

Kingship and Monarchy In The Brunei Sultanate

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This article delves into the intricate components that define the institution of kingship and monarchy in Brunei Darussalam. The focal points of this discussion revolve around the concepts of God-king (dewaraja), sovereign (daulat), and treachery (derhaka), which was influenced during the Indianisation period. These foundational principles were subsequently influenced by the advent of Islam in the region. To comprehensively analyse the concept of kingship, we will explore Geertz's Negara System and Milner's Kerajaan System of Government. Furthermore, another key aspect to consider is the formation of the army, comprising soldiers who pledged their loyalty to various leaders rather than exclusively to the Sultan. These intriguing dynamic highlights the existence of distinct power structures and allegiances within the governance framework. Consequently, the army's allegiance, though not solely tied to the Sultan, played a crucial role in shaping the institution of kingship during the 16th to 19th centuries in the Brunei Malay Sultanate. By examining these interconnected components—God-king, sovereign, treachery, the Negara System, the System of Malay Sultanate Government, and the army—we gain a deeper understanding of the institution of kingship and the governance of the Brunei Malay Sultanate during its historical zenith. These elements collectively underpinned the socio-political fabric of the Brunei Malay Sultanate, reflecting the complex interplay of religious, cultural, and power dynamics within the kingdom.

Keywords: *God-king, Theatre State, Malay Traditional Government, Brunei Sultanate*

Introduction

This article discusses a few concepts that will serve as reference for the subsequent chapter, in particular the institution of kingship in the traditional political system of the Sultanate of Brunei, and its relationship with the concepts of God-king (dewaraja), sovereign (daulat) and treachery (derhaka). This article will delve into what is the institution of the king and how it impacted on and affected the governance of Brunei in the past. In this article, discussions will begin by looking at how the system of kingship or monarchy first began, what influenced the system and how the system evolved in the Malay traditional society. Discussions about the royal palace system and the military will be at the end of the discussions on leadership and the monarchy. It is widely recognized that traditional societies, both in the East and the West, did not conform to the structure of Western democracy. This holds true for the political system of traditional Malay societies, including Brunei, which significantly differs from Western democratic models.³ It is a system of political power which is controlled by a group of people at the apex of society who can be accepted or seen as the rulers or the ruler of that society, and who can then be titled as Leader or King, or in the Islamic era, the Sultan. This was further enhanced by leveraging on the Negara system as conceptualized by Geertz⁴ where ceremonies and rituals, meticulously organized to evoke grand feelings, became the ultimate goal the theater state sought to achieve.

By looking at Anthony Milner's⁵ definition where he considered the political activities of the traditional Malay community who considered themselves as living not under the status of a government. The people considered themselves as being in a kingdom where there existed a single person who ruled with the status of a person of prowess, or a leader or a king. In this kingdom, the concept of space and boundaries are not considered. But what is important is the concept of one's obedience to one's leader under what can be

described as a mandala system of government. What held them together, according to Milner, was the concept of “nama” or name. Everyone needed to have a name or a title which could only be awarded by the leader or the king of that kingdom. The Westphalian concept of boundaries did not emerge until the Western societies dominated the Malay region from the 19th Century onwards. The concept of the king is one who created a kingdom with a government, where that king held the supreme power in the socio-political and economic system. He also had the power to be a legislator and executor of laws, as well as a judge. When a kingdom was formed, a palace for the king would be built and located in the capital.⁶ The palace not only served as the residence of the King and his family members, but it also served as the central government that carried out the administration of the country. Under the mandala system of government, it then developed by having several colonies under the result of the policy of expansion of patrons and supreme political power. From here came the administrative structure that perfected and strengthened the position of the King and his Kingdom.

This can be compared to the Western concept of authority especially that of Max Weber’s⁷ three categories of legitimate rule in relation to power and authority to explain the rulers' authority and right to govern. The first category of legal power which is granted legally is generally applicable in the modern world, but not so much in the pre-modern era. Meanwhile the second category of traditional authority is where this is applicable, and the third category is contingent of the ruler’s charm or anything extraordinary which could establish his right to rule.

The Emergence of the Monarchy System in the Malay World

The Indianisation of the states in Southeast Asia as according to Coedes⁸ began from the First Century AD. The Indianisation of the states in Southeast Asia as according to Coedes began from the First Century AD. According to researchers, referring to the Kutai inscriptions (East Borneo), it was around this time that the early signs of the emergence of a monarchical system in the Malay World could be seen, which was around the 4th century in the East of Borneo Island and West Java. These kingdoms were modelled after King Pallava’s kingdom in Tamil Nadu. This can be seen by a Sanskrit and Pallava inscription which recorded the names of the Kings who had Pallava language influence, identifiable by the fact that their names ended with the word “Varman”. Based on this finding, it is not surprising that the practice of monarchy was not something new in the Malay World, and that it had happened for a very long period. Indianisation or the influence of the Indian Civilisation spread across the Malay society as a result of trade, invasion, and communication with the Indian people and traders. There are several theories associated with how Indianisation took place. The concept of a kingship was accepted and recognised by the people, such that the king had ruling authority in Southeast Asia. This concept could have already existed as early as the First Century CE, or even much earlier.

According to George Coedes,⁹ the trade relationship brought about the formation of Indian settlements in ports around Southeast Asia, and facilitated the arrival of educated people such as monks to spread the Indian influence in those area. Coedes said there were four elements of influence of Indian civilisation in the region, namely the concept of Kingship based on: a. Hindu-Buddhist beliefs; b. Literary writing using Sanskrit; c. Aspects of beliefs quoted from the Ramayana and Mahabharata Tales; and d. Hindu-Buddhist Law. The caste-based style of governance and administration in India was adapted by the Malay population, which subsequently solidified the two-class structural form of society, namely the ruling class and the ruled class. In consequence, the status of the ruling elite grew more stable. Such a scenario can be considered to have taken place in the Brunei community¹⁰ as one of the political units of the Malay society in the Malay World. What actually happened was that India's influence on the Malay community was more pronounced on the ruling class than on the common people. It is this group that played a role in spreading this influence to the lower society in their respective “kavvasan” or areas. This Indian influence was later strengthened with the birth of Hindu-Buddhist Kingdoms such as Funan, whose existence was recorded in Chinese sources in 3rd Century CE. After that Srivijaya emerged as a powerful political force from 7th to 14th Century CE. This was followed by the emergence of Majapahit which was born after the collapse of

Srivijaya. Among the Indian cultures that can be said to have a prominent influence on the Malay community is the field of religion, especially the doctrine of Hindu-Buddhist cosmology. The doctrine of avatar which means the incarnation of gods or incarnation and samsara which means rebirth or reincarnation is the basis of the most important religious influence. Based on the Hindu-Buddhist philosophy of cosmology, the perfection of life can be achieved through the harmonization between the micro-cosmos and the macro-cosmos. Man, like a microcosm, must align himself with God or a deity as a macro-cosmos. In a departure from the teachings of this incarnation, then was born the concept of dewaraja or King, who is permeated by the nature of divinity or divinity that has a role as a patron, looking after the welfare of the people. The concept of reincarnation or rebirth, meanwhile, was based on the belief that if a person's life was full of goodness in the past, then he would be reborn as King.

The God-King Concept

In Malay culture, the idea of God-king¹ refers to a ruler as an incarnated or shadow deity. As represented in his statue as Lord Vishnu riding an eagle, Javanese rulers such as Airlangga were venerated as the avatar of Lord Vishnu. Similarly, Ken Arok is seen as a reincarnation of Lord Vishnu, whereas King Kertanagara, who was exalted in the Jawi Temple, is regarded as the incarnation of Siva-Buddha. With the king's propaganda portraying himself as the manifestation of the gods, they had legitimized themselves as a noble and dignified class of human beings, and thus the subjects in turn believed they should not defy the king. Along with utilizing military force to assure the people's and their divided colonies' allegiance and devotion to the king, a concept was implanted in psychology that the king held amazing abilities

From here emerged the concept of mandala² (circle of kings), which is a symbolic circle described as a circle of obedience to the king. In the centre of the circle is the central government and the palace where the king resides, while outside the central circle there is a larger circle symbolizing a colony that is relatively independent of the supervision of the central government. This means that the central government is surrounded by the colonies it controls. The concept of this mandala also has a connection with the teachings of Hindu-Buddhist cosmology, where Mount Meru, the sacred mountain of this religion is located in the middle and is surrounded by the ocean. The concept of mandala is common in traditional Malay rule, including Brunei, where the king is more powerful in the central government, whereas in the outlying districts political power is left in the hands of government representatives or district leaders. This phenomenon occurred in the Sultanate of Brunei, as evidenced by its association with the territorial ownership system used by the Sultan and the dignitaries in the names of Sungai Kerajaan, Sungai Kuripan, and Sungai Tulin. The influence of the concept of dewaraja also exists on the monarchy of Brunei, which can be traced through the folklore and customs of the Brunei royal family. One of the folk tales that display the concept of dewaraja in Brunei is *Cerita Awang Semaun*.³ According to this tale, the ancestors of the Sultans

¹According to newer research, India's 'caste-based style of governance and administration' was not 'adapted' by the Malay population' or anywhere else in Southeast Asia. In fact, status differentiation had long existed in many parts of Southeast Asia, particularly among those speaking Austronesian languages. In many places, this appears to have consisted of ruling families, commoners and slaves, although there were often conflicts within these ruling families throughout history as, unlike in India, there was not a fixed hierarchy in this elite. The term precedence rather than hierarchy appears more appropriate for Austronesian-speaking societies. Indian cosmology was only partly adopted in places and adapted to an existing indigenous cosmology of an Upper World, Middle World and Underworld. This cosmology is reflected in a plethora of origin traditions for the ruling families in Austronesian-speaking societies from Southeast Asia to Polynesia, including that of Brunei, where the first ruler or rulers descend from the Upper World or sometimes ascend from the Under World. In some places, Mt Mehru was adapted to local sacred hills that had long been part of indigenous beliefs. See Druce, Stephen. (2022). *Examiners' Report on Thesis*. Unpublished. Dr. Druce is the Deputy Director of Academy of Brunei Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam.

² O.W. Wolters (1999). *History, Culture, and Region in Southeast Asian Perspectives*. USA: SEAP Publications, Cornell University Press. p.27

³ Asbol Mail. (2012). *Sejarah dan Peserjaraan Brunei: Dinamika Pembentukan dan Transformasi*. Brunei History Centre. pp.7-8

of Brunei came from an egg from the heavens that descended and landed at the headwaters of the Limbang River. From this egg emerged a young man known as Sultan Dewa Amas Kayangan. The young man later married a Murut woman. When his wife's gestational age reached three months, then she craved to eat tembadau meat (a kind of wild buffalo). Coincidentally, one day, a tembadau was wandering around looking for food in their home area. Sultan Dewa Amas Kayangan then pierced the tembadau with a spear belonging to his father-in-law. The spear had hit its target, but the tembadau did not die and managed to escape with the spear that was embedded in its body. Sultan Dewa Amas Kayang then chased the injured tembadau by riding a white elephant. During his journey to trace the tembadau through the traces of the tembadau blood droplets, Sultan Dewa Amas Kayang stopped at 13 places, and at each stop he married a local woman. At the final stop the white elephant he was riding on died, and he failed to catch the tembadau.

However, there is another version that says this tembadau was caught as soon as it reached Tuaran, Sabah. From the several marriages that Sultan Dewa Amas Kayang had, including with his first wife, there were 14 sons. All these princes eventually met him in heaven, after which they were returned to Earth again, while Sultan Dewa Amas Kayang remained in heaven. Throughout their adventures the 14 princes conquered several provinces that were later made colonies under Brunei. They were the first to discover the central position of the Government of Brunei located on the Brunei River which flows into the Brunei Bay. Awang Semaun, the title character of the story, was the youngest of 14 siblings, but he was a strong and courageous person. Meanwhile, Awang Alak Betatar was appointed King not because he was the eldest son, but because he was the smartest and most handsome of the siblings. When the country was established, they took the initiative to compile the Royal Customs and Traditions of Brunei. Eventually, 14 of these brothers converted to Islam and Awang Alak Betatar was later known as Sultan Muhammad Shah

Indian Influence in Bruneian Society

Indian influence can presently be found in the institutions of the Sultanate of Brunei today, most notably in ceremonies where titles are conferred on Brunei dignitaries. During a typical conferment ceremony, apart from the recitation of the prayer, the recitation of *chiri gelaran* is also performed. Sanskrit was initially used almost entirely in this ceremony. When Islam's influence grew in Brunei, the Arabic language and Islamic elements were incorporated into the *chiri* of this ceremony without abandoning the main language usage of Sanskrit, which is still in place today. The Sanskrit language is preserved because it is part of the traditions and customs that have been inherited from generation to generation. In the meantime, the titles bestowed on the country's dignitaries also clearly have elements of Indian influence, such as the titles of Pengiran Indera Mahkota, Pengiran Maharaja Anakda, Pengiran Kerma Negara, Pengiran Dipa Negara, and Pengiran Derma Wijaya among other titles. Meanwhile, the Indian influence can also be seen in Brunei Malay weddings, such as during the *berbedak*, *tawar*, *berinai* and *bersanding* ceremonies. In short, the Indian influence not only permeated the ruling group but also the people. Although Indian influence has long been entrenched in Brunei society and other places in the Malay World, in terms of appreciation of the Hindu-Buddhist religion, there was a big difference with what was practiced by the followers of this religion themselves. According to

H.O. Beyer, the Indian influence in Brunei was not as deep and strong as in Java. The evidence is that not many historical traces, especially in the form of archaeology, have been found in this country. This may be due to the likelihood that Indian influence in Bruneian society did not come directly from India, but may have been brought by Hindu-Buddhists who had long settled in Sumatra and Java. This view is also agreed upon by Tom Harrison¹⁴ who says that the effects of Indian influence in Bruneian society were not in the form of physical effects such as houses, idols, temples, or statues of the kind found in Java. It was manifested more in the spiritual form and customs of the king, the instrument of Royal greatness, the use of Sanskrit language, the customs of the life of the common people, the custom of marriage, the custom of childbirth, and so on.

The Concept of Sovereignty in Malay Politics and Government

Departing from the concept of dewaraja, the concept of Daulat⁴ was born in politics and the Malay Government, which can be tracked back to the reign of Srivijaya. According to R.J. Wilkinson,¹⁶ before the Malays used the word daulat taken from Arabic which has elements of Islamic influence, they used the word “dirgahayu” which means old age, which also has the same meaning as daulat, namely King and Government. The word “daulat” itself is taken from the Arabic/Ottoman word “daulah”, which means a matter or matters related to power, government, empire, dynasty, government or state. It is this emphasis on the concept of sovereignty and rebellion that drove the feeling of undivided loyalty to the reigning king. In effect, this was why the king had been placed in a special and exalted place in the socio-political makeup of the country. Any member of society who rose up against it would be severely punished. The HinduBuddhist influence emphasized the concept of dewaraja in monarchical institutions in the Malay world, including Brunei, but the Islamic influence, which is believed to have begun to take root in the 7th Century CE and then expanded in the 9th Century CE, elevated the dignity of the Sultan by giving him recognition as the Caliph of God or the Representative of God and the Umbrella of God in implementing the rule of a Kingdom on Earth.

The Sultan was effectively Allah’s mediator with the people under his rule. The same phenomenon also happened to the Brunei Government when the influence of Islam was once again thought to have taken root from the 13th Century to 16th Century CE in the state. However, the advent of Islam as a new religion to replace Religion Hindu-Buddhism in the Malay World, including Brunei, was not able to completely eliminate the influence of Hindu-Buddhism in the institution of monarchy, nor were any aspects compatible with the culture or the existing traditional values of Brunei society compromised. Assumptions about the Rulers of the Malay World as the Caliphs of God in this world can be highlighted from this passage found in the Hikayat Hang Tuah: “In addition, I heard the news in Malaya now that it is said that a king who came from a king in the senses was sent down by Allah Ta’ala. This servant came to see, because the king will be Allah Ta’ala in this world, whoever sees the king is like seeing Allah Ta’ala.”⁵ “So hukama said, the just King with the Prophet Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam is like two jewels on a ring, moreover the King is like a substitute for Allah in the world with him zullullahu fi Ilam.³⁶ When doing devotion to the King is like doing devotion to Allah Subhanahu wa Ta’ala.”⁶ In Malay Annals, the Malay Sultan is considered not only as the Caliph of Allah but, also as the Shadow of Allah, and the Sultan is also associated with the Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم as is written in the will of Tun Perak, one of Malacca’s well known Bendahara of Malacca. The same is true of the Sultanate of Brunei.⁷ This matter is clearly displayed in the text “Puja Puspa”⁸ during the Istiadat Berpuspa or Coronation of the Sultan of Brunei. The role of this text is almost the same as the chiri recited during the Title Awarding Ceremony on Brunei dignitaries. Puja Puspa is exclusively reserved for the Sultan on the day of his inauguration or coronation. The text of Puja Puspa is as follows:

⁴ Tom Harrison, who served as the Curator of the Brunei Museum and later the Sarawak Museum in 1960, developed a particular fascination with the Brunei section of the Boxer Codex contained within folios 71-86 of the manuscript. He approached John S. Carroll to translate and publish it in English. Eventually, in 1982, the translated version was published in the Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Society (JMBRAS). Ref: footnote (17) Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, Vol.55, No.2 (243), 1982 and Source: Yunos, Rozan. (2014). 16th Century Brunei Darussalam From European Perspectives. The Brunei Times, 10(1), p.413.

⁵ Original Malay text read: “Tambahan hamba mendengar khabar di Tanah Melayu sekarang sudah konon diturunkan raja yang berasal raja di keinderaan diturunkan Allah Ta’ala. Hamba datang ini pun hendak melihat, kerana raja itu akan Allah Ta’ala di dalam dunia ini, barang siapa melihat raja seperti melihat Allah Ta’ala”

⁶ Original Malay text read: “Maka kata hukama, Raja yang adil itu dengan Nabi Sallallahu ‘Alaihi wa Sallam adalah umpama dua butir permata pada sebetuk cincin, lagi pun Raja itu umpama ganti Allah di dalam dunia dengan ia zullullahu fi Ilam. Apabila berbuat kebaktian kepada Raja seperti berbuat kebaktian kepada Allah Subhanahu wa Ta’ala”

⁷ Asbol Mail. (2012). p.35

⁸ P.M. Yusuf. (1975). Adat Istiadat Diraja Brunei Darussalam. Brunei Museum Journal. Vol. IV. No. 3, 1975, pp.48- 50.

Sudah dengan kehendak Allah Tuanku menjadi Raja dalam Negeri Brunei ini; Sudah dengan kehendak Allah Tuanku menjadi junjungan rakyat Negeri Brunei ini; Sudah dengan kehendak Allah Tuanku menjadi pemimpin rakyat Negeri Brunei ini;
Sudah dengan kehendak Allah Tuanku menjadi penaung rakyat Negeri Brunei ini; Sudah dengan kehendak Allah Tuanku menjadi turus tunggak Negeri Brunei ini;
Sudah dengan kehendak Allah Tuanku menjadi Yang Di-Pertuan bagi Negeri Brunei ini; Mudah-mudahan Kebawah Duli Yang Maha Mulia Tuan Patek kekal karar di atas Singgahsana Kerajaan Brunei turun-temurun memerintah dan memimpin rakyat Negeri Brunei Darussalam. Amin Ya Rabbal Alamin.

To date, this Puja Puspa text has not had an in-depth study of when and who first wore it, but according to P.M. Yusuf,⁹ this text has been used for generations by the Sultanate of Brunei. Based on this opinion it can be believed that this text is not something new; and it can be said that this is a traditional text that is inextricably linked to the “Berpuspa Ceremony”. In English, this ceremony is known as the Coronation. It is an important ceremony to confirm a Sultan as the supreme ruler of Brunei with the title of Yang Di-Pertuan, and a ceremony that is held only when a new Sultan is crowned.¹⁰ Although the text of Puja Puspa does not directly touch on the Sultan of Brunei as the Caliph of God, the Image of God or like a ring with a jewel between the Sultan and the Prophet, but what is implied in the text of Puja Puspa is clear enough to give a picture of the Sultan is the Caliph of Allah or the Representative of Allah in this world. The text however lends credence to the belief that since the Sultan of Brunei becoming the head of state is by the will of Allah جل جلاله, then it can be interpreted that Allah جل جلاله has destined and chosen the Sultan of Brunei as the supreme ruler of Brunei. Similarly in traditional Brunei manuscripts such as Syair Awang Semaun, 23 the author gave the title of Sultan Bolkia as “Duli Khalifah”,²⁴ as well as Pengiran Shahbandar Pengiran Muhammad Salleh, the author of Syair Rakis, also gave a similar title to Sultan Abdul Momin. This shows the Sultan of Brunei was also regarded as the Caliph of God. The text of puja puspa also contains references to the values of political philosophy and the Government, which emphasizes that the appointment as Sultan is a very heavy responsibility. The Sultan, despite being the country’s supreme authority, cannot use his power arbitrarily. All his actions must be based on the teachings from the verses of the Qur’an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم. Therefore, if the Sultan is fair and just, he will get the reward, and consequently it is obligatory for the people to be grateful. Theoretically if the Sultan were to be cruel and unjust then he would be considered as having sinned. Therefore, any belief or religion does have a principle that does not allow injustice to tarnish the use of power, let alone if it is seen within the framework of Islam. In view of strengthening the caliphate which is derived from the Islamic view of the Sultan of Brunei, the royal lineage has been linked with the descendants of the Prophet Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم through Sultan Sharif Ali, 25 Brunei’s third Sultan. He is said to have come from Taif,²⁶ which has a drop of the Prophet’s blood which he obtained through the descendants of Sayidina Hassan, the grandson of Rasulullah. Although this claim is difficult to prove, it is not an important question to the people of Brunei, because what is important to them is that their Sultan is equal and has blood ties with a famous and authoritative leader. Especially when associated with Rasulullah صلى الله عليه وسلم, a human being is believed to be infallible by all Muslims. In the meantime, the Sultan also has the responsibility to run the government of Brunei on four important elements, namely canon, syarak, rasam, and customs. This shows that a Sultan in the Government of Brunei has a certain track record in implementing the government of the country. He

⁹ P.M. Yusuf. (1975). pp.48-50

¹⁰ D.S. Ranjit Singh. (2000). The Making of Sabah 1865-1941: The Dynamics of Indigenous Society. University of Malaya Press, Kuala Lumpur. p.63; Kerajaan Negeri Brunei Darussalam. (1968). Perpuspaan 1 Ogos 1968. Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka. Brunei. pp.41&47.

cannot escape from the requirements of the Islamic Religion where he is the head of religion and the most powerful person in moving the administrative machinery and religious affairs. He must also follow the path of customs that have been practiced for so long in the Sultanate of Brunei. Although the concept of sovereignty is said to be difficult to understand but there are also scholars who try to explain it and connect it with the power of the Malay Rulers.

Muhammad Yusoff Hashim,²⁷ for example, argued that the concept of Sovereignty became the essence of the right of the ruler to use his power to rule a government or country. The sovereignty of a king is also an element of luck, glory, privilege, and advantage in the King's personality.²⁸ Meanwhile, Zainal Abidin Wahid²⁹ understood that the sovereignty concept is not merely a reflection of the authority of the law in the hands of the Malay Sultans, but covers religious and cultural aspects. The sovereignty gave him many rights and privileges, placing him in society without being criticized. Daulat also demanded that the people shed their undivided allegiance to the Sultan. The concept of sovereignty and rebellion in the Sultanate of Brunei's political system is said to have been inherited from generation to generation. If the existence of Syair Awang Semaun is accepted at the end of the 16th Century, then it can be said that it is the earliest traditional text to mention the word daulat directly, when it is recorded "Berkat daulat Betara Khalifah ... turun-temurun menjadi Raja. Sekalian tidak mendapat bala." ³⁰ The formation of Brunei Darussalam is the result of the unity of the people who have voluntarily handed over power to the King (Sultan). This handover of power is based on the principle that the King cannot be unjust, and in return the people cannot rebel against the King. When power has been handed over then by itself the Sultan of Brunei has had a sovereignty that has a close relationship with the concept of non-rebellion. Thus arose the unity between the King and the people on the basis of the king for the people and the people for the King. According to the Brunei Code, the Sultan of Brunei as the head of state must have four main criteria, namely forgiving, generous, powerful, and enforcing the law firmly. The word "sovereign" is not directly recorded in this canon, but if we take into account that sovereignty could be defined by all the privileges and advantages that a king has, then it can be considered that what is recorded in the canon through the four features mentioned above that the Sultan of Brunei does have the concept of sovereignty in his rule. This means that the concept of sovereignty had already existed in the Sultanate of Brunei in the 15th Century, if the existence of this Brunei Code of Laws was indeed accepted in that century. However, the main key in defending the concept of sovereignty and rebellion is the importance of having fair qualities in implementing the government and laws of the country, both in the Sultan who sits on the throne and among the dignitaries involved with the administration of the Government. This concept of sovereignty is then further clarified in the "Berpuspa Ceremony" or Coronation of the Sultan of Brunei. For example, during the inauguration of Sultan Muhammad Jamalul Alam II in 1919, when he was sitting in the lapau or hall of residence, the Pengiran Bendahara would say the words "Daulat Yang Di-Pertuan, dilanjutkan oleh Allah usia" (can be loosely translated as Long Live the King or Allah extend his life) and then instructed the audience to worship. With this call and prayer, then it seems that all the people have given recognition to the Sultan as their leader and with sovereignty.¹¹

The Negara System One critical approach for bolstering the monarchy's prestige is the use of rituals and other royal regalia, which may be analysed via Professor Geertz's Negara system. There are parallels between what Geertz referred to as Bali's "theater states" and Malay Sultanates. Professor Geertz's 1980 book³² "Negara: The Theatre State in Nineteenth-Century Bali" made use of the word "negara" in referring to the type of supreme political power that dominated most of Southeast Asia during the precolonial era. Geertz³³ introduced the notion of the theatrical state in his writing. It is an anthropological examination of the negara, a type of government that predominated in 19th -Century Bali. Negara is a Sanskrit term for state that is currently used in the Malay language. Geertz's political system is predicated on the premise that achieving order in political life is fundamentally a question of replicating the divine order of the cosmos.

¹¹ P.L. Amin Sweeney. (1968). pp.81-82; Pehin Dato Jamil Al-Sufri. (2001). Tarsilah Brunei: Sejarah Awal and Perkembangan Islam. Brunei History Centre. pp.55-56.

The first was a perspective on the nature of God. The Universe was envisioned as a hierarchy in which Siva, the highest God, sat immobile on the axis. The most significant institution sustained by these principles was a type of “divine right” royalty. The purpose of establishing a negara, according to Geertz,¹² was to construct “cosmologically based exemplary state.” In Negara, although the Balinese courts had little governmental influence over the communities they governed, they were, like the Brunei Sultanates, the unmistakable cultural centres of the nation. The constant complex ceremony was an argument – repeated in the relentless language of ritual – that worldly position has a cosmic basis, that hierarchy is the guiding principle of the cosmos, and that human life arrangements are approximations, more or less similar to those of the divine. Geertz³⁵ highlighted how precisely orchestrated rites and rituals eliciting big sensations were the ultimate purpose of the theatrical state. Geertz’s central point in Negara is that state power is not limited to political economic structures and methods of physical violence used to subjugate citizens, but also to the institutionalized capacity to demonstrate authority via symbolic means. According to Geertz,³⁶ it is the symbolic channel that permits a demonstration of the capacity of grandeur to arrange the Universe. In addition, Geertz asserted that symbolic portrayals are not deceiving; they mediate the interpretation of the imaginations into reality, in which the theatrical state is meant to convey a view of the ultimate reality's nature that forms the existing conditions of existence to correlate with that reality. This is where the state gained its authority, which was sufficiently authentic due to its intellectual vigour and semiotic capacity to enslave injustice. For the state, symbolic acts have great influence. If one desires to generalize this insight, it is applicable not just to the Balinese state but also to current modern governments, where the state’s hegemonic interactions with its inhabitants continue to be characterized by the employment of symbolic tactics.

The Kerajaan System

The Kerajaan System Observers of the 19th Century saw a unified “Malay World” with the same language, clothes, manners, faith, religion, and customs, as well as equivalent patterns of residency and activity. Despite the fact that its people have always had a sense of cultural oneness, the Malay world has never attained complete political unification. Instead, it was a fragmented and mobile realm consisting of several rajas, moving capitals, hazy borders, and nomads. The Malay term “Kerajaan,” which is sometimes translated as “government,” “state,” or “kingdom,” meant nothing more than “being in the situation of having a raja.” Typically, European observers concentrated on the study of Malay institutions rather than the underlying principles, and they interpreted and assessed these institutions in Western terms. In his 1982 work *Kerajaan: Malay Political Culture on the Eve of Colonial Rule*, A.C. Milner¹³ examined Malay sources such as the hikayat and historical literature to determine the genuine nature of Malay political motives and how Malays interpreted their political actions. He focuses his studies on two separate occurrences in the Malay world during the 19th Century: the emergence and expansion of Deli on the eastern coast of Sumatra and the Pahang civil war on the Malay Peninsula. The Hikayat Deli and Hikayat Panang are used to illustrate the preoccupations and classifications of the Malay political culture. The economic interpretation of Malay political objectives was easily apparent to European observers. For instance, he¹⁴ saw the desire to dominate the East Sumatran export trade, particularly the pepper trade, as the motivating reason for political action in that region. The Malay raja was more concerned with personal wealth than with commerce, as wealth was a path to power and authority was reflected in the number of his personal following and subject population. Given that any wealthy Malay may be a potential power rival, the raja attempted not just to maximize his own wealth but also to prevent his people from amassing wealth. Wealth was essential to the raja’s power because it allowed him to buy the loyalty of influential individuals by the bestowal of titles, dignities, and privileges and the maintenance of costly ceremony, celebration, and entertainment. Thus, it was compatible with the Malay tradition of Kerajaan for “rajaship” to be conventionalised and institutionalized, and for the

¹² Geertz, Clifford. (1980). p.37

¹³ Milner, AC. (2016). pp.49-82 & pp.113-146

¹⁴ Milner, AC. (2016). pp.49-82 & pp.113-146

raja to be connected with rites and ceremonies as opposed to the actual responsibility of ruling. Although they acknowledged that the Malay kerajaan did not match with Western political concepts or categories, European observers were unable to realize that it was, in fact, a “magio-religious”¹⁵ system as characterised by Milner. Milner⁴⁰ finds that two critical notions are at work: kerajaan, which he described as the state of having a raja, rather than the governmental implications it has today, and nama (good name, reputation, public image, etc.). The two concepts interact as follows: the kerajaan is an ecosystem populated by the rakyat with the raja as its focal point, which is similar to the God-king concept, Khilafah on Earth concept and the Bali Negara kingship concept where the social driving force for the ecosystem is nama: everyone, including the raja, pursues it; the raja can increase his nama by increasing the number of rakyat and foreigners trading at his port, whereas the rakyat can raise their nama by being conferred titles. These were exactly the things desired by a Malay subject from his raja.

Brunei’s Palace Court System

The supreme authority in Brunei is always the Sultan.¹⁶ However, in terms of practicality, the Sultan does not have to administer and govern directly. In the Brunei Malay Sultanate, the Sultan will appoint and award titles to several nobilities made up primarily of the three state institutions namely that of the Wazir, Cheteria and Menteri. These nobilities will assist the Sultan in administering the government which is made up of two structures, the first being the central government, and the second, the outlying districts. At the central government, the Sultan will be assisted by the Wazir, Cheteria and Menteri¹⁷, while at the outlying districts, it would be done by Cheteria, Pengiran, Menteri, Syarif and heads of villages or the relevant ethnic tribe leaders. The appointments of these Brunei dignitaries have certain procedures and conditions that have been set according to the adaptations of the Malay Sultanate of Brunei, and which have been inherited since the beginning of recorded history.

Among the important conditions is the person who will hold the position of Wazir, who is usually from among the closest royal family members or the “Pengiran Bertaras” such as from among the Sultan’s siblings who are unlikely to be able to or who are not eligible to accede to the throne, whether Pengiran Gahara or otherwise, brother-in-law, son-in-law, nephew or uncle of the Sultan. Such an appointment is necessary because the position of Wazir has a great influence in shaping the political system and government of Brunei. Some of these positions are stepping stones to higher positions, and one could even become the Sultan if circumstances permit, especially the Pengiran Bendahara. Apart from that, it is also to strengthen the bonds of brotherhood among the royal family.

Asbol Mail argued that this method is the best alternative compared to appointing a Wazir from among non-royal relatives. If a non-member of the royal family is appointed as Wazir, it is feared that their power will threaten the Sultan’s power. As Wazirs, they have political influence, many followers and economic power. Through the appointment of the Sultan’s immediate family to the post of Wazir, it is also hoped that they will be able to reunite and increase the closeness between the Brunei royal family which has been divided among them. One example is the dispute between the family group of Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin II (1828- 1852 CE) and the family of Raja Muda Hashim. This dispute occurred when Sultan Muhammad Alam (1826-1828 CE) took over the reins of Brunei after the death of his father Sultan Muhammad Kanzul Alam (1807-1826 CE). This throne should have been given to Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin II. As a result, there was a seizure of political power in the early 19th Century which led to the

¹⁵ Merriam Webster Dictionary described magio-religious as: of, belonging to, or having the character of a body of magical practices intended to cause a supernatural being to produce or prevent a specific result (as an increase of the crops). Retrieved from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/magico-religious> on 21 December 2021

¹⁶ _____ (n.d.). The Brunei Constitution. Attorney General’s Chambers.

¹⁷ Leyden, John. (1821), Malay Annals (translated from the Malay language). Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown. p.2; Mills, L.A. (1960). British Malaya 1824-67. Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, Vol.33, Pt.3 1960, (No.191), p.283; Leys, Peter. (1968). Observations of the Brunei Political System. Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society Vol.41 No.2 (214) December 1968 pp.121-124; and Tarling, Nicholas. (1971). Britain, The Brookes and Brunei. Oxford University Press p.4

death of Sultan Muhammad Alam, the brother of Raja Muda Hashim.⁴³ Meanwhile, the appointment of Ministers is reserved for those who are not from the Pengiran group or people mostly from the middle class who have wealth, influence and respect, and who have knowledge of religion and local customs. These are usually appointed among village or tribal leaders and are not necessarily Muslims. They are the link between the people and the rulers of Brunei, including the Sultan. Some of these Ministers also serve in the central government, especially those of Brunei Malay descent and who are Muslims, while others are appointed as government representatives in Brunei's territories. Any dignitary who has been appointed and conferred a title, is effectively given the authority to administer and implement the law and any order of the Sultan, whether at the central government or at the provincial level in Brunei, in accordance with the status of their respective titles and elite powers. Without an official appointment from the Sultan, the dignitaries will not get the recognition and respect of the people.¹⁸

In ensuring that all forms of state administration run smoothly, the Sultan together with the Wazir, Cheteria and the Minister, often holds meetings in the central government. In this meeting all opinions are submitted for hearing and then decided by consensus and collectively. This method at least prevents the Sultan from doing as he pleases in taking decisions related to the national interest. However, the supreme power and final decision on national policies lie in the hands of the Sultan, because the Sultan's seal is required in any document that has been met and confirmed by members of the meeting council. The Brunei Palace Court system as is currently practiced comprise one chief Vizier (Perdana Wazir), four Viziers (Wazir), two chief Cheteria, four Cheteria 4, eight Cheteria 8, sixteen Cheteria 16, thirty-two Cheteria 32 and then followed by the Pehin Menteris also in the same numerical sequence and then the various Menteri Darat and other appointees. There is also a separate category for the Religious Ministers. This Mandala-like structure was already in place for a period of time but over the years the numbers have varied. According to Asbol Mail¹⁹, at least five versions of these palace system had taken place over the years. The first two was from Silsilah Raja-Raja Berunai Text A.²⁰ The third version was from Silsilah Raja-Raja Brunei Text B. The fourth version was written by P.M. Yusuf, and the fifth version was noted during the reign of Sultan Abdul Momin.⁴⁹ Based on these five versions, one of the common factors is the group of Viziers made up of Pengiran Bendahara, Pengiran Digadong, Pengiran Pemancha and Pengiran Temenggung. The appointments of Cheterias and Pehin Menteris are varied in terms of numbers and even their titles, but still considered as supporting or completing the duties of each other. What is clear is that not every Sultan will appoint and fill in all the titles. His appointments will be based on the needs of the nation. At the same time, the Sultan has to take precaution in ensuring that those who he will appoint have the right credentials as well as the person's influence in society. D.E. Brown⁵⁰ also noted the possibility that the vacant posts were not filled in because the person to be appointed refused to take up the posts. This indicated that not everyone wanted to be appointed despite the prestige, due to its heavy responsibility. There were occasions when those who refused the appointment left the central government and moved to Sabah and Sarawak.

This was to avoid being labelled as treacherous for not having accepted the Sultan's award. Thus, the structure of the traditional nobilities of Brunei depended on the Sultan's titah. This made the structures distinctive for different reigns. However, the changes were usually not far different from the general appointments. Pengiran Bendahara: Among the four Wazirs, the Pengiran Bendahara held many roles and responsibilities in government politics and administration. He was the main adviser to the Sultan of Brunei. In terms of position, he had higher authority than the other dignitaries of the similar rank of Vizier. This was made clear as the Pengiran Bendahara held the highest position in the hierarchy of government after the Sultan. He was regarded as the second most significant person behind the Sultan. The Pengiran Bendahara was one of the Viziers who was always brought to consult on matters pertaining to the administration of the

¹⁸ P.M. Yusuf. (1958). pp.43-44; and Pehin Dato Jamil Al-Sufri. (1985) p.8

¹⁹ Asbol Mail. (2008). *Institusi Wazir, Ceteria dan Menteri pada Abad ke-19: Struktur dan Kuasa Elite dalam Pentadbiran di Kesultanan Melayu Brunei*. SOSIOHUMANIKA, 1(1) 2008 Jurnal Pendidikan Sains Sosial dan Kemanusiaan ISSN 1979-0112 & ISSN 2622-6855

²⁰ weeney, P.L. Amin. (1968). pp.14-16, 19, 21 and 47-48

country, such as making political decisions in relation to war or peace negotiations and also on the colonies under Brunei. The Pengiran Bendahara oversees and monitors almost all state affairs. Meanwhile, according to the custom of appointing the Sultan of Brunei, Pengiran Bendahara was usually one of the potential candidates to replace the Sultan should the Sultan not have a prince or heir who was qualified to replace him. Pengiran Digadong: His main job is to look after and supervise the financial resources and the country's revenue derived from tax collection. He was assisted by eight Cheteria and Ministers consisting of both Orang Kaya Digadong, Pengiran Syahbandar, Bendahari Dagang and Penyurat Dagang. Pengiran Pemancha: He is responsible as the chairman in any meeting of Brunei dignitaries. He would schedule the meeting. He would also be the supreme head of the administration of internal affairs and the customs, traditions and canons of Brunei Darussalam. There are eight Cheteria and eight Ministers who would be assisting in the duties of Pengiran Pemancha.

Pengiran Temenggong: He is responsible for leading the armed forces in the sea. That is why he is also renowned as the king of the sea. If an attack is to be made on the enemy, Pengiran Temenggong is tasked with preparing the army by ordering the people to join the Brunei forces to mount the attack.

The Role of the Military in the Brunei Sultanate

The military's significance in the Brunei Sultanate in particular cannot be understated, especially in terms of managing the different Mandala polities along Borneo's coast. According to Asbol Mail,²¹ the role of the military in protecting its nation against hostile assaults is inextricably linked to political forces. If it defeats the adversary, it would have succeeded in preserving the country's present political powers. As a result, the protected nation is considered sovereign and independent, free of foreign rule. Apart from defending against foreign military threats, the military is often utilized to put an end to rebellious efforts to destabilize the reigning authority. In such cases, it is evident that the government not only controls the military forces, but also certain political groupings with a sizable following. As a result, the "tentera karah" or conscripted army consisted of armies such as "government's army", "dignitary's army", and the "government agent's army". Due to the critical role of the military in defending the nation and the political authority's strength, the Brunei Sultanate selected specialized dignitaries to supervise the military inside their government's administrative machinery. These nobles served as the army's commander, strategising defense and recruiting recruits, particularly during war preparations. In the Bruneian Sultanate, the Pengiran Temenggong is appointed as the army's commander-in-chief.

The Pengiran Bendahara, as de facto Chief of all the Viziers and the sultan's most senior adviser, is also active in controlling military-related matters.²² During the time of Sultan Muhammad Tajuddin (1795-1804) (1804-1807), he ordered Pengiran Temenggong Abdul Raub to quell a revolt by the Melanau people in Rejang and Mukah, demonstrating the role of Pengiran Temenggong as leader of the army. In 1858, Pengiran Temenggong Hashim assembled a "tentera karah" (conscripted army) of 200 Pengkalan Tarap Limbang inhabitants to confront the rioting Kayan people.⁵³ The Pengiran Bendahara is also known to have led the Brunei armies probably due to the Pengiran Temenggong being unavailable or when the Sultan himself could command it. During the reign of Sultan Saiful Rizal (1533-1581), he was also tasked with leading 1,000 Bruneian men against the Spanish army in 1578 during the Castilian War.⁵⁴ Similar to other Malay Realm sultanates, not just in terms of manpower, but also in terms of the quality of its equipment, Brunei's troops were a formidable force. During the time of Sultan Saiful Rizal (1533-1581), the Bruneian Sultanate possessed as many as 160 calaluz vessels and 90 lancharas in 1546. These vessels were undoubtedly armed with modern armaments, particularly cannons. These warships were sent to aid the Kingdom of Japara, which was engaged in a civil war with the Kingdom of Pasaruan.⁵⁵ A Sultanate's huge and powerful army allowed it to enjoy much more political authority. Therefore, it was able to expand its territory by attacking

²¹ Asbol Mail, Ampuan Haji Brahim Ampuan Haji Tengah, Haji Tassim Haji Abu Bakar, (2021). *The Role of The Military, The Bruneian Political Power and The Malay Realm (14th – 19th Century): From a Historical Perspective*. Psychology And Education (2021) 58(4), ISSN 1553 – 6939.

²² Asbol Mail. (2011). p.58

its neighbours. These conquests were conducted to increase its political dominance, but economic and theological motives, like as the spread of Islam, also played a role. The territorial occupations led in an expansion in the country's economic sources, notably in terms of tributaries and tax revenues from the conquered states. Aside from that, commercial operations expanded, resulting in earnings not just from commerce but also from taxes levied on the traded items. The process of expansion also permitted the spread of Islam across the Malay Realm, as occurred in the Bruneian Sultanate and Malacca in the 16th and 15th Centuries, respectively. Political instability occasionally manifested itself in the form of power struggles for the throne, whether among royal princes or dignitaries. One prime example was the conflict between Sultan Abdul Hakkul Mubin (1661–1673) and Sultan Muhyiddin (1671–1683) (1673-1690).⁵⁶ The army was implicated in this power struggle. The civil war between the two Sultans lasted 12 years, from 1661 to 1673, and both Sultans required warriors that were loyal to them. The war was eventually won by Sultan Muhyiddin

Clearly, the military played a significant part in this civil war, as both Sultan Abdul Hakkul Mubin and Sultan Muhyiddin enlisted their respective royal forces, one based in Pulau Chermin and the other in Bandar Brunei. Both of these royal armies comprised a considerable number of warriors and were effectively equipped, as shown by their ability to endure a 12-year battle. This was not a temporary situation. It had to defeat formidable armies loyal to their separate kingdoms. A lengthy conflict required a robust economy to pay the army's requirements as well as the equipment. This civil war also demonstrates the presence of weaponry such as cannons employed by Sultan Abdul Hakkul Mubin to destroy royal regalia. The cannons are evidence that His Majesty had advanced armaments. He also used a military plan, which consisted on tactics to prevent supplies from reaching Kota Batu via sea. With this siege, it was anticipated that Sultan Muhyiddin's troops would run out of food. This approach proved ineffective, as Sultan Muhyiddin was able to enlist Sulu's aid to fight Sultan Abdul Hakkul Mubin. After Sultan Abdul Hakkul Mubin was vanquished, Sulu was willing to lend help when they were offered Kimanis region, as a recompensation. In 1828, the military's participation in the war for the throne of the Bruneian Sultanate re emerged during the Second Civil War, between Pengiran Raja Noralam and Sultan Muhammad Alam or Sultan Marak Berapi (1826-1828). This event engaged both the royal army and the rebel force. The villagers of Kampong Burung Pingai supported Raja Noralam, and it was they who succeeded to slay Sultan Muhammad Alam. Upon his death, the prince of Raja Noralam, Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin II (1828-1852), was enthroned as the next Sultan.⁵⁷ In 1846, during the Third Civil War, between Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin II and Pengiran Bendahara Raja Muda Hashim, the latter died. In this occurrence, the royal army squared off against the dignitary army of Pengiran Bendahara Raja Muda Hashim. In response to the killing of the Pengiran Bendahara, James Brooke and the British forces launched an assault on Brunei. James Brooke had been a close friend of the Pengiran Bendahara from their first meeting in Sarawak Asal. In addition to resolving power issues, the military also played a major role in suppressing popular rebellions.⁵⁸ The same occurred when the Bruneian Sultanate enlisted warriors to quell rebellions in Sarawak Asal (Original) in 1835, in Limbang twice in 1856 and 1884, and in Tutong and in Belait in 1899.²³ Pengiran Indera Mahkota Pengiran Syahbandar Muhammad Salleh was unable to put down this uprising since his army's power was not as strong to that of the rebel force.⁶⁰ James Brooke ultimately assisted Pengiran Bendahara in putting an end to the insurrection. In addition, on October 3, 1840, Raja Muda Hashim requested aid from James Brooke. With all the military aid he got, he was able to put an end to the insurrection on 20th December 1840, but the Brunei government paid a very high price as Rajah Brooke subsequently seized further territories from Brunei.⁶¹ The Bruneian Sultanate's royal army also played a role in eradicating pirates. One such occasion in the Bruneian Sultanate was recorded in the Boxer Codex. In these records, it is stated that there had been as many as 100 warships in Bandar Brunei. Among them were the galera type. Other than being used for war, these ships were also used to attack the

²³ Asbol Mail (2011) p.122

pirates that roamed Bruneian waters.²⁴ When it was assaulted by the Sulu army, the Bruneian Sultanate once deployed its military to protect itself against foreign invasions coming from this area. The Bruneian army was defeated during an invasion in 1369. Bandar Brunei was destroyed by fire, resulting in enormous damages. The Sulu army captured a large number of Bruneian assets. Brunei may not have had a powerful army⁶³ at the time as it was still under Majapahit authority⁶⁴ at the time. Brunei was initially defeated by the Spanish in 1578, but in retribution, Pengiran Bendahara Sakam commanded 1,000 troops in a counterattack. They constructed a stone fort on Ambok island. They also used a policy of poisoning the supply of drinking water for the Spanish army, causing many soldiers to get sick. Thus, the Spanish were only able to occupy Brunei for a total of 72 days. This demonstrates that the Bruneian royal army, led by Pengiran Bendahara Sakam, gave their best to protect their nation's independence and sovereignty.²⁵

Conclusion

This article has looked into how the monarchy system in Brunei has emerged. Although no one really knows how the Brunei Kingdom and later the Brunei Sultanate had evolved over time, speculations can be made by referring to the Malay Sultanates in Peninsular Malaysia and other Malay kingdoms around the region. The need to have a leader probably stemmed from someone who was strong and influential, often referred to as the Person of Prowess. With the coming of the Buddhist-Hindu influences, in an attempt to legitimize their rule became the incarnation of God or the best human being under the Hindu-Buddhist beliefs and culture. The influences of the Indic have permeated not just at the top level of society where it changed the rulership's structure but it has also permeated to the common people. The Indic influences made the rakyat more susceptible in accepting the rulers as incarnations of God and accepting the concepts of Daulat and Tula where it is accepted that the king is divine and held the Daulat status, and to disobey them would lead to Tula and to destruction. Thus, it is apparent that the concepts of dewaraja, daulat, and derhaka are existent in the Sultanate of Brunei, one of the Malay World's oldest monarchical kingdoms. Both the notion of dewaraja and the concept of sovereignty and rebellion have the same purpose: to raise the dignity of the King as the Caliph of God in comparison to the ordinary people as the governed. The pomp and ceremony kept the tradition and the influences of the kings as can be seen in the work of Geertz when he described the political system of the Balinese states, which reflected on the Malay Kingdom states, as well as the work of Milner when he described the Sultanates as Kerajaan which leads to Sultans providing "nama" by titles or through wealth creation. With the coming of Islam, the God-king became the Shadow of God on Earth, and the khalifah. Eventually most Islamic rulers took the title of Sultan including the Brunei Malay Sultanate. The Brunei's court system resembled the Mandala system which it inherited thousands of years ago, but which was modernised. The system, which made the Sultan the apex of the system, also allowed for powerful representation among the court officials just below him. The prime minister styled as Pengiran Bendahara led the group of four Wazirs made up of Pengiran Bendahara, Pengiran Digadong, Pengiran Temenggong, and Pengiran Pemancha. Below them were the Cheterias and the Pehin Menteris as well as a group of Religious Ministers. What is interesting is that at the top, because of the proximity of the relationship of the families, succession to the sultanate may not have been from the ranks of the immediate princes of the Sultans, but could also have been from the ranks of the Wazirs, as they were in most cases very close relatives of the Sultan or previous Sultans. The Brunei military, though unlike the military of today, were mostly made up of volunteers and conscripted men. They fought for their respective leaders and not necessarily for the Sultan. Thus, it was not difficult for the Brunei people to fight each other as their loyalty belonged to the chiefs of their respective groups. And if the chiefs of their groups could also become kings or sultans themselves, then that would not necessarily be wrong to fight against the Sultan's army. The Sultan of Brunei really needed to cultivate the feeling of loyalty to His Majesty is always fertile and flourishes among the people to strengthen and consolidate his power. This article will provide the basis for the scrutiny into the roles of the Sultan and the people in authority with regard to their actions, decisions and policies in maintaining and sustaining Islamic Governance from the 16th to the 19th Centuries

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²⁴ Carroll (1982). p.15

²⁵ Sweeney. (1968). p.55

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