Searching Dato Godam (The Lost Ancestry)

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Abstract: This working paper intends to investigate the lineage of Dato Godam from Ujung Tanjung, Sungai Kedayan, Kiarong and others villages in Brunei Darussalam. That is, the genealogy of Dato Godam from Menteri Putih to Menteri Omar, Pehin Orang Kaya Di GadongAwangAliwaddin and so on. Then Menteri Uban in Sarawak as the pioneer of search for the kinsman and beneficiaries of Dato Godam in Pagaruyung and in Malaysia.

Keywords: Dato Godam, genealogy, Ujung Tanjung

1. Introduction: the History

As Ahmad Dahlan stated in his book (Sejarah Melayu, 2014, p.454) that Pagaruyung was believed to have existed in the early 14th century. Sang Sapurba from Siguntang Hill was once a ruler of this state. The state was situated at the flat land of TanjungEmas or Tanjung Sugayang Indonesia, which is now at the Padang West Sumatera. DatukPepatih Nan Sebatang made Adityawarman as the ruler in 1347, whom was succeeded by his son Ananggawarman (1375-1417, ibid). There was no known dynasties afterwards. DatoGodam was believed to be a part of Pagaruyung at the period when it became an Islamic nation with a strong influence of PepatihMinangkabau customs and traditions. At the beginning of the 16th Century, its administration was divided into three parts namely Raja Alam, Raja Adat and Raja Ibadat. The three were also known by a nickname - Raja TigoSelo (Raja TigaKedudukan).

Sultan HarunSyah Sultan Bengawan was known by his nickname as Datuk Bendahara Harun who was a descendant of Raja-Raja Aceh. Dato Bendahara Harun was a dignitary officer in the administration of Pagaruyung palace. He married the daughter of Jan Van Groenewegen Dutch Resident of East India Company in Aceh in the year of 1660,. The marriage of DatoGodam’s father to the daughter of the Dutch Resident in Aceh became an issue towards the bestowal of the Bendahara title (“mengangkat raja”) under the customs and traditions of Pagaruyung.

Dato Godam was born around the year of 1660s with a given name of Raja Umar. He had a good personality and was brought up in the Godam Palace in Pagaruyung. Since childhood, he received both life and religious education. He was taught on aspects of administration as preparation for him to inherit his father’s title of DatuBendahara. As a bright and religious son, he was extremely respected. However mixed blood of Sumateran and Dutch provide challenges for him to gain the title of Bendahara Pagaruyung. Despite this, Basa Ampek Balai, the committee of Adatistiadat (the committee for customs and traditions) allowed him to participate in the tests to earn the title of Bendahara Pagaruyung. Dato Godam failed in one of the test, to get the prestigious seat of the ‘white elephant’ government. This made him excluded from earning the title of DatuBendahara by the committee of Adatistiadat (“BasaAmpekBalai”) despite having done successfully in many other tests:- “Dato Godam had passed several tests to become Bendahara such as sitting on a rock but Dato Godam failed on raiding a white elephant”. This failure brought him travelling to places like Singapore, Kepulauan Riau and Borneo. In Borneo, he travelled to Saribas, Sarawak and then went to Brunei.
2. The Journey: Arrival in Borneo

There were two versions to Dato Godam’s story in Borneo. The first one was a story from Sarawak where he stumbled into PengiranTemenggongPengiran Abdul Kahar. During the meeting they shared their own frustrations. PengiranTemanggong left Brunei because of his disappointment for his daughter, DayangKachi being taken by Sultan Nasaruddin as the third wife. DatoGodam shared his story of his failure to get the tilte of PagaruyungBendahara.

2.1 The First Version:

Saribas, Sarawak, before the arrival of DatoGodam was a port and commercial market selling woven fabric from Pagaruyung, Sumatera. According to DatuSanib in his article “Sarawak Sebelum Brunei dan Brooke: 5 Negeri Melayu Yang Hilang”, PengiranTemenggongPengiranAnak Abdul Kadir was the first Malay to open Saribas:

“...Saribas state was founded in the early or mid 17thCentury. In the ‘SyairTarsilahNegeriSaribas’, it mentioned that PengiranTemenggongPengiran Abdul Kadir left the capital city of Brunei to the north as his beautiful daughter ‘Dang Chi’ was taken by the Sultan. As he arrived at the estuary of BatangSaribas, he opened this place with Tandang Sari at the bank of Rias River as a capital city....”(Sanib Said, ibid)

DatoGodam came to Saribas to see the trading of the woven fabrics from Pagaruyung, Sumatera. There DatoGodam met PengiranTemenggong, and shared their ‘misfortunes’. It was then DatoGodam agreed to help PengiranTemenggong to take back his daughter DayangKachi.

The version from Sarawak iterated that Dato Godam only stayed in Brunei for a few days. When he met DayangKachi from the signs given by PengiranTemggong, he took DayangKachi away and sailed straight back to Saribas. According to the people of Sarawak DayangKachi was pregnant at the time of arrival. After DayangKachi delivered her first child (MenteriPutih or Menteri Said) Dato Godam married DayangKachi, and had their first child named MenteriUban or Menteri Abdul Rahman.

Menteri Putih was sent back to Brunei to Sultan Nasaruddin, who bestowed as a menteri.

2.2 The Second Version:

This version differs from the first. PehinJawatanDalam Seri Maharaja Dato Seri Utama Dr.HajiMohd.Jamil Al-Sufri mentioned that DatoGodam lived in Brunei for years, and gotten married with the daughter of PengiranTemenggongPengiran Abdul Kadir. They had two sons:

“DatoGodam arrived in Brunei and worked at Sultan Nasaruddin's palace in the field of administration and law. The Sultan granted him his own concubine, DayangKachi, the daughter of PengiranTemenggongPengiran Abdul Kadir, who became his wife. Their reunion resulted in two sons; MenteriPuteh and MenteriUban. With the arrival of a group searching for DatoGodam from PagarRuyong had caused DatoGodam and his family to leave Brunei, except for MenteriPuteh who was summoned by the Sultan to stay in Brunei as a legacy of DatoGodam. (ibid. PehinJawatanDalam, 2004, p.7 – 8)

When Dato Godam and his family left, they did not go back to Pagaruyung. They stopped in Pusa (Saribas) and settled down there. They stayed in Saribas till their final days. Even his son, MenteriUban and his descendants, from either Brunei and Sarawak, never visited Pagaruyung. The descendents was lost since the 18th century. But his descendents from Brunei and Sarawak spread out to Tanah Melayu, Thailand and Sabah. There is a possibility that Dato Godam’s descendents travelled and moved to other countries as well.
3. Conclusion

The two historical figures from Dato Godam lineage had never been investigated to explore the continuity of his descendants who are believed at this moment still living scattered across the Malay Archipelagos such as; in Borneo, Sumatera, Malaysia, Patani South of Thailand and Singapore.

In Brunei, his descendants are still alive and expanding. They are usually identified with name titles that begin 'Awang and Dayang' (in PehinJawatanDalam Seri Maharaja Dato Seri Utama Dr. Haji Jamil Al-Sufri – Dato Godam, 2004). Many of them had become community leaders and public administrators with bestowed Titles such as Pehins and Chaterials. This was as promised by Sultan Nasaruddin (Ibid, PehinJawatanDalam Seri Maharaja Dato Seri Utama Dr. Haji Jamil Al-Sufri p.8). Dato Godam’s descendants have also received the same high positions as Brunei in the political government state of Sarawak. In Malaysia, there is an active effort being made to unite the descendants by AngkuAtril Raja Aceh, a Palace Speaker for the Government of Pagaruyung in Malaysia.
There is in deed a need to locate the missing descendants. Any future exploration on this will help shed further lights in identifying and recognising the origins of the Malays in the Malay Archipelago. Historical facts has shown connection of the Malay descendants since the 1st Century. This exploration requires a joint research between historians, writers and anthropologists in the Malay Archipelago including those from Sumatera.

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