

BUDDHISTS MINORITY IN MALAY MUSLIMS  
MAJORITY OF PASIR MAS, KELANTAN

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KULLIYAH OF ISLAMIC REVEALED KNOWLEDGE AND HUMAN  
SCIENCES

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# **BUDDHISTS MINORITY IN MALAY MUSLIMS MAJORITY OF PASIR MAS, KELANTAN**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Although Malaysia is a predominantly Muslim country, other religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity, Sikhism, Taoism, and other traditional belief systems are also practiced. The objective of this study is to investigate the real pattern of relationship of Buddhists minority in Malay Muslims majority in one of the east coast states in Malaysia, Kelantan. A small town, Pasir Mas is chosen as it consists of two major religions, Islam and Buddhism, forming two religious communities living side by side in a traditional village namely Kg. Tendong. It is an ethno-religious study of Malay Muslims and Chinese as well as Siamese Buddhists in terms of their religious interaction in the said location. The study in Pasir Mas could be perceived as a subset study over the dominant set of ethnic groups in Malaysia. In order to measure the quality of interaction, some indicators have been prepared to be applied on a total of one hundred and forty (140) respondents that were drawn from Muslims and Buddhists. The sample size together with the above-mentioned indicators showed that the quality of interaction is encouraging in the sense that the universal values of the two religions, namely Islam and Buddhism that bind people together. On the other hand, the discouraging factor of interaction among the residents of Pasir Mas was that trivial issues of religious differences. Therefore, the significance of the study lies mainly in showing the level of interaction between Muslims and Buddhists in Pasir Mas. This result is essential to the policy makers to develop a better pattern of inter-racial interaction in a remote area of Peninsular Malaysia.

### **KEYWORDS:**

Social Interaction, acculturation, assimilation, Muslims and Buddhists.

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Living in Malaysia is a very unique experience, this is due to his citizen which comprise of various ethnic, religion and identity. Majority of the residents are Malay and profess Islam then Chinese whose are mainly Buddhists and Christians, Indians whose are Hindus and Christians and others like Indonesians, Siamese, Burmese and so on. Surprisingly, with these varieties all residents of Malaysia live in peace and harmonious environment. People might raise a question on how Malaysian citizens live with this phenomenon. Thus the main objective of this study is to explore the real pattern of relationship among the Malays majority towards Buddhists minority in Pasir Mas, Kelantan.

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

This study is good for interethnic and inter-religious understanding that may lead to national writing in a multi-racial, multi-religious and diversified society. There are many books written on Islam and Buddhism by scholars around the world, unfortunately there are limited sources which stress on the comparison between the two religions. Apparently, the studies focus more on religious doctrines and not about their religious and social interaction. However, there are a few related works to the study:

The works of Morgan and Lawton (1996), Mc Donald (1984), and Ismail Raji al-Faruqi (1998) are some examples of studies that focus on the comparison between religions. These authors deal with the world's major religions like Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Unfortunately, they incline to use the descriptive approach in describing those religions. Therefore, the scope of comparison is not broad enough.

However, among the studies that use the comparative approach are those by Hariri (1980), Prasert Yenprasit (2004) and Sri Mulyati (1982). The authors manage to compare Buddhism and Islam but again in these studies they only focus on one area of comparison, not comparing all religious issues as a whole. For instance, Hariri only discusses the issue of life after death according to Buddhism and Islam and Prasert Yenprasit stresses on the concept of man according to Theravada Buddhism and Islam.

There are several studies that focus on the social interaction between the dominant group and minority group. However, these studies were conducted outside Malaysia which include the studies by Abdo A. Elkholy (1960), Abdullah Bin Taib (1978) and Abdur Rahman I. Doi (1992). Indeed, the first two studies provide information about social interaction and thus may be useful for comparisons of this study.

As stated before, Abdullah Bin Taib (1978) in his dissertation stresses that the Malays perceive other ethnic groups such as Chinese and Indians in Malaysian as different to them and not part of the son of the soil (*Bumiputra*). Due to this perspective, Malays possess unfavorable feelings on other ethnic groups in their surroundings. Even though these three ethnic groups share similar experiences, backgrounds, and social life, yet they have different perceptions upon others. In the same way, the study shows that the Malays have similar perception over local residents of United States of America (USA) even though the Malays used to study in USA.

Additionally, there are two books by Hanapi Dollah (1986) and Teo Kok Seong (2003) that deal with the local situation which focus on the Chinese community in Malaysia. The first book discusses how the Chinese community in Kampung Mata Ayer, Pulau Chondong, Kelantan assimilated Malay culture into their own. While, the second book explains the historical background of Chinese in Kelantan and their pattern of communication which is similar to that

of the majority of Malays by using Kelantanese dialect. From their studies, the researchers collect much information about the Chinese way of life particularly in Kelantan.

On the other hand, a book by Mohamed Yusoff Ismail (1993) is very important because it studies socio-religious aspect that emphasizes the ethnicity of the Buddhists and their social and religious structure. Even though it does not carry a comparative approach, its emphasis on the socio-religious study is the best example of this type of research.

The literature reviews by the researchers indicate that a thorough piece of work on the religious interaction between the two has yet to be conducted. Therefore, this research seeks to explore the religious and social interaction between Muslims and Buddhists in Pasir Mas, to determine the real interaction that takes place between them.

### **3.0 METHODOLOGY**

The methods adopted in the study are library research and field studies. There are two sources of data: primary source which includes interviews with Muslim religious scholars and Buddhist monks, and a survey questionnaire directed to villagers of all walks of life. Meanwhile the secondary source is collected through library research obtained from both print and electronic media such as books, journals, magazines, internet and statistical reports.

The researchers started the field work by using a survey method through distribution of questionnaires to 200 respondents of Muslims and Buddhists. The researchers then interviewed ten important knowledgeable persons like Muslims religious scholars and Buddhist monks. The researchers used *Bahasa Melayu* as the medium of communication in her study as it is the common language of communication between them. All data obtained and collected through

these methods were then examined and analyzed by the researchers. Thus, this research applies both quantitative and qualitative approaches.

### 3.1 Historical Background Of Pasir Mas

Kelantan (see Appendix I) is one of the states in Malaysia, which is located in the northeast of Peninsula Malaysia. It comprises of 15,022 km<sup>2</sup> areas (see Appendix II), and bordered by Thailand in the north, Terengganu in the southeast, Perak in the west, and Pahang in the south. In the northeast of Kelantan is the South China Sea. Kota Bharu is the capital city which has been declared an “Islamic City” or “*Bandaraya Islam*” by the state government.

The total population of Kelantan is 1.4 million people comprising of 95% Malay, 3% Thai, 1.9% Chinese, and 0.1% others (see Appendix III). The state has ten *jajahan*<sup>1</sup>, namely Kota Bharu, Pasir Mas, Tumpat, Pasir Puteh, Bachok, Kuala Krai, Machang, Tanah Merah, Jeli, and Gua Musang. Since 95% of Kelantan’s population consists of Malay and under the Malaysian Constitution, all Malays are considered Muslims. Islam has become the most influential religion in the state.

*Jajahan* of Pasir Mas is located in the western portion of Kelantan which is about 200 square miles in area. The Kelantan River forms the eastern boundary of the *jajahan*, while the Golok River forms the western one. The state capital of Kota Bharu which is a political, administrative and commercial centre of the state lies 11 miles away from Golok River.

Under *jajahan* of Pasir Mas there are 10 *daerah* (districts). They are; Alor Pasir, Bunut Susu, Chetok, Gual Periuk, Kangkong, Kuala Lemal, Kubang Gadong, Pasir Mas, Rantau

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<sup>1</sup> State political system of Kelantan is distributed to several levels starting *from negeri* (state) *jajahan*, *daerah* (district), *mukim* and *kampung* (village). This system is quite different to other states of Malaysia because Kelantan has additional level which is *jajahan*.

Panjang and Kubang Sepat. In the district of Kubang Sepat there are seven mukims. Those mukims include Tendong, Sakar, Kubang Pak Amin, Kubang Sepat, Paloh, Hutan Chenggal and Padang Embun.

In Mukim Tendong there are six *kampung* (villages) with a total population of 3,548 people. Malays 3,221 or approximately 90.8%, Chinese 297 (8.4%) and others (including Siamese) 30 (0.85%) (Population and Housing Census of Malaysia, 2000). These six villages are Kampung Tendong Hilir, Kampung Tendong Hulu, Kampung Gaung, Kampung Resak, Kampung Cherang Tok Rong and lastly Kampung Cabang Empat Tendong which is known as Kampung Tendong where the study is conducted. Kampung Tendong has a multiracial society. It comprises of Malays, Chinese and Siamese natives. Despite the difference in ethnicity, their relationship is harmony and it indicates social stability of the diversified population of the state.

The total population of Mukim Tendong as recorded by the Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2000, is 3,548, which comprises of 3,221 Malays, 297 Chinese and 30 others (including Siamese) (Population and Housing Census of Malaysia, 2000). Moreover, according to the report *Carta Kebersihan Luar Bandar Daerah Kubang Sepat, 2006* prepared by the Health Department of Pasir Mas, Mukim Tendong comprises of 3,867 with 727 houses. It also stated that Kampung Tendong has 716 people with 143 houses. However, this study is confined to Muslims and Buddhists of Kampung Tendong, not to the whole population of Mukim Tendong.

Before the social interaction of Muslims and Buddhists is discussed, it is necessary to examine briefly the history of Chinese migration into Malaysia.<sup>2</sup> Trade and seeking job opportunities were two major reasons for the settlement of the Chinese in Malaysia.

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<sup>2</sup> Malaysia formerly known as Malaya or *Tanah Melayu*, gains independence in 1957 and Malaysia formed as a nation in 1963. Before 1963, Malaysia was known as Malaya.

It is recorded by Tan et. al (2005) that Chinese trade in the Malay Peninsula started as early as the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. By the 8<sup>th</sup> century, the Chinese traded with kingdoms on the peninsula that they called *Tun Sun* (said to be situated at the mouth of the Johore River), *Chu Li* (believed to be a port at the mouth of the Kuantan River, Pahang) and *Ch'ih Tu* (thought to be in Kelantan). In the same source, the authors presented a Chinese chronicle that *Ch'ih Tu* had sent diplomatic and trade missions to China during the Tang Dynasty (619-906 A.D), and the Chinese emperor presented a gift of 100 rolls of silk to the kingdom of *Ch'ih Tu* in the 7<sup>th</sup> century (2005: 4). These were the best examples of early relationship of Kelantanese with the Chinese.

On the other hand, seeking jobs opportunities was the economic reason which attracts the Chinese to settlement in Malaysia. Historically, mainland Chinese faced overpopulation, natural calamities and the exploitation of peasants by landlords brought tens of thousands of Chinese out of the coastal provinces of China to Nanyang (Tan et. al., 2005: 9). The majority of those who joined the migration into Malaysia came to work in the land or involve in trade. Some of them negotiated with the Malay rulers and chiefs of tin mines to acquire the lands for plantation or cash crops.

In the case of Kelantan, the Chinese migrated and settled in a significant numbers in Kelantan since the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. The settlers were generously given land for farming by the Sultans and powerful royal families. According to Robert L. Winzeler (1985: 18) the Chinese settlers occupied and owned much of the land about 40 kilometers along both sides of the Kelantan River. They socialized well with local Malays and became highly assimilated to the local way of life. Today, Chinese descendents wear Malay-style dress, speak the Malay

Kelantanese dialect and observe Malay customs. However, they have retained their Chinese religion and customs.

Majority of the Chinese in Kelantan are the followers of Theravada Buddhism. In Mukim Tendong, the Kuan Yin statue sits in a temple is believed to have been built in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Even though the Chinese population is small with 297 individuals, they preserve their religious practices. They celebrate Chinese festivals, enjoy Chinese norms, cultures, and lifestyles like consuming liquor, eating pork and having dogs as pets.

### **3.2 Who Are Buddhists?**

A Buddhist is a person who believes in Buddhism. It is a world faith, a philosophy and a way of life based on the teachings of Buddha, a person of noble birth who was born in India about 2,500 years ago. In the beginning, he led a luxurious lifestyle, lacking nothing materially and his father wanted him to follow his footsteps and become the king of the *Sakya* clan. However, after observing great sufferings at the age of 20 Buddha left the life of luxury and became an itinerant monk to pursue spiritual knowledge.

After years of practicing extreme austerities and engaging in prolonged and intense meditation, Frithjof (1989) noted in his book that Buddha realized that neither the extreme of self-indulgence nor the extreme of self-mortification lead to an end of suffering. He said “avoiding these two extremes I have realized the middle path” (1989: 27). Buddha traveled all over India for about 40 years. After his death, Buddhism spread throughout South East Asia, China, Japan, Tibet and the West.

In the study, Buddhists are the occupants of Chinese<sup>3</sup> and Siamese<sup>4</sup> of the Buddhist faith in Kampung Tendong. Buddhists largely are identified by their Chinese or Siamese names, which are different from the Malays.

### 3.3 Who Are Muslims?

A Muslim is a person who adheres to a religion called Islam. Islam is a religion revealed 1400 years old ago. Muslims believe that there is only one God (*tawhīd*), called Allah (*subḥānahu wa ta‘āla*). Islam was revealed to Rasūlullah Muḥammad bin ‘Abd Allāh. Muslims believe that Muḥammad (*ṣallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam*) was the last Prophet of Allah (*subḥānahu wa ta‘āla*). The word “Islam” stems from the fourth verbal form of the root *slm*: *aslama*, which literally means “to submit” or “to surrender”. Thus, the word Islam has come to mean “submission”, “surrender”, “resignation”, and “obedience” to Allah (*subḥānahu wa ta‘āla*) and His guidance (Mir Zohair Husain, 2003: 1).

The religious scripture of Islam is the Holy Qur‘ān and the place for communal worship is called Mosque (*Masjid*). Islam is a way of life, governing religious practice and morality as well as social relationships, marriage, divorce, kinship, economy and political relations. Someone who believes in Islam is a Muslim. Muslims believe that Islam teaches the true and successful way of life for all people.

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<sup>3</sup> Chinese populations of Southeast Asia or outside China are a set of distinct communities linked by language and culture to the mainland Chinese society, but in many respects are very different from that natal society. See Teo Kok Seong (2003: 1).

<sup>4</sup> Siamese refers to the native of Siam which is now known as Thailand. Thailand is situated in the north of Kelantan. Because of this closed location to Kelantan, Siamese are easily found in various places of Kelantan.

At present, the Muslims are mainly Malay<sup>5</sup> residents of Kampung Tendong who profess Islamic religion. A unique aspect to distinguish Muslims and non-Muslims (who confess other religious faiths other than Islam) of Kampung Tendong is their dress code. The female Muslims are identified through their *hijabs* that cover their heads and most often they wear long and loose dresses. Majority of males wear headgear tailored (*kopiah*) specially for the purpose of prayers.

### **3.4 Acculturation and Assimilation**

In this study, social interaction is analyzed in terms of Chinese and Siamese communities participation among the majority of Malays in Kampung Tendong and how both religions of the two groups interact towards each other. When discussing social interaction, it is undeniably significant to discuss acculturation and assimilation processes. Acculturation and assimilation are two sides of the single process by which a group borrows cultural traits and becomes accepted by the dominant group.

Acculturation is the psychological and social counter-part of cultural diffusion. Originally “acculturation” was referred to the colonial racist idea that so-called “savages” and “lower peoples” experience mental evolution when they imitated the so-called “civilized” or “higher peoples” (Winthrop, 1991).

Teo Kok Seong (2003) has defined acculturation as the process of adopting the social patterns and cultural traits of another dominant group. He also noted that acculturation is a type of sociocultural change experienced by an entire or a section of an ethnic group as a result of interethnic contact with a dominant society and culture with a change in one or usually in both

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<sup>5</sup> According to Federal Constitution of Malaysia, Malays are those who confess Islam, speak Malay language, practice Malay culture and those who were born before or on the Independent Day of the Federal or Singapore and settle in Federal or Singapore. See *Perlembagaan Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur: International Law Book Services.

entities. This change does not necessarily involve the loss of ethnic identity, which is opposed to assimilation (2003: 6).

Teo (2003) also states that acculturation depends on the communication which flow between the two cultures in contact. This is because for him, it is a phenomenon which results when groups having distinct cultures come into first hand interaction with subsequent changes, conscious or subconscious, in the original cultural patterns of both groups.

On the other hand, the word assimilation is derived from Latin word which means “to render similar” (Wikipedia; ‘*Assimilation*’, retrieved on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2007 in <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assimilation>>). The process of assimilation carries different connotations in various disciplines. In linguistics, for instance, assimilation is a process in which a sound becomes similar to an adjacent sound. In biology, assimilation is the conversion of nutrient into the fluid or solid substance of the body, by the processes of digestion and absorption. In philosophy, assimilation is the incorporation of new concepts into existing schemes.

However, in sociology and anthropology, assimilation is the process whereby a minority group gradually adopts the customs and attitudes of the prevailing culture. It also leads to language shift or language assimilation, the progressive process whereby a speech community of a language shifts to speaking another language. The best example which usually quoted by the scholars is Americanization of Native Americans or cultural assimilation of Native Americans in the United States and Jewish assimilation (Wikipedia; ‘*Assimilation*’, retrieved on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2007 in <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assimilation>> ).

According to Winick (1956) assimilation is a process of sociocultural change which involves the lost of ethnic identity. Within his general framework, assimilation is associated with

only a total change in the reference group. Whereby, the process occurs when the members of a group see them as belonging ethnically to another group. However, the complete loss of ethnic identity on the part of the “new” members does not mean that there is ready acceptance of membership to another ethnic group by that ethnic group. Recognition and acceptance as “equals” by the majority members of the dominant group are true criteria of “total assimilation”. If and when the “new” members are not treated as “equals” at societal level, then it is only “partial assimilation” which is synonymous with “assimilation” (1956: 3-4, 46).

For the present study, the researchers uses acculturation and assimilation to mean a single process, adopting a culture to one owns. This is because, the study is designed to measure the extent to which the Buddhists have interact with the local Malays consequently merged, to that degree, a process of adopting Malay culture into a part of their own culture.

#### **4.0 RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

In this study, respondents are divided into Muslims and Buddhists. There are four constructs to measure social interaction namely mixed interaction, sharing workplace, sharing leisure time together as well as religious understandings. Using a convenience sampling technique, a total of one hundred and forty (140) respondents were drawn from Muslims and Buddhists of Pasir Mas, Kelantan. The sample size together with the above-mentioned indicators showed that the quality of interaction based on frequency is above average (i.e., 67.83%).

Precisely, for “mixed interaction” was 82.7%, “sharing workplace” was 72.44%, “sharing leisure times together” was 66.72%, and “religious understandings” which were divided into two parts ‘intra-religious understandings’ was 82.95% and ‘inter-religious understandings’ was 34.34% with the average percentage of 42.59.

Based on responses of the questionnaire, there are 140 respondents, 94 (67.1%) were Muslims and 46 (32.9%) were Buddhists. The study shows that Muslim male respondents were the majority with 47.9% followed by Buddhist males 20.7%, Muslim females 19.3% and lastly Buddhist females constitute the smallest number, 17 (12.1%). The frequency for each sex group showed males were 68.6% followed by the females 31.4%.

In total, female respondents were only 27 persons compared to 67 of males. One might say that the small number of female participation in the study is due to customary practice of the Malays. This is because, the administration of the questionnaires was done in public, by approaching those who were in markets, restaurants, shops, retailers, and other places. These places are infrequently visited by women folk of Kampung Tendong as it is a part of Malay custom that a female is traditionally indoor rather outdoor. They spend more time doing household chores, cooking and handicrafts. Thus, for those who strictly practice such kind of custom, would discourage their daughters and grand-daughters from going outdoor without any purpose.

Based on the researchers's observation, majority of females in this location preferred to stay at home and active in-door. Thus, it can be concluded that the Malay residents in Kampung Tendong strictly uphold and preserve their customs. This is in-line with a comment made by an anthropologist, Robert L. Winzeler in his work (1985: 7) which stated that Islam is also prominent in the identity of Kelantanese Malays. Within the context of Malaysia and perhaps South-East Asia generally, Kelantan is marked by a strong popular commitment to Islam.

Moreover, on several occasions when the researchers approached a group of people or a family, the males voluntarily participated in the study. Their females would encourage males to take part in the study. A big number of them refused to answer the questionnaire if their spouses

voluntarily participated. Again, this shows their commitment to Islamic principles. The male is regarded as a leader in a family life. In return, the female should give full respect and obey to his command as long as the command does not transgress with Islamic teachings. Thus, this leads to lower number of Malay female participants in the study.

In contrast, due to the process of assimilation, the Buddhists tend to adapt the Malay custom. The females are expected to be at home and take care of the household. As reported by Winzeler, “upon entering a rural Chinese village and meeting the inhabitants the observer who is aware of cultural and social distance between Malays and other ethnic Chinese is apt to be impressed by how similar these Chinese outlook as Malays” (1985:51).

Another important possibility is that, the Chinese of Kelantan are unique and differ from other Chinese in other Malaysian states. This is because, the Chinese of Kelantan generally have dark complexion and, an appearance similar to that of the Malays and Thais (Teo, 2003: 58). Besides that, their language (that is capable of speaking Kelantanese dialect), clothing, food and eating style are also similar to the Malays (Teo, 2003: 58-65). These similarities make the process of interaction between the Malays and the Chinese in Kampung Tendong run smoothly. The results yielded an affirmation towards the process of Chinese assimilation towards Muslims culture.

Teo Kok Seong (2003) stated about the Chinese in Kelantan as having some Malay and Thai influences in culture and language, reflecting the processes of cultural and language contact, interaction and influences. The language spoken by these Chinese is a reflection of the processes of assimilation on their part to the local Malays and Thais. Being a minority group, these Chinese are a good case study of cross-cultural and cross-linguistic experience.

Uniquely, even though the Chinese differ in their religious belief with that of the Malays, there is no reported case of hostile and turmoil among the two communities in Kampung Tendong. Thus, this study plans to examine the factors which bind their social interactions.

In the previous discussion, the five indicators of social interaction are used they are mixed interaction, sharing workplace, sharing leisure time together, religious understanding as well as discussion factors that promote and hinder interaction. Those five items are briefly explained below:

Based on previous discussions, it can be said that the Muslims and the Buddhists in Kampung Tendong were having positive mixed relationship. This is due to several possible reasons. Firstly, they had no communication problem. As stated earlier, the Chinese are fluent in speaking Kelantanese dialect. By so doing, they are easily accepted by the Malays and this scenario could make the process of communication smooth and effective.

Secondly, the residents of Kampung Tendong did not have any problem in running their daily activities. This is because the Chinese have similar features and appearance to that of the Malays, in terms of their dark complexion, styles of clothing, food and eating habits. These similarities make the process of interaction more meaningful.

Lastly, the result of the study yielded an affirmation towards the process of assimilation. The above two mentioned reasons are the best explanations of the assimilation process in Kampung Tendong.

Most importantly, universal values are the sole factor that binds Muslims and Buddhists in Kampung Tendong tightly. They freely interact with each other because their religious faiths encourage them to do so. Thus, if they tightly adhere to the religion, peaceful co-existence among them would enhance.

Under the indicator of 'sharing workplace', there is no doubt that the residents of Kampung Tendong were having positive interaction in their work settings. This is because majority of them did not have any problem and even comfortable in sharing the same career and place of work with the other believers. It could be assumed that the shared universal values of their religions that make them tolerant toward other religious followers.

Another important point is majority of the respondents reported that there is no such segregation occurs in their workplace. Above all, both groups either Muslims or Buddhists insisted that their colleagues would help each other as a team in completing a task regardless of their faiths.

Based on the data collected, the result yielded that the respondents were having mixed interaction and even shared their leisure times together. Majority of them responded that they enjoyed the companies of other religious believers. They also participated in similar collective activities run by the authorities. They have no problems eating together and shopping at the same coffee houses, restaurants, markets, shop retailers and other places. All of these determine that the residents of Kampung Tendong were having positive interaction and they share their leisure times together. It could be said that the universal values of their religions encourage them to socialize well with others.

On the other hand, under the religious understandings, there were two important things to discuss. Both groups, either Muslims or Buddhists were having good understandings of their own religions and this deep understanding is not a disruptive aspect to their relationship. Furthermore, in term of the lack of understandings in other religious teachings would not also a determinant to hinder their positive interaction. In short, religious difference would not break but

rather enhance and strengthen the good relationship of the two groups. The main reason is due to the shared values that their religions have in common.

The study discovered that, the possible variable that facilitates interaction is universal values shared by the two religions – Islam and Buddhism. These similarities would bind their relationship together and tightly bonded.

On the other hand, the study also found that the possible destructive element to their relationship is that trivial religious issues. These issues are the sole factor that could discourage close relationships among them. However, it could not break the strong ties among them. Why? Possible answer is the concept of universal values that shared by both religions that drive their good relationship.

## **5.0 CONCLUSIONS**

As a conclusion, one might say that the residents of Kampung Tendong were having positive interaction between the two groups, namely Muslims and Buddhists. Even though they have huge differences of religious beliefs, cultures, norms and practices yet it could not break or even shaken the closed relationship that they have. Uniquely, there is no conflict or collision case reported by the local government or authorities. It shows that they were having good interaction with each other this is due to the process of acculturation and assimilation.

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## APPENDIX I: Maps of the Location

Map of Malaysia



Map of Kelantan



## APPENDIX II: Area of the Location

### Area of the Location

<b>JAJAHAN</b>	<b>KELUASAN (KM PERSEGI)</b>	<b>LUAS PERSEKELILING (KM)</b>
Gua Musang	8,177	615
Kuala Krai	2,277	258
Jeli	1,318	201
Tanah Merah	880	158
Pasir Mas	569	129
Machang	527	148
Pasir Puteh	424	106
Kota Bharu	394	117
Bachok	279	98
Tumpat	177	83
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,022</b>	<b>820</b>

Source: Jabatan Ukur dan Pemetaan Negeri Kelantan, Retrieved on 30 May, 2006 in <http://kelantan.gov.my/web/main.php?page=keluasankawasan>

### APPENDIX III: Population

DISTRICTS	TOTAL POPULATION							
	1980	1991	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Bachok	73,953	98,557	111,039	112,039	113,048	114,065	115,092	116,128
Kota Bharu	275,986	366,770	406,662	410,322	414,015	417,741	421,501	425,294
Machang	58,040	71,584	79,032	79,743	80,461	81,185	81,916	82,653
Pasir Mas	118,153	150,035	165,126	166,612	1668,112	169,625	171,151	172,692
Pasir Puteh	90,959	96,348	106,138	107,093	108,057	109,030	110,011	111,001
Tanah Merah	61,996	94,611	103,487	104,418	105,358	106,306	107,263	108,228
Tumpat	85,952	116,044	134,812	136,025	137,250	138,485	139,731	140,989
Gua Musang	18,578	63,816	76,655	77,345	78,041	78,743	79,452	80,167
Kuala Krai	62,301	90,830	93,550	94,392	95,241	96,099	96,964	97,836
Jeli	23,352	32,720	36,512	36,841	37,172	37,507	37,844	38,185
<b>Total</b>	<b>859,270</b>	<b>1,181,315</b>	<b>1,313,014</b>	<b>1,324,831</b>	<b>1,336,755</b>	<b>1,348,785</b>	<b>1,360,924</b>	<b>1,373,173</b>

Source : Jabatan Perangkaan Malaysia,

<<http://kelantan.gov.my/web/main.php?page=keluasankawasan>> (accessed 30 May, 2006).