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KLANG

Twenty Centuries Of Eventful Existence

Tan Sri Dato' Dr. Mubin Sheppard

Mubin
2/60

Foreword by
His Highness Tengku Idris Shah
Regent of Selangor



The Heritage of Malaysia Trust

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ISTANA MESTIKA
SHAH ALAM,
SELANGOR,
MALAYSIA.

Foreword

When I heard that Gedung Raja Abdullah was to be restored and opened to the Public by Badan Warisan Malaysia (the Heritage of Malaysia Trust) I was delighted, and when I received an invitation to attend the opening ceremony in November last year I cancelled another engagement so that I could be present.

Klang has a long and distinguished history, beginning many centuries before Raja Abdullah built his Storehouse, but very few relics of this ancient past have survived. Gedung Raja Abdullah, which was built over one hundred and thirty years ago, is all the more precious. It is part of the Heritage of Selangor.

Local history was at one time kept alive by Elders in Court and Kampung whose recollections were repeated but seldom written down. But kampung life has changed and I therefore welcome this short book on the highlights in the history of Klang, in ancient and more modern times, attractively illustrated and easily readable, and I congratulate Badan Warisan Malaysia for making it available.

I hope that it will find a ready reception both among overseas visitors and among the present generation of Malaysians, to whom the recollections of our Elders are no longer available.

His Highness Tengku Idris Shah
REGENT OF SELANGOR

19 March 1986.

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Introducing Klang

Malacca, Penang, Kuala Lumpur or Klang: which of these has the longest history? The answer is **KLANG**.

Malacca was only a little fishing village in 1400 when Prince Parameswara landed there and founded the capital of a Malay empire. Penang, too, was only a fishing village when Captain Francis Light landed there in 1786 and founded a seaport, and Kuala Lumpur was only brought into existence by Tin Miners who came up river from Klang in about 1856.

Malacca was captured by the Portuguese in 1511 and remained in the hands of foreigners until 1957. Penang continued in British hands until Independence and Kuala Lumpur, when it had grown into a city, only celebrated its centenary three decades ago.

But Klang has a history which stretches back for at least two thousand years. It was never occupied by a foreign power and the river Klang has been a source of tin of high quality since ancient times.

Malay Rulers and Chiefs have lived near the mouths of great rivers, so that they could control the export of forest produce and, when it was available, tin or gold. No other place in this peninsula at a river mouth has experienced such a long period of eventful existence as Klang.

The river Klang was clearly marked and named on the earliest maritime charts, which were prepared with great accuracy and care by men who sailed with the great Chinese Admiral and Ambassador, Cheng Ho, who visited Malacca five times between 1409 and 1433. The Map which covered many large sheets of paper is often called the *Wu Pei Chi* charts and shows places and rivers on both coasts of this peninsula, and many towns and rivers in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India and still further to the West. The fact that the river Klang was shown on the map (as Chi Ling Chiang) proves that it was of importance even in the fifteenth century. But Klang had, in fact, been a centre of civilisation at a much earlier date.

In the pages which follow we will trace the highlights of its history.

Very Ancient Klang

A number of small islands form a protective barrier from storms a short distance from the mouth of the Klang river. These islands have attracted sailing ships travelling through the Malacca Straits since ancient times, and some of the travellers and traders came ashore and settled near the river mouth.

We do not know when these early travellers first came ashore but a number of Bronze objects – (finely ornamented bronze Drums and Elephant Bells) have been found buried under the ground on two low hills, called Bukit Kuda and Bukit Jati close to the Klang river and only a short distance up stream. Similar drums have been found in Terengganu, in South Sumatra and in some other parts of East Asia, notably in the land which we now call Vietnam, and they

Very Ancient Klang. The Chief of Klang in about 100 AD. mounted on his elephant, with a Bronze Elephant Bell hanging, from its neck, accompanied by his followers carrying Bronze Ornamental Drums.



have been dated, after scientific tests, at not later than 100 A.D. These bronze treasures were found on Bukit Jati, and Bukit Kuda and they are now in the National Museum in Kuala Lumpur.

Low hills, near river mouths were the favourite headquarters of Malay rulers and chiefs, and provided defence posts. The rulers of Malacca lived on a low hill, so did the early Chiefs of Klang.

Traders from China and from the Middle East were already searching for the metal which we call tin, and we can conclude from



Giant Stone head found in
South Sumatra, North East of
Mount Dempo. Size: about 3½
feet from chin to back of head.

A Bronze Drum Head found near Klang (on Bukit Kuda) believed to date from about 100 AD.



the discovery of bronze drums and bells which could only have been brought to Klang from overseas and would only have been used by major chiefs, that a flourishing trade in tin existed near the mouth of the Klang river in 100 A.D.

In the first section in the Display of the Highlights of Klang's history in Gedung Raja Abdullah is a Chief on his elephant,

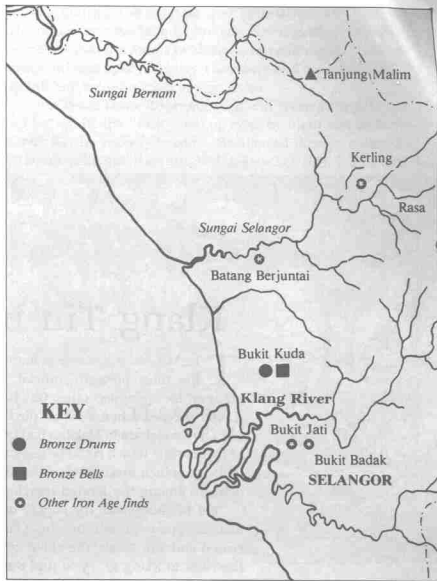
A Bronze Elephant Bell found near Klang (on Bukit Jati): believed to date from about 100 AD.

attended by men carrying bronze drums. The face of this chief is copied from that on a large stone head found in South Sumatra, where similar drums and bells have been found, dating from about the same time.

Replica of a bronze drum and an elephant bell have been made by a technician at the National Museum, and are displayed beside the drawing. A sketch map shows the location of Bukit Jati where this drum was found.



A Map showing the location of Klang river, Bukit Jati and Bukit Kuda.



Klang Tin in Malacca

The Malacca Sultanate was founded in about 1400 A.D. By 1430 the most powerful official was the *Bendahara* — Chief Minister. He appointed other Chiefs and sometimes decided who should succeed when a Sultan died.

The Bendahara of Malacca had been given control of Klang and of the revenue which could be collected there, including ownership of the tin which was mined up the Klang river. This tin was in great demand among the foreign merchants who came to Malacca.

But in about 1445 the supply of tin, which had been sent to Malacca every month by the Klang Headman (*Penghulu*) had ceased and Tun Perak, the eldest son of the Bendahara, sailed up the coast to Klang to try to find out the reason.

He was told by the old Penghulu that his men were working surface mines in the forest up river as usual, but each month when the tin ore was ready to be brought down to Klang, robbers from Aceh, across the Straits of Malacca, came at night, drove his men away and stole most of the tin. They were well armed and threatened to kill anyone who tried to stop them.

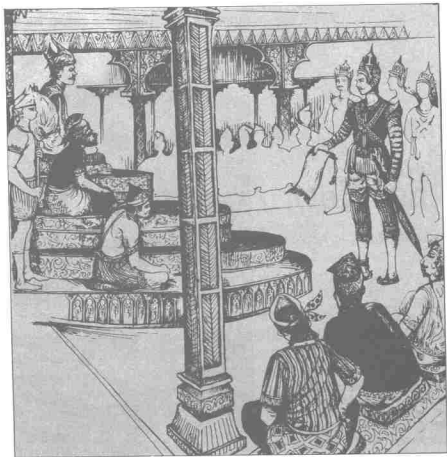
Tun Perak chose 20 young men and trained them in fighting with *Kris*. He then took them up river by night and waited in the forest for the robbers to come. He allowed them to collect the tin in small sacks, and then attacked them when their hands were full.



Tun Perak, the son of the Chief Minister of Malacca comes to Klang and captures the Tin Stealers, with the help of some of the young men of Klang.

All the robbers were caught and tied up with rattan and brought down river to be punished by the Penghulu.

From that day, more tin supplies than ever before were sent from Klang to Malacca.



Klang helps to defend Malacca

Not long after Tun Perak had come to Klang he was chosen by the people to be their Headman in place of To' Ibrahim, who was very old.

A few months later, the King of Siam sent one of his ministers with a letter ordering the Sultan of Malacca to pay Tribute to Siam and to send Golden Flowers (*Bunga Emas*) to him every three years.

The Sultan and his Chiefs knew that if they refused to agree Siam would attack and would try to conquer Malacca. But they sent a reply to say that Malacca would not recognise Siam as her Overlord.

The Sultan then prepared to defend Malacca. He sent sailing ships along the coast telling the Headmen to send as many of their young men as possible to help.

opposite page

An Envoy from the King of Siam visits Sultan Muzaffar Shah of Malacca to demand that the Sultan send Tribute and Golden Flowers to Siam as a token that he recognized the King as his Overlord, about 1448 AD.

Tun Perak chose fifty of the strongest young men and trained them in fighting. He set up figures, made of rattan and told the men to practice throwing spears at the figures. He also ordered the carpenters and metal workers to make spears and he told others to make leather coats and caps from buffalo skins for the young men to wear, when they were fighting, to protect them from poisoned darts.

Two weeks later, they set sail for Malacca leaving To' Ibrahim and the older men in Klang.

When the Siamese attacked Malacca they were unable to capture it, and after several weeks they retreated overland across the peninsula.

Not long afterwards, Tun Perak was appointed Bendahara of Malacca in place of his uncle Tun Ali.



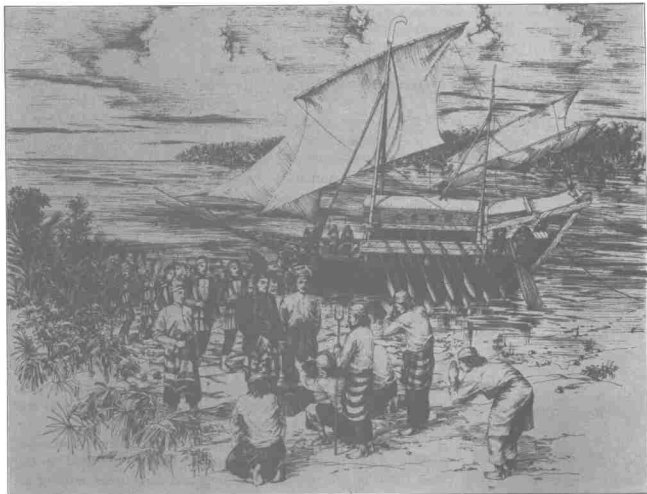
Tun Perak, at Klang, trains his young men in throwing spears before sailing to Malacca to help to defend it against the Siamese army.

Klang becomes part of the new Sultanate of Selangor

When Malacca was captured by the Portuguese in 1511 and the Bendahara moved with the Sultan to Johor, Klang no longer sent tin to Malacca and the Headman of Klang, who was known as To' Engku, was semi-independent.

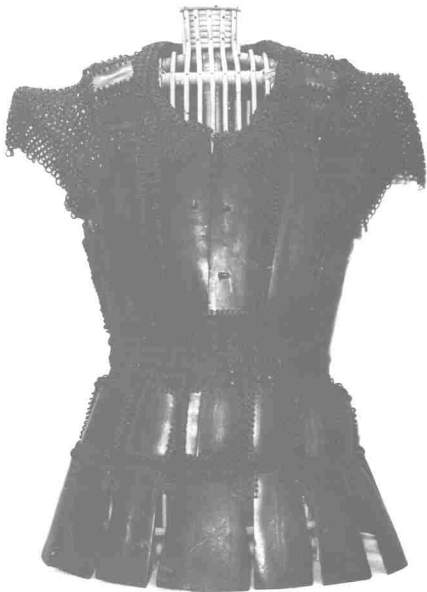
About 200 years later, many Bugis warriors and traders who had come to Johor from Sulawesi, South of Borneo, travelled up the West Coast of the peninsula trading and sometimes settling on vacant land near one or other of the main river mouths — the Klang river, the Langat river or the Selangor river.

In about 1755, Daeng Chelak, one of the Chief Bugis officials at the Court of the Sultan of Johor, visited Klang and Kuala Selangor several times. The Bugis were trade rivals of the Dutch in Malacca.

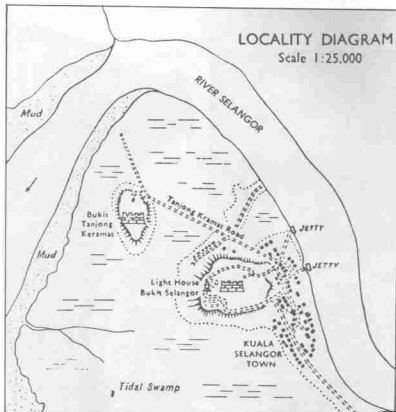


Raja Lumu, the First Sultan of Selangor pays his first visit to Klang in about 1756. He is welcomed by the Chief of Klang, To' Engku Raja Lumu's followers wear Bugis armour.

A man wearing a Bugis coat of armour, holding a Bugis sword.



A Coat of Bugis armour.



In order to provide stronger opposition to the Dutch in Malacca, Daeng Chelak gathered many of the Bugis who had settled along the coast and proclaimed his son, Raja Lumu, as Sultan of Selangor, at the mouth of the Selangor river. He made the headquarters of the new Sultanate near the river mouth, and the first three Sultans of Selangor lived there and were buried there.

Raja Lumu took the name of Sultan Salehuddin Shah. Soon after he had been proclaimed Sultan he sailed down the coast in a large

opposite page

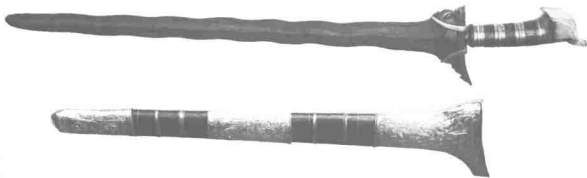
Map showing the Sultan's Fort at Kuala Selangor.

Bugis ship, with some of his Bugis warriors, to visit the Headman of Klang. The Dutch had been buying tin from Klang and Raja Lumu wanted to make sure that in future all the tin from Klang would be taken over for trading by the Bugis.

In the picture on page 16 Raja Lumu has just come ashore at Klang and is received by the Headman. The Bugis warriors are wearing coats of chain mail. The Klang Chief has a spear with two prongs, which was part of his Regalia. Raja Lumu is wearing the costume of a Bugis prince, which was different from that of a Malay Raja. The Bugis head dress was very much higher than that worn by Malays.

From this time onwards the Sultan of Selangor appointed the Chief of Klang — usually a member of his own family.

A Bugis Sword (called Sundang).



The New Chief of Klang

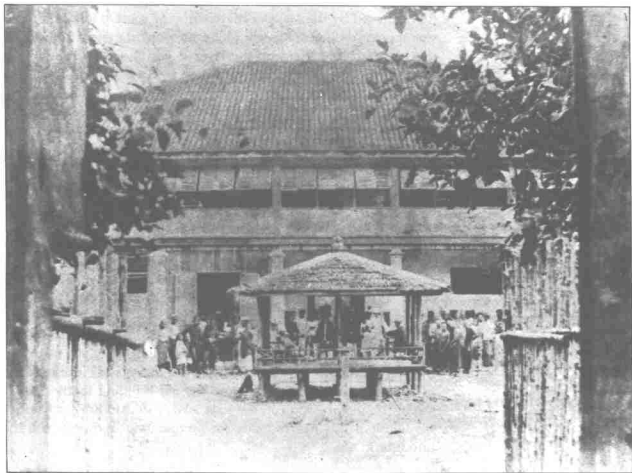
In 1853, Raja Sulaiman, the Chief of Klang, died. He was the eldest son of Sultan Muhammad, and during his life time the Sultan had borrowed a large sum of money from Chinese merchants in Malacca and had used it to send men to prospect for tin up the Klang river. But they found nothing, and when Raja Sulaiman died the debt was still unpaid. Raja Sulaiman had a son named Raja Mahadi and many people expected that he would succeed his father. But Sultan Muhammad chose Raja Abdullah bin Raja Ja'afar, the second son of the Raja of Lukut. He did so for at least two reasons. Firstly because Raja Abdullah had been born and brought up at Lukut, where his father owned many tin mines. Secondly, because Raja Abdullah and his elder brother Raja Juma'at

had guaranteed the repayment of the Sultan's debt, when he was hard pressed by the Malacca merchants. As soon as Raja Abdullah was appointed Chief of Klang, in 1854, he brought miners from Lukut to Klang and sent them up the river to search for tin. They soon found tin in the area which we know as Ampang and started to mine it for Raja Abdullah.

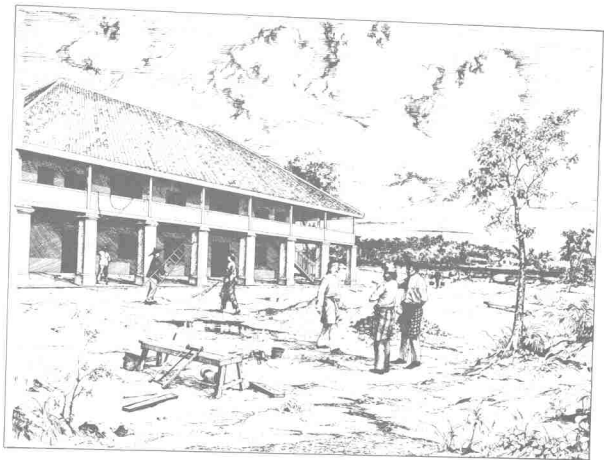
Raja Abdullah had lived with his father at Lukut in a very large house which stood on a hill, inside a fort at the mouth of the Lukut river. When he moved to Klang and had opened several tin mines up river, he decided to build a house and a store for himself. He brought builders and carpenters from Lukut and they started work in 1856. A year later they had completed a large two-storied house close to the Klang river, very similar to that of his father. It was called *Gedung Raja Abdullah*. He and his family lived upstairs. Downstairs there were several smaller rooms which were used for storing tin, and for mining equipment and for rice, oil, opium and other supplies for the miners, who were Chinese from Lukut and Malacca.

The builders from Lukut were skilled workmen and the timber and bricks which they used over one hundred years ago were still in good condition when the Badan Warisan Malaysia (the Heritage of Malaysia Trust) came to restore the old building in 1984.

In the picture you can see Raja Abdullah standing in front of his house. It was nearly ready for occupation. He moved into the building in 1857.

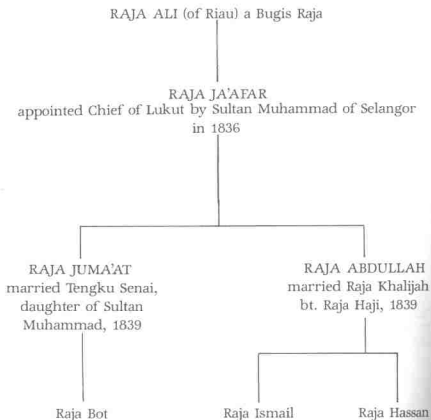


Raja Ja'far's house at Lukut,
where Raja Abdullah was born.



Raja Abdullah supervising the final work on his new house and Gedung at Klang, in 1857.

The Family Tree of Raja Abdullah

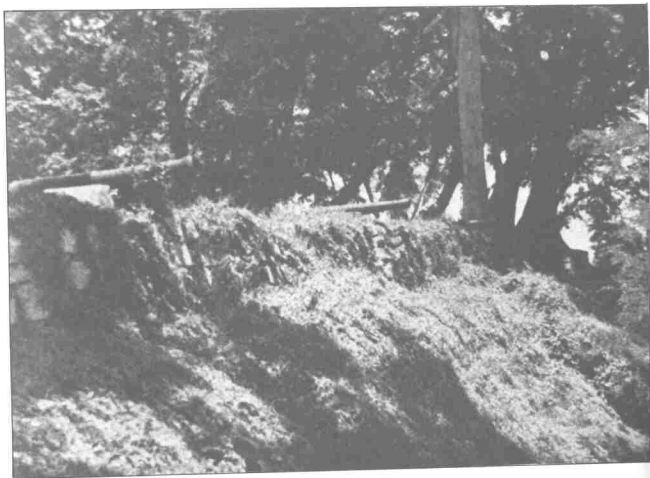


Civil War in Klang

While Raja Abdullah and his family lived in his *Gedung*, Raja Mahadi also lived in Klang and watched while Raja Abdullah became rich from the sale of tin from his mines and from the taxes which he collected on other tin which was brought down river.

Raja Mahadi was very jealous and he told his friends that he was the rightful Chief of Klang and that Raja Abdullah was a foreigner and should be driven out.

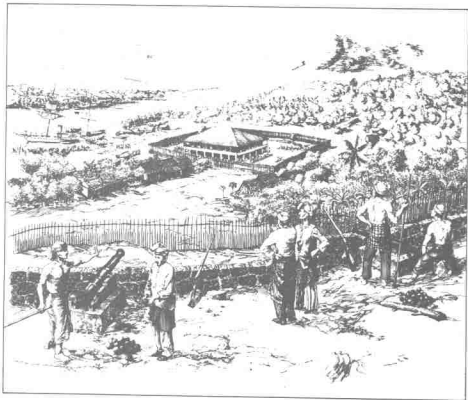
Raja Mahadi built a large fort on the high ground above the *Gedung*, and brought cannon and ammunition from the fort at Kuala Selangor. Many members of Sunatran Malay families who lived near Klang agreed to support Raja Mahadi. Raja Abdullah was a Bugis.



A view of the main Bugis fort at Kuala Selangor, near the river mouth, with cannon mounted on the walls.

This fort was built by the first Sultan of Selangor, it was captured by the Dutch in 1874, but recaptured by the Malays a year later.

For about ten years Raja Abdullah continued to live in his Gedung. Raja Mahadi's men and Raja Abdullah's followers were often involved in minor clashes, but Raja Abdullah did not wish to fight openly against Raja Mahadi and in June 1866 he decided to withdraw to Malacca and sailed in his paddle steamer, *Kimbul*, taking his wife and younger children with him. Raja Ismail and Raja Hassan, his two eldest sons, remained in the Gedung.



Raja Mahdi (son of Raja Sulaiman) in his Fort at Klang, prepares to attack Raja Abdullah in his 'Gedung' lower down the hill in 1866. The cannon had been brought from Kuala Selangor.

Raja Mahadi is forced to withdraw from Klang

Sultan Abdul Samad had been proclaimed Sultan of Selangor in 1859. He lived at the mouth of the Langat river, at Jugra.

At the end of 1866, Raja Ismail, Raja Hassan and their followers were also forced to withdraw to Malacca. Raja Mahadi had imposed a blockade and prevented food and ammunition from reaching the Gedung.

Raja Mahadi was then master of Klang and collected all the taxes on tin coming down the river. Raja Abdullah died at Malacca in 1869.

Raja Abdullah had sent \$500/- each month to Sultan Abdul Samad, but when Raja Mahadi took control of Klang he did not do so, and the Sultan was very annoyed. The Sultan had planned to marry his youngest daughter to Raja Mahadi, but he changed his

mind and gave her in marriage to Tunku Kudin, the brother of the Sultan of Kedah in 1867. He also appointed Tunku Kudin *Wakil Yam tuan*, which has been translated as “Viceroy”, for the whole State. Many members of the Selangor Royal Family did not approve of his appointment and therefore supported Raja Mahadi.

The Sultan asked Tunku Kudin to help Raja Ismail to return to Klang, but Tunku Kudin had not enough fighting men to make a direct attack and he placed cannon on high land overlooking the Klang river mouth and prevented ships carrying food or ammunition from reaching Raja Mahadi. The blockade was slow but successful and in March 1870 Raja Mahadi and his followers withdrew from Klang and went to Kuala Selangor. Tunku Kudin entered Klang and went to live in Raja Mahadi's fort.



Tunku Kudin and Raja Ismail watch while their gunners, sited near the mouth of the Klang river, prevent food and ammunition for Raja Mahdi being brought up river.

Civil War spreads to Kuala Lumpur

While Raja Abdullah was Chief of Klang many new tin mines were opened in the interior of Selangor, some near the area we now know as Kuala Lumpur and others up the Selangor river. Raja Abdul Samad, Sultan Muhammad's nephew, sent Chinese up the Selangor river in about 1856 and they opened a number of mines near Kanching and paid tribute to him.

Most of the miners were Chinese and they were all members of the same tribe — Hakka — but they belonged to different clans and different secret societies, and they became rivals and enemies.

At Kanching, in Ulu Selangor, the leader was called Chong Chong and at Kuala Lumpur the leader was Liu Ngim Kong. But Liu was a sick man and he feared that if he died Chong Chong would try

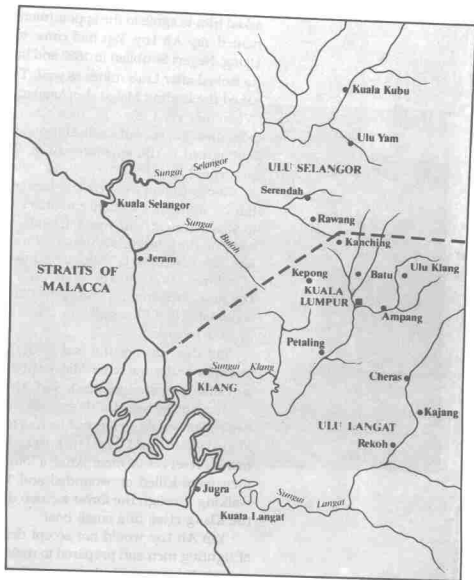


Yap Ah Loy, the Chinese Headman (Capitan Cina, 1868 — 1885) at Kuala Lumpur, wearing his Mandarin Robe.

Yap Ah Loy standing beside
Tunku Kudin's Chinese
interpreter (seated).



Map showing the location of
Klang, Kuala Lumpur, Kuala
Selangor, Kanching and Jugra.



to replace him. Liu therefore went to visit the Sultan in 1868 and asked him to agree to the appointment of one his strong supporters, named Yap Ah Loy. Yap had come to Kuala Lumpur from Sungei Ujong, Negeri Sembilan in 1862 and had opened his own mine while he looked after Liu's mines as well. The Sultan agreed, and Liu also asked the leading Malay shopkeeper, Sultan Puasa, for his support. When Liu died later in 1868 Chong Chong tried to claim the position of *Capitan* of Kuala Lumpur, but he was told that the Sultan had agreed to the appointment of Yap Ah Loy, and Sultan Puasa confirmed this.

Chong Chong went back to Kanching and continued mining tin, but he waited for a chance to attack Yap Ah Loy. In 1870 he went to Kuala Langat and made friends with Syed Mashhor, a Malay warrior from Indonesia who had many followers. They agreed to join forces with Raja Mahadi and to oppose Tunku Kudin.

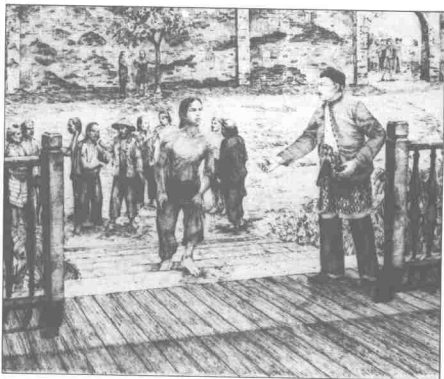
Chong Chong and Syed Mashhor made their attack on Yap Ah Loy near Ampang in October 1870, but they were defeated, and it is probable that Chong Chong was killed. His name does not appear in later records.

But this was not the end of the Civil War. Raja Mahadi, Syed Mashhor and some other Malay chiefs waited for more than a year and then prepared to attack Yap Ah Loy again.

Yap Ah Loy heard of their plans and decided to attack the enemy before they could strike, but he had to take his men a long distance to Kuala Kubu, and when he attacked he was short of supplies and had no reserves of men. After a long battle most of Yap Ah Loy's men were killed or wounded and Yap himself only escaped by walking through the forest for two days and then travelling down the Klang river in a small boat.

Yap Ah Loy would not accept defeat. He collected a new body of fighting men and prepared to make a fresh attack. Tunku Kudin went to Pahang, with the permission of the British Governor, and

Picture of Yap Ah Loy, after his defeat near Kuala Kubu, wearing only a pair of cotton trousers, being welcomed by Tunku Kudin at Klang, 1872.



asked the Bendahara to send Malay fighting men to help. In February and March 1873 Yap Ah Loy's men and the large Pahang force surrounded Syed Mashhor, Raja Mahadi and his supporters near Kuala Lumpur and defeated them so severely that they never made another attempt to renew the Civil War. Raja Mahadi left for Singapore, where he died and Syed Mashhor went to Perak to take part in the Perak war. He later returned to Selangor and settled at Jugra, at the Court of Sultan Abdul Samad.

The Gedung becomes The New Government Headquarters

The Civil War ended late in 1873 but the tin mines around Kuala Lumpur had been destroyed, pirates were attacking the coastal shipping, law and order had broken down and even farmers were not planting their rice crops.

Tunku Kudin advised the Sultan to ask the Governor to send a number of British administrative officers to set up a new administration.

The first official to arrive was Mr. Davidson, a lawyer and friend of Tunku Kudin, who was appointed British Resident and set up his headquarters in Klang. He opened his office in Gedung Raja Abdullah and also set up a State Treasury, a Public Works Department, a Land Office, a Post Office and a Survey Office in the building. Tunku Kudin

Group photo of Tunku Kudin, and Syed Zin seated, and Raja Ismail (behind Tunku Kudin), Davidson, the first British Resident, with a beard, stands behind Syed Zin, late 1874.



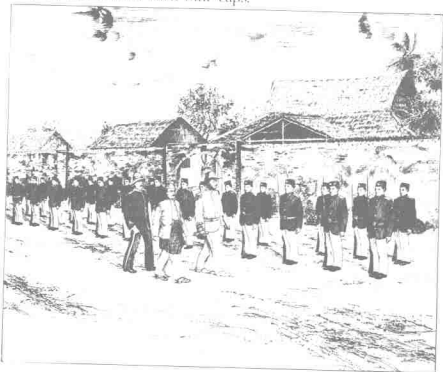


Tunku Kudin (seated) with Raja Ismail standing behind him.



continued to live and have his office in Raja Mahadi's fort. He also asked the Governor to send a man who could set up a new and disciplined Police Force. H.C. Syers, a young British soldier, who had learnt Malay in Malacca, was chosen and recruited his first fifty police constables in Malacca. The first Police barracks and parade ground were in the Fort. Later Syers opened police stations in different parts of Selangor, but Yap Ah Loy set up his own Police Force in Kuala Lumpur.

This picture shows Tunku Kudin and the second British Resident, Bloomfield Douglas, inspecting a parade of Selangor Police in front of the Fort. The Police wore dark blue tunics and long, white trousers and round, dark blue caps.



Tunku Kudin and the second British Resident inspect a Police Guard, outside Tunku Kudin's headquarters at Klang. H. Syers, the Police Officer walks behind them, 1876.

When the Resident moved his office to Kuala Lumpur in 1880, a number of the government offices remained in Klang and continued to operate in the Gedung. But in about 1890 a new government office was built near the centre of the town and the Selangor Police occupied the whole of the Gedung and continued to do so, except during the Japanese occupation, until 1974. The building was then left empty.

H.M.S. Avon anchored off Klang
in 1876



The Selangor State Council Meets

In March 1877 Sultan Abdul Samad appointed a State Council. The members were, Tunku Kudin, President, Bloomfield Douglas, the second British Resident, two major Malay Chiefs, Syed Zain, Yap Ah Loy, the Captain Cina, and J. Innes the Collector of Land Revenue at Kuala Langat. H.C. Syers was instructed to attend as interpreter to assist the Resident.

The first full meeting of the Council was held in the large upper room in the Gedung on 12 June 1877. The Minutes of this meeting have survived and have been copied from a microfilm in the Archives in Singapore.

The sixth item on the agenda of his meeting was a request from Raja Ismail, on behalf of the children of Raja Abdullah, asking for

Group photo of Sultan Abdul Samad outside the Palace at Jugra, with some of his Chiefs. His small grandson, Raja Sulaiman stands beside him. Syed Mashhor, the warrior, wearing a large head dress, stands, aloof, on the Sultan's left c. 1877.



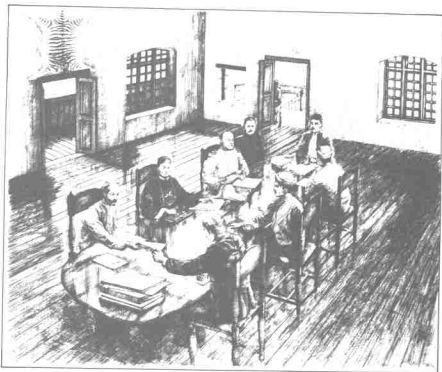


compensation for the loss of their father's post as Chief of Klang and of the income which had been derived from his tin mines, and payment for the Gedung which was being used by the government as an office. This petition was discussed and a note of the decision was recorded. It was decided, subject to the approval of the Sultan, to buy the Gedung for \$3,000/- and to pay a monthly allowance to each of Raja Abdullah's sons.

Tunku Kudin sat at the head of the table, presiding at this meeting, wearing formal Kedah-style Malay dress. Bloomfield Douglas sat on his right, in Naval uniform, although he had only served in the Merchant Marine and later as a Coastguard Officer. Raja Kahar, the Sultan's son is seated on Tunku Kudin's left. Tengku Panglima Raja, another senior Malay Chief, sat on the Resident's right, with Yap Ah Loy, in his Mandarin robes, sitting next to him. Syed Zain, the Superintendent of Public Works, sat next to Raja Kahar, and James Innes the Collector, on his left. The windows and door behind Tunku Kudin are still in position and are unchanged.

Gedung Raja Abdullah thus became a government building and it is still the property of the government, since it stands on land which is a Museum Reserve.

The first full meeting of the Selangor State Council, held in the upper room of the Gedung Raja Abdullah on 12 June 1877.



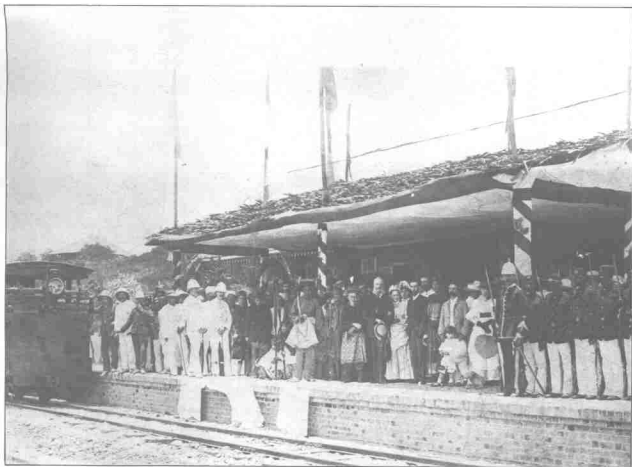
The Selangor State Railway

Even before the main government offices were moved from Klang to Kuala Lumpur in March 1880 the tin mines had attracted many traders and shopkeepers from Klang and from other places.

But the only means of access to Kuala Lumpur was by boat up the Klang river to Damansara, and then by bullock cart or horseback. It was a long, slow and tiring journey.

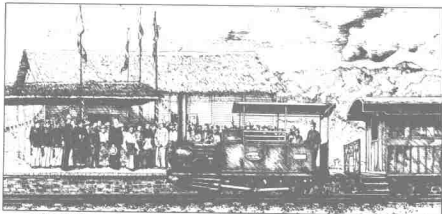
Frank Swettenham, who replaced Douglas as Resident of Selangor in August 1882, recognised the urgent need to build a railway from Klang to Kuala Lumpur and asked the Governor to seek the approval of the Colonial Office in London for this to be done as soon as possible.

He prepared estimates for the cost of the work, totalling \$650,000 and asked for a Loan from the government of the Straits Settlements to meet at least half the cost.



The Klang Railway Station, on the north bank of the river, on the occasion of the opening of the Railway from Klang to Kuala Lumpur. Sultan Abdul Samad and Governor Weld stand near the centre of the Platform, July 1886.

View of the first Engine and the first passenger coach, moving into Klang railway station on the day of the Opening Ceremony. The Sultan and the Governor are standing near the centre of the temporary platform.



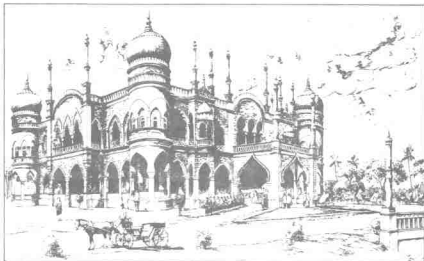
The Railway trace was completed in September 1883 and work on the earth work and culverts started in February 1884. Work began from Kuala Lumpur because there was a plentiful supply of bricks and lime, neither of which were available in Klang.

The Railway ran from a temporary station behind the Selangor Club, in Kuala Lumpur, to Bukit Kuda, where the Station was known as "The River Klang Station". A bridge across the river and a new station in Klang town were built some years later.

When the railway line was ready the Sultan came to Klang from Jugra, Kuala Langat, and the Governor, Sir Frederick Weld, came from Singapore. They both travelled by sea.

The Sultan, the Governor, the Acting Resident, Mr. J.P. Rodger, and many well-known figures of all communities travelled in new passenger coaches from Klang to Kuala Lumpur, a distance of 21 miles. They were received at the Kuala Lumpur railway station by H.C. Syers and a guard of honour of Selangor Police.

Klang becomes the Royal Capital



View of Istana Mahkota, Klang,
on the day of the Sultan's
Installation in 1903.

The first three Sultans of Selangor lived and were buried at Kuala Selangor.

The fourth, Sultan Abdul Samad, moved the royal headquarters to Jugra, near the mouth of the Langat river, and lived there for 39 years. He died there at the age of 93, in February 1898.

His eldest son, Raja Muda Musa, had died in 1884 and the Major Chiefs decided to instal the old Sultan's grandson, Raja Sulaiman, as the next ruler.

The government built a new palace for him at Klang, named Istana Mahkota Puri. It was completed at the end of 1899, but the new Sultan preferred to live in his own palace at Bandar until he had been officially installed. This ceremony was delayed and did not take place until October 1903.

Motor cars had not yet arrived in the Malay States and most of the guests travelled to Klang by train and from the railway station to the palace by horse-down carriages. The first motor car arrived in Kuala Lumpur in 1904.

Sultan Alauddin Sulaiman Shah celebrated his Golden Jubilee early in March 1938, but he died later in the same month at the age of 72.

He was succeeded by his third son, Tengku Alam Shah, who had been granted the title of Raja Muda in 1934, in place of his eldest brother, Tengku Musa Eddin.

Klang has continued to be the official place of residence of the Sultans of Selangor but Istana Mahkota was replaced by Istana Alam Shah in 1950.

His Royal Highness Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah, the present Ruler, succeeded his father in 1960.

Sultan Alauddin Sulaiman Shah,
the new Sultan in 1903.





Istana Mahkota, built for the new Sultan at Klang in 1899.

Gedung Raja Abdullah comes back to life

When the new Selangor Contingent Police Headquarters were built in 1980, immediately behind Gedung Raja Abdullah, the Gedung was left empty.

The Chief Police Officer planned to demolish the old building to provide space for Badminton Courts for his men, and had it not been for Badminton Courts for his men, and had it not been for the intervention of His Royal Highness the Sultan, this would have been done.

Action was then taken by the Museum Department to Gazette the building under the Antiquities Ordinance and thus to guarantee its continued survival. But no attempt was made to restore it.

When Badan Warisan Malaysia was founded in August 1983, with the preservation of old and historic buildings as its principal object, the first two projects to be undertaken were the rescue of

an old timber palace in Besut, Terengganu, and of Gedung Raja Abdullah in Klang.

The Council also decided to set up a mini-museum inside the Gedung showing the highlights in the history of Klang.

His Royal Highness the Sultan gave the proposal enthusiastic support and asked the State Government to assist. The Museum Department gave much valuable advice, and Mr. Jimmy C.S. Lim, a talented architect with a special interest in old buildings inspected the Gedung, declared it to be still structurally sound and volunteered to direct its restoration.

An historical outline was prepared and Long Th'ien Shih, a Klang-born graphic artist, was commissioned to provide the illustrations, beginning in 100 A.D. and including all the incidents mentioned in this book.

The State Government promised financial assistance, the Malaysian Mining Corporation made a generous launching grant, and work started both on the restoration in 1984 and the illustrations early in 1985.

A Chain-Link fence was erected round the building, separating it from the Police barracks, and the President of the Klang Town Council landscape the surrounding strip of ground. Klang residents also expressed their keen interest.

When Raja Abdullah planned his Gedung, he provided a very large room on the upper floor, 58 feet by 37 feet which he used as the living and sleeping quarters for himself and his family. During the occupation of the Gedung by the Police many partitions were erected upstairs and the store rooms at ground level were used for the detention of criminals and the safekeeping of court exhibits. Once the partitions had been removed, the upper floor provided an ideal area, for the historical display, and the total absence of central pillars was a great advantage.

The Council of the Heritage of Malaysia Trust planned to

complete the restoration and the Historical Display in time for an Opening during the Sultan's Silver Jubilee Celebrations in September 1985, but it was later decided to arrange a separate ceremony, in November.

The Opening Ceremony, on 23 November was a combined operation in which the State Government, the President of the Klang Town Council, the National Museum, the District Heads of Departments and leading residents of Klang took an active part.

The President of the Badan, Tan Sri Abdullah bin Mohd. Salleh, invited the sultan to enter the historic building, followed by the Raja Muda, and many other members of the Royal family and distinguished guests. Fortunately, Klang enjoyed a sunny afternoon after a week of heavy rain.

Members of the Public were admitted to the Gedung the following morning, and the building has been open to the public six days a week ever since.

When it was first erected in 1857, Raja Abdullah's Gedung must have attracted many visitors. In December 1985, without any publicity, visitors came from many different places, and in the first month, over two thousand Malaysians paid for admission.

Gedung Raja Abdullah, built in 1857 and so nearly demolished about a century later, can now look forward to a new lease of life, serving a different purpose but still a landmark in one of the most historic places in Malaysia.