

Pandangan/Opinion

*Ampu and Perempuan: Speculations on the
Status of Malay Women*

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PREFATORY REMARKS AND DISCLAIMERS

This is not an accomplished paper, nor can I claim much expertise in the territory I am stepping into. However, I found myself sufficiently intrigued to try and resolve certain matters that puzzled me and which, out of ignorance, I had not seen resolved elsewhere. Since then, I have discovered that much has been written, but it is perhaps still worthwhile to go over the territory.

This paper proceeds by way of a series of associations and speculations upon a set of lexical items, coupled with a central origin myth, which, I suggest, direct us towards certain conclusions, both real and mythical, regarding the ambiguity of the status of womankind in Malay society, namely:

- that status is not an accomplished fact, but a contested one arising out of a social philosophy whose structure might be discerned in both linguistic and mythic terms;
- that such a structure can both empower and disempower, although I suggest that disempowerment has been on the ascendant historically, particularly in this century;
- that such disempowerment has been accompanied by the erosion of that social philosophy and a consequent lapse of social memory, aided by the forces of a time-lagged modernity.

In writing this paper, I have also been motivated by another set of issues, deriving from a reading of Connerton's illuminating and exciting book, *How Societies Remember*. While I do not address them directly, they form a backdrop and a framing device, partially turning this essay into an exercise in a certain type of myth-making. These issues are:

- a. while historians often emphasize the influence of the present upon the historical imagination and our understanding of the past, the reverse is perhaps even more true: that personal experience of the present is, to a significant degree, contingent upon individual memory of the past;
- b. socio-political needs of legitimation are constructed upon a selective imaging of that past as reproduced in commemorative, bodily and other

- practices which thus constitute tradition, even as that tradition subserves a series of ongoing practices that shape the present and future;
- c. that such an imaging, if it is to serve the purposes of legitimation, needs to achieve a large measure of consensus by elimination of contrary individual memories, a process assisted by, on the one hand, physical and symbolic elimination of contrary practices and communities and, on the other, by symbolic reconstitution and physical construction of new practices and communities, or at least, commonalities;
 - d. that contestation of present social memory must, if it wishes to achieve some measure of success, begin to revivify, for a start, individual memories that are at odds with this selective imaging of the past, even when it wishes to break with that past. In this sense, we may forever be condemned, in Marx's words, to having "the tradition of all the dead generations weigh like a nightmare on the brain of the living" and to have to "anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past...and borrow from them names, battle cries and costumes in order to present the new scene...in this time-honoured disguise and this borrowed language";
 - e. that social science, willy-nilly, must participate in these processes by choice or by default for social science is not simply a reflection of the world as it is, but a description of the world under a set of terms which are chosen not only because they are, in some sense, adequate to social reality, but also because they, in some measure, convey images of a desired and a desirable world, if only negatively; this is why there cannot and should not be any single consensus in social science, for the attainment of consensus would also mean the arrival of a world in which the goal of control and manipulation has gained ascendancy over everything else, an observation made by Mary Hesse (1978) some time ago; it would mean the loss of what Bauman (1992) has called the power of forward-dreaming.

Thus, I attempt to recover not only what I believe to be the facts of the matter, but also to revivify personal memories and myths by which we can live. If I fail, I hope that the effort will at least have been stimulating, perhaps entertaining.

INTRODUCTION

I begin with Wilkinson's suggestion in 1903 that Austronesian languages, which he labeled "Oceanic", are basically disyllabic and vocalic, and that the root of words "is not to be obtained by the separate consideration of each syllable, but...is usually made up of two vocalic syllables and is to be seen in the central portion of most words" (App. A, p. 713; see Asmah 1983). And despite his warning that the derivation of the word *perempuan* from the word *ampu* is

doubtful, I wish to re-pose the derivation for consideration, to look at putative derivatives as well as cognates, to associate it with the myth of the origin of Malay kingship, and to use shifts in the dominant meaning of *ampu* to suggest how it may provide clues to the underlying social philosophy and how the fundamental ambiguity of the structure of that social philosophy has allowed for developments in a direction that has been disadvantageous to women, even as women continue to resist them (Wazir 1993).

It may be best to recount how it was I came by this series of speculations by way of introducing them: The Kedah Laws, the role of the Bendahara, the Mangkubumi, and the myth of the origin of kingship (Hocart; Josselin de Jong; Clastres; Sahlins). [On Mangkubumi: “an exalted title; regent or viceroy”, and suggested as deriving from *pangku* and *bumi*. *Pangku* is glossed by Wilkinson as “breast, bosom; holding between breast and forearm; nurturing, fostering”, and he provided a pantun:

Petik jambu di dalam paya
Tanam padi di dalam lubuk
Penat pangku letak di riba
Letak di bantal takut merajuk

Pangkuwan is then “the upper portion of the lap; the breast” and *memangku* is “1. to hold on the breast, as a court servant holds the royal betel-box....; 2. to attend to the affairs of a country as regent (i.e., as a nurse, not as a mother)”].

AMPU

Today, the word *ampu* has, generally and popularly, a negative connotation which is made clear in its vulgar association with the term *bodek*, and by the fact that when I was first pressed for a title and committed myself to the one that you now have before you, I was often met with grimaces for the most part: Khay Jin being obnoxious yet again!

Yet this popular understanding of the word was and is its metaphorical sense, as the *Kamus Dewan* makes clear. Its base meaning was something altogether different, considerably more positive with much richer and more powerful resonance, encompassing notions of foundation and fount, support and nurturance, of self-possession and ownership of the cultural world, of rulership and power, of community and civilization: indeed, its semantic links with *mangku/pangku* should be noted. In this debasement of the word (as of *mangku/pangku*) lies, I believe, a tale worth telling. For paralleling this has been the debasement of the word *perempuan*, which is now taken to be somewhat *kasar*, as compared to the Sanskrit import *wanita*. But hardly two generations ago, the word *wanita* was unknown, at least, unused: it does not appear, for instance, in the revised

and enlarged 1948 edition of Coope's abridged version of Wilkinson's classic dictionary, but it makes an appearance in the Winstedt's dictionary of 1952, where it is simply noted as of Javanese and Indonesian provenance and characterized as being of literary usage. Needless to say, it makes no appearance in Bowrey's dictionary of 1701, Marsden's of 1812, and Wilkinson's of 1903. But this is to jump ahead.

However, it can be asked, what link is there between the word *ampu* and *perempuan*. For, even if one were to suggest that *perempuan* is compounded of affixes, the best, it would appear, would be to suggest that *perempuan* comes from *empu* and the *per-* affix. At this juncture, let us look at old (pre-Zaba) jawi practice and early romanizations.

[Spelling of *ampu* and *empu*; *ampat* and *empat*; *perempat* or *perempat*; *perempuan* or *perampuan* or *parampuan*. Thus, the dropping of the initial alif in the compound form is no guide as to whether the root should be an /e/ or /a/ sound. In brief, the indeterminacy of the initial alif, except in speech, and even then. For truth of the matter was that there might even have been a /h/ in the initial position as in *hampu*, *herti* or *harti*, &c.]

Early, i.e., the first few decades of this century, rumi practice in Kedah was often to transliterate *perempuan* as either *parampuan*, *perampuan* or *perempuan*. The first was favoured over the others, perhaps reflecting speech practices in Kedah. Marsden, in his dictionary of 1812, transliterated it as *perampuan*, as also *perempat*, thus turning the initial putative alif to /a/. Ras, in his transliteration of the *Hikayat Banjar*, published in 1968, opted for *parampuan*, as for *ampat*, and *ampunya*. Wilkinson used *perempuwan*, but provided both *ampu* and *empu* for the one jawi word *a-m-p-u*.

But does it matter a great deal whether the root is taken to be *ampu* or *empu*. Not, I suggest, a great deal, as a reference to the *Kamus Dewan* will show. [The meanings] I now want to look at some associated terms, if we accept the derivation: terms that in my obsession have contributed to persuading me of the plausibility of my speculations.

AMPUAN, EMPUAN, PUAN, EMPUNYA

According to Wilkinson, again, it was von de Wall who originally suggested that *perempuan* came from *ampu*, a derivation that was disputed by Klinkert who, instead, suggested that *tengku ampuan* was derived from *ampu*. Both these names are illustrious ones in the field of what Maier had aptly called Malayistics; but I have to say that I came to this derivation prior to being aware of the above fact. Unfortunately, I have not been able to consult either discussion and cannot therefore discuss the reasons for their respective derivations. Wilkinson, as you can see from the handout, doubts both.

The important point here is that it seems evident that both derivations boil down to the same thing, for the fact of the matter is that *tengku ampuan* and *tengku perempuan*, are used synonymously, if not interchangeably. Thus, if *ampuan* does derive from *ampu*, then so does *perempuan*, and vice-versa. This derivation is indeed implicitly acknowledged by the *Kamus Dewan* when it glosses *empuan* as *perempuan*.

Extending this, *ampuan* or *empuan* also means a special gold or silver *sirih* container. The form *empuan* or *ampuan* does appear in the classical literature, but the more common form is *puan* which (coincidentally?) is used in polite reference to women, and is glossed by the *Kamus Dewan* as an abbreviation for *empuan*, in parentheses, *perempuan*.

The *puan* (*sirih* container) is associated with the female royal consort and with the bride, but also functions as one of the symbols of power and authority of the raja and has its place in the installation ceremony. I have insufficient knowledge to enter into this matter at this time; suffice to note that *sirih* and implements associated with *sirih* play a powerful symbolic role in Malay, indeed in Southeast Asian, life and culture and history. Indeed, just recently, there have been exhibitions and at least one publication of the betel-nut cutters of Southeast Asia: only an instrument of major symbolic importance would have received such lavish embellishment and craftsmanship.

Thus, the woman (*perempuan*, *ampuan*, *puan*), as royal consort, is associated with the *puan*, a symbol of power and authority; and the woman, as bride, as *raja se hari*, in her wedding ceremony, too, is associated with this particular symbol. Since Hocart, it has become almost common wisdom to hold that installation and wedding ceremonies are homologues of one another, that one, as it were, recapitulates the other.

On the other hand, and here we have one of those ambiguities I mentioned at the beginning, such an association can only too easily slide into another: the *puan* in its aspect as vessel is associated with the *puan* in its aspect as woman. Here, Maznah informs me that in Greek, the same term is used for both vessel and woman. It would appear that we are not that far from such a link. But let me continue with this exploration of words.

If *empuan*, *ampuan* and *perempuan* can be taken as derivative of *empu*, why not *empunya* as well. Let me suggest that there is not a great deal between *mengempukan* or *mengampukan* in the examples cited in the *Kamus Dewan*, if one were for a moment to suspend one's modern notions of *memerintah*, of governance or rulership, and refer back, say, to the Sun King and his oft-quoted remark: "La France, c'est moi", and think of the association between the body of the king and the body politic, of the king as possessor of the country, and of the country as possessing the king; that there is not a great deal between this and the gloss to *empunya*: possession, possessor. Indeed, it is not uncommon to find in the classical literature phrases such as so-and-so yang *empunya negeri* such-and-such. Thus, if *mengempukan* or *mengampukan* and *empunya* or

ampunya are not derivatives of the same root, they are at least semantically equivalent, and at least one of them can be linked to *empu/ ampu*.

Here, I would like to take a leap in the dark, and suggest that a look at Iban clinches the link I would like to make. In Iban, if you refer to the handout, *empu* means “possess, own, take as one’s own” and, fascinatingly, “self”— one’s own true self, the self that one possesses? From this, it is but a short step to *empunya* and *mengempukan*. I leave you to make as you will of the terms *pun* (another short step to *puan?*), and *indu*’.

Thus, using either *empu* or *ampu* as the root, we have a notion of *perempuan* as: to be in the state of or in the condition of protector, ruler, lord, master, owner, pillar, mainstay, foundation (Badriyah informs me that the stones upon which the pillars of the house rest are called *ampu rumah*; the central pillar is, of course, the *tiang ibu* or *tiang seri*, which in Iban is the *tiang pemun*, from *pun*; *seri* is splendour, glory, majesty, prosperity, in Sanskrit), nurturer, &c., indeed of self-possession, of autonomy, dare one say. But of what?

KINGSHIP

It is a remarkable — dare one say it in this post-modern age — universal, first demonstrated in copious detail by Frazer, followed up by Hocart and, in more recent times, with specific reference to the Indo-European world, by Dumézil and latterly with reference to Polynesian in particular Fiji and Hawaii, Sahlins, that individual who was supposed to embody the people and the country had his (for it is all too commonly a he) putative origins as a foreigner, a stranger; a stranger that all too often started off by wreaking havoc and disorder upon the people he would come to embody: think of Romulus and the rape of the Sabine women.

In the Malay world, this initial act did not assume such violent proportions — a not insignificant mytho-fact; nevertheless, the stranger who would be king brought disease in his wake until he was properly contained, as it were. Thus, the Malay monarchy, that which, if Milner is to be believed, defines the Malays and Malayness, has its putative origins in a stranger. This mytho-fact has been little remarked upon in local circles, perhaps for understandable reasons, even as the emphasis has been on the terms of the original contract between Demang Lebar Daun, the leader of the autochthons, and Sang Sapurba (various names), the stranger who becomes king.

However, the fact is that this agreement is only consummated in the marriage of Demang Lebar Daun’s daughter, Wan Sendari, to the stranger Sang Sapurba. Thus, the daughter of the indigenes mediated this act of foundation, and in doing so constituted the stranger as king, bringing as her dowry the land and sovereignty (but not quite possession, as I argue below) over it. Amongst the Benin, Nupe, Central Bantu, and the Nilotics, observed Levi-Strauss (1988), society begins in a marriage between a male stranger of noble birth and a daugh-

ter or sister of the autochthons, or those who claimed to be such, who brought as dowry, the land and sovereignty over it.

At the same time, Demang Lebar Daun became the Mangkubumi, he who supported the earth on his lap, and held it to his bosom, the keeper of the land. The term *mangkubumi* is pregnant with meaning and significance. Indeed, it can be suggested that it originally meant the owner of the land. Thus, while a conditional sovereignty is ceded to the stranger — here one might refer to the crowning ceremony for the king of Aragon, or to the oath of allegiance sworn by the nobles to Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin II in the early 1800s — ownership of the soil, the earth, the land, remain with the people, as embodied in the person of Demang Lebar Daun, and they reserve unto themselves the right and power of king-maker, of constituting the king, of encompassing him anew. Indeed, according to de Josselin de Jong (1980), up until the early nineteenth century, the heir to the throne could only assume office if he was married to some one of the so-called “commoner” clans, i.e., who would be the king in Negri Sembilan had to first marry a commoner woman, a daughter of the indigenes.

Let me read extracts from the first *bab* of the Undang-Undang Kedah pertaining to the status and role of the Mangkubumi. Just so: For the person who is called the champion of the country (*panglima negeri*), the warrior of the country, meaning the person in possession (*empunya*) of the *negeri*, is therefore addressed as cradler of the world (Mangkubumi). But these extracts also indicates what has happened, the subsequent overlays upon that original notion until the term *mangku* is now glossed primarily in its meaning as someone who acts in someone else’s role, but is not himself or herself the real possessor of that role, until now only sovereignty, but also possession of the land is surrendered, as is clearly indicated in another section of these Undang-Undang Kedah where it is stated that the earth (*bumi*) is God’s, while the land (*tanah*) is the raja’s. Please note the link between *mangku* and *ampu*.

THE AMBIGUITY OF THE WOMAN

I would now suggest an answer to the question “Of what?” that I raised earlier. Of the earth, the land, of society, of culture. And here I would like to raise Lapierre’s outrageous but fascinating question “whether...power has its birthplace and *raison d’être* in nature and not in culture” (Lapierre, 1968, as cited in Clastres, 1977: 2), and Clastres’ analysis that the state was always and everywhere an imposition, that societies jealously guarded their autonomy, and maintained a continuing vigilance with regard to the domestication and control of power.

Viewed from another angle, this is indeed the meaning of the myth, a neat inversion of the now often-criticized binary opposition of male:female:culture:nature. For the male stranger of supernatural powers, is

impotent, a destroyer, contaminating everyone he comes into contact with — in Sang Sapurba's case, all of thirty nine women — (an idea that persisted in the notion of the King's evil, and in the Malay notion of *kena daulat* as reported by Skeat — see Ch. 4, Hocart, 1927); that those powers can only be turned to fertility, health and wealth, only when it is contained; that the act of containment is the act of marriage, which is also the act of installation, to a daughter/sister of the indigenes. (According to Macaulay, Medieval European kings were believed to have the power of healing, the “king's touch”, and this power, it was believed, was communicated in the course of the coronation ceremony.) Thus, the woman, representing society and culture, contains and harnesses the power (*daulat*) of the (male) sovereign. And yet — as we have painfully learnt from our own relationship with nature — the containment, the taming, society's mastery over nature, is never, can never be, complete; thus, *kena daulat*. (In the instance of Fiji, while the chief brought fertility and prosperity, it was also believed that “too close a contact of the chief with plants might blast them instead of promoting growth” (Hocart, 1927:33) — the Chief of Suva, for example, could not go into the plantations or the crops would die.)

But one can extend this further. The king becomes king by marrying a sister/daughter of the autochthons. By this act is constituted both king and subject. From the line of the sister/daughter comes the line of kings/queens; from the line of the indigenes, the line of councilors — the *Mangkubumi*, the *Bendahara*. In so far as the latter can control the former, and harness their power, the state is in a prosperous and healthy condition. When they fail, disorder and chaos descends upon the state. This, de Josselin de Jong (1980) suggests, is the reason for the structure of the *Sejarah Melayu* and the centrality of the *Bendahara* in it; that it is not simply because it was composed by someone from the *Bendahara* line, but that he could compose it in this way because of the structure of the origin myth itself, transformed, perhaps, into social memory.

Take it yet another step. The relationship established is, as de Josselin de Jong (1980) again points out, a regulated relation between king and bride, ruler and realm, with mutual ties of agreed rights and duties. The woman is pivotal. Her marriage and disease-free copulation with the stranger-king establishes the state and the dynasty; her acquiescence to the marriage constitutes the people as people. She stands on both sides simultaneously. Herein lies the ambiguity, for power is fundamentally ambiguous, fundamentally dangerous, always on the edge of disease and destruction, always trying to break out of its bounds into arbitrariness and oppression. Just look at the *Sejarah Melayu* and, especially, Abdul Rahman's (1985) powerful and persuasive interpretation. Or observe that the society of the king's court was partially made up of murderers, the civilly dead, cripples, clowns, &c.

She, as indigene, would retain possession of the land, would be the councilor to kings, the purveyor of wisdom and justice, peace and community. She as progenitrix of the line of rulers, would assume sovereignty over the land,

but only as mediator, as consort — of course there have been queens, but I am talking mytho-history here. Thus she would on either side also be a party to her own subjection: from *permaisuri* to *suri rumahtangga*. (A story made clearer by an arbitrary leap to early Rome and the role of the Sabine women, who as the captured and raped wives of the one side, and the daughters and sisters of the other, negotiated the peace between the two.)

Finally, move it one more step. Kings, by virtue of descent from the original marriage, are sister's sons of the indigenes. In this way, kings represent the female against the male side of the indigenes. Yet kings are related to the indigenes through marriage, the ruler relates to the realm as bridegroom to bride. In this way, kings are the male to the female of the people. In the process, the female is lost, and power, arrogating to itself, pretending to encompass, both male and female, comes to be located at the very heart of society, in the centre, from which it radiates outwards, and the people become its servants, its warriors.

Thus, the *perempuan yang mengampukan* and *yang empunya*, becomes the *puan* the symbol of royal power, a vessel, while the *mangkubumi* becomes the king's shadow, the servant of power. Given away in marriage in order to acquire the power of the king, she starts a line that assumes lordship over her kin, while she becomes the consort: the possessor becomes the possessed, while the cultural becomes natural.

Foundations are easily forgotten, for they only make themselves felt by their absence; sources are ignored, until they dry up. And so, the *perempuan yang ampu*, becomes the forgotten support, even worse, as the fate of *ampu*, paralleled by that of *mangku*, well illustrates. To cap it all, the *perempuan* has become *wanita*, the soft (*lembut*) and soft-spoken (*halus*) wife and woman.

Maybe it's time we expel the pretender of the *wanita* and bring back the brazen hussy of the *perempuan*?

APPENDIX I

KAMUS DEWAN, 1970; 1989

ampu I; mengampu 1. sl menahan di bawah (dng telapak tangan), menyokong dr bawah (supaya jangan runtuh [2nd ed: supaya tidak jatuh, runtuh dsb]); *kain baju diampu oleh hamba raja*; 2. sl = **mengampukan** memerintah (negeri, kerajaan): *yg pertama*

mengampukan negeri Pasai ialah Sultan Malikul Saleh; 3. ki mengangkat, menyanjung [2nd ed: untuk menyukakan seseorang supaya mendapat sesuatu faedah daripadanya]: *siapa pandai mengampukannya akan mendapat segala sesuatu daripadanya*; ___ *bodek* bk mengangkat (supaya mendapat sesuatu); **pengampu** 1. penahan, penyangga, penyokong; ___ *susu* kain penyangga susu,

kutang [2nd ed: baju dalam perempuan, coli, kutang]; 2. orang yg memerintah negeri; 3. orang yg menjaga keselamatan seseorang, wali, orang tua; [1st ed: hampul]; [2nd ed: 4. orang yg mengangkat-angkat (suka menyanjung) seseorang, orang yg mampu]

ampu II Mn empu; ___ *kaki* ibu jari kaki

[1st ed: **ampu III**, ampuan → empuan]

empu I sl 1. tuan; 2. orang yg mahir (ahli) dlm sesuatu (terutama dlm membuat keris);

mengempukan memerintah[kan, 1st ed.], berkuasa: *setelah beberapa lamanya ___ negeri Aceh, maka Raja Muzafar Shah pun hilang.*

empu II; ___ *jari (tangan)* ibu jari; ___ *kaki* ibu jari kaki

empuan perempuan; *engku (tengku)* ___ panggilan kpd permaisuri (isteri raja); *dato'* ___ panggilan kpd isteri *dato'* (orang besar); ampuan.

empunya 1. pemiliknyanya, tuannya: *harta pulang ke ___*; 2.=**empunyai** (obs.) mempunyai, memiliki: *tiap-tiap orang Lampung ada ___ kebun lada berisi seribu dua ribu batang lada; barang siapa ___ untung ia beroleh Sita Dewi; yg ___ (orang) yg punya (tuannya, pemiliknyanya); → punya.*

puan I sj tempat sirih yg diperbuat drpd emas atau perak (biasanya dipakai oleh permaisuri, pengantin perempuan atau sbg tanda kekuasaan raja).

puan II 1. kep empuan (perempuan); *dato'* ___ panggilan kpd isteri *dato'*, datin; *Toh (To')* ___ a) panggilan kpd isteri Tun; b) Ph isteri kpd To' Muda; *sakit* ___ [2nd ed: a) cabang ilmu perubatan yg khusus mengenai kelahiran dan rawatan ke atas wanita sebelum dan sesudah bersalin; b) penyakit (spt sifilis, gonorea dsb) yg boleh berjangkit melalui perhubungan kelamin, penyakit kelamin;] 2 = *che'* ___ panggilan kpd perempuan yg sudah bersuami, nyonya (lw tuan).

perempuan 1. wanita, lw laki-laki; ___ *itu isteri dia; raja ___ permaisuri; penyakit ___ penyakit sifilis*; 2. isteri; ___ *nya orang Minangkabau; ___ gatal* perempuan yg suka akan laki-laki; ___ *jahat*, = ___ *jalang* pelacur; ___ *joget* perempuan penari joget; ___ *jungkat* perempuan gatal; ___ *melangkahi ular tiada lepas* prb perihal kelemahan perempuan; *bagai bunyi ___ di air* prb sangat bising (riuh rendah); [this is taken from the 2nd edition; but the 1st edition is essentially identical]

wanita bh orang perempuan, lw lelaki

WILKINSON'S MALAY-ENGLISH DICTIONARY, 1903

ampu. Upholding; supporting; sustaining; holding up by pressure from below. *Mengampu susu*: to hold up the breasts. *Pengampu susu*: the name given to a kind of corset worn by dancing girls.

The word *perempuwan* (a woman) has been derived, according to Von de Wall, from *ampu*. Klinkert, who discards this derivation, gives, however, *tengku ampuwan* (the title of a raja's principal wife) as a derivative of *ampu*. Both these etymologies seem doubtful. The word *puwan* (an oval bowl of metal for betel-chewing requisites) has also been derived from *ampu*, the full form being given as *ampuwan*; cf. *puwan*.

empu. Javanese honorific, title.

ampuwan. *Tengku ampuwan*: the designation of a raja's principal wife if of royal birth. *To' puwan*: the principal wife of a Malay dignitary.

empuwan. An oval tray for carrying betel-chewing requisites; usually *puwan*, q.v.

empunya. Possession; also *punya*. *Yang empunya*: the possessor. *Mempunyai*: to possess.

puwan. I. A royal betel-box; ...Sej. Mal., 92. II. *Enche' puwan*: a title given to the wife of a high dignitary, and even (in the Ht. Koris) to the queen herself (*enche' puwan permaisuri mahkota raja*). Cf. *ampuwan*.

perempuwan. A woman. See *empu*.

The term *wanita* does not appear in Wilkinson's 1908 dictionary, nor in Marsden's of 1812, nor in Bowrey's of early 1701.

Wilkinson's abridged Malay-English Dictionary, revised and enlarged by A.E. Coope, 1948, does not list *wanita*. But it appears in Winstedt's dictionary, 1st ed. 1952, where it is listed as of Javanese/Indonesian provenance, and of literary usage.

As a matter of interest, in Iban, Richards glosses *empu* as "1. Possess, own, take as one's own" and also as "3. Self" as in *aku empu* (Richards, A. 1981. An Iban-English Dictionary. PJ: Fajar Bakti). The generic term for woman is *indu'*, which Richards derives from the Sanskrit, meaning "drop, spark, life-giving, deity of the home, moon, &c."), and glosses as "woman, mother, female, feminine, female of a pair", with *orang indu'* as "a woman, womenfolk". The term *indu'* appears also in *indu' padi* which means the "sacred plants set with the stones as the

'centre' of a padi field" and "damaging any of these or the *padi pun* (see below) is a serious breach of *adat*". *Indu*' also glosses as the "principal, chief, main or bigger member" of a class, thus *indu' negeri* (capital city), or *kasau indu'* (main rafter of a house), or *tunjok indu'* (thumb, or big toe), or the largest in a family of drums, *gendang indu'*.

There does not appear to be a word closely similar to *perempuan* for woman. But there is the word *pun*. Richards glosses *pun* as "origin, basis, cause, occasion, start, stem", as in *pun bilik*, the "senior member of *bilik*-family by descent (who would erect the first post of new building, not always the *tuai bilik*)", or *pun rumah*, the "founder of longhouse", or *padi pun*, the "primary sacred padi of *bilik*-family", or *tiang pemun*, the "first post of longhouse to be erected". [*Tiang ibu* in Malay, given in the *Kamus Dewan* as *tiang seri*; *rumah ibu* is the *bahagian tengah sesebuah rumah*, or *bahagian yang besar*].

[In Malay, Wilkinson gives *indung* as "mother" in the *Ht Hang Tuah*, also *induk*, in which the example is *induk kerbau*, used in *Pelayaran Abdullah*. The *Kamus Dewan* has *indu* as Minangkabau for *induk*, *indung*, *nenek moyang*; thus *seperinduan* as *sekeluarga*, *berasal drpd satu induk*. *Induk* itself is then glossed as Minangkabau for *ibu* (*terutama pd binatang*), *emak*, and metaphorically as *yg terutama*, *yg besar*, *yg menjadi pokok*.]

MACDONNELL'S PRACTICAL SANSKRIT DICTIONARY, 1954(1929)

van like, love; wish, desire; gain, procure; conquer, win; possess; prepare...

van-ita beloved, wife; girl; woman; female (of an animal or bird)

van-in desiring; bestowing

vanin-i clever or intriguing woman; intoxicated

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