The Study of Ancient Times in the Malay Peninsula and Straits of Malacca

Dato Sir Roland Braddell

M.B.R.A.S. REPRINT No. 7
A STUDY OF ANCIENT TIMES
IN THE MALAY PENINSULA
AND THE STRAITS OF MALACCA

and

NOTES ON ANCIENT TIMES IN MALAYA

by

Dato Sir Roland Braddell. S.P.M.J. K.B.E.

and

NOTES ON THE HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY OF MALAYA

by

Dato F.W. Douglas
Contents

An Introduction to the Study of Ancient times in the Malay peninsula and the Straits of Malacca.

Part One: Anthropological
JMBRAS Vol. XIII. Part 2. 1935. Page 1

Part Two: Ptolemy's Geographike Syntaxis.

Part Three: the Pre-Funan period.

Part Four: Pre-Funan continued, and Funan.

Part Five: Funan continued.
JMBRAS Vol. XIX. Part 1. 1941 Page 238

Notes on Ancient Times in Malaya

Part One: Megaliths and Slab Graves.


JMBRAS Vol. XXIII. Part 1. 1950 Page 361


Part Six: Che-Li-Fo-Che: Ho-ling:

Notes on the Historical Geography of Malaya.
Sidelights on the Malay Annals.
by Dato F.W. Douglas.
published privately. 1949. Page 459
Illustrations

Roland Braddell

Frontispiece

Plate I A map of 1623 A.D. showing a river crossing the Peninsula. (*Langren in Linschoten, Dutch Edition*).

Plate II Ptolemy's idea of south-eastern Asia from a late edition in the British Museum map department.

Plate III Carte de l'Inde Transganetique d'apres le Venetus 516 (R) (from Renou's Edition of Book VII) Fourteenth Century Map.

Plate IV Ptolemy's Map of India and the Ganges River (Printed in Cologne in 1584).

Plate V 1584 Ortelius. Indiae Orientalis, Insularumque, Adiacentum Typus. Publisher:

Plate VI 1553 Ramusio, Bengal-China: Sumatra-Gilolo. Terza Ostro Tavola. Publisher:


Plate VIII 1571 Fernão Vaz Dourado, (Tablolarvm Geographicae Lvsitanorum).

Plate IX 1747 Bowen Emanual, East India Islands. Publisher:
DATO SIR ROLAND BRADDELL. S.P.M.J. K.B.

Roland St. John Braddell was born in Singapore on December 20, 1880. He was the eldest son of Thomas Braddell, who later became Attorney General and Chief Judicial Commissioner of the Federated Malay States, and was Knighted in 1914. Roland was the third generation of the Braddell family to work in Singapore. His grandfather, Thomas Braddell, was appointed the first Attorney General of the Straits Settlements in 1867 and drafted the Pangkor Engagement.

Roland was sent to Kings School, Canterbury, the oldest Public School in England, and later to Worcester College Oxford, where he studied Law and obtained an Honours Degree. He was called to the Bar by the Middle Temple in July 1905 and was admitted to the Bar of the Straits Settlements in April 1906. Unlike his father and grandfather he never held any Government appointments, but joined his father's legal firm, Logan and Braddell. His brother Robert joined him later and the firm was renamed Braddell brothers. Roland practised law in Singapore and Malaya for nearly fifty years.

He became a member of the M.B.R.A.S. in 1913, and served on the Council of the Society from 1926 until 1952. He was Vice President from 1938 to 1942 and in 1946 and 1947, and from 1948 to 1951 he was President. He contributed 22 articles to the Society's Journal and was awarded the honorary Degree of D. Litt. in 1950, by the University of Malaya, then in Singapore.

For many years before the Second World War Roland Braddell was the private legal adviser to H.H. Sultan Ibrahim of Johore, and from 1932 to 1940 he was appointed a member of the Johore Executive Council and of the Johore Council of State. After the Japanese occupation of Malaya Braddell was appointed legal adviser to U.M.N.O. and was also appointed a private legal adviser to Their Highnesses the Rulers during the Constitutional discussions, between 1948 and 1951. For these services H.H. Sultan Ibrahim of Johore conferred on him the title of Dato, with the order S.P.M.J. He was Knighted by King George VI in 1948. At the age of 80 he returned to England and died in 1966.
An Introduction to the Study of Ancient Times in the Malay Peninsula and the Straits of Malacca.

By Roland BraddeI, F.R.G.S.

§ 1. Prefatory.

This essay is proferred with the object of re-awakening interest in the ancient story of the Malay Peninsula, with which is interwoven that of the Straits of Malacca. So far, despite all that has yet been written, the Peninsula is a dark spot in the ancient story of south-eastern Asia. Two inconsistent views of the ancient history of the Malay Peninsula are too often expressed locally, that there remains nothing worth doing and that it is all too problematic to be worth doing. It is hoped that this essay will prove the incorrectness of both these views.

§ 2. Anthropological.

The Malay Peninsula, which runs from Tavoy to Singapore, begins at the isthmus of Kra, 10° N., where it is about 35 miles from sea to sea, widening out in the middle to a maximum breadth of under 200 miles and reaching a total length of roughly 1,000 miles. There is no spot; even in the far interior of the Peninsula, which is as much as 100 miles from the sea. Its back-bone consists of a main range (or system of ranges) of mountains which are steep and savage, being clad with jungle to the very sky-line, and which reach in some parts from 6,000 to 7,000 feet high. From this range pour the main rivers of the Peninsula and they for long formed the principal high-ways to and from the coasts. The reader is referred to Skeat and Blagden (3, introduction) for an admirable description of the Peninsula and the environment in which its pagan peoples have lived.

In remote times the Peninsula was continuous with Borneo and Java. Celebes, New Guinea and the neighbouring islands were joined to Australia, but there was always a break between Borneo and Celebes, called Wallace's Line, with perhaps another break between Lombok and Bali. The archaic continent of Asia was, accordingly, divided from the former extension of the Australian continent by a sea-passage which had to be crossed by migrating peoples (4, pp. 121, 131; Fig. 30).

Who first peopled the Malay Peninsula? Whence and how did they come? What part did the country play in the peopling of Oceania? From what races are its present peoples derived?
Whence have come the cultures and languages, past and present, of its various peoples? These and others are the problems which make the Malay Peninsula so important to the anthropologist.

Wilkinson (2, chs. I & IV) divides the living peoples, indigenous in the Peninsula, into (a) the Negrito, collectively known as Semang (b) the Sakai (c) the Besisi (d) the Proto-Malays (e) the Malays.

Winstedt (5, ch. VIII) states them as (a) the Negrito (b) the Sakai (c) the Besisi (d) the Proto-Malay (e) the Malay; but in his new History of Malaya omits division (c).

Proto-Malay, however, is an expression from the use of which great confusion arises. It appears to have been invented (see 6, p. 238) by Haddon as a convenient term to mean the branch of Pareocean man from whom the various specialized modern 'Malays' are sprung. Elliot Smith (4, p. 152) suggests that the expression should be kept for that branch of the Mongol race, sometimes called the Maritime or Oceanic Mongols, from which the modern mixed population of the Peninsula and Archipelago called 'Malay' is descended. It seems to the present writer that it would be wiser not to use the expression in connection with a living race but, if it is to be used at all, to give the prefix Proto its proper meaning of primordial.

The distinguished American anthropologist Professor Kroeber (7, p. 486) says that the north of the Peninsula is divided into three racial groups, the Semang, the Sakai and the Malays; and he does not mention the Jakun at all.

The divisions of Skeat and Blagden (3, p. 21) appear to be the most convenient, adding to them a fourth group, the Malays, with whom, of course, their work is not concerned. We can, then, state the living peoples of the Peninsula to be as follows,

A. SEMANG—the Negrito tribes generally; of whom the East Coast ones are known as Pangan;
B. SAKAI—including the Senoi or central Sakai tribes;
C. JAKUN—the aboriginal Malay tribes, including the Blandas of Selangor and Sungai Ujong; the Besisi, sea tribes of the Selangor and Malacca Coast; the Mantra, in the interior of Malacca; and the Udai, a mixed tribe of Johore;
D. MALAY.

These peoples have, of course, mixed and produced mixed tribes but such will fall into the above groups in accordance with what part of the mixture predominates.

1 Another term invented by Haddon to express the southern examples of Yellow Man (6, pp. 62, 63).
It is essential anthropologically to consider questions of race, culture and language separately. In fact, it has become a commonplace that the arguing of connection between these three factors, the making of inference from one to the other, is logically unsound (7, p. 111); yet the fault persists in book after book.

The term *race* is one which has unfortunately acquired a somewhat varied meaning in every-day speech. From the standpoint of the anthropologist a race is a biological group, based on community of physical characters. Where a group is characterized by a linguistic unity he terms it a *stock*; and where it is characterized by cultural, historical or political unity, he terms it a *nation*. If every writer on linguistics, ethnology or archaeology would follow that terminology, much confusion would be avoided. As Kroeber (7, p. 57) says “it may seem of little moment whether the word race is restricted to its strict biological sense or used more loosely. In fact, however, untold loose reasoning has resulted from the loose terminology.” A classic instance, of course, is the “Aryan race,” an expression that is really meaningless. Aryan is purely a linguistic term and merely indicates a family of languages and the speakers of those languages; yet over and over again it is used as though it actually had a physical meaning and indicated a race of men. The “Latin race” and the “Anglo-Saxon race” are two more instances; here, what is really meant is the Latin culture and the Anglo-Saxon culture. Then there are such expressions as the “French race” or the “German race,” which mean in reality the French nation or the German nation.

Similarly, expressions like Malay, Malay-Polynesian, Dravidian, Mon-Khmer refer, primarily, to families of languages and, secondarily, to the ethnic complex which speaks such languages. There is, strictly speaking, no such thing as the Malay race; there are the Malay people, the Malay culture and the Malay language etc.

So, too, with culture. Because two peoples possess a certain culture, that is no evidence of any racial unity. Elliot Smith (4, pp. 146, 147) points out, as must be obvious to any student of ethnology, that there is in most modern writings a serious confusion between race and culture. “In ethnological discussions, few people seem to be able to steer clear of such elements of confusion. Race and the culture of a race are two very different things. Any member of any race can adopt the culture of another people without undergoing any change in its physical characteristics.”

Finally, language is possibly the worst trap of all. We have already instanced the classic case of the Aryan. “As a matter of fact,” writes Kroeber (7, p. 104), “languages often preserve their existence, and even their territory, with surprising tenacity in the face of conquest, new religions and culture, and the economic disadvantages of unintelligibility.” To-day, Breton, a Keltic dialect,
maintains itself in France as the every-day language of the people in the isolated province of Brittany—a sort of philological fossil. It has withstood the influence of two thousand years of contact, first with Latin, then with Frankish German, at last with French”; and he says later (ibid., p. 111) that “it is possible for a population to substitute a wholly new language and type of civilization for the old ones, as the American negro has done, and yet to remain relatively unmodified racially, or at least to carry on its former physical type unchanged in a large proportion of its members. On the other hand, a change of speech without some change of culture seems impossible. Certainly wherever Greek, Latin, Spanish, English, Arabic, Pali, Chinese have penetrated, there have been established new phases of civilization.”

Again, he points out (ibid., p. 113), that “no clear correspondence has yet been traceable between type or degree of civilization and type of language. Neither the presence nor the absence of particular features of tense, number, case, reduplication, or the like seems ever to have been of demonstrable advantage toward the attainment of higher culture.”

In comparing language with culture one must bear in mind facts such as that the bulk of Japanese culture is Chinese; yet Japanese speech is built on wholly different principles.

When we come later to deal with Professor Rivet’s theories the above commonplaces as to race, culture and language should be kept in the forefront of the reader’s mind.

Let us now consider the questions of race with which the Peninsula involves us. The history of race classification will be found traced by Kroeber (7, pp. 49–55). At this date it is generally considered by English scholars that there are six fundamental races, which Elliot Smith (4, ch. IV) states as the Mediterranean, the Nordic, the Alpine, the Australian, the Negro and the Mongolian; and Hocart, perhaps more conveniently, (1, ch. 11) as the Australoid, the Negro and Negroid, the Mongolian and Mongoloid, the Mediterranean, the Nordic and the Alpine. Kroeber divides them into Caucasian i.e. Nordic, Alpine, Mediterranean and Hindu (sic); Mongoloid; Negroid; and people of doubtful position: but the English divisions are convenient and will be followed here.

Taking the living peoples, indigenous in the Peninsula, the Semang are usually stated to be Negroid pygmies; the Sakai to be Australoid; the Jakun to be Mongoloid near-pygmies; and the Malay proper to be Mongoloid.

A local re-consideration of the whole question would, however, be a most fruitful enterprise. Already, according to Mr. A. C.
Baker\(^1\), the Temiar in the Cameron Highlands, who are usually called 'Sakai',\(^2\) are considered by Mr. H. D. Noone, the present Ethnographer, to be "Nessiots\(^2\), a primitive Indonesian stock who preceded the round-headed Oceanic Mongols."

We shall return further to these racial questions in considering the theories of Professor Rivet.

So far as archaeological skeletal remains are concerned there is little beyond the debris of skulls discovered in 1860 by Mr. Earl at a shell-heap 10 miles from the mouth of the Sungei Muda in Province Wellesley and identified by Professor Huxley\(^3\) in 1863 as belonging to 'the Australo-Melanesoid race.' This shell-heap has recently been re-examined by Dr. van Stein Callenfels, whose discoveries confirm (so the writer understands) Professor Huxley's identification.

The remains found by Ivor Evans at Kuala Selinsing, Perak, would appear to belong to the historic period; but the discussion of them by Professor Gordon Harrower (8) would seem to possess more anatomical than anthropological value.

The languages of the Peninsula have been very fully treated by local scholars and, if there is room for much further research, Hocart (1, p. 280) perhaps points to a direction in which it might proceed. He says that philologists have made a mistake in looking exclusively to words for evidence and in not admitting affinity unless they can identify with certainty a sufficient number of words. They will not admit, he says, that, if the structure is nearly the same in two languages, those languages must be closely related. Structure, he argues, is far more permanent than words, as is shown by the fact that a man who learns another language can master the vocabulary, but seldom the structure, and goes on casting his new words into his old forms.

Winstedt (5, ch. IX) says that the Semang or Negritoess still have a number of words of a distinctive type that have not been traced to a Mon-Khmer or Malayan source many of which, he now tells me, belong to that old Malayo-Polynesian language, Sundanese. The Sakai dialects, he formerly considered, would appear to have been related from the first to the Mon-Khmer languages, though in his latest work he calls their language Malaya-Polynesian with an admixture of Mon-Khmer. The Jakuns speak a Malayan dialect which, however, contains a number of unexplained and possibly alien words.

\(^2\) Should be Nessiots, i.e. Islanders, a term invented by Haddon to express what are frequently called Indonesians.