

Museum Volunteers, JMM

Taking the Mystery out of History

# A Very Rough Guide To Lukut

*by Eric Lim*

## Introduction

Moving on with the exploration on **Federal Route 5**, this time we drive past the state boundary at Sepang to enter the **Land of Nine States – Negeri Sembilan**. The destination is only 20 kms away; it was originally a part of Selangor but in an agreement with Negri Sembilan, was given in exchange for Rekoh, a settlement on the upstream of Sungai Langat and all area in Labu which is understand to be the district of Semenyih today. **Lukut** is the name of this town and it became the wealthiest tin mining centre in the country between 1830 and 1860 but went into a decline after the switch to Negeri Sembilan.

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Photo source : [Old Town, Lukut, Malaysia | Matthew Tan](#)

## History

During the start of the 18th century CE, the **Bugis** were already establishing their foothold on the west coast of the peninsula and had taken control of the coastline, starting from the mouth of Sungai Linggi in the south (Selangor's border with Melaka), and stretching to the Bernam river valley at the border with Perak in the north. **Tin** had taken over from spices as the main trade commodity. The Chinese started mining (for gold and tin) in Melaka from 1793 and, by early 1800, they had ventured into neighbouring Sungai Ujong and Lukut. Records show that the **Chinese** were already mining for tin in Lukut from 1815. When John Anderson visited Selangor in 1818 to carry out a survey on the economy and population, he reported that Lukut had '*lately become a great place for tin*' and the Chinese had formed a fifth of the total population of a thousand people in Lukut.

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Raja Busu's house / Photo source : [Previous post Peristiwa Berdarah Di Lukut](#)

In the 1820s, **Raja Busu** (full name **Raja Hassan Bin Raja Nala ibni Almarhum Sultan Salehuddin**), the youngest son of Sultan Salehuddin, the first Sultan of Selangor, attracted by the rich tin deposits, took control and proclaimed himself the first Malay Ruler of Lukut. Raja Busu ruled the settlement as an independent district and he brought in more Chinese from Melaka to expand the output of the mines. The Malays were already mining for tin using the '*lampang*' (sluicing) but the Chinese mining technique of '*lombong*' (opening larger pits) was more effective in getting a larger yield. Lukut saw the start of tin mining using Chinese labour, technique and capital. The imposition of a ten per cent tax on the output did not go down well with the Chinese miners and merchants. On a dark rainy night in September 1834, some 300 to 400 Chinese gathered in front of Raja Busu's house and demanded that he come out or they would set the house on fire. He refused to budge and told them that as a Muslim he was not afraid to die. The Chinese promptly took the cue and burnt the house down, killing Raja Busu and his family members. In retaliation, the Malays ambushed the Chinese as they tried to cross the border to British controlled Melaka. Thereafter, the mines were abandoned for a time.

This was during the reign of the third Sultan of Selangor, **Sultan Muhammad**, who took the opportunity to assert his authority and proclaimed Lukut as part of Selangor in 1836. In 1846, Sultan Muhammad announced the appointment of **Raja**



**Jumaat** as Chief of Lukut. Prior to this, Raja Jumaat together with his father, **Raja Jaafar** and brother, **Raja Abdullah**, had settled in Lukut for some time. They were Bugis from Riau, Indonesia.



*Tin mining in Malaya / Photo source : Wikimedia Commons*

The appointment of Raja Jumaat eventually turned out to be crucial and important for the town and the Sultan. Under his leadership, a well laid out township took shape with a main street and a double row of brick shophouses with tile roofs, large godowns and a customs house. He even set up a police force of twenty Malays attired in uniforms and hats with identification numbers. Chinese traders, mainly Hailam, set up their businesses in the town. As his residence, he **built a fort on top of a hill** overlooking the town and protected by cannons around the parameters. He had established good business relationships with Melaka businessmen and friendship with **Lieutenant Colonel Ronald MacPherson** who was the Resident Councillor (chief administrator) at Melaka between 1857 and 1860. Lukut reached the peak in tin production and the settlement became prosperous and flourished under Raja Jumaat.

**Sultan Muhammad** also tried his hand at tin mining in the Selangor and Klang river basins but without any success, instead he accumulated a large sum of debts.



Raja Jumaat helped Sultan Muhammad by standing as guarantor for the royal debts on two occasions, in 1839 and 1846. For the former, the favour was reciprocated when Raja Jumaat married Raja Senai, daughter of Sultan Muhammad. For the latter, the Sultan had granted the Lukut district to Raja Jumaat and his heirs in perpetuity. Concurrently, the Sultan conferred Raja Jumaat the prestigious title of **Raja Tua** (royal coadjutor/assistant).

From 1846 onwards, Raja Jumaat became the most powerful man in Selangor. When Sultan Muhammad passed away in 1857, Raja Jumaat was in a position to influence the choice of a successor in place of the heir who was still a minor. Subsequently, **Raja Abdul Samad** became the fourth Sultan of Selangor. In the same year, Raja Jumaat and his brother, **Raja Abdullah**, prospected for tin at the Gombak and Ampang area with Chinese miners from Lukut and were successful two years later. When Raja Jumaat died in 1864, it was a big blow to Lukut as it began to decline and the situation was made worse with the gradual depletion of its tin deposits.



*Raja Bot and his family, photo taken in 1912 / Photo source : [Misteri Kehilangan Istana Kota Lukut](#)*

**Raja Bot** became the new Ruler of Lukut. Raja Bot was born on 4 December 1847; at the age of ten, he was sent to Malacca to study in an English school and stayed

for ten months with Macpherson. He was then sent to Baba Chi Yam Chuan where he helped with reading and writing of Malay letters from and to Lukut. At thirteen, he was helping to look after his father's business in Lukut.

During an early stage of his rule, Raja Bot had to face several disturbances. **Raja Sulaiman of Sungai Raya** had wanted to break away from Lukut and this prompted him to lead an attack on Lukut. Raja Bot and his men managed to stop the attack, even without the protection of his band of 30 Arab mercenaries as they had fled the scene after seeing one of them being stabbed to death. The next incident happened when **Raja Yahya**, adopted son of Sultan Abdul Samad, paid a visit. On the way to meeting Raja Bot, he had caught a Chinese Hailam whom he executed, without the permission of Raja Bot. When the Chinese arrived seeking an explanation, a melee ensued but Raja Yahya managed to escape. Then there was an incident where a Malay Raja set the Chinese bazaar on fire. These disturbances greatly affected the relationship between the Chinese and Malays and the prosperity of Lukut. Chinese miners started to head out to the more successful mines in Hulu Klang and Ampang in the north.

Raja Bot was not involved in the **Klang War/Selangor Civil War** (1867–1873) and Lukut was far away from the battlegrounds. After the war, the British started to gain stronger influence in the affairs of state with the implementation of the Residential system. In 1878, the British wanted to settle the long-standing **boundary problem**, brought up by Dato Kelana Sending of Sungai Ujong for a claim of the Lukut district including **Cape Rachado (Tanjung Tuan today)**. Raja Bot, who was not consulted, protested strongly against the transfer of Lukut to Sungai Ujong.

It was finally concluded in a convention held in Singapore on 31 July 1880 where Raja Bot was compensated with a total sum of 27,000 dollars. He sought employment from the Selangor government but he was denied. In June of 1887, he applied for the post of Penghulu of Sungai Buloh and this time, Bot was successful. However, it was a short stint and his next posting was as a member of the State Council on 18 December 1888 where he stayed until his passing on 11 April 1916. He died of asthma and heart failure; he was buried at the Royal Burial Ground at Johor Bahru.

## Fun Facts



Saiyid Mashhur (middle, with kris)



(Left) – Saiyid Masyor (middle) / Photo source : [SEJARAH MELAYU DAHULU DAN SENJATA API??](https://sejarah.melayu.com/daulu-dan-senjata-api)

(Right) – Lieutenant Colonel Ronald MacPherson / Photo source :

<https://cathedral.org.sg/page/tour-the-cathedral>

**Kapitan Yap Ah Loy** also came to Lukut to work as a cook at **Chong Chong's** tin mine. They were both Fui Chew Hakka but ended up in different camps when the Klang War/Selangor Civil War erupted. Yap Ah Loy headed the Hai San group and Chong Chong was with Ghee Hin. When Chong Chong and **Saiyid Masyor** made their second attempt to capture Kuala Lumpur, they were intercepted at Rawang by Yap Ah Loy's troops commanded by Chung Piang who managed to stop them and Chong Chong retreated to Serendah, where he is presumably killed.

Incidentally, the first Kapitan Cina of Kuala Lumpur, **Hiu Siew**, was a tin mine owner in Lukut. Hiu Siew and another mine owner, **Ah Sze**, were persuaded to relocate to Kuala Lumpur by **Sutan Puasa**.



The current Saint Andrew's Cathedral in Singapore was designed by **Lieutenant Colonel Ronald MacPherson**.

## Places of Interest



## Royal Tombs

There are two Selangor royal tombs in Lukut. The first one is located at a hillock at **Kampung Kuala Lukut (now Chuah) [1]**. This is where **Raja Busu and his family members** were buried. Earlier, there was a plan to upgrade it to reflect it as a Royal Tomb but this did not materialise. The other is **Raja Jumaat's tomb at the Selangor Royal Mausoleum [2] located inside the Lukut Muslim Cemetary**. It is easy to find the place as it is opposite the Lukut Police Station and adjacent to a petrol station. As far back as 1855, it was designated as the final resting place of members of the Selangor royal family. The Selangor state government is still paying to the local authority for use of the land.





## Lukut Town

Prior to the start of E29 Seremban–Port Dickson Highway (SPDH) [5], motorists travelling from Seremban/North South Highway to Port Dickson must pass through the town of Lukut. It is just ten kilometres away from Port Dickson and Lukut is becoming a haven for seafood. The local restaurants serve fresh fish, clams, prawns and crabs. For sea fishing enthusiasts, a popular fishing area is Kelong Mahmud, which can be reached by renting fishing boats from Kuala Lukut. Take a leisure stroll around the town and maybe visit the small theme parks located nearby. There is no shortage of accommodations along the stretch to Port Dickson.



Photo source : [Lukut Town](#)

## Getting There

If you are from the coastal area, you can use **Federal Route 5** to Lukut. Coming from Kuala Lumpur city centre, use the **North South Highway (E2 South)** and exit



to the **Seremban– Port Dickson Highway (E29)**. Then exit at Exit 2905A Lukut interchange to Lukut.

## References

[A History of Selangor \(1766 – 1939\)](#) (page 34 – 48)

[Raja Bot Bin Raja Jumaat](#) (page 68 – 93)

[The State of Lukut. \(With text figures\)](#) (page 291 – 295)

[Misteri Kehilangan Istana Kota Lukut](#)

[Previous post Peristiwa Berdarah Di Lukut](#)

[SEJARAH MELAYU DAHULU DAN SENJATA API??](#)

[Muzium Lukut](#)

[Old Town, Lukut, Malaysia | Matthew Tan](#)

<https://cathedral.org.sg/page/tour-the-cathedral>

[Lukut Town](#)

[Perancangan Kerja Naiktaraf Makam Raja Busu](#)

[Makam Raja Jumaat](#)

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