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## **THE ASSESSMENT ON KAMPUNG KUBU, TANJUNG MALIM, PERAK AS A HERITAGE VILLAGE**

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### **Abstract**

The conservation of heritage villages in Malaysia seems to receive more attention from government and private organizations. However, the assessment guidelines are still unclear, and urban development tends to ignore these historical settlements. This study aims to assess Kampung Kubu, a historical settlement in Tanjung Malim, Perak, by discussing its potential as a heritage village. The study focuses on heritage significance based on the criteria used for heritage village assessment in other states. Descriptive data is obtained from reviews on historical documents and articles, field observation, and interviews with the village and local authority representatives. The findings showed that Kampung Kubu displays strong evidence in the historical aspect, based on the traditional houses, historical landmarks, weaponry, and proper documented historical records. Therefore, it is recommended for this village to be developed for heritage tourism to support its recognition as a heritage village as a part of the urban development.

**Keywords:** Kampung Kubu, heritage village, conservation, historical settlement

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Understanding the values practised by the local community and its authenticity helps in preserving the heritage character of rural areas. Rural heritage has a significant role in creating a sense of place and acting as a catalyst for the regeneration and sustainability of a village settlement. Traditional villages are significant regional settlements that come from human and nature interaction with social and cultural values. Cities and villages in Malaysia have played a remarkable role in enhancing the living multicultural heritage, as portrayed by society's different religious and cultural practices (Radzuan & Ahmad, 2017). Malay traditional villages have existed as a settlement that portrays the Malay cultural landscape. The setting system, organization of space, time, meaning, communication, cultural landscape, and physical elements are the determining elements in a Malay settlement. By enhancing the heritage character of the village, a tool for people who lives in a rural area can be obtained to make them part of the rural development process (Nair, Singh & Munoth, 2020).

## **RESEARCH BACKGROUND**

Uncontrolled development has caused the destruction and deterioration of traditional villages' historical and physical characteristics. These villages, which once held important events, had deteriorated in terms of their historical function as today they are often surrounded and dominated by modern suburban development (Radzuan & Ahmad, 2017). On the other hand, even though Malaysia has begun to list heritage sites, the government has yet to produce a set of criteria to ensure that cultural value is identified correctly and appraised (Hashim, 2017). As a result, social practices such as rituals and festivals are neglected as a protected cultural heritage (Mustafa & Abdullah, 2013), leading to villages with these heritage values not being qualified as heritage sites.

It is also vital to include traditional villages as part of heritage assessment since little attention has been given to conserving and protecting this area. Many conservation efforts often emphasize the building and the area of land (Mat Nayan, 2017). In addition, academic research focuses less on safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in a village setting (Abet, 2021).

Kampung Kubu in Tanjung Malim, Perak is a Malay settlement in Malaysia that has inevitably been transformed through several phases of changes resulting in a new village character. The development of Tanjung Malim city has made the village idle or relatively isolated. Therefore, this study aims to assess Kampung Kubu for it to be conserved as a heritage village. The study's objectives are to compile the criteria used to design a heritage village and identify the significances as the criteria for Kampung Kubu to be gazetted as a heritage village.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Heritage Village*

Heritage village is a cluster of traditional dwellings, including their surroundings, open spaces, trees and any associated community, service or ancillary buildings that represent the social history and cultural heritage of a community or ethnic, indigenous communities. A heritage village's construction and spatial nature reflect its rural or urban origins, although they may have been subsumed by urban expansion (Penang Heritage Trust, 2012). A heritage village can also be defined as a traditional neighbourhood or a specific district with historic significance, where both the physical characteristics and its inhabitants, living with their traditions, skills, and other cultural practices (Radzuan & Ahmad, 2020). However, heritage village protection, unlike other cultural heritage protection, needs to consider the people and the community, including their living conditions and overall village development.

In Malacca, seven villages have been recognized as heritage villages by PERZIM under the Conservation and Preservation of Cultural Heritage Enactment 1988 (Amended 2008): Kampung Morten, Kampung Chitty, Kampung Portugis, Perkampungan Baba Nyonya Melaka, Kampung Banda Kaba, Kampung Bukit China and Kampung Parit Sidang Seman (Yaman, Ramele & Ariff, 2021). In other states, Kampung Air Hangat, Mahsuri Tomb, Sarawak Cultural Village, Mari Mari Cultural Village are also registered as heritage villages based on the uniqueness of traditional houses of different ethnic communities (Abet, 2021). Each village is gazetted under the criteria of significance which is indicated in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Heritage Villages in Malaysia and Their Significances

| <b>Heritage Village</b>            | <b>Significance</b>  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Kampung Morten, Melaka             | Traditional Malay River village                                  |
| Kampung Chitty, Melaka             | Chitty ethnic community  |
| Kampung Portugis, Melaka           | Portuguese ethnic community                                      |
| Perkampungan Baba Nyonya, Melaka   | Baba Nyonya ethnic community                                     |
| Kampung Banda Kaba, Melaka         | Traditional Malay village  |
| Kampung Bukit China, Melaka        | Chinese ethnic community   |
| Kampung Parit Sidang Seman, Melaka | Traditional Malay village  |
| Kampung Air Hangat, Kedah          | Folklore/myth  |
| Mahsuri Tomb, Kedah                | Folklore/myth  |
| Cultural Village, Sarawak          | Bidayuh, Iban, Orang Ulu, Chinese, Melanau, Malay, Penan ethnics |
| Mari Mari Cultural Village, Sabah  | Dusun, Rungus, Lundayeh, Bajau, Murut ethnics                    |

Source: Yaman, Ramele & Ariff (2021), Abet (2021)

### ***Heritage Village Criteria***

The recognition of a site's heritage values pays much attention to the cultural heritage values. According to ICOMOS (2002), cultural heritage is an expression of a community's ways of life passed down through generations, including customs, practices, places, artefacts, artistic manifestations, and values. The term 'cultural heritage' relates to how today's culture uses the past. It is a modern or postmodern reflection of the past that contributes to national and regional identity formation.

In Melaka, the government has listed a few attributes as criteria that need to be considered in the heritage village recognition process under the Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage 1998 Enactment (Amendment 1993). These attributes consist of (i) traditional architectural attributes (building design and style); and (ii) socio-cultural attributes (residents' culture and custom, daily activities of the communities, traditional craft, and food business.

In Malaysia, Rahil, Ghani & Sarkom (2020) suggested that the role of the community in shaping the environment and atmosphere of their village, and the architectural heritage does contribute to the identified values and significant values of a heritage village. Meanwhile, Mat Nayan (2017) suggested a few criteria that could potentially identify to ensure these heritage elements are not neglected and taken into consideration for new development. These criteria include (i) historical and current research; (ii) connections between building/village and its surrounding; (iii) aesthetic appeal; and (iv) setting.

Other criteria used by other countries as heritage significance to assess a heritage village are summarized in Table 2.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Malaysian related acts and enactments, and significances in the conservation of heritage villages, mainly carried out by Yaman, Ramele & Ariff (2021), are reviewed. The criteria used in Malaysian practices are compiled with criteria listed in other countries, mainly by Bhandari, Kaur & Grover (2016) in Table 2. The compiled criteria are used as attributes to assess Kampung Kubu to reveal its potential to be gazetted as a new heritage village in Malaysia and suggest new criteria to be added to a designation of a heritage village.

Kampung Kubu, which is in the district of Tanjung Malim (Figure 1), Perak is chosen as the case study due to its historical values related to the establishment of the settlement, a historical event which involved the sultanates of Perak, Selangor and Pahang, and the cultural values of Rawa ethnic. In addition, Tanjung Malim is in Muallim, a district that has the potential to become a rapidly developing district in the southern region of Perak. Therefore, it is crucial to include the conservation of Kampung Kubu as a heritage village in the development planning to prevent this village from further modernization and urbanization.

**Table 2:** Heritage Village Criteria and its Indicators

| <b>Attribute</b>                              | <b>Criteria</b>   | <b>Significance Indicator</b>   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>Historical</b>                             | Demonstrate a strong association of life, events, or activities of a person/clan/organization.  | Associated with a significant event or historic phase.<br>Maintains or shows the continuity of a historical process or activity.<br>Associated with person/s whose life, career or acts hold strong historical significance.  |
| <b>Scientific</b>                             | The place has the potential to add to the information that will enhance human understanding of the natural, historical and culture of the region. | Has knowledge that may lead to a greater understanding of an aspect of local history.<br>Has knowledge that may aid in comparative analysis of similar places.  |
| <b>Architectural</b>                          | Noteworthy or significant aesthetical characteristics.  | Important for distinctive aesthetic attributes.<br>Important for its creativity in design (architectural style) or technical advancement (construction technique).<br>Possesses landmark quality.<br>Important for contribution to the local landscape.   |
| <b>Social Value</b><br><b>Spiritual Value</b> | The place displays any community or group important for spiritual, social, or cultural reasons.   | A place of high value for a community or an entire group on account of social, cultural, or spiritual grounds.<br>Contributes to a sense of identity for a community.<br>A place that has a religious context or any secular.<br>Important owing to inner qualities or believed to be spiritual.<br>All cultural values passed through materials and habits are a part of the heritage. |

*Source: Bhandari, Kaur & Grover (2016)*



**Figure 1:** Location of Kampung Kubu in Tanjung Malim  
*Source: Google Map, 2020*

Relevant local documents related to the history and development of Kampung Kubu are reviewed, and an interview with a villager, who is the 5th generation of Dato' Haji Mustapha bin Raja Kemala is carried out to reveal the heritage significance of the village. Field observation was also done to identify other significances of architecture and sociocultural attributes. However, this study is limited to an interview session with one person in the village due to the COVID-19 pandemic's Movement Control Order (MCO). Therefore, it avoids variation in the information collected on the history and background of the case study.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### ***Historical Significance of Kampung Kubu***

The southern part of Perak, including Tanjung Malim, was often threatened by Selangor for its strategic tin trade area where Selangor controlled the collection of trading tax based in Kuala Bidor. Perak paid tribute to the Siamese government to ensure it received protection from Selangor's threats. The border dispute between Perak and Selangor became a point of contention between the two states to the point of war among the inhabitants of Tanjung Jambu (the earlier name of Kampung Kubu). British intervention in reconciling the two sides of Perak and Selangor was resolved with a border agreement called the Anderson Agreement in 1825, where Sungai Bernam has become the border of the two states.

Tanjung Jambu was also used as a fort to protect Dato' Haji Mustapha bin Raja Kemala, the chief of Rawa tribe, a place official, and a loyal follower of Bendahara Tun Wan Mutahir bin Bendahara Tun Ali, head of Pahang (1857-1863). He was said to fled to this village with a few loyal commanders during the civil war between two sons of Bendahara Siwa Raja Tun Ali (Bendahara Pahang):

Bendahara Tun Wan Mutahir and Wan Ahmad (Sultan Ahmad Al-Muadzam Shah) in Pahang (Official Portal of MDTM, 2021). After a fort built by Dato' Haji Mustapha succeeded during the second attack from Pahang in 1871, Dato' Haji Mustapha was appointed as the village leader, which was then known as Kampung Kubu (a fort village). He was later appointed as the old chief of Mukim Ulu Bernam and the first chief of Tanjung Malim by Sultan Selangor, Sultan Abdul Samad Ibni Almarhum Tengku Abdullah in 1876.

His residence in Kampung Kubu became the centre of tax collection from 1876 to 1897, where he was assigned to collect boat tax and tin ore in the Tanjung Malim area. Later, the tax collection centre was moved to the resthouse area (today known as the Sarang Art Hub). He also built the first mosque in Tanjung Malim here in this village in 1870, located in his residence's area, where it has become a centre for Islamic scholars. However, this mosque was demolished during the Japanese occupation, resulting in a new *surau*, Madrasatul Al-Mustaufiah, built around the 1960s. The Klang War in Selangor in 1875 and Gee Hin and Hai San's conflict in Ipoh had also forced the Malays and Chinese to migrate to this village. In the early 1900s, the Hokkien Chinese built two rows of shophouses with a wood structure along Sungai Bernam to form a city-like business centre in the area.

### ***Scientific Significance of Kampung Kubu***

Kampung Kubu is also documented in a historical record by Sir Frank Swettenham, who was the Assistant of Perak in 1874, Resident of Perak in 1889 and Resident-General of the Federated Malay States from 1896 to 1901, during his adventure to Tanjung Malim. In his adventure, he had also witnessed the glory and wisdom of Dato' Haji Mustapha in the era of his reign.

The monochrome paintings and watercolours were produced in 1885 during his journey from Perak to Selangor and directly to Pahang (Lim, 1988). The paintings illustrated their views along the route from the point of view of British understanding of the region through visual recordings made while traversing Sungai Bernam and Sungai Pahang. Drawings of Dato' Haji Mustapha looking at Sungai Bernam, merchant ships anchored in Sungai Bernam, and the old mosque in Kampung Kubu were included in the book, *Frank Swettenham & George Giles: Watercolours & Sketches of Malaya 1880-1894* (Figure 2). All the drawings are stored and displayed today at the National Gallery of Art.

Meanwhile, weapons used during the civil war between Pahang and Kampung Kubu during the arrival of Dato' Haji Mustapha were also kept until today. These weapons were brought by Dato' Haji Mustapha and his followers from Pahang and were used during the protection at the fort built in Kampung Kubu and other areas in Tanjung Malim. Some cannons were displayed in the village, some were kept in Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI) Museum, and some were kept by the leader's heirs (Figure 3).



Figure 2: Drawings of Sungai Bernam in Frank Swettenham & George Giles: *Watercolours & Sketches of Malaya 1880-1894*  
Source: Tuanku Bainun Library Collection (2021)



Figure 3: Cannons displayed at Kampung Kubu (left) and UPSI Museum (right)  
Source: Tuanku Bainun Library Collection (2021)



### **Architectural and Aesthetic Significance of Kampung Kubu**

Kampung Kubu's layout remains a traditional Malay kampung located along the river. There are 13 traditional Malay houses, a *surau*, an orchard, an edible garden, and a compound for public activities (Figure 4). The residential areas covered 2 acres out of a total village area of 5 acres. However, some of the traditional Malay houses have been altered due to modernization, mainly influenced by the development of Tanjung Malim town and the need for bigger spaces due to the increasing number of family members. Most of the houses, inherited from their families, are two-storey buildings, where some of the upper floors are occupied by owners and rented to tenants on the lower floor. Seven out of 13 houses are surrounded by fences directly connected to the open road, while the other six are opened and built close to each other.



**Figure 4:** Village Layout and Traditional Malay Houses in Kampung Kubu

### **Sociocultural Significance of Kampung Kubu**

Kampung Kubu was a settlement believed to be established by the Batak tribe, led by the Batak king, whose daily activities were hunting and fishing (Official Portal of MDTM, 2021). Later, it was also inhabited by the Bugis people who fled from Selangor in 1790 after the Dutch conquered the state (Syed Mansor et al., 2018). Today, the old Bugis grave behind the Cathay Ulu Bernam Theatre shows the evidence of Bugis people's settlement during that time. Later, Dato' Haji Mustapha, the chief of the Rawa tribe in Gali, Raub, Pahang, arrived in Tanjung Jambu with a few loyal commanders to seek protection from the Pahang people's attack due to civil war in the state (Official Portal of MDTM, 2021). Instead, they were welcomed by the Bugis people, and today, all Kampung Kubu's inhabitants are the fourth generation of Dato' Haji Mustapha. Although some of the essential cultural traditions among the Rawa community are no longer practised here due to Islamic rule, the inhabitants annually organize programmes promoting Rawa ethnic through food, exhibition, traditional games, and performances (Figure 6). These programmes are jointly organized with the neighbouring village, Kampung Simpang Empat and UPSI.



**Figure 6:** Muallim Rawa Festival at UPSI in 2018  
*Source: Muallim Rawa Festival 2018 Facebook Page (2021)*

### ***Discussion***

The criteria identified in Kampung Kubu that can be the historical, scientific, architectural/aesthetic, and sociocultural attributes, and lead to the assessment of the village as a new heritage village are listed in Table 3.

### **CONCLUSION**

This study compiled the assessment criteria for the recognition of a heritage village in Malaysia and other countries to propose a new list of criteria to reveal the potential of Kampung Kubu in Tanjung Malim, Perak, as a new heritage village in the country. The list consists of historical, scientific, architectural/aesthetic, and sociocultural attributes. As a result, Kampung Kubu can be identified as an old Malay settlement built in 1870 as Tanjung Jambu, historically related to a series of wars involving the states of Perak, Selangor, and Pahang, documented as one of the important views in the record of Sir Frank Swettenham, built with a layout of a traditional Malay kampung located along the river, and the cultural traditions practised by the Rawa community. Like the heritage village of Kampung Morten, Malacca, which is in the World Heritage Site of Malaysia, Kampung Kubu can also be an example of a typical Malay village which is locked in development but is still lingering on with its history. Findings from this study can be used to stimulate Kampung Kubu's conservation and development plans and promote Kampung Kubu as one of the important heritage villages at the national level to prevent the extinction of its historical value amidst the urbanization and modernization of Tanjung Malim.

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**Table 3:** Heritage Significance of Kampung Kubu

| Attributes and Criteria  | Heritage Significance  |
|--|--|
| 1 Historical Attribute<br>(The village demonstrate a strong association of life, events, or activities of a person/clan/organization)  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kampung Kubu demonstrates several historical events:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Became a concentration point after Selangor-Perak's border was determined by Anderson Agreement, 1825</li> <li>○ Used as a fort in civil war of Perak and Pahang, 1871</li> <li>○ Boat tax and tin ore collection point (1876-1897)</li> <li>○ First mosque in Tanjung Malim</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Kampung Kubu is associated with Dato' Haji Mustapha bin Raja Kemala who was:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A palace official and loyal follower of Bendahara Tun Wan Mutahir bin Bendahara Tun Ali, head of Pahang (1857-1863)</li> <li>○ First Penghulu of Ulu Bernam and first chief of Tanjung Malim</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| 2 Scientific Attribute<br>(The village has the potential to add to the information that will enhance human understanding of the natural, historical and culture of the region)   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kampung Kubu has evidential value as a historical relic, local document, books, drawings and historical record (Historical Record of Frank Swettenham)</li> <li>• The fort was equipped with cannons, spears, swords, and daggers, which still remain here and some are displayed in UPSI Museum</li> </ul>   |
| 3 Architectural/Aesthetic Attribute<br>(The village displays distinctive aesthetic vernacular landscape, local architectural characteristics of the built structure (architectural style) or technical advancement (construction technique)) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kampung Kubu displays a layout of traditional Malay kampung, where there are <i>surau</i>, orchard, edible gardens, traditional Malay houses, compound for public activities</li> <li>• 13 traditional Malay houses still existed in the village; however, some of them have been altered due to modernization and urbanization</li> </ul>  |
| 4 Sociocultural Attribute<br>(The village displays community or group important for spiritual, social, or cultural reasons)  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kampung Kubu displays Rawa cultural practices through festivals held annually with UPSI and the neighbouring village</li> </ul>   |

Source: Author, 2022

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