MEMORY OF THE WORLD REGISTER

*Taj al-Salatin* (The Crown of Kings)

(Malaysia

Ref N° 2010-52

PART A- ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

1. SUMMARY

*Taj al-Salatin* (The Crown of Kings) is regarded as a Malay literary classic and a traditional guidelines to the king’s and ruler. It is recognized as a national literary heritage which is well-known not only amongst the Malays but also to the people in the Malay Archipelago and the Middle-East. Studies have been conducted on this manuscript by local and foreign researchers.

*Taj al-Salatin* (1603) spelled out the duties and responsibilities of a ruler, the role of the court and the laws to restrict a king’s powers. The main function of the *Taj al-Salatin* is to set out the parameters and guidelines for good governance in Islamic terms. It thus inevitably reduces the ruler to the status of God’s servant on earth. Furthermore, it places great emphasis on the role of the king’s guardian, the king’s advisors, ministers and scholars to ensure that the ruler does not veer off the right path.

*Taj al-Salatin* is a work designed with the aim of advising future kings and their executive officers (e.g. viziers, judges) on statecraft, how to best rule their subjects and to lead a decent life in accordance with the stipulations of Islamic ethics.

What is radically different about the narrative of *Taj al-Salatin* compared to most pre-Islamic feudal propaganda is that it clearly reorganises the worldview of the feudal system. In many pro-feudal texts, loyalty is the right of the ruler and it is expected of the people. The *Taj al-Salatin*, however, demands the loyalty of all subjects to the supreme power of omniscient and omnipotent God, thus distracting attention from the king himself.

The National Library of Malaysia has in its possession three (3) versions of *Taj al-Salatin*, with identification numbers MSS 1589, MSS 2530 and MSS 4078. The manuscripts were written on English laid paper about 200 years ago that bears a distinct Colophon statement, as is usual in the tradition of Malay manuscripts writing. The author of the *Taj al-Salatin* was known as Bukhari al-Jauhari who was originated from Johore, a state in the south of the Malay Peninsula. The manuscripts are preserved in an acid-free box and kept in the strong room which is designed according to accepted standard of preservation requirements.

2. DETAILS OF THE NOMINATOR

2.1 Name (person or organization)
National Library of Malaysia.

2.2 Relationship to the documentary heritage nominated
Director-General
National Library of Malaysia.

2.3 Contact persons (s)
Miss Rahimah Haji Ahmad
2.4 Contact details (include address, phone, fax, email)

Address:
National Library of Malaysia
Centre for Malay Manuscripts,
232, Jalan Tun Razak.
50572 Kuala Lumpur, MALAYSIA.

Tel. : 603-26871700
Fax. : 603-26924788
Email : rahimah@pnm.my

3. IDENTITY AND DESCRIPTION OF THE DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE

3.1 Name and identification details of the items being nominated

The three (3) versions of Taj al-Salatin are as follows:

(i) Taj al-Salatin MSS 1589 comprises 32 leaves, measuring 17cm x 10.5cm written on English laid paper. Traditional repair has been done and it is beautifully bound with leather;

(ii) Taj al-Salatin MSS 2530 comprises 204 leaves, measuring 36cm x 25cm written on English laid paper on both sides. The manuscript is beautifully bound with full leather. Traditional repair has been done and it was rebound using its original cover; and

(iii) Taj al-Salatin MSS 4078 comprises 186 leaves, measuring 23cm x 17cm written on English laid paper on both sides. The manuscript is beautifully bound in full cloth with flower designs.

3.2 Description

These Islamic credentials are of crucial importance. For Al-Jauhari they serve as a security measure to ensure that the loyalty and obedience of the courtiers to God before the ruler. The duties of these advisors include the need to educate the king and to instruct future monarchs; the need to present without fear all detailed information, that the ruler may require; and the need to approach the ruler if and when he or she transgresses the law. For the first time in the history of the traditional feudal universe, the discursive territory of the ruling ideology was opened up to new participants. The site of political activity was extended beyond the person of the ruler himself to include the courtiers, commanders, and advisors of the court.

Taj-as-Salatin has been translated into other languages such as French and Dutch.

3.3 Visual documentation, if appropriate (for example, photographs or video of documentary heritage)

(Specimen of photographs of manuscripts as attached)

3.4 Bibliography:

4. JUSTIFICATION FOR INCLUSION/ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

4.1 Is authenticity established?

Generally, evaluation by the Committee on Evaluation of Manuscripts, National Library of Malaysia recognized the *Taj al-Salatin* is authentic based on:

i. *Paper* - English laid paper

ii. *Ink* – sustained the tradition writing of Malay manuscripts by using black and red colour ink, from mixture of fruits and soother (iron gallotannate)

iii. *Contents* – describes good governance for kings and rulers from an Islamic perspective. The manuscript is arranged in 24 chapters and deals with role of viziers, royal justice and the sacred authority of king.


4.2 Is world significance, uniqueness and irreplaccability established?

Since the 17th century, *Taj-as-Salatin* enjoyed great popularity in the Malay world among royalties and commoners alike (in the case of Malaysia, to a certain extent, even until the present time). *Taj-as-Salatin* has been translated into other languages such as French and Dutch. Studies have been done by the following researchers:

(i) A. Marre (1878) translated to French with the title *Mahkota Raja-raja, Ou La Couronne des Rois, par Bokhari de Djohari* (Paris: Maisonneuve).

(ii) Roorda Van Eysinga (1827) translated to Dutch with the title *Der Kroon aller Koningen van Bochari van Djohor.* (de Holander 1976).

(iii) Yasadipura II (end of 18th century) translated to Javanese with the title *Serat Tajussalatin* (T. Iskandar 1965).

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?

*Criterion 1 – Influence*
The *Taj al-Salatin* is an exemplary text which describes the universal declaration of the equality of mankind as creatures and representatives of God on earth. Its Islamic credentials can be found in the way that it draws examples from Islamic and Semitic history in order to illustrate the proper conduct of Muslim rulers. Citing the example of the Prophet Muhammad *pbuh* as the ruler exemplar bar none, the *Taj al-Salatin* notes the necessary characteristics and obligations of the Muslim ruler. These include the need to ensure the prosperity and livelihood of his people; to protect his people from all manner of calamities (from poor government, abuse of power to invasions from abroad); to ensure the stability and prosperity of the country; to protect those who cannot protect themselves such as the poor, the disabled, widows and orphans, etc.; and to ensure that he chooses good advisors and listens to their counsel.

**Criterion 2 – Time:**

The *Taj al-Salatin* relates to the theology, jurisprudence and history practiced in the Malay Archipelago especially by the kings and ruler during the 17th century.

**Criterion 3 – Place:**

Al-Jauhari has thus put the ruler in his place. The survival and prosperity of the realm depends upon whether the King ruler rules according to the dictates of his faith and abides by its laws, which are, of course, the laws of God. Failure to do so leads to moral degradation, despair, and eventually, total chaos and destruction.

While symbolic power is allowed to remain in the hand of the ruler, the true centre of attention is thus relocated on a higher metaphysical level, beyond the reach of people and kings alike. It is clear that for Al-Jauhari it is God, and not the ruler, who is truly supreme and that it is God’s will and commandments that are to be obeyed and followed before the king’s.

Reflects geographical span as known to the Malays during that period covering the Malay Archipelago, Thailand, Middle-East, India and even Sri Lanka.

**Criterion 4 - People**

Reflects the belief, cultural, social and religious values of the Malays.

**Criterion 5 - Subject/Theme**

*Taj al-Salatin* sets out the parameters and guidelines for good governance in Islamic terms. It thus inevitably reduces the ruler to the status of God’s servant on earth. Furthermore, it places great emphasis on the role of the king’s guardian, the advisors, the ministers and scholars to ensure that the ruler does not veer off the right path.

**Criterion 6 - Form and Style**

These manuscripts are written in the Jawi or Arab-Malay script, displaying the naskh calligraphy style of writing.

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

*Taj-al-Salatin* is the main source of reference to researchers.

5. **LEGAL INFORMATION**
5.1 Owner of the documentary heritage (name and contact details)
Director-General
National Library of Malaysia
Centre for Malay Manuscripts,
232, Jalan Tun Razak,
50572 Kuala Lumpur MALAYSIA
Tel. : 603 – 26871700
Fax : 603 – 26924788
Email : pmm@pnm.my

5.2 Custodian of the documentary heritage (name and contact details, if different to owner)
(Refer to 5.1)

5.3 Legal status:
(i) Category of ownership :
National Library of Malaysia
(ii) Accessibility :
The original work is not available as research material. A microfilm and fax copy is made available for public use. However, it is opened for public viewing if required.
(iii) Copyright status :
Vests with National Library of Malaysia
(iv) Responsible administration :
The manuscripts are preserved and kept in accordance with procedures as stipulated in the Policy on Malay Manuscripts.
(v) Other factors :
The National Library Act 1972 (Amendment 1987) provides provisions relating to cultural heritage as follows:
  ii) to acquire and maintain a comprehensive national collection of library resources reflecting the intellectual, literary and cultural heritage of the nation as well as representative national collection reflecting the accumulated knowledge and wisdom of mankind;
  iii) to establish within the Library:
  iv) the National Centre for Malay Manuscripts for the acquisition, documentation and use of Malay Manuscripts.
  v) The National Library of Malaysia has produced a Policy on Malay Manuscript which stipulates policy on acquisition, documentation and preservation of Malay manuscript collection as intellectual heritage of the people and the Nation as well as providing research service related to Malay manuscript.

6. MANAGEMENT PLAN

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

Statement of the significance of the documentary heritage:

The National Library of Malaysia has in its possession three (3) versions of manuscripts of Taj al-Salatin, with identification number MSS 1589, MSS 2530 and MSS 4078.

Access Policy and Procedures:
Microfilm and fax copy are made available for reference and research purposes. However, permission is granted to refer to the original manuscript under certain circumstances and strict supervision of staff. Photocopying from the manuscript is strictly prohibited.

Preservation and managerial policies to control the physical environment:

The National Library of Malaysia has the capability and expertise to save this intellectual heritage to make it available for present and future generations. The manuscripts are kept in a strong room and maintained under proper preservation conditions with 24 hour air-conditioning, and with the following features:

(i) **Temperature:** 18 C is maintained
(ii) **Humidity:** 60% is maintained
(iii) **Sunlight:** No sunlight is allowed
(iv) **Equipment:** Equipped with Quartz Digital Thermo Hygrograph, Dehumidifier and Fire Extinguisher 13 (FE-13)
(v) **Security:** The door is double-layered with fire resistant features and double lock devices. The combination number of the vault is restricted for use by Deputy Director and Librarian of the Centre for Malay Manuscripts only.

Disaster prevention and restoration plans

(i) Installation of smoke detector, fire alarm and automatic fire extinguisher;
(ii) Stored in a vault with fire resistant feature

Preservation staff

(i) Number : 22
(ii) Experience: More than 15 years specialising in conservation and preservation of manuscript and rare book.

7. CONSULTATION

7.1 Details of consultation about the nomination

(i) **Owner** : National Library of Malaysia
(ii) **Custodian** : - same as above-
(iii) **Relevant Regional or National Memory of the World Committee** :

Department of National Heritage
Ministry of Information, Communication and Culture
Level 1,2 &10, Menara Chulan
Jalan Conlay, 50450 Kuala Lumpur, MALAYSIA

Tel: 603 - 21675100
Fax: 603 - 21716028

PART B –SUBSIDIARY INFORMATION
8. ASSESSMENT OF RISK

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

There is always a threat existing due to the heat and humidity of the tropical climate. However, preventive measures as indicated in (6) will ensure that the manuscripts are in safe condition.

9. ASSESSMENT OF PRESERVATION

9.1 Detail the preservation context of the documentary heritage.

9.1.1 Present physical state: Have been repaired and bound.

9.1.2 History of preservation: Not preserved properly especially MSS 4078 whereby this manuscript was classified as a latest acquisition.

9.1.3 Current preservation policy in relation to proposed nominated documentary heritage: Well preserved in accordance to international standard.

9.1.4 Person or organization responsible for preservation: National Library of Malaysia.