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"On a Malay World Request"

SUMBER :

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MARCH 20, 2017

people

ON A MALAY WORLD QUEST

The artistry of the Malay world has always captured the imagination of Dr Muhammad Pauzi Abdul Latif, an avid collector of its artefacts, writes ninotaziz

ABOUT 100 years ago, one could travel by sampan from Kampung Bukit Kuda in Klang right up to Sungai Gomlak and all the way to Masjid Jamek.

We can only imagine what the view from such a trip would have been like. Virgin jungle. Sounds of the wild. Rivers so crystal-clear that you could probably see tiger prowlers and little fishes dancing in the water.

An avid collector of Malay world artefacts and "rescuer" of traditional Malay houses, Dr Muhammad Pauzi Abdul Latif remembers his grandfather Pak Samad Majid regaling him with tales of such waterways and how the sampan could take you to the city in days long gone by. Supplies and goods were transported to Kuala Lumpur from Klang via this route.

A sampan maker, Pak Samad moved from Terenghu, Pahang to Kampung Kuda in the 1940s to practise his trade by the Klang River.

His daughter Zainab and then-grandson Muhammad Pauzi or Paji, as he was fondly called, were both born in Kampung Bukit Kuda. Paji used to spend hours watching his grandfather build his boats.

The boy was eventually allowed to help with minor woodwork and carpentry. Paji learnt to check for leaks by filling up new boats with water and to check the alignment of the boats by immersing them in the river.

Pausing for a moment to recall his childhood, Pauzi, the director of Universiti Putra Malaysia's (UPM) Malay Heritage Museum, shares that sailing out to sea with his grandfather on a new sampan to test its worthiness number among the best memories he has of his childhood.

CALL OF HISTORY

In school, history was Pauzi's favourite subject even as he aspired to be a lawyer. His passion for the written word led him finally to the world of communications.

However, the love for history remained.

Smiling, he confesses that he always yearned to see, touch and collect items that connect us to our history.

He also enjoyed travelling locally to little towns and villages like Besut and Pasir Mas. Very quickly the East Coast became his favourite local destination and it was there that he met with woodworker adiguru (master) Marzuza Noordin. This made him appreciate the beauty and heritage of wood carving even more.

Soon, it dawned on the professor that the artistry of the Malay World was not limited to wood-carving, but also in metal works, textiles and manuscripts.

His collection quickly grew bigger and he found himself travelling far and wide to obtain wood carvings, textiles, traditional weapons, manuscripts and ceramics.

He scored known collectors and the Netherlands.

One of his prized pieces is a Malay matchlock gun or the *linggar*. The *linggar* was used as early as the 1500s and, according to the Malay Annals, was used against the Portuguese in the 1511 invasion in Malacca.

In the story of *Melayu Mengalahkan*, for instance, the hero Megal Terawis defeated his opponent Tok Suban using a specially-made bullet fired through an *linggar*.

Pauzi, through his friend Arjan Hollesteijn in Portugal, Netherlands, acquired an *linggar* in prime condition in 2015.

The Malay, explains Pauzi, specialised in metal works like powder and brass and silver and gold. Silver pieces are not only exquisite and functional. They also have a longstanding history in Kelantan.

Silver boxes, jewellery and dining ware are of the highest quality and have been used in royal households for ceremonies since ancient times. Sadly, the famed silverware is disappearing.

Pauzi's friend, Pak Daud of Kota Bharu who taught him about silverware, is

Kemaskini: 29/03/2017 [ctsakinah]

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Pusat Rujukan Persuratan Melayu (<http://prpm.dbp.gov.my/>)

Suruhanjaya Komunikasi dan Multimedia Malaysia (<http://www.skmm.gov.my/?lang=ms-MY>)

Pusat Pemajuan Kompetensi Bahasa UPM (<http://www.calc.upm.edu.my/?LANG=bn&uri=?LANG=en&uri=>)

Medlit (Media Literacy for Social Change) (<http://medlit-upm.herokuapp.com/>)

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