

# A Historical Evolution of the Malay Travel Culture

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## Abstract

Travelling in the present day is very convenient as compared to the past in which the world was not as advanced and sophisticated as today. Through constraints or lacks, Malays still traveled all over the world then. Definitely a lot of knowledge about the ways adopted by the past society and surely their culture of travelling can be learned by us today. The Malay community's knowledge of travelling in the past has been passed down to us through the readings of the narratives. Various sources were also referred to in the search for answers to questions about the knowledge of travel practiced by them. This paper focuses on the historical evolution that clarifies more on the Malay travel culture in the past.

**Keywords:** Malays, travel, culture, knowledge, journey, historical evolution

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

General travel knowledge and practices of the community is not something new that has been explored by people. The Malay race is known in travel science since from time immemorial. Among the well-known pioneers of wisdom in the scientific culture of travel is surely a figure named Panglima Awang. He was a great figure and famous in this field (H Aminurrashid, 1958). Masron et al. (2012) add that the travel and trip by Panglima Awang is new scientific knowledge and knowledge of geography becomes wider to the world, especially to the integrity of the community itself.

There are so many reasons why people travel and so do in the Malay travel culture. In this paper, we are focusing on the Malay travel culture on the historical evolution that influences the travel mode of the Malays. By that, we can clearly see how the evolution influences the Malay culture itself and how the evolution affects other culture. People in different cultures have strikingly different construals of the self, of others and interdependence. This evolution can influence and in many cases determine the very nature of individual experience, including cognition, emotion, and motivation. Many Asian cultures have distinct conceptions of individuality that insist on the fundamental relatedness of individuals to each other (Markus et al., 1991). The emphasis is on attending to others, fitting in, and harmonious interdependence with them. For examples, other culture neither assumes nor values such an overt connectedness among individuals. In contrast, all races including Malay seek to maintain their independence from others by attending to the self and by discovering and expressing their unique inner attributes. As proposed herein, these evolutions are even more powerful than previously imagined. Theories of the self from both psychology and anthropology are integrated to define in detail the difference between an evolution of the self as independent and a construal of the self as interdependent (Sperber, 1996). Each of these divergent evolutions should have a set of specific consequences for cognition, emotion and motivation. These consequences are proposed and relevant empirical literature is reviewed.

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## 2. HISTORICAL EVOLUTION

According to historical records, there are many reasons to travel out of the community and make a travel of journey. Some trips are short while some take longer time. There are many reasons that make Malay community travel and we can classify the main reasons as follows:

### I) To explore new lands

The good example of travel is to explore new lands is from Parameswara's travel. Portuguese historians agree that Parameswara was a Malay ruler who originally came from Palembang, spent five years in Singapore, and then was driven away and founded Malacca around 1400. Parameswara made an effort to travel fled north and found a new settlement. From the chronology, when in Muar, Parameswara contemplated establishing his new kingdom at either Biawak Busuk or at Kota Buruk. After his finding that the Muar location was not suitable, he continued the travel to the northwards. Along the way, he reportedly visited Sening Ujong and formerly known as Sungai Ujong, before reaching a fishing village at the mouth of the Bertam River (former name of the Malacca River). This evolved over time to become the location of modern-day Malacca Town.

According to the Malay Annals, the legend was about the king who saw a mouse deer kicked his hunting dog into the water when he was resting under the Malacca tree. Parameswara thought this boded well, remarking, "this place is excellent, even the mouse deer is formidable; it is best that we establish a kingdom here"(Singapore Infopedia, 2009). Tradition holds that he named the settlement after the tree he was leaning against while witnessing the portentous event. Today, the mouse deer is part of modern Malacca's coat of arms. The name "Malacca" itself was derived from the fruit-bearing Malacca tree (Malay: Pokok Melaka) scientifically termed as *Phyllanthus emblica*. Loo (2009) described the travel made by Parameswara as follows:

Malacca became stable country with large of army and strong economy. This is because the strategic location of Malacca which is narrowest part of the straits of Malacca and this advantage allowed Malacca to take take control of lucrative spice trade.

Another account on the origin the naming of Malacca elaborates that during the reign of Muhammad Shah (1424-1444), the Arab merchants called the kingdom 'Malakat' (Arabic for 'congregation of merchants') because it was home to many trading communities (Wilkinson,1935). Below is Figure 1 as the route of Pameswara to Malacca.



Figure 1: Route of Pameswara to Malacca

### II) To learn

Panglima Awang or Enrique of Malacca was a major contributor to the Malay knowledge of travel. He was the first man to circumnavigate the globe with Magelans Armada expedition mission (Hooker, 1999).

The story began in 1511 after Malacca fell to the earth of Portuguese. After the Portuguese conquest of Malacca, including Awang and hundreds of men had been taken prisoner and thrown into a large vessel belonging to a Western nation (Abd Rahman et al.,2009). The intelligence and prowess of Awang's ability resulted Portuguese Viceroy Alfonso de Albuquerque decided that Awang was his personal prisoner and slave.

After some time, they lifted anchor and began sailing ship and parted the sea to leave the earth of Malacca heading to a foreign continent with prisoners and booty. The ship stopped at Goa and some prisoners were sold as slaves. Next the voyage continued towards Lisbon, capital of Portugal. From this travel, Awang learned a lot about traveling knowledge from the experts.

Sailing away which takes a long time to finally bridge the gap between the ship's captain, Commander Ferdinand de Magellan with Awang. The Commander was very interested in the young man's character and Awang was given the privilege to be released from prison while the chain at his feet and hands opened. Panglima Awang ordered to be stiff on board during the voyage as long as that the young man was not rebellious (Rahim, 2014). This history shows us how Panglima Awang followed all the rules and laws because he wanted to learn as much in the knowledge of travelling.



Figure 2: Panglima Awang's voyage

### III) To escape

The plant system forced by the Dutch in the 1820s, which had forced the Java people to grow only coffee, tea and spices alone had angered the Javanese when they were facing food shortages. To avoid and escape the starvation situation, many Java people travelled and migrated to the Malaya Peninsular and stayed in the Malaya states under the influence of British administration (Jais, 1989). Most Javanese had strong religious beliefs and refused to bow under the influence of pagan administrator (Netherlands) had chosen to settle Johor. They came in stages by the royal family who owned the ship known as Dagar king who got special permission to sail and trade in the archipelago by the Dutch.

According to the historical records, the band or the Java migration wave to the Malay Peninsular was the most active in 1835 until 1900. This was due to Rodi Systems or Forced plant imposed by the Netherlands and expenditure severe punishment to anyone who disobeyed an order up to the level of lives threat (Tirtosudarmo, 2005). The Cerebon Royal family relatives, for example, was a group of the most active traders because they was adept at sailing and trade in the region and around the bays and harbors in the archipelago. Trade, travel and preach were culture of life. They inherited seamanship, as well as the spread of trade for generations and origin of the Sheikh and Arab traders. From the history, we clearly define that Java people travelled because they wanted to escape their bad situation in their origin place.

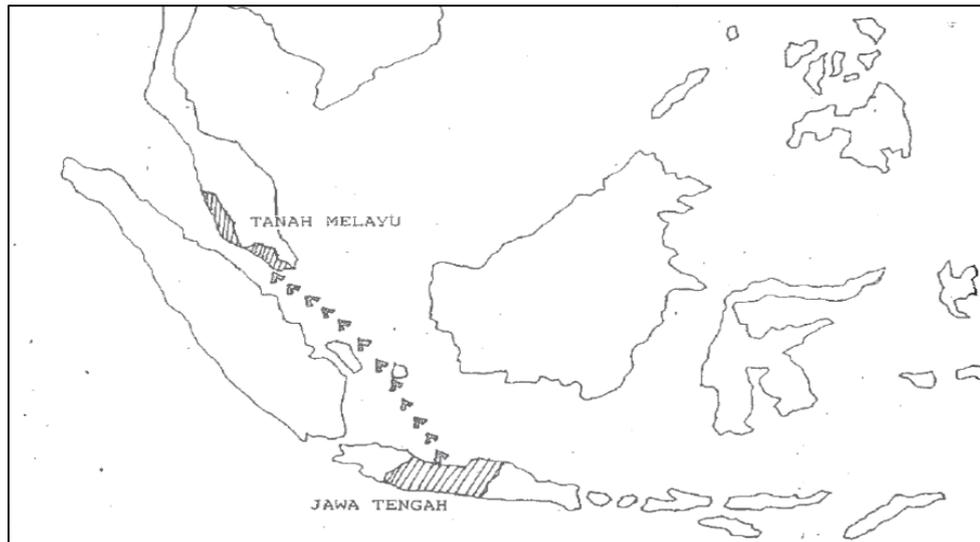


Figure 3: Java people's travel route to the Malay Penisular

#### IV) To cross places and event

Travel of pilgrimage by the Malays believed to have started since the arrival of Islam to the Malay Archipelago in the 13th century. However, a clear historical record of progress pilgrimage in the country scarce in detail because there was not much information about it. Malays who were capable and engaged in shipping activities was the earliest pilgrimage groups.

The Portuguese medical practitioner, T Pires (1515) claimed two of Melaka kings expressed a desire to worship was Sultan Mansur Shah who ruled from 1456-1477 BC or 860-881 Hijri and Riayat Sultan Alauddin Shah (1477-1488 CE / 881-893 AH). However, both could not continue because of death. Within their intention that note, T Pires explains both king had make preparations, including saving a lot of gold and preparing the ship for a cruise on pilgrimage. However, the notes from T Pires could not be regarded as the earliest records relating travel of pilgrimage to Mecca because pilgrimage itself is a duty of Muslims executed.

The others famous story of pilgrims from the Malay Archipelago was by traveling scholar of Muhammad Yusuf Ahmad, better known as Tok Kenali in 19 AD (13 AH). Tok Kenali originated from Kelantan and studied religion in Mecca when he was 18 years old (KK Kim, 1974). He took six months to get to Mecca. Tok Kenali then decided to settle in Mecca to seek knowledge, in addition to performing Umrah and Hajj. He then returned to Kelantan at the age of 40 years and founded the center of Islamic learning (MR Othman, 1998). Besides him, several Malay scholars who were famous must be Hamzah Fansuri. His travel sailing to Mecca at the end of the 16th century AD (10 AH) and Abdul Rauf Singkel pilgrimage in 1643 AD (1052 AH). When the 19th and 20th century AD, the evidence appeared more related activities of travel pilgrimage Malay community in Malaysia. Many artifacts, manuscripts, printed matter and recorded images Malays who went to Mecca on travel because of pilgrimage (VI Braginsky, 1999).

One interesting travel note was produced by Munshi Abdullah, a scholar coming from the country that tell every detail of voyage to the Holy Land in 1854 AD (1270 AH) through the saga of "Sailing Abdullah" (AKH Din, 1982). After that many Malays intellectuals and educated people who had been to Mecca on pilgrimage and Umrah devoted their thoughts in writing to share their knowledge of travel with others.

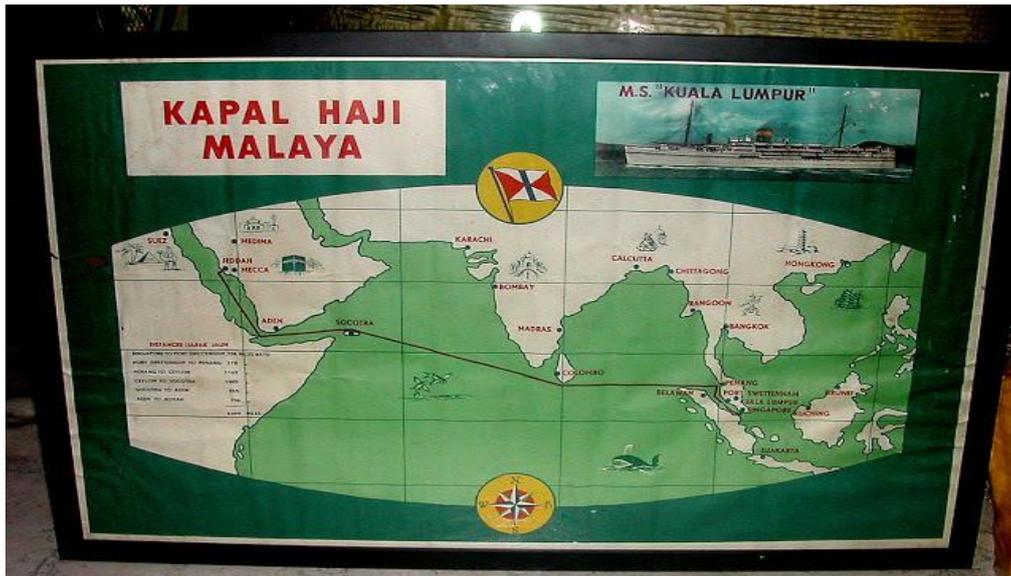


Figure 4: Map of kapal haji

### 3. FINDINGS

Table 1: Historical evolution analysis

	To Explore New Lands	To Learn	To Escape	To Cross Places And Events
<b>Period</b>	1400	1511	1820	1300
<b>Case Study</b>	Parameswara	Panglima Awang	Java Peoples	Tok Kenali & Munshi Abdullah
<b>Pull Factor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Mousedeer vs dog</li> <li>✓ Malacca as strategic location</li> <li>✓ Merchant and traders meeting point</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Alfonso dicided Awang as personal slave</li> <li>✓ Long of journey</li> <li>✓ Commander Ferdinand likes Awang behaviour</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ British &amp; Malay Sultan welcome</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Religion study</li> </ul>
<b>Push Factor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Drivven away from Temasik</li> <li>✓ Muar location not suitable</li> <li>✓ Ohers palce along northwards no suit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Taken as prisoner</li> <li>✓ Awang intelligence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Plant system forced by Dutch</li> <li>✓ Starvation period</li> <li>✓ Refuse bow to Dutch</li> <li>✓ Threat live</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Duty of muslims</li> <li>✓ Ability of transport</li> </ul>
<b>Route</b>	Palembang-Temasik-Muar-Malacca	India-Africa-Portugal-Morocco-Seville-San Lucar de Barrameda-Tenerife-Rio de Jeneiro	Jawa Tengah-Malay Penisular	Penang-Colombo-Aden-Jeddah

The history of the Malay if we look at the case study here, began as early as the 13th century. The requirements and demands of the religion influence the Malays to make the voyage. The story of how Malacca was found was very familiar among the Malaysian people, in addition, this subject was studied in the school history. In the 15th century we could also see how the famous Malay sailor named Panglima Awang had been around the world. It seeks to deny his greatness by the West but the truth could not be hidden. The 18th century also showed how the Java society came to the Malay Peninsula, especially to the state of Johor and Selangor.

The pull factor for Parameswara's travel to Malacca and then built the government there was a rare case where a deer had kicked the hunting dog. The incident was believed by Parameswara that if animals were in the area was so strong and brave, he believed the place also can give strength to the government which was to be built. The other reason Parameswara travelled to this place because due to the strategic position of Melaka. After opening Malacca, many traders from all over the world made their way here as a meeting point of the worldwide trade. Panglima Awang's pull factor for travelling around the world, was due in entrusted by Commander Alfonso and Ferdinand. The long voyage before it was a useful knowledge for Panglima Awang to take the next trip. The factor for the Javanese traveled to Malaya because the British and French Governments welcomed them. The opening of new farms in Malaya required many employees in addition to the Javanese had a good knowledge in agriculture. Factor for Malay people traveling to the Holy Land of Mecca, because there were religious teachers who could teach well in Islamic knowledge. Many young people who wanted to learn Islam were excited to make a pilgrimage in the Holy Land as well as to learn and explore the science of religion.

Parameswara started the travel because he was driven out of Temasek as a power struggle. Parameswara then tried to build a government in Muar and some locations but were not suitable and continued to travel up until he found Malacca. The push factor in the case of Panglima Awang was because he was taken as a prisoner and because of that, Awang wanted to change his destiny and continued tirelessly to learn from the West on a cruise. In addition, the commander Awang also had intelligence and it was not a surprise for him to get attention and good position. In the case of the Java people, a factor which they had to travel for migration was because of their agricultural system in their place was limited to only a few types of plants by the Dutch. The Java people, were also experiencing serious problems of starvation due to lack of food. The reluctance of some leaders of the West to submit to and obeyed the Dutch government had been subjected to death threats. Consequently, the threat of life had become the most powerful factor why Java people traveled to Malay Peninsular. As we all know, the Hajj is obligatory worship performed by Muslims if they are enabled and have ability. Hajj has become one of the pillars of Islam. In addition, the push factor that makes the Malays as Tok Kenali and Munshi Abdullah was able to travel was because the ability of the transport itself. The Sea was the main connection when it over to the other places. Thus the power and ability of transport vessels an important factor in all trips taken.

A journey undertaken by Parameswara started from Srivijaya where history began in Palembang. The beginning of the journey started by his parents. Parameswara then traveled from Temasek to Muar and other places until he found Malacca. The travel undertaken by Panglima Awang was worldwide. The advance of the places visited by the Panglima Awang is shown in the table above. There is a controversial issue where the question of who first traveled around the world whether Columbus or Panglima Awang. Java people were traveling from Java to the Malay Peninsular. The journey to Mecca started in Penang to Colombo and then to Aden before reaching Jeddah.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Cultural travel has actually existed for centuries in the Malay community. The Malay community is not the race that is young and still searching for its identity. The greatness of the Malay race is known to many areas and this includes the performance areas that involves travel. This paper is devoted to a travel that involves the ocean and certainly subsequent studies can be made where the travel journey involves using the road.

Through historical evolution, we can know that there are four main reasons that led the Malays to travel. This paper has also taken a case study for each of the causes of the Malays to travel. The case studies are taken not only in Malaysia because the Malays were also found in Singapore and Indonesia. Examples of case studies are Parameswara of Singapore and case studies about the Javanese from Indonesia. Through historical evolution, we can also know that the journey undertaken by the Malays are not only local but also to the world beyond. So that a detailed study should be made in the search for knowledge in connection with the Malay travellers. Malays' trip to the Holy Land is also something interesting to be discussed and reviewed. In the future a study should be made to extend all the way to the Holy Land and the knowledge of the pre-trip, during the trip, when arrived at destination and the time when leaving the place visited.

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