The History of Malacca Ancient Entrepot and its Role in the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road

Abstract

Malaysia since ancient times has been a land bridge between the South China Sea and the Bay of Bengal. In addition, it connects the mainland Southeast Asia with the Malay archipelago which is also known as Nusantara which produced spices. The supply of spices such as nutmeg and pepper contributed to the creation of trading ports in Southeast Asia. One of the ancient entrepots was Malacca. In 1400 CE, the Malacca Sultanate rose from the ancient maritime Silk Road to become a major trading hub; attracting traders from China and India as well as those from West Asia. It is noteworthy to mention more than 84 languages were spoken in ancient Malacca. Among those who visited Malacca was Admiral Zheng He of the Ming Dynasty in the 15th century. Six hundred years later, Malacca once again becomes prominent as the trading centre of the modern Silk Road, or better known as the One Belt, One Road (OBOR). This paper analyses the development of Malacca as an entrepôt in the ancient maritime Silk Road and its role in the contemporary Silk Road.

Keywords: Maritime Silk Road, Malacca, Belt and Road Initiative, China, Southeast Asia

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