwuk, Udamakatraya and the other islands in its surrounding |
| <i>Makkasar</i> | : Buton, Banggawi, Kunir, Galian, Salayar, Sumba, Solot, Muar, Wanda (n), Ambon, Maluku, Waning, Serantau, Timor and some other islands in its surrounding |
| ADJACENT NATIONS | |
| <i>Dwipantara</i> (archipelago partners) | : Syangka together with Ayudyapura, as well as Darmanagari, Marutma, Rajapura, as well as Singanagari, Campa, Kemboja and Yawana as acquainting friends |

Source: *Nāgara-Kērtāgama* as edited by Slamet Mulyana (1979, pp.279-281)

As shown in Table 1, based on indigenous historical source (*Nāgara-Kērtāgama*), the discussions related to Nusantara incorporate six major divisions of nations. They are **Melayu**, **Tanjungnegara**, **Hujung Medini**, **Jawa**, **Makassar** and **Dwipantara**. It denotes an indigenous geographical region which covers a vast area of south-eastern part of present Asian region. Its geopolitical area coverage could be conceptualized by amalgamating all those countries under the subordinate of Nusantara. The boundaries of Nusantara can be configured by tracking the countries located at the extreme end of northern, southern, western and eastern parts of Nusantara. A complete Nusantara boundaries appear when all those extreme end countries are combined.

The boundary of Nusantara at its northern part is Isthmus of Kra, southern Thailand. *Nāgara-Kērtāgama* mentions about a country name Langkasuka. Langkasuka was an indigenous nation country located at Southern Thailand. It was one of the countries under Hujung Medini. The boundary of Nusantara at its southern part is western Papua New Guinea. This is because *Nāgara-Kērtāgama* mentions about a country by the name of 'Waning'. Waning is an ancient name of the western Papua New Guinea. It is located at the extreme end of Nusantara at its southern part. Waning was one of the countries under Makassar. The boundary of Nusantara at its western part is Barus. It is located at the extreme end of Nusantara at its western part. Barus was one of the countries under Melayu. Historically, before the founding of Malacca Sultanate around 1400, the center of Melayu was in the vicinity of Palembang and Jambi. The boundary of Nusantara at its eastern part is Manila. *Nāgara-Kērtāgama* mentions about a country by the name of 'Saludung' (or 'Salurong'). It was an ancient name of present Manila. It is located at the extreme end of Nusantara at its eastern part. 'Saludung' (atau 'Salurong') was one of the countries under *Tanjungnegara* centered in Kalimantan.

Nusantara is a combination of those extreme ends of each country. Furthermore, *Nāgara-Kērtāgama* also mentions about the existence of 'foreign countries'. They were Syangka, Ayudyapura, Darmanagari, Marutma, Rajapura, Singanagari, Campa, Kemboja and Yawana. This Javanese Majapahit source states that these countries were the acquainting friends of Nusantara, and they were known as *Dwipantara* (archipelago partners). The names of those nations in contemporary time are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: The names of divisions and subdivisions of nations that constituted nusantara (13th-14 centuries) in modern, contemporary time

| ANCIENT NAMES of CORE NATIONS | CONTEMPORARY NAMES |
|--|---|
| <i>Melayu</i> | : Entire Sumatera |
| <i>Tanjungnegara</i> | : Kalimatan, Brunei and southern Philippines |
| <i>Hujung Medini</i> | : Malay Peninsula, Isthmus of Kra, and Singapore |
| <i>Jawa</i> | : Java Island and other surrounding islands |
| <i>Makasar Isles</i> | : Sulawesi, Western Papua New Guinea (Waning) |
| ADJACENT NATIONS | |
| <i>Dwipantara</i> (archipelago partners) | : Sri Lanka, Myanmar and China or <i>Sin</i> (in general term of Syangka), Ayuthia, Thailand (Ayodhyapura), Dharmarajanagara/Ligor (Darmanagari), Martaban, southern Thailand (Marutma), Rajjpuri, southern Thailand (Rajapura), the bay of Menam River (Singhaagari), Cambodia (Campa), and Annam, Vietnam (Yawana) |

The scrutiny on its divisions and subdivisions shows that the Nusantara region in general is very much tallied with the present day of Southeast Asian region, which is currently synonymous to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Thus, issues on humanity and social aspects are enveloped within this region. To be more precise, Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei Darussalam, Singapore and the Philippines are the countries covered in this journal.

Additionally, this journal will indirectly involve Thailand, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos and China (or Sin), as long as they have issues related to Nusantara. This is because, as noted in *Nāgara-Kērtāgama*, these countries have a very long history of relationship with the states in Nusantara region to the

extent that it has a special name called *Dwipantara*, which means other archipelago partners or acquainting friends of Nusantara. Until today, it operates on the same basis of present ASEAN relationships and partnership with other nations, such as Japan, China, India, the United States of America, European United and so forth.

The second most important source that describes the meaning of the Nusantara is *Pararaton*, the Javanese Majapahit source which was written in the 14th century—but at a later time from the writer of *Nāgara-Kērtāgama*. The descriptions in *Pararaton* about Nusantara are shown below:

He, Gajah Mada Patih Amangkubhumi does not want to enjoy a palapa (breaking the fast). He, Gajah Mada said, "If you have beaten Nusantara, I (will) give up the fast. If you have beaten Gurun, Seram, Tanjungpura, Haru, Pahang, Dampo, Bali, Sunda, Palembang, Tumasik, so I (will) enjoy a palapa (breaking fast).

(Raden Mas Mangkudimedja & Harjana Hadipranata 1979, p.111).

It is clearly indicated that *Pararaton* has provided almost identical facts and information to *Nāgara-Kērtāgama*. The leader, Sira Gajah Madapatih Amangkubhumi in *Pararaton* is a figure called Gajah Mada in *Nāgara-Kērtāgama*. Similarly, the coverage area of the archipelago in *Pararaton* is approximately equal to the coverage provided in the *Nāgara-Kērtāgama*. The only difference is that *Nāgara-Kērtāgama* is more elaborative than *Pararaton*. According to *Pararaton*, Nusantara is a combination of the states within the region which include Gurun, Seram, Tanjungpura, Haru, Pahang, Dampo, Bali, Sunda, Palembang, Tumasik. Correspondingly in *Nāgara-Kērtāgama*, Nusantara in *Pararaton* is a listing of the countries that make up Southeast Asia today.

The third most significant source that elucidates the meaning of Nusantara is *Sejarah Melayu* or Malay Annals (1612), a Malay writing about Government of Malacca in the 15th century till 16th century. The description of Nusantara in *Sejarah Melayu* or Malay Annals is as follows:

Sahibul saga stated it is the word Betara Majapahit. Then he begets with the daughter of the king of the Bukit Seguntang, the two men, and the old one, his name is Raden Inu Merta Wangsa, then was the celebrated as king in Majapahit; and the young one whose name is Raden Mas Amari, then was crowned in Majapahit, as the state is huge. Later, Betara Majapahit had already gone, so the old son replaced Betara Majapahit, the kingdom was once great kingdom of the king in those days, all the land of Java, all of them in his law, and all the kings Nusantara was subject to his own. After Betara Majapahit Singapore heard about the great city, its king no longer worship[ped] the king, and the king of Singapore is the cousin of him.

(*Sejarah Melayu*, ed. Shellabear, 1977, p. 32).

Sejarah Melayu gives general account on Nusantara. However, it provides information on the nature of Nusantara as a vast region in Southeast Asia.

WHY NUSANTARA?

‘Nusantara’, not ‘South Asian’, is chosen as the name of this journal as it has a specific reason. While the term ‘Southeast Asia’ is foreign, ‘Nusantara’ is a ‘sacred’ term which carries a very deep historical and cultural sentimental values among the natives of this region. As mentioned earlier, it fertilizes a form of sense of belonging that is often pronounced as ‘a compatriot kin’ (bangsa serumpun) based on their common ancestors, spoken language, beliefs, way of life, and skin colours, besides their domiciles.

All known indigenous historical sources (especially *Nāgara-Kērtāgama*, *Pararaton* and the Malay Annals/*Sejarah Melayu*) prove that Nusantara is not an ordinary local myth but rather a geopolitical conception. The authors of the sources stress that at one time the whole nations of this region had already acquired a unified geopolitical region concept long before the West introduced the term ‘Southeast Asia’.

That unified region of Nusantara has been a long rooted establishment within the indigenous cultural and historical epoch. Its existence can be traced back from Kalidasa, an ancient Indian record dated 400 A.D. According to Levi (1931), as well as many other observers (e.g. Coedes, 1965; Gonda, 1973; Wolters, 1967; Pande, 1999; Behera, 1999, and Linehan 1949), Nusantara has been a unified region which is identical to Kun-lun in ancient Chinese source (see I-Tsing, 1896) which codified it as referring to Southeast Asian region.

Nusantara has played an important role in Indonesian struggles before its independence since early 1920's. The term 'Nusantara' had been capitalized by nationalist circles such as E.F. Douwes Dekker, Ki Hadjar Dewantara and Sukarno (to name some of them) to stir nationalistic feeling among various communities. In this political sense, 'Nusantara' was introduced by Ki Hadjar Dewantara (1889-1959), the national hero who was the founder of Taman Siswa, one of early Indonesian intellectual rings, after Brandes (1897), a Dutch scholar, published the *Nāgara-Kērtāgama* manuscript (1365) in Dutch. Since then, Nusantara had been chosen by those nationalist circles, especially Sukarno and his fellow nationalists, to rename the new independence nation-state to supplant the word 'Netherlands Indies' of colonial Dutch invention (Vlekke, 1959; Resink, 1960; Jones, 1973). In Indonesian nationalistic discourses, even today, Nusantara is perceived as synonymous to 'Indonesia', a name used when they proclaimed independence on 17 August 1945 in Jakarta.

Currently, however, its importance is more than to Indonesian pre-independent political interests. Nusantara is being distinguished as not the property of Indonesians alone but of other indigenous nations in this region too, such as Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, Southern Thailand, the Philippines, and Singapore. This is based on their inclusion under the sway of Javanese Majapahit in 13th and 14th centuries. In fact, it is questionable to claim Nusantara as being dominated by one particular entity because according to *Nāgara-Kērtāgama*, *Pararaton* and *Malay Annals*, Nusantara refers to 'other island'. By this notion, hence, it excludes Java. In Jones' (1973, p.93) words:

The respectable antiquity of Nusantara is attested, for it occurs in the 14th century *Nāgara-Kērtāgama*, though there in the sense of 'other island' that is, excluding Java. It did not refer to what we now know as Indonesia; indeed, it is of questionable value to speak of such a concept as "Indonesia" prior to Dutch colonization.

It is acknowledged that the debate among the various parties on the status of the archipelago is still pending. Somehow, its existence is not a fairy tale; rather, it is a geographical concept that is tangibly existed; the fact that cannot be neglected. This goes back to all the available resources, especially *Nāgara-Kērtāgama*, *Pararaton* and *Sejarah Melayu*/ *Malay Annals* which have inscribed so clearly about it as a union territory or region in Southeast Asia.

Regardless of perception given by various parties, this journal inhibits any predisposition and inaccurate debates or places any sides or favour to certain parties. The journal emphasizes debates, arguments and interpretations which are strongly grounded on authentic and verifiable sources.

Based on the historical sources highlighted, it is profoundly stressed that Nusantara is a proper noun which has a specific meaning as discussed earlier in this paper. Its meaning cannot be drawn out from logical guess. In geographical sense, Nusantara is comparable to Alam Melayu (the Melayu World) because during Saliendra's (7th century) and Srivijaya's (6th–12th century) periods, its territorial coverage was the same as Nusantara; under the Malay imperial. From this perspective, Nusantara, although originally was a Javanese concept, has currently stood as an appellation to the word 'Southeast Asia'. The nations are currently belonged to ASEAN nations. One another note, although this journal focuses on humanity and social issues in Nusantara region, it does not mean that it is binding to Orientalism formulated by Edward Said (2014), which denotes all senses and images in the oriental nations are created and referred to the West than to the orients themselves. The visibilities of oriental are represented based on the Western thought and techniques. Should this be what the word really meant, then 'Nusantara' is a descriptive phrase, not a proper noun, because this term can be used to refer to any place which is located 'between' or 'intermediate' to other things. Hence, it is not to be bound to Orientalism formulated by Edward Said.

Debates on the properties of Nusantara and the concept of Orientalism may still rage and have long been the subjects of contention. Thus, the choices are up to the authors. The main salient task of this journal is to provide opportunities to everybody to channel their ideas to unearth the untold truth in academic sense to cultivate knowledge in disciplines of humanities and social sciences. We welcome respectable authorities as well as junior writers from all over the world to entail their good and original works in the journal. As mentioned earlier, this journal is barely about Nusantara, but it enfolds the whole range of humanities and social sciences issues in this region embracing culture, history, language, education, social, politics, communication, psychology, development, tourism, economy, arts, science, technology, and international relation (to mention some).

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