

THE TALES OF SERI NEGERI

*The Origin*

OF THE NAME OF PLACES

*in*

**LANGKAWI**

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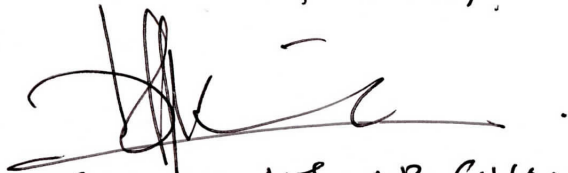
ROHANI HJ. AB GHANI  
ZULHILMI PAIDI  
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SITI ALWALIYAH MANSOR



Semoga Yang Amat Berbahagia Tun &  
isteri Senjasa diberkati Allah di dunia &  
akhirat.

Terima kasih kerana menjadi negarawan  
kami.

Salam Jaksim.



ROHANI H.S. AB GHANI & RAKAN-RAKAN

18/9/24



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Published by:  
School of Languages, Civilisation and Philosophy  
College of Arts and Sciences  
Universiti Utara Malaysia  
06010 UUM Sintok  
Kedah

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UUM CAS, Universiti Utara Malaysia.

ISBN 978-967-26817-8-6



Book cover, Type-setting and layout design by Zuraizee Zulkifli  
Printed in Malaysia by UUM Press



Redzuan  
11 Julai 2021



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FOUNDATION  
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# Preface

**“T**he greatest secrets are always hidden in the most unlikely places” is a quotation by Roald Dahl that perfectly characterizes Langkawi Island. A place that was once a deserted island actually holds a rich history of conflicts, love stories, secrets, and untold sorrows among its residents. This book is an effort to unearth some of the tales and stories of the island so that they will stay fresh in people’s minds.

This book has five parts that begin with a narrative about the history of Kedah. The main highlight in this section is the uniqueness of the history of the royal kingdom of Kedah, spanning more than 1000 years continuously under a single line of descent. This fact has been strengthened through the discovery and preservation of administrative centers or capital cities throughout the state of Kedah and some areas in the state of Perlis.

The history of Langkawi Island, as a whole, is described in the second part. The island, originally a fishing settlement, holds astonishing myths and legends that were previously unknown to outsiders. Ironically, two national statesmen, Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj, the first Prime Minister of Malaysia, and Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, the fourth and seventh Prime Minister of Malaysia, have once served on this island. These two leaders had a huge impact on the development and reconstruction of Langkawi Island, which makes the island the country’s main tourism industry center it is today.

The third part gives special attention to the perspective of the Honorable Tun Dr. Mahathir on Langkawi. The history of Tun’s service as a Medical Officer and his memories about the community on the island is something authentic that has not been highlighted in other writings. His experience with the local community subsequently became a turning point in Tun’s vision on how to develop Langkawi later on.

The legend of Mahsuri is synonymous with the history of Langkawi and has been conveyed in various versions from generation to generation. Part four provides a classic representation of the history of Mahsuri by Dato Wan Ibrahim Wan Soloh. This writing, which is more than 50 years old, is expected to be able to revive the story of Mahsuri on a first-source basis.

The origin of the name of places on Langkawi Island is included in the fifth part of this book. The names of these places have a unique and distinctive history. Undoubtedly, the origin of the chosen name of places is closely related to folk tales that have been handed down from generation to generation and remain to this day. This element apparently provides a local identity and historical context of the island that needs to be preserved. This book ends with a closing segment, which reinforces the historical values, the uniqueness of mythical stories, and the power of legendary storytelling that are part of the identity of Langkawi Island.

The production of this book relies heavily on oral sources, which are interviews with elderly residents

and natives of Langkawi, leaders who have served on the island, and LADA officials. Apart from the primary sources consisting of archival records, personal notes, memoirs, and personal photographs of Langkawi natives, related agencies, secondary sources, as well as online sources also support the writing of this book.

It is hoped that the production of the book *The Tales of Seri Negeri The Origin of the Name of Places in Langkawi* gives meaning to the value of local history, especially to provide information to the younger generation about the history of their homeland and contribute to the tourism industry sector of Langkawi Island.

# Foreword

Bismillahirrahmanirahim

Assalamualaikumwarahmatullahiwabarakatuh

All praise to Allah SWT for His abundant grace that has allowed the completion of this book. Congratulations to the team of writers from Universiti Utara Malaysia for successfully completing this book.

Langkawi, known as the "Jewel of Kedah," is a tourism destination with great potential to boost the country's tourism industry. It is well-known that this "Seri Negeri" island holds many stories inherited from the elders and mentioned in the history of the state of Kedah. The legend of Kedah, which began with Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa, followed by the tragic story of Mahsuri and later linked to two great national leaders, the late Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj and Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad. The rich history of this period has painted Langkawi as a platform for Malaysians and foreign visitors to appreciate the beautiful island and learn about its stories.

LADA strives to uphold the cultural aspects, especially the folklores, that led to the original names of the places on the island. This is part of LADA's efforts

to promote Langkawi by preserving the historical narrative of the origin of the names of places on the island. LADA hopes this book will find a place in the readers' hearts and help promote Langkawi's tourism industry.

*Belayar mudik bahtera Tok Muda  
Mari bersaing Merak Mercu  
Bacalah tuan sebaris dua  
Buat pesanan sianak cucu*

Greetings from LADA



**YANG BERBAHAGIA.**  
**DATO' HASLINA BINTI ABDUL HAMID**  
*Chief Executive Officer (Planning and Development)*  
*Langkawi Development Authority (LADA)*



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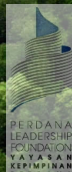
The history behind the names of places in Langkawi is rarely highlighted. These pictorial works depict legends, myths, and mysteries that have been a part of people's lives for generations. Langkawi, known as the Legendary Island, is a tropical paradise with a history that begins with the mountains and extends down to the island and beach. This history is commemorated in the names of places around Langkawi. A book about a cross-continental love story, the mystery of a mermaid in a lake, and the Mahsuri legend is rich with folk tales. It is also special because it contains the memoirs of the Malaysian statesman, Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, who shared his experiences about life on this island. The presentation of the story becomes authentic because it also contains the artistic work of Langkawi natives as well as the nostalgia of the locals who have immortalized their entire lives here. The combination of text, memoirs, and a collection of new and classic photos embodies the content of the book's title - *The Tales of Seri Negeri: The Origin of the Name of Places in Langkawi*.



ISBN 978-967-26817-8-6



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