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MALAY LIBEL ACTION.

GURU CLAIMS DAMAGES.

ALLEGATIONS OF HERESY AND UNORTHODOXY.

The Kuala Lumpur Supreme Court was packed with Malays from all parts of the State on Wednesday, when an action was begun before the Chief Justice (Sir Henry Gompertz) in which Haji Jalaluddin Bin Ismail, a religious instructor, of Jendram, Ulu Langat, brought an action against seven other Malays—Buyong alias Nicham, Haji Siam alias Haji Abdullah, Sura, Sarin, Kasat, Kahan and Mundok—for publishing a libel against him, says the *Malay Mail*. He claimed \$3,250 as damages, and prayed for an injunction against the defendants restraining them from publishing similar libellous statements to that complained of. Mr. M. N. Mallik appeared for the plaintiff and Mr. F. B. Ivens for the defendants.

The plaintiff, who is a "guru," imparting religious instruction to the people of Sungei Jendram, alleges that on Dec. 15, 1927, the defendants and others presented a petition to the Chief Kathi of the State of Selangor, which set out *inter alia*: "In the village of Sungei Jendram at the present time have sprung up the doctrines of 'Quam Muda,' who are otherwise called the sect of 'Wahabis.' Their teacher who has taught those doctrines is Tuan Gurn Haji Jalaluddin, together with all his friends." It was also asserted that the plaintiff

prayed without uttering the Usam, and prohibited teaching of Talqueen to the dead and the praising of the Sultan during the sermon of the Friday prayers—meaning therefore that he was preaching unorthodox and heretical doctrines and imparting teaching calculated to foster feelings of disloyalty to the Sultan.

An inquiry into the complaint was held by the Chief Kathi of Selangor, and after evidence had been recorded the complaint against the plaintiff was dismissed.

As a consequence of the libellous statements, the plaintiff declares that he has been virtually excommunicated and has lost many pupils.

The defence pleads denial, truth and justification, and privilege.

Chief Kathi's Evidence.

The first witness called was the Chief Kathi of Selangor, who said that the plaintiff was appointed by him as a religious teacher at Sungei Jendram about five years ago. The witness had the power to appoint from H.H. the Sultan. The first occasion on which he had a doubt as to whether the plaintiff was discharging his duties satisfactorily was on his receiving the petition in December, 1927, and in February he held an inquiry. Twenty-three witnesses were examined. The decision recorded was that there was insufficient evidence to convict the plaintiff and revoke his authority as a teacher.

Mr. Ivens pointed out that H.H. the Sultan had appointed a committee to investigate the case, and that as a result the plaintiff was dismissed.

In reply to his Lordship, the witness stated that H.H. the Sultan appointed the Raja Muda, the late Dato Stia di Raja, the Raja Haji Abdullah and himself as the committee.

In reply to Mr. Mallik the witness said that the decision was that the plaintiff should be permitted to continue in his capacity as a teacher for six months.


Further evidence was given regarding the difference between Sunni Mohammedans and Wahabis. A Sunni Mohammedan who acted like a "Wahabi," the witness said, would be acting contrary to the religious rules in the country. It would be objectionable for a man to be termed a "Wahabi" if he belonged to the Sunni sect.

Yesterday morning the plaintiff was called and was subjected to examination by Mr. Mallik.


The hearing is proceeding

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