THE PORTUGUESE MISSIONS IN MALACCA AND SINGAPORE (1511-1958)

VOLUME I — MALACCA

AGÊNCIA GERAL DO ULTRAMAR
LISBOA — 1961
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BY
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MALACCA BEFORE THE ARRIVAL OF THE PORTUGUESE

THE NAME AND ITS ORIGIN

The word «Malacca», in the form ‘Malākā’, first occurs in the «Kot Monthieraban» — or ‘Palatine Law’ of Siam, enacted in A. D. 1360. J. V. Mills in his notes to Eредia’s Description of Malacca says: «The Malay name is Melaka».

Meanings: Four derivations of the word ‘Malacca’ have been put forward.

First. Barros (1553) and Albuquerque (1557) allege a connection between ‘Malacca’ and ‘Malayo’ (Malaio), the point being that «in Javanese the word ‘Malayu’ signifies ‘to run away’, and the proper name has traditionally been derived from this, in reference to the alleged foundation of Malacca by Javanese fugitives.»

Yule and Burnell (Hobson-Jobson. p. 544) quote Skeat as writing «The suggested connection between Malayu and Malaka appears impossible to me, and I think, would do so to any one acquainted with the laws of the language.»

Secondly. Albuquerque mentions an alternative derivation, which evidently refers to the Arabic ‘Mulākāt’ ‘a meeting’. The «Malay Annals» (1612) allude to this:
The Arabs gave it the name of Malakat or the mart for collecting all merchants. (*Leyden’s Translation.* (1821). p. 108).

This derivation «may be totally rejected». (*Yule and Burnell, Hobson-Jobson.* p. 544).

Thirdly. Crawfurd is positive that the place was called from the word ‘Malaka’, the Malay name of the *Phyllanthus emblica*, or emblic Myrobalan; *Yule and Burnell (Hobson-Jobson.* p. 544) quote Skeat as writing «There can be no doubt that Crawfurd is right, and that the place was named from the tree». The fact is that the place, as is so often the case among the Malays, must have taken its name from the Sungei Malaka, or Malaka River».

Fourthly. Gerini cannot credit the derivation from the name for the emblic myrobalan, and prefers to hold «that the name of Malacca is either a modification of Malayakolam or Malayaka (meaning the ‘country of the Malayas’); or that it is identical with Mālaka, the name of the Southern Indian tribe mentioned in the Mahābhārata, transplanted, like many others, on the soil of the Malay Peninsula». (*Researches, etc.* p. 105).

In connection with the reference to the «Malay Annals», ‘Sejarah Melayu’, above, «it may be observed that «the Malay Annals» though dated A. D. 1612, refer to «the late Sultan Aladin Riayat Shah who died in Acheen». This reference shows that the book was revised some years later than 1612».


The Sejarah Malayu avers Malacca to have been founded by Raja Iskander Shah, the Ruler of Singapore
(in proper succession), on his expulsion from that city by the Javanese despatched by the Bhatara of Majhapaht. Raja Iskander Shah, after settling on the Muar for a time, gave it up and removed to Sangang (Sungai?) Ujong, where he left a «mantri» (Minister), and proceeded to Birtam, a place called in the Sejarah a river, where he had a «pelandok» (mouse deer) hunt.

The coat of arms of the Municipality of the Town and Fort of Malacca with the device of a Malacca tree and startled deer, perpetuates the legend of the foundation of the town related in the Sejarah Malayu: — Raja Iskander Shah was hunting near the coast when one of his dogs attacked a mouse deer «pelandok». The deer stood his ground and drove the dog into the sea. The Raja exclaimed «this is a fortunate land where even the deer are full of courage» and decided to settle on the spot and to name the new city Malacca after the name of the tree under which he was resting.

W. E. Maxwell has pointed out that this tradition closely resembles a Gujerati one, and is probably borrowed from it (1).

Dr. C. Otto Blagden thinks Malacca did not rise to be a place of any real significance until after the destruction of Singapore and Palembang by the Javanese Majhapaht Empire about 1377, though it may have been in existence as a small port of call at some period before that time. According to the same scholar, Singapore became independent of Palembang, under its own Kings, about the year 1295.

The Founder of Malacca

Gabriel Ferrand, in his interesting study Malaka, le Malayu et Malayur (Journal Asiatique, Mai-Juin 1918)

(1) See Journal, Royal Asiatic Society, January, 1881.
has for the first time collected some oriental writings, together with what the Portuguese chroniclers (Duarte Barbosa, Comentários by the son of Albuquerque, Correia, Castanheda, Barros, Couto and Eredia) and the Dutch Valentyn had written about the early history of Malacca. Then Sir Richard Winstedt took up the subject again in his History of Malaya (J. R. A. S. M. B. Vol. XIII, Part I) quoting also the Malayan, Chinese, and Portuguese sources. Wilkinson did the same in The Malacca Sultanate.

Winstedt writes: «Perhaps the earliest account is that published in 1557 by the bastard son of the great d’Albuquerque, who had access to his father’s papers. He tells how after much fighting «Paramicura», a pagan King of Palembang, married a daughter of Bataramural (? Batara of Tumapel) and agreed to pay his father-in-law tribute, and be his vassal. Faithless to his promise he was attacked and conquered by the Batara and lost his Kingdom, whereupon he fled to Singapore along with his wife and children. The local chief Tamagi received him hospitably, but after eight days was creesed by his guest, covetous of the country’s riches. Joined by 3,000 followers from Palembang, Parameswara reigned for five years at Singapore, pillaging all the passing ships with his fleet of lancharas. Then, aided by Singapore subjects who disliked their ruler’s exactions, the King of Patani drove out the murderer of his brother Tamagi».

De Barros, in 1553, relates that after the death of a Javanese ruler, Pararisa (?Bhra Hiang Wisesa, King of Tumapel, 1389-1428, one of the two Kingdoms into which Majapahit split on his succession), a dynastic war started and many nobles fled from the country, among them a Parameswara, who accepted the hospi-
tality of Sangesinga (Sanghiang Singha), King of Singapore. After a short time, Parameswara murdered his host and with the aid of his Javanese followers and the «Cellates» made himself master of the town. He was driven out by the King of Siam, father-in-law and Suzerain of Sangesinga, fled to Muar river and built a wooden fort at Pagoh for dread of Siamese attack. The «Cellates» (1) or Proto-Malay sea folk followed him. But fearful of their numbers the exile bade them go elsewhere to make a settlement; they founded Malacca.» Diogo de Couto says that the Javanese drove out Parameshwara from Singapore.

Eredia (1613) assigns the foundation of Malacca to «Permicuri, first King of the Malayos (Malacca, Meridional India and Cathay, p. 16); he lived in fear of the ruler of Pahang, who was related to the Xabandar of Singapore, whom Permicuri assassinated when he took refuge there in his flight from his father-in-law the Emperor of Java Major.

Valentyn (1726) states that the founder of Malacca ruled for three years at Singapore and then for twenty-two at Malacca (JRASSB, N. 13 (1884) p. 67).

P. V. van Stein Callenfels, O. B. E., Ph. D., wrote an article on «the Founder of Malacca», trying to give the correct version. We give here the summary of this article. Winstedt, misguided by the supposition that the Javanese ruler Pararisa of the Barros was the Majha-

(1) Ferrand in his Malaka, le Malayu et Malayur derives the Portuguese word «Cellates» from the Malay selat (strait) meaning «people of the strait, maritime population who lived in the strait». However Tomé Pires in his Suma Oriental, translated and edited by Armando Cortesão (Hakluyt Society, 1944), Vol. I p. 149, says that «Celates is the Malay for sea robbers».

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pakit emperor Bra Hyang Wishesa (1389-1428), overlooks a very valuable data, which throws more light on Parameshwara, first Malaccan King. Parameshwara's father-in-law, called Bataratamurel, is certainly Bhatara Tumapel of Javanese history, as proposed by Winstedt; Barros gives us the cause which made Parameshwara leave Java: a dynastic war.

D'Albuquerque is perhaps right in making Bhatara Tumapel the father-in-law (more probably a relative) of the founder of Malacca; it is possible that Parameshwara married either a daughter of Bhatara Tumapel, or another Princess of the imperial house of Majhapahit. Whether he was of Palembang descent (according to Albuquerque) or a Javanese nobleman (according to Barros) has to remain undecided.

The Bhatara Tumapel of Albuquerque and the dynastic war of Barros combined enable us to fix a more definite date for the arrival of Parameshwara at Singapore. In 1389, the most famous emperor of Majhapahit, Hayam Wuruk, during whose reign the genius of his Prime Minister Gajah Madak, the might of the Empire, reached its summit, died. By his wife he had only a daughter, by a concubine a son, Wirabhum. The Javanese law disposed in such cases, that the princess of royal blood on both sides had to marry her cousin who then became emperor; accordingly, Hayam Wuruk's daughter married her cousin Bhra Mataram I, son of a younger sister of her father, after whose death the son-in-law became emperor as Bhra Hyang Wishesa. Wirabhum, Hayam Wuruk's son by a concubine, had married Bhre Lasem «the Fat», a daughter of the same sister of Hayam Wuruk. As the old emperor loved his son Wirabhum and not daring to change the law of succession left him the eastern part of Java as a kind
of vassal kingdom. Both Bhra Hyang Wishesa and Wirabhumi fought against each other; both requested the help of Bhre Tumapel and of Bhra Parameshwara; at first, these remained neutral; but when Wirabhumi had the advantage, both helped Wishesa to beat him. Wirabhumi then went away at night and boarded a ship, but was overtaken and beheaded in A. D. 1406 (3).

Bhre Tumapel became emperor of Majhapahit (1447-1451) as successor of his sister Devi Suhita. Bhra Parameshwara, who married the latter, saw her ascend the throne as empress (1429-1447) and he was anointed as prince under the name of Ratnapanzkaja; he died in 1446, one year before his wife. Therefore Hyang Parameshwara is not the founder of Malacca.

At what date did Parameshwara of Singapore and later of Malacca leave Java?

The Ming Annals report that Malacca existed already in 1403, but was not a kingdom; it was subject to Siam; the chief was Pai-li-su-ra, certainly our Parameshwara. As he had founded Malacca already in 1403, it is impossible that he took part in the final war of 1404-1406. He probably had left Java already during the troubles of 1401.

(3) Bhre Tumapel = Bhatara Tumapel was the son of Wishesa and his concubine. It seems that Wishesa favoured the succession to the throne of his daughter by a concubine, Devi Suhita, who became empress. To have his father driven out of the country and Wirabhumi seated on the throne meant that he would lose every chance of once becoming emperor, although he had married one of Wirabhumi's daughter; this is why he helped Wishesa. Bhra Parameshwara was the grandson of Hayam Wuruk's father by a concubine and the son of another sister of Bhra Hyang Wishesa. At the death of the latter, he had a right to the throne; he married Devi Suhita, the daughter of Bhra Hyang Wishesa, who later succeeded her father.
Albuquerque calls him a Palembang prince married to a daughter of Bhatara Tumapel (*). We think that Bhre Tumapel of the Pararaton was not yet old enough to have marriageable daughters; it is possible that the Bhre Tumapel, his father-in-law, was not the man bearing that title at the time of the foundation of Malacca, but an elder one, the father of Ayam Wuruk. Bhre Tumapel died in 1372, when Majhapahit was at the summit of its power and there was no civil war in the kingdom. Therefore the story of Albuquerque that Tumapel sent an expedition to Palembang to drive out his son-in-law who refused to pay tribute is impossible. The version of Barros that Parameshwara, a Javanese nobleman, left Java because of the civil war in 1401 is nearest to the truth; and it is supported by Albuquerque's mention of a Batara Tumapel who played part in the events. The title Batara is a little confusing. During the Majhapahit empire the royal princes who bore the Tumapel title are mentioned as Bhra or Bhre, Bhatara being the title of the sovereign.

The Bhatara of Tumapel «who started the imperialist policy of Java by sending an expedition to Bali and to «Malayu» (Jambi and the country of the Upper-Batang Hari), was murdered in 1292, long before the foundation of Malacca. It was his cousin and son-in-law who, after

(*) Tomé Pires, as we will see below, says that Parameswara, the founder of Singapore and Malacca, was married to a niece not to a daughter of Bhatara Tumapel; Pires also reports that Bhatara Tumapel sailed to Banca and Palembang to destroy Parameswara, who was defeated and escaped to Singapore. P. V. van Stein Callenfels is right in saying that Bhatara Tumapel was not father-in-law but a relative of the founder of Malacca, who married a princess of the imperial house of Majhapahit.