



EXISTENCE OF MELAKA MALAY (FORT) CITY BASED ON A'FAMOSA

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Author's Biography

Picture

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Peer-review under responsibility of 3rd Asia International Multidisciplinary Conference 2019 editorial board
(<http://www.utm.my/asia/our-team/>)

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Research Highlights

Despite of many historical records from Portuguese about the physical of Melaka Malay City, its existence is still doubtful since there is no clear physical evidence that can be used as basis support to its existence. However, to prove that the city was existed, various physical and scientific evidence are required to prove its existence. Thus, this study aims to identify historical evidence that mentioned its existence which based on the first painting of A'Famosa (Malacca Fort City during Portuguese era). The study proposed three hypothesis and results indicated there is a postivie outcome to prove that the Melaka Malay City existed on and around Bukit Melaka (or St Paul Hill now) based on historical records and sketches found.

Research Objectives

This paper attempts to uncover and reveal the historical evidence of Melaka Malay (Fort) City before the city was destroyed and rebuilt according to Portuguese terms. This paper was created to identify the differences between designs and layout plans between the Malacca Malay (Fort) City and the world-renowned Fort A'Famosa, thus comparing the hypothesis arguments about the existence of Melaka City. Indeed, there is a clear distinction between the design, layout, character and philosophy of the Malay and Portuguese cities. The scope focuses only on the site of the physical building (which is believed to be historical evidence) of the city at the Melaka River's estuary where important and significant buildings during Melaka Malay empire was constructed – the palace, mosque, administration buildings, harbors, and different kind of settlements. There is a great probability of continuing this study into the use of satellite technology in determining and identifying the Melaka Malay City with more precise and accurate details. The implication of this study can be a catalyst for continuous and deeper research on the original site of the Melaka Malay City as to prove the validity of its existences.

Methodology

In an effort to discuss the existence of this Melaka Malay City, various aspects and methods were conducted to find the most suitable matches and comparisons that almost accurately describe their design then prove its existence. The remains and plans of Melaka City today since the British era will be the basis of its existence. Hence, the study of historical records and sketches of the Melaka City from the Dutch government and subsequently the Portuguese will be made to seek physical evidence of the earliest design of Melaka City. Later, the historical records of the city from Malay Archipelago, Chinese, Portuguese and Dutch sources will be depicted in city design. As a reinforcement, the philosophy of urban design in the Malay World is highlighted as well as presenting the comparison between the other Malay Kingdoms and the Melaka Malay City.

Results

The foundations of the Malay cities basically were designed in square or rectangular shape, no matter how far the city was set up (Abdul Halim Nasir, 1990). This is in line with the philosophy in the Malay world that associated with a simple yet sufficient form of compassion that covers the various aspects of the Malay community's facilities and their living that are synonymous with modular systems (Yusoff Hashim, 2010). The first Fort A'Famosa built by the Portuguese was rectangular (G.W.Irwin, 2006). Its position was below the foot of Bukit Melaka and along the estuary of the Melaka River which is also near the bridge stretching the





mouth of the Melaka River (Portuguese Documents of Malacca, 11: 6 de Goes, para 11). The city of *A'Famosa* in the painting has a relatively six-tower on the corner of the city near the bridge. Whereas city fort or bastion on three other city corners are two-storey building. *A'Famosa* was built on the site of the Great Mosque of Melaka (Portuguese Documents of Malacca, 11: 6 de Goes, the 25th) which features a rectangular shape as the custom of mosques designs in the Malay Archipelago realm at that time, then the *A'Famosa* was originally built in rectangular over the ruins (or damage) of the Great Mosque Malacca after the success of Portuguese colonization.

Findings

The research showed that the design of Melaka City or *A'Famosa* City was in square or rectangular shape as it was built on the ruins of the Great Mosque of Melaka. The rectangular fort design was synonym with the design of other Malay forts or cities as it was a fundamental design tradition in the Malay world from fourth century until the later centuries after the collapse of Melaka empire either in Malay clusters. This coincides with the urban philosophy and design of the Malay and Islamic city that breed in the Malay Archipelago region at that time.

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