

## Book Review 'Raja-Raja Melayu: Kemajuan atau Kemunduran?' (Malay Version)

Uqbah Iqbal\*

Department of Social Sciences and Humanities, History Programme, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, UKM 43650 Bangi Selangor, Malaysia

\*Corresponding author: Uqbah Iqbal, Department of Social Sciences and Humanities, History Programme, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, UKM 43650 Bangi Selangor, Malaysia, Tel: +60 3-8921 5555; E-mail: [uqbah@siswa.ukm.edu.my](mailto:uqbah@siswa.ukm.edu.my)

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### Book Review

This book is about a great thing - the Malay Rulers. There are nine Kings, comprises seven Sultans, a King and the Yang di-Pertuan Besar for the nine states in Malaysia. In addition, there is also the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, the King of the whole country, elected by rotation every five years by nine kings. The approach of the author in this book is from three angles, namely current, historical and comparison. From the point of time, he checked the position, role and powers of the Rulers as provided for by law and practiced. Historically, he checked the changes that have been passed by the Royal Institution through time and due to various events or influences. By comparison, he saw Malaysia in the context of the various systems in different countries and ranking changes experienced by King respectively. Finally, this book tries to do something that is almost impossible, namely the possibility of predicting what the future of the Malay Rulers. It avoided the sensational and controversial.

The early manuscript of this book published in 1993 entitled King Issue and Amendment of the Constitution. In that year there has been a widespread controversy due to government attempts led by Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir Mohamad to limit the power of the Malay Rulers. This gives rise to what is known as a constitutional crisis. Twenty years later in 2013, the translation of this book has been updated and published in English under the title The Malay Rulers: Reform or Regression ?. The author has made some amendments and additions to update this version. This book in Bahasa Malaysia has been given a new title, namely the Malay Rulers: Setback or Progress ?. It contains the same updates as the English version.

Malay Rulers here refer to the Sultan of Johor, Kedah, Kelantan, Pahang, Perak, Selangor and Terengganu, the Raja of Perlis and the Yang di-Pertuan Besar Negeri Sembilan. Governor or the Yang di-Pertua of Malacca, Penang, Sabah and Sarawak do not belong to the same category. Almost all of the facts in this book are in the public domain; the different is the author process it into an abnormality; strengthen the argument and set. As described by title of the book, it's about the Malay States Kings, but what is more significant is the subtitle: Decline or Renewal? The attention is very much focused on the Malay feudal system. It should be noted that the criticism of feudalism and calls to change the way of thinking - and this is basically the core of this book - is not the same as supporting the abolition of the institution of the Malay Rulers.

In terms of style, the author writes smoothly and accurately. English colonization history summed up in just a few sentences. As explained

by the author, although in theory the Kings did not participate in the administration of their lands, but there are some examples of conflicts with political leaders in the stratification of power in the intervention elect the head of state. The author supports the removal of king immunity from the law, but he questioned why the ruling political leaders so reluctant to remove their immunity.

In Malaysia, there have not seen a sign or a political agenda to abolish the Monarchy. Even during the amendment tabled by the Government in Parliament on 18 January 1993, was not mentioned by anyone on the need to abolish the Monarchy as unauthorized. It has long been considered by many Malays that their Rulers are protecting the special position of the Malays as a whole. Even today many defend the King as a symbol of Malay supremacy. They think this is very important to help maintain the high position of the Malays, who fell behind in many fields, especially economy and education. Malaysian society has changed a lot now. The impact of the development schemes undertaken by the Government, the position of the Malays of specific groups improved in economics and education, though not so satisfactory as expected by many.

The Malays should not expect too much help given through their special position protected by the King and guaranteed by the Constitution. They should do more to strengthen themselves in the areas of politics, economy, science and technology, in order to have a strong foundation to compete with other ethnic groups in the country. Only then they will be respected in the country and around the world. Today, the king is not only for the Malays, but to all the people who have become citizens. The king was supposed to be a shelter and hope of all citizens, especially the poor and needy, the poor and the oppressed.

In the current situation, Malay King is not in the form of absolute power King and they do not govern. Therefore they cannot be held responsible or blamed for various problems and difficulties that occur among the people. Government is actually run by political elite that has taken a lot of power and formed through the electoral process. The ruling elite is responsible for the fate and future of the people, for example due to abuse of the New Economic Policy by top leaders and their cronies or weakness of the Malay language as the national language is seen as occurring as a result of giving English Language bigger and more important position in life and public affairs.