

THE JOHOR-MALAY WORLD, 1511-1784:
THE IDEOLOGY OF KINGSHIP IN
THE CONTEXT OF CHANGE

by

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Raja adil raja disembah
Raja zalim raja disanggah

The centrality of the ruler to the *kerajaan* has been appropriately emphasised by A.C. Milner as the cardinal factor in the understanding of Malay political culture.¹ Dependent not on military and economic power alone, the influence of the Malay ruler was contingent upon his spiritual aura. However, this went beyond the superficial preoccupation with ceremony and ostentation and was firmly grounded in the practical implications of the ruler's protection and preservation of society. *Daulat*, or the divine aura, invested in the royal line, pre-supposed a virtuous personality. An inherent part of the virtue was the ruler's ability to offer effective leadership, both spiritual and secular. With increased external challenges faced by the Malay polity after the fall of the Melaka sultanate in 1511, the leadership of the ruler became a crucial factor in determining the fate of the realm. It is the purpose of this paper to discuss the relevance of the principle of kingly virtue in the context of radical political and economic change in the Johor-Malay world between 1511 and 1784.

The traditional influence of the Malay ruler was founded on spiritual force, expressed in his role as protector of the law

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¹A.C. Milner, "Islam and the Muslim State", *Islam in South-East Asia* (ed.), M.B. Hooker (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1985), 31-2; *Kerajaan, Malay Political Culture on the Eve of Colonial rule*, The Association of Asian Studies Monograph, No.XI (Tucson, Arizona: The University of Arizona Press, 1982).

and community at large. The concept had its roots in the earlier Hindu-Buddhist tradition, according to which the ruler, conceived in cosmological terms, as *chakravartin* or moral conqueror of the physical world, was inevitably *dharmaraja* or the righteous ruler.² The devination of kings in Southeast Asia, through the royal cult of *devaraja*, strengthened the spiritual attributes and practical obligations of the ruler.³ At Srivijaya, the progenitor of the Melaka Sultanate, it crystalized in the concept of "andeka or the supernatural influence that pervades all kingship and punishes any one who insults or injures the Lord's anointed".⁴

With the Islamization of Melaka, regal aura was identified with *daulat*, the touchstone according to which all political behaviour was regulated.⁵ The ruler was the deputy of God and, as such, his subjects owed total loyalty to him. No matter what the actions of the ruler, disloyalty towards him was acknowledged as heinous sin or *derhaka*. According to the *Sejarah Melayu*, "it was the custom of the Malays never to be disloyal to their masters."⁶ This did not mean, however, that the ruler was free to do as he willed. His wrongs were punishable by the "law of God"⁷ and he was bound by a contract with his subjects not to put them to shame, however grave their offence. Within the same context, the obligations of the ruler as protector, found expression in the Islamic concept of *khalifah*. According to one authority:⁸

[T]he idea that the appointment of the caliph was a kind of contract imposing *reciprocal obligations* on the man elected and on his

²S.J. Tambiah, *World Conqueror and World Renouncer: A Study of Buddhism and Polity in Thailand against a Historical Background* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 24-5, 39-47.

³W. Mabbett, "A Survey of the Background to the Variety of Political Traditions in Southeast Asia", in *Patterns of Kingship and Authority in Traditional Asia* (ed.), W. Mabbett (London: Croom Helm, 1985), 74-79.

⁴R.J. Wilkinson, *A Malay English Dictionary* (New York: Macmillan & Co. Ltd. 1959).

⁵C.C. Brown (trans.), *Sejarah Melayu: 'Malay Annals'* (intro.), R. Roolvink (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1970), iii; W.G. Shellabear (trans.), *Sejarah Melayu* (Kuala Lumpur: Penerbit Fajar Bakti Sdn. Bhd., 1975), 183; Zainal Abidin bin Abdul Wahid, "Sejarah Melayu", *Asian Studies*, IV, iii (1966), 446.

⁶C.C. Brown, *Sejarah Melayu*, 89; Shellabear, *Sejarah Melayu*, 144. The same principle is stressed in the *Undang-Undang Melaka*. See Liaw Yock Fang, *Bibliotheca Indonesica*, 13 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976), 67.

⁷Brown, *Sejarah Melayu*, 121; Shellabear, *Sejarah Melayu*, 186.

⁸Laura Veccia Vaglieri, "The Patriarchal and Umayyad Caliphates", *The Cambridge History of Islam*, Vol.IA: *The Central Islamic Lands from Pre-Islamic times to the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 57.

subjects gained ground, and became a fundamental concept once the Muslims had developed a judicial mentality.... [My italics]

The Islamic perception of rulership which was universalistic, was different from the Malay-Javanese idea of personalised kingship with the *daulat* (divine aura) of the ruler as 'a single reference point'. However, fundamental to both traditions was the reciprocal obligations of the ruler (*khalifah*) and the community (or *umat*) he ruled.⁹ The agreement between the ruler and his subjects is epitomized in the *Sejarah Melayu* in the voluntary contract which the first king of the Malays, Sri Tri Buana, entered into with Demang Lebar Daun, his Chief Minister.¹⁰

If any ruler puts a single one of his subjects to shame, that shall be a sign that his kingdom will be destroyed by Almighty God. Similarly it has been granted by Almighty God to Malay subjects that they shall never be disloyal or treacherous to their rulers, even if their rulers behave evilly or inflict injustice upon them.

In fact, the special emphasis on the interdependent relationship between ruler and ruled, based on the principle of equity, constitutes the local variant of the universal concept of ruler as protector and was axiomatic to Malay political culture.¹¹ The ruler needed his subjects and this is clearly spelled out in the Raffles MS 18, Blagden recension, of the *Sejarah Melayu*.¹²

For rulers are like fire and their ministers are like firewood, and a fire needs wood to produce a flame ... which means 'subjects are like roots and the ruler is like the tree'; without roots the tree cannot stand upright....

⁹A.H. Johns, "The Turning Image: Myth and Reality in Malay Perceptions of the Past" in *Perceptions of the Past in Southeast Asia* (ed.) Antony Reid and David Marr (Singapore: Heinemann Educational Books (Asia) Ltd., 1979), 64.

¹⁰Brown, *Sejarah Melayu*, 16. For the Rumi version of Raffles MS 18 see R.O. Winstedt, "The Malay Annals or Sejarah Melayu", *JMBRAS*, XVI, iii (1938), 57. In the *Undang-Undang Melaka*, of the three qualities required of a ruler's subjects, honour is placed before obedience and submission. See Liaw Yock Fang, *Undang-Undang Melaka*, 67.

¹¹In contrast, the Javanese variant, for instance, did not allow for any form of social contract or conceptualized system of mutual obligation between superior and subordinate. Benedict R.O'G Anderson, "The Idea of Power in Javanese Culture", *Culture and Politics in Indonesia* (ed.), Claire Holt (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972), 47-8.

¹²Brown, *Sejarah Melayu*, 117. For the Rumi version see Winstedt, "Sejarah Melayu", 150.

Hence, on approaching his death, the Sultan of Pasai, Maliku'l-Tahir's advice to his son was:¹³

My son . . . disregard not the words of your servants in any matter of yours. Take counsel with your ministers and do not provoke those who serve you.

Most of all, in fulfilling his duties towards his subjects the ideal ruler recognised justice as the keynote.¹⁴ This was in total accordance with the universal Islamic concept of government in which "justice came to be regarded as the cornerstone of royal authority".¹⁵

Although Melaka fell in 1511 to the Portuguese, the basic concept of the Malay *kerajaan*, as laid down during the Melaka Sultanate was perpetuated by Johor and became the model for other Malay states which emerged in the Peninsula during the following centuries.¹⁶ But though the basic concept of the *kerajaan* was drawn from the Melaka Sultanate, it should not be assumed that Malay political ideology and codes of conduct, which formed the basis of Malay statecraft, remained static without responding to new elements of challenge.¹⁷ It is apparent that Johor, far from an effete kingdom on its defence, soon turned the inherent characteristics of the Malay kingdom to new uses. *Daulat* derived from the Johor ruler's genealogical link with the Melaka dynasty, together with the loyalty and resourcefulness of its ministers, *orang kaya* and Orang Laut, became the basis of its immediate adaptability and survival through the constant shifting of its capital. With the dawn of the eighteenth century, the pressure of Bugis activity in the Straits began to bear too heavily upon Johor, as with other Malay states such as Selangor, Perak and Kedah, weakening their resis-

¹³Brown, *Sejarah Melayu*, 39. For the Rumi version see Winstedt, "Sejarah Melayu", 79.

¹⁴Brown, *Sejarah Melayu*, 39; Shellabear, *Sejarah Melayu*, 65.

¹⁵S.A.A. Rizvi, "Kingship in Islam: Islamic Universalism Through the Caliphate", *Patterns of Kingship and Authority in Traditional Asia* (ed.) Mabbett, 127.

¹⁶D.J. Steinberg et al., *In Search of Southeast Asia, A Modern History* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1971), 74-5; P.F. de Josselin de Jong, "The Rise and Decline of a National Hero", *JMBRAS*, XXXVIII, ii (1965), 149; J.M. Gullick, *Indigenous Political Systems of Western Malaya* (London: The Athlone Press, 1965), 44-5.

¹⁷Leonard Y. Andaya, *The Kingdom of Johor, 1641-1728: Economic and Political Developments* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1975), *passim*.

tance to western commercial domination. Nonetheless, up till then, the history of the Malays is an eloquent record of over two hundred years of survival in the face of unrelenting European activity to try and seize commerce, which was the basis of livelihood and the nucleus of power in the Malay world.

If the Melaka Sultanate represents the 'classical age' in Malay history, the subsequent two centuries and more represent an equally important period of Malay international diplomacy. Though challenged by Western naval and commercial presence, Malay power continued to hold sway and reached peak periods of prosperity in Johor, Perak and Terengganu. The method by which the Malay states achieved this is impressive as it demonstrated, quite clearly, their ability to adapt to new political realities. Not only was this reflected in their diplomatic dealings with the European powers but also in their conceptual adjustments within the Malay *negeri* to new external challenges. It serves also to stress the importance of European presence to changes within the workings of the Malay *negeri* which, in many cases, far from representing a process of decline since the fall of the Melaka Sultanate, demonstrates clear evolutionary trends and adaptations. The *Sejarah Melayu*, notes P.E. de Josselin de Jong, unlike the Javanese histories, notably the *Nāgarakērtāgama*, does not strive to achieve "a maximum of supernatural effect...."¹⁸ C.C. Brown has made specific reference to the sober treatment of the rulers of Melaka in the *Sejarah Melayu*: the author pays tribute to the justice, humanity and physical prowess of individual rulers but is "no chartered eulogist of royalty".¹⁹ He "does not go to extremes in eulogizing Malacca's Sultans" and though "[t]here is no lack of fairy-tale happenings in the *Sejarah Melayu*, yet the whole atmosphere is realistic, even matter-of-fact." This difference is attributed to the fact that in the culture of Melaka there is no figure to parallel the *pujangga*, the annalist-astrologer of the Javanese court.²⁰ While this may to some extent be true, it is important to note that the *Sejarah Melayu* (the Raffles MS 18) which was completed some time after the fall of Melaka

¹⁸P.E. de Josselin de Jong, "The Character of the Malay Annals", *Malayan and Indonesian Studies* (ed.) J. Bastin & R. Roolvink (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1964), 236.

¹⁹Brown in his introduction to *Sejarah Melayu*, x.

²⁰Josselin de Jong, "The Character of the Malay Annals", 237-8.

to the Portuguese,²¹ was not meant essentially as a historical chronicle. The *Sejarah Melayu* was evidently written during a period of extreme instability when Johor faced external challenge from the Portuguese. It was essential to reinforce the *daulat* of the Melaka-Johor kingdom to ensure its survival through hard times. This, indeed, was the aim of many Malay historical writings, "written at a time when the sultanates with which they were concerned were defunct or reduced to impotence."²² The *Malay Annals*, thus, were meant as a 'guide' - an argument which may be reinforced by the absence of a comparable work initiated *during* the period of the Sultanate. If this be the case, it is clear that the *Sejarah Melayu* could not afford to indulge too freely in fairy-tale happenings and had to recognise some measure of realism. It was designed to serve existing political challenges and needs.

A more realistic adjustment to the basic ideology of kingship is also apparent in the *Sejarah Melayu* in contrast with the *Hikayat Raja Raja Pasai*.²³ To quote P.E. de Josselin de Jong again, "The basic ideology or, as we might call it, the political ethics, of the *Pasai Chronicles* is the same as that of the *Malay Annals*: the subject's unquestioning loyalty and submission to his king, and his avoidance at all costs of the unforgivable sin of *derhaka*:

²¹The view held by Winstedt that the *Sejarah Melayu*, the Raffles MS 18, was completed some time before 1536, although generally accepted, has been challenged by R. Roolvink & A. Samad Ahmad. See R.O. Winstedt (ed. & intro.), "The Malay Annals or *Sejarah Melayu*", *JMBRAS*, XVI, iii (1938), 28-30; Brown, *Sejarah Melayu*, xxv; A. Samad Ahmad, *Sulalatus Salatin* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa & Pustaka, 1979), xiii-xxvii.
²²A. Teeuw & D.K. Wyatt, *Hikayat Patani: The Story of Patani*, Vol. II (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970), 294. See also, T. Iskandar, "Some Historical Sources used by the Author of the *Hikayat Hang Tuah*", *JMBRAS*, XLIII, i (1970), 43. The *Hikayat Siak* was also composed when the power of the Raja of Siak was in a state of serious decline. See Muhamad Yusoff Hashim, "Hikayat Siak: Suatu Pengenalan Tekstual dan Historiografi", *Sastera dan Sasterawan* (Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia, 1980), 1-22. Another example of a hitherto unpublished Malay 'historical' work composed under similar circumstances is the *Syair Mukomuko* or the *Syair Puteri Benialam*. See J. Kathirithamby-Wells & Muhamad Yusoff Hashim (ed.), *The Syair Mukomuko: An Early Nineteenth Century Sumatran Chronicle*, Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, Monograph 13 (1985).

²³An example of the more human treatment of kingship by the *Sejarah Melayu* (Raffles MS 18) is seen in the case of the ruler of Pasai who is made a fool of for accepting for a wife a daughter of the ruler of Perak by a *gundik*, in preference to two others by a principal wife. The *Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai*, in contrast, justifies the ruler's selection as having been determined by the hand of destiny and the girl's extraordinary good looks. Brown, *Sejarah Melayu*, 33; A.H. Hill, "The *Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai*", *JMBRAS*, XXXIII, ii (1960), 60-1; A. Teeuw, "Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai and *Sejarah Melayu*", *Malayan and Indonesian Studies* (ed.) Bastin & Roolvink, 237.

insubordination or treason."²⁴ In the *Sejarah Melayu* there is, beyond this, a more complex and realistic conception of rulership. The common genealogy of the Melaka-Johor rulers is recognised as a sacred and indestructible force of unity. But the Malays were alert to the new realities that supernatural and sacrosanct powers of legitimacy were in themselves insufficient at a time when fresh elements of challenge had entered the scene. The individual character, personality and moral strength of the rulers were important for enhancing the durability of the Malays. It is presumably for this reason that the Malay rulers in the *Sejarah Melayu* are viewed as human characters with their individual merits and foibles. The author does not necessarily eulogize the rulers of Melaka.²⁵

The prosperity of Melaka is attributed to three important components: the ruler, the chiefs, and the people. Peace and prosperity were dependent upon the correct observance of the principles of justice and loyalty. Thus, though the total framework of the kingdom and its survival was guaranteed through the *daulat* of the ruler, it was the character of a particular ruler which determined the proper functioning of the government through his good relations with the ministers. Of these the most important at the time was the Bendahara or Chief Minister,²⁶ who acted as the ruler's principal functionary, followed by the Laksamana who headed the naval forces. While there is little evidence about the role of the Bendahara and Laksamana during Johor's genesis, the ruler himself, as during the time of the Melaka Sultanate, was active in politics and diplomacy.²⁷ Sultan Mahmud Syah (1488-1529) took personal control of military affairs which involved defending Johor from Portuguese and

²⁴Josselin de Jong, "The Character of the Malay Annals", 239.

²⁵*Ibid.*, 240; Brown, *Sejarah Melayu*, x.

²⁶Brown, *Sejarah Melayu*, xi. The Bendahara held a very special position of privilege as Mangkubumi: 'custodian of the realm', or 'upholder of the world'. C.H. Wake, "Melaka in the Fifteenth Century: Malay Historical Traditions and the Policies of Islamization", *Melaka: Transformation of a Malay Capital, c.1400-1980* (ed.) K.S. Sandhu & Paul Wheatly, Vol.I (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1983), 144; R.O. Winstedt, "A History of Johore (1365-1895 A.D.)", *JMBRAS*, X, iii (1932), 9-10.

²⁷Wilkinson describes Parameswara Iskandar Syah (1390-1413/14) and his son, Megat Iskandar Syah (1414-23/24) as 'trading Sultans' both of whom are said to have visited China, while Sultans Muzaffar Syah (1446-56) and Mansur Syah (?1456-77), for example, were personally responsible for defending and expanding the empire.

Acehnese attacks and maintaining the unity of the kingdom.²⁸ Though unable to recapture Melaka, the ruler adopted an active policy of attracting trade away from it to Johor by offering better commercial facilities in the form of lower duties and fair prices for commodities.²⁹ By the second half of the sixteenth century Johor's increased commerce brought Portuguese accusations that the Sultan was forcing traders to call at Johor, with detriment to Melaka.³⁰ Undoubtedly, the ease with which a ruler, possessing the appropriate genealogical sanctions, was able to move his capital and establish his *kerajaan*, counted as an important factor in Johor's survival. But the *negeri's* economic viability and its successful diplomatic manoeuvres must be ascribed to the shrewd policies and personal efforts of the ruler. Though Sultan Alauddin Riayat Syah (1597-1613) was notoriously intemperate and ineffectual, his brother, Raja Muda Abdullah, acted with foresight in establishing friendly relations with the Dutch in 1602 which, later, on succeeding to the throne as Sultan Hammat Syah (1613-23), he continued to cultivate.³¹ The connection proved an enduring one and was a crucial factor in Johor's rise to prominence during the seventeenth century.

The occupation of Melaka by the Dutch in 1641, with the assistance of Johor,³² augured a new era for Malay power. By the treaty of 1642³³ the Dutch allowed duty exemptions and the provision of passes to the Sultan and the *orang kaya* who began to use it in every possible direction to expand Johor's trade. They allowed, for example, the Muslim traders whom the Dutch were so anxious to curb, to sail under their banner. Sultan Abdul Jalil Riayat Syah (1623-77) also attempted to revive Malay traditional trade with India, China and Indonesia and

²⁸A.K. Dasgupta, "Acheh in Indonesian Trade and Politics, 1600-1641". Ph.D. Thesis. Cornell University, 1975, 48-9, 91-2; Winstedt, "A History of Johor, 1365-1895", 18-22; Brown, *Sejarah Melayu*, 166, 172, 175-6, 182-5.

²⁹M.A.P. Meilink-Roelofs, *Asian Trade and European Influence in the Indonesian Archipelago Between 1500 and About 1630* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962), 139-40.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 141.

³¹Wilkinson, *Papers on Malay Subjects*, 55-58; N. Netscher, "De Nederlanders in Djohor en Siak", *VBG*, XXV (1870), 7-8; M.G. de Eredia, "Description of Malacca and Meridional India and Cathay" (trans.), J.V. Mills, *JMBRAS*, VIII, i (1930), 57-8, 182-3; P.A. Tiele, "Bouwstoffen voor de geschiedenis der Nederlanders in de Maleischen Archipel", *BKI*, XXXV (1886), 305-6, 32. D.K. Bassett, "Changes in the Pattern of Malay Politics, 1629-c.1695", *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, X, iii (1969), 435-8.

³³J.E. Heeres (ed.), "Corpus Diplomaticum Neerlandico Indicum", I, *BKI*, LVII (1907), 365-6.

opened Johor to other European traders besides the Dutch. The Sultan fitted out his own ships to the Coromandel Coast and Bengal to buy cloth and persisted in sending vessels to China in the face of repeated disaster.³⁴ The active role played by the Johor chiefs, who sent trading expeditions to Perak and the *rantau* areas of Minangkabau, was reminiscent of similar activities pursued by the ruler and Bendahara during the time of the Melaka Sultanate.³⁵ There was the important difference, however, that the revived trade after 1641 was conducted in the face of rigid Dutch competition. Maintenance of it required more positive and vigorous commercial participation on the part of the Johor chiefs, and this fact they seem to have readily responded to. In fact, it would be true to say that the royalty and *orang kaya* formed the backbone of Johor's trade during the seventeenth century.³⁶ Unlike the period of the Melaka Sultanate when the royalty and Malay nobility were not the central participants in trade,³⁷ during the seventeenth century, the Laksamana shared a lively trade with Sultan Ibrahim Syah of Johor (1677-85).³⁸ There was also Raja Indra Bongsu, Tun Mahmud, who as Raja Muda during the reign of Sultan Abdul Jalil Riayat Syah (1699-1719), was the spearhead of Johor's commercial resistance against the Dutch and an important patron of trade.³⁹ He was engaged in overseas shipping "on his own behalf" to Makassar and India. In 1708 he sent a vessel to Negapatnam with a capital investment of 8,000 guilders.⁴⁰ He pursued his commercial interests, according to the English country trader, Alexander Hamilton, with utter ruthlessness, "buying and selling at his own Prices and punishing those who dared

³⁴Andaya, *The Kingdom of Johor*, 61, 70-3, 75-6.

³⁵Brown, *Sejarah Melayu*, 154; Tomé Pires, *Suma Oriental*, II (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1944), 243; Meilink-Roelofs, *Asian Trade and European Influence*, 51-2.

³⁶See Andaya, *The Kingdom of Johor*, chapter III.

³⁷The most active participants mentioned in contemporary sources are Sultan Muzaffar Syah and Bendahara Tun Mutahir. However, as Meilink-Roelofs argues, the Sultan's trade was "occasional in character" and Bendahara Tun Mutahir himself was of Indian stock so that there is no evidence of a strong Malay entrepreneurial class among the nobility. Meilink-Roelofs, *Asian Trade and European Influence*, 52-4, 57-8.

³⁸Andaya, *The Kingdom of Johor*, 115; see also J. Kathirithamby Wells, "Royal Authority and the *Orang Kaya* in the Western Archipelago", *JSEAS*, XVII, ii (1986), 261.

³⁹For a full discussion of his official and personal role in trade see: Dianne Lewis, "The Dutch East India Company and the Straits of Malacca, 1700-1784", Ph.D. Thesis, Australian National University, Canberra, 1970.

⁴⁰It appears that this ship was actually wrecked off Negapatnam and its goods seized by the Dutch so that the Raja Muda later claimed 8,000 guilders as compensation from the Governor and Council at Melaka. Lewis, "The Dutch East India Company and the Straits of Malacca, 1700-1784", 113-32; Andaya, *The Kingdom of Johor*, 220.

to speak against his arbitrary Dealings.”⁴¹ But, as Dianne Lewis has commented, it is highly unlikely that the Raja Muda was motivated solely by personal gain. “[H]is policies seem more in keeping with an attempt to capture for Johor the central position in the trade and politics of the Straits held previously by the Malacca Sultanate.”⁴²

Though during the days of the Melaka Sultanate the nobility had not participated so widely and indispensably in trade, the situation had changed with the increasing challenges presented after 1511 to Malay sovereignty and to the normal flow of trade within the kingdom. The livelihood of the *orang kaya*, which traditionally had accrued from taxes and tolls drawn from their appanages or *lungguhan* in the outlying regions of the kingdom, was severely threatened. It is no wonder that the *orang kaya*, with the high ranking officials, rose rapidly in defence of the economy with the two pronged weapon of commercial diplomacy and active individual trade participation.

Melaka, not unlike Johor, had derived its political influence from its commercial prosperity. The Malay Sultanate, however, had more in common with Antwerp during its Golden Age, at the end of the fifteenth century, because at both entrepôts large commercial investment had been, by and large, in the hands of foreign traders.⁴³ Johor-Malay trade, in contrast, was conducted mainly by its own people. The antithesis between the generally passive participation of the Malays during the days of the Melaka Sultanate, and the more active role of the Sultan and *orang kaya* of the Johor kingdom through exploitation of the Dutch pass system, again, is proof of Malay adaptability as a factor of survival.

Unlike trade in the Melaka Sultanate which flourished under relative security, Johor's trade was based on the constant

⁴¹A. Hamilton, *A New Account of the East Indies* (ed.), Sir William Foster, II (London: The Argonaut Press, 1930), 53.

⁴²Lewis, "The Dutch East India Company and the Straits of Malacca", 118.

⁴³Antwerp bears comparison with Melaka because, after the decline of Venetian trade at the end of the fifteenth century, it rose to become the chief port for northern Europe with spice as its most lucrative item. S.B. Clough & C.W. Cole, *Economic History of Europe* (Boston: D.C. Heath & Co., 1952), 156-63; Meilink Roelofs, *Asian Trade*, 57-8.

manipulation of treaty negotiations with the Dutch.⁴⁴ The situation made new leadership demands and, this, together with the fresh commercial opportunities for the enhancement of personal influence, brought the *orang kaya* and particularly, ministers such as the Bendahara and Laksamana, to the fore. Competition soon arose with resulting tensions between the Sultan, Bendahara and Laksamana which became a normal feature of Johor politics. In fact, shortly after the Dutch capture of Melaka, it became apparent that the Laksamana was emerging as a powerful element in Johor politics, and his friendship with the Dutch created uneasy feelings at court.⁴⁵ The role of the Laksamana is not to be underrated; it was he who was instrumental in placing Sultan Abdul Jalil Riayat Syah (1623-77) on the throne on condition that the succession would pass to the Raja Muda (Raja Ibrahim), son of the previous ruler, Sultan Hammat Syah (1613-23) by a Jambi princess, when he reached his majority. It was the Laksamana, too, who by gaining Dutch alliance against Aceh, made it safe for Sultan Abdul Jalil to terminate his sojourn in Patani (1639-41) and re-establish his new capital at Makam Tauhid from where he shifted back to Batu Sawar the following year.⁴⁶

The changing role of the Johor Laksamana in the new commercial environment of the Straits attested to the positive, evolutionary trends within the Malay-Johor polity. P.E. de Josselin de Jong, who analysed the role of the famous Laksamana, Hang Tuah, has drawn attention to the rise of this figure as a national hero only 'around 1700'.⁴⁷ In the *Sejarah Melayu* itself, the role of Laksamana Hang Tuah is limited to his naval and military exploits; the civil affairs of the kingdom were firmly under the control of the ruler's confidant, the Bendahara. Though Hang Tuah served three rulers loyally, his relationship with them and his own failings of character contrast with the moral superiority of the Bendahara.⁴⁸

⁴⁴J. Kathirithamby-Wells, "Dutch Malacca and the Malay World". Paper presented at the Seminar Sejarah, Melaka, December 1976 (unpublished), 10-12.

⁴⁵Bassett, "Changes in the Pattern of Malay Politics", 434, 438, 442.

⁴⁶Andaya, *The Kingdom of Johor*, 61, 85; Bassett, "Changes in the Pattern of Malay Politics", 430-4.

⁴⁷P.E. de Josselin de Jong, "The Rise and Decline of a National Hero", *JMBRAS*, XXXVIII, ii (1965), 142.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 141-8; Brown, *Sejarah Melayu*, 58, 99-100; Wilkinson, *Papers on Malay Subjects*, 39-40.

By the second half of the seventeenth century, however, the Laksamana, in the person of Tun Abdul Jamil (c.1642-88), began to figure as the most important minister at court. In the ensuing 'war' with Jambi during 1669-73, which arose from the ruler's efforts to prevent the Raja Muda from falling under Jambi influence, the Laksamana served the Sultan loyally, heading the Orang Laut forces which he quickly reassembled after the destruction of the capital at Johor Lama. Following this event the Sultan himself withdrew from the main arena of politics to live in Pahang. Left to the business of restoring affairs in Johor, the Laksamana re-established Johor's prestige, first, by defeating the enemy fleet some months after the destruction of Johor Lama and, later, by the conquest in 1679, of Jambi. He then selected Riau as the new capital and attended to the resumption of trade. Fully aware that it was the Laksamana who held the effective power, the Dutch at Melaka treated him with due circumspection.⁴⁹ When the death of the Raja Muda in 1675 gave the Laksamana a freer hand, he soon entered into belligerent competition with the Dutch for Siak's tin supplies. Though relations between Tun Abdul Jamil and the Dutch deteriorated as a result, both parties recognised the importance of avoiding open war.⁵⁰

With the death of Sultan Abdul Jalil in Pahang in 1677, his nephew who succeeded him as Sultan Ibrahim Syah (1677-85) was determined on taking personal control of affairs at Riau, relegating the Laksamana to second place. The ease with which the new Sultan did this, in spite of the all-powerful role which the Laksamana had wielded, again, speaks well for the adaptability of the Johor political system. In the absence of an active ruler and, at a time when Johor's power and prestige was dependent upon the exertions of the navy, the Laksamana, by the very nature of his position as head of the Orang Laut forces, was in an ideal position to hold the reigns of government. On the return of the ruler to office, however, Malay political codes demanded the Laksamana's surrender of authority and, in the case of Laksamana Tun Abdul Jamil, he complied without resentment and was richly rewarded. The ruler married a daughter of the Laksamana, an honour traditionally reserved for the Bendahara, and conferred upon him the illustrious title of

⁴⁹Andaya, *The Kingdom of Johor*, 84-100.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 105-6, 121-22.

Paduka Raja. Abdul Jamil, on his part, continued to serve the ruler well. He restored Johor's prestige by dealing a decisive blow in 1679 on Jambi and, in 1688, crushed a rebellion among Johor's Minangkabau subjects in Siak;⁵¹ but the peace did not last.

Beneath the apparent calm of the Laksamana's independent regime before the investiture of Sultan Ibrahim, his exercise of unprecedented powers had evidently created jealousy and dissatisfaction among the *orang kaya*, led by the Bendahara. With the Sultan back in Riau and the competition which arose between the Bendahara and the Laksamana for the ruler's favours, factional feelings began to surface. Perhaps because of the uneasy situation and a desire not to jeopardise the apparent stability of the kingdom by straining relations between his leading ministers, Sultan Ibrahim Syah, with his loyal supporters, withdrew in 1683 from Riau to the mainland. Any anxiety the ruler might have felt about the future of his kingdom was assuaged by the continued prosperity of Riau under the guidance of Paduka Raja who resumed his position at the helm of the government. Events which led to the final rupture between the Laksamana and the rival Bendahara faction are unclear. The ruler died in Pahang in 1685 and was succeeded by an infant son, Sultan Mahmud Syah (1685-99), when the Paduka Raja, and not the Bendahara as according to tradition, became the *de facto* regent.⁵²

Some three years later, the Bendahara led a palace revolt, with the full support of the *orang kaya*, to restore the balance of power in Johor. It was obviously the intention of Bendahara Tun Habib Abdul Majid to revive the importance of his office and restore the *orang kaya* to their traditional advisory and influential functions. The Paduka Raja made his escape and was reported, in 1688, to have died.⁵³

It is noteworthy that whatever the internal tensions, personal rivalries, and leadership changes within Johor, the basic commercial tactics and policy of the kingdom towards the Dutch remained unchanged. With the shrewd Laksamana Paduka Raja

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 121-22, 127, 130-3.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 135-6, 139.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 152-61, 166-7.

removed the Dutch did, indeed, seek a renegotiation of commercial terms. But much as he disliked his predecessor, the Bendahara appreciated the sagacity of Tun Abdul Jamil's policy towards the Dutch. After consulting the *orang kaya* and the new Laksamana, a son of Paduka Raja (1688-93), the Bendahara conceded to Dutch demands for exclusive trade in a new treaty⁵⁴ but, in actual fact, Johor did not honour the terms of the agreement.⁵⁵ Despite both the new treaty and the absence of the Laksamana Paduka Raja, trade prospered at Riau. Johor-Dutch relations thus continued to be strained but did not suffer umbrage because of the mutual desire for peace. The Bendahara's untiring efforts at assuaging Melaka indicated his full support for Johor's established policy that it was better to be at peace, even if nominally only, than at war with the Dutch.

The internal stability of Johor was finally shattered following the death, in 1697, of Bendahara Sri Maharaja Tun Habib Abdul Majid which posed a serious leadership crisis. The young ruler, who had come of age in 1695, was cruel and immature, as exemplified in the incident recorded by the English county trader, Captain Alexander Hamilton. According to it, Sultan Mahmud tried "a Pair of Screw-barrelled Pistols" given to him as a present "on a poor Fellow on the street" to see "... how far it could carry a Ball into his Flesh, and shot him through the shoulder."⁵⁶ The Bendahara's successor, his son, Tun Abdul Jalil, was unable to check the excesses of the Sultan. Power moved temporarily into the hands of the Syahbandar who proved unable to offer Johor the necessary firm leadership. The lack of proper control at the centre began to tell on Johor's trade. Without a suitable leader to harness their energies for the interests of the kingdom, the Orang Laut, the main defenders of Johor's

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 168-9.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, 170-3. The concept of written treaty engagements and total commercial monopoly, as distinct from royal prerogatives, was alien to the Malays. Thus, the Malay chiefs did not appreciate the gravity of their treaty agreements with the Dutch, placing traditional emphasis on the recognition of their own maritime codes and the exercise of maritime control and trade through the loyal services of the Orang Laut. Kathirithamby-Wells, "Dutch Malacca and the Malay World", 6-7; C.H. Alexandrowicz, *An Introduction to the History of the Law of Nations in the East Indies* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 64-5. Alfred P. Rubin, *The International Personality of the Malay Peninsula* (Kuala Lumpur: Penerbit Universiti Malaya, 1976), 55, 63-4. Similar conceptual differences created problems between the Dutch and the Makassarese in the latter's struggle to uphold the principle of *mare liberum*. G.J. Resink, *Indonesia's History Between the Myths* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1965), 45-7.

⁵⁶A. Hamilton, *A New Account of the East Indies*, II, 51.

hitherto successful commerce began, gradually, to turn to piratical activities. By now, the tyranny of the young ruler, Mahmud, reached intolerable limits and affairs at the centre were in chaos. Abandoning traditional codes of loyalty, the Bendahara and Temenggung, with the unanimous support of the *orang kaya*, decided, in 1699, on the murder of the Sultan. The cataclysmic event took place on Friday, in the month of Safar, in the Hijrah year 1111. Bija Wangsa, the only *orang kaya* who refused to commit *derhaka*, was duly put to death.⁵⁷

How did the *orang kaya* rationalise their hideous act of *derhaka*, the only instance overtly recorded in the Malay annals?⁵⁸ According to the *Siak Chronicle* it is Sultan Mahmud's brutal murder of the pregnant wife of *orang kaya* Megat Sri Rama which carried the consensus of the chiefs to put an end to the unabated atrocities of the young ruler. Yet, the incident could have provided only the occasion for disloyalty without the *justification*. For, as the *Sejarah Melayu* sternly warns, "... [I]t has been granted by Almighty God to Malay subjects that they shall never be disloyal or treacherous to their rulers, even if their rulers behave evilly and inflict injustice upon them."⁵⁹ The cruel acts of Sultan Mahmud, though unprecedented in their scale, are not an unfamiliar tale in Malay history. There was, for instance, the unjust execution by Sultan Mahmud, the last ruler of Melaka, of his faithful servant, Bendahara Sir Maharaja.

Indigenous sources we are familiar with, are silent on the point of proper rationalisation of the regicide within the frame-

⁵⁷Andaya, *The Kingdom of Johor*, 181-8; Virginia Matheson & Barbara Andaya, *The Precious Gift: Tuhfat al-Nafis* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1982), 42.

⁵⁸There were two earlier instances of the regicide in the Melaka royal line. The first involved the murder of Sri Parameswara Dewa Syah, the son of Sultan Sri Maharaja but was not strictly *derhaka* as, according to Winstedt, the young ruler is claimed to have been struck down by his guardian, the raja of Rokan, "in his death agony" when attacked by a rival faction. R.O. Winstedt, *A History of Malaya* (Kuala Lumpur: Marican & Sons, 1964), 50-51; Brown, *Sejarah Melayu*, 51-53. The second case which involved the death of Sultan Almad also cannot be interpreted as *derhaka* as it was carried out on the orders of his father, Sultan Mahmud Syah (1511-29). (See 52 & 53). There is, moreover, according to Wilkinson, the case of Sultan Alauddin Riayat Syah (1478-88), believed to have been poisoned at the instigation of the rulers of Pahang and Inderagiri, though the *Sejarah Melayu* does not mention this. Wilkinson, *Papers of Malay Subjects*, 41.

⁵⁹Brown, *Sejarah Melayu*, 16.

work of Malay political ideology and statecraft. The murder of Sultan Mahmud, constituted a turning point in Malay history. It irrevocably terminated the Melaka ruling line, which was then succeeded by the Bendahara line, and could only have been rationalised by the ruler's failure to adhere to Islamic tenets, fundamental to the survival of the *umat*. The ruler's qualification as head of the *umat* was a pre-requisite for his earning *daulat*. It was Sultan Mahmud's disqualification as head of the *umat*, which would have provided the necessary rationale for the complicity of the *orang kaya* in the regicide. Evidence for this is to be found in a manuscript in the Duke Humphrey Collection at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, concerning a report on Johor, preceding the regicide, by another English country trader, a certain "Mr. Douglas".⁶⁰ He records the tense situation which prevailed in Johor in anticipation of the ruler's assumption of power.⁶¹

[Ye King although "22" Years of Age is not as yet circumcised. In Anno "1694" the peers of his Realme Invited a great Mufftie to Officiate Ye Ceremony and Ye Emperour of Minangkabau, Ye kings of [Aru, Kedah and Riau] with other princes ... sent their Ambassadors to visit him, Augment Ye splendour of Ye Ceremony, but when Ye Mufftie went about to do his Office and shewed Ye king his knife he drew his [kris] and threatened the Priest that if he was Ye least pained he would immediately kill him - & Ye Mufftie for fear of Ye Worst left him as he found him which amongst them is reckoned unclean....

It is pertinent to refer here to the total lack of reverence and religious ceremony with which, after the murder, Sultan Mahmud's naked body was left exposed for half a day in front of the *balai* before it was wrapped in eight ells of cloth and perfunctorily buried.⁶²

The implications of Sultan Mahmud's failure, as head of state, to comply with the obligation of circumcision can only be fully understood if the situation is seen in the light of the

⁶⁰"The proceedings of Mr. Douglass" (B)MS Rawl. A 334, "The proceedings of Mr. Douglass in y^e William & Richards, Captⁿ. Rogers, when at Borneo -wth remarks of entering into Batavia", Jan.-May, n.d., Duke Humphrey's Collection, The Bodleian Library, Oxford.

⁶¹*Ibid.*, f.10.

⁶²Andaya, *The Kingdom of Johor*, 186.

episode relating to Melaka's conversion under Raja Tengah, Sultan Muhammed (1424-44), as recorded in the *Sejarah Melayu*. The ruler's conversion on the arrival of Makhdum Syed 'Abdull-'Aziz from Jedda was anticipated by a miraculous circumcision.⁶³

One night the king had a dream. He dreamt that he saw clearly our Prophet Muhammed ... and the Apostle of God ... said to Raja Tengah. "Say 'I testify that there is no god but God and that Muhammad is the Apostle of God'" And Raja Tengah repeated word for word....

Then day broke and Raja Tengah awoke from sleep, and he saw that he had been circumcised.... [My italics]

The importance of moral and religious principles for the maintenance of the unity and prosperity of the state is borne out by Sultan Mahmud's disregard of his religious duty and his resulting intemperance, with severe consequences for the kingdom. As Douglas reported,⁶⁴

[Y]e want of his Circumcision Wth other unjust and inhumaine dealings Wth Strangers makes Ye Trade to his Country very small although it produced [tin], in great plenty....

Apart from his arbitrary policies, his dubious status as a Muslim head of state evidently affected trade with others of the same faith.

The legitimacy of the Melaka ruling house had served well as the focus of unity at Johor. While this had been the main anchor for survival during the sixteenth century, adjustment to new realities during the following century, particularly the acceptance of Dutch presence and their commercial challenge, brought other priorities to the fore. The ruler, evidently, was unable to manage the complex political and diplomatic affairs independently and, beginning with the reign of Sultan Abdul Jalil Riayat Syah (1623-77), power passed gradually into the hands of the Laksamana and the Bendahara who adjusted readily to their new roles. Since even traditionally it was men of talent who were appointed to matters pertaining to trade and diplomacy

⁶³Brown, *Sejarah Melayu*, 43-4.

⁶⁴"The Proceedings of Mr. Douglass...", f.10.

and their energies constantly put to the test, it is not too surprising that they adapted easily to the new diplomatic scene. On the other hand, the ruler himself, since the days of Laksamana Paduka Raja, had moved further and further away from *realpolitik* and, on some occasions, from the capital itself. The Sultan had long since ceased to fulfil any practical functions. In the case of Sultan Mahmud, he transgressed his contractual obligations to his people through his tyranny and excessive temper which led the *orang kaya* to believe he was mad (*orang yang gila*).⁶⁵ By failing to fulfil his symbolic role as fountain of justice the ruler contravened the contractual obligation of a *khalifah* towards the *umat*, as stated, for example, in Abu Yusuf's original address to Harun ar-Rashid (A.D.786-809):⁶⁶

Rulers ... were responsible to their Creator, just as a shephard was to his master.... The Caliph should dispense justice, refrain from issuing arbitrary orders and avoid inflicting punishment in anger.

Sultan Mahmud's transgression was complete, allowing for the rationalisation of, though not exoneration from, the crime of *derhaka*. For, according to one version of the *Tuhfat al-Nafis* (Cod. Or. 7304), and the *Hikayat Siak*, Sultan Mahmud hurled a kris at his assassin, Megat Sri Rama. The latter sustained a wound on his foot and lived in agony for four years, with grass growing in it, because he had committed treason.⁶⁷

The sin of *derhaka* is also explicit in an earlier instance of regicide when Sultan Ahmad who suffered the wrath of his father, Sultan Mahmud Syah (1511-29), because of his unbecoming behaviour as ruler.⁶⁸

Sultan Ahmad still had no love for his officers and chiefs: his favourites were the (young) men of the court.... When Sultan Mahmud Shah came to hear how his son was behaving, he was displeased and gave orders to make away with him.

⁶⁵*Hikayat Siak*, KBG 191 W (Jakarta) ff.405-6. I am indebted to Muhammad Yusoff Hashim for this reference.

⁶⁶Rizvi, "Kingship in Islam", 122-23.

⁶⁷Matheson & Andaya, *The Precious Gift*, 323, note 3; *Hikayat Siak*, KBG 191 W (Jakarta) f.409.

⁶⁸Wilkinson, *Papers on Malay Subjects*, 61-2; Wake, "Melaka in the Fifteenth Century", 144.

Though, unlike Megat Sri Raja, Tun Ali Haji was forced by royal orders to execute Ahmad, all the same, he atoned for the gravity of the sin of *derhaka* by asking to be put to death.⁶⁹

With the termination of the old Melaka dynasty, the rulership passed to the Bendahara, the chief functionary in the government. Though not as effective a leader as his father, Bendahara Tun Abdul Jalil had maintained excellent relations with the *orang kaya* so that power vested in the Bendahara line by Sri Maharaja Tun Abdul Majid remained unchallenged. Bendahara Tun Abdul Jalil became Sultan Abdul Jalil Riayat Syah (1699-1719) and the founder of a new dynasty. The assumption of royal power by the Bendahara line was unprecedented. For, despite their influence at court since the days of the Melaka Sultanate, they were regarded as commoners. Thus, though it was customary for the ruler himself to marry a daughter of the Bendahara, no chief minister married a Melaka princess.⁷⁰ On coming to the throne, however, the former Bendahara, Tun Abdul Jalil, assumed a relatively passive role in the affairs of the kingdom and performed purely symbolic and spiritual functions. Perhaps in atonement for his guilt in being a party to the regicide, he devoted himself to religion. Matters of government were left to his brothers, Bendahara Tun Mas Anum and the Raja Muda, Raja Indra Bongsu Tun Mahmud.⁷¹

The period following the murder of Sultan Mahmud was notably unstable and Leonard Andaya stresses the shock of the regicide as the main reason for it, resulting in the loss of the loyal and indispensable services of the Orang Laut.⁷² It may, however, be argued that the Orang Laut were already showing signs of restlessness and insecurity *before* the murder of Sultan Mahmud. The Orang Laut were, in fact, a practical people and it was not so much the enormity of the sin of *derhaka* which upset them as the destruction of a familiar order and a focus of power for commercial activity dating back, most likely, to

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, 63; Andaya, *The Kingdom of Johor*, 201-9; Hamilton, *A New Account of the East Indies*, II, 53; Lewis, "The Dutch East India Company and the Straits of Malacca", 113.

⁷⁰Brown, *Sejarah Melayu*, 164.

⁷¹*Ibid.*, 164-5.

⁷²Andaya, *The Kingdom of Johor*, 189.

the original Malay kingdom at Palembang.⁷³ Whatever the measure of shock suffered, they showed a willingness to adjust to the new situation. It is reported that, "After a year many of them seem to have drifted back to Johor and offered their allegiance to the new ruling family in the absence of any who claimed the throne of Johor as a direct male descendant of the Malacca family."⁷⁴

Any chance for the restoration of stability at the centre, however, was undermined by political upheavals, following the 1699 regicide, in Johor's dependencies. Furthermore, the Bugis had by the end of the century begun to filter into the Straits presenting an additional challenge. Bugis activities particularly in Siak, Kedah, Selangor and Linggi, Johor's most important sources of tin, were a serious economic threat. The situation reached a crisis when Raja Kecil, ostensibly a posthumous son of Sultan Mahmud, appeared in the Straits in 1717 with an impressive number of Minangkabau followers to lay claim to the Johor throne. A large number of Orang Laut recognised him as the legitimate heir to the old dynasty.⁷⁵ The fact remained, however, that some continued to serve Sultan Abdul Jalil, who established his headquarters, first, in Pahang and then in Terengganu. The division among the Orang Laut, who gave their allegiance to opposing camps, indicated that their essential unity was shattered. Moreover, Raja Kecil's superior credentials by virtue of his apparent connections with Sultan Mahmud were jeopardised by his personal actions. Shortly after he captured Johor in 1718 he put to death a number of important leaders among the Orang Laut. The incident caused many of the Orang Laut to turn away from him.⁷⁶

Overwhelming support, initially, from the Orang Laut for Raja Kecil and their later disappointment with him clearly suggests that the primeval contractual obligation between the Malay ruler and his subjects, and the former's commitment to rule justly with the advice of his ministers, still held good. The aura of regality was based only partly on the ruler's sacrosanct *Meiaka*

⁷³O.W. Wolters, *The Fall of Srivijaya in Malay History* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1970), 124-5, 139-40; Andaya, *The Kingdom of Johor*, 45.

⁷⁴Andaya, *The Kingdom of Johor*, 190.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*, 256, 264.

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, 289, 306-7.

pedigree while the rest was conditional to his fulfilling his contact with his people. Thus, despite his unique regal credentials, charisma and military strength, Raja Kecil's personal actions seem to have undermined his claim to legitimacy.

Sultan Abdul Jalil himself had prejudiced his own position through personal inertia during the crucial spell, 1708-18, when he had left affairs solely in the hands of his brothers.⁷⁷ Sultan Abdul Jalil's attitude during this period evidently originated from political misconception. It came too late to him that, as one not descended from the regal Melaka lineage, he had even less reason than his predecessors to play a passive, symbolic role. After Johor fell to Raja Kecil in 1718, Abdul Jalil made a bold but futile attempt to reconstitute a Malay government in Terengganu with the support of a number of ministers and *orang kaya* who were bound to him by personal loyalties.⁷⁸ Sultan Abdul Jalil's selection of Terengganu as his base is significant because the *negeri* became an important rallying point during that century for Malay opposition against the Bugis. Factors which determined its rise were obviously its location away from the main current of Bugis activity in the Straits and its prosperous trade in pepper and tin with the 'country traders'.⁷⁹ By now Johor was overwhelmed by external forces. In 1721 the Bugis, under Daeng Marewa, seized Johor from Raja Kecil and installed Raja Sulaiman, son of the murdered Sultan Abdul Jalil, as the new ruler of Johor. In actual fact, the Malay sultan was a puppet and *de facto* authority fell into the hands of Daeng Marewa who was appointed to the important post of *Yang Dipertuan Muda*.⁸⁰ Henceforth the Malays had little share in the power

⁷⁷See above.

⁷⁸Andaya, *The Kingdom of Johor*, 285-6; Hans Overbeck, "Silsilah Melayu dan Bugis dan Sakalian Raja-Raja-nya", *JMBRAS*, IV, iii (1926), 353, 356.

⁷⁹Barbara W. Andaya, "An Examination of Sources Concerning the Reign of Sultan Mansur Syah of Trengganu (1741-1793), with Special Reference to the *Tuhfat al-Nafis*", *JMBRAS*, XLIX, ii (1976), 82, 86, 99-102; Lewis, "The Dutch East India Company and the Straits of Malacca", 219-20; II. Furber, *John Company at Work* (Cambridge, Mass./London: Harvard University Press, 1948), 77; Mark Francis, "Captain Joseph Jackson's Report on Trengganu 1764", *Journal of the Historical Society*, Vol. VIII (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya, 1969/70), 73-7.

⁸⁰Andaya, *The Kingdom of Johor*, 291-5. The appointment of the *Yang Dipertuan Muda* rendered the formerly important posts of Bendahara and Temenggung redundant. The latter officials withdrew to their respective fiefs in Pahang and Singapore where they later established themselves as independent rulers. Virginia Matheson, "Tuhfat al-Nafis", Ph.D. Thesis, Monash University, 1973, xviii.

and prosperity of Riau, which became a strong Bugis base, with the thousands of sea-faring Bugis immigrants replacing the Orang Laut as the important maritime element.⁸¹

During the eighteenth century the exercise of Malay royal authority was more successful in the mainland Peninsula where, with the increased wealth from European trade, it attained political and economic viability. Following the breakup of the kingdom of Johor and Bugis efforts to fill the power vacuum, independent Malay *negeri*, foremost among them, Perak, Kedah and Terengganu, emerged under strong royal control, based on a prosperous trade with the Dutch and the English. Unlike the Melaka and Johor kingdoms which controlled extensive territories and were maritime based, the riverine Peninsular *negeri* constituted smaller areas of control and thrived on the export of produce such as tin and pepper from their immediate hinterlands. The Terengganu ruler, Sultan Mansur Syah's (1741-93) influence in the Malay world at large would not have been possible without the wealth earned from furnishing local produce for the 'country traders'.⁸² Similarly, Sultan Iskandar Syah of Perak (1752-65) was able to check the power of the *orang besar* and bring prosperity to the state through a satisfactory commercial policy with the Dutch.⁸³ In Kedah, too, notwithstanding earlier Bugis interference, Sultan Muhammad Jiwa Zainal Mu'azzam Syah (1728-78) maintained a modicum of peace in the country and established his undisputed influence and authority through political diplomacy, expansion of trade and non-participation in the direct Malay-Bugis conflicts outside.⁸⁴

⁸¹Carl A. Trocki, *Prince of Pirates: The Temenggongs and the Development of Johor and Singapore, 1784-1885* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1979), 16-17. For information on the dependence of the Orang Laut on their Malay overlords, see David E. Sopher, *The Sea Nomads* (Singapore: The National Museum, 1977), *passim*.

⁸²See W. Marsden, *A Grammar of the Malayan Language with an introduction and praxis* (London: Crosby Lockwood & Son, 1812), 139-43.

⁸³Barbara Andaya, "The Nature of the State in Eighteenth Century Perak", in Anthony Reid & Lance Castles (ed.), *Pre-Colonial State Systems in Southeast Asia*, *JMBRAS*, Monograph 6 (1975), 31-2.

⁸⁴Dianne Lewis, "Kedah: The Development of a Malay State in the 18th and 19th Centuries", *Ibid.*, 39. Evidently, the Sultan was in contact with the rulers of Terengganu, Minangkabau and Inderagiri. He expressed his intention of entering with them into a grand anti-Bugis, anti-Dutch alliance, particularly if British support was received. But this could have been purely a diplomatic ploy to win British alliance and, in any case, came to naught. Sultan Muhammed Jiwa's (1723-78) dislike of the Bugis presumably originated from the interference of Bugis mercenaries in the internal troubles which arose in Kedah in 1771 over the succession. R. Bonney, *Kedah, 1771-1821: The Search for Security and Independence* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1971), 27-34, 47-8; Overbeck, *Silsilah Melayu dan Bugis*, 360-2.

In days preceding the Bugis influence, commercial policy and the diplomatic dealings which went with it were handled by the kingdom's ministers and enforced by its maritime forces, the Orang Laut. These various agents at work on behalf of the *kerajaan* were held in balance through their mutual loyalties towards the ruler whose permanence was assured by his *daulat*. Eighteenth century Riau under the Bugis, however, saw the emergence of a fresh set of values to accommodate new circumstances. In the *Tuhfat al-Nafis*, Haji Raja Ali's nineteenth century history of Johor, there is, in fact, little concern and expression of the conceptual and theoretical aspects of the state. The *Tuhfat al-Nafis* shows greater concern with the workings of the state.⁸⁵ This was in accordance with the south Sulawesi tradition according to which the ruler, though associated with divinity, was judged by his personal character and practical deeds.⁸⁶ In the *Tuhfat al-Nafis*, unlike the *Sejarah Melayu*, the behaviour of the ruler, his personal qualities and his relations with his people are not discussed as an ideology but are borne out in its treatment of particular incidents. Although the first section of the *Tuhfat al-Nafis* constitutes a short resume of the *Sejarah Melayu*, what would seem an integral part of the latter text, like the covenant between ruler and ruled and passages contributing to the glorification of the Sultanate, are omitted. However, events pertaining to the attack on Singapore, first, by the sword-fish and, then, by Majapahit are deliberately included and are attributed to the cruel actions of Paduka Sri Maharaja and, his son, Sultan Iskandar Syah, respectively. The first had killed his religious teacher, Zainal al-Khutib, while the latter had unjustly put to death his secondary wife, the daughter of the Penghulu Bendahari.⁸⁷ Similarly, the defeat of Melaka by the Portuguese is interpreted as divine retribution issuing from Sultan Mahmud's decision to put Bendahara Sri Maharaja to death. Not only in Johor, but in Perak as well, "the character of the idealised king became an integral part of much court literature".⁸⁸ Both the

⁸⁵Virginia Matheson, "Concepts of State in the *Tuhfat al-Nafis* ('The Precious Gift'), *Pre-Colonial State Systems in Southeast Asia*, 12-21.

⁸⁶L. Andaya, *The Heritage of Arung Palakka*, 35.

⁸⁷Raja Ali Haji, *Tuhfat al-Nafis: Sejarah Melayu dan Bugis* (ed.) Munir bin Ali (Singapore: Malaysia Publications Ltd., 1965), 3-4, 7, 10; Matheson & Andaya, *The Precious Gift*, 13-14, 17. In contrast with the *Tuhfat al-Nafis* which directly links the transgression of justice and good behaviour with subsequent catastrophies and ill fate, the *Sejarah Melayu* merely lays down the principle of behaviour for rulers leaving aside discussion of the actual form or manner of divine retribution.

⁸⁸Barbara Andaya, "The Nature of the State in Eighteenth Century Perak", 23.

Tuhfat al-Nafis and Raja Culan's eighteenth century court history of Perak, *Misa Melayu*, show that in the contemporary Malay world centred at Riau the *daulat* of the ruler is no longer taken for granted. It became a matter of general concern as it was directly linked with the fate of the kingdom and the welfare of its people.⁸⁹ *Daulat* was *earned* and was no longer assumed. In *Tuhfat al-Nafis* talks not about their divine aura and magnificence but their personal initiative; Sultan Alauddin Riayat Syah (1477-88) for example, undertook to restore peace and security in Melaka town.⁹⁰

The traditional concept of *daulat* had been put to the test by the character of Sultan Mahmud and the consequent substitution of the old ruling dynasty of Melaka, with the Bendahara line, had threatened the stability of the kingdom. Effective control of the government was now in the hands of the Bugis, with a strong tradition of military and naval power, headed by the *Yang Dipertuan Muda*.⁹¹ It was he who controlled commerce which reached unprecedented heights with the entry of British trade into the Straits and the rapid expansion of the 'country-trade' based on the exchange of cloth and opium for tin.⁹² It was the *Yang Dipertuan Muda* also who administered all other affairs of the state, including relations with the outlying areas and their respective local heads. The Sultan himself, apparently, was ineffectual in matters of the state but served as symbolic head of the Malays and was, thus, a crucial figure in the Malay-Bugis coalition. Relations between him and the Bugis were clearly not based on the concept of *daulat*, which is not even mentioned in the *Tuhfat al-Nafis*.⁹³ Instead, it is the concept

⁸⁹*Ibid.*, Barbara Andaya & Virginia Matheson, "Islamic Thought and Malay Tradition: The Writings of Raja Ali Haji of Riau (c.1809-1870)", *Perceptions of the Past in Southeast Asia* (ed.) Anthony Reid & David Marr, 119-20; Matheson, "Concepts of State in the *Tuhfat al-Nafis*", 12.

⁹⁰Raja Ali Haji, *Tuhfat al-Nafis*, 6; Matheson & Andaya, *The Precious Gift*, 16.

⁹¹Matheson, "Concepts of State in the *Tuhfat al-Nafis*", 14.

⁹²Lewis, "The Dutch East India Company and the Straits of Malacca", 57, 78-9, 206-9, 211-14, 237; "The Growth of the Country Trade in the Straits of Malacca, 1760-1777", *JMBRAS*, XLIII, ii (1970), 114-29; D.K. Bassett, "British Commercial and Strategic Interest in the Malay Peninsula During the Late Eighteenth Century", *Malayan and Indonesian Studies* (ed.), J. Bastin & R. Roolvink, 123-4.

⁹³In contrast with the word *derhaka* which occurs often in the *Tuhfat al-Nafis*, the word *daulat* does not appear in the text and occurs only twice even in the *Sejarah Melayu* (Raffles MS 18). This, according to Timothy Moy, does not necessarily suggest that the latter concept was unimportant but, rather, that it was taken for granted. On

of *derhaka*, the antithesis of loyalty based on the fundamental Bugis ideal of *siri* or self-worth and dignity,⁹⁴ which the *Tuhfat al-Nafis* is concerned with. But, even so, Raja Ali Haji's work does not consider *derhaka* as heinous an offence as the *Sejarah Melayu* as is clear, for instance, in the *Tuhfat al-Nafis*' justification of the murder of Sultan Mahmud by Megat Sri Rama.⁹⁵ Malay-Bugis relations were based on a practical alliance bound together by personal codes of loyalty (*sumpah setia antara Bugis dan Melayu*) involving Malay acknowledgement of their indebtedness to the Bugis.⁹⁶

Sultan Sulaiman, together with all the Malay *suku* show gratitude to us the Bugis in full respect of our status and reputation.

The *Tuhfat al-Nafis* spells out the nature of the bond existing between Sultan Sulaiman (1721-60) and his Bugis allies, based on personal relations and a clear-cut rationale, as opposed to the alleged irrationality of the Malay faction.⁹⁷

... [Sultan Sulaiman] was very close to the Bugis faction. The affection, the honesty, the sincerity, the intimacy between him and the Yang di Pertuan Muda and his family was quite apparent. When some of the Malay faction saw this, the fire of jealousy and hatred was implanted in their hearts. This fire consumed their reason, and when their reason was destroyed, they followed their own desires, not caring about the *benefits or the losses of this world or that to come*. [My italics]

In other words, the relationship between the sultan and the Bugis rested on a practical alliance rather than on the abstract ideal of the ruler's powers of protection and preservation and the subjects' loyalty deriving from *daulat*. Unhappily, the absence of the theoretical concepts of state and assumed codes of indestructible loyalty towards the ruler and his *kerajaan* left

the other hand, it was considered essential to stress the crime of *derhaka*. Timothy J. Moy, "The 'Sejarah Melayu', Tradition of Power and Political Structure: An Assessment of Relevant Sections of the 'Tuhfat al-Nafis'", *JMBRAS*, XLIII, ii (1975), 70-1.

⁹⁴On the concept of *siri* see L. Andaya, *The Heritage of Arung Palakka: A History of South Sulawesi (Celebes) in the Seventeenth Century*, VKI, 91 (1981), 15-16.

⁹⁵Moy, "Sejarah Melayu: Tradition of Power and Political Structure", 72, 76; Raja Ali Haji, *Tuhfat al-Nafis*, 34.

⁹⁶Raja Ali Haji, *Tuhfat al-Nafis*, 102 (My translation). For other examples see pp.112, 113, 115. The Bugis, led by Daeng Perani, swore similar allegiance on appointing their candidate as ruler in Kedah. Hans Overbeck (ed.), "Silsilah Melayu dan Bugis dan Sakalian Raja-Raja-nya", 357.

⁹⁷Matheson & Andaya, *The Precious Gift*, 100.

the Bugis-Malay factional cleavages unresolved. This was important, for, whatever the might of the Bugis it was the failure of total reconciliation between them and the Malays which finally broke indigenous resistance to western power.

What may be concluded from the above discussion is that there were two principal factors which contributed towards the preservation of Malay power as an entity after the fall of Melaka in 1511. The first was the concept of *daulat* and, based on it, the indestructible ties of loyalty between the Malay ruler and his subjects, sanctioned and validated by divine authority. The second, was Malay political and commercial adaptability which made appropriate demands on leadership. Both factors placed a heavy onus on the virtue of the ruler, which assumed a wider practical meaning to include political sagacity and initiative, besides the normally understood ideals of goodness and humanity. This fundamental political ideology, challenged by Sultan Mahmud, was subsequently replaced by an inherently different Bugis political ideology, which ill-fitted the Malay-Johor world.⁹⁸ This primary drawback was enhanced by Malay-Buginese ethnic cleavage.⁹⁹

... [D]ifferences in attitude arose between the Malay and Bugis groups. Each had its own desires and aims, and it was impossible for His Majesty Sultan Mahmud [1761-1812] to resolve the dissension. There were twists and contortions like entangled horns and confusion reigned in Riau.

Commercially, the Bugis had both the talent and effective force to supervise a flourishing trade at Riau. But due, perhaps, to their traditional dislike of the Dutch whose control they had tried to escape by seeking an alternate base in the Straits where they were resolved on asserting their dominance.¹⁰⁰ The Bugis were less accommodating in their dealings with Dutch Melaka. Their own tradition of treaty conceptions,¹⁰¹ which plac-

⁹⁸Matheson, "Concepts of State in the *Tuhfat al-Nafis*", 18.

⁹⁹Matheson & Andaya, *The Precious Gift*, 179.

¹⁰⁰Andaya, *The Heritage of Arung Palakka*, 226-7; Andaya, *The Kingdom of Johor*, 116-20.

¹⁰¹In contrast with the Malays who did not consider treaty agreements to be permanently binding, in south Sulawesi from where the Bugis came, treaties were regarded as sacred "After a treaty was concluded between two powers, it was copied and preserved among the regalia.... To swear to uphold or renew a treaty involved past, present and future generations and was not a matter entered into lightly." L. Andaya, "Treaty Conceptions

ed treaty agreements within the realm of the sacred tools of government, could also explain their unwillingness to accommodate to the Johor tradition of diplomatic exploitation of legal ambiguities in their treaties with the Dutch.¹⁰² Johor-Dutch relations were no longer determined by a mutual desire for peace. Complaints of Johor's transgression of Dutch treaty privileges were answered in aggressive tones by the Bugis *Yang Dipertuan Muda*. In 1774 when the Governor-General at Batavia complained to the Sultan of Johor about the piratical activities of some of his subjects, Daeng Cellak responded with the reply that the agreement between the Company and Johor had been "exactly maintained".¹⁰³ In 1782 again, when Dutch Melaka tried to draw up a treaty agreement with the *Yang Dipertuan Muda*, Raja Haji, it provoked the sharp retort that a contract between Johor and the VOC already existed, and the Bugis chief hinted darkly at the strength of the British.¹⁰⁴ It was apparent that Raja Haji did not value the friendship of the Dutch and showed no inclination to preserve the *modus vivendi* through treaty negotiations. The capture at Riau, in 1782, of the English Company ship, *Betsy*, by a French privateer, allegedly at the instigation of the Dutch at Melaka, provided Raja Haji the occasion for war. The situation culminated in the Dutch capture of Riau in 1784 which ended Bugis supremacy.¹⁰⁵

Ironically, though possessing the commercial and naval acumen to fill the indigenous power vacuum in the Straits, the Bugis were severely handicapped by the lack of a *shared* world-view with the Malays. The collapse of Malay leadership according to traditional prescriptions thus augured significant changes in political ideology in Riau-Johor. However, the eighteenth century witnessed the resurgence in the Peninsular *negeri*, including the Bugis influenced states of Selangor and Kedah, of a Malay political culture which was more akin to the traditional concepts

and Misconceptions: A Case Study from South Sulawesi", *BKI*, CXXXIV, ii & III (1968), 268-83, 287-8.

¹⁰²Kathirithamby-Wells, "Dutch Malacca and the Malay World", 7-11.

¹⁰³Lewis, "The Dutch East India Company and the Straits of Malacca", 176-8; Matheson & Andaya, *The Precious Gift*, 168.

¹⁰⁴Lewis, "The Dutch East India Company and the Straits of Malacca", 274-8.

¹⁰⁵Bassett, "British Commercial and Strategic Interest in the Malay Peninsula During the Late Eighteenth Century", 138-40.

of *deulat* and divine kingship.¹⁰⁶ Inherent in the institution were moral and practical virtues which enabled the more outstanding amongst them to accommodate to political challenges and the economic opportunities brought by another era of change.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶Emily Sadka, *The Protected Malay States, 1874-95* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1969), 8, 17.

¹⁰⁷J.M. Gullick, *Malay Society in the Late Nineteenth Century: The Beginnings of Change* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1987), 20; M.C. Sheppard, "A Short History of Trengganu", *JMBRAS*, XXII, iii(1949), 17-22.