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### Linggi

For centuries the river Linggi was the main highway in and out of Sungei Ujong and it is only in the present century that road and rail communications have deprived this historic route of trade and migration of its previous importance. Yet it is worthy of note that the Malay rulers of Sungei Ujong never sought to hold the mouth of the Linggi which was the gateway to their state. The land at the river mouth was either uninhabited or in the occupation of strangers. Perhaps it was fear of pirates which kept the Malays inland once they had arrived. The history of the Linggi estuary is the explanation why the territory is not truly part of Sungei Ujong and yet inseparable from it. For this reason it has been thought best to relate its history and custom separately from the rest.

The name "Linggi" is said to come from the stern of a ship (linggi). The story goes that the founder of the modern settlement found part of a ship when he was exploring in 1783 and so the country takes its name. This story must be doubted if only because the river was being called 'Linggi' at least half a century before 1783. In the records of the seventeenth century the lower Linggi is called the river "Penagie" or "Panagim". By 1720 the name "Linggi" had come to be applied to the river below Simpang. Later still the word 'Linggi' came to mean the river as far upstream as Seremban; to this day it has penetrated no further. "Penajis" is now used only of a tributary of the Linggi which flows in from Rembau. Like so many other place names in Sungei Ujong "Linggi" must be left unexplained. It may be that it was brought in by the Bugis, since its use coincides with the appearance of the Bugis in this part of Malaya. But this assumption still leaves open the question whether it does derive from 'linggi' meaning the poop of a ship or from some other source. It is said that in Hindustani 'linggi' means those who bear the mark of Shiva, but it seems unlikely that a word of Hindu religious significance was brought into use some three hundred years after the majority of the Malays ceased to be Hindus.

The early history of Linggi is a story of trade with the interior rather than settlement at the estuary. When there were Sultans in Malacca, traders and miners went in and out of Sungei Ujong by this route but it is unlikely that there was any settlement at the mouth. According to the *Sejarah Melayu* there was a string of settlements along the coast from Cape Rachado to Bukit Jugru. The coast further south is not mentioned—possibly it was taken for granted as part of the surroundings of Malacca. The Bendaharas, who even then had local control of Sungei Ujong, may have had a headman or a customs collector at the river mouth but it is

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more likely that Klang was then the centre of administration of the northern territories of Malacca.

In the history of this era occurs the shadowy tale of the unsuccessful rebellion of Sheikh Ahmad, also called Ahmad Majanu. Almost all that is known of him is written on his tombstone, which is the centre-piece of the "Pengkalan Kempas stones" or "Keramat Sungei Udang". Around the tomb are carved stones which may have been put there before the tomb itself. It may be that the place was holy to the worshippers of some pre-Islamic religion and that they worshipped there. The difficulty about this supposition is the word "Allah" in Arabic script carved in relief on one of the stones. Unless the masons who first carved the stones left a convenient blank panel in the middle of their design the carving "Allah" can hardly be a later addition.

At the foot of the tomb itself is a square stone pillar through which a hole has been pierced big enough to admit a man's hand and wrist. There used to be an ordeal by oath in which a man was challenged to swear to the truth of his statement with his arm through the hole. It was believed that if he swore falsely the stone would close on his arm and he would be unable to free himself. On the opposite sides of the pillar are inscriptions in Arabic and another script similar to that found on monuments in Sumatra of the same era. The inscriptions in Arabic record that Sheikh Ahmad was buried there in the year corresponding with A.D. 1467, in the reign of Sultan Mansur Shah of Malacca. The other inscriptions relate that Ahmad Majanu set out and came down the river to play a trick at the time when the king, Tun Barah Kalang, was a child, that he was caught and that he and his followers died a low death having lost their cause. R. J. Wilkinson suggested that Tun Barah Kalang was Bendahara Tun Perak formerly of Klang, but not a child in 1467. There is a passage in the *Sejarah Melayu* which tells how Bendahara Tun Perak lost his half share in Sungei Ujong to Sri Nara di-Raja, who shared it with him, because his local headman, Tun Tukul, governed so badly that the people of the interior would no longer come out of the country. The suggestion made is that Tun Tukul by his maladministration caused a local revolt of the people of the country, Malay traders as well as Sakai. Sheikh Ahmad may have led the revolt which was suppressed by Tun Tukul with unnecessary severity. In consequence the Sakai broke off relations with Malacca and the tin trade down the Linggi, and the attendant revenues of the trade ceased to flow. For this Tun Tukul lost his post and his life, and Tun Perak lost his share in Sungei Ujong.

Whatever explanations is adopted there remains the difficulty of Sheikh Ahmad's tomb. When a revolt fails the victors do not

usually erect a monument to the leader of the losing side. Perhaps in the revulsion against Tun Tukul the followers of Sheikh Ahmad were, as a conciliatory gesture, allowed to commemorate him. It is also puzzling that there should be inscriptions in two different scripts which are neither identical nor completely different in their content, as though they were written independently about the same subject. If the rebels were Sakai and immigrants they may have preferred to pay their tribute separately.

It has been suggested that Sheikh Ahmad himself was a Sumatran trader, and also that he was by origin an Indian Muslim or an Arab. The tradition of Sungei Ujong tells the story that he was a holy man from Aceh who saved Batin Sibn Jaya from being turned to stone by the ogre Kelembai. This legend at least confirms that Sheikh Ahmad is remembered as a foreigner who championed the local aborigines against an external danger. It is unlikely that history will ever provide more than this mere glimpse of a lost cause. At the present time the tomb of Sheikh Ahmad is become more of a Chinese than a Malay shrine. Chinese rubber tappers live round the place and it is they who burn candles and pray at the place on their feast days.

After the fifteenth century episode of Sheikh Ahmad, Linggi does not come into history for some considerable time. It was not the scene of any recorded event in the long triangular struggle between the Portuguese, Aceh and Johore. As late as 1613 A.D. there had been no considerable Malay immigration into Sungei Ujong according to D'Eredin. But the trade up and down the Linggi continued to be of importance. D'Eredin says that over 100 bahara of tin came out of Linggi each year and Schouten, writing after the Dutch capture of Malacca in 1641, records that the Portuguese had on occasion blockaded the mouth of the Linggi; he recommended that the Dutch should provide ships and men for the same purpose. By the time that the Dutch were in Malacca the Malay immigration had begun. According to the proverb "dull are the men of Menangkabau who have no footing on the sea" but in this case they pressed up the Linggi in search of tin, or padi land, or peace and quiet, or perhaps all these things. Linggi remained uninhabited. In the 1640's Bendahara Sekudai came to Sungei Ujong and stayed with the Sakai at Pengkalan Dui in Linggi. Here he married Batin Sibn Jaya. Later he moved upstream to Kuala Siliu and remained there for a space. Then, according to the legend, he went further inland to Rembau and Sungei Ujong. Nowhere does the legend mention any Malay settlement at the mouth of the Linggi. But the legends do throw an interesting light on the trade of that time. The story of Dato' Alon Tujoh, a follower of Bendahara Sekudai, who came in search

of his lost wife, tells that he met Sakai from Kenaboi who had come to the mouth of the Linggi to buy salt.

D'Eredia's map shows various places in the area of Linggi but unfortunately the map is probably inaccurate in this respect. D'Eredia puts "Lucoth" (Lukut) near the north bank of the lower Linggi, which is inaccurate if he means the Lukut of the nineteenth century near Port Dickson. He marks a place "Tuan formerly Berobe" on the coast between Linggi and Cape Rachado. "Berobe" mentioned by Ptolemy has been identified with Mergui in southern Burma. The Portuguese did not administer north of the Linggi river and it must be supposed that D'Eredia's information in this case was inaccurate hearsay.

One of the objects of Bendahara Sekudai's visit was to establish peaceful relations between Sungei Ujong and the Dutch, who wanted tin. In the latter part of the seventeenth century the Dutch did their best to monopolise the tin exports of Sungei Ujong but they were not very successful. The Dutch Register of 1663 mentions vessels from Johore shipping away Sungei Ujong tin. In the 1678 report of Baltusar Bort the force blockading the mouth of the Linggi is given as one yacht and one sloop with twenty-seven men, both sailors and soldiers. Two miles inland from the estuary there was a barricade across the river beyond which the blockading force was forbidden to penetrate. Bort says that the object of the Linggi blockade was to prevent food supplies from entering the interior so that the Menangkabau settlements might be weakened, and so be more easily overcome by the Dutch later on. If Bort's appreciation of the needs of the Malays in Sungei Ujong is sound the cultivation of rice can hardly have begun on any scale, despite the fact that the territory contains at least 5,000 acres of land which can be planted with wet padi.

In the eighteenth century Linggi became a focal point in the long wars between Raja Keehil and the Bugis. In 1721 Daeng Parani decoyed Raja Keehil and his fleet away from Riau by a feint attack on Linggi. It is not obvious why Linggi had become so important that Raja Keehil was prepared to leave his main base defenceless in order to save Linggi. His motive may have been to preserve control of the Linggi trade or his contacts with the Sumatran Malays of Negri Sembilan, who would be well disposed to his cause. It may also have been just one of those accidents of strategy which bring a Blenheim or a Marathon into the light of history for a moment.

In 1745 when Sultan Sulaiman contracted with the Dutch to restore their tin monopoly in his dominions when he should regain his lost territories, Linggi was important enough to be mentioned

with Selangor and Klang as one of the places to which the agreement referred. A few years later relations between Sultan Sulaiman and the Bugis came to such a pass that the Bugis abandoned the capital at Riau. It was Linggi which Daeng Kemboja chose to make his main base until he was strong enough to return to Riau. The Bugis force and their largest cannon were at Linggi from about 1753 to 1759. This seems to have been the first settlement at Linggi. But it was a mere temporary military base, of which no trace now remains and the site is forgotten. From Linggi the the Bugis launched their attacks on Malacca in 1756. The Dutch and their Malay allies drove Daeng Kemboja back to Linggi in May 1757, forced him to abandon his ships and besieged him there until he capitulated in December of the same year. The Malays, the Bugis and the Dutch entered into various agreements for the settlement of their differences. It appears that Sultan Sulaiman so much wanted to get the Bugis out of Linggi that he was prepared to cede the territory to the Dutch if they could get Daeng Kemboja out. The Bugis being in possession could make unconditional offers, and they promised the Dutch the monopoly of the tin exports of Linggi. Soon after, in 1760, the Bugis leaders returned to Riau and Linggi passes out of the history of their wars.

At the time when the Bugis community was obliged to leave Riau a brother and sister, members of one of the leading families, migrated to Telok Ketapang near Malacca where there was already a Bugis settlement. This is the first record of Dato' Awaludin and Dato' Srilah, the ancestors of the modern Waris Linggi. The tradition of Linggi relates that in 1775 Dato' Awaludin, Dato' Srilah and their followers moved to Rembau and settled at Kampong Penajis. They came in peace but they can hardly have been popular. Kampong Penajis was a stronghold of Memangkabau feeling, to which Raja Melewar had come on his first arrival in Negeri Sembilan five years before. There was a long tradition of hostility between the Bugis and the Sumatran Malays which was exacerbated by the difference in their customs. On occasion the Bugis married relatives on their mothers' side (*nikah bersanak ibu atau sapupu*) which was incest among the Memangkabau communities. So Dato' Awaludin and his party decided to move away to a settlement of their own. According to the tradition both the Undang of Rembau and the Dato' Klana of Sungai Ujong were well disposed towards them, but neither would permit a Bugis settlement in the middle of the Sumatran villages of their territories. But Dato' Klana Leha did offer the vacant land on his side of the lower Linggi. This Dato' Klana Leha had tried other means to weaken the position of his too powerful subject, the Dato' Bandar, and a rival settlement lower down the Linggi may have been another move in the same strategy.

The Linggi legend relates that Dato' Awaludin sailed down the Linggi in search of a site for the first village in his new territory and landed for the night at Pengkalan Kundang. At dawn the next morning the rays of the sun shone through the leaves of the trees on to his face. This was a propitious omen and he chose the place as the site for the settlement. Later he discovered the poop (linggi) of a wrecked ship in the sand and so the settlement got its name. Dato' Awaludin, Dato' Srilah and their followers moved to Linggi in 1783 and established themselves with the blessing of the Undang of Rembau and the Dato' Klana of Sungai Ujong—the settlement was said to be "beribu ka-Rembau berbapak ka-Sungei Ujong."

In spite of such auspicious parentage the settlement at Linggi did not prosper. The padi crops failed and the settlers became discouraged and returned to Rembau. But in 1798 Lebai Dolman, a grandson of Dato' Srilah, persuaded his people to move back and this time the venture prospered by its entrepot trade.

The boundaries of the territory granted by Dato' Klana Lela were Kuala Selebu as the upstream limit on the Linggi, Bukit Tiga and Sungai Serban downstream, and Tampin Kecil, opposite Permatang Pnsir, as the inland limit. The village of Kuala Linggi was not founded till 1833 when more settlers arrived from Langat. The settlement acknowledged the authority of a ruler drawn from the descendants of Dato' Awaludin and Dato' Srilah. It is said that the first two rulers bore the title "penghulu" and that Mohamad Katus was the first to be called "Dato' Muda", because for many years he deputised for his aged father-in-law and predecessor, Abdul Rahman, on whom the Dato' Klana had conferred the title of "Dato' Linggi". Until modern times there was no clan structure and descent on both sides was recognised for political and social purposes.

The wars of the 1830's gave Dato' Muda Mohamad Katus an opportunity to establish his position in Negri Sembilan. Saiyid Shaaban, son-in-law of the Yam Tuan Muda of Rembau, was a personal enemy of Mohamad Katus. Soon after his successes in the Nanning war Saiyid Shaaban allied with Nakhoda Lop, a rebel subject of Mohamad Katus, and attacked Linggi. Mohamad beat off this attack and carried the war into Rembau. Saiyid Shaaban, exasperated with the Undang of Rembau who would not help him in the trouble he had brought on himself, turned on the Undang who joined forces with Dato' Muda Mohamad Katus and brought in Dato' Klana Kawal of Sungai Ujong as an ally. The ultimate result in this part of Negri Sembilan was the abolition of the office of Yam Tuan Muda of Rembau, and the creation of

Tampin as a separate territory. Dato' Muda Kalas came out on the winning side.

For the next forty years the history of Linggi and of the other states which bordered on the Linggi river was a sequence of struggles for the profits of the river traffic in tin. Chinese tin mining had begun and the revenue to be obtained from tin vastly increased. In this era of war and intrigue the lesser rulers of Negri Sembilan had to be adroit in order to survive. Selangor extended to Lukut, including Cape Rachado and Sungei Raya, and laid claim to Linggi itself, but this claim was not admitted. Every minor chief and pirate who had a stockade on the banks of the Linggi levied dues on the passing craft, which brought on the heads of the Malay rulers castigation from the British authorities in the Straits Settlements. In 1849 the trouble between the Dato' Klana and Dato' Bandar of Sungei Ujong came to the point of war and in the settlement which followed it was provided that the Dato' Klana, Dato' Bandar and the Dato' Muda Linggi should take equal shares in the dues on vessels and merchandise entering and leaving the mouth of the Linggi. In the 1850's the Dato' Klana, prodded by the authorities in Singapore, tried to eliminate the illicit toll stations of the minor chiefs, especially the fort of one Lebai Kulop at Simpang Linggi. In the 1860's the threat of encroachment by Selangor receded owing to its civil wars but in 1870 Rembau saw fit to bring Selangor into the local squabbles by purporting to establish a Rembau-Selangor boundary at Simpang Linggi! Piracy and exaction of illicit dues on vessels in the Linggi became worse. When the Government of the Straits Settlements, acting under its new policy of limited intervention, made the Sungei Ujong treaty of 1874 its principal provisions dealt with free trade on the Linggi which was the main British interest in the area at that time.

During the half century up to 1874 the Dato' Muda Linggi was generally an ally of the Dato' Klana against the Dato' Bandar, but nonetheless they quarrelled with each other occasionally. The Dato' Muda had climbed to a position of almost independence. He signed the treaty of 1874 as a principal, and he was admitted to the small State Council of Sungei Ujong in 1878. He signed the Rembau treaty of 1883, and took part in the negotiations for the cession of Simpang Linggi 1877. Within his own state of Linggi he had been supreme authority and there was no appeal from his decisions which were final. He was "bergajah tunggal—menggenting putus, meliang tembus, memakan habis, membunuh mati" In the present century the office of Dato' Muda, like that of Dato' Bandar, has lost ground to the Dato' Klana whose juridical sovereignty over the whole territory has been re-asserted. In this age rulers do not govern and there is a natural tendency to conduct the government in the name of the dignitary in whom resides the

legal sovereignty. Offices of mere de facto authority suffer thereby. In this case, as in that of the Dato' Bandar, particular events played their part; the office of Dato' Muda Linggi was vacant from 1912 until 1932.

The Dato' Muda Linggi is not considered a vassal of the Dato' Klana, but the territory of Linggi is not an independent unit in Negri Sembilan. Linggi is deemed to be more or less part of Sungei Ujong without more exact definition. In the Estimates the Dato' Muda Linggi appears, like the Dato' Bandar and the Penghulu Tanah Mengandong, as one of the "Chiefs of District". He receives the largest allowance of chiefs in this category except the Dato' Bandar. The early connection of Linggi with Rembau is considered ended and the saying has been modified to "berbapak ka-Klana dan beranak ka-Bandar." The Dato' Muda Linggi does not attend on the Dato' Klana, as the subordinate chiefs do, on Hari Raya Pusa and other great occasions. The Sungei Ujong history says of the Dato' Muda Linggi "tiada beradat kedudukannya". Mr. R. J. Wilkinson wrote:—

"The Dato' Muda Linggi, who occupies a position of semi-independence in Sungei Ujong, usually settles the question of his precedence by staying away from the great audiences in which the issue might be raised."

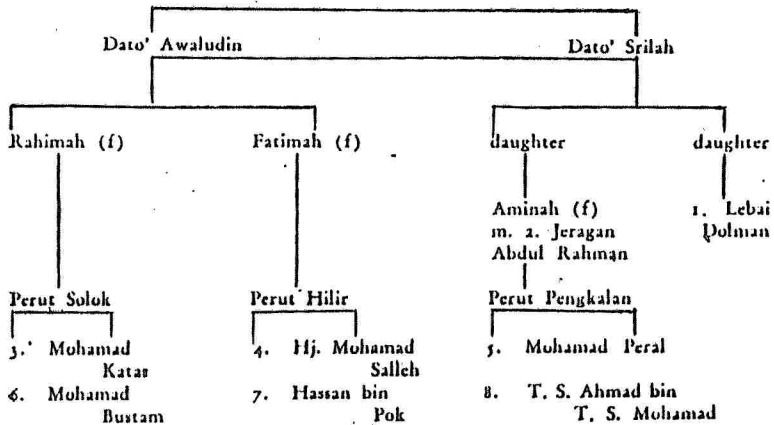
Until modern times there were no rules to define the mode of succession and appointment to the office of Dato' Muda Linggi. The holders of the office have been:—

1. Lebai Dolman
2. Jeragan Abdul Rahman (d. 1824)
3. Mohamad Katas (son-in-law of No. 2)
4. Haji Mohamad Salleh (brother-in-law No. 3)
5. Mohamad Peral (son No. 4)
6. Mohamad Bustam (d. 1912)
7. Hassan bin Pok (1932—1936)
8. Hon'ble Tengku Syed Ahmad bin Tengku Syed Mohamad (1936 — )

As there was no clan system in the early days and no rules of exogamy there have been intermarriages between different lines of descent from the founders, which makes the relationship of the successive holders of the office a little complex. Lebai Dolman was a son of a daughter of Dato' Srilah. His successor, Jeragan Abdul Rahman, was his paternal uncle and also the husband of Dolman's cousin, another grandchild of Dato' Srilah. One of the three clans now established is descended from the union of Jeragan Abdul Rahman and the grand-daughter of Dato' Srilah. The



other two clans are descended from two daughters of Dato' Awaludin. The genealogical tree then is:—



This neat and equitable system of matrilineal clans and rotation of office is twentieth century invention which happens to fit the facts of the nineteenth century. Until 1932 there was no agreement about clans or the rules of descent and therefore there was no rotation as a conscious observance of an accepted rule. When Dato' Muda Mohammad Bustam died in 1912 there was no agreement in the waris Linggi about the rules governing the choice of his successor. Successive British Residents advised that the waris must make up their minds on the general issue before there could be any progress in selecting a new Dato' Muda. Owing to the diplomatic intervention of the late Dato' Klana Ma'amor bin Kassim C.B.E. the system set out above was eventually adopted and the office filled. The following rotation is now accepted:—

1. Perut Solok
2. Perut Hilir
3. Perut Pengkalan

The clans are based on matrilineal rules of descent. The acceptance of this rule by a group of Bugis origin is an interesting example of the persuasive effect of the neighbouring Memangkabau constitutions.

The mode of appointment of a Dato' Muda also follows the model of the 'adat perpatch. The Waris may appoint if they can achieve unanimity. If they are not unanimous the power of appointment passes to the Dato' Klana and Dato' Bandar jointly.

The Dato' Muda receives an allowance of \$380 p.m. which represents his former revenues since commuted. He retains half

this allowance and divides the other half among the three lesser chiefs of the Waris Linggi who are

Dato' Panglima Besar  
Dato' Panglima Perang  
Dato' Laksamana

The titles of these offices indicate that they derive from the time when Linggi was a militant state. The three offices follow the same rotation as the Dato' Muda, but there is no rule against one clan having more than one of the offices at the same time if the rotation so requires. The offices are not clan headships but offices under the Dato' Muda (orang besar). When an office is to be filled the waris may propose a candidate but the final decision rests with the Dato' Muda who actually makes the appointment.

In addition to the three orang besar there are three local headmen, who represent the early civil administration of Linggi. These are:—

Dato' Jaya of Permatang Pasir  
Dato' Bentara Setia of Pengkalan Durian  
Dato' Kanda of Linggi

The Dato' Kanda is also master of ceremonies in the balai of the Dato' Muda. These headmen (ketua) are appointed by the Dato' Muda at the suggestion of the waris. There is no rule of rotation between clans in this case; the choice tends to fall on someone already resident in the area concerned. Holders of the offices must be drawn from the Waris Linggi. These headmen are subordinate to the orang besar through whom they must pass to bring a matter to the Dato' Muda Linggi.