

Diplomatic Correspondence between the Sultanate of Sulu and China: A Comparison between Chinese and Malay Documents from around 1784*

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Introduction

Today insular Southeast Asia is made up of countries such as the Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia, but before the framework of these states developed, several kingdoms rose and fell in this region. In the Sulu Archipelago, which today belongs to the Philippines, there lived many different peoples. Muslims arrived around the thirteenth century, and eventually there was established a kingdom known as the Sultanate of Sulu. In the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries envoys of either the ruler or the sultan of Sulu, which is mentioned in Chinese sources of the fourteenth century as Sulu 蘇祿, visited Beijing, and the kingdom of Sulu was regarded as a tributary state by the Ming and Qing dynasties. The area around the Sulu Archipelago was known for marine products such as sea-slugs, bird's nests, and mother-of-pearl, and especially from the second half of the eighteenth century to the first half of the nineteenth century it became a trading centre for the collection and distribution of a great variety of goods, attracting not only people from throughout Southeast Asia but also Chinese and people associated with the East India Company.¹⁾ Among well-known studies, relations between the Sultanate of Sulu and the Philippines, Great Britain, and other Euro-American countries have been covered in a general history by Saleeby, while Majul has reconsidered the so-called Moro Wars from the standpoint of Muslims in the Philippines, and Warren has delineated relations between Sulu and surrounding regions, China, the Spanish government office in Manila, and the East India Company in terms of a "Sulu zone."²⁾

Prior to the spread of Islam, Indic scripts were used in Southeast Asia, but subsequently a method for writing local languages was devised by making some modifications to the Arabic script. This script based on the Arabic script is called the Jawi script and came to be used widely throughout insular

Southeast Asia.³⁾ Writings in the Jawi script were produced and used in various contexts, including literature, genealogies, histories, books on Islam, contracts, royal correspondence, and later newspapers and magazines. In Sulu, local languages such as the Tausug language of the Tausug people and the Sama language of the Sama people were spoken, but in trade, diplomacy, Islamic studies, and so on Malay was used as the *lingua franca*.

Research on various kinds of documents written in Southeast Asian languages with the Jawi script has been conducted primarily in Europe and the countries of Southeast Asia.⁴⁾ In this research, contact with not only the Europhone sphere but also other language areas has been attracting attention. However, it has proved difficult to discover the whereabouts of documents in local languages sent to China in the eighteenth century. Among such documents, a letter from the Sultanate of Sulu held by the National Palace Museum Library in Taiwan is a valuable Malay document written in the Jawi script. The existence of this letter shows that in eighteenth-century Sulu Malay written in the Jawi script was being used when exchanging documents not only with neighbouring Southeast Asia, with its many languages, and the Europhone sphere but also with the Sinophone sphere of China. This document has been stamped in the upper right with a vermilion seal bearing the sultan's name.⁵⁾ Below the seal, there is written in Chinese "An official communication in a foreign script from the state of Sulu" (蘇祿國番字咨文一件), which was presumably added at some stage during the subsequent filing of the letter after it had been received by an official in Fujian 福建 province.⁶⁾ This letter deals with a minor trade-related incident,⁷⁾ and in the following I wish to introduce it to the reader while comparing it with Chinese sources.

First, I wish to summarize in chronological order both the train of events that becomes clear through a comparison of Chinese sources and the Malay letter and the series of exchanges about this incident between the Qing dynasty and the Sultanate of Sulu. In the 7th month of Qianlong 乾隆 45 (1780), Wang Sanyang 王三陽, who had been engaged in trade between Sulu and Fujian in southern China, returned to Fujian with goods that the sultan had asked him to sell in China. But instead he exchanged most of the goods for silver and pocketed the proceeds. In Qianlong 46 (1781) Wang Sanyang ordered a person by the name of Zheng Xiong 鄭雄 to deliver a letter to the sultan of Sulu. On this occasion, the sultan provisionally took receipt of the outstanding monies from Wang Sijian 王四簡 and Yang Deyi 楊得意, who had arrived in the sultanate, but unhappy with the situation, he sent a letter to the magistrate (*tongzhi* 同知) of Xiamen 廈門, asking him to resolve the problem. A document called a "declaration" (*xi* 檄) was delivered to the sultan via officials in Fujian

province, and the sultan sent the Malay letter in question in reply to the officials in Fujian province. The contents of this letter were reported to the Qianlong emperor in a palace memorial (*zouzhe* 奏摺) submitted in Qianlong 49 (1784).⁸⁾

The main sources used in this article are listed below. For convenience, they will be referred to hereafter by their sigla (A–G); all sources except F are written in Chinese.

A: Palace memorial by Yade 雅德, governor (*xunfu* 巡撫) of Fujian, dated 13th day of 10th month, Qianlong 47 (1782).⁹⁾

B: Court letter from Fulong'an 福隆安 and Heshen 和珅, grand councillors (*junji dachen* 軍機大臣), to Yade, governor of Fujian, dated 9th day of 11th month, Qianlong 47 (1782).¹⁰⁾

C: Declaration addressed to sultan of Sulu, dated 9th day of 11th month, Qianlong 47 (1782).¹¹⁾

D: Court letter from Fulong'an and Heshen, grand councillors, to Yade, governor of Fujian, dated 26th day of 11th month, Qianlong 47 (1782).¹²⁾

E: Palace memorial by Yade, governor of Fujian, dated 22nd day of 12th month, Qianlong 47 (1782).¹³⁾

F: Letter from Muḥammad 'Azīm al-Dīn, sultan of Sulu, dated 1st day of Ramadan, 1198 Hijri (1784), in Malay.¹⁴⁾

G: Palace memorial by Fulehun 富勒渾, governor-general (*zongdu* 總督) of Fujian and Zhejiang (Min-Zhe 閩浙), and Yade, governor of Fujian, dated 10th day of 9th month, Qianlong 49 (1784).¹⁵⁾

I shall first clarify on the basis of Chinese sources A–E the circumstances that led to Malay source F being sent from Sulu to Fujian, and I shall then present a romanized transcription of the Malay letter written in the Jawi script and endeavour to translate it and interpret its contents.¹⁶⁾ In addition, I shall also compare correspondences in wording between the letter sent to Sulu by officials in Fujian province (source

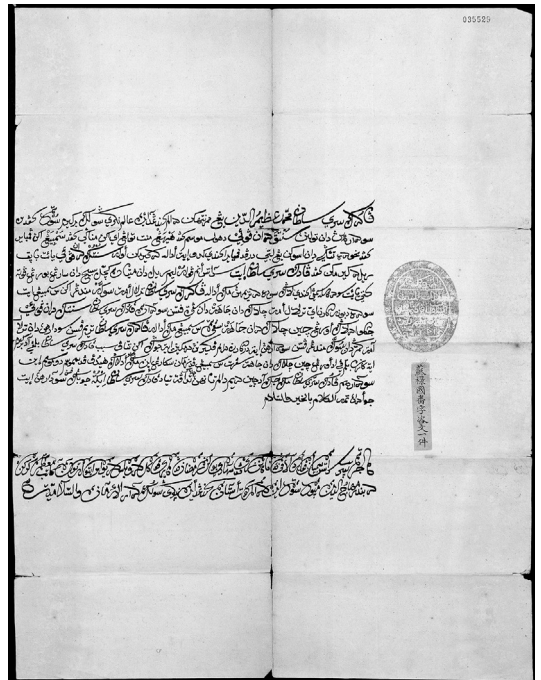


Fig. 1. Letter from the sultan of Sulu, dated 1st day of Ramadan, 1198 Hijri (1784), in Malay (Collection of the National Palace Museum, Taiwan).

C), the letter from the sultan (source F), and quotations in Chinese from source F included in the palace memorial submitted to the emperor by the Fujian authorities (source G).

I. The Circumstances behind the Exchange of Correspondence

When and where was the Malay letter in question written? Generally speaking, in Malay letters the date and the place where the letter was written are recorded at the end of a letter, after the closing words.¹⁷⁾ In the letter in question, this information similarly appears in the final section, which comes after several blank lines following the main text of the letter.

Hijrat seribu seratus sembilan puluh delapan pada tahun zai¹⁸⁾ pada sehari bulan ramadan pada hari pukul duabelas dewasa itulah, tuan katib Mu‘azzam¹⁹⁾ karkun di bandar [M-H-A-J] al-Dīn²⁰⁾ menyurat surat ini, dalam kota astana²¹⁾ kandang daerah negeri Suluk dār al-amān wa-al-salām²²⁾ itu.

In 1198 Hijri, the year of Zai, on the 1st day of Ramadan (9th month), at twelve o’clock, at this very moment, Secretary Mu‘azzam, the clerk of the port (or factory) of [M-H-A-J] al-Dīn, writes this letter in the palace of the kingdom of Sulu, a safe and peaceful country.

The date is given in the first half of this sentence and the location in the second half. “Hijrat,” deriving from Arabic, is “Hijrah” in Modern Malay and refers to the Hijri (or Islamic) calendar; “seribu seratus sembilan puluh delapan” is “1198”; and “sehari bulan ramadan” is “the 1st day of Ramadan.” In the Western calendar this corresponds to 19 July 1784, and in the Chinese calendar to Qianlong 49/6/3.

The *tuan katib* (secretary) Mu‘azzam, who was a *karkun* (clerk), has a name of Arabic origin, and there is a strong possibility that he was a Muslim. The letter is written in comparatively neat Arabic script, and the scribe would have been well versed in such documents. The final phrase “dār al-amān wa-al-salām” presumably means “safe and peaceful country,” and the letter was written in just such a location, i.e., the Sultanate of Sulu.

1. Chinese Sources

Why, then, was this letter sent to Fujian province in China? At the time,

there were Chinese living in Sulu and people travelling back and forth between Sulu and southern China.²³⁾ Passages showing that documents were being exchanged between Sulu and the Qing dynasty around the time the Malay letter was sent, i.e., in Qianlong 47–49 (1782–84), are found in imperially rescripted palace memorials (*zhupi zouzhe* 硃批奏摺) in the Palace archives, record books of imperial edicts (*shangyudang* 上諭檔) in the Grand Council archives, and the veritable records (*shilu* 實錄) of the Qianlong reign.²⁴⁾ At the start of the above-mentioned court letter sent by Fulong'an and Heshen to Yade and dated Qianlong 47/11/9 (source B) the incident in question is summarized in the following terms: “An incident in which Wang Sanyang of Longxi 龍溪 county (in Zhangzhou 漳州 prefecture) wrongly appropriated [the silver coins corresponding to] the price of goods from the state of Sulu, made a false accusation [to the sultan of Sulu] that Wang Sijian had not paid the silver, and asked [the sultan of Sulu] to seize [the deficit].”

What sort of relationship existed between Wang Sanyang, mentioned here, and the sultan of Sulu? Let us consider the situation on the basis of the palace memorial submitted by Yade, governor of Fujian at the time, and dated Qianlong 47/10/13 (source A).

1) Wang Sanyang returns from Sulu to Fujian province

Wang Sanyang was a merchant trading between Sulu and Fujian province, and he was well acquainted with the sultan of Sulu, probably through his trading activities. When he returned from Sulu to Fujian province in the 7th month of Qianlong 45, he was entrusted by the sultan with “2 pearls, one large and one small, 30 catties (*jin* 斤, *kati* in Malay) of edible bird’s nests (*yanwo* 燕窩), 5 catties of Borneo camphor, 1 picul (*dan* 担) of beeswax, and 1 *ban* 板 of *qingni* 青呢 (blue woollen cloth?),” which he was meant to sell in China.

2) Wang Sanyang sells the goods and receives payment, but squanders the money and has a letter sent to the sultan of Sulu

Wang Sanyang was supposed to hand over the payment he had received for the goods, but instead

Wang Sanyang secretly took 23 catties of bird’s nests, made 299 *yuan* in silver, and [before returning to Xiamen] sold them and used [the money to repay] his overseas debt. He returned to Xiamen during the 9th month, handed over one large pearl to his nephew Wang Gongchen, and together with his associates Wang Sijian, Ceng Yu, and Wang Zhongzheng went to Guangdong and sold the goods. In addition, he pawned the small pearl to

Wang Zhihe for 100 *yuan* in silver. The remaining goods—bird's nests, camphor, and beeswax—he sold for 229 *yuan* in silver, but then he spent it on cutting the cloth to make garments, and so he hoped to gain payment for the large pearl, make amends, and return the money. Wang Gongchen unexpectedly arrived in Guangdong with the [large] pearl, but it so happened that the value of pearls had dropped considerably. He sold it for only 700 *yuan* in foreign silver dollars, and once he excluded 30 *yuan* for travelling expenses, only 670 *yuan* was left. Previously, when Wang Sanyang had been overseas, he had borrowed silver taels from Wang Sijian through Wang Gongchen, and when Wang Sijian saw that Wang Gongchen had the payment for the pearl he had sold, he immediately demanded the principal and interest of his uncle Wang Sanyang's earlier debt, 570 *yuan* (in total). Wang Gongchen repaid the entire amount, and so on the day he returned home only 100 *yuan* remained to hand over to Wang Sanyang.²⁵⁾

Wang Sanyang converted into cash 23 of the 30 catties of bird's nests he had received from the sultan of Sulu and used this money to repay his debts, and consequently he was left with only 7 catties. He handed over the large pearl to Wang Gongchen, and he also borrowed 100 *yuan* and handed over the small pearl as security to Wang Zhihe. The remaining bird's nests, camphor, and beeswax he sold in Guangdong together with some associates and obtained 229 *yuan* in silver for them. He turned the cloth into garments and used the 229 *yuan* he had received for the bird's nests, camphor, and beeswax for the tailoring. He tried to make up the shortfall by selling the large pearl he had handed over to Wang Gongchen and received 700 *yuan*, but he allocated 30 *yuan* to travelling expenses from Xiamen to Guangdong and repaid 570 *yuan* to Wang Sijian to cover his earlier debt. Consequently, Wang Sanyang was left with only 100 *yuan*. If one excludes the payments for the small pearl and the cloth, they had at this stage obtained the equivalent of 1,228 *yuan*.

After further developments,

Furthermore, he had already converted the goods he had received from the state of Sulu [into silver] and allocated it to his expenses and had deducted from the silver taels [obtained from] the sale of the pearls his unpaid debt to Wang Sijian, and he had no way to repay [the sultan of Sulu].²⁶⁾

Thus, while having sold the goods received from the sultan of Sulu and

obtained payment for them, Wang Sanyang had squandered the money. In addition, the money obtained by selling the pearls had already been placed under distraint by Wang Sijian as payment for the money owed to him, and so Wang Sanyang was unable to use it as payment for the goods.

3) The sultan of Sulu sends a letter to officials in Fujian province

Next, as can be seen in the same source A, Wang Sanyang sent a duplicitous letter to the sultan of Sulu.

In the 1st month of Qianlong 46, it so happened that Zheng Xiong was going on business to the state of Sulu. Accordingly, [Wang Sanyang] falsely stated that . . . ; as well, he had reduced the 6,000 taels of Butou silver owed by Yang Deyi to 420 taels, while Wang Sijian had deceitfully taken the price of the pearl, 505 *yuan* in silver, and so they should be deducted from the silver [held by] Yang Deyi, et al.²⁷⁾ He asked Zheng Xiong to write a letter to this effect on his behalf and had him deliver it to the sultan of Sulu. As soon as the said sultan received the letter, he deducted the full amount from the silver [held by] Yang Deyi and Wang Sijian, but Yang Deyi, et al., categorically declared that they had never owed Wang Sanyang any silver taels. The said sultan then prepared another letter along with Wang Sanyang's original letter, attached 5 catties of bird's nests, entrusted it to Zhou Zuo from Haicheng county, sent it to the magistrate of Xiamen, and asked him to arrest Wang Sanyang and, when repaying the price of the goods [previously entrusted to Wang Sanyang], to repay Yang Deyi, et al., making them take receipt of it, and return the remainder to the said state [of Sulu].²⁸⁾

A letter was written by Zheng Xiong on behalf of Wang Sanyang and was delivered to the sultan of Sulu when he visited Sulu on business in the 1st month of Qianlong 46 (1781). According to this letter, Yang Deyi had failed to repay 420 taels, while Wang Sijian had made off with the 505 *yuan* for the pearl, and therefore Wang Sanyang wanted the sultan to make up the deficit in full from the money held by Yang Deyi and Wang Sijian. The sultan accordingly seized the deficit from Yang Deyi and Wang Sijian. This tells us that Zheng Xiong, Yang Deyi, and Wang Sijian were also engaged in trade between Sulu and Fujian province in southern China. But Yang Deyi and Wang Sijian insisted that they had never owed Wang Sanyang any money, and so the sultan attempted to resolve the matter by having Zhou Zuo of Haicheng county deliver a letter together with 5 catties of bird's nests to the magistrate

of Xiamen. In the letter, the sultan asked that Wang Sanyang be arrested and the payment for the goods be recovered, that Yang Deyi and Wang Sijian be repaid, and that the balance be sent back to Sulu.

4) Wang Sanyang is charged

In the same palace memorial (source A) Yade, governor of Fujian, suggests how Wang Sanyang, et al., ought to be dealt with.

In accordance with the regulation that those who have colluded with a foreign state, traded with them, and swindled goods will be sent to a remote region in exile,²⁹⁾ Wang Sanyang should be strictly sent to a place such as Ili and given to a soldier as a slave to till the earth. . . . The price of the other goods [apart from the small pearl] is all together 1,270 *yuan* in foreign silver dollars. The said sultan has already deducted from Yang Deyi 420 taels in silver, corresponding to 600 *yuan* in foreign silver dollars, and has seized 505 *yuan* in foreign silver dollars from Wang Sijian, all together 1,105 *yuan*, and that which should still be repaid [to the sultan of Sulu] is 165 *yuan*. . . . As for the bird's nests sent by the said sultan to the magistrate of Xiamen, they are to be sent back to the said state to be taken receipt of together with the extant small pearl and the silver taels to be repaid. . . .³⁰⁾

In other words, on the basis of the punishment imposed when someone had formed a relationship with a foreign country, engaged in trade with that country, and defrauded it of goods, Yade submitted that Wang Sanyang should be sent in exile as a slave to a place such as Ili in the present-day Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. In addition, it is also stated that payment for the goods should be forcibly recovered and returned to their rightful owners, while the bird's nests, small pearl, and money should be returned to the sultan of Sulu, and it is evident that a letter to the sultan had been drafted. Since it is stated that the payment for the goods entrusted to Wang Sanyang by the sultan of Sulu, apart from the small pearl, came to 1,270 *yuan* in foreign silver dollars, the price of the cloth was probably also included in this sum. Yade, governor of Fujian, had investigated the circumstances and relationships involved in this incident and submitted a memorial concerning the punishment of those involved and the return of the silver and so on.

The subsequent treatment of Wang Sanyang by the Qing court can be inferred from court letters from the grand councillors Fulong'an and Heshen, dated Qianlong 47/11/9 and 47/11/26 (1782) (sources B and D), and another

palace memorial submitted by Yade, governor of Fujian, and dated Qianlong 47/12/22 (source E). First, let us consider source B.

Wang Sanyang should be interrogated in accordance with the regulations. It is only when the silver taels for the price of the missing goods have all been repaid in full in the name of the said criminal and returned to the said sultan and he has taken receipt of them that [the settlement] will be fair.³¹⁾

Wang Sanyang was thus charged with having committed a crime. In addition, the money corresponding to the payment for the goods he had received from Sulu was to be returned by him to the sultan of Sulu. Further, in source D it is stated:

Currently, the autumn assizes have already ended, and the said criminal is to be immediately condemned to death by hanging. When it comes to China's pacifying and governing of foreign regions, if there happen to be lawbreaking fellows from China who cause trouble in those [regions], punishing them most severely to serve as a warning should suffice to make the minds of [people in] foreign regions submit. [The Son of Heaven] instructs Yade: "Wait until the time of Wang Sanyang's execution and inform foreigners from the said state (Sulu) in Fujian to have them observe [the execution] at close hand so that they will know that China certainly does not in the least pardon criminals who cause trouble abroad and also so as to give a warning and bring fear to merchants engaged in trade."³²⁾

The emperor's instructions regarding Wang Sanyang's punishment were thus more severe than exile to a remote area, as suggested in Yade's memorial, and he gave orders for him to be sent to the gallows. This was based on the idea of winning over the hearts and minds of foreigners by inflicting severe punishment on Chinese who caused trouble in other countries. It was also meant to serve as an example to foreigners in Fujian and a warning to merchants engaged in overseas trade.

5) Yade, governor of Fujian, drafts a "declaration"

It is also evident from source B that, prior to the preparation of a declaration addressed to the sultan of Sulu (source C), Yade, governor of Fujian, prepared a draft, part of which caught the emperor's attention and was

called into question.

Then, when [the emperor] read the declaration drafted by Yade in reply to the state of Sulu, it laid the blame on the said sultan for the fact that the person entrusted [by him with the goods] had been an unsuitable person. In addition, [it stated that the sultan] had rashly believed the one-sided words of Wang Sanyang, seized the silver taels of others, and asked the magistrate of Xiamen to take additional measures, all of which was inappropriate.³³⁾

Thus, Yade faulted the sultan of Sulu for having entrusted his goods to an unsuitable individual, believed Wang Sanyang's one-sided claims, seized money belonging to other people, and also asked the magistrate to impose an additional penalty. Yade stated that all of these actions had been inappropriate, and this assertion was called into question. Source B continues:

Now, in the declaration drafted [by Yade] the imputation of blame on the said sultan's errors in handling the matter was a bad habit of the Ming dynasty, which protected the people of China and belittled foreign states, sought to subdue small countries, and eventually led to the fomenting of disputes. Again, to fear the disdain of others and cow them into submission is quite wrong. Apart from having the grand councillors (Fulong'an and Heshen) revise the text and return it, convey the emperor's instructions to Yade and have him reprimanded and have this matter communicated for 400 *li*. . . .³⁴⁾

In other words, with regard to Yade's draft, his laying of blame on errors in the sultan's handling of matters was called into question, and it was pointed out that it was protecting the people of China, looking down on other states, and trying to subdue small countries that were creating a situation conducive to trouble, which was an inappropriate way of dealing with the matter, and the grand councillors were instructed to revise the text and return it to Yade. In source C there is no reference to Sulu's faults, and it presumably represents the revised text. Rather than regarding this incident as being due to problems on the part of Sulu, the Qianlong emperor sought to understand it as a problem concerning merchants engaged in trade.

Subsequently, in a palace memorial submitted by Fulehun, governor-general of Fujian and Zhejiang, and Yade, governor of Fujian, and dated Qianlong 49/9/10 (source G), it was reported as follows:

In the name of Wang Sanyang 165 *yuan* in foreign silver dollars for the price of the goods to be repaid, the unsold small pearl, and the 5 catties of bird's nests sent by the said sultan to the office of the magistrate of Xiamen are to be returned. The ministers (Yade and Fulehun), following the emperor's orders, prepared a declaration, ordered the offices [of the Provincial Administration Commission and Provincial Surveillance Commission] to forward it to the magistrate of Xiamen, arranged for a ship to return [the goods with the declaration] to the said sultan, and had him take receipt of them.³⁵⁾

On the basis of the emperor's instructions, Yade, who had received the text revised by the grand councillors, prepared the declaration (source C) and had it sent to the magistrate of Xiamen, who also oversaw traders at the port and revenue from seagoing vessels. In this fashion, 165 *yuan* in foreign silver dollars, one small pearl, and 5 catties of bird's nests were sent to the sultan of Sulu together with the declaration.

2. Contents of the Document Sent to Sulu: Chinese Sources

Next, let us examine the contents of the declaration (source C). The first half reads as follows:

So far as we know, the said state had sent a letter to the magistrate of Xiamen, according to which a person from China would not return [the money corresponding to] the price of the goods he owed, [and the magistrate] forwarded a report, which reached here, the offices of the governor-general and the governor. We had already issued an order to arrest Wang Sanyang, who had appeared in court, and we had memorialized the Great Emperor, who gave sanction for Wang Sanyang to be thoroughly investigated and severely punished, apart from which it was found upon investigation that the said state, ever since having presented a memorial and offered tribute in Yongzheng 5 (1727), had been showing its good faith by sending ambassadors repeatedly and was respectfully offering its services, and the Great Emperor, commending you (the sultan of Sulu) for aspiring to turn towards civilizing influences, has granted you a special favour.³⁶⁾

A letter had been sent from Sulu to the magistrate of Xiamen stating that

money for goods which Wang Sanyang had been contracted to sell had not been paid. This had been reported to the governor-general and governor, whereupon Wang Sanyang had been immediately arrested and taken to court. The emperor had been informed of this incident, and Wang Sanyang had been severely punished. It is then mentioned that ever since Yongzheng 5 (1727) Sulu had repeatedly sent embassies to China, shown its good faith to the emperor, and offered tribute to the court, and the emperor had praised its sincere admiration of China and granted it a special favour. The declaration continues:

Although the said state lies in the farthest corner of the ocean, it has long been under the boundless protection of the Court. Now a villainous merchant from China has pocketed the money for the goods, and his whereabouts must be thoroughly investigated and severely examined. With regard to the return in the name of Wang Sanyang of the silver for the price of the goods originally sold, apart from the repayment of the 1,105 *yuan* in silver in total deducted by the said state from Wang Sijian and Yang Deyi, the remaining 165 *yuan* in silver and the small pearl not yet sold by Wang Sanyang, together with the 5 catties of bird's nests sent to the magistrate of Xiamen, will be sent all together to the said state to take receipt of. Hereafter the said state, if it happens to encounter [a merchant] selling goods, should check whether he is an honest well-to-do merchant and [only then] do business with him in cash in the hope that it will not be defrauded by villainous merchants and will thereby accord with our Venerable Lord's most sincere wish to win over people in distant lands.³⁷⁾

Here, Sulu is described as a country that "lies in the farthest corner of the ocean" and "has long been under the boundless protection of the Court." In addition, it is stated that Wang Sanyang, who had pocketed the money for the goods, had been punished, 1,105 *yuan* in silver had been repaid in his name to Wang Sijian and Yang Deyi, and the remaining 165 *yuan* in silver, the small pearl not sold by Wang Sanyang, and the 5 catties of bird's nests sent to the magistrate of Xiamen through Zhou Zuo of Haicheng county were to be returned to Sulu. Furthermore, when engaging in trade with a Chinese merchant in the future, the sultan of Sulu is asked to "find out whether he is an honest well-to-do merchant and [only then] do business with him in cash."

The train of events leading to the sending of the Malay letter to officials in Fujian province may be summarized as follows. Wang Sanyang was

originally a merchant involved in trade between Sulu and China. In Qianlong 45, when returning from Sulu to Fujian province, he was entrusted by the sultan of Sulu with some goods to sell in China, but he pocketed the money received for the goods and in Qianlong 46 asked Zheng Xiong to send a letter to the sultan of Sulu in which he asked the sultan to have Wang Sijian and Yang Deyi reimburse the sultan for the goods. On receiving the letter, the sultan took the money from Wang Sijian and Yang Deyi, but they refused to accept the sultan's reason for having done so. Accordingly, the sultan sent a letter to the magistrate of Xiamen asking that Wang Sijian and Yang Deyi be reimbursed and that he himself be repaid the deficit. As stated in sources A–E dating from Qianlong 47, investigations of those involved were undertaken, and as well as it being determined that there had been no fault on the part of Sulu, instructions were given for the return of the money and the goods and for Wang Sanyang's punishment. Lastly, a document known as a declaration, in the drafting of which grand councillors and ministers were involved, was sent to Sulu.

Subsequently a Malay letter dated the 1st day of Ramadan, 1198 Hijri (Qianlong 49/6/3) (source F) was sent from Sulu to Fujian province.

II. The Letter Sent by the Sultan to the Emperor

In this section, I wish to present a romanized transcription and English translation of the Malay letter and also examine what was written in the palace memorial submitted to the emperor regarding this letter.

1. Contents of the Malay Letter in Jawi Script

This letter has no punctuation or line breaks, and because it is written by hand, parts of it are difficult to decipher. However, it is possible to show the general gist of the letter, and so I wish to give the full text.

Paduka Seri Sultan³⁸⁾ Muḥammad 'Azīm al-Dīn³⁹⁾ yang memerintahkan dalam kandang daerah alam negeri Suluk berkirim surat kepadanya saudarah⁴⁰⁾ nya dan taulannya Suntuq dan Pu'ī. Dahulu musim, kepada hayhang⁴¹⁾ minta tolong ia akan menagi[h]⁴²⁾ kepada Sambiyang⁴³⁾ akan pembayar kepada nakhodah⁴⁴⁾ [T'-G-Y] dan [A-Su-K-N],⁴⁵⁾ yang lebi[h]⁴⁶⁾ daripada pembayar⁴⁷⁾ akan dia ke dua itu⁴⁸⁾ adalah dikirimkan oleh Suntuq dan Pu'ī, iaitu⁴⁹⁾ banyak rial dikirimkan kepada Paduka Seri Sultan itu. Seratus enam puluh lima rial dan mutiara kecil sebiji dan

sarang burung putih kati, iaitu sudahlah sampai akan dia lagi sudah diterimanya.

Paduka Seri Sultan Muḥammad ‘Azīm al-Dīn, who governs the kingdom of Sulu, sends a letter to his brothers and friends, the governor-general (*suntuq* or *suntut*, transcription of *zongdu*) and the governor (*pu’i*, transcription of *buyuan* 部院, for *fubuyuan* 撫部院, or governor’s office). Previously, he had asked the Maritime Customs to help him press [Wang] Sanyang to repay the captains [Yang] Deyi and [Wang] Sijian and the governor-general and the governor to send the remainder of the payment to those two, namely, to send many silver dollars to Paduka Seri Sultan. As for the 165 dollars, one small pearl, and white bird’s nest, catty, these have namely already arrived, and he (i.e., the sultan) has already received them.

First, the sender’s name and position are succinctly expressed in the opening line. *Paduka Seri* is one of a set of honorific titles that serve to indicate the title-holder’s status and social position. The sender of this letter was Sultan Muḥammad ‘Azīm al-Dīn II (r. 1763–64, 1778–91), whose name is also engraved on the seal affixed in the upper right of the letter. In this letter, he is described as the ruler of Sulu. Next, the addressees are given. The Malay word *saudara*, of Sanskrit origin, means “brother, relative, close friend,” while *taulan*, of Tamil origin, means “acquaintance, comrade, friend.” Prior to sending this letter, the sultan had sent a letter together with 5 catties of bird’s nests to the magistrate of Xiamen, and, as mentioned below, the present letter was delivered to the governor-general and governor via Liu Jiahui 劉嘉會, magistrate of Xiamen, and the two provincial offices (*fannie liangsi* 藩臬兩司), i.e., the offices of the Provincial Administration Commission and Provincial Surveillance Commission. “Sambiyang” presumably refers to Wang Sanyang, mentioned in Chinese sources. In his previous letter, the sultan had asked for Wang Sanyang’s debt to the two captains to be repaid and the balance to be sent to himself.

Further, *seratus enam puluh lima rial* (“165 dollars”) corresponds to the “165 *yuan* in silver” mentioned in the declaration (source C), while *mutiara kecil sebiji* (“one small pearl”) similarly corresponds to the small pearl mentioned in the same source. As for the 5 catties of bird’s nests mentioned in Chinese sources, this appears as *sarang burung putih kati* (“white bird’s nest, catty”). The number of bird’s nests is not specified and merely given as “catty” (*kati*), and instead they are described as “white” (*putih*). But in spite of this difference, these items

by and large coincide with those mentioned in the Chinese declaration.

The Malay letter continues:

Maka adalah Paduka Seri Sultan terlalu amat [S-W-K-H]⁵⁰⁾ mendengar akan si Sambiyang itu sudah dibunuh kerana ia terlalu amat celaka dan jahat. Dan seperti pesan saudarah Paduka Seri Sultan Suntut dan Pu'i jikalau ada lagi orang Cina celaka dan jahat seperti si⁵¹⁾ Sambiyang, maka adalah Paduka Seri Sultan terima pesan saudarhnya, dan terlalu amat gemar dan suka⁵²⁾ mendengar pesan saudarhnya itu. Daripadanya dalam fikirannya demikiannya itu juga. Akan tetapi sebab Paduka Seri Sultan belumpai ada berkirin itu, kerana belumpai ada orang Cina celaka dan jahat seperti si Sambiyang pada zaman sekarang ini.

Paduka Seri Sultan is extremely happy to hear regarding [Wang] Sanyang that he has been killed since he is extremely vile and wicked. And in accordance with the instruction of the brothers of Paduka Seri Sultan, the governor-general and governor, if there is again a Chinese person vile and wicked like [Wang] Sanyang, then Paduka Seri Sultan will accept the instruction of his brothers, and he will be extremely delighted and happy to hear the instruction of his brothers. Such is [the sultan's] thinking on this matter. But the reason that Paduka Seri Sultan has not yet issued [this instruction to people in neighbouring regions] is that there is not a Chinese person vile and wicked like [Wang] Sanyang at this time.

Here, Wang Sanyang, referred to as a “villainous merchant” in the declaration (source C), is described as “vile and wicked” (*celaka dan jahat*). Judging from the context set out above, the “instruction” (*pesan*) of the governor-general and governor mentioned several times in this letter actually refers to the Qianlong emperor's instructions conveyed by the governor-general and governor. The protasis starting with “if” (*jikalau*) leads on to the apodosis starting with “then” (*maka*). The contents of this instruction presumably follow on from the final section of the declaration, namely, “Hereafter the said state, if it happens to encounter [a merchant] selling goods, should check whether he is an honest well-to-do merchant and [only then] do business with him in cash in the hope that it will not be defrauded by villainous merchants and will thereby accord with our Venerable Lord's most sincere wish to win over people in distant lands.” It is further stated that the sultan of Sulu has not yet notified people in neighbouring regions of this instruction since currently there are no wicked Chinese in the region.

Maka jikalau ada lagi hidup pada semusim dua musim ini, saudarah-mu Paduka Seri Sultan, maka jika ada Cina diam dalam tanahnya celaka, tidapat tiada Paduka Seri Sultan ikut jua bagi pesan saudarahnya itu. Jua adanya. Tamma⁵³⁾ al-kalām bi-al-khayr wa-al-salām.

If during these one or two years your dear Paduka Seri Sultan is still alive, and if there are vile men among the Chinese living in that land, Paduka Seri Sultan will have to follow his brothers' instruction. This is all. This statement ends with goodness and peace!

Here, it is stated that if any “vile” (*celaka*) Chinese are found in Sulu, the sultan will follow the instructions issued by the governor-general and governor (in reality, by the emperor). When it says, “your dear” (*saudarah-mu*), is it really expressing a sense of heartfelt affection? The repetition of “Paduka Seri Sultan” as the subject of the sentence could be a type of emphatic expression. The word *adanya* is a suffix often used in Malay at the end of a sentence, and the main text of the letter ends here. The final sentence—“Tamma al-kalām bi-al-khayr wa-al-salām” (“This statement ends with goodness and peace!”)—which brings the letter to a close can be interpreted as Arabic. There are other examples of the use of such Arabic expressions being used at the end of Malay letters.⁵⁴⁾

2. Contents of the Chinese Translation Conveyed to the Emperor

The contents of the above letter in Jawi script (source F) that arrived from Sulu were reported to the emperor in a palace memorial by Fulehun, governor-general of Fujian and Zhejiang, and Yade, governor of Fujian, dated Qianlong 49/9/10 (source G).

Here the report from the two provincial offices states: the submission from the magistrate of Xiamen, Liu Jiahui, reported that the shipowner and captain Lin Deshun, having returned to Xiamen on the 14th day of the 7th month of this year, had received a communication from the state of Sulu, a reply to us (Fulehun and Yade), and he (the magistrate) presented it [to the two offices].⁵⁵⁾

Thus, when Lin Deshun's ship, which had come from Sulu, arrived in Xiamen in Qianlong 49, a reply from Sulu was delivered to the magistrate of

Xiamen, and this was reported to the governor-general and governor through the offices of the Provincial Administration Commission and Provincial Surveillance Commission. It is evident that in this instance the sultan's letter was treated as an official communication (*zi* 咨). The palace memorial submitted to the emperor by the governor-general and governor (source G) also quotes from the letter that had arrived from Sulu.

... It consists of a document in a foreign script and a document translated into Chinese characters, which say: "Although our humble country lies in the farthest corner of the ocean, we have been admiring and bathing in the virtuous influence of the Heavenly Dynasty and have long been under its boundless protection. The year before last we sent a letter to the magistrate of Xiamen, requesting that the payment for goods deceitfully taken by Wang Sanyang, a person from China, be repaid, and now, according to the declaration, '[The Court] issued an order to arrest Wang Sanyang, who appeared in court and was strictly investigated, and memorialized the Great Emperor, who gave sanction for Wang Sanyang to be condemned to death by hanging; as for the silver remaining after the repayment for the goods, a ship has been arranged and they will be returned together with a small pearl and 5 catties of bird's nests.' We are deeply moved by the Great Emperor's consideration and kindness, and our small country is truly most grateful. We promptly took receipt of the accompanying silver and goods and also informed the people of our humble country that whenever a travelling merchant on an overseas ship sells goods, they should check clearly whether he is an honest well-to-do merchant and [only then] do business with him in cash, thereby preventing the causing of trouble such as fraud."⁵⁶⁾

Two documents arrived from Sulu, one written in a foreign script, namely, the Malay letter (source F), and one written in Chinese. In content, they are said to have opened with an expression of respect and admiration for the Son of Heaven, whose virtuous influence Sulu had received. The Malay letter opens only with "Paduka Seri Sultan Muḥammad 'Azīm al-Dīn, who governs the kingdom of Sulu," but in source G this has been replaced by deferential expressions: "our humble country lies in the farthest corner of the ocean, we have long been admiring and bathing in the virtuous influence of the Heavenly Dynasty and have been under its boundless protection." Judging from the fact that the declaration dated Qianlong 47/11/9, two years earlier (source C), included the statement "the said state lies in the farthest corner of

the ocean, it has long been under the boundless protection of the Court,” the palace memorial appears to have adopted this wording and added “we have been admiring and bathing in the virtuous influence of the Heavenly Dynasty.”

As for the contents of the document sent earlier to the magistrate of Xiamen, the above palace memorial (source G) states that Sulu had “requested that the payment for goods deceitfully taken by Wang Sanyang, a person from China, be repaid.” But according to Yade’s palace memorial dated Qianlong 47/10/13 (source A), the sultan had asked the magistrate of Xiamen “to arrest Wang Sanyang and, when repaying the price of the goods [previously entrusted to Wang Sanyang], to repay Yang Deyi, et al., making them take receipt of it, and return the remainder to the said state [of Sulu].” Meanwhile, the Malay letter asked that Wang Sanyang repay his debt to the two captains and the balance be sent to Paduka Seri Sultan, which is somewhat closer in content to source A. However, the Malay letter differs in that there is no mention of arresting Wang Sanyang, while the people to whom the money is to be returned are called “captains” (*nakhodah*), and it also has “to Paduka Seri Sultan” (*kepada Paduka Seri Sultan*).

Next, as regards the character and treatment of Wang Sanyang, in the declaration it says that “he must be thoroughly investigated and severely examined,” while in the Malay letter it says that “he has been killed since he is extremely vile and wicked” (*sudah dibunuh kerana ia terlalu amat celaka dan jahat*). According to source G, “[The Court] issued an order to arrest Wang Sanyang, who appeared in court and was strictly investigated, and memorialized the Great Emperor, who gave sanction for Wang Sanyang to be condemned to death by hanging.”

Further, as for the items to be returned to the sultan, source G has “the silver remaining after the repayment for the goods, . . . together with a small pearl and 5 catties of bird’s nests” and goes on to express profound gratitude to the emperor. With regard to the amount of silver, one could suppose that the translator was unable to accurately translate *seratus enam puluh lima* (165) in the Malay letter, but it could also be surmised that since source G refers to “165 *juan* in foreign silver dollars for the price of the goods to be repaid, the unsold small pearl, and the 5 catties of bird’s nests sent by the said sultan to the office of the magistrate of Xiamen,” in the corresponding passage this was simply expressed as “the remaining silver.” The Malay letter has “165 dollars, one small pearl, and white bird’s nest, catty” (*Seratus enam puluh lima rial dan mutiara kecil sebiji dan sarang burung putih kati*), but as a whole the quantities and types of items were confirmed by both parties. It could also be said that the Malay letter includes nothing corresponding in content to the statement “We

are deeply moved by the Great Emperor's consideration and kindness" in source G.

As for future trade, source G can be taken to indicate that instructions to ascertain whether merchants are honest and only then do business with them in cash were widely promulgated among the local population.

Concluding Remarks

In the above, we discovered references in Chinese official documents to the circumstances in which a letter written in Jawi script was sent to Fujian province in southern China, and we also analyzed the contents of a declaration sent to the sultan of Sulu, the original text of the Malay letter sent by the sultan to the governor-general of Fujian and Zhejiang and the governor of Fujian, and the Chinese translation of this letter found in a palace memorial.

Initially, Yade, governor of Fujian, agreed to investigate the incident and return the money owed, but in his draft of the declaration he also pointed out that the sultan of Sulu had been at fault, and he considered it to have been inappropriate for the sultan to have asked the Chinese to resolve the problem. But the emperor, noting that it was precisely this idea of laying the blame on Sulu that was the root cause of such problems, gave instructions for the declaration to be rewritten. In addition, he condemned Wang Sanyang to death by hanging, thus taking a stricter stance than Yade, who had suggested exile to a remote region. It has become clear that in the end the declaration sent to Sulu mentioned Wang Sanyang's punishment, the intention of repay the money in his name, and the amount of silver and names and quantities of items to be returned to Sulu, and it also suggested that in the future Sulu should do business in cash with merchants only after having checked their background.

In the original text of the Malay letter that arrived in Fujian province, it was stated that Sultan Muḥammad 'Azīm al-Dīn governed the kingdom of Sulu, that he had sought payment of the silver and had received it along with the remaining goods, and that should there be any wicked merchants, he would heed the emperor's instructions, but there were currently no such individuals, although if there were, he would follow the emperor's instructions. This letter reached the emperor via the magistrate of Xiamen, the offices of the Provincial Administration Commission and Provincial Surveillance Commission, and the offices of the governor-general and the governor.

When one compares the Malay letter sent from Sulu with its contents as conveyed to the Chinese emperor, it is evident that the fact that Wang Sanyang

had been engaged in trade between Sulu and Fujian province and had pocketed the payment for some goods, the quantity of silver and goods to be returned to Sulu, and the sultan's adherence to the emperor's instructions had been confirmed by both parties. But there can be seen a difference in perception or wording regarding the instructions issued by the Chinese, for whereas the Malay letter is worded in such a way that it can be taken to imply that the sultan had no intention of notifying the people of these instructions, in the palace memorial it is assumed that the sultan will promulgate them widely among the people of Sulu. In either case, it probably means that Sulu could respond as it saw fit. When one considers the structure of the documents, in the declaration and the palace memorial the return of the silver and the goods is mentioned after the reference to Wang Sanyang's punishment, whereas in the Malay letter mention of his having been killed follows the reference to the receipt of the silver and the goods. In addition, the palace memorial includes passages not found in the original text of the Malay letter, such as praise of the emperor's virtue, admiration for China, and gratitude to the emperor. The repeated references to "Paduka Seri Sultan" in the Malay letter can also not be inferred from the Chinese sources. It could be said, in other words, that changes were made to parts of the structure of the letter's contents and that there are differences in the modes of expression employed in the Malay letter and the Chinese sources.

It has thus become clear through a comparison of the Malay letter and its contents as quoted in the palace memorial that there are passages for which no correspondences can be found. It could be said that rather than having faithfully quoted the original text of the Malay letter sent by the sultan, its contents as reported to the emperor in the palace memorial submitted by Fulehun, governor-general of Fujian and Zhejiang, and Yade, governor of Fujian, and dated Qianlong 49/9/10 (source G) are closer to the contents of the declaration composed with the involvement of grand councillors and so on, especially its second half. Nonetheless, since the contents were confirmed to a certain extent on both sides, it is to be surmised that either the person who composed the Malay letter or someone among the people around him could comprehend contemporary Chinese documents. The question of what sort of documents the sultan of Sulu was sending to other regions at the time and what sort of negotiations he was involved in is a topic for future research.

Notes

- * This is a revised and extended English version of San'ō Masayo 三王昌代, “Shindai chūki ni okeru Sūrū (Soroku) to Chūgoku no aida no ōrai bunsho: Jawi bunsho to kanbun shiryō kara” 清代中期におけるスールー（蘇祿）と中国のあいだの往来文書—ジャウイ文書と漢文史料から [Diplomatic correspondence between Sulu and China in the mid-Qing period: A comparison between Jawi and Chinese documents], *Tōyō gakuho* 東洋學報 (Journal of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko) 91, no. 1 (2009), pp. 01–027. In reading the Jawi document, I received assistance from Prof. Sugita Hideaki 杉田英明 of the University of Tokyo, Prof. Kawashima Midori 川島緑 of Sophia University, and Mr. Saiful Bahari bin Ahmad, who taught Malay at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, the University of Tokyo, etc. In addition, Prof. Sugita and Prof. Kawashima in particular introduced me to a great deal of research literature. As well as expressing my thanks, I would add that responsibility for any errors remains my own. This study was supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number JP21J01687.
- 1) James Francis Warren, “Sino-Sulu Trade in the Late Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries,” *Philippine Studies* 25, no. 1 (1977), pp. 50–79.
 - 2) Najeeb M. Saleeby, *The History of Sulu* (Manila: Filipiniana Book Guild, 1963); Cesar Adib Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 2nd ed., 1999 [1st ed., 1973]); James Francis Warren, *The Sulu Zone 1768–1898: The Dynamics of External Trade, Slavery, and Ethnicity in the Transformation of a Southeast Asian Maritime State* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1981).
 - 3) For basic information on the Jawi script, see Michael F. Laffan, *Islamic Nationhood and Colonial Indonesia: The Umma below the Winds* (London: Routledge, 2003); Kawashima Midori, “Introduction: Asian Muslim Networks and Movements,” *Journal of Sophia Asian Studies* 27 (2009), pp. 1–3; Hashim bin Haji Musa, “Early Jawi Materials and the Creation of a Network of Malay Islamic Centres,” *Journal of Sophia Asian Studies* 27 (2009), pp. 10–12; Annabel Teh Gallop et al., “A Jawi Sourcebook for the Study of Malay Palaeography and Orthography,” *Indonesia and the Malay World* 43, issue 125 (2015), pp. 13–19, 28–30, 38–39.
 - 4) E.g., Gallop et al., op. cit.; Annabel Teh Gallop, *The Legacy of the Malay Letter = Warisan Warkah Melayu* (London: The British Library, 1994).
 - 5) On the seal's inscription, see note 38 below. In this letter, the seal has been affixed on the right-hand side, slightly lower than the first line. According to Gallop, an expert on Malay seals, a ruler would place his seal on the right of the paper, and the position of the seal placed in the right-hand column expressed differences in rank between the sender and the recipient in a nineteenth-century Malay manual on letter-writing. See Annabel Teh Gallop, A. C. S. Peacock, and İsmail Hakki Kadi, “Introduction: The Language of Letters, Southeast Asian Understandings of Ottoman Diplomats,” in *Ottoman-Southeast Asian Relations: Sources from the Ottoman Archives*, edited by Peacock and Kadi, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2020), p. 18. This book was brought to my attention by Kawashima Midori. Judging from this explanation by Gallop about the positions of seals, the position of the seal on this Malay letter, too, may reflect the Sulu perception

of a difference in rank between the sultan of Sulu and a Chinese provincial governor in the eighteenth century. But as seen in note 40 below, the word *saudara*, indicating a comparatively equal relationship, is used in the letter, and therefore the actual significance of the seal's position will be left as a topic for future consideration.

- 6) The Chinese classified this letter as an “official communication” (*ziwen* 咨文). Generally speaking, a *ziwen* was an official document exchanged during the Qing dynasty between government offices of equal status, but there are also some missives sent during the Qing from the Ryūkyū kingdom and Joseon to the Ministry of Rites (*libu* 禮部), one of the Six Ministries (*liubu* 六部), that are designated *ziwen*.
- 7) On tribute to China by the Sultanate of Sulu, see Matsuura Akira 松浦章, “Chūgoku-Sūrū kan no tsūkō kankei” 中国・蘇祿間の通交関係 [Diplomatic relations between China and Sulu], in id., *Shindai kaigai bōekishi no kenkyū* 清代海外貿易史の研究 [Studies on foreign trade during the Qing period] (Kyoto: Hōyū shoten 朋友書店, 2002), pp. 467–495. This article was originally published as “Min-Shin jidai ni okeru Chūgoku Sūrū kankeishi” 明清時代における中国蘇祿關係史 [China-Sulu relations in the Ming-Qing period], *Kansai daigaku bungaku ronshū* 關西大學文學論集 (Essays and Studies by Members of Faculty of Letters, Kansai University) 30, no. 3 (1980), pp. 1–36.
- 8) Palace memorials were one type of document whereby high-ranking officials reported to the emperor during the Qing period. They could be submitted directly, quickly, and in secret without any Manchu translation being attached to memorials written in Chinese or any draft for the emperor’s vermilion endorsement being prepared before being shown to the emperor. One of the functions of palace memorials was to increase the emperor’s knowledge of local political conditions. See Silas H. L. Wu, *Communication and Imperial Control in China: Evolution of the Palace Memorial System, 1693–1735* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970), p. 73.
- 9) National Palace Museum Library in Taiwan, Palace Memorials (宮中檔奏摺), 403042757. This memorial is included in Guoli gugong bowuyuan 國立故宮博物院, ed., *Gongzhong dang Qianlong chao zouzhe* 宮中檔乾隆朝奏摺 [Palace memorials of the Qianlong reign], vol. 53 (Taipei: Guoli gugong bowuyuan, 1986), pp. 367–369.
- 10) Zhongguo diyi lishi dang’anguan 中國第一歷史檔案館, ed., *Qianlong chao shangyu dang* 乾隆朝上諭檔 [Imperial edicts of the Qianlong reign], vol. 11 (Beijing: Dang’an chubanshe 檔案出版社, 1991), p. 466. Court letters or secret edicts (*jixin yuzhi* 寄信諭旨) were written under the grand councillors’ names and dated the day they received (*feng* 奉) the imperial instructions.
- 11) *Ibid.*, pp. 466–467.
- 12) *Ibid.*, p. 484.
- 13) National Palace Museum Library in Taiwan, Palace Memorials, 403043653. This memorial is included in Guoli gugong bowuyuan, ed., *op. cit.*, vol. 54, pp. 526–527.
- 14) National Palace Museum Library in Taiwan, Grand Council Archives (軍機處檔摺件), 035529.
- 15) Zhongguo diyi lishi dang’anguan, ed., *Qingdai Zhongguo yu Dongnanya geguo guanxi dang’an shiliao huibian* 清代中國與東南亞各國關係檔案史料匯編 [Collection of archives on relations between China and Southeast Asian countries in the Qing period], vol. 2 (Beijing: Guoji wenhua chubanshe 國際文化出版公司, 2004), pp. 216–217.

- 16) The romanization of the Jawi document basically follows the transliteration scheme given in Gallop et al., “A Jawi Sourcebook for the Study of Malay Palaeography and Orthography,” p. 37. Words of Arabic origin are basically treated as Malay, and the orthography of Modern Malay given in Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, ed., *Kamus Dewan*, 4th ed. (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 2005) has been used. However, Arabic phrases inserted into the text and the names of people prior to the nineteenth century have been transcribed as Arabic. When there are differences with the Jawi spelling, there are instances where the Jawi spelling has been preferred. Parentheses () indicate supplementary explanations by the present author or in the original text, and phrases that are illegible or unclear and words for which the Modern Malay spelling has been supplemented have been enclosed in brackets [].
- 17) Gallop, *The Legacy of the Malay Letter*, pp. 32–33.
- 18) Zai was a Muslim calendar with an eight-year cycle. See Ian Proudfoot, *Old Muslim Calendars of Southeast Asia* (Leiden: Brill, 2006).
- 19) Spelt “Muazam” in Modern Malay. Here, the Arabic diacritic *shaddah*, marking a geminate, has been added above the letter *zā*, and so it reads “Mu‘azzam.”
- 20) *al-dīn* (“religion”), of Arabic origin, has here been added to “Mahāj” or “Muhāj.” Mahāj al-Dīn or Muhāj al-Dīn? According to Sir Monier Monier-Williams’ *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary: Etymologically and Philologically Arranged with Special Reference to Cognate Indo-European Languages* (Oxford and Tokyo: Clarendon Press, 1899, p. 795), *mahāja* means “high-born, noble.”
- 21) According to the Jawi spelling, *astana*. Malay *istana* (in modern spelling) derives from Sanskrit and means “palace.”
- 22) An Arabic phrase; “dāru-l-amāni wa-s-salāmi” in Arabic phonetic transcription.
- 23) Warren, *The Sulu Zone 1768–1898*.
- 24) *Qing shilu* 清實錄 [Veritable records of the Qing], vol. 23 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1985–87), entries for Qianlong 47, 11th month, cyclic day *renyin* 壬寅 (pp. 669–670) and cyclic day *gengshen* 庚申 (pp. 681–682).
- 25) Source A: 王三陽私取燕窩二十三斤，作銀二百九十九圓，賣抵番賑。九月內，回至廈門，將大珠一粒付姪王拱臣，偕同另夥王四簡·曾愈·王中正等，前赴廣東貨賣。又將小珠一粒向王致和押銀一百圓。餘存燕窩及冰片·黃蠟等物共賣銀二百二十九圓，陸續花用青呢裁為衣服，希冀大珠得價，彌補寄還。詎王拱臣攜珠到廣，適值珠價大賤。僅賣得番銀七百圓，除行用盤費三十圓外，淨存六百七十圓。先是王三陽在番時，曾借王四簡銀兩係王拱臣經手，王四簡見王拱臣賣有珠價，即索取伊叔王三陽前欠共本利五百七十圓。王拱臣如數給還，到家之日，只剩交王三陽銀一百圓。
- 26) Source A: 又因所領蘇祿國貨物先已變當花用，而賣珠銀兩復經王四簡扣抵欠賬，無從歸補。
- 27) Yang Deyi, Wang Sijian, and Wang Sanyang correspond to the men whose names are given as [T²-G-Y] and [A-Su-K-N] in note 45 and Sambiyang in note 43.
- 28) Source A: 乾隆四十六年正月，適有鄭雄赴蘇祿國生理。隨捏稱（中略），並以楊得意負欠伊埔頭銀六千兩折實銀四百二十兩，又王四簡僥去珠價銀五百零五圓，令將楊得意等貨銀扣抵等情，托鄭雄代為寫信，寄與蘇祿國王。該國王接信，即於楊得意·王四簡銀內，照數扣抵，楊得意等堅稱並未欠王三陽銀兩。該國王隨將王三陽原書併另作一字，附燕窩五斤，托付海澄縣人周佐，寄送廈門同知，囑拘王三陽追出貨價，給還楊得意等收領，餘剩寄還該國等語。

- 29) The relevant statute is found in Zheng Qin 鄭秦 and Tian Tao 田濤, eds., *Da Qing lüli* 大清律例 [Great Qing code with sub-statutes], in *Zhongguo zhenxi falü dianji jicheng* 中國珍稀法律典籍集成 [Collection of Chinese rare legal texts], edited by Liu Hainian 劉海年 and Yang Yifan 楊一凡, pt. 3, vol. 1 (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe 科學出版社, 1994), p. 275 (“Panjie jianxi” 盤詰姦細).
- 30) Source A: 王三陽合依交結外國，互相買賣，誑騙財物，發邊遠充軍例，從重改發伊犁等處，給種地兵丁為奴。（中略）其餘貨價共番銀一千二百七十圓。該國王已扣楊得意貨銀四百二十兩，合番銀六百圓，又扣留王四簡番銀五百零五圓，共一千一百零五圓，尚應給還一百六十五圓（中略）。至該國王寄送廈防同知燕窩，同現存小珠併應找還銀兩，一併給還該國收領（後略）。
- 31) Source B: 自應將王三陽按律問擬。其所欠貨價銀兩，並於該犯名下照數追出，給還該國王收領，方為允協。
- 32) Source D: 現在已過秋審，著將該犯即行處絞。至中國撫馭外夷，遇有內地不法之徒，在彼滋擾，尤當嚴示懲儆，方足以服外夷之心。著傳諭雅德，俟王三陽正法時，傳知該國在閩夷人令其在旁觀看，俾知中國於在外滋事之犯，斷不稍為寬貸，且使貿易商民共知儆畏。 More or less the same wording is found in source E, which has, however, “time of the autumn assizes” (秋審之期) instead of “autumn assizes” (秋審).
- 33) Source B: 乃閱雅德所擬寄覆蘇祿國檄文，內有歸咎該國王所托非人，又輕信王三陽一面之詞，扣留他人銀兩，並囑廈門同知，著追辦理，均屬未協等語。
- 34) Source B: 今所擬檄文內，轉歸咎於該國王之辦理錯謬，是即明朝陋習，護內地民人，而賤外國，屈小邦，及至釀成事端。又怕人侮，屈意從之，殊屬非是。除將原文令軍機大臣另行刪改發回外，雅德仍著傳旨申飭，將此由四百里傳諭知之（後略）。
- 35) Source G: 其王三陽名下，追出應找貨價番銀一百六十五圓，未賣小珠一粒并該國王寄送廈防應燕窩五觔。臣等遵旨，繕備檄文，飭司轉發廈門同知，配船寄還該國王，收領去後。
- 36) Source C: 照得該國寄信廈門同知，有內地民人王三陽負欠貨價不還等情，轉稟到本督部堂撫部院。當經立飭提拏王三陽到案，奏明大皇帝，將王三陽嚴審究追，從重治罪外，查該國自雍正五年，奉表通貢以來，復節次遣使輸誠，敬修職貢，大皇帝嘉爾傾心向化，恩禮有加。
- 37) Source C: 該國雖遠處海隅，久在聖朝怙冒之內。今既有內地奸商，侵昧貨銀，自應著落嚴追，從重究辦。已於王三陽名下追出原賣貨價銀，除償還該國扣收王四簡·楊得意共銀一千一百零五圓外，尚餘貨銀一百六十五圓，并王三陽未賣小珠一粒，同寄送廈門同知燕窩五斤，一併附交該國收領。嗣後該國如遇銷售貨物，務須查明誠實殷商，現銀交易，庶不受奸商誑騙，以副聖主懷柔遠人之至意。
- 38) In Arabic, Sulṭān. In Arabic and Malay letters sent by the sultan of Sulu in the mid-eighteenth century, there are examples such as “Anā al-Sulṭān Muḥammad ‘Azīm al-Dīn malik Sūluk wa-jamī‘ jazāyir-hi” (I am the Sultan Muḥammad ‘Azīm al-Dīn, King of Sulu and all its islands) and “Paduka Seri Sultan Muḥammad Mu‘izz al-Dīn,” where the sultan’s name is given at the start of the letter (Isaac Donoso Jiménez and Mourad Kacimi, “A Royal Letter, in Arabic, by Sultan ‘Azīm al-Dīn I of Sulu (1747),” *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts* 10, issue 1 [2019], p. 38, fig. 3, p. 34; Isaac Donoso Jiménez, “Philippine Islamic Manuscripts and Western Historiography,” *Manuscripta Orientalia* 16, no. 2 [2010], p. 5, fig. 2). Letters in Tausug, on the other hand, usually begin with

- “Bahwa ini surat” and “Surat ini” (This is the kind letter) (Isaac Donoso Jiménez, “Islamic Manuscripts in the National Archives of the Philippines,” *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts* 7, issue 2 [2016], p. 211). The title “Paduka Seri Sultan” is sometimes used by the title-holder himself, and so it is not necessarily the same as a term of address and reverence such as “His Highness.”
- 39) If read as Arabic, the phonetic transcription would be “Azīmu ad-dīn” or “Azīmu-d-dīn” (“tremendous in faith”; in Modern Malay, ‘Azimuddin or Azimuddin). As noted, *dīn* is of Arabic origin and is spelt *din* in Modern Malay. The Arabic text on the seal reads: “al-mutawakkil ‘alā al-malik al-mubīn al-Sulṭān [P-A . . .] ‘Azīm al-Dīn sanat 1191” (He who entrusts himself to the King, the Manifest One, the Sultan [. . .] ‘Azīm al-Dīn, the year 1191 [1778 A.D.]) (sections inside brackets are unclear and cannot be read. A provisional reading could be “Paduka Seri Muḥammad”). The expression “al-malik al-mubīn” is considered to be based on the *ḥadīth* “al-malik al-ḥaqq al-mubīn” (“manifest and true king”) (see Abū Nu‘aym al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā’ wa Ṭabaqāt al-Aṣfiyā’*, vol. 8 [Cairo: Maktaba al-Khānjī / Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1996], p. 280). (I am indebted to Sugita Hideaki for pointing this out.) It is also known that there exist other Sulu seals in which “al-mutawakkil ‘alā al-malik al-mubīn al-Sulṭān” is followed by the sultan’s name and the date (see Annabel Teh Gallop, *Malay Seals from the Islamic World of Southeast Asia: Content, Form, Context, Catalogue* [Singapore: NUS Press in association with The British Library, 2019], p. 642, Seal number 1891: The seal of Sultan Muḥammad Mu‘izz al-Dīn [1748–63]).
- 40) This Malay letter has *saudarah*, but in Modern Malay and in letters included in Gallop, *The Legacy of the Malay Letter*, we find *saudara*. The sultan of Sulu uses this term, indicative of a brotherly relationship, also when addressing Chinese provincial governors, and it is to be surmised that their relationship was perceived as a comparatively equal relationship. In South Sulawesi to the south of Sulu there had long existed several petty kingdoms of the Bugis people, and according to Leonard Andaya all alliances apart from the relationship between a master and his slaves were referred to by the term *asseajingēng* (brotherhood). In addition, in Dutch translations of letters they sent to the Dutch East India Company the word “broeder” (brother) is used, and this is thought to have corresponded to *saudara* in the original Malay text (Leonard Y. Andaya, “Treaty Conceptions and Misconceptions: A Case Study from South Sulawesi,” *Bijdragen tot de Taal, Land- en Volkenkunde* 134, no. 2/3 [1978], pp. 281, 293, n. 15). As can be seen in Gallop, *The Legacy of the Malay Letter*, in the various kingdoms established throughout Southeast Asia words indicative of a relationship between brothers or relatives were used among the rulers of these kingdoms and in their diplomatic relations with Europeans. See also Barbara Watson Andaya, *To Live as Brothers: Southeast Sumatra in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1993), p. 29. A letter from Paduka Mahasari Maulana Jamāl al-Kirām II, sultan of Sulu (1884–1936), to the governor-general of the Philippines also uses the Tausug word (my, the sultan’s) *taymanghud* (“brother”) to refer to the other party (Donoso Jiménez, “Islamic Manuscripts in the National Archives of the Philippines,” pp. 203–204).
- 41) Chinese *haiguan* 海關, i.e., the maritime customs at Xiamen.
- 42) “h” is missing in the original text but has been added for ease of comprehension in Modern Malay.

- 43) Judging from the context, this refers to Wang Sanyang, and therefore Sambiyang is a transcription of Sanyang 三陽.
- 44) *nakhōdah* in the original Jawi text, *nakhoda* in Modern Malay; derives from Persian *nākhūdha/nākhodā*.
- 45) Judging from Chinese sources, T'-G-Y and A-Su-K-N refer to Yang Deyi and Wang Sijian, in which case T'-G-Y transcribes Deyi 得意 and A-Su-K-N transcribes Sijian 四簡. It is currently unclear why family names have been omitted in this Malay letter.
- 46) There is no “h” in the original text, and a *shaddah* has been added above the Arabic letter *bā'* (“lebbi”), but the spelling has been adjusted to conform with Modern Malay.
- 47) Text reads *pemyayar*.
- 48) “itu” added on the advice of Kawashima Midori (18 Dec. 2020).
- 49) Text reads *yaitu*.
- 50) Probably Malay *suka* with “h” added at the end; a *shaddah* has been added above the Arabic letter *kāf*.
- 51) *si* is a diminutive prefixed to people’s names and has here been added before “Sambiyang” on the advice of Kawashima Midori (18 Dec. 2020).
- 52) Text reads *sukka*; a *shaddah* has been added above the Arabic letter *kāf*.
- 53) *tamat* in Modern Malay. But here it has been treated together with the following phrase as an Arabic expression (see Gallop, *The Legacy of the Malay Letter*, p. 231). Since Arabic *kalām* (statement) is a masculine noun, the verb also takes the masculine form *tamma* (end). In this text the final “t” does not seem to have been fully written, but as can be seen in Gallop, *The Legacy of the Malay Letter*, p. 174, etc., in other Jawi documents there are examples with a final “t”.
- 54) “Tamma-l-kalām bi-l-khayr wa-s-salām” in Arabic phonetic transcription. I wish to cite some examples of Arabic expressions used to conclude letters from Gallop, *The Legacy of the Malay Letter* (pp. 36, 123, 125, 129, 132) (with some minor changes made with reference to the transliteration scheme in *ibid.*, pp. 196–202): “Tamma al-kalām bi-al-khayr” (“This statement ends with goodness” [fig. 32]; as is indicated by Gallop’s transliteration *tammāt*, the original text has “t” at the end, but in Arabic it should be *tamma*); “wa-al-salām bi-al-khayr” (“And peace with goodness!” [fig. 131]); “wa-al-salām” (“And peace!” [fig. 136]); the stock phrase “wa-Allāh a‘lam bi-al-ṣawāb” (“Allah knows the right best” [fig. 143]; the final word could be “h-w-a-b,” but the meaning is unclear); “Tamma al-kalām” (“This statement ends” [fig. 161]; text reads *tammāt*).
- 55) Source G: 茲據藩臬兩司詳稱，據廈門同知劉嘉會申報，船戶林德順，於本年七月十四日返掉回廈，資領蘇祿國咨覆臣等回文一角，呈繳前來。
- 56) Source G: (前略)，內係番字文一件又譯出漢字文一件，據稱，敝國遠處海隅，仰沐天朝德化，久在怙冒之中。緣前年寄信廈門同知，托追內地民人王三陽僥欠貨價，茲准文檄飭拏王三陽到案嚴審，奏明大皇帝，將王三陽處絞正法，所追貨價餘銀，并小珠一粒燕窩五觔，配船交還，深感大皇帝恤惠，小邦實為感激之至。隨將配到銀·物查收，并通諭敝國土民，凡有洋船客商銷售貨物，務查明確係誠實殷商，現銀交易，以免詭騙滋事等語。