

DANNY WONG TZE KEN

The Cham Arrivals in Malaysia: Distant Memories and Rekindled Links

When Phnom Penh and Saigon fell in April 1975, throngs of refugees fled Cambodia and Vietnam in the face of incoming Communist regimes in the two countries. The refugees left their countries for fear of living under what they considered oppressive governments; in some cases they were enemies of the Communists as they had taken part in the fighting against the Communists. This marked the period of mass exodus (1975–1982) when more than a million people left these two countries as refugees. Many left in a very deplorable and perilous manner. Crammed into small vessels which were hardly seaworthy, many had to face the threats of storms and pirate attacks. While many made their way to neighbouring countries such as Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and Philippines, others were less fortunate and perished at sea. In these countries, known as transit countries, the refugees were detained in refugee camps where they were screened and processed by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) before being settled in a third country.

In Malaysia, it was estimated that more than 250,000 Indochinese refugees passed through the various transit points in the country and were resettled elsewhere.¹ While the Malaysian Government, for various reasons – including fears of racial imbalance and security – generally did not allow the refugees to settle in the country, an exception was made for 9,704 of

1. For a study on Indochinese refugee arrivals to Malaysia, see Danny Wong Tze Ken, *Vietnam–Malaysia Relations during the Cold War, 1945–1990*, Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1995, pp. 93-97, 126-130 & 152-155.

them. This group of refugees, ethnically known as Chams or Islam Kemboja (Muslim Cambodians), were, at the time of their arrival, Muslims or practitioners of the Islamic faith. This paper will examine the circumstances that led to the Malaysian Government's decision to accept the Chams. Focus will be given to the two reasons generally provided by the Malaysian officials: humanitarian reasons and also the common Muslim brotherhood factor. This paper will venture to propose that apart from these two, a very crucial third factor prompted the Malaysian Government to accept these Chams: centuries-old ethnic and family ties. Along with the Islamic religion factor, this third factor formed the two main reasons behind the Malaysian Government's decision to allow the Chams to remain in the country.

This paper will explore the origins of the Cham refugees and how they came to settle in Malaysia. For the first time, first-hand information from the personal papers of Mubin Sheppard deposited in the National Archives of Malaysia was consulted to obtain a fuller picture of what transpired.²

The Refugee Problem

Malaysia's experience with the Indochinese refugees was a mixed one. As an ally of the Saigon regime in Vietnam and the government of, first, Sihanouk and, later, Lon Nol in Cambodia, Malaysia had always been sympathetic to the plight of these two countries which were facing severe threats from the Communist elements of the political divide. Malaysia's position was essentially shaped by its own long struggle against a Communist attempt to take power, including a long twelve-year war against the Communist armed insurgency, known as the Emergency (1948–1960). Thus, when the Indochinese refugees first landed on the shores of Peninsular Malaysia, particularly along the coasts of the northeast states of Terengganu and Kelantan in April 1975, they were looked upon with great sympathy. Help and assistance were readily made available. Malaysia's humanitarian assistance to the Vietnamese refugees even won praise from Hanoi.³ However, as the number of refugees began to grow and showed no sign of abating the once sympathetic attitude began to change towards negative reactions. No longer seen as people who were in need of help, the refugees were increasingly looked upon as possible threats to local and national security.⁴ Many of these refugees left their home with vast amounts of cash

2. The (Tan Sri) Mubin Sheppard Papers are listed as SP38 in the Personal Papers Collections (Surat Persendirian) of the Malaysian National Archives. The papers concerning the Chams are part of Sheppard's documentation of his role in bringing the Chams to Malaysia. Sheppard was acting in the capacity of Honorary Secretary of the Malaysian Muslim Welfare Organisation (Pertubuhan Kebajikan Islam Malaysia/PERKIM).

3. *New Straits Times*, 11 June 1975.

4. *New Straits Times*, 29 November 1978.

and jewellery. During their stay in the refugee camps, many traded with the locals for subsistence items, causing a sudden rise in prices of necessary goods in the local market. Some of the refugees were former military personnel who arrived with their military hardware, including some very advanced weapons which could prove to be extremely dangerous should they fell into the hands of wrong parties, especially at a time when Malaysia was still facing armed rebellions from the outlawed Malayan Communist Party.⁵

From the beginning, the Malaysian Government's stance on the refugee issue was very clear. While the country was playing an important role as a first asylum country in helping the UNHCR to process the refugees who arrived on its shores, the government had made it clear that it would not allow any refugees to settle in the country. In 1977 the refugees were reclassified as illegal immigrants under the Immigration Act, thereby denying them entry into Malaysia. The refugee camps were also classified as restricted areas and refugees were barred from moving freely beyond the boundaries of the camps. This decision had much to do with government security concerns. First, the refugees were mainly either ethnic Vietnamese or ethnic Chinese residing in the two countries. There were also some Khmers. All these people were ethnically different from the people of Malaysia, except for the ethnic Chinese. For a country like Malaysia where the question of ethnicity was crucial and could be sensitive, any influx of new people, particularly the Vietnamese and the ethnic Chinese from Vietnam, would tilt the sensitive ethnic balance. Furthermore, these two groups were unlikely to be assimilated with the indigenous community.

The refugee issue also created problems in international relations when Malaysia and Indonesia both refused to accept further arrivals and began to push (towed) the refugees' vessels out of their waters into that of the other nation. The matter took on an even stranger turn when Mahathir Mohamad, the then Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia, allegedly threatened to shoot the refugees, something which he later clarified as trying 'to shoo' them off.⁶ It was obvious that after several years of dealing with the refugee problem, it had taken its toll on the Malaysian Government. However, the matter continued to drag on even longer as more Vietnamese, mainly southerners, unwilling to live under the new Communist-led government continued to turn themselves into refugees by leaving the country illegally.⁷ While the

5. *New Straits Times*, 17 January 1978.

6. *New Straits Times*, 25 March 1979.

7. Many in the Malaysian Government suspected that the mass exodus of the Vietnamese could have even been encouraged by the Vietnamese government. The arrival of a Vietnamese ship named *Hai Hong* on 14 November 1978 with 2,500 refugees onboard was a classic case. It was inconceivable that so many people could escape the attention of the ever-watchful Vietnamese authorities. See *New Straits Times*, 15 November 1978.

media continued to harp on the issues of Indochinese refugees who came by sea, another group of refugees was making their way to Malaysia, albeit under different circumstances, and were treated differently. They were the Chams, who are the focus of this paper.

Very little was known locally about the arrival of the Chams. As most of them were from Cambodia and most were Muslims, they were generally known as Muslim Cambodians (Kemboja) or Malay Cambodians (Melayu Kemboja). Until the mid-1990s these terms were used in the local media to describe this group of people. It was only much later that they began to be known as Melayu Champa or Cham Malays. This was a departure from the practice of referring to the religion of the people to using ethnicity as a distinguishing feature. Interestingly, this change of name in the public sphere was partly attributed to the academic programmes promoted by the *École française d'Extrême-Orient* (French School of Asian Studies or EFEO) that had begun to study the relationship between the Chams and the Malays earnestly since the setting up of an EFEO Office in Kuala Lumpur in 1988. Thanks to the many EFEO publications on the subject, as well as its series of public seminars, this notion of Malay-Cham identity was reinforced and the name stuck.

Unlike most Vietnamese refugees who left the country by boat, the Chams mainly came to Malaysia overland. Two groups of Chams came to Malaysia. The first originated from among the Cham communities in Vietnam but had travelled to Cambodia before leaving that country. Many Chams from the coastal areas in places like Saigon, Phan Rang and Nha Trang moved to border towns such as Chau Doc and Tay Ninh before crossing over to Cambodia. From Cambodia, they made their way to Thailand before coming to Malaysia. The second group came from Cambodia. Known as Cambodian Chams, they consisted mainly of Chams who had steadily migrated from Vietnam to places like Kampong Cham and areas north of Phnom Penh since the decline of Champa in 1471. Both groups came to Malaysia via Thailand.

Historically, the Chams were inhabitants of central Vietnam. Between the second century AD and 1835, the Chams had their own ruling class and kingdom. However, due to a series of wars with Vietnam, the Chams began to experience decline and by 1835, the Chams in Vietnam were confined to the region around present-day Ninh Thuan and Binh Thuan provinces. The Chams who were already in Cambodia were the remnants or descendants of Chams who had fled there since the first major defeat of Champa by the Vietnamese in 1471. From that time, a pattern of Chams crossing over to Cambodia whenever a major crisis took place in their country seems to have become established. Most crossed through the border town of Chau Doc before settling in one of the many Cham settlements in Cambodia. This practice continued even during the Vietnam War.⁸

Cham Emigration to Malaysia

When news of the fall of Phnom Penh and, later, Saigon reached Malaysia, the concern of the Malaysian Government was to manage and overcome the problem of the mass arrivals of refugees by sea. It was not long before news concerning another group of refugees stranded in Thailand began to reach Kuala Lumpur. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Home Affairs were informed of the existence of a group of Cham Muslim refugees who had requested settlement in Malaysia instead of being processed for a third country. These refugees were part of the larger refugee exodus from Indochina who had found their way into Thailand hoping to be resettled in the United States and elsewhere. However, unlike their counterparts who wanted to move to countries like the United States, Australia and France,⁹ this group of refugees wanted to come to Malaysia.¹⁰

Despite being well treated by the Thai Government which channelled help through Muslim organizations in that country, these Chams put forward requests for asylum in Malaysia. It must be emphasized that these requests were made not merely because of the common Muslim fraternity that had definitely endeared Malaysia to these people; the Secretary General of the OIC (Organisation of Islamic Conference) was the former Malaysian Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj. But more importantly, many of these refugees had relations in Malaysia, particularly in the state of Kelantan and also some in Terengganu. There was also a legal issue pertaining to the status of the Chams as refugees. At the time Cambodia and Vietnam fell to the Communist regimes, ASEAN countries had not ratified the United Nations Refugee Convention of 1951 and the Refugee Protocol of 1967. Hence, the refugees were considered illegal immigrants and were not allowed to remain in these countries. They would either be resettled in a third country or ran the risk of being sent back to Cambodia when peace was re-established.¹¹

8. Even as late as the 1960s, Cham fugitives from southern Vietnam crossed over the borders to Cambodia. Many joined the FULRO (Front Unifié de Lutte des Races Opprimées) which championed the political rights of the highland minorities, including the Chams. Some of the Chams also served in the Cambodian army. See Po Dharma and Mak Phœun, *Du FLM au FULRO : Une Lutte des Minorités du sud indochinois, 1955–1975*, Paris, Les Indes Savantes, 2006.

9. Some Cambodian Cham refugees decided to move on to the third receiving countries such as the United States, France or Australia. However, their numbers were small. See various secretariat reports for the executive committee meetings of the Malaysian Red Crescent Society, 1976, in Personal Papers of Mubin Sheppard, SP38/a 52/6 (Arkib Negara Malaysia).

10. In a series of interviews conducted with former Cham refugees now settled in Malaysia, many expressed the view that they decided to come to Malaysia as they preferred to live in a Muslim country. Interviews at Kampung Kubu Gajah, Sungai Buluh, November 2008.

11. Through the intervention of the Vietnamese Army in late 1978, the Democratic

Meanwhile, the Malaysian government was beseeched by many welfare organizations and even Malay political parties to take measures to assist the Cham Muslim refugees. In the forefront was PERKIM (Pertubuhan Kebajikan Islam Malaysia/Muslim Welfare Organisation of Malaysia) which was extremely concerned about the welfare of the Chams.¹² The Malaysian Government was also urged by the OIC Secretariat to accept the Cham Muslim refugees on a temporarily basis, especially because Malaysia is the nearest Southeast Asian country with a large Muslim population. It was therefore based on the two main reasons of humanitarian factors and common Muslim fraternity that the Malaysian Government made the decision to accept the Cham Muslim as refugees on a temporarily resettlement basis. Steps were then taken to bring them into the country.

The first step taken was for the Malaysian Government – through the Malaysian Embassy in Bangkok with cooperation from the Thai Government and the UNHCR – to visit refugee camps to identify the Cham Muslim refugees and make offers to bring them to Malaysia. This was carried out as early as June 1975, barely two months after the fall of Cambodia to the Khmer Rouge regime. According to Haji Ahmad bin Yahya, a well-known religious teacher who was an advisor for Islamic affairs in Cambodia prior to the Khmer Rouge rule, the Chams chose Malaysia because it is a strong Islamic country with strong religious leanings.¹³ Such admission on the part of the refugees clearly demonstrated the role of Islam in the refugees' acceptance of the offer of temporary asylum in Malaysia. When the news of the Malaysian offer reached the ears of the Cham Muslims refugees who were still in the various refugee camps in Thailand, it was like a god-sent opportunity. Many took up the offer and towards the end of 1975, 1,279 Cham refugees were accepted into Malaysia. The process of bringing in Cham refugees continued well into the late 1980s, resulting in a total of 9,704.¹⁴

Kampuchea Government led by the Khmer Rouge was ousted. A new regime under Heng Samrin supported by Vietnamese was set up. By 1980, taking advantage of the relative peace, many Cambodian refugees in Thailand, including Cham Muslim refugees, were repatriated to Cambodia. See Milton Osborne, Beverly Male Gordon, Lawrie W.J. O'Malley, *Refugees: Four Political Case-Studies*, Canberra: The Australian National University, 1981, p. 6.

12. "Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj, President PERKIM to Tuan Haji Alias, Working Secretary, PERKIM", 12 May 1975, in Mubin Sheppard Personal Papers SP38/a 52/6 (Arkib Negara Malaysia).

13. Abdullah bin Mohamed (Nakula), "Keturunan Melayu di Kemboja dan Vietnam: Hubungannya dengan Semenanjung dengan Tumpuan Khas kepada Negeri Kelantan", *Majalah Warisan Kelantan*, VIII, 1989, p. 6.

14. This is a figure provided by Dato' Nik Mohamed Nik Salleh in his paper entitled "Kedatangan dan Kehadiran Masyarakat Melayu Cam di Malaysia". Dato' Nik Mohamed was formerly Deputy Secretary General of the Ministry of Home Affairs responsible for bringing in the Cham refugees. Personal communication, May 2008.

Table 1: Cham Refugee Arrivals in Malaysia, 1975–1988

Year	No. of Refugees
1975	1,279
1977	180
1979	1,079
1980	1,923
1981	638
1983	587
1984	118
1985	1,012
1986–88	2,888
Total	9,704

Source: Unpublished paper by Nik Mohamed Nik Salleh.

However, it must be pointed out that the first group of Cham refugees had arrived in Malaysia in April 1975. This group of 27 persons were the pioneers of the Chams who came to Malaysia. Their arrival preceded those who came under the Malaysian-initiated resettlement programme. According to Mubin Sheppard, the group who arrived in April 1975 were charged immigration pass fees by the Malaysian Immigration Department upon their arrival at the Thai–Malaysian border.¹⁵

The Cham refugees who came under the resettlement programme introduced by the Malaysian Government were brought in by boat from Thailand. The process of accepting the refugees was carried out by representatives appointed by the Malaysian Government. Among those heavily involved during the initial period were Haji Ahmad Nordin (Secretary General of PERKIM), S. Sampatkumar (official representative of UNHCR) and Ruby Lee, the Secretary General of the Malaysian Red Crescent Society. They were tasked with the job of identifying Cham refugees through a general interview process. Once accepted, the refugees were put on a transfer programme that would eventually bring them into Malaysia.

Malaysians’ introduction to the presence of the Chams came through a series of articles published in the *Islamic Herald* and *Majallah Kelantan* in 1975. The first article was written by Mubin Sheppard, who introduced the Chams as people of a former great kingdom which had gone into decline and exile. He also highlighted the historical linkages between the Chams and the Malays, as well as the religious links between Kelantan and Indochina. However, the article fell short of highlighting the efforts of the Malaysian

15. Mubin Sheppard to Tunku Abdul Rahman, May 1975, in SP38/a 52/6.

Government in offering asylum to these Cham Muslims.¹⁶ At the time of the publication of the article, Mubin Sheppard had just returned from his fact-finding trip to Thailand where he met the Cham refugees and submitted a report to the Tunku which laid the foundation for Malaysia's (and PERKIM)'s programme in bringing the Muslim Chams to Malaysia.

In August 1975 the *Islamic Herald* published an article by Tunku Abdul Rahman in which he made an appeal to Malaysians for financial assistance to help the Muslim refugees from Cambodia.¹⁷ The Tunku also personally visited the Chams who had settled earlier in Pengkalan Chepa in Kelantan.

Writing in the December 1975 issue of the *Islamic Herald*, Haji Ahmad Nordin, PERKIM's secretary general, highlighted the existence of a group of Cham refugees still in camps in Thailand. "Apart from about 1,200 Cham refugees who are now living in North Malaysia, and some others who are reported to be still in Thailand, we have no news of this very large number of our Muslim Neighbours in Cambodia, but we understand that the 185 Mosques have been converted to other uses, or destroyed."¹⁸ In subsequent visits to the refugee camps in Thailand where the Chams were congregated, Ahmad Nordin and his team, comprising R. Sampatkumar (UNHCR Resident Representative in Malaysia) and Ruby Lee (Secretary General of the Malaysian Red Crescent Society), met a number of Cham refugees who expressed a wish to join the 1,500 fellow refugees already in Malaysia. The last statement was a very important one: the desire to come to Malaysia, and not compelled to come nor forced to come. "Our task was to interview those who wanted to come to Malaysia so as to make sure that no one was being pressured to go to anywhere against his will and that the 'doubtful' cases would not be included."¹⁹

It is interesting to note that, despite being clearly identified as Chams, these refugees were referred to at various times as Muslim refugees from Cambodia; yet on other occasions they were simply known as Chams.

The Malaysian Government's acceptance of the Chams was indeed a rather special one. Officially, the government's statement on the Indochinese refugees reflected its concerns on the possible threat posed by the refugees, especially when the majority were ethnic Vietnamese and ethnic Chinese. This had resulted in Malaysia only taking on the role of a transit country where refugees were screened and processed before being sent to a third

16. Mubin Sheppard, "Our Muslim Neighbours", *Islamic Herald*, 1(2), June 1975, pp. 6–7.

17. Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj, "Muslim Refugees from Cambodia", *Islamic Herald*, 1(4), August 1975, p. 11.

18. Ahmad Nordin, "Interviewing the Muslim Cambodian Refugees in Thailand", *Islamic Herald*, 2(9), January 1977, p. 14.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

country for resettlement. The exception was the Cham community whom the Malaysian Government received with open arms. This exception was made possible because the Chams are of Malay stock, and are Muslims.

When the Chams first arrived in the country, they were settled at a refugee camp at Kemumin in Pengkalan Chepa, near Kota Bahru, the state capital of the northeastern state of Kelantan. The camp was later renamed Taman Putra, Kemumin, or Putra Garden, Kemumin from the name of Malaysia's first Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra al-Haj who was at the time the Secretary General of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC). The camp was declared opened by the Tunku in June 1976.

The camp was governed by a special committee known as the Special Committee for Refugees. It was different from other refugee-related committees in that it consisted of representatives from the Ministry of Home Affairs, the police force, the Immigration Department, the Kelantan State Secretariat, Ministry of Social Welfare and PERKIM. The main difference was the inclusion of the local Kelantan governments and PERKIM. This clearly demonstrated the nature of the issue – the Islam fraternity factor as the primary reason for the Chams' acceptance for resettlement in Malaysia. Upon completion of their rehabilitation programme, the new arrivals were transferred to different settlements in the country where they were expected to fend for themselves.

Old Cham–Malay Links

This segment will explore the theme of distant memories and recent rekindled relations in the context of the relations between the Chams and the Malays, another major reason for the resettlement of Cham refugees in Malaysia.

Even as common adherence to the Islamic faith was a principal reason why the Muslim Chams chose to come to Malaysia, a second reason was that many of the Chams were related to people in the Malay Peninsula, particularly in Kelantan. In other instances, they had known of the link between Kelantan and the Malay Peninsula to their community since very early times. In many ways these links were also tied to the Islamic faith, with Kelantan and the Malay Peninsula being a centre for Islamic learning and the source of many Malay-related families in Cambodia (and Vietnam).²⁰

The importance of Kelantan to the Muslim Cham community can apparently be traced to very early times. According to Abdullah Mohamed, the decline of the Chams and the annexation of their territories by the Vietnamese had caused the Chams to be despaired and many began to turn

20. Another place of similar importance would be Pattani in southern Thailand which also shared many common cultural and religious practices with the Kelantanese.

away from their religious practices. It was during this time (likely to be between the fall of Vijaya in 1471 and the annexation of the last Cham territory in 1832) that Muslim preachers and missionaries from the Malay Peninsula, especially Kelantan, began to arrive in the former land of Champa and Cambodia, and started to work among the Cham communities. Through the efforts of these early missionaries, whose names are no longer remembered, the Chams in Cambodia began to return to the right way of religious practices and the Muslim Chams regained their sense of purpose.²¹ Even though the names of the preachers and missionaries were lost to posterity, their place of origin – Kelantan and the Malay Peninsula – was known to the Chams. Thus the Chams, especially the Muslim Chams in Cambodia, held Kelantan dear to their hearts, so much so that when Malaya became independent of Britain in 1957, it was celebrated among the Cambodian Muslim Chams as “Kelantan is now independent!”²²

The old links between the Malays from Kelantan and the Chams were sustained over the years by the visits of many religious teachers and missionaries from Kelantan to Vietnam and Cambodia where their main purpose was to propagate the Islamic faith to the Chams. These visits were not unitary in terms of direction and many Chams also made the effort to send their children to Kelantan for religious education. In fact, it was the desire of many Chams from both Cambodia and Vietnam to have their sons study at the religious establishments in Kelantan.

One of the earliest to observe this flow of religious teachers and missionaries from Kelantan to Champa and Cambodia was Husin bin Yunus. Husin, a native of Kampong Cham, was sent by his parents to study religious teachings at Kampung Pulau Chondong, Kota Bahru, Kelantan in 1957. Later, he continued his studies at Pasir Mas before returning to Cambodia in 1964. He became a religious teacher and remained so until 1971 when life was becoming increasingly unbearable. He then decided to return to Kelantan with his family. It was Husin’s observations and research that yielded valuable information which helped to strengthen the notion of the old and lasting links between Kelantan and the Cham communities in both Cambodia and Vietnam. It was drawing upon the memory of this linkages that had eventually helped the 1975 Cham refugees to make the decision to choose Malaysia as their destination after leaving Cambodia or Vietnam. Husin bin Yunus’ research provided us with a list of 25 male Muslim missionaries and seven female missionaries.²³

21. Abdullah bin Mohamed (Nakula), “Keturunan Melayu di Kemboja dan Vietnam: Hubungannya dengan Semenanjung dengan Tumpuan Khas kepada Negeri Kelantan”, *Majalah Warisan Kelantan*, VIII, 1989, p. 24.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 27.

Table 2: Male Muslim Missionaries to the Chams from Kelantan

No	Name	Visit to Vietnam/ Cambodia	Year	Origin
1.	Ungku Omar	Cambodia	c. 1580–1590s	Kelantan
2.	Laksamana Haji Abdul Hamid @ Datuk Bamso	Cambodia	1687	Jembal, Kelantan
3.	Laksamana Haji Omar* (Brother of Hamid)	Cambodia	c. 1695–1700	Jembal, Kelantan
4.	Tuk Guru Haji Hassan bin Abdullah @ Ong Hassan	Cambodia	c. 1849	Ligor, then Kelantan
5.	Tuk Guru Syeikh Ismail bin Syeikh Hussin @Tuk Nguk	Cambodia	c. 1860s	Pasir Mas, Kelantan
6.	Tuk Guru Haji Wan Salleh bin Haji Omar	Cambodia	c. 1870s	Pasir Mas, Kelantan
7.	Tuk Guru Haji Wan Ngah Wan Mat Yunus	Cambodia, Kelantan	1889–1917	Pasir Puteh, Kelantan
8.	Tuk Guru Haji Syeikh Ismail bin Muhammad Zain	Cambodia	c. 1890	Kota Bharu, Kelantan
9.	Tuk Guru Haji Wan Ismail bin Wan Musa	From Mecca to Cambodia	1892	Pasir Mas, Kelantan
10.	Tuk Guru Haji Wan Ahmad bin Wan Ismail	From Mecca to Cambodia, Vietnam	1892	Pasir Puteh, Kelantan
11.	Tuk Guru Haji Daud bin Lebai Hussin	From Mecca to Cambodia	1893	Tumpat, Kelantan
12.	Tuk Guru Haji Ismail bin Yusuf	From Mecca to Cambodia, Vietnam	c. 1896	Kota Bharu, Kelantan
13.	Tuk Guru Haji Ibrahim bin Haji Yusuf	From Mecca to Cambodia, Kelantan	1903–1905	Kota Bharu, Kelantan
14.	Tuk Guru Haji Said bin Haji Isa	Cambodia	1905	Kota Bharu, Kelantan
15.	Tuk Guru Haji Awang bin Muhammad @Haji Awang Lemak @ Tuk Kemboja Tua	From Mecca to Cambodia, Kelantan	1912–1932	Kampung Terap, Kelantan
16.	Tuk Guru Haji Ahmad bin Haji Abdul Manaf @ Tuk Kemboja	From Mecca to Cambodia	1912–1922	Kota Bharu, Kelantan
17.	Tuk Guru Haji Shamsuddin bin Syeikh Ismail *(son of Syeikh Ismail, No. 7)	Cambodia – Kelantan - Cambodia	Returned to Cambodia 1920	Cambodia – Ketereh, Kelantan
18.	Tuk Guru Haji Wan Ahmad bin Haji Wan Muhammad Zain@Al-Arif Billah	From Mecca to Cambodia	1914	Kota Bharu, Kelantan
19.	Tuk Guru Haji Wan Muhammad Zain bin Haji Wan Ahmad (*son of Haji Wan Ahmad, No. 18)	From Mecca to Cambodia, Kelantan	1914 -1928	Kota Bharu, Kelantan
20.	Tuk Guru Haji Ahmad bin Abdul Rahman	Cambodia	1918–1930	Kota Bharu, Kelantan
21.	Tuk Guru Haji Wan Hassan bin Haji Wan Muhammad Zain (*brother of Haji Wan Ahmad, No. 18)	Cambodia	1924	Kota Bharu, Kelantan
22.	Tuk Guru Haji Idris bin Haji Salleh	Cambodia	1924	Kota Bharu, Kelantan
23.	Tuk Guru Haji Syeikh Wan Muhammad Nur bin Haji Wan Ishak	Cambodia	1929	Kampung Che Bakar, Kota Bharu, Kelantan
24.	Tuk Guru Haji Salleh bin Mat Yusuf @Haji Salleh Kangkung	Cambodia	1929	Pasir Mas, Kelantan
25.	Tuk Guru Nik Daud bin Nik Mat	Cambodia, Kelantan	1931–1932	Jambu, Patani, Kelantan

Source: Abdullah bin Mohamed (Nakula), “Keturunan Melayu di Kemboja dan Vietnam: Hubungannya dengan Semenanjung dengan Tumpuan Khas kepada Negeri Kelantan”, *Majalah Warisan Kelantan*, VIII, 1989, pp. 38–41.

Table 3: Female Muslim Missionaries to the Chams from Kelantan

No	Name	Visit to Vietnam/ Cambodia	Year	Origin
1.	Hajah Wan Zainab	Cambodia	1927	Kelantan
2.	Hajah Wan Aminah	Cambodia, Kelantan	1927–1975	Kelantan
3.	Che Zainab	Cambodia	1941	Bachok, Kelantan
4.	Che Kalthum	Cambodia	c. 1941–1945	Pasir Mas, Kelantan
5.	Hajah Hafsa bt Muhammad	Cambodia, Kelantan	1920s–1975	Pasir Mas, Kelantan
6.	Cik Fatimah bt Abdullah	Cambodia, Kelantan	??–1975	Pasir Mas, Kelantan
7.	Che Maimunah @ Mok Noh Saigon	Vietnam, Kelantan	??–1963	Pasir Puteh, Kelantan

Source: Abdullah bin Mohamed (Nakula), “Keturunan Melayu di Kemoja dan Vietnam: Hubungannya dengan Semenanjung dengan Tumpuan Khusus kepada Negeri Kelantan”, *Majalah Warisan Kelantan*, VIII, 1989, pp. 38–41.

Tables 2 and 3 are lists of Muslim missionaries from Kelantan who went to serve among the Chams in Cambodia, and one or two in Vietnam. While it is clear that both lists are incomplete as many more were not recorded, several observations can be made. First, the presence of Muslim missionaries from Kelantan among the Chams, in both Cambodia and Vietnam, was a very long-standing affair. The links had existed for at least three to four centuries. Secondly, the continuation of this link into the twentieth century had ensured that though it could be seen as part of distant memories, it remained a recent one. More importantly, many family ties remained intact, even after a century. The continued coming and going of family members between the two places had ensured that the linkages remained fresh – and that when disaster struck, as in the case of the fall of Cambodia and Vietnam to the Communist regimes, Kelantan and Malaysia became the natural choice of destination for the Muslim Chams. In some cases, as in three out of seven female missionaries, they chose to return to the land of their birth in 1975.

The people-to-people relations were not confined to religious activities. It is likely that the Chams had been frequenting Kelantan for many centuries. Several place names in Kelantan suggest close ties between the two peoples, and wide acceptance on the part of the Malays. In Kelantan, one finds names such as Pengkalan Chepa and Kampung Chepa. There were also costume and textile names associated with Champa, for example, *tanjak Chepa*, *sutra Chepa*, *kain Chepa*. Chepa is also used to describe one type of *keris* (dagger). There was also *padi Chepa* (Champa paddy) and *sanggul Chepa* (hair decoration). It is also believed that a mosque in Kampung Laut was built by the Cham sailors who frequented Kelantan.²⁴

24. Abdul Rahman, AI-Ahmadi, *Sejarah Mesjid Kampong Laut*, Kuala Lumpur: Kementerian

Between the establishment of Nguyen rule over Champa in 1693 and the final annihilation of the Cham political entity in 1834, the Chams made many attempts to break away from Vietnamese rule. These normally took the form of armed revolts. Among the major Cham revolts were those of 1693, 1728, 1796 and 1832–34. It is likely that the main cause of the 1728 Cham revolt was the Chams' dissatisfaction with the socio-economic situation with the Vietnamese. This, in turn, brought about the emergence of anti-Vietnamese movements.²⁵ It was through these revolts that the Chams began to rekindle their ties with the Malays and to seek their help in resisting the Vietnamese. The Cham resistance of 1796 against Vietnamese control was led by a Malay nobleman named Tuan Phaow, who is believed to have been from Kelantan as he told his Cham followers that he was from Mecca (which is the Cham name for Kelantan). His followers were mainly Chams from Binh Thuan and from Cambodia (giving rise to the suggestion that he was from Cambodia) as well as Malays. Tuan Phaow's resistance also had a religious dimension. In order to rally the Chams, Tuan Phaow claimed to have been sent by God to help them resist the Vietnamese. His forces were up against Nguyen Anh (Gia Long, founder of the Nguyen Dynasty). Despite putting up a strong resistance for almost two years, Tuan Phaow's forces were cornered and defeated by the Nguyen army working in league with a Cham ruler who was pro-Nguyen. Tuan Phaow was reported to have escaped to Mecca. His resistance was the first clear indication that Cham resistance against the Vietnamese had a strong Malay connection. It also shows that the Islamic religious dimension was a common rallying call.

The 1832 Cham revolt was a reaction against Emperor Ming Mang's harsh oppression of the Chams who had supported Le Van Duyet's viceroy in Gia Dinh in the south. Le Van Duyet had refused to accept orders from Hue since 1728. After Le Van Duyet passed away in 1832, he was succeeded by his adopted son Le Van Khoi, who continued to resist the Nguyen Court. Ming Mang's army carried out a series of oppressive activities against the Cham population in Binh Thuan as punishment for their support of Le Van Duyet and Le Van Khoi. In this conflict, once again the Malay-Cham connection is evident, in the form of Malay leadership in the fight against the Vietnamese. The Chams were led by an Islamic clergyman from Cambodia named Katip (Khatib) Sumat who had spent many years studying Islam in Kelantan. Apparently, upon hearing that Champa was being attacked by the Nguyen army, Katip Sumat immediately returned to Champa accompanied

Kebudayaan, Belia dan Sukan, 1978, pp. 112–113; J. Dumarçay, «La mosquée de Kampung Laut (Kelantan) : étude architecturale», *Archipel*, 44, 1992, pp. 115–122.

25. Po Dharma, *Le Pāndurāṅga (Campā) 1802–1835 : ses rapports avec le Vietnam, Vol. I*, Paris, École française d'Extrême-Orient, 1987, p. 81.

by a large force of Malays and Chams from Kelantan. Katip Sumat, who arrived in Binh Thuan in 1833, led the Chams in a series of guerrilla attacks against the Nguyen army. Apart from fighting for the survival of Champa, he also invoked the Islamic bond in rallying Malay and Cham support for the cause. In some ways this turned the Cham struggle against the Vietnamese into a form of religious war.²⁶ The Katip Sumat-led resistance, however, was defeated by the Nguyen army. Po Dharma is of the opinion that Katip Sumat's Malay contingent did not consist of mere volunteers. He believed they were sent by Sultan Muhamad I of Kelantan (1800–37), who raised an army to accompany Katip Sumat to Champa. According to Po Dharma, the underlying factors were the Sultan's acknowledgement that he and the ruler of Champa were of the same lineage, i.e., Po Rome's descendants, and the need to preserve Islamic unity.²⁷

The defeat of Katip Sumat and other Malay-Cham resistance against the Vietnamese in 1834 marked the end of Champa as an 'independent or autonomous' political entity. However, it remains clear that the Malay-Cham relationship was very old, and was based on their common identity of Malay-ness and, since the 16th century, their common adherence to the Islamic faith. The relations were also lasting as evident by post-1834 relations, where the two peoples continued their ties, both culturally and religiously.

Conclusion

This paper sets out to investigate the reasons behind the Malaysian Government's decision to accept the Chams for resettlement in Malaysia and the reasons the Chams chose Malaysia over the opportunities to settle elsewhere. It is evident that the common adherence to Islam was the main reason behind both decisions. This paper also argues that, apart from the contemporary Islamic ties, the Chams and the Malays – especially those from Kelantan – had established and sustained a long-term people-to-people relationship as a result of many Malay Muslim religious teachers and missionaries from Kelantan going to Cambodia and Vietnam to work among the Chams. When the Chams in Vietnam were facing crisis and oppression from the Vietnamese, there were Malay delegations from the Malay Peninsula that went on to the Chams' aid, though to no avail. All these old links, both religious and political, were strongly imprinted in the minds of the Chams so much so that when Cambodia and Vietnam fell to the Communists, it was to Kelantan and the Malay Peninsula that the Chams had

26. *Ibid.*, pp. 141–147.

27. Po Dharma, "Peranan Kelantan dalam Pergerakan Islam di Campa 1833-1834", *Majalah Warisan Kelantan*, VIII, 1989, pp. 85–86.

chosen to settle in. In many ways, the Chams' experience of migrating to Malaysia demonstrated the importance of distant memories and old linkages in helping to shape present day decisions.

The Cham migration to Malaysia ended some time in 1985. By then the number of Chams who had settled in the country had increased significantly. It is estimated that the total Cham population in Malaysia is probably around 50,000 or more. This was not merely due to the arrivals but also those who were born subsequently in Malaysia. The Cham refugees' resettlement in Malaysia owed its success to the efforts of PERKIM which introduced various programmes to help the Chams to settle. The programme became the Chams' source for social-economic welfare, security and religious solace – three important elements of their lives, especially in the face of the difficulties and challenges they faced. Through PERKIM's resettlement programme, the Cham refugees were able to enjoy social-economic welfare help; they were provided with shelter and basic necessities. After attending the programme, many of the Cham refugees were able to leave the camp and move to other parts of Kelantan and, later, to other parts of the country. Today, many have slowly being integrated into the Malaysian society.