The Malacca Sultanate.

By R. J. Wilkinson, C.M.G.

Malacca.

There is much old history in Malaya, could we only unearth it. There was a kingdom of Langkasuka, now a mere fairyland of romance, yet referred to by old writers for nearly a thousand years. There were Brua or Gangga Negara with its legends, the lost castle of Lenggiu in the Johore valley, and the fallen City State that first gave its name to Singapore. Of these only a few traditions now survive. But the story of Malacca is detailed and well-documented from the first. It links with its record the romance of great names: Albuquerque, Magellan, Camoens, St. Francis Xavier, van Riebeek, Raffles,—as well as those that live for ever in the memories of Malays. Prophetically indeed was the old fortress named by the Portuguese conquerors A Famosa, "the Renowned."

About the name "Malacca" there is both legend and history. Malay tradition tells us that when a fugitive king of Singapore was fleeing from his foes, he sat under a tree by the banks of the river Bertam. From his seat he watched a little mousedeer turn upon the hounds pursuing it and fling them back into the water. "A fine site this, for a city," said he, "this place that breeds bravery; let us make it a settlement for ourselves." His followers agreed.—"And what is the name of the tree against which I am leaning?"—"A Malaka tree, Your Highness."—Then, we will call our town Malacca." And in time, the Chronicle tells us, "Goods were brought to Malacca from all the neighbouring countries and from the lands beyond the Sea, and the port became so frequented that the Arabs named it Malakat, 'the Mart.'"

Here, we get two rival renderings of the one name Malacca; and of the two the second is the truer to fact, for the name is older than the city, the "Mart" than the Sultanate. From its first Chinese visitors we learn that there had been a "Mart" on one of the Five Islands,—probably on Water Island, still the resort of pilgrims to the tombs of pre-Malacca saints; and we meet the name Malacca in a Javanese poem of 1324 A.D. and in a list of Siamese dependencies of about A.D. 1360. The Siamese had sent a fleet to raid the Straits and had levied a "tribute" of 40 taels of gold for which they did nothing in return and which may have been more than the little "Mart" could afford to pay. So the settlement was moved from Water Island to the mouth of the Bertam River, where there was a fishing-village of sea-gypsies,—"Cellates" or Orang Selat,—a tribe still met with on the isle of Battam, opposite Singapore. From the site on the River Bertam the traders with their wares might slip up-stream should the Siamese fleets show any interest in their "dependency"; and it was to this new "Mart" that they were able, some years later, to welcome...
the Chinese admirals sent out by the Emperor Cheng-tsu with orders "to display his warlike strength to foreign countries." To account for this visit we must turn to Chinese history.

In A.D. 1370 the first Emperor of the Ming dynasty was able to announce to the Indonesian world the overthrow of his Mongol predecessors and his willingness to resume the time-honoured Chinese policy of accepting "tribute" from such nations as were wise enough to give it. Tribute to China had no likeness to Siamese tribute; it was returned in value many times over both in gifts and honours and blessed him that gave rather than the power that took it. It was,—apart from the name—a most enlightened policy of peaceful penetration. But the first Ming envoys stumbled on trouble. The Javan ruler of Majapahit was making war on all the Malay States and was displeased when he met a Chinese ship bearing titles and presents to a local potentate whom he had just overcome. So he slew the Chinese envoys; and the Emperor made a virtue of necessity and "did not think it right to punish him for what he had done." For some years friendly relations between China and Malaya were suspended.

In A.D. 1403 the Ming Emperor Cheng-tsu ascended the dragon-throne and again sent out fleets to ask for the friendly tribute and "to show that China was rich and strong" and worthy to receive it. Of this first Chinese visit to Malacca the Ming record may be allowed to speak.

"In the tenth month of the year 1403 the Emperor sent the eunuch Yin Chhing as envoy to Malacca to bring presents of silk woven with golden flowers, curtains adorned with gold, and other things. In the country there was no king nor was it called a kingdom, but it belonged to Siam to whom it paid an annual tribute of 40 taels of gold. When Yin Chhing arrived he spoke of the power and rank of China and of his wish to take the Chief back with him. The Chief, called Pai-li-su-ra (permaisura), was delighted and sent envoys to go to Court with the Imperial Envoy and to submit products of the country as tribute.

"In the ninth month of the year 1405 these envoys arrived at the capital; the Emperor spoke in praise of their master, appointed him king of the country and sent him a commission, a seal, a suit of silk clothes and a yellow umbrella."

Yin Chhing took the seal, the commission, the robes of honour and the yellow umbrella along with him when he revisited Malaya in A.D. 1406; the kingdom of Malacca may be said to date from that year. On his return-journey in 1407 A.D. he was given further "tribute" for the Emperor which was acknowledged two years later when the famous Chinese admiral, Cheng Ho or Ong Sam Po, visited the little Malay mart for the first time. This admiral was a remarkable man. Having begun life as an officer in the army he passed from grade to grade by "military merit" till he rose to the singular position—for a soldier—of Chief Eunuch.
at the Emperor's Court. From this post he was promoted or transferred in A.D. 1405 to the command of an armada of sixty-two ships and 27,000 troops. With this array he was commanded to show his country's flag in the Indian Archipelago and lead foreign countries to see that it was wise to accept the kindly hegemony of China. On his first journey he stopped short of Malacca; he visited Champa, Java and Palembang. In Java he learnt that the King of Majapahit, though harassed by his Western neighbours, and defeated in a great war, still insisted on claiming suzerainty over Sri Vijaya or Palembang. Palembang he found so fallen from its high estate that a Chinese pirate Cheng Tsu-i was the real ruler of the country though both Majapahit and Malacca claimed to be its overlords. Cheng Ho seized Cheng Tsu-i and took him back a prisoner to Nanking where he was beheaded. So ended Cheng Ho's first voyage in A.D. 1407.

In 1408, after having been rewarded for his services, Cheng Ho was sent on a second and longer mission. On this voyage he touched at Malacca (A.D. 1409) bringing as tokens of imperial favour to the pérmaisura two silver seals, a cap, a girdle, and a long robe; and in the Emperor's name he proclaimed the mart a City and Kingdom and left behind him a load of tiles for roofing the royal palace. He then went on to Ceylon. In Ceylon he found the king less awake to the logic of facts so the king was kidnapped and taken along to China to see things with his own eyes. On this return journey Cheng Ho touched again at Malacca and gave the pérmaisura and his wife a passage on his fleet. We are told that the captive Singhalese king was treated with royal honours and escorted back to his own country, wiser for his experience of a kindlier civilisation than his own. Of the pérmaisura's experiences we are told:

"In A.D. 1411 the King (of Malacca) came (to China) along with his wife, his son and his ministers, some 540 persons in all. When he reached the suburbs of the capital the Emperor sent out two officers to meet and greet him, after which he was lodged in the building of the Board of Rites and received in audience by the Emperor who entertained him in person while his wife and his suite were being entertained elsewhere. Every day bullocks, goats and wine were sent him from the Imperial buttery. He was given by the Emperor two suits of clothes embroidered with golden dragons and one suit with unicorns, other gifts of gold and silver, curtains, mattresses, etc., all complete; his wife and followers also got gifts. When about to leave, the King was presented with a girdle studded with gems, with horses and saddles, a hundred ounces of gold and five hundred of silver, 400,000 kwan of paper-money and 2,600 strings of copper cash; he received also three hundred pieces of silk gauze, a thousand pieces of plain silk and two pieces of silk with golden flowers. His wife, his son, his nephew and
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his suite were entertained apart, and got presents in accordance with their rank. Afterwards the officers of the Board of Rites entertained them twice at two different post-stations on their road (to the sea).

In 1412 A.D. the permaisura sent his nephew with tribute to China. In 1414 A.D. the permaisura was dead.

The subsequent career of Cheng Ho may be of interest as a picture of Chinese policy. In 1412 he left on a mission to Sumatra and returned in 1415. In the winter of the following year he took back the envoys of Malacca, Calicut and seventeen other countries to their homes and returned to China in 1419. In 1421 he set out again on a shorter expedition, returning the following year. In 1424 he was sent to carry a seal and commission to the Imperial Agent at Palembang and found on his return that his master, the Emperor Cheng Tsu was dead. By Cheng-tsu's successor he was appointed to be Guardian of Nanking or Military Governor of the Metropolis of China, a post created for him. He had been sent on missions to no less than thirty countries and might well have looked for rest; but in A.D. 1430 the Emperor noticed that tribute from foreign countries was not as plentiful as before and sent Cheng Ho on one last expedition to seventeen foreign countries. On his return we are told that "Cheng Ho was now old and died soon afterwards." The judgment passed on his work was that "he brought back numberless valuable things but what China had spent on them was not little either."

It is so hard to make out a foreign name written in Chinese that the full extent of Cheng Ho's journeys will never be known. He is believed to have sailed as far as Ormus, Arabia and East Africa. He left a name to conjure with among Chinese families in Java and the Straits. True, that name is given wrongly as Ong Sam-po, the Ong being really the clan-name of his second-in-command who was with him on all his journeys and merits a share in his fame. He was unlucky also in that his reports have perished and that we owe our knowledge of his journeys to the notes of his two interpreters who were Chinese Moslems. We know also a little about his ships. Their dimensions are given as 440 feet long and 180 feet beam, the latter an incredible figure. They were certainly large ships, and each had a smaller pilot-ship to feel the way into doubtful harbours, as well as two large barges in tow to save the ship's company in the event of a wreck. They sailed with one monsoon and returned with the next so that a voyage lasted the best part of a year; on one occasion indeed, Cheng Ho was away three years.

The permaisura was succeeded as ruler of Malacca by his son Iskandar Shah, about whom we learn nothing from Malay sources. From Portuguese books we get his name—"Xaquendar sa"—and no more. By Chinese records we are told that Iskandar Shah reigned about ten years and visited China in A.D. 1414 and again in A.D. 1419.

Of the third ruler of Malacca, the Chinese Si-ri-ma-ha-la (Seri Maharaja) we learn that he visited China in A.D. 1424 and 1431 to beg for help against Siam and that the Emperor sent a decree to the King of Siam "ordering him to live in good harmony with his neighbours and not to act against the orders of the Court."

Our local chronicles—the Annals and the Bostan al-salatin—tell us of a fourth early ruler of Malacca, a boy-king, Raja Ibrahim, son of the third ruler. This boy-king (whom neither the Portuguese nor the Chinese mention at all) was murdered in a revolution and is known to Malay tradition as Abu-shahid, "the Martyr"; he died too young to play a part in history. After his death we get from Malay sources a more detailed story of events.

Of greater interest to the historian, though not to the author of the Malay Annals, is the question of the life of the people and the system of trade and government under the first Port-Kings. It can only be learnt indirectly from a few Malay anecdotes and from what the Chinese writers tell us. Early Malacca was made up of two parts: an outer township where most of its people lived and an inner stockaded bazaar where the traders kept their stores, money and provisions. This, the real "Mart," was shut up at night and guarded or policed. Business was carried on in small raised booths or stalls. When a ship arrived from abroad it was stopped at the barrier drawn across the river till it had paid duty on its cargo; after payment it was allowed to enter the river and sell freely to the merchants. At the barrier and at all landing-places there was a show of military force to impress visitors; in the bazaar watchmen went about ringing bells to let it be known that the police were on the look-out and that thieving would not be tolerated.

The first "Malacca" on Water Island was a trading-mart pure and simple; there was no room for serious cultivation. At the new site by the estuary of the River Bertam,—"the River of the Mart" or Malacca River as it came to be called,—plantations were possible but were unpopular: "the fields are not fertile," say the Chinese records; "they produce little rice, for which reason the people do not occupy themselves with agriculture." "The Mart" was a trading port. Goods were brought by canoe down the river and by small local vessels from the Malay hamlets along the coast to be sold or bartered for the luxuries offered by the foreign merchants in Malacca. The exports were tin and products of the jungle and the sea such a lignum aloes, camphor, pearl-shell, fragrant woods, rhinoceros-horn, bezoars, ivory, incense, with perhaps, pepper. The tin-business was controlled by the State which sent people to wash streams for the metal and smelted it into small blocks weighing one catty eight taels or one catty four taels official weight; ten pieces were bound together with rattan and sold as a small bundle and forty as a large bundle. In all trading-transactions tin was the currency or standard of value.

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Of all the products of Malay material culture the house is the most prominent. Yet, if one may judge from the small number of published references to it, it has received very little study. There have been excellent accounts of Malay basket work, hat and dishcover making, silverwork, brass and white metalwork, weaving and boat-building but no systematic account of house design and construction. This may have been due to the fact that house-building is not a skilled and localised craft and is therefore very liable to change with fashion. Consequently one might suspect that Malay houses have in common only their raised floors, and that otherwise they represent the owner’s whims. This may well become so in a few years’ time but, at present, the traveller who never leaves the main north-south road can recognise that the houses in a district are similar. The plethora of modern nondescript structures does not prevent him from determining broadly a Malacca, Negri Sembilan, Perak, and Kedah style. But it is not obvious to casual observation what relationship the styles have to each other and whether there is one style which can be called basic. The object of this paper is to trace out this relationship and to describe in detail the basic form. It is recognised that the basic form is almost certainly not the ancestral form, which is probably to be sought in Sumatra (Snouck Hurgronje, 1906. Hasselt, 1897). As Malays are essentially the inhabitants of the Straits of Malacca only the western side of the Malay Peninsula is dealt with here. The East Coast states, with their strong Thai and Majapahit influence, are not considered, nor are religious buildings or palaces.

Evolution of the Malay House.

The Malay house could have been derived from tree dwellings, or from the coastal piled or raft dwelling of the type constructed by many Malaysians, Melanesians, and Polynesians. Our knowledge is too scanty yet to trace an evolution on ethnological evidence; with such perishable materials one cannot hope for help from archaeology, except indirectly in tracing race movements, and historical records go back only two or three hundred years. It is useful to compare the humbler Malay
THE HISTORY OF THE CREATION OF THE MALACCA POLICE.

By A. H. DICKINSON, O.B.E.

On the 30th. June 1827—Mr. W. T. Lewis, a few days before his appointment to the Office of Superintendent of Police, Malacca submitted in his capacity of Assistant Resident, a report to Government embodying a census of the population of the Settlement. The report is quoted in full (Appendix A) because it describes so clearly the settlement as it was at the time he assumed his police duties.

Of the policing of Malacca under the Dutch in the XVIIIth century little is known. There was in the town undoubtedly a "Burgher Watch". During the British military occupation after 1796 this watch was maintained and the law administered by the Dutch College of Justice; its sentences of death being subject to confirmation by the King of England.

With the advent of a British Civil Government in 1825—a definite attempt was made to create a Police Force. The Headmen of the old Burgher Watch were certainly maintained in Office, and they no doubt constituted the nucleus round which was created a regular force for duty in the town.

The responsibility for the policing of the country districts was in the first instance laid upon landed proprietors by the terms of a clause in the ancient grants under which they held their lands from the Dutch Government. This clause stated:—The proprietors acknowledge also that in cases of emergency (if any such should occur) they are bound to provide for the peace of their respective Estates by embodying a police from among their tenants."

This arrangement was to have been supplemented (by the Dutch) with the order to Penghulus to which reference is made in Mr. Lewis' census report. The order which is here quoted (Appendix B) clearly defines the functions of Penghulus 114 years ago and at once explains the jealousy which, however veiled, at times exists between the average penghulu and the Malay non-commissioned officer in charge of a country police subdivision. For with the development of the police under the British the penghulu has been deprived of much of his position as the preserver of the peace. The British Government immediately in fact when promulgating the order clearly laid down the subjection of the penghulus to the new Police.

On 5th. July 1827 a Council meeting was held in Malacca at which the Governor, the Hon’ble Robert Fullerton was present. 1941] Royal Asiatic Society.
The intention appears to have been to enlist at Madras, each Settlement being responsible for the cost of passage of its own batches of recruits. There was some difference also in the pay of the Police in Malacca and Penang.

The Resident Councillor Malacca on 15th May 1863 writes to Penang:—

"At present we have only two rates of pay for Police peons viz—$6 say Rs. 13 for our small Frontier Force of 32 Peons and $5 say Rs. 11 for all the Town Police—but by offering to all new comers the lowest scale of pay obtaining at Penang of Rs. 10 we can easily assimilate our scale to yours as the rupee thus gained from the pay of each new comer could be added to that of the Seniors of the Town Force now drawing Rs. 11—the scale would then be Rs. 13.12.10. The number of the 2nd class could be decided on hereafter.

Appendix G.

1865 October.

The Resident Councillor (Major I. Burn) ordered the construction of a Police Station "same size as at Brisoo to be erected on our North West Frontier at Lobo Chiena to be defended by a ditch and strong fence and well raised from the ground". By August 1866 the Station had been completed much to the satisfaction of the Raja of Rembau who had written to the Resident of Malacca expressing the contentment of his people for the protection afforded.

The country was beginning to become thoroughly modernized in this year—and the Settlement was almost within reach of the "Electric Telegraph."

On the 30th July Major Burn addressed the Sultan of Selangor as follows:—

"I write this letter to explain to my friend that two gentlemen, Merchants of Singapore, have formed a Company to carry out a Line of Electric Telegraph from Rangoon to Singapore—there is no word in the Malay language by which I can explain the meaning of Electric Telegraph to my friend but it consists in so long a line of posts about 20 feet high and about 60 feet apart and along the tops of these posts is stretched a wire, by which if one end of the wire is in Rangoon and the other end of the wire in Singapore people at Rangoon can talk to people at Singapore and also at any place between where Stations are made for the ends of the wire to be placed. If any of my friends people have been to Singapore they will have seen an Electric Telegraph from Telok Blanga to the Merchants Street in Singapore.

1941] Royal Asiatic Society."
These Tooan have already received permission from the King of Siam and from the Toomongong of Johore to put up their wooden posts in their respective territories and have signed agreements with them, and they now ask my friend to give them authority to erect these posts through Selangore in a straight line from Perak to Malacca. The Hon'ble the Governor will be very glad to learn that my friend is willing to give the Company all the assistance in his power and I hope my friend will agree to sign the agreement which I now send to him and which has been signed by the two gentlemen who have formed the Company. My friend will be put to no expense whatever but if the Company receive good profit then they will give a share of that profits to my friend and as they will have to employ my friends subject to cut down jungle and put up posts the poor people in Selangore, Kallang and Looroot will receive good wages. If my friend approves of the agreement I request my friend will sign it and put his great seal to it end enter the date on which he seals it and then either return the agreement to me or give it over to Mr. Read who has gone up to Kallang and who intends meeting my friend at Langat.

Appendix H.

1875

15th December, 1875.

Serious disturbances took place between Chinese of different Secret Societies in the Country districts. The acting Lieutenant/Governor Mr. C. B. Plunket reported to the Officer Commanding the Troops in Malacca as follows:—

"I am now sending out 2 headmen of each Society to beat a gong all around the suburbs ordering their men to keep quiet. These men will be accompanied by a guard of 12 Police and I have to request that you will afford a further guard of 12 Europeans of the 10th Regiment to go with them. I am anxious to send the party off before 12 o’clock today (15.12.75).

In the afternoon however he had changed his mind. "I have thought advisable instead of sounding the gong round the suburbs—to order the party of Police to proceed direct to Durian Toongal, a distance of 10 miles and remain there for the night. The next day the party will move on probably to Alor Gajah another distance of 10 miles. After which they will return home. Inspector Cartwright goes in charge of the party. Whatever Commissarial Stores may be required I will send out by gharry.

A few days after this on the 21st December another European Inspector was detailed to accompany a military party to Chin Chin. "I have just received information that an attack is expected by a gang of Rambow Malays upon Chin Chin a frontier station about 24 miles from Town."