Do you know that the development and progress of the nation today is due to the roles and contributions of previous prominent figures? Has it ever crossed our minds that if not for our pioneers, we would not have achieved what we have today? This goes for the history of the nation’s development, where the roles of the earlier societies need to be evaluated by the current generation. The new generation must be aware of the socio-political traditions that are practised today are a heritage from the traditional societies of the past. Hence, in this topic, the socio-political and economic traditions of the traditional Malay societies will be revisited for the benefit of the newer generation. This will ensure that they do not forget their origins and self-purity, like the Malay proverbs ‘di mana bumi di pijak di situ langit dijunjung’ and ‘takkan Melayu hilang di dunia’.
WHO DOES TRADITIONAL MALAY REFER TO?

Traditional Malay refers to the Malay society that is rich in culture and customs, and not forgetting noble courteous values. It refers to the Malay society that existed before colonialism. Therefore all forms of their socio-economic activities were on their terms without Western influences. These traditional Malay societies were well-known, especially from the 13th to the 16th centuries. This was due to the emergence of several traditional Malay kingdoms like the Malay Malacca, Johor, Perak, Pahang, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, Terengganu and Kelantan kingdoms.

THE MALAY MALACCA KINGDOM

1.2.1 Introduction

The Malay Malacca kingdom was established by Parameswara in the 15th century. It emerged to be a well-known empire in the Malay sphere. The golden age of the Malay Malacca kingdom was during the reign of Sultan Mansur Syah (1456-1477). Among the factors that made Malacca supreme and outstanding during the time are:

(a) Geographical factors;
(b) Economic factors; and
(c) Political and administrative factors.

1.2.2 Malacca as a Great Kingdom

The Malay Malacca Sultanate that achieved glory in the 15th century was famous throughout the world as:

(a) A vast empire that was stable in its rule, military, control of conquests and laws

The Malacca Empire was said to encompass the entire of the Malay Peninsular, the eastern parts of Sumatera and the Riau-Lingga Archipelago.
(b) **Centre for World Trade**
Malacca was the diverging point of all Eastern and Western merchants, for example those from China, India, Middle East, East Asia and the Malay Archipelago.

(c) **Centre for the Spread of Islam**
Malacca was the focus of proselytisers because Islam was declared as the official religion and was embraced by the Sultan and his people.

(d) **Centre for the Spread of Knowledge**
The Malacca Palace functioned as the centre for the dissemination and expansion of language, culture and literature.

### 1.2.3 The Political and Administrative System of the Malay Malacca Sultanate

The political and administrative systems are as follows:

(a) The Sultan was deemed to be the highest authority.

(b) Several posts were created to ease the administration, such as the *Bendahara, Penghulu Bendahari, Temenggung, Syahbandar* and *Laksamana*.

(c) **Islamic civilisation – The ‘Devaraja’ concept, which was the political stance and symbol of sovereignty of the local kings, was replaced with the ‘Khalifatullahfil-ardhi’ concept. The ruler was no longer deemed to be the avatar of Hindu gods, but instead Caliphs of Allah who were responsible to prosper the lands.**

(d) Established diplomatic ties with foreign countries such as China, in order to strengthen its position.

(e) **The Laws of the Malay Malacca Sultanate. At the time there were two types of law:**

   (i) *Hukum Kanun Melaka*; and

   (ii) *Undang-undang Laut Melaka*.

These laws were inherited for generations, either in oral or writing forms. Both these laws were heavily influenced by elements of local customs and Hinduism. Another name for the *Hukum Kanun Melaka* was the *Risalat Hukum Kanun* and *Undang-undang Darat Melaka*. The original copy of the hukum kanun had 19 sections, which were later increased to 22 sections and subsequently 44 sections. **The Undang-undang Laut Melaka was also known as the Adat Pelayaran Melaka, Hukum Undang-undang Laut and Kitab Peraturan Pelayaran. It contained 24**
topics. The existence of these laws actually functioned to organise the lives of the Malacca society at the time, be it on land or at sea.

1.2.4 The Fall of Malacca

The glory of Malacca peaked during the reign of Sultan Mansur Syah (1456-1477). However, the kingdom started to decline at the end of the 15th century, especially during the reign of Sultan Mahmud Syah. Among the factors that led to the decline of the kingdom are discussed in the next sub-topic.

1.2.5 Factors that Contributed to the Decline of Malacca

Did you know that Malacca’s decline was mainly due to internal factors?

(a) Lack of Able Leadership
The lack of an able ruler started with Sultan Alauddin Riayat Syah. He was completely different from his father, Sultan Mansor Syah. The latter was a brave and strict ruler. Sultan Alauddin, though equally brave and firm, was soft-mannered and disliked violence. As a result, there were not much territorial gains during his reign. This led to many occupied lands trying to free themselves and forming autonomies.

From the aspect of the officials, the subsequent Bendaharas after Tun Perak were not as capable and wise. For example, his brother Tun Perpatih Putih, who replaced him, was a spendthrift, as was Tun Mutahir who focused more on personal gains and wealth rather than the administration of the kingdom. Other than that, from the aspect of military defence and prowess, there was a lack of valiant warriors in the mould of Hang Tuah and Tun Hamzah. This further weakened the kingdom’s defence.

(b) Oppressive Rulership
Though Islam was widely embraced and mainly spread in Malacca, its principles were not practised and appreciated faithfully. Therefore, there were many oppressive and unjust acts happening regularly. This phenomenon can be related to the increase in corrupt practices among the officials in their pursuit of personal wealth.

(c) Divided and Disunited
The lack of unity among the people also brought about to the decline. The aristocrats and people formed factions. For example there were the old guard (Sultan Mahmud group) and the young Turks (Sultan Ahmad group)
who were at loggerheads. There was also conflict between the Indian-Muslims and Malays.

(d) **Shift of Trade Centres to other Locations by Merchants**
The unjust practices by the officials such as imposing excessive taxation led to anger among the merchants and they started seeking other ports like Aceh, Bentan, Patani and Brunei to trade.

(e) **Lack of Military Might and Weak Defences**
From the aspect of military equipment, the Malacca kingdom had not progressed in terms of manpower, war strategy and weapons. It still practised outdated techniques such as the usage of the keris and swords. On the other hand, the Portuguese were using more potent weapons like muskets and cannons.

### 1.2.6 External Factors

The Discovery of a naval passage through the Cape of Good Hope in Southern Africa by Bartholomew Diaz in 1488.

As a result of the exploration to the East by the Europeans with the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope in 1488, the Western powers were eager to locate sites for trading in the East. The Portuguese attacked Malacca in 1509 and 1511, and in this period of time, Malacca did not have a strong fortress and could not match the more modern and sophisticated firepower of the Portuguese.

Malacca fell to the Portuguese in 1511, whose forces were under the command of Alfonso de Alburqueque.

### ACTIVITY 1.1

Based on the events that led to the fall of the Malay Malacca kingdom, what are the lessons that can be learnt by the current generation to ensure the independence of the country is forever maintained?
JOHOR KINGDOM

After Malacca fell to the Portuguese, Sultan Ahmad Syah and his father Sultan Mahmud Syah, together with their followers, retreated from Malacca to the south. Sultan Mahmud Syah resided in Batu Hampar while Sultan Ahmad built a fortress in Pagoh in anticipation of an attack to reclaim Malacca. His plan, however, was discovered by the Portuguese, which forced Sultan Ahmad and Sultan Mahmud to retreat to Pahang. After several years there, both the royal families moved to Bentan. There they resided in Kopak. Sultan Ahmad died in Kopak and was laid to rest in Bukit Batu. Hence he was titled ‘Marhum di Bukit Batu’.

With the passing of Sultan Ahmad, Sultan Mahmud assumed back the rulership of the Malay Malacca Sultanate, which he has earlier abdicated. He also elected his son from his union with Puteri Onang Kening of Kelantan, Raja Muzaffar, as his heir with the title ‘Raja Muda’.

However, when the Sultan’s other wife (Raja Fatimah) gave birth to a son Raja Ali, Raja Muzaffar’s position was seized. Upon the request of Raja Fatimah, Sultan Mahmud proclaimed Raja Ali as ‘Sultan Muda’. Sultan Mahmud resided in Bentan for almost 13 years, from 1513 to 1526. During this period, the Portuguese attacked Bentan several times, notably in 1521, 1523 and 1524.

Though Sultan Mahmud resided for a long time in Bentan, this did not mean he had managed to establish a strong and lasting kingdom. He retreated to Kampar, Sumatera when the Portuguese attacked in October 1526. There, he resided in Istana Kampar, which belonged to his late cousin Sultan Munawar Syah. This allowed Sultan Mahmud to rule Kampar till his death in 1528. He was given the title ‘Marhum Kampar’. Raja Ali was installed as the successor to Sultan Mahmud, and took the name Sultan Alauddin Riayat Syah. Meanwhile, Raja Muzaffar left for Perak and there he was installed as the first Sultan of Perak. He was known as Sultan Muzaffar Syah and ruled until 1549.

Sultan Alauddin then moved to Pahang and married Puteri Kesuma Dewi. He later moved to Johor and established a permanent settlement in Hujung Tanah in 1528. Thus he is known as the first sultan of Johor. In 1718, the kingdom of Johor was attacked and captured by Raja Kecil of Siak. He installed himself as the new sultan of Johor, with the title Sultan Abdul Jalil Rahmat Syah. He transferred the administration centre from Panchur to Bintan Island. Raja Sulaiman, prince of Sultan Abdul Jalil IV, defeated Sultan Abdul Jalil Rahmat Syah and was installed as the subsequent sultan of Johor, with the title Sultan Sulaiman Badrul Alam.
Syah in 1722. He continued to reside on Bintan Island. (Mardiana Nordin, ‘Kerajaan Melayu Tradisional’, Pengajian Malaysia).

The kingdom of Johor vastly inherited the system and form of governance from the Malacca kingdom. The administration was centralised, and the highest authority in the kingdom was the Sultan who aided by main officials like the Bendahara, Temenggung, Penghulu Bendahari, Laksamana and Syahbandar.

There were several other positions in existence such as Seri Bija Diraja, Seri Perdana Menteri, Seri Nara Diraja and Seri Amar Diraja, as well as religious officials like the kadi and imam. The Sultan was also assisted by close members of the royal family like the heir apparent or Raja Muda/ Sultan Muda.

The governance can be classified as follows:

(a) Sultan;

(b) Ministers who function to further strengthen the institution of the Johor Sultanate; and

(c) There were units of Orang Kaya. Under this group, there were titles such as Dato’ Bendahara, Paduka Raja, Tuan Pikrama, Laksamana, Temenggung, Sri Bija Diraja, Sri Nara Menteri, Sri Nara Diraja, Sri Bija Wangsa, Paduka Sri Maharaja, Seri Pikrama Raja, Sri Mahawangsa and Maharaja Indera Denda.

Johor emerged as an important centre for trade in the middle of the 17th century, and indirectly as the main centre for trade in Nusantara. The capability of sites in Johor to emerge as international ports was influenced by several factors:

(i) The sites of the capital of Johor along the Johor River were strategic as a stopping point for merchants from the East and West. The wide and deep river allowed large vessels to be navigated further inland, especially during the high tide.

(ii) Its capability to provide good warehouses and trade markets in order to launch trade activities. Notes of a Western writer dated 1703 states that the port of Johor, located at Panchur, provided repair services for merchant ships. In 1706, it was reported that Johor opened three factories to repair ships. Among other services provided by the port were officers trained in matters relating to trade voyages, reasonable customs taxes and fixed system of measurement.

(iii) Johor also depended on goods from abroad. The port managed to provide textiles with the latest designs at reasonable prices. Other foreign goods
traded include gold, fragrant woods, birds’ nest, ivory, camphor, tin, rattan, wax, bronze, silk, pottery and opium.

(iv) The Orang Laut also played a role in the development of trade in Johor. They encouraged merchants to head to Johor in efforts to prevent economic competition from others.

(v) The port of Johor reaped benefits in the course of the friendship with the Dutch, more so after aiding the Dutch in removing the Portuguese from Malacca. As how Malacca received the patronage of China, Johor received the protection from the Dutch.

Matters relating to trade in the Johor kingdom, as was in other Malay states, came under the jurisdiction of the Syahbandar. The Syahbandar was among the four main ministers in Johor, with the following responsibilities:

- Keeping control of merchants who entered and left Johor.
- Arbitrating any disputes between merchants, and referring serious cases to the courts.
- Checking and determining all taxes.
- Checking cargo aboard merchant ships, as well as vessel sizes.
- Maintaining the security in the port.

Also, trade in Johor was carried out under a patronage system, which was more prevalent during the control of Johor by Laksamana Tun Abdul Jamil. In this system, a merchant, regardless of his origin, obtained patronage from an individual with power in the kingdom such as the Bendahara, Raja Indra Bongsu, Temenggung and Laksamana.

Overall, the Johor kingdom became a famous centre for trade in the 17th century, as well as being a centre for the spread of Islam after the decline of Aceh.

### 1.4 Perak

The earliest evidence pointing to settlements in Perak is based on archaeological findings. Several ancient artifacts have been found in areas such as Kota Tampan and Gua Badak in Lenggong, Gua Kerbau in Sungai Siput and Gunung Churau in Ipoh. Other than that, there are several entries in the Sejarah Melayu that mention the existence of ancient kingdoms in Perak like Beruas and Dinding. There is also mention about a kingdom called ‘Gangga Negara’ which is believed to have existed in the 5th or 6th century in the Beruas or Manjung area in Perak.
The establishment of the Perak Sultanate is linked to the Malacca Sultanate. When Malacca was attacked by the Portuguese in 1511, Sultan Mahmud and his son Sultan Ahmad retreated to Johor and moved from site to site in the efforts to seize Malacca back as well as to evade counter attacks by the Portuguese. Sultan Ahmad died in Bentan while residing at Kopak. As a result, Sultan Mahmud elected Raja Muzaffar, his son with the Kelantanese princess Puteri Onang Kening, as the ‘Raja Muda’. However, upon the birth of a son by his wife Raja Fatimah, Raja Muzaffar’s position was retracted and Raja Ali was installed as ‘Sultan Muda’. Hence, upon the death of Sultan Mahmud in 1528 in Kampar, Raja Ali was installed as the Sultan of Johor with the title Sultan Alauddin Riayat Syah. The slighted Raja Muzaffar travelled to Perak, where he was installed as Sultan Muzaffar Syah, the first sultan of Perak.

This meant that from the 16th century onwards, the ruling family in Perak was descended from Sultan Mahmud Syah of Malacca. The ruling family lasted until the 17th century, when a new family emerged from Pahang to rule Perak.

The transition of the rulership took place due to the interference from the Acheh ruler, Sultan Iskandar Muda Thani. During his reign in Acheh, Perak became a vassal state under his power. He installed his cousin Raja Sulong, a descendant of the Malacca-Pahang Sultanate, as the new ruler of Perak with the title Sultan Muzaffar Syah II.

Pahang’s early history is known also through archaeological discoveries. Among the areas containing such discoveries are Sungai Lembing, Tembeling and Tresang.

Pahang was also mentioned in the journals of various travellers. Pahang was mentioned by Arab, European and Chinese travellers as ‘Pam’, ‘Pan’, ‘Paam’, ‘Paon’, ‘Phaan’, ‘Phang’, ‘Pahan’, ‘Pan-Pan’ and ‘Pan-Hang’. Other than that, Pahang was also mentioned as Inderapura in classical texts like the Hikayat Hang Tuah.

The establishment of the Pahang Sultanate was also closely linked to the Malacca Sultanate. The Sejarah Melayu manuscripts mention that, during the reign of Sultan Mansur Syah in Malacca, his son Raja Muhammad killed the son of the Bendahara, Tun Besar for hitting his headgear (tanjak) with a ball while playing ‘sepak takraw’. To punish his son’s ‘cruelty’, Sultan Mansur Syah sent Raja Muhammad into exile in Pahang, where he was installed as Sultan Muhammad Syah, the first Sultan of Pahang. Sultan Muhammad subsequently married the King of Kelantan’s daughter, Mengindera Puteri and had three sons who were
called Raja Jamil, Raja Ahmad and Raja Mahmud respectively. Hence, until the early 17th century, Raja Muhammad’s descendants were the rulers of Pahang.

His lineage ended when Raja Muda Abdullah, son of Sultan Abdul Ghafur, died in 1614. The implication was that the throne of Pahang was taken by a member of the family ruling the Malacca Johor Sultanate, Raja Bujang. Though a new family had taken over the rulership of Pahang, both families were actually from the same lineage, the Malacca Sultanate.

### 1.6 Negeri Sembilan

The name Negeri Sembilan came about when nine regions grouped together to form a state. These regions were Sungai Ujong, Naning, Rembau, Jelebu, Johol, Klang, Jelai, Ulu Pahang and Segamat. However, Klang was returned to Selangor, while Jelai and Ulu Pahang were returned to Pahang and Segamat was ceded to Johor. Later, Negeri Sembilan comprised Sungai Ujong, Rembau, Jelebu, Johol, Ulu Muar, Inas, Gunung Pasir, Terachi and Jempol. However, today, Negeri Sembilan comprises only 7 regions which are Jelebu, Jempol, Kuala Pilah, Seremban, Port Dickson, Rembau and Tampin.

Until the 16th century, Negeri Sembilan was a territory ruled by the Johor kingdom. At the end of the 17th century, Negeri Sembilan started to free itself from Johor influence due to the weakening and internal conflicts plaguing the Johor kingdom. As such, there was an emergence of many outstanding officials in their respective governed districts.

### 1.7 Selangor

The origins of Selangor can be observed via archaeological discoveries that prove the state was inhabited by humans for at least in the past two thousand years. Among tools found were the gendang (drum) and bronze bell in Klang and Sungai Lang, Kuala Langat. Also found were orang utan bones in Klang. Other prehistoric sites include Jenderam Hilir, Gombak, Batu Caves, Ampang, Bukit Kuda, Bukit Jati and Bukit Badak.

Selangor was under the rule of Malacca in the 15th century. Notes in the Sejarah Melayu manuscripts prove this by making mention of places such as (Kuala) Selangor, Klang, Jeram, Jugra and Morib. When Malacca was defeated by the Portuguese and the sultanate shifted to Johor, Selangor also came under the rule
of Johor. Until the 18th century, Selangor remained under the power and influence of the kingdom of Johor.

On May 1745, Daeng Chelak, one of the five Bugis cousins who were based and influenced by the governance of Johor in the 18th century, died. He left behind two princes, Raja Haji and Raja Lumu.

While Selangor was under Johor, the governance of Selangor was undertaken by the Regent Daeng Lakani (Suliwatang), Raja Said (Daeng Merewah’s son) and a body consisting of elder statesmen. The Selangor Sultanate was established when Raja Lumu was installed as the first Sultan of Selangor bearing the title Sultan Salehuddin Riayat Syah in 1766. It is said that this was due to the fact that Raja Lumu desired a prestigious position as his brother Raja Haji was the Yamtuan Muda of Johor. Therefore, in order to free Selangor from Johor and to be a truly sovereign ruler, he conspired to become the Sultan of Selangor. With Raja Lumu or Sultan Salehuddin Shah becoming the Sultan of Selangor, the emergence of a new ruling family in Selangor still holds the Selangor throne as of today.

### 1.8 Terengganu

Since the 13th century, evidence of Terengganu’s role as a trading port was well documented by foreign travellers. Chinese travellers, who wrote in 1525, mentioned that the port on the East Coast of the Malay Peninsular was known as ‘Tong-Ya-Nong’. While in the maps sketched by Ptolemy in the 12th century, there is a mention of a port in Kuala Terengganu called ‘Perimoula’ and ‘Kole’ in Kemaman. Furthermore, the discovery of the Batu Bersurat of Terengganu in Kuala Berang dated 702H (1303) proves the spread of Islam by the 14th century, at the latest. What is clear is that Tun Zainal Abidin Ibn Tun Habib Abdul Majid was the founder of the Terengganu Sultanate in the 18th century. He was a descendant of the Bendahara of Johor. The installation of Tun Zainal Abidin as the Sultan of Terengganu led to the emergence of a sovereign ruling family in Terengganu in the 18th century.

### 1.9 Kedah

Based on archaeological discoveries, Kedah is among the states with the oldest settlements in the Malay Peninsular. Among the historical sites are areas around Gunung Jerai such as the Sungai Merbok and Sungai Muda valleys. Kedah is also mentioned with different names. Arab and Persian writers pronounce the state as
'Kilah' or 'Kalah' or 'Qalha'. Sanskrit sources call it 'Kataha' or 'Kadara' while Tamil records call Kedah 'Kadaram' or 'Kalagam'.

Reliable local Malay sources that are useful in viewing Kedah's history are:

(a) Al-Tarikh Salasilah Negeri Kedah which states that Kedah's early rulers were descendants of Gumrun Persia, and carried the title 'Maharaja', the first being Maharaja Durbar Raja.

(b) Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa which claims that Kedah's ruling dynasty was established by a king who originated from Rome called Raja Merong Mahawangsa. According to Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa, the seventh king of the dynasty, Raja Phra Ong Mahawangsa, was the first ruler of Kedah to embrace Islam and was called Sultan Muzaffar Syah.

Kedah's history encompasses several episodes of rulership, such as the defeat to Aceh, occupation by Siam, and the subsequent transfer to British hands through the Bangkok Treaty of 1909. However, those events have not disrupted the lineage of the sultanate till today.

1.10 KELANTAN

Early evidence of the existence of settlements and a port in Kelantan can be identified through the records by foreign travellers. Among them are:

(a) Historical records from the Tang Dynasty (618-907 CE) mention a settlement named 'Ko-Lo' or 'Ko-lo Fu-sha-lo' which most likely refers to Kelantan.

(b) Other Chinese records call Kelantan 'Ho-lan-tan' or 'Kou-lo-tan'.

The early history of the rule of Kelantan shows that this state was once governed by the Jembal Dynasty, before shifting to sultanate dynasties that still occupy the throne till today. Other than that, classical Malay texts such as:

(i) Hikayat Seri Kelantan; and

(ii) Riwayat Kelantan mention that this state used to be ruled by female rulers, Puteri Saadong and Cik Siti Wan Kembang. Nevertheless, the Jembal dynasty which ruled Kelantan ended in 1721 with the death of Sultan Omar. This was because, although Sultan Omar had a male heir, the throne was passed on to his in-law, Long Bahar who was a descendant of the ruling family in Patani. The descendants of the Jembal dynasty lost complete power over Kelantan when Long Bahar died because his son, from the union with the Kelantanese princess Raja Pah, was not installed as his successor.
Instead, his son Long Sulaiman, from his marriage to the Patani princess, was installed as the ruler of Kelantan.

1.11 TRADITIONAL MALAY GOVERNANCE AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC STRUCTURE

1.11.1 Socio-Politic System in Traditional Malay Society

The traditional political system was the dominant system of governance before the influx of the political modernisation process brought on by the arrival of colonialists in the 18th century. This traditional political system was heavily influenced by beliefs, customs and religion.

The main characteristic of traditional political system is the existence of a gap among rulers, aristocrats and the commoners. This is represented in Figure 1.1.

*Figure 1.1: The traditional political system*

*Source: Adapted from Sivachandralingam, Tamadun Dunia, 1999*
In the traditional Malay society, political, economic and social powers are held by the aristocrats. The commoners are not given the opportunity to get involved in the governance of the country. In conclusion, society of the time was divided into two groups: ‘the ruler’ and ‘the ruled’.

(a) **What is the Monarchy System?**

The king is the pillar of sovereignty. In the Malay world, Malay kings at the helm of the kingdom provided an identity of the history of the Malay Kingdoms and existence of the Malay world. The Malay world and kingdoms set foot during the period of the Funan Kingdom in the 1st century and the Srivijaya Empire, which was based in Palembang, Sumatera, in the 7th century. The Malay world, under the rule of the Malay kingdoms, comprised a vast area encompassing southern Thailand, Langkasuka, Majapahit, Mentaram, Brunei and Champa, right to the golden age of the Malacca Sultanate in the 15th century.

In the context of the Malay Monarchy system, the Islamic Malay sultanate managed to propel the civilisation of race into the political, legal, knowledge, intellect and literature systems in the Malay world through the civilisation built. Though kingdoms rise and fall, each kingdom continued a tradition—maintaining the identity of the race. The Malay Sultanate is a reality, a manifestation—a symbol of the glory of a race.

Today, there are only three countries still governed by the Malay rule. First, the Sultanate of Brunei, second the Republic of Indonesia and third the Constitutional Monarchy and Parliamentary Democracy in Malaysia. The preservation of the monarch institution in this country is a continued effort to maintain the identity of a Malay kingdom in the land. Based on this understanding, the late Tunku Abdul Rahman, when drafting the formula to form a government, established government and nation systems on the platform that combined the institutions of the monarchy and the people. The King is enshrined as the head of Islam. This role has been inherited since the era of the Islamic Malay Sultanates and has never been transferred to others. Islam is the moral guide to governance that is fair and just, neither cruel nor oppressive. Islam contains universal noble values found in all religions.

The teachings of Islam are complementary to Malay Sultanate institution because the values and practices extolled by Islam were most influential during the Malay Sultanate era. For example, laws in Malacca state that the high status of a sultan is evaluated from the perspective of the Makruf practice carried out by him. (Raja Nazrin Syah, ‘Institusi Raja Perkukuh Bangsa, Integrasi Nasional’.)
(b) **Concept of Sovereignty and Treason**
This concept means that the people cannot commit treason against the ruler/King. If a commoner goes against the king’s orders, he will be cursed with misfortune.

(c) **System of Officials**
Based on the chart earlier, the officials rank third highest but are still classified as upper class. Most of them work in the palace as advisors to the king and there are also a number of them who are officials in certain districts. These officials are elected by the sultan, and empowered to collect taxes and have their own armies and servants. Among the famous officials are Seri Nara Diraja, Tun Perak, Laksamana Hang Tuah, Tun Bija Sura and many more (refer to the Teks Sejarah Melayu). The lowest of the officials are the village headmen who are the most powerful in the village level. They also serve as the intermediary between the King and the common people.

(d) **Establishing diplomatic ties with foreign countries. For example, during the Malay Malacca Sultanate: Japan, China, West Asia etc.**
The Malays have long been civilised, more than thousands of years ago. Other than being able to organise and govern their own country in accordance with the times, our ancestors also used to travel the vast oceans like the Indian Ocean, South China Sea and around the South Pacific Ocean, other than waters in the Malay Archipelago, by using large sail ships they built.

They not only had ties with China in the east, but also with more civilised and powerful nations in west, in the area we know as the Roman Continent.

Laksamana Hang Tuah was once assigned by the Malacca Sultan as a visiting ambassador to both regions. Other than creating ties and sealing friendships between the Malay Malacca Sultanate, China and the Roman Continent, trade ties were also created and maintained.

---

**AKTIVITY 1.2**

What is the difference between the traditional political system and the modern political system of today?
1.11.2 Economic System of the Traditional Malay Society

The economic system of the traditional Malay society refers to the economic activities still strongly linked to traditional economy such as self-sustaining economy. The focus was on family needs, while essential goods that could not be self-produced were obtained through exchange with outsiders. However, trade relations with foreign countries, specifically China, India and West Asia, were already in existence.

The second characteristic of the economic system of the traditional Malay society was the separation between the ruling class and commoners. In this case, the rulers and aristocrats held the economic system and controlled positions of power. They received taxes from merchants who docked at the ports, as well as taxes from the people. The people were mainly farmers who rented lands from the aristocrats.

1.11.3 Social System of the Traditional Malay Society

Characteristics of life in the traditional Malay society reflect a civilisation of high standing. This is because the lifestyle changed according to the times based on a series of cultural encounters with external cultures like Hinduism, Islam and the West. However, the lifestyle of the Malay society steadily matured and became more organised with the arrival of Islam, for they had previously easily believed in spiritual and animistic rituals. The Malay society practised cultures from the various Malay islands, especially Indo-Malay and Islamic-Malay cultures.

The second feature is from an aspect of family ties. The Malay society is the strongest proponent of the family system because it is in the family that a Malay individual first learns how to socialise. They are taught noble values like respect for elders and the importance of education at home.

The next feature is the introduction of laws to govern behaviour in society and naval laws. The importance of laws and customs in the Malay society can be seen in the proverb ‘biar mati anak jangan mati adat’. This proverb was coined to stress the importance of laws and customs to maintain etiquette and individual behaviour in society. In this day and age, each state has its own set of laws, for example Undang-undang Pahang, Undang-Undang Johor etc.

1.11.4 Achievements in Technology

The following are the achievements in technology:
(a) Malay architecture – Malay house (Pahang, Kelantan, Terengganu, Kedah, Johor etc).
(b) Making of weapons – keris.
(c) Making of transportation – boats, dinghies, sailboats.
(d) Medicine – traditional medicine (herbal medicine).

**AKTIVITY 1.3**

(a) In your opinion, what are the contributions of the Traditional Malay Society to the development of today’s society?

(b) In your opinion, what are the contributions of the Traditional Malay kingdoms to the forming of a united nation today?

**SUMMARY**

- The traditional Malay society played an important role in shaping the political, economic and social systems of today’s modern Malay society.

- Though there has been assimilation with new cultures, the traditional elements are still preserved.

- However, these traditional elements will fade away and vanish if the younger generations do not appreciate it and do away with the noble values, all in the name of modernisation.

**KEY TERMS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constitutional Monarchy Institution</th>
<th>Parliamentary Democracy</th>
<th>Socio-economic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Islamic Civilisation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Socio-political</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monarchy System</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REFERENCES


