

# Fiction Or Facts: Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa (The Kedah Annals) In The View Of Current Civilization Value

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## Abstract

Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa is a historical document about the writing of ancient Malay folklore, which mirrors the fine Malay traditional culture through the practice of high cultural moral values and customs. The essence of its contents explains that ancient/old Malay culture is rich with values which can be learned and taken as an example. The genealogy of Malay rulers have been previously analysed and discussed by scholars from different era. The translation of this account tells about its very own and unique metaphors, myths and legends. It is known that almost all ancient Malay kingdoms are connected to a particular history about their origins and ruling chronicles. Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa is the truth as well as a literary document to prove that the Malay history cannot be denied and its significance need to be understood. Thus, among the objectives of this paper work is to see whether Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa is a fictional or a factual account. Apart from that, this paper is meant to investigate whether the work is still relevant with the values of Malay modern society.

Keywords: Value, fiction, facts, metaphor, civilization and thought.

## Introduction

Ancient Malay kingdoms have their own historical literary collections. There are varieties of narrations about the founding of a particular state, its progress, the golden age and the downfall. These literary works regarding the foundation of a state often were mould with elements of myth and legend which can be considered as a pulling factor of Malay traditional historical literature.

The existence of the bloodline from Merong Mahawangsa up until the seventh generation that is Raja Pra Ong Mahawangsa or also known as Sultan Mudzalfar Shah has been truly proven. The earliest manuscript of Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa was believed to be bound and the first publication has been made in the 1898. It was printed on the stone slabs without any paragraph, comma or full stop. R.J Wilkinson's version as being described by Dato' Dr. Haji Wan Shamsudin bin Mohd Yusof (Per. Com.2010) has being made in the form of a book made from printed stone slabs with Jawi script. This version contains 113 pages of 13"x8.4". The book was written by Muhammad Yusof Nasiruddin and it was completed being copied down in 2 Rejab 1316 or 16 November 1898. However, the manuscript is illegible because earlier version of Jawi script is not as easy as current Jawi script which is easier and more readable.

According to Dato' Dr. Haji Wan Shamsudin, Merong Mahawangsa came from Rome which was a colony in the north of Persia and it was not in Italy as it was claimed by certain people. Persia was actually situated in today's Iran and this were reported by Malays in Kedah. From the analysis by Siti Hawa (1991), the name Merong Mahawangsa itself originated from the Hindu-Buddhism influence from which the culture and civilization from India was still strongly practiced by the local community. Towards the final part of the manuscript, it stated the chronicles of Kedah's ruler lineage and Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin was the last sultan stated in the chronicle. Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin's lifespan was between 1806-1845 and it was corresponding with the date of which the hikayat was written.

According to Dato' Dr. Haji Wan Shamsudin (Per. Com. 20100, the beginning of this hikayat had been asserted with mythical elements. These elements were meant to spice up the narration and indirectly it has become an attraction point for readers to read and believe it. For example, the narration stresses on the aspects of capability, obedience, and supernatural power of a ruler.

## Fictions and Facts in Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa

Kamus Dewan Fourth Edition (2005), defines civilization as referring to a state of human society which is defined by its standard of material advancement and development in thinking, social, culture and politic. In the context of the country and its population, it shows that they have achieved the material advancement and progress in culture which also included the fine moral aspect.

Fiction means imaginary events or invented stories (Kamus Dewan Fourth Edition (2005)). Among fictitious elements found in Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa is about the existence of phoenixes in the era of Solomon. The Phoenix was usually pictured as a magical creature that can change its form into human being. All animals in that era were claimed to have the ability to speak. In the hikayat, the Phoenix intended and played the role to prevent the marriage of prince of Rome and the China's princess. Due to such sinister act, the Phoenix was banished to Kalzum Sea under the order of Solomon. Apart from that, the Phoenix was also banished for being arrogant towards the royalties and Solomon himself.

There are several reasons regarding the founding of Langkasuka. Some claimed that the word Langkasuka originated from Sri Lanka where Langkasuka was the meeting place for the Rome's prince and China's princess. Most of the time, they will focus up at Gua Cerita in Langkawi. Some even claimed Langkasuka came from the phrase "Alangkah sukanya" (How delighted) which means that they fond of building a kingdom there. Those mentioned were giants who were living in Langkasuka. The giants were actually aboriginal people and they respected Merong Mahawangsa because Langkasuka used to be his sojourn. Merong Mahawangsa was capable of travelling to the southern east and stopped at Langkasuka to look for the missing Rome's prince after he lost in the sea due to the Phoenix attack.

Another myth is the myth about Raja Bersiong ( King with fangs) or his real name is Raja Ong Maha Perita Deria and he was a cruel ruler. Among his cruelty towards the people was to kill whoever did any misconduct. He was said to like food added with human blood. His fangs emerged due to this habit. Due to his cruel acts, his ministers, his people and wife were no longer respecting him as a ruler. He still refuses to change even though after being advised and it leads to a war with one of his ministers, the Fourth Minister and finally he fled to Patani through pintu malim.

There are also fictions about buluh betung (bamboo plant) which appeared in this hikayat but also come up in other hikayat like the Hikayat Banjar

and Hikayat Raja Pasir. Raja Bersiong's tale is related to the buluh betung when he fled to the jungle after being hunted by the Fourth Minister who was actually looking for an heir of Kedah and Raja Bersiong's son, Raja Pra Ong Mahapudisat became the new ruler of Kedah.

Raja Pra Ong Mahapudisat however did not have offspring for an heir and one day he went to the jungle and found a bamboo plant in one of the elderly houses. He took it back because he felt so fond of the bamboo plant. When the bamboo plant was finally burst out/ opened up, a good looking boy came out from inside the bamboo plant. Finally, Raja Pra Ong Mahapudisat decided to take the child as his own.

Kota Kuala Kedah or previously known as Kota Kuala Bahang is the evidence that this Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa is not merely a myth or imagination. The fort was rebuilt during the reign of Sultan Abdullah Mukarram Shah ( 20th Kedah ruler) between 1780-1782 as it is located today. The fort consists of a palace with cannons bought from the Dutch and British which placed around the area of the fort. Apart from being a fort, it was also made as the administrative centre by Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin Halim Shah II (22th Kedah ruler). During his reign, the fort was attacked and tore apart by the Siamese army on 12 November 1821 and later on, it was used by the Japanese during their occupation in Malaya (Source: Skwad Cekna).

### **Facts in the Merong Mahawangsa**

However, there are no concrete evidence regarding the founding of Langkasuka. Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa evidently claimed that Langkasuka situated at the foothill of Gunung Jerai, or the Bujang Valley which later was moved to Pattani. The earliest archaeological evidence was the Inscribed Stone of Budhhagupta found in Seberang Perai and Bukit Meriam which dated back to A.D 4-6. Lembah Bujang was progressing as an entry port and a sojourn for voyagers from India, Middle East and China. (Source: Kedah Library).

According to Dato' Dr. Haji Wan Shamsudin bin Mohd Yusof (Per. Com. 2010), Kedah was considered as a huge territory with the Pattani at the east and Lembah Bujang at the north. He further elaborates that the opening of a new state will be made through an unusual treaty as how Malacca derived its name. The ruler of Malacca was laying against a tree called Malacca to get some rest when a fruit fall down from the tree and to that the ruler name the state as Malacca.

The early part of Kedah's history was very much influenced by its strategic

geographical location in the region. From the pre historic perspective, Kedah can be described as a bridge/link or route used by people in the migration process from the north to the south and from the east to the west.

Pulau Serai as being mentioned in the hikayat is also known as Gunung Jerai where a lot of historical artifacts were found. The location of Gunung Jerai which extends to Tanjung Jaga at the coastline made it as a guide to ancient voyagers whom came to trade in this state since ages.

### **Values in Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa**

Value is a vital component in every culture of any society. In general, values are principles in having the acceptable and practiced norms of a society and it is the combination of all good and ideal elements which are accepted by the society (Wan Abdul Kadir, 2000). Value is an idea that is shared together regarding what are things deemed to be important and useful. Shared values are values that can be accepted by members of the society collectively. It is a common principle which offers the society members with one particular measure to justify and decide certain actions and aims. It is not an object with colours nor shapes but it determines the mental representation which was moulded from human behavior (Kamarudin and Siti Hajar, 1998).

According to Nadjer (1975), value is a form of faith, belief, and confidence which being applied to make a decision. Value is also belief people hold which decides whether one's action is accordance to the prescribed norms of the tradition, religion and the inclination towards doing something. The sources of values are religion, culture, education, family and society.

It has been known that the values of Malay society since ancient time has been encountering various diffusion and acculturation process which began with Hindu, Islam and Western culture. However, Islamic culture has great influence on the Malay lifestyle including their values. In the other words, values is a human behavior principle that is accepted and practiced by a society and it reflects combination of all elements that are considered rational, good and perfectly complete until it is has become a part of their life in the present time.

Among the values are:

- i) Politeness
- ii) Kindness

- iii) Humble
- iv) Generous

In Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa, there are numerous values that can be used as exemplar and lesson such as loving, responsible, respecting others, responsible, politeness, compassion, warriorship, kindness, kind-heartedness, politeness, generosity, humble and undivided loyalty to the King or Ruler. Integration and unity concept together with cooperativeness and helping each other are also values that are indeed accepted and practiced by the Malay society until present. The existence of these values had led a harmonious and peaceful life to the Malay society. The example can be observed in the excerpt below:

*“Upon the completion of the city and palace, then the ministers and knights began building their house and opening villages surrounding the king city ”.*

*(Siti Hawa Haji Salleh, 1998)*

The Malays attributes that are always humble, respecting others and fondness to the King or Ruler can be observed in the following excerpt.

*Later, the people present themselves to the King everyday. The King acquired fame to be King of the land ”.*

*(Siti Hawa Haji Salleh, 1998)*

Looking from other perspective, Kedah state ruler once had already practiced open-door policy specifically towards foreign traders that come to trade in the state. All amenities and needs were provided conductively by the ruler besides hospitality cozy/warmth treatment from the local people. It has been a norm where Malays pay respect to others and specifically prioritize their guests.

Their hospitality that is without prejudice is one of the Malays decent attitudes. These attitudes can be observed from the excerpt below.

*“Traders and strangers came from other region to trade there and the good sense and conciliating demeanor of the Raja and the ministers caused them to prosperously making living there.”*

*(Siti Hawa Haji Salleh, 1998)*

Values like kind-heartedness and generosity to all human kind regardless races, willingness to help, cooperation, interaction, visiting each other, tolerance, conscientious and forgiving are the richness of attitude that exist in the culture of Malaysian society.

Generosity and benefaction in dividing their earning is regarded as highly regarded values. In the context of this Hikayat, King Pra' Ong Mahaputisat is portrayed as a fair and generous ruler upon encountering fakir. This can be proved/ observed in the following excerpt.

*“The requirement to be King; should always be patient, compassionate to the people of the state and the servants with fairness and beneficence by giving alms and donation to the fakir, the convict to be sentenced to death should be kept retention for 3 or 4 days to be thoroughly scrutinized before execution, and the heir to be king in the land of Kedah should not reside at only a place instead to build fort and ditch in the residence and must be king ruling the state; city.”*

*“There were a great number of people in the land during King Pra Ong ruling the state of Kedah for he is just and prudent and the people are always remorseful with all the bala. The people are not living in mistreatment and the foods are all prosperous.”*

*(Siti Hawa Haji Salleh, 1998)*

Undivided loyalty for the King is apparent. This can be learnt when Kedah undergone throne vacancy, but the Fourth Minister never attempted to take chance occupying the vacancy instead immediately requesting assistance from Siam King to seek for Kedah State King and he also negotiate with clever astrologer besides asking the supernaturally-gifted elephant (Gajah Sakti) named Gemala Johari to assist in searching for the king to solve the problem.

The entire people of Kedah were mesmerized by the keistimewaan of an elephant which succeed in tracing Raja Bersiong ( King with Fang) son who was to be titled as King of Kedah. It can be concluded that the Fourth Minister that concerns on the people problems indeed posses highly precious values/attributes in him. Besides, he is not selfish even the opportunity is there for him to be the King by taking the throne. He also did not reject Raja Bersiong (King with Fang) heir to be king even though he strongly oppose Raja Bersiong ( King with Fang) inhumane conduct.

Example of generosity that is portrayed in this Hikayat Merongwangsa is as follows;

*They all work without being ordered even more they ask others too working until they stop for refreshment. After some food and drinks, they continue working until night. All the hard work is not after wages but sufficiently rewarded with foods and drinks for them. That's how Raja Bersiong ( King with Fangs) presents himself to the them'*

*(Siti Hawa Haji Salleh, 1998)*

It is also portrayed in this Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa that Malay societies are very concern with politeness especially when attending guests. This can be seen when Sheikh Abdullah Yamani, a pious from Baghdad managed to convert King Pra' Ong Mahawangsa and the entire people of Kedah into embracing Islam. Upon all his kindness, King Pra' had given special treatment and shown great hospitality towards him. This phenomenon showed that in the Malay society, politeness is highly regarded. Politeness is an attribute that is possessed by those who have manner is their speech to honour their guests.

Islamic brotherhood values also can be observed when Sultan Aceh presented a gift two books which were Siratul-Mustakim and Babun-Nikah to Sultan Muzaffar Shah. This gift in all probability might be purposefully given to be utilized as guidance to distinguish good and evil and also to function as practice on Islamic teachings basis.

Apparently, Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa exhibit us the fight, opposition between the benevolence and malevolence. Malevolence is defined as all malevolent intentions and values like arrogant and ungrateful, lustful and complies with the devil. The malevolence can be defeated with faith and devotion to God's Almighty power and those who act benevolently will be blessed and protected by Allah and for those who disobey practice malevolence conduct will be paid with anguished agony like what had happened to the

Phoenix and Raja Bersiong ( King with Fang).

## **THE VALUE OF INTELLECTUAL AND LEADERSHIP OF HIKAYAT MERONG MAHAWANGSA**

Merong Mahawangsa was born after Kedah started to open with solid foundation of administration with the existence of its own empire equipped



with its traditional architecture of the castle and strong base of its ruling system. The story of Merong Mahawangsa symbolises both ideology and leadership in traditional Malay culture.

The concept of *raja adil raja disembah, raja zalim, raja disanggah* (famous quotation of Hang Jebat; a just king is a king served, an unjust king is a king defeated) has been emphasised in the story of Raja Bersiong (the king with fangs) where this story is about the cruel ruling of the king which ends with the lost of his throne.

The story about merciless king is demonstrated in many forms of historical fictions and facts around the globe. As mentioned earlier, the traditional form of ruling system shows how the traditional monarchy system functions and reveals the dictatorship of the king during the era. It also reveals how royal prerogative right of the king to decide almost everything. The king has the veto power and honour to make any decision in every aspect of life of the country they ruled and the citizen has no right, neither to question nor to criticise.

Mohd Azhar Bahari (2009) explains that Malay Kings or Sultan appear to bring the sense of honour, authority and noble elements along with the throne and this has been practiced since the traditional ruling system. Everything is designed to symbolise the attributes of the royal highness in the form of the royal attire and accessories. The belief towards the king's power and honour among the citizen has made it compulsory for them to be faithful and pay the honour towards the king. This custom is called 'menjunjung duli' (the act of complimenting the king with great respect and honour). The term 'menjunjung duli' is a custom of showing respect and great honour which has been practiced among the state ministries in order to show the honour and loyalty to the sultan.

The arrival of Islamic missionary to Kedah has also been well narrated in Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa as stated in:

“ Therefore, it reaches the king of the state who is kafir and takes alcohol; reaches the leaders of satan with Sheikh Abdullah and enter the castle of Raja Pra' Ong Mahawangsa and straight to the battle field. ”

(Siti Hawa Haji Salleh, 1998)

The Islamic influence has indirectly caused a form of transformation in daily activity of the traditional society. Ishak Saat (2009) has stated that, traditionally the royal family and higher hierarchical society were under

great influence of Hinduism-Buddhism and this can be seen through their habitual activity and belief system. They prioritise certain aspects as in the ceremony and teachings involving praising and praying towards the goddess for their own privilege. The influence of philosophical writings on the citizen has also played major roles in penetrating through the heart and setting the mind of the citizen to respect the king and those of socially higher hierarchy.

The quotes stated below explain the delivery of Islamic teachings through the arrival of Sheikh Abdullah;

“Thus, said Sheikh Abdullah, should all of you know that this is the only religion of our Prophet Muhammad until the arrival of the doomsday. It is our responsibility to spread Islam as what have been taught in Quran, as It is from Allah s.w.t to his prophet, Muhammad s.a.w, where Mecca is the place that he lives and Madina is the place of his tomb. And your highness, it is important for you to realise that there is no other true religion other than Islam.

Therefore, said Raja Pra’Ong Mahawangsa to Sheikh Abdullah, if it is true then you must teach and spread Islam to this region”

(Siti Hawa Haji Salleh, 1998)

The above quote of Merong Mahawangsa explains that with the arrival of Islam has contributed for changes in terms of mentality and leadership of the people during the era. The acceptance of Islam among Malay society give huge impact in complementing the empty soul and successfully change the perception of Malay society towards the position of a king and aristocratic class of community. The Malay society today practices the concept of a king as the royal highness with honour and dignity; as well as loyalty towards the king in which parallel to what have been emphasised in Islam. Islam has successfully made a huge paradigm shift in Malay society towards a rational and intellectual mentality and leadership. Islam has changed the belief system of Malay society, which was from the practice of goddess to a religion where Allah is the only God. The shift to Islam remains until today.

Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa has also highlighted the use of technology during the era. It is the beginning of the era of civilisation which begins from developing the aspect of morality and values, guiding, directing and improvising to a better living. Classifications in terms of the technology used in Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa involve navigation technology, sailing and shipping, military, production and construction technology.

The knowledge of navigation has been illustrated in annals termed Merong Mahawangsa as stated below:

“Thus after everything are ready, therefore on one fine day, Raja Merong Mahawangsa pulls the anchor and sails together with all the fellow ships.”

(Dzulkifli bin Mohd Salleh, 1967)

The annals termed Merong Mahawangsa records the journey of King Merong Mahawangsa from Rome to Langkasuka used two large ships took along the prince of Rome with the companion of Merong Mahawangsa’s ship. These two ships were guarded with another nine voyages. In the annals, the term voyage can be interpreted as small ship or cannel. Therefore, it is obvious that, the King of Rome was being particular and selective in honouring a heavy duty responsibility. The King Merong Mahawangsa was chosen due to his capability and knowledge of navigating and sailing that he possessed.

During the second attack at Kuala Tawai, Merong Mahawangsa used the strategy of unity where he combined his ship with Prince of the King of Rome while other small ships and frigates circulated around the two voyages making the winning on the side of Merong Mahawangsa. The Prince of Rome was safe because of the brilliant strategy used by Merong Mahawangsa.

Merong Mahawangsa practices different combat techniques flexibly according to situations of the forces. During the first attack, Merong Mahawangsa used swinging military type of equipment in defending their clan. Other than arrow and bow which are later termed as Ayunan, arrow and bow named Berana Pura also was used during the second attack. The third attempt at Kuala Parit too used arrow and bow.

Other than military equipment, the annals has also recorded the used of comprehensive military uniform as stated during the era of Raja Ong Maha Perita Daria. The decision was made by the ministers of the states to show sign of disagreement towards the existing ruler and this had made the king to be equally prepared to face any attack against him. This king’s preparation which includes the wearing of his complementary equipment is illustrated as below:

“as he wears the belt around his waist that made of Azrang Kashmiriyang, with the length of forty *hasta* or cubit (*a traditional way of measuring which use elbow*

*and middle finger), putting on tengkolok (traditional Malay headdress) named Bulang Randai with keris (traditional Malay dagger) that covered with gold and a shawl on the left shoulder, an attire with golden spinach seed, holding tombok (long stick weapon) with shining bright eye and all these suit his great feature..”*

(Dzulkifli bin Mohd Salleh, 1967)

The events of great wars highlighted earlier have given a sense of value in which has been adopted in order to strengthen today's civilization. The current socio economy and socio political environment of Malay has encouraged the practice of defending strategy more than attacking strategy. The expansion of empire is done through a diplomatic negotiation.

Other forms of technology used during the era as stated in the annals is constructional technology. There are a number of events which illustrate the use of constructional technology such as drains, fortress and castles. These buildings are the symbols of the development of Kedah in terms of the developing country states. However, the development of infrastructure has not being mentioned directly but the sense of harmony and increasing number of traders at that moment indicate that the infrastructure facility offered complement the need of necessity of trading activities conducted in the region.

The knowledge applied as mentioned in the annals includes the knowledge of cosmology. Forecasting the movement of wind such as changes in the direction of Monsoon from a certain distance of time has been the area of expertise of sailors and navigators. The journey to the continent of China is not a short journey. Familiarity with the route is a strong factor for the King of Rome to request the companionship of Merong Mahawangsa to head the journey of Prince of Rome to China. The knowledge of cosmology has eased the journey to China because during that era, the method used like sun and astrolab are the modification to meet the needs and flexibility of today.

The annals of Merong Mahawangsa also illustrates how the society during the era is skilful in carpentry. This can be seen when Raja Seri Mahawangsa commanded that all carpenters and moulders of gold, silver and metals to gather to produce the gold and silver trees. All the possessions are presented as a gift to his nephew in Siam.

Creativity in Malay carpentry in the annals of Merong Mahawangsa can be related with the passage stated below;

“Therefore, the current construction work of buildings, drains, stations and castles has to be stopped as they are busy with the gold and silver flower as the branch is covered with gold and silver ring, with sharp point of silver and gold, spear named Buangan is also covered with gold that complete with round shield and its smaller armed shield as if they are preparing for war”

(Dzulkifli Mohd Salleh, 1973)

The nature of the environment has become the source of inspiration and foundation to the creativity among Malay community. In Merong Mahawangsa annals, silver and gold flower trees, were served as royal presents. This culture is still being practised in ceremonies and Malay wedding today.

The annals also relates with the wearing of jewelleries among Malay women.

“...thus Tuan Puteri Seribulan is embodied with jewelleries of diamond and gold as she is as beautiful as the stars in the sky ....”

(Siti Hawa Haji Salleh, 1998)

Syed Ahmad Jamal (1992) explains that in Malay classic Literature, there are a lot of evidence or goods made of gold. Some of them involve women’s jewellery like ring, earrings, necklace, bracelets and anklets, brooch, *dokoh* (golden locket), *pending* (accessories on the chest or waist) and *cucuk sanggul* (intricate hairpin). The motive behind the creation of jewelleries is focusing on abstract geometry, plants (young tendril leaves, bamboo shoot, renik flower), animals (Kelah’s scale) and nature (cloud, air and etc.)

Creativity among Malay community can be valued through expertise and detailed handmade crafts. Malay community sees the nature as jewel that functions to brighten one’s life.

## **SYMBOLS IN MERONG MAHAWANGSA ANNALS**

In Merong Mahawangsa annals, the tone of writing tends to emphasise on the element of sarcasm and metaphor. For example, the ocean is a symbol of human knowledge and treasure, as a source of income and from the ocean, it forms estuary, river, confluence and downstream in which form its own ecosystem.

The language used seems to bring the element of Siamese like the name of a place like Pulau is taken from a name of a tree, *pulas* (tweak), *siong* (fangs) as appear in the name of a king, Raja Bersiong. Baling (a name of a place) is also originated from Siam (*ban* means village while *ling* means monkey), the same with Changloon and Sik. Besides that, pronunciation also indicates the influence of Siam like *bilik air* (bathroom) is pronounced like *bilik ae*. Siong (fangs) symbolises cruelty.

Other symbol identified in the annals is the existence of Garuda Phoenix. The character of Garuda has been illustrated as having a miracle power that can transform into a human form. For example, Garuda bird is an animal in Hindu myth which appears as Vishnu's transport which have a miracle power that it able to change into other forms of various creatures that against the power of Allah the Almighty through the prophet of Sulaiman.

Technology in production of gold and silver has been greatly explained in the annals. The way they are moulded serves the symbol of peacefulness in Malay culture. This symbol has been highlighted not only in Ptolemy map which represents Malay land as Golden Chersonese or golden peninsular, but also in Veda as *survanabhumi* which means golden land. Other than silver and gold, the use of metal has also been emphasized through the third attack at Kuala Parit, which use arrow and bow as illustrated to transform as Jentayu bird.

## Conclusion

In identifying facts and fiction of the annals, Merong Mahawangsa is recognised as one of the Malay creative writings to express thoughts and ideology of traditional culture of Malay. Therefore, from the point of view of literary writings, the creative writings derived from deep philosophical thought has greatly contribute to the development of civilisation. For example, the issue of globalisation crosses the borders internationally and influences the entire nation worldwide and Malays are not excluded from receiving the same impact. Various changes due to the impact of globalisation which involve the history of Malay civilisation but the traditional inherited culture is still relevant and should be practiced continuously among Malay community. The concept of traditional Malay leadership needs to be appreciated and to be learnt as in the annals of Merong Mahawangsa.

Merong Mahawangsa is not in a form of fact but still the Malay society today would able to appreciate the meaning behind the fictional form portrayed in the annals. It represents the elements of symbols and sarcasm as in the Legend of Puteri Gunung Ledang. The aspects of education and the way

of giving advice illustrated in the legend have been portrayed in a form of sarcasm towards the cruel leading rulers.

Should we classify Malay today as having orthodox and poorly developed mentality and culture? Conferences involve the fight of Malay warriors towards improving the civilisation and mentality of Malay without neglecting the teaching of al-Quran.

Strong and healthy minds are from the minds that can differentiate between good and bad. Minds drive human to see and allow them to distinguish between fiction and fact. From this point of departure, human potential can easily be observed. Besides that, minds allow human to observe and search miracle and secret of the world created by Allah s.w.t. Hamka (2008) stresses that the miracle power of human mind is the ability and willingness to distinguish and differentiate between the good and bad by observing the world around them using the given senses. If the scars remain within the soul, it can be a guidance and experience in life. Discussion on ethics has been one of the philosophical activities in breaking through the mystery and secret of the world.

Readers of *Merong Mahawangsa* today may probably be associating the annals as classic Malay fiction. The aim of the writing is to encourage the view of various angles so that the knowledge will be continuously spread and appreciated.

Classic Malay annals should be appreciated locally and internationally. It would be even better if it could be as well known as *1001 Nights*. This type of literary writing usually highlights brave characters in the classic annals like Abdullah Munshi, Hang Tuah and etc. Editing and delivery should be originally fresh and appropriate with the acceptance and advancement in today's technology. For example, Japanese has successfully promoting the literary writings in various forms and genre such as comics, animation, computer games and etc.

Characters in *Merong Mahawangsa* are the combination of two different worlds, reality and fantasy. The element of combination of both worlds in a story can be seen in other international fictional films such as *Avatar*, *Harry Potter*, *Chronicles of Narnia*, *Lord of the Rings*, *The Time Travellers*, etc. The sense of loyalty and leadership portrayed in *Merong Mahawangsa* should be greatly emphasised in order to continuously develop a better construction of civilisation among Malay, such as in terms of value, mentality which may involve leadership and loyalty. In general, the term culture in Malay society can be seen as a way of lifestyle that is related to individual behaviour, reaction and way of thinking as well as spiritual aspect. The

traditional Malay culture can also be related from the early process of the creation of human being until the end of one's life. It should be educated and inculcated to the next generation to ensure continuity of civilisation of the nation.



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