

# MEMORY OF THE WORLD REGISTER

## *Batu Bersurat, Terengganu* (Inscribed Stone of Terengganu) (Malaysia)

Ref N° 2008-37

### 1. SUMMARY

The *Batu Bersurat*, Terengganu or Inscribed Stone of Terengganu\* constitutes the earliest evidence of *Jawi* writing. i.e. writing based on Arabic alphabets) in the Malaya Muslim world of Southeast Asia. With the advent of Islam into the region in the 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> Century, a life based on the teachings of *Al-Quran* and the *Hadith* (practices of the Prophet) became widespread in Southeast Asia and together with this, the use of the *Jawi* script. Thus, it heralded a new age of literacy, when converts to the new faith gradually replaced the previous Hindu derived script with *Jawi*, in expressing their new belief.

As a testimony to the spread of Islam that emanated from the Middle East, the Inscribed Stone offers more than just a glimpse of the life of the people of the era. This historical artefact also depicted the growing Islamic culture subsumed under a set of religious laws.

A concomitant feature of this historic movement was the growth of maritime commerce that centred around Kuala Berang, the place where the *Batu Bersurat* was found. The Inscribed Stone alludes to regional trade that flourished in the course of Islamization, with its trading pattern and movement of peoples during that time.

While the Islamization of Terengganu was pursued effectively, it did not put an end to the old way of life. The *Batu Bersurat* bears witness to the new way of thinking, that did not jeopardize their previous way of life unnecessarily. However, the Inscribed Stone also contained a number of Sanskrit terms, a memorial to Southeast Asia's Hindu past.

\*A state on the East Coast of peninsular Malaysia

### 2. DETAILS OF THE NOMIATOR

Name (person or organization):

**Department of National Heritage.**

Relationship to the documentary heritage nominated:

**Preserver of nation's heritage and Chairman of Memory of the World National Committee.**

Contact Person:

**Dato' Professor Emeritus Zuraina Majid.  
Commissioner of Heritage.**

Contact Details:

**Department of National Heritage  
Ministry of Unity, Culture, Arts and Heritage of Malaysia.  
16<sup>th</sup> floor, Menara TH Perdana,  
1001 Jalan Sultan Ismail, 50694 Kuala Lumpur.  
Tel : 603-2612 7600  
Fax : 603-2697 5161**

### 3. IDENTITY AND DESCRIPTION OF THE DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE

#### Inscribed Stone

Description:

The Stone is 89cm in height, 53cm in width at the top, and weighs 214.8 kg. All of its four sides (sections) have inscriptions written from opposite directions.

The inscription is in Malay written in the *Jawi* script, and dated 702 Hijrah (1303). The promulgation of Islamic Laws established Islam as the state religion of Terengganu, and defined a new way of life for the people.

The Inscribed Stone has 3 facades and the following is a translation of the Arabic on each façade (see photo image no. BBT01, BBT02 & BBT03)".

#### BBT01 (Side A)

1. Behold the Prophet of God and his apostles.
2. Praise the God Almighty for giving us Islam.
3. With Islam, truth revealed to all Thy creatures
4. On this land the religion of the Holy Prophet shall prevail.
5. The Holy Prophet, the upholder of truth in Thy kingdom.
6. Hear ye kings, these messages.
7. Messages from the Almighty, ye doubt not.
8. Goodwill, with thee fellow men, saith the Almighty.
9. Be it known, the land of Terengganu, the first to receive message of Islam.
10. On the noon on Friday in the month of Rejab whilst the sun was in the north by religious reckoning.
11. Seven hundred and two years after the demise of the Holy Prophet.

#### BBT02(Side B)

1. Brethren of lands distant.
2. Cometh hither to tell ye. The Forth Commandment for debtors.
3. Take ye not, lose ye not, gold in thy hands.
4. Fifth Commandment give thee alms and pay thy tithes.
5. Take thee not, gold of others.
6. If take thee the gold, return it.
7. Peril be to adulterers.
8. To repent, the following be done, command the Almighty.
9. A hundred whips, for free man, a wife hath.
10. A married woman, to be buried.
11. To the waist and stoned to death.
12. Ignore thee not. Be it the daughter of a prophet.

#### BBT03(Side C)

1. Singles, the fine, ten and a half 'saga'
2. A gentry not married, the fine, seven 'tahils'.....
3. Two and a half 'saga', the fine for older singles.....
4. Seven 'tahils' to the treasury if.....
5. Free man. The Seventh Commandment; dowry for woman should.....
6. Deny her husband, if she commit adultery.

- Translated by: Terengganu State Museum.

#### 4. **JUSTIFICATION FOR INCLUSION/ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA**

##### 4.1 Is authenticity established?

The Terengganu Stone is an original piece of work, and is one of its kind in Southeast Asia. Now that its historical importance has been established, it has become a major source of reference for researchers working on the Islamisation and the economic globalization of the Southeast Asia.

##### 4.2 Is world significance, uniqueness and irreplaceability established?

Bearing its uniqueness and irreplaceability, the Inscribed Stone of Terengganu has assumed additional importance, especially in the context of understanding the political and social history of Southeast Asia, and the transformation of the religious and economic life of its people.

Its world significance includes the fact that it is a historical landmark which allows us to map the movements of peoples and understand the power configuration associated with trade and commerce of the era

##### 4.3 Is one or more of the criteria of (a) time (b) place (c) people (d) subject and theme (e) form and style satisfied?

a) The engraving of *Batu Bersurat* is reminiscent of its time, and is manifest of the world of craftsmanship associated with the age of exploration and commerce of the people of Southeast Asia in the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

c) The presence of traders from various Asian regions illustrates not only the variety of cultures that intersected and interacted on the local scene, but also the migratory patterns of the time. The Indianization and Sinicization of Southeast Asia is well encapsulated in the growth of Kuala Berang, of which the Inscribed Stone is one famous manifestation. While this area a major port-of-call and or and important centre of trade, it has assumed a new role as a significant tourist destination.

##### 4.4 Are there issues of rarity, integrity, threat and management that relate to this nomination?

It is unique, and portrays a life-changing episode of a significant number of people in the Southeast Asian region. It is now well preserved in the gallery of the Terengganu State Museum.

#### 5. **LEGAL INFORMATION**

##### 5.1 Owner of the documentary heritage:

**Government of Malaysia**

**c/o Commissioner of National Heritage  
Department of National Heritage  
Ministry of Culture, Arts and Heritage Malaysia  
16<sup>th</sup> Floor, Menara TH Perdana, 1001  
Jalan Sultan Ismail, 50694 Kuala Lumpur  
Malaysia**

5.2 Custodian of the documentary heritage:

**Terengganu State Museum Board  
Bukit Losong  
20566 Kuala Terengganu  
Malaysia**

5.3 Legal Status:

(a) Category of ownership:  
**Public**

(b) Accessibility:

With Permission From:

**Terengganu State Museum Board//Terengganu State Government.**

(c) Copyright status:

**Copyright reserved by the Terengganu State Government.**

(d) Responsible administration:

**The Terengganu State Museum Board is responsible for its administration.**

(e) Other factors:  
**Nil.**

## 6. MANAGEMENT PLAN

6.1 Is there a management plan in existence for this documentary heritage?

**No.**

## 7. CONSULTATION

7.1 Provide details of consultation about this nomination with (a) the owner of the heritage (b) the custodian (c) your national or regional *Memory of the World* committee

(a) The owner of the heritage:

**Government of Malaysia**

**c/ o Commissioner of National Heritage  
Department of National Heritage  
Ministry of Culture, Arts and Heritage Malaysia  
16<sup>th</sup> Floor, Menara TH Perdana, 1001  
Jalan Sultan Ismail, 50694 Kuala Lumpur  
Malaysia  
Tel: 603-26127600  
Fax: 603-26975161**

(b) The Custodian:

**Terengganu State Museum Board  
Bukit Losong  
20566 Kuala Terengganu  
Malaysia  
Tel: 09-6235444  
Fax: 09-6231209**

(c) National Committee:  
Memory of the World National Committee.

The current chairman is:

**Dato' Professor Emeritus Zuraina Majid  
Commissioner of National Heritage  
Department of National Heritage  
Ministry of Culture, Arts and Heritage Malaysia  
16<sup>th</sup> Floor, Menara TH Perdana, 1001  
Jalan Sultan Ismail, 50694 Kuala Lumpur  
Malaysia  
Tel: 603-26127600  
Fax: 603-26975161**

## **PART B – SUBSIDIARY INFORMATION**

### **8. ASSESSMENT OF RISK**

8.1 Detail the nature and scope of threats to this documentary heritage

The Inscribed Stone is a rare historic object, and one of its kind in Southeast Asia. As with all important historical artifact, it could be stolen. There is also a slight threat of wear and tear through time.

### **9. ASSESSMENT OF PRESERVATION**

9.1 Detail the preservation context of the documentary heritage

The Inscribed Stone is well taken care of so long as the existing preservation policy is in place. Currently it is kept in the Terengganu State Museum under normal temperature and humidity. Granite does not require special temperature and humidity control. While is being exhibited in the Terengganu State Museum, visitors are not allowed to touch it, and the Terengganu Stone has kept it away rom any form of physical human contact, touching or rubbing. Both the State Government of Terengganu and the Government of Malaysia have shown special interest in its safety and preservation.

**PART C – LODGEMENT**

This nomination is lodged by :

**DATO' PROFESOR EMERITUS ZURAINA MAJID.**

( Signature ):.....

( Date ):.....