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## Manuscript leads to lost city

**PETALING JAYA:** It was an old Malay manuscript once owned by Sir Stamford Raffles, the founder of Singapore, in a London library that led Raimy Che-Ross to the existence of the lost city in Johor.

According to Raimy, the presence of a lost city in the jungles at the southern end of the Malay peninsula had been indicated in Malayan folklore for over four centuries.

His findings on the lost city has been published in the latest issue of *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society 2004*.

In his paper, he said the place was raided by the Indian-Chola conqueror Raja Rajendra Cholavarman I, of the South Indian Chola Dynasty in 1025A.D.

The ruins could be as old as Borobodur, and could pre-date Angkor Wat, Raimy said, adding that aerial photographs taken over the site and tales from the orang asli had indicated the existence of structures.



**RARE FIND:** Raimy pointing to an unusual square earthen platform which was discovered along the pathway leading into the reported site of the lost city of Kota Gelanggi.

“From the air I could see formations which looked like a set of double-walls, protecting the inner city.

“I have verified all the information by reviewing and reassessing old colonial records and travellers tales,” he said.

Information on Kota Gelanggi appears in the *Sejarah Melayu (Malay Annals)* which was



edited and revised by Tun Seri Lanang, the Bendahara (equivalent to the prime minister of a sultanate) of the Royal Court of Johor in 1612 A.D.

The manuscript narrated an account of the devastating raids by Raja Rajendra Cholarvarman I, who after destroying the city of Gangga Negara (now Beruas in Lower Perak) turned his attention to Kota Gelanggi.

Raimy said he did not expect to find in Kota Gelanggi structures similar to Angkor Wat, as the lost city in Johor Gelanggi was much older.

“We can expect to find simple granite and brick structures, walls, buildings and possibly undisturbed tombs.

“Based on the data I have collected and consultations with archaeologists over the years, it is believed that Kota Gelanggi in Johor, which some scholars believe to be the kingdom of Lo-Yue, was also the first centre of trade for Sri Vijaya.

“It was in Johor that the whole Malay civilisation was born. The Sri Vijaya site in Palembang has artefacts which date back to the 13th or 14th century,” he said.

“There is a wealth of information we can derive from this city.

He said that official Japanese records noted that an Imperial Crown Prince of Japan, Prince Takaoka, Shinnyo Hosshinno, reportedly met his death in Lo-Yue after being attacked by a tiger. Perhaps we may find his tomb here,” he said.

Raimy said that while its main activity was a trading post, Kota Gelanggi was also a centre of sacred learning.

“Hinduism and Buddhist statues and figurines may exist but what I hope to find is epigraphic inscriptions (writings on granite),” he added.

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