

From a Maritime Kingdom to Modern Johore: An Evolution, Transformation and Metamorphosis of a Malay Kingdom

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ABSTRACT

This article attempts to explain the uniqueness in the history of Johore in terms of how the government has gone through and experienced a totally different history, as compared to other Malay states. This writing about Johore's history is divided into several stages of evolution, transformation and metamorphosis. Firstly, this paper will discuss the evolution and early history of Johore, which began before the year 1530. Secondly, this paper will explain the evolution and transformation of Johore's history from 1530 to 1640, followed by the third stage which will discuss the transformation in the history of Johore from 1641 to 1699. The discussion in the fourth stage revolves around the transformation of Johore's history from 1700 to 1720 and the fifth stage continues to discuss the transformation of Johore's history from 1721 to 1784. The sixth stage will discuss the transformation of Johore's history from 1785 to 1824, and lastly, the seventh stage will explain the metamorphosis in the history of Johore after 1825 until today. All these seven stages of development in the history of Johore, which involved the processes of evolution, transformation and metamorphosis, have shown the strength and competitiveness of the government in facing all kinds of challenges and how it has successfully maintained its heritage and identity as a Johore-Malay state for centuries.

Keywords: Johore, Riau, trade, Malays, Bugis

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received: 24 May 2011

Accepted: 1 March 2012

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INTRODUCTION

The sovereignty of Johore is among the oldest ones established in the history of the Malay kingdom. However, more studies and research still need to be carried out by scholars and historians. Through the

long history of Johore, one can clearly see how the historical evolution of this Malay kingdom was formed. One can also witness how this Malay kingdom went through various phases of evolution, transformation and metamorphosis, which were so effective that they caused great changes in terms of the kingdom's territories and colonies, the ruling government, the ruling power and administration, as well as the underlying politics, economics and social history. The evolution, transformation and metamorphosis of this oldest Malay kingdom can also be clearly seen when the Johore kingdom was established. Furthermore, based on maritime kingdoms, such as Srivijaya and Melaka, Johore later moved towards a kingdom that depended entirely on development related to land and agricultural based activities. Notably, to date, Johore has now entered the last phase of its transformation, heading to its metamorphosis phase to become a Malay kingdom that depends on manufacturing, industry and trading activities.

The history of Johore begins with the early kingdom of Johore, which was located in the southern part of the Malaya Peninsular (Winstedt, 1992). The early history of the kingdom's origin was unclear, but the kingdoms of Johore-Pahang-Riau and Lingga were established after the fall of Melaka in 1511. The evolution occurred as a result of the combination of vast territories in southern Malaya Peninsular, which was then transformed into a kingdom consisting of only the state of Johore and her territories after its failure to defend Pahang-Riau

and Lingga as a part of her larger territory later in the 19th century. In terms of its geographical location, Johore is situated in an extremely strategic region. It is located in the middle of the trading route connecting the East and the West. Johore, as with the old kingdoms of Srivijaya and Melaka, had successfully exploited her strategic location to strengthen her sovereignty as a Malay kingdom. In fact, one can say that the winding history of Johore was determined by her very strategic geographical location. Therefore, the evolution, transformation and metamorphosis of the Johore kingdom were deeply influenced by the geographical factor. The location at the southern tip of the Malaya Peninsular, between the busy shipping lanes in the world, brought desirable progress and development to the kingdom, which relied on trade, shipping and maritime activities. Thus, the evolution, transformation and metamorphosis in the history of Johore showed how it started and underwent various changes. However, Johore still place emphasis on its mastery of trading activities and used its strategic location to emerge as a successful and strong kingdom.

THE FIRST PHASE OF EVOLUTION IN THE PRE-1530 HISTORY OF JOHORE

Although there are many records and archaeological findings about the early history of Johore before 1530, there are still many unanswered mysteries and questions regarding the evolution, existence and development of the early history of

the kingdom. Johore, in its early history, was known as Ujung Medini or Ujung Tanah, which refers to the territories located on the southern part of the Malaya Peninsular including Johore, Muar, Pahang and Tumasik. It was also associated with a kingdom called Wurawari, which means “clear water” in old Javanese texts (Winstedt, 1992). An inscription in the year 1006, which was written in Sanskrit and old Javanese documents, stated that the City of Wurawari was plundered by a Javanese king. A more detailed study is needed because Johore in its early history was also known as the kingdom of Ganggayu, which was an old Johore kingdom established in Kota Batu Hitam located on the upstream of the Johor River, which has yet to be studied thoroughly. The old kingdom of Johore was also known as Klang Kio by the Siamese, which means the City of Gems, while the ruler was called Raja Chulan. Raja Chulan was reported as a king who had a significant power over a vast territories and regions in the east. These facts have long been known by scholars, but the question here is, why are there no studies and research done to unveil the old history of Johore? Even until today, our question regarding the early kingdoms of Johore, such as Ujong Medini, Ujong Tanah, Wurawari, Kota Batu Hitam and Klang Kio, still remains unanswered.

Judging from the development of the early history and early settlements of Johore, it is obvious that the history of Johore focused more on the eastern part of the state, which centred at Johore’s river

basins and river banks. Many settlements and developments in Johore’s early history were centred in the eastern part of Johore along the Johor River, which has a deep and wide river mouth that can be used as a trading route to reach the inland regions. The river basins of Johore mentioned above are considered as, “The Lost Frontier of the Malay Civilization” that has yet to be studied in detail by any scholars. If the first phase of history and evolution of the Johore kingdom was centred at the Johore river basin, the following phases had also shown a similar situation where governments were centred along the Johor River. Names of ancient cities listed in the history, such as Kota Kara, Makam Tauhid, Bukit Seluyut, Kota Tinggi, Bintan, Riau, Sayong, Johor Lama, Kopak, Pasir Raja, Pekan Tua, Batu Sawar and Seluyut, still need to be studied in order to explain the historical strength of the Johore Malay civilization.

The early kingdom of Johore depended on trade and maritime activities. Oceans and rivers were important aspects of transportation and trading activities. Its strategic location also made Johore the focus of traders sailing between the East and West. Furthermore, the monsoon wind also played an important role in making traders navigating across the Strait of Melaka to stop at ports under the jurisdiction and territory of the kingdom. Although the first phase in the early history of Johore was still unclear, the Johor River functioned as a very crucial area in the history and early evolution of the kingdom.

THE SECOND PHASE 1530-1640: EVOLUTION AND TRANSFORMATION OF A MALAY KINGDOM

In general, scholars often refer to the year 1530 as the founding year of the new kingdom of Johore. This is because the pre-1530 history of Johore was still unclear since not many studies have been done on this. Therefore, for the time being, before we find a reliable research regarding the matter, we will have to accept the date as the founding date of the government. If that is the case, the kingdom of Johore had been founded more than 480 years. The new kingdom of Johore was founded by Sultan Alauddin Riayat Shah after the fall of Melaka. It experienced an evolution and its transformation had a huge impact in the history of Malaysia.

The period between 1530 and 1640 (110 years) was a very challenging period in the establishment of the Johore kingdom. The 110-year challenge can be clearly seen in the history of Johore recorded along the Johor River. The establishment of the kingdom from Kota Kara to Kota Tinggi clearly portrayed the strength and determination of the kingdom in facing various challenges in order to maintain and strengthen its position. The 110-year period of evolution and transformation of the government was very important for the survival of the next government. The initial challenges between 1530 to 1600 were tough due to the occurrence of wars as well as various external threats, such as attempts to destroy the kingdom by external powers (Andaya,

1975). However, the competitiveness and strength of the ruler and kingdom enabled it to overcome those threats. The history on the cruelty of wars, destructions, as well as the loss of lives and properties in the river basins of Johor River has also been written. This was also the place where history was made on how the Sultan and the government of Johore had successfully defended their honour and kingdom from being destroyed by the Portuguese and Aceh.

The role played by the Laksamana family was evident, while the Bendahara family had been set aside because this era was an era of wars and chaos which required military strength to defend the newly established kingdom. Thus, Laksamana Paduka Raja had played an important role to ensure the sovereignty of the government, to restore and enhance the kingdom's economic strength, as well as to increase the volume of trade, which was seen as the pulse to the kingdom (Andaya, 1975). This situation was very different from the tradition where the Bendahara family played a major role in the kingdom. As a result, an internal conflict occurred when emphasis was given to the role played by the Laksamana in certain matters. There were no other states in the Malay history that showed such efforts in establishing a government by facing various kinds of enormous challenges except for the kingdom of Johore. Its challenging evolution had led to the maturity in terms of the government's spirit and thinking to stand firm in defending and protecting the heritage of Malay civilization.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF A MALAY KINGDOM DURING THE PERIOD 1641-1699

By the 17th century, great changes had taken place in the balance of power in the Malay world, especially in the Strait of Melaka. The presence of Dutch had changed the entire structure of the existing balance of power. At the same time, the decline of Aceh also brought great impact to the future development and success of Johore. Meanwhile, the Portuguese were also forced to face new challenges with the emergence of the Dutch fleet and the strength of their traders, who established the Dutch East India Company in the early 17th century. The establishment of the Dutch East India Company had not only caused great changes to the world trade patterns, but it also challenged the sovereignty and the power of the Portuguese and Spanish. This opportunity was taken and fully utilized by the kingdom of Johore, which led to the signing of an agreement that created a new environment in the Strait of Melaka that contributed to the success of Johore's transformation.

Along the 16th century, the Strait of Melaka was haunted by wars which brought the sense of insecurity to traders and seafarers. The strategic trading route through the Strait of Melaka also experienced an era of declination after the fall of Melaka in 1511. There were ongoing wars between the Portuguese in Melaka, Aceh and Johore. These three powers had fought nine wars in the Johor River, Melaka and Aceh. As a result, the war years of 1512, 1518, 1520,

1521, 1523, 1524, 1526, 1536 and 1587 had affected the trade and living environment in the Strait of Melaka (Andaya, 1975). The presence of the Dutch in the early 17th century and the establishment of the Dutch East India Company with large funds also created a new chapter in the Malay world.

The unique thing about the history of Johore is that, it is not only made up by the history of the Malay world. In fact, it can also be linked with the global history connecting the East and the West as the major player in the early globalization of the world. The Malaya Peninsular, the Strait of Melaka and the strategic geographical location of Johore, which was located at the crossroad of world's leading sailing route between the East and the West, had become important for international trade during that time since they were able to utilize the advantages they had through their geopolitical position (Nordin Hussin, 2008). The Strait of Melaka was situated in the centre of the heritage of Malay civilization (Nordin Hussin, 2005). It played a major role in connecting the busy trading route between the Indian Ocean and the Far East. The strategic importance of this waterway connecting the East and the West had long been known and dominated by the Malays who lived in the Malaya Peninsular and the Sumatera (Nordin Hussin, 2011). These were the places where the Malay civilization which based on the maritime world was founded and developed. The presence of the Dutch in the region had made the objectives of the European powers become apparent through their efforts to turn their dreams

and beliefs into reality. This was because they realized that whoever dominated and controlled the Strait of Melaka would be the one who would control the wealth from the trading activities that flowed through it (Nordin Hussin, 2012).

The early history about the success of the Dutch in dominating the world trade and expanding their influences in Asia began with the establishment of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in 1602. The establishment of VOC by merging several small companies with capital worth millions of gulden and shareholders from major cities in Netherlands such as Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Enquizen, Delft and Leiden, as well as wealthy merchants had strengthened the company's capability to explore the extremely profitable trade in the Malay world, Far East, Asia and Africa (Nordin Hussin, 2008). This success turned VOC into the only chartered trading company and also a very profitable one. After the establishment of VOC, many major port cities in Asia were dominated by the Dutch. For instance, Batavia in 1619 fell under the control of VOC and was then turned into the main administrative centre of the company in Asia. The mid 17th century was the peak period for the Dutch's activities in Asia, where many ports formerly owned by the Portuguese fell under the control of VOC.

The presence and influence of the Dutch in the Malay world were deeply felt by the Malay governments in the region. Before the Dutch successfully gained control over Melaka, Batavia, Ambon and Makassar, VOC had already been very active in the

trade monopoly in its attempt to break the Portuguese domination in the Malay world (Nordin Hussin, 2008). The company also tried to cultivate trading relationships with the Malay governments in the region, especially with Johore. This was intended to boycott and prevent the Portuguese from controlling tin and Indian cotton trade, which were extremely profitable. Without the close friendship with the Malay government of Johore, it would not be easy for the Dutch to achieve their goal to eliminate the Portuguese from the Malay world and eventually gain full control over the lucrative trade in the region.

This was a period of time that reflected how the European power dealt with the local power from the Malay world and had together successfully formed a peaceful era. The relationship between VOC and Johore emphasized trading relations and friendship, which were forged to further promote trade between the two. Their success in prioritizing the common interests in commerce and their newly developed friendship had led to the re-emergence of the Strait of Melaka as an important area for intra-Asian trade growth between the East and the West, with the government of Johore in Riau as its facilitator.

The presence of Dutch in the Strait of Melaka in the early 17th century, especially with the arrival of Admiral Jacob Heemskerck in 1602 to the kingdom of Johore in Batu Sawar, started a new era where friendship was cultivated between the Dutch and the government of Johore (Andaya, 1975). This was because both

parties shared a common interest - that was to expel the Portuguese from the Strait of Melaka and to revitalize the commercial economy that had been severely damaged by the endless wars.

The Dutch East India Company (VOC) would not be able to achieve its ambition to eliminate the Portuguese from the Strait without the help from Johore. Similarly, Johore also needed a reliable partner to create a peaceful environment and promote trade and economic developments which were severely affected by the wars. Without the cooperation with the Dutch, Johore's goal would be difficult to achieve as well. Thus, the policy of smart partnership between the two powers created a new history in the Strait of Melaka, where the cooperation between the two had brought peace to the Strait for another 184 years.

Through the cooperation, Johore once again rose to glory with the assistance of the Dutch. This close relationship between the two powers lasted until 1784 when their cooperation deteriorated due to Raja Haji's ambition to conquer Melaka, caused by a small incident (Reinout Vos, 1993). It was not a wise decision by Raja Haji to declare war with the Dutch because of the hijack of the Betsy ship. Raja Haji who did not understand the close historical ties cultivated since 1640 between the Dutch and the kingdom of Johore eventually destroyed the cooperation between the two, as well as the port of Riau that had been the economic life line to Johore. The unwritten agreement between the Johore kingdom

and the Dutch also led to the recovery of the Strait of Melaka and the Malay world from the era of wars and brought growth and development to the region through intra-Asian trade between the East and the West. Unfortunately, this bond was destroyed by Raja Haji's unwise ambition who thought he had the ability and capability to defeat the Dutch. Without a good understanding of the history and friendship bond that had been established for over hundred years, Raja Haji destroyed the bond between the two powers and also Riau as the major trading centre in the Malay world.

The truth was the friendship between the Dutch and Johore benefited the kingdom of Johore in so many ways. For instance, it helped develop the port of Riau which was the main trading centre in Southeast Asia that had challenged both Melaka and Batavia. It also provided great opportunities for officers and the Orang Kayas in the kingdom of Johore to get involved in trading activities in the Strait of Melaka without any restrictions from the Dutch. This cooperation improved the economic conditions of Johore and turned the port of Riau into a favourable port for merchants from Europe, India, China and the Malay world without restrictions from the Dutch. This certainly resulted in intense competition with the port of Melaka. In addition, the monopoly policy of the Dutch was not implemented on Johore's traders and port. The economy of Johore was growing rapidly without restrictions and had reached its peak period in the history of world trade.

THE PROBLEMATIC YEARS OF 1700-1720

The Johore kingdom experienced an era with tragic challenges in its transformation history by the 18th century. The assassination of its last Sultan from Melaka and Srivijaya descendants in 1699 had destroyed the atmosphere strengthened by Laksamana Paduka Raja. These challenges that occurred in the early 18th century tested the concept of sovereignty. The 20 years of long conflict ended the era of Sultanate and replaced it with the era of the Bendahara's rule. There was also a civil disorder and infighting over the throne, and the civil war eventually led to Bugis interference into the palace.

This was a huge challenge to the concept of sovereignty and also the conflicts between the Malays and the Bugis. The failure of efforts done by the Malays to expel the Bugis had led to a new dimension in the history of Johore, whereby the unification of two Malay groups which were the Malays and the Bugis to rule Johore. Although these evolution and transformation were difficult to be accepted by majority of the elites and the Malay rulers, they were unable to go against the tide of change that occurred during that period. Thus, the 20 years of problems had brought huge impacts and challenges to the transformation and history of Johore.

YEARS OF SUCCESS: 1720-1784

Having experienced the trial transformation in terms of the ruling of the government between the two Malay groups, one may say that the period from 1720 to 1784 was

the new era for the kingdom of Johore. The Malay civilization that had been the basis of the government since the glorious era of Melaka and Srivijaya continued to stand strong and sustain. The only difference was the existing trading strength, developed by the Malays, was further strengthened by the presence of the Bugis. All this while, the important class of merchants was made up of the Malay merchants who dominated the intra-Asian trade in the Malay world. However, the presence of Bugis from Sulawesi to the Strait of Melaka got more prominent by the early 17th century. These Bugis merchants were known for their expertise in sailing through the Sulu Sea, South China Sea, Java Sea, and also the Strait of Melaka, which were an extremely profitable trading network.

Their presence can also be traced up to the northern part of the Malaya Peninsular and the government of Ayuthaya in Siam. Many ports in the Malay world had also become the stopping point for the Bugis traders. Just like the Malay traders who had successfully dominated the intra-Asian trade, the Bugis traders had also managed to do the same. Therefore, these two groups of traders were those who had successfully controlled and dominated the trade in the Malay world. The trading index in Melaka, when it was ruled by the Dutch, had shown how dynamic the Malay and Bugis traders were (Nordin Hussin, 2008, 2005, 2011, 2012). This index clearly showed that the Malay traders played the most important role, followed by the Bugis traders, as compared to other traders from Asia and Europe.

With the introduction of a new post that had previously never existed in the Malay supremacy from Srivijaya and Melaka, the Bugis introduced a new post called *Yang Dipertuan Muda* in the government of Johore. *Yang Dipertuan Muda* had the power far beyond the Sultan of Johore and the power had been fully utilized by the Bugis so that they could be absorbed more easily into the Malay governmental system. They also introduced the *adat tiga hujung*, which they absorbed successfully into the palace and Malay government. The transformation from a pure Malay supremacy to Malay-Bugis supremacy was successful although there were intense oppositions from the Malays led by Sultan Mansur Shah from Terengganu, who spent his time and reigned in Johore to eliminate the Bugis supremacy. His efforts, however, ended in failure.

Hence, Riau developed into an important port from 1722 to 1784 and succeeded in controlling the trade that flowed through the Strait of Melaka by fully exploiting the geopolitical strength and strategic location of Johore to make it a major trading centre in the Malay world. Although Johore succeeded in its dramatic transformation by turning Riau as the major trading centre and at the same time competed with Melaka and Batavia dominated by the Dutch, the friendship cultivated since 1600 was still intact and had in fact become the platform for Johore to thrive without being challenged by the Dutch in Melaka and Batavia. In addition, the free trade established by the kingdom of Johore which was the backbone of its

economy also increased its strength. This free trade policy was totally the opposite of the Dutch's strict monopoly trade policy implemented in the Strait of Melaka. However, Johore continued to grow without being challenged by the Dutch.

The friendship forged between the Dutch and the kingdom of Johore was challenged by the Bugis who dominated the administration of Johore at that time. The Bugis, particularly Raja Haji who was the *Yang Dipertuan Muda* of Johore neglected the spirit of friendship forged between Johore and the Dutch for over 184 years. The relationships between both powers were nurtured and never challenged; however, Raja Haji made his personal political moves without taking Johore's history into considerations. Due to his greed and unwise political calculations, Riau fell under the control of the Dutch in 1784 and this led to an era of darkness to the history of the kingdom. As a result, the defeat of Johore to the Dutch in 1784 had divided the kingdom, which had gone through its evolution and transformation since the 16th century. Thus, in late 18th century, the Johore kingdom went through a critical transformation where only the inner strength, political changes that took place in Europe and Asia, as well as the new balance of power in the Malay world could save it.

DIFFICULTIES AND CHALLENGES: 1720-1784

In this phase of history, Johore had a time of great difficulties and challenges after its defeat to the Dutch in 1784. This is

also the phase less studied and examined by historians. In general, the political environment in the world and Malay world had gone through great changes in the last few years of the 18th century and by early 19th century. One can also notice the weaknesses of the Dutch as a major power that controlled the world trade in this period of time. The age of Pax Netherlandica which controlled the globalization of world trade was heading towards its age of decline. At the same time, the rise of France in Europe as well as the conquest of Napoleon on European countries also led to the fall of the Netherlands to France and the destruction of the Dutch East India Company (VOC). Furthermore, the strength of its marine fleet had led to the rise of British to dominate the weaknesses left by the Dutch. As a result, the power to control the world trade had changed in favour of the British. This situation also presented new challenges to the political atmosphere and trade in the Malay world. The decline of the Dutch had created a power vacuum in the Malay world. This opportunity was fully utilized by the British. Starting from the late 18th century, the British brought new challenges to the Dutch and also the local authority in the Malay world.

Due to this changing environment, Johore had experienced an era full with difficulties and challenges, as well as transformation for the second time. However, this phase of its history differed from the one that occurred between 1700 and 1720. Previously, difficulties faced by the kingdom of Johore only involved

internal problems and conflicts of the kingdom without involving the world's major powers or external powers outside the Malay world. However, in the second phase of its transformation, the kingdom of Johore was forced to face great challenges in its sovereignty and also as the major trading power in the Malay world. The challenges faced by its sovereignty can be traced after the government's defeat in war against the Dutch, which destroyed its capital city and the main trading centre of Riau. Fortunately, the political environment in that critical situation during that time happened to be in favour of the Johore kingdom. The decline of the Dutch and the destruction of its East India Company (VOC) provided a lifeline to the sovereignty of Johore. Meanwhile, the attempt of the British EIC to present itself in the Strait of Melaka was stopped by the Dutch. This had a great impact on the sovereignty and power of Johore although the destruction of the government occurred in 1784.

British competition and intervention in the Strait of Melaka and the Malay world, the power struggle of the European powers on the world stage, as well as the strategic policy change by the VOC brought a lasting impact on the history of Johore. In addition, the dispute between the kingdom of Johore and the Dutch, as well as the Bugis domination in the palace and the Malay elites had also impacted upon the kingdom of Johore. After the fall of Riau in 1784, there were ongoing efforts made by the Dutch to implement their colonial policy on Riau. This was due to the strategic

location of Riau and its strength as an important port in the East. Therefore, one can notice that the Dutch were attempting to put Riau under the world trade network by trying to eliminate the Bugis presence in the Strait of Melaka. However, these efforts failed without the cooperation from Sultan Mahmud and also the oppositions from the local authority. This eventually led to a situation where the kingdom of Johore attempted to regain control over Riau in 1787 although its attempt did not succeed. This led to the destruction of the Malay and Bugis supremacy where they were forced to leave Riau and move to some other areas in the kingdom.

Thus, this period of transition provided the kingdom of Johore with the time to reassemble its efforts and strength to go through its next era of transformation to re-emerge as the major Malay power in the Strait of Melaka. This phase that started from 1874 until 1824 was an extremely challenging era to the sovereignty of Johore and had witnessed the destruction of a huge territory of the government of Johore-Pahang-Riau and Lingga (Keng, 2008; Trocki, 1979). This transformation was also a very painful era due to the internal conflicts of the royal family and the division of Johore's empire, which had permanently split Johore into two territories dominated by the Dutch and the British, respectively.

TRANSFORMATION AND METAMORPHOSIS OF A MODERN JOHORE

By the 20th century, a complete transformation had occurred and reached

the stage of metamorphosis regarding the establishment of the kingdom of Johore that was once a Malay maritime state, which was then evolved into a modern Johore that sets its focus in the field of agriculture, industry and trade. Attention was once upon a time only set on the ports, while development on land was neglected. However, this situation has completely changed in this phase of transformation and metamorphosis of a modern Johore. This quick change made by the government and the ruler of Johore has enabled us to see a new horizon in trading activities, world demand, as well as rapid change in world economy. As the main player in world economy in the early days, it was not surprising how the government of Johore was able to change its course quickly to meet the needs and demands of world economy (Sinclair, 1967; Trocki, 1979, 1976). In the 17th century, goods demanded by the world economy were items such as pepper, clothes from India, tin, bird nest, as well as sea and forest products. In the early 19th century and 20th century, however, the goods demanded by the world economy had shifted to items such as gambier, rubber, timber and palm oil. Thus, the agrarian economy to meet the needs of world economy could be developed in the state of Johore.

Therefore, the evolution, transformation and metamorphosis of Johore were evident when the new Johore led by Sultan Abu Bakar had successfully drove Johore to a new era, and his success was then continued by his successors. If the other states had tin to drive their economic development, Johore, on the other hand, had made land

and agricultural activities as its economic strength. Its success was envied by the British, who with every effort tried to gain control over Johore. However, Johore continued to grow with the establishment of Port of Tanjung Pelepas and the Iskandar Johore region situated in the extremely strategic route in the world. Hence, Johore reached its metamorphosis and emerged as a progressive government.

The winding progress, however, required high resistance ability from Johore obtained through evolution, transformation and metamorphosis as long as 480 years. Today, research opportunities available should be given serious attention in order for our future generations to understand the history of Johore, which is full with obstacles. The government's strength and high resistance had enabled it to remain as a strong and stable government. Therefore, studies on the cities and ports of Johore, such as the history of Kota Kara, Makam Tauhid, Bukit Seluyut, Kota Tinggi, Bintan, Riau, Sayong, Johor Lama, Kopak, Pasir Raja, Pekan Tua, Batu Sawar and Selunyt, should be carried out to strengthen the heritage of Johore so that it will not be devoured by time. Similarly, research on the river basin of the Johor River as a Malay historical heritage site should also be carried out. This is because it is the frontier of Malay historical heritage regarding the rise of the government of Johore and how the Malays successfully established their own government and shaped their commercial-based economy, which enabled them to dominate trading activities in the region

by successfully utilizing Johore's strategic geographic location to serve the purpose.

CONCLUSION

The history of Johore had experienced eras and phases of evolution, transformation and metamorphosis from a maritime government to a modern government of Johore. The government of Johore had gone through these three challenging phases with strength and managed to maintain its identity as a maritime government based on trading activities that was the backbone for its economic strength. This strength had been strengthened by the progress in the field of agriculture and industry, as well as the development of the Iskandar region and the Port of Tanjung Pelepas, which played a similar role like the port of Riau as the major port in Asia and the driver of Johore's economy.

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