



AWANGKU MUHAMMAD NABEEL BIN PENGIRAN HAJI KAMARUL  
ZAMAN, NANI SURYANI BINTI HAJI ABU BAKAR &  
HAJI AWANG ASBOL BIN HAJI MAIL

## A Brief History of Brunei Noble Rank between 1958 and 1959: A Restructuring

**ABSTRACT:** The title of “Pengiran” was mentioned in sixteenth century European records and was written on local tombs dating to the same period. The “Silsilah Raja-raja Brunei”, which is the genealogy of Brunei rulers, shows that ranking within “Pengiran” had already existed since the reign of Sultan Muhammad Hassan, 1582-1598. Simultaneously, there also occurred other branches of the Brunei nobles from the reigns of other Sultans of Brunei. This paper – using the qualitative approach, historical method, and literature review – demonstrates that there was a restructuring to the ranking of Brunei nobles during the reign of Sultan Haji Omar Ali Saifuddien III, 1950-1967, specifically between 1958 and 1959. The restructuring, which occurred on the eve and following the promulgation of the 1959 Constitution, was indirectly influenced by the role of Sultan Hashim Jalilul Alam Aqamaddin, 1885-1906, in the 1905/1906 Supplementary Agreement. Sultan Hashim only wanted the descendants from him to be the future Sultans of Brunei which in turn, in 1959, distinguished nobles of Sultan Hashim descendants to nobles of non-Sultan Hashim’s descendants. Another factor is the growing numbers of “Pengiran” from the nineteenth century. However, the “Pengiran Kebanyakan” proved to have no clear definition largely, because it was a product of the restructuring. This was also because the restructuring had tried to simplify the noble ranking, which was categorically wider and complex in the past.

**KEY WORDS:** Brunei Nobles; Genealogy of Brunei Rulers; Restructuring.

### INTRODUCTION

It is not assuredly known when and from where the word *Pengiran* originated. According to a compilation of Chinese sources by W.P.

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**Suggested Citation:** Zaman, Awangku Muhammad Nabeel bin Pengiran Haji Kamarul, Nani Suryani binti Haji Abu Bakar & Haji Awang Asbol bin Haji Mail. (2021). “A Brief History of Brunei Noble Rank between 1958 and 1959: A Restructuring” in *TAWARIKH: Journal of Historical Studies*, Volume 12(2), April, pp.159-178. Bandung, Indonesia: Minda Masagi Suci and ASPENSI, with ISSN 2085-0980 (print) and ISSN 2685-2284 (online).

**Article Timeline:** Accepted (February 24, 2021); Revised (March 24, 2021); and Published (April 30, 2021).

Groeneveldt, *Pengiran* may have Chinese derivation: *Pang-Ki-Lan*. In contrast to this, Pehin Jawatan Dalam Seri Maharaja Dato Seri Utama Dr. Haji Awang Muhammad Jamil Al-Sufri (1992 and 2002a) suggested that the word *Pengiran* may be related to Majapahit era in Java, looking at the close linguistic connection between *Pengiran Dipa Negara*, which is one of the Brunei's *Cheteria*<sup>1</sup> titles; and *Pengeran Depo Negoro*, who was a Javanese prince, 11 November 1785 to 8 January 1855 (Groeneveldt, 1880:102; and Al-Sufri, 1992 and 2002a).

According to some old generation *Pengirans*, today's pronunciation of the word is rather new because as recent as the early 1950s, Bruneians also pronounced it as *Pengeran* or *Pangiran*. This proposes that the Chinese or especially the Javanese derivation is a huge possibility. The first people to be invested *Pengiran* could have been the siblings of the first Muslim ruler of Brunei, Sultan Muhammad Shah, who ruled from 1363 until 1402. On the ceremony of his accession to the throne, two of his brothers were granted *Wazir*<sup>2</sup>'s posts of *Pengiran Bendahara Seri Maharaja Permaisua* and *Pengiran Temenggong Sahibul Bahar* respectively. There is no record about the mentioning of *Pengiran* before the existence of the Sultanate of Brunei in 1363 (Sweeney, 1968:54).

In his article, Awang Haji Mahmud bin Said (2004) studied an old tomb dated 1514, which belongs to a Brunei noble named *Pengiran Syateria Maharaja Dinda* (Said, 2004:42). According to the genealogical record of the Sultans of Brunei, this came from the reign of Sultan Bolkiaah, the fifth Sultan of Brunei, who ruled from 1485 until 1524 (Halim, 2002:106). This indicates that the title *Pengiran* had already existed before 1514. The *Castille War*, fought between Brunei and Spain, broke out from around the same century in 1578. It occurred during the reign of Sultan Saiful Rizal, the seventh Sultan of Brunei, who ruled from 1533 until 1581.<sup>3</sup>

The man who led the Spanish expedition, Dr. De Sande, made his own report about the situation. Dr. De Sande noted the *Pengiran* as being relatives of the Sultan, as cited in Robert Nicholl (2007), as following here:

*He (the king) was a tall, fat man, and quite black. He was seated with many of his relatives called "Panguilans", and his children and brothers* (Nicholl, 2007:65).

*Boxer Codex*, which is originally a sixteenth century Spanish source, also notes that the rest of the people of the royal house of Sultan Saiful

<sup>1</sup>A category of traditional Minister appointed only among members of the royal family and nobles.

<sup>2</sup>Like *Cheteria*, the *Wazir* is a category of traditional minister below the Sultan appointed only among members of the royal family, the core nobles as well as the common nobles. *Wazir* is the highest category of all the traditional ministers.

<sup>3</sup>Sultan Saiful Rizal was not in the capital city for most part of the war and leaving behind the defence of the country to his brother Pengiran Bendahara Sakam. During the retreat, Sultan Saiful Rizal met his Kedayan concubine, Dang Arfah, into which the Sultan begat Orang Kaya Kassim.

Rizal carried the title *Pengiran*, as cited in Johns Carroll (1982), as following here:

*The rest of the people of the royal house, whom they call "Panquilanes";<sup>4</sup> (Malay-Javanese "Pengiran" = Noble Person), which is how to say titled lords (Carroll, 1982:4).*

In 1735, the *Silsilah Raja-raja Berunai* was purportedly written during the reign of Sultan Muhammad Alauddin, the seventeenth Sultan of Brunei, who ruled from 1730 until 1737. The *Silsilah Raja-raja Berunai* is a genealogy of the Sultans of Brunei and contains records on the implementations of royal ceremonies carried out during the reign of Sultan Muhammad Hassan, the ninth Sultan of Brunei, who ruled from 1582 until 1598 (Sweeney, 1968).

The records on royal ceremonies came under a particular section known as *Kitab Risalat al-Marhum fi-Adati l-Marhum*. The *Kitab Risalat al-Marhum fi-Adati l-Marhum* notes two categories of the Brunei noble from the reign of Sultan Muhammad Hassan:

Firstly, *Yang berbangsa dan panchir keluarga Sultan*. Translation: Closely related to the Sultan; and

Secondly, *Raja-raja Meloran*. Translation: Kings of Meloran (Sweeney, 1968:16).<sup>5</sup>

Apart from this, there were other branches of the Brunei noble. However, it is unclear from the reign of which Sultan some of the noble groups below were. According to Yura Halim (1993), there was specific group of *Pengirans* that he referred as *Pengiran-pengiran pengangkat usungan*, that is the nobles who operated the Sultan's royal carriage. This reference shows that the nobles who operated the Sultan's royal carriage was a distinct group of *Pengiran* of certain origin (Halim, 1993:8).

The story surrounding this originated from the reign of Sultan Hussin Kamaluddin, the sixteenth Sultan of Brunei, who ruled twice from 1710 to 1730 and from 1737 to 1740. According to the history, there was an incident involving a member of the Sultan's family with a member of *Pengiran Temenggong Rajid's* family, who resided at Kampong Labuan Kapal, which was one of the wards in Kampong Ayer.<sup>6</sup>

The Sultan side's desire to propose a female of *Pengiran Temenggong Rajid's* family was rejected. This culminated to the murder of one of

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<sup>4</sup>Professor C.R. Boxer believes that *Panquilanes* is *Pengiran*. See, for example, C.R. Boxer (1983).

<sup>5</sup>It is unknown what *Meloran* is. Nonetheless, the word may denote a form of rank: there is a caste section called *Meluran* (in a village named *Melur* in Tamil Nadu). The Brahmins, who are the highest in the caste system, had their earlier settlement in *Melur*. Because of its relation to the caste, which is prevalent in the largely Hindu-influenced Malay Sultanates in Southeast Asia, *Meloran* may refer to a degree of rank.

<sup>6</sup>One of the wards of Kampong Ayer that no longer existed. It was mentioned in St. John account, who visited Kampong Ayer sometime in 1862. See, for example, William H. Treacher (1891); Francis Simon (1906); Peter Blundell (1923); Abdul Latif Haji Ibrahim (1971); and Haji Tassim bin Haji Abu Bakar (2018).

the *anak buah*,<sup>7</sup> that is the family of *Pengiran Temenggong Rajid*. When one of them wished to revenge, *Pengiran Temenggong Rajid* objected it. Feeling guilty towards the palace, *Pengiran Temenggong Rajid* offered his *anak buah*, who were the *Pengirans* to be the operators of Sultan Hussin Kamaluddin's royal carriage during his coronation as a reparation (Al-Sufri, 2012:255-256).

Since then, according to Pehin Jawatan Dalam Seri Maharaja Dato Seri Utama Dr. Haji Awang Muhammad Jamil Al-Sufri (2012), the *anak buah* of *Pengiran Temenggong Rajid* became the bearers of the Sultan's royal carriage as a way to demonstrate loyalty (Al-Sufri, 2012:256). With regard to Labuan Kapal, where *Pengiran Temenggong Rajid* resided, the descendants were mentioned in *Silsilah Raja-raja Brunei* (Text B), edited and annotated by P.L. Amin Sweeney (1968), in its account on Sultan Muhammad Jamalul Alam II's coronation, on 15 May 1918, as bearers of a royal article:

[...] dan puan tarian pun dipigang oleh anak raja2, bangsa Labuan Kapal (Sweeney, 1968:80).

**Translation:**

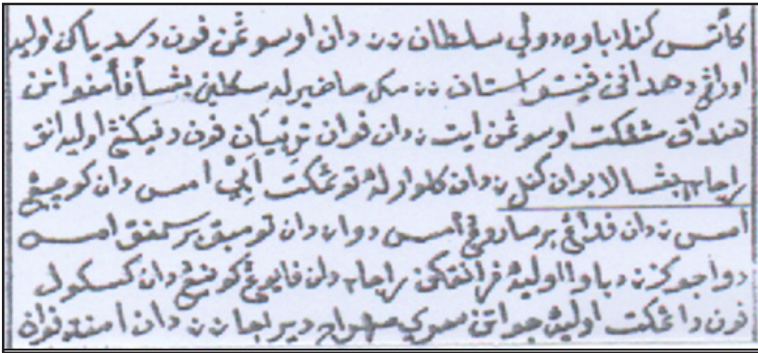
[...] and the Mrs. Dance that is a silver vase were being held by the sons of the Raja-raja that is the Pengirans of Labuan Kapal.

This indicates that they were a distinct group of *Pengirans* as they were described as "*anak raja2 bangsa Labuan Kapal*", which means nobles of Labuan Kapal. In another *Silsilah Raja-raja Brunei*, copied in 1841, similar categories of *Pengirans* mentioned in the 1735, *Silsilah Raja-raja Brunei* were also mentioned, but with an additional category that is the *Bangsa Raja-raja* (translation: *Raja-raja* descent). This shows that there was another noble rank from the mid-nineteenth century period (Sweeney, 1968:72). See text 1.

Furthermore, there was also a group of *Pengirans*, who had no knowledge of their ancestors who were differentiated from the other noble groups. In this context, D.E. Brown (1970), who was in Brunei for over a year from 1967 until 1968, noted that *Pengirans* of "very remote and untraceable descent" are known as "Pengiran Sapakudian". So, *Pengiran Sapakudian* was "presumably a noble worth, but a bolt of cloth in reference to marriage payments" (Brown, 1970:13).

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<sup>7</sup>According to a 1921 compilation of Brunei Malay words by H.B. Marshall (1921), *anak buah* is a cousin, although currently it may refer to a niece or nephew. In Sarawak and Peninsular Malay, it referred to a follower. See, for further information, H.B. Marshall (1921); and A. Clynes (2001).



**Text 1:**

A specific group of nobles, *Raja-raja Bangsa Labuan Kapal*, as recorded in a manuscript on the coronation of Sultan Muhammad Jamalul Alam II on 15 May 1918. A List of those involved during the coronation procession of Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin, on 17 March 1940. It recorded three categories of nobles: *Anak Raja2*, *Anak Raja2 Peranakan Chatria*, and *Anak Raja2 Kerabat yang Hampir Kebawah Duli*.

With regard to this noble group, D.E. Brown (1970) provided the following passage from his interview with a Pehin Khatib, dated on 6 November 1967, as follows:

*Ini Pengiran beberapa jenis, banyak macham: Anak Sultan, Anak Wazir, Anak Cheteria. Tapi lama, lama, lama, lama tidak ada paku (?) sudah jadi Pengiran Pekudian. Kudi arti 20 ala kain (Brown, 1970:13).*

**Translation:**

There are several categories of *Pengirans*: *Sultan*, *Wazir*, and *Cheteria's* children. But over time, there is no needle (*paku*?) and became *Pengiran Pekudian*. *Kudi* means twenty roles of cloths.

D.E. Brown (1970) asserted that he did not only encounter the term *Pengiran Sapakudian/Pekudian* from the Pehin Khatib, but also from several other informants. The word *Sapakudian* may be derived from the word *kudi*, which roughly means a roll of cloth (*kain*). They could be nobles, who had fallen to a low category and became slaves as there were in fact descendants of Sultans of Brunei, who became slaves. Nonetheless, *Pengiran Sapakudian* appears to be a very old term as the older generations today hardly remember the word (*cf* Treacher, 1885; Brown, 1970; and Ghofur, 2015).

*Pengiran Jaya Perkasa Pengiran Anak* Muhammad Hassan, or his full name is *Pengiran Anak Muhammad Hassan bin Pengiran Anak Sabtu*

Kamaluddin (n.y.), also wrote in his manuscript about a branch of nobles that was the children of *Cheteria*, who were the bearers of the Sultan's royal carriage, as follows:

*Saperti pengangkat-pengangkat usungan anak-anak Raja-raja Cheteria*  
(Kamaluddin, n.y.:12).

**Translation:**

Bearers of the royal carriage, the children of the *Cheteria*.

Pengiran Anak Muhammad Hassan bin Pengiran Anak Sabtu Kamaluddin (n.y.), further, noted that the *anak gundeks*, that is the noble born from the concubines, were also bearers of the Sultan's royal carriage. This reference shows that they were a distinct group of the nobles that is being nobles of concubine descents. *Pengiran Di-Gadong Sahibul Mal Pengiran* Haji Muhammad Salleh, or his full name and his title is Yang Teramat Mulia Seri Paduka Duli Pengiran Di-Gadong (Sahibul Mal) Pengiran Haji Mohd Salleh bin Pengiran Anak Haji Mohammad (1968), also noted about the existence of another group of *Pengirans*, which he referred to as the "*biduanda kechil anak raja2 gondok tujuh kali tiris*" (Mohammad, 1968:5). These were people seen during coronations in the past as bearers of the *Lembing Kerajaan* that is the ceremonial spear (*cf* Kamaluddin, n.y.; Mohammad, 1968; and Murtagh, 2005). See text 2.

Pehin Jamil, or his full name is Pehin Jawatan Dalam Seri Maharaja Dato Seri Utama Dr. Haji Awang Muhammad Jamil Al-Sufri (2002a), also notes that the *biduanda kechil* is:

[...] *anak Pengiran-pengiran daripada gundik-gundik tujuh kali tiris* (Al-Sufri, 2002a:67).

**Translation:**

[...] children of the *Pengirans* from the *tujuh kali tiris* concubines.

This particular noble group was also distinct as they were the only ones who could carry the ceremonial role. What could be concluded from the above discussion is that there actually existed varying groups of the Brunei nobles in the past and the Brunei nobility rank was seen that way. As the old capital of Brunei until about the early to mid-twentieth century, Kampong Ayer was both the centre of rules where the palaces were located and where trades were centred (Mail, 2015:54). Therefore, the *Pengirans* originated from Kampong Ayer. The *Boxer Codex* recorded that Sultan Saiful Rizal, like his forebears, resided in a palace above the water (Caroll, 1982:2).

"DULI YANG TERAMAT MULIA PENGIRAN MUDA"	- Gelaran untuk anak Sultan yang gahara
"PENGIRAN ANAK"	- Untuk anak Sultan yang tidak gahara, atau anak Pengiran Pemancha dan Pengiran Temanggung serta anak2 Pengiran Digacong yang bukan anak sulong.
"PENGIRAN MUDA"	- Bagi anak2 gahara Pengiran Bendahara dan bunga tuboh (anak sulong) Pengiran Digacong.

(32A) in P. 35. 35. (1)

List Orang2 yan akan memieng alat Kerajaan masa kemusa.

Sa-orang anak raja2 yang pilehan memieng pedang tersula dihadapan Singgahsana.

4	orang	anak	raja2	peranakan	Chatria	memieng	katok.
4	"	-do-	"	Panastan.			
4	"	-do-	"	Puan.			
4	"	-do-	"	Terian.			
4	"	-do-	"	Chupu.			
4	"	-do-	"	Penyigupan.			
4	"	-do-	"	Kipas			

Dan yang memieng yang dekt dipileh raja2 anak raja2 kerabat yang hampir kabawah Duli.

### Text 2:

Definitions of *Duli Yang Teramat Mulia Pengiran Muda*, *Pengiran Muda*, and *Pengiran Anak* by Yang Amat Mulia *Pengiran Setia Negara Pengiran Haji Muhammad Yusof bin Pengiran Haji Abdul Rahim* (Taken from *Kursus Wazir2, Cheteria2, dan Manteri termasuk Manteri Pendalaman*, 1968)

This article – using the qualitative approach, historical method, and literature review – tries to elaborate as well as analysis a brief history of Brunei noble rank between 1958 and 1959 in the context as restructuring matters. Primary and secondary sources will be used in describing the historical events (Ibrahim, 2000; Zed, 2008; and Sjamsuddin, 2012).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

***Brunei into the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.*** Leading to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Brunei was ruled by Sultan Hashim Jalilul Alam Aqamaddin, the twenty-fifth Sultan of Brunei, who reigned from 1885 until his death in 1906. The Sultan's

reign was a critical one. His rule was contested by *Pengiran Bendahara Seri Maharaja Permaisuaru Pengiran Anak Besar Muhammad*, who was a relative of the murdered *Pengiran Raja Muda Hashim*, due to earlier royal conflict (Hussainmiya, 2006:51).

*Pengiran Raja Muda Hashim* once claimed to be the successor of the ruling Sultan of his time, Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddien II, the twenty-third Sultan of Brunei, who ruled from 1828 until 1852, on the reason that the Sultan did not have a son from a noble wife and, thus, could not inherit the throne (Brown, 1970:149). *Pengiran Raja Muda Hashim*, in turn, was a son of Sultan Muhammad Kanzul Alam born from a noble mother. To *Pengiran Raja Muda Hashim*, such a situation made him the most rightful to the next throne. Nevertheless, Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddien II had a child born from a non-noble mother, *Pengiran Anak Hashim*, who eventually became Sultan Hashim (Brown, 1970; Al-Sufri, 1989; and Gallop, 2019).

According to B.A. Hussainmiya (2006), following Sultan Hashim's installation, "*the other contender, the Pengiran Bendahara, lost in the race*" (Hussainmiya, 2006:51). Worse, Sultan Hashim was definitely implicated in the killing of the father of the *Pengiran Bendahara* and the *Pengiran Di-Gadong* (Hussainmiya, 2006; Mail & Anwar, 2016; and Gallop, 2019).

The *Pengiran Bendahara's* younger brother, *Pengiran Di-Gadong Sahibul Mal Pengiran Anak Muhammad Hassan*, at one point attempted to eliminate Sultan Hashim during the Sultan's coronation in 1895 by pretending to perform homage to the Sultan (Al-Sufri, 2002b:33).

In addition to the family conflict, Sultan Hashim was also faced by territorial problem. Limbang, for example, was seized by Charles Brooke in 1890 and the British, who agreed to protect Brunei through 1888 Protectorate Agreement, condoned the annexation (Marryat, 1848; Boyle, 1865; Al-Sufri, 1989; Mail, 2014:38; and Gallop, 2019). These situations culminated to the signing of the Supplementary Agreement of 1905/1906, whereby Brunei received a British protection and a British Resident, whose advise had to be followed by the Sultan, except matters relating to the Islamic religion. One of the terms of the agreement was that the British agreed to preserve the post of the Sultan and settle the "*due succession*" of Sultan of Brunei. Initially, this meant only the retainment of the post of the Sultan itself, but "*at Sultan Hashim's request, it was quickly revised to refer only to his descendants*" (Hussainmiya, 2006:59 and 77).

The demand was effective, because when Sultan Hashim passed away in May 1906, his oldest surviving son, *Pengiran Muda Muhammad Jamalul Alam*, succeeded him on the throne as Sultan Muhammad Jamalul Alam II (Al-Sufri, 2002b:34-35). This averted other claimants to the throne, such as the said *Pengiran Bendahara*, who was still around until 1917 (Al-Sufri,

1989; Hussainmiya, 2006; Mail & Anwar, 2016; and Gallop, 2019).<sup>8</sup>

Simultaneously, the numbers of *Pengirans* had also increased. In 1837, J.T. Dickenson provided the numbers of the nobilities and their remainders combined to be around 500 people (Dickenson, 1837). Over a century later, in 1967, D.E. Brown (1969 and 1970) estimated that the nobilities and their descendants were approximately around 2,000 people exclusively at Kampong Ayer (Brown, 1969 and 1970:13). In a special issue of *Borneo Bulletin: Keluaran Khas Merdeka*, on 31 December 1983, around 10% of Kampong Ayer was inhabited by descendants of nobilities that is the *Pengirans*:<sup>9</sup>

*Kira-kira 10 peratus dari penduduk Kampong Ayer itu berketurunan bangsawan, seperti yang jelas terlihat pada nama mereka – “Pengiran” – untuk lelaki dan wanita yang telah berumahtangga; – “Awangku”<sup>10</sup> – untuk lelaki bujang; dan “Dayangku” untuk wanita yang belum bersuami.<sup>11</sup>*

**Translation:**

Roughly 10 percent of the residence of Kampong Ayer descended from the nobilities, which is apparent from the title – *Pengiran* – for the married males and females; – *Awangku* – is for the male bachelor; and *Dayangku* for the female equivalent.

In 1924, Sultan Muhammad Jamalul Alam II passed away and was succeeded by his son, Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin, who reigned until his death in 1950. Ten years earlier, in 1940, the Sultan was coronated to become *Yang Di-Pertuan*. According to a leaflet program of the coronation, three categories of *Pengirans* were listed: *Anak Raja2* (Children of the *Rajas*); *Anak Raja2 Peranakan Chatria* (Children of the *Cheteria*); and *Anak Raja2 Kerabat yang Hampir Kabawah Duli* (Children of the *Rajas* who are Closely Related to the Sultan).<sup>12</sup>

In 1950, *Pengiran Bendahara Seri Maharaja Permaisuaru Pengiran Muda Omar Ali*, ascended the Brunei's throne as the successor to his brother, Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin, who had no male heir. He became known as Sultan Haji Omar Ali Saifuddin Sa'adul Khairi Waddien (Mail *et al.*,

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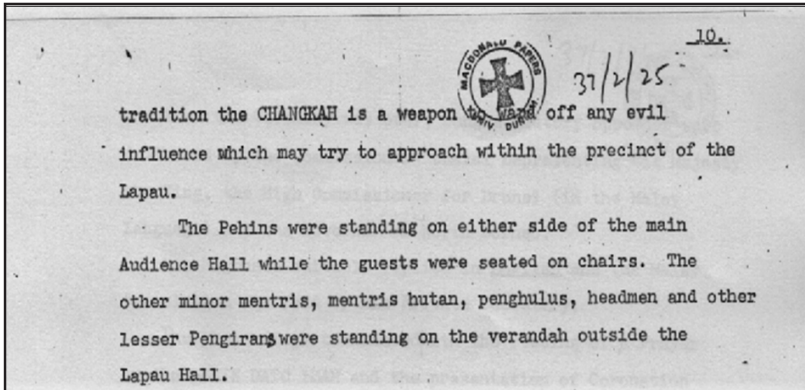
<sup>8</sup>See also, for example, “Annual Report of Brunei, 1917”. *Unpublished Primary Sources*. Available and owned by the Authors.

<sup>9</sup>See “Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III: Arkitek Brunei Moden” in *Borneo Bulletin: Keluaran Khas Merdeka*, on 31 December 1983, p.Ax.

<sup>10</sup>The title *Awangku* is mentioned in a genealogy written by *Pengiran Kesuma* Muhammad Hasyim between 1818 to 1831. The author wrote: “Bahwa adapun Hawangku, anak Pangiran Muhammad Hasyim, keluar diperanakan oleh ibunya Kahawang Bidah” (And so Hawangku, the son of Pangiran Muhammad Hasyim, was born of his mother Kahawang Bidah). See, for further information, *Pengiran Sabtu Kamaluddin ibni Al-Marhum Seri Paduka Duli Pengiran Bendahara Muhammad* [n.y.].

<sup>11</sup>See also again “Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddin III: Arkitek Brunei Moden” in *Borneo Bulletin: Keluaran Khas Merdeka*, on 31 December 1983, p.Ax.

<sup>12</sup>See “B.R.O. Conf.25/38”. *Unpublished Primary Sources*. Available and owned by the Authors.



**Text 3:**

British document on the coronation of Sultan Haji Omar Ali Saifuddien III in 1951 stating “Lesser Pengirans”.

2014:13). In 1951, the Sultan underwent coronation to become *Yang Di-Pertuan*. At the porch of the *Lapau* (where the ceremony was held), were some “Lesser Pengirans”.<sup>13</sup> See text 3.

However, it is unknown who these *Pengirans* were. Sultan Haji Omar Ali Saifuddien III had high devotion for the royal custom, even since his early age. When he was still a child, he favoured asking the older generation about the royal custom (Mail *et al.*, 2014:41); when he got married to *Pengiran Anak* (later *Raja Isteri*) Damit in 1941, he took the marriage as an opportunity to learn more about the custom (Al-Sufri, 1987:15); and when he was a *Wazir* at the time of his brother’s rule, he realized there was no effort to document the royal custom.<sup>14</sup>

Eventually, in 1958, the Sultan ordered the royal custom to be written and re-arranged. The task was given to a man, whose family background was cultivated in the field of royal custom, PM (Pengiran Muhammad) Yusof bin Pengiran Haji Abdul Rahim. Pengiran Muhammad Yusof bin Pengiran Haji Abdul Rahim (1958) re-arranged the royal custom, which was published in Jawi as *Adat Istiadat Diraja Brunei (Darussalam)*.

**About the Adat Istiadat Diraja Brunei (Darussalam).** In *Adat Istiadat Diraja Brunei Darussalam*, Pengiran Muhammad Yusof bin Pengiran Haji Abdul Rahim (1958) listed the core *Pengirans*, which he referred as *Peranakan Raja-raja*<sup>15</sup> *yang berteras* (Rahim, 1958:83). The word

<sup>13</sup>See also, for example, “Accession and Nomination of a Sultan”. *Unpublished Primary Sources*, No.PS/PnB/BR/0000829. Bandar Seri Begawan: Available and owned the copy by Authors, p.10.

<sup>14</sup>See “Sabda Duli Yang Teramat Mulia Paduka Seri Begawan: Adat Istiadat ‘Am dengan sa-Chara Rengkas”. *Kertas Tidak Diterbitkan* untuk Kursus Wazir2, Cheteria2, dan Manteri2, Termasuk Manteri2 Pendalaman di Brunei, kali yang pertama, p.3.

<sup>15</sup>The word “*Peranakan Raja*” appears to have been around since at least the early eighteenth century. In *Silsilah*

*Peranakan Raja-raja yang berteras* seems to be a newly modified word. The *Silsilah Raja-raja Brunei* mentions only *Peranakan Raja* (Sweeney, 1968:30), which was a general reference to all categories of the nobles (Rahim, 1958).<sup>16</sup>

The *Peranakan Raja-raja yang berteras*, according to *Adat Istiadat Diraja Brunei (Darussalam)*, are: (1) Children of a Sultan until the *Piut*, that is the third generation; (2) Children of a *Wazir* until the *Cucu*, that is the second generation; and (3) Children of a *Cheteria* until the *Anak*, that is the first generation (Rahim, 1958).

In contrast to *Peranakan Raja-raja yang berteras*, Pengiran Muhammad Yusof bin Pengiran Haji Abdul Rahim (1958) also mentioned *Raja-raja Biasa*, referring to the rest of the *Pengirans*, who do not belong to the category of *Peranakan Raja-raja Berteras*. The term generally refers to the generations after the Sultan's *Piut*, *Wazir's Cucu*, and *Cheteria's Anak*. Pengiran Muhammad Yusof bin Pengiran Haji Abdul Rahim (1958) also mentioned *Raja-raja Biasa* in the criterion to the offices of *Cheteria Pengalasan*, which is the lowest category of *Cheteria*.<sup>17</sup> Pengiran Muhammad Yusof bin Pengiran Haji Abdul Rahim (1958) noted that the Sultan may confer any of the *Cheteria's* office to any *Pengiran* based on his contribution to the Sultan and to the country (Rahim, 1958:38).

Simultaneously, Pengiran Muhammad Yusof bin Pengiran Haji Abdul Rahim (1958) mentioned *Raja-raja Kebanyakan*. This appears to be the first occasion where the word *kebanyakan* was adopted to refer to the rest of the *Pengirans* (Rahim, 1958:38). The next year, on 29 September 1959, Brunei promulgated its written Constitution. Months before the Constitution was promulgated, there was a restructuring on the use of various flags in Brunei, including flags of the nobles.<sup>18</sup>

***Re-Structuring of the Use Nobles' Flags in 1959.*** Prior to the signing of the Constitution, it was announced that only these *Pengirans* – who are the *Pengiran Berteras*<sup>19</sup> – were allowed to fly their private flags, namely: (1) Children of a Sultan until the *Antah*, that is the fourth generation; (2) Children of a *Wazir* until the *Piut*, that is the third generation; and (3) Children of a *Cheteria* until the *Cucu*, that is the second generation (Rahim, 1958; and Damit, 2006/2007:83).<sup>20</sup>

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*Raja-raja Brunei*, it was written “*dan apabila peranakan raja atau cheteria yang bekerja, tujuh hari nobat tiada berbunyi*”. See, for further information, Pengiran Muhammad Yusof bin Pengiran Haji Abdul Rahim (1958:30); P.L. Amin Sweeney (1968); and “Rancangan Istiadat Perkahwinan Di-Raja Yang Teramat Mulia Pengiran Anak Puteri Norain dengan Yang Amat Mulia Pengiran Anak Mohd Yusof”. *Naskah Tidak Diterbitkan*. Wujud dan ada pada Penulis.

<sup>16</sup>See also, for example, Heading News “Rupa Baharu Bendera Brunei” in *Pelita Brunei*, on 19 August 1959, refers the ordinary *Pengiran* as “*Peranakan Raja2*”.

<sup>17</sup>The categories were: *Kepala Cheteria* (Head of *Cheteria*); *Cheteria Besar*; and *Cheteria Pengalasan*.

<sup>18</sup>See “Bendera2 Ra’ayat dan Pengiran akan di-Hapuskan” in *Pelita Brunei*, on 19 August 1959, p.A1.

<sup>19</sup>In this context, Muhammad Yusop Damit (2006/2007:83) notes that *Pengiran “Berteras”* is *Pengiran “Peranakan”*.

<sup>20</sup>See again, for example, “Bendera2 Ra’ayat dan Pengiran akan di-Hapuskan” in *Pelita Brunei*, on 19 August 1959, p.A1.

As could be seen, the close generations of a Sultan, *Wazir*, and *Cheteria*, who form the *Pengiran Peranakan*, had increased to a generation. Pengiran Muhammad Yusof bin Pengiran Haji Abdul Rahim (1958) noted that the *Pengiran Peranakan* are descendants of the Sultan until the *Piut*, which had expanded in 1959 to the *Antah*; the *Wazir* until the *Cucu*, which had expanded to *Piut*; and the *Cheteria* to the *Anak*, which had expanded to the *Cucu* (Rahim, 1958). Begawan Sultan Haji Omar Ali Saifuddien, in 1968, also noted about this expansion, as follows:

*Pengiran2 yang mana dahulu-nya Cheteria hingga anak sekarang Cheteria hingga Chuchu, Sultan hingga Antah, Wazir dengan Piut.*<sup>21</sup>

**Translation:**

*Pengirans* who were previously *Cheteria* to the son now *Cheteria* to the grandson, Sultan to the *Antah*, *Wazir* to the *Piut*.

At the same time, the rest of the *Pengirans*, apart from the ones mentioned above, were no longer allowed to fly their flag. According to a news quoted in the *Pelita Brunei*, *Lain2 Pengiran*, which refers to the rest of the *Pengirans* outside the *Pengiran Peranakan*, were no longer allowed to fly their standard noble flag. They were ordered to fly the national flag of Brunei, similar to the rest of the people:

*Lain2 Pengiran akan menggunakan bendera Negara Brunei, ia-itu sama-lah seperti ra'ayat. Bendera Pengiran yang berwarna biru bertepikan kuning di-bawah dan di-atas tidak lagi boleh di-gunakan.*<sup>22</sup>

**Translation:**

The other *Pengirans* will be flying the national flag of Brunei, that is similar to the rest of the *ra'ayat* (commoners). Flag of the *Pengirans* which is blue and has yellow stripes on the upper and lower sections cannot be used anymore.

In the Constitution, *Raja-raja Kebanyakan* appears to have been altered to *Pengiran Kebanyakan*, specifically to refer to the rest of the nobles outside the *Pengiran Peranakan*. Thus, the *Pengiran Kebanyakan* was defined for the first time in the Constitution. As a result, there occurs opposing definitions of *Pengiran Kebanyakan*, which in turn shows that the new noble category was a product of a restructuring and that it has no clear definition. See text 4.

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<sup>21</sup>See "Sabda Duli Yang Teramat Mulia Paduka Seri Begawan: Adat Istiadat 'Am dengan sa-Chara Rengkas". *Kertas Tidak Diterbitkan* untuk Kursus Wazir2, Cheteria2, dan Manteri2, Termasuk Manteri2 Pendalaman di Brunei, kali yang pertama, p.4.

<sup>22</sup>See again "Bendera2 Ra'ayat dan Pengiran akan di-Hapuskan" in *Pelita Brunei*, on 19 August 1959, p.A1.

“orang keturunan darah Sultan Negeri Brunei” berma’ana orang keturunan sah dari Almarhum Sultan Hashim Jalilul Alam Akamuddin, atau, jika tiada keturunan yang demikian dari pihak lelaki maka berma’ana keturunan sah dari nenda Sultan yang memerintah pada masa itu dari pihak lelaki atau, jika tiada Sultan yang memerintah pada masa itu, berma’ana keturunan yang sah dari nenda Sultan yang baharu lepas memerintah dari pihak lelaki;

“Pengiran Kebanyakan” berma’ana orang dari keturunan darah bangsawan Negeri Brunei ia-itu selain dari orang keturunan darah Sultan<sup>2</sup> Negeri Brunei;

**Text 4:**

*Pengiran Kebanyakan* as Defined in the 1959 Constitution.

**About the “Pengiran Kebanyakan”:** The Constitution defines *Pengiran Kebanyakan* as follows:

*Orang dari darah keturunan bangsawan Negeri Brunei, ia-itu selain dari orang keturunan darah Sultan<sup>2</sup> Negeri Brunei.*<sup>23</sup>

**Translation:**

A person of Brunei noble blood other than a person, who is the blood of the Sultans of Brunei (*ibidem* with footnote 23).

It, further, defines that “*orang keturunan darah Sultan Negeri Brunei*” as:

*[...] orang keturunan sah dari Almarhum Sultan Hashim Jalilul Alam Akamuddin, atau, jika tiada keturunan yang sedemikian dari pihak lelaki, maka berma’ana keturunan sah dari nenda Sultan yang memerintah pada masa itu dari pihak lelaki, atau, jika tiada Sultan yang memerintah pada masa itu, berma’ana keturunan yang sah dari nenda Sultan yang baharu lepas memerintah dari pihak lelaki (ibidem with footnote 23, p.168-169).*

**Translation:**

[...] a person of legal descent from the late Sultan Hashim Jalilul Alam Akamuddin, or, if there is no such descent from the male side, then meaning a legitimate descendant of the then ruling Sultan from the male side, or, if there is no ruling Sultan at that time, meaning a legitimate descendant of the ruling Sultan who recently ruled from the side of men.

<sup>23</sup>See, for example, *Perjanjian Negeri Brunei, 1959*. Brunei: Arkib Negeri Brunei, p.168.

From the definition, *Pengiran Kebanyakan* are nobles who are descendants of nobilities (*bangsawan*), but not descendants of Sultans, mainly Sultan Hashim Jalilul Alam Aqamaddin. Moving away from this definition, D.E. Brown (1970) states that *Pengiran Kebanyakan* are *Pengirans* outside the realm of the *Pengiran Peranakan*, while not stating them as non-descendants of Sultans:

Those nobles, not in the core, are occasionally referred to as the *Pengiran Kebanyakan* or Ordinary Nobles (Brown, 1970:13).

In his other work entitled “The Social Structure of Nineteenth Century Brunei”, D.E. Brown (1969) notes that *Pengiran Kebanyakan* are descendants of Sultans:

[...] the Common Nobles (*Pengiran Kebanyakan*) descended from earlier Sultans (Brown, 1969:168).

In contrast to D.E. Brown (1969 and 1970), Haji Kula Haji Muhammad Noor (2007), in his book entitled *Kata dan Bentuk Sapaan Bahasa Dalam*, which is about court language in the administration of Brunei, notes that *Pengiran Kebanyakan* as non-descendants of Sultans. He also notes that the unmarried child of *Pengiran Kebanyakan* carries the title *Awangku* for the male; and *Dayangku* for the female:

[...] bangsa Melayu Brunei berketurunan darah bangsawan Brunei, tetapi bukan daripada keturunan Sultan-sultan Brunei. Di kalangan individu lelaki berketurunan *Pengiran Kebanyakan* sekiranya belum berkahwin hanya dirujuk sebagai *Awangku*; dan bagi perempuan pula *Dayangku* (Noor, 2007:47).

**Translation:**

[...] Bruneians who descended from Brunei noble blood, but not from the Sultans of Brunei. Among the *Pengiran Kebanyakan* if they are not married, they carry the title *Awangku*; and for the female equivalent *Dayangku*.

From this definition, *Pengiran Kebanyakan* is defined as nobles who do not descended from Brunei Sultans. Dayang Junaidah & Baszley Bee (2013), in their article “Sejarah Status Gelaran Golongan Bangsawan Melayu Brunei di Kawasan Pantai Barat Borneo”, which is about the history of titles in North Borneo, note that *Pengirans* who are not descendants of the royals are the *Pengiran Kebanyakan*. According to them, *Pengiran Kebanyakan* is a branch of noble, whose ancestors are unknown:

*Bagi golongan yang mempunyai gelaran Pengiran tetapi bukan dari keturunan Diraja dikenali sebagai Pengiran Kebanyakan. Mereka ini merupakan golongan yang tidak diketahui jurai keturunannya daripada keturunan asal* (Junaidah & Bee, 2013:168).

**Translation:**

For those who carry the title *Pengiran* but not of royal descendants are known as *Pengiran Kebanyakan*. They are the group whose ancestors are unknown.

From the statement, *Pengiran Kebanyakan* refers to nobles who are non-descendants of the royals and their forebears are unknown (Junaidah & Bee, 2013). Although he does not specifically define *Pengiran Kebanyakan*, in his book *Budaya dan Adat Istiadat dalam Karya Kesusasteraan Melayu Brunei*, Pengiran Dr. Hidup (2009) notes that whoever bears *Pengiran Anak*, *Pengiran*, *Awangku*, and *Dayangku* are descendants of any of the Sultan of Brunei, who had ruled the country:

*Kerabat Diraja pula ialah mereka daripada keturunan Sultan yang pernah memerintah negara ini, yang diambil daripada takrif bapa. Hal ini bererti sesiapa yang namanya bermula dengan panggilan "Pengiran Anak", "Pengiran", "Awangku", atau "Dayangku" adalah tergolong sebagai Kerabat Diraja (Hidup, 2009:232).*

**Translation:**

*Kerabat Diraja* are the patrilineal descendants of the Sultans who had ruled the country. This means that anyone with the titles *Pengiran Anak*, *Pengiran*, *Awangku* or *Dayangku* is a *Kerabat Diraja*.

It could be understood from this statement that *Pengiran Anak*, *Pengiran*, *Awangku*, and *Dayangku* are descendants of Sultans of Brunei. Pengiran Dr. Hidup (2009)'s statement corresponds to D.E. Brown (1969 and 1970)'s definition of *Pengiran Kebanyakan*, who states that *Pengiran Kebanyakan* are descendants of Sultans (cf Marshall, 1921; Brown, 1969 and 1970; Hidup, 2009; and Gallop, 2019).

The varying definitions above show that *Pengiran Kebanyakan* is fluid in its definition. This is largely, because it was a product of the restructuring in 1958/1959. The restructuring had attempted to simplify the noble branches, which was, as demonstrated earlier, historically and categorically wider and complex. These old noble branches were difficult to contain, due to the fact that it had long predated the restructuring; and that it was highly probably the way noble position was partially, if not wholly, viewed in the past.

The birth of Brunei noble category of especially *Pengiran Kebanyakan* was indirectly influenced by the role of Sultan Hashim in the 1905/1906 Supplementary Agreement, who demanded that only the descendants from him could assume the throne of Brunei. Sultan Hashim's decision in the 1905/1906 Supplementary Agreement influenced his grandson, Sultan Haji Omar Ali Saifuddin III, in a way that the 1959 Constitution stated that:

“Person of the blood of the Sultans of Brunei means a person who is lawfully begotten descendant of *Almarhum* Sultan Hashim Jalilul-alam Akamuddin”; whereas “A person of Brunei noble blood other than a person who is the blood of the Sultans of Brunei” is the *Pengiran Kebanyakan*.<sup>24</sup>

This shows that there actually emerged a distinction between nobles of Sultan Hashim’s descendants and nobles of non-Sultan Hashim’s descendants at the time. This was also caused by the growing numbers of the nobles as shown earlier, where the population of the nobles was increasing steadily from the nineteenth century.

At the same time, in 1959, the close generations of a Sultan until the *Antah* (fourth generation), *Wazir* until the *Piut* (fourth generation), and the *Cheteria* until the *Cucu* (second generation or the grandchildren) developed to form the *Pengiran Peranakan*. This was done mainly to strengthen the Brunei noble class, whilst the rest of the nobles became the *Pengiran Kebanyakan* as a way to preserve the remainders of the Brunei nobility although their flag was banned at one point.

## CONCLUSION

This study has shown that ranking within Brunei nobles had already existed in the past during the reign of Sultan Muhammad Hassan. At the same time, there were also other old varying branches of the Brunei nobles, which existed during the reigns of other Sultans of Brunei. During the reign of Sultan Haji Omar Ali Saifuddien III, specifically on the eve and following the promulgation of the Constitution in 1959, the noble ranking was restructured. This was influenced by the role of Sultan Hashim, who was Sultan Haji Omar Ali Saifuddien III’s grandfather in the 1905/1906 Supplementary Agreement that prescribed that only the descendants from him could be the successor to the Brunei throne. This sequentially differentiated nobles of Sultan Hashim’s descendants to those nobles of non-Sultan Hashim descendants.

Another relative factor for the restructuring was social factor, that is the growing numbers of *Pengirans* from the same period, which led to further differentiation amongst the nobles. Consequently, in 1959 specifically, nobles of non-Sultan Hashim’s descendants were referred to as the *Pengiran Kebanyakan* to distinguish them from nobles of Sultan Hashim’s descendants, who were considered to be the core nobles.

At the same time, the restructuring bolstered the *Pengiran Peranakan*, that is the core nobles where there was an expansion in their generations, that is the Sultan to the *Antah* that is the fourth generation; *Wazir* to the

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<sup>24</sup>See again *Perjanjian Negeri Brunei, 1959*. Brunei: Arkib Negeri Brunei, p.168.

*Piut* that is the third generation; and *Cheteria* to the *Cucu* that is the second generation, devised the term *Pengiran Kebanyakan* for the remainders of Brunei nobles; and restructured the use of nobles' flags where primarily the flag of the *Kebanyakan* was once banned.

Simultaneously, *Pengiran Kebanyakan* proved difficult to define as it was a product of the restructuring in 1958/1959. The restructuring endeavored to abridge the noble branches, which was (evidently) historically and categorically wider and complex. These old noble branches had preexisted the restructuring, and that it may be the way Brunei nobility was observed in the past, if not to the present.<sup>25</sup>

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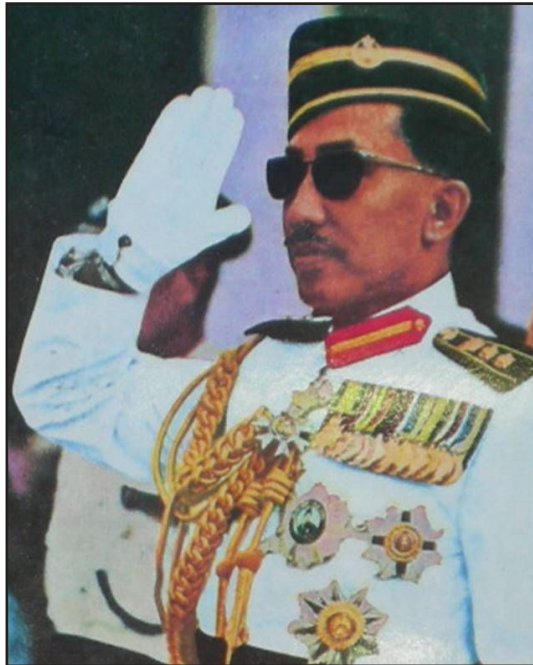
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<sup>25</sup>**Statement:** We, herewith, made the statement that our paper is not product of plagiarism, not to be submitted to the other journal(s), reviewed as well as published by other scholarly journals; and finally having received, it will also not to be withdrawn by the Authors from this TAWARIKH journal. This statement letter was made to be used by the Editor as an appropriate.

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**Sultan Haji Omar Ali Saifuddien III of Brunei Darussalam**

(Source: [https://www.pinterest.com/pin, 03/07/2021](https://www.pinterest.com/pin/03/07/2021))

Ranking within Brunei nobles had already existed in the past during the reign of Sultan Muhammad Hassan. At the same time, there were also other old varying branches of the Brunei nobles, which existed during the reigns of other Sultans of Brunei. During the reign of Sultan Haji Omar Ali Saifuddien III, specifically on the eve and following the promulgation of the Constitution in 1959, the noble ranking was restructured.