Introduction

History is a study of the past. To help us understand the context of time, historians use label or number of years based on the year when Jesus of Nazareth was born. For example, the label A.D./ C.E.* indicates the years after the ‘birth of Jesus Christ’, whilst B.C.* refers to the years before. (Ministry of Education, 2014).

Today, we are living in the 21st century. A century refers to a period of 100 years. It has a root word from Latin ‘centum’ which means ‘hundred’.

There are many evidences supporting the existence of ancient civilizations found around the world, including Southeast Asia, during the 1st century and years before that. Our society exists today because of the first settled and stable communities that existed a long time ago. An ancient kingdom refers to territory that was once ruled by a king or a queen. There were a number of kingdoms established in the Southeast Asia regions. Below is a highlight of some ancient kingdoms.

**Highlights of Ancient Kingdoms**

Evidences of ancient kingdoms or empires in the Southeast Asian region can be found along the coastal as well mainland areas. The most notable are:

- **Funan**
- **Srivijaya**
- **Angkor**
- **Sukhothai**
- **Majapahit**
- **Malacca**

**Timeline:**

- **1st Century**
- **7th Century**
- **9th Century**
- **13th Century**
- **15th Century**
The kingdoms, especially those along the coastal areas became major trading centres. Merchants, scholars and religious leaders from India, China, Arabia and other parts of the world sailed through the Straits of Malacca, which was an important seaway leading from the Indian Ocean to the South China Sea. (Macdonald, Fiona. 2005.)

Rice cultivation, especially in the kingdoms of Funan, Majapahit and Angkor, provided a great source of income as rice was a valuable trade item. The Kings undertook the construction of massive irrigation projects that brought water to rice fields thus enabling farmers to harvest rice up to three times a year. Other root crops were also grown by hard-working farmers. (Macdonald, Fiona. 2005.)