

# HERITAGE STUDY OF MUSLIM WORLD

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ALI RAZA SOOMRO



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# **HERITAGE STUDY OF MUSLIM WORLD**

**DR. ALI RAZA SOOMRO**



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## **CHAPTER 9: TRACING THE WATERFRONT TREATMENT OF THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF KUALA LUMPUR CITY CENTRE**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Most cities in the world had their earliest settlement at the waterfront. The choice of settlement area at the waterfront is obvious because people use to travel from one point to another by water, which was the main transportation mode then. However, with the change of technology and transportation system, most of these cities had opted for land transportation and ‘forgotten’ the relationship with their waterfront. This is also the case of Kuala Lumpur. The moves to achieve sustainable development, had geared these cities to revisit their connection to the water body. In doing so, one of the aspects that are crucial to be understood before the future planning (Trancik, 1986) take place is the morphological development of the waterfront which include the waterfront treatment.

Recently, Kuala Lumpur had also expressed its vision to connect the river back to the city in achieving a better quality environment. However, studies in relation to the morphological development of the waterfront treatment were not yet in place. Therefore, this paper traced the waterfront treatment of Kuala Lumpur focusing on the early period of its development for the reference of future waterfront development. Conzen’s (1960) method in understanding urban form was employed by ‘dissecting’ the city into several aspects which include the site and settlement form, the river, the street, the plots and the buildings.

### **KUALA LUMPUR: THE BEGINNING (1857-1910)**

The birth of Kuala Lumpur started at its waterfront in the middle of the nineteenth century. Historically ‘Kuala Lumpur’ means ‘Estuary of Lumpur’ which belongs to the Lumpur River. That shows how important was the river then to the new settlement. The name of Lumpur River has now been replaced to Gombak River. The evident of its original name is available from a map drawn by C.J Irving in 1872 (Khoo, 1986). Kuala Lumpur was founded by Raja Abdullah in 1857 during the search of new tin mining areas at the confluence of the Gombak and Klang Rivers. Through the river they travel upstream from Klang to Kuala Lumpur (Fig. 1).