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## R A J A   H A J I .

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**B**EING on a visit to Singapore in October last I found myself one day in the Raffles Library, and it occurred to me that it would be interesting to look over the Malay manuscripts on the shelves of the Logan Collection of philological books. Guided by a catalogue, I selected a thin, discoloured manuscript described as "Sha'ir Aceh," wondering that there should have been a poem about Aceh in Logan's time, though the Dutch expeditions to Aceh have made us familiar with the effusions of Malay poetasters thereon in later days. The first verse contained an allusion to Selangor, and it soon became apparent that the document had nothing to do with Aceh, but was a ballad relating the adventures and death of a certain Raja Haji in Malacca. The names of persons, including those of the Dutch commanders who led the attack in which the Malay hero of the ballad lost his life, were given, so it was evidently a work contemporaneous with the events which it described. I borrowed the manuscript from the Library and set to work to collect all available information about Raja Haji's attack upon Malacca in the last century. Materials were plentiful; Begbie \* devotes five pages (pp. 65—69) to the subject and Netscher † has published (in Dutch) the text of the official diary kept in the fortress of Malacca from day to day during the stirring events of 1783—4, the source, apparently, from which Begbie got his information. And besides the English and Dutch accounts I found a long description of Raja Haji's invasion of Malacca in a Malay historical work called "Tuhfat-el-nafis," which treats of the Malay Rajas of Bugis extraction in the Straits of Malacca.

I subjoin the text (Romanised) of the Malay ballad preserved by Logan, and probably acquired by him during one of his visits to Malacca some forty years ago. It is evidently the work of a Malacca Malay, friendly to the Dutch and perhaps in their service, who looked upon the Selangor invaders as robbers and the Bugis

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\* "The Malayan Peninsula," Madras, 1834.

† "Twee Belegingen van Malakka."

as pirates. I have not ventured to attempt to translate it. The character of Malay poetry makes it almost impossible to make *pantuns* readable in an English dress. The story is carried on in the third and fourth lines of each stanza only, the first two lines being either mere tags on which to hang the rhyme, or, at the best, some figurative statement, a kind of background against which to set the picture. To read ninety-five stanzas like the following would give little idea of the effect of the original:—

*Near the house of Inche Sabtu.*

*The siyakap fish from the sea of Banca.*

The corpse was cast into a cleft of the rocks,  
Of him who had boasted he would take Malacca.

*The siyakap fish from the sea of Banca.*

*Si Tuah runs away with the tray.*

His intention was to take Malacca,  
Little aware that his life would be lost.

*Si Tuah runs off with the tray.*

*Wood is turned by Si Naga Wangsa.*

Little thought he that his life would be lost.  
The body was removed by the Governor of Malacca.

The literary merit of the poem is not great, but it is of considerable historical interest and will be valued in Malacca as the work of some local bard of the last century, who celebrated in the best language he could command the successful repulse of the raid attempted on his native city.

Begbie's account of the cause of the quarrel between the Yang-di-per-tuan Muda of Riouw and the Dutch, and of the fighting that ensued is an appropriate preface to the Malacca ballad\* :—

“At this period (A.D. 1782; Heg. 1194) Pieter Geraldas de Brigu was the Governor of Malacca, being assisted by five other individuals as Members of Council: these were (1) the President of the Court of Justice, (2) the Commanding Officer of the Troops, (3) the Master Attendant, (4) the Fiscal, and (5) the Winkellier, or Superintendent of the Company's trade. Few readers need to be reminded that a severe contest was being maintained at this epoch by the English against the united strength of the French and Dutch nations, Gerrid Pangal was also Resident of the island of Rhio, another Dutch settlement in the vicinity of Singapore, Rajah Hadgi was the Rajah Moodah, or Iyang de Pertuan Moodah, of the same place, and Sulthaun Mahomed Shah, Sulthaun of the

\* The spelling of the original has been retained.

small island of Linggin. An English merchantman was attacked by a French man-of-war somewhere in the Indian Archipelago, but, managing to make her escape, put into Rhio for protection. It must be remembered that, although the Dutch possessed a Colony here, it was as yet but in its infancy, and their authority merely nominal. The Englishman consequently relied upon the neutrality of the Rajah Moodah."

"Pangal, anxious as he was to obtain the merchantman as a prize, was therefore unable to seize her without the permission of Rajah Hadgi, which he accordingly sought and obtained upon condition that he should receive a fair proportion of the booty. Pangal lost no time in communicating with the Governor of Malacca, who forthwith despatched a fast sailing French corvette that was lying in the roads, by whom she was seized, carried to Batavia, and sold, the French and Dutch dividing the proceeds between them."

"Rajah Hadgi in vain demanded his proportion of the prize, for the more powerful confederates laughed at his pretensions. Indignant at this shameless breach of agreement by the Dutch, who were *nationally* concerned in it, the disappointed Rajah Moodah declared war against them the following year. To meet this declaration Francis Lenckner, the President of the Court of Justice, was despatched to Rhio from Malacca at the close of the year in command of about seventeen small vessels and six hundred troops, a most incongruous appointment for a man of law. Lenckner's expedition terminated as might have been foreseen. He was not only totally defeated, and obliged to crowd all canvas in his retreat, taking with him the settlers of Rhio, but also to leave behind one of his vessels, which had been stranded on the bar, and could not be floated off."

"Flushed with this success, Rajah Hadgi determined the ensuing year to attack Malacca; he therefore equipped a fleet of one hundred and seventy vessels, carrying a large body of men, with which he sailed for the Moar River."

"The Dutch, as timorous in the hour of peril as they had been perfidious when the rule of the strongest was theirs, despatched one of their number, Abraham D'Wind, a gentleman whose influence with the natives was very considerable, to expostulate with the exasperated Rajah Moodah, and deprecate his vengeance. But if the Dutch really hoped that they could again cajole him, they were quickly undeceived by the rapid return of their

ambassador, who accounted himself but too happy in having been able to effect his escape with his life."

"Rajah Hadgi, having weighed anchor, now came off Katapang, a small village situated about five miles easterly of Malacca, and opposite the Water islands; here he disembarked and erected a stockade on the sea shore, in which he took up his head-quarters, having with him about 1,000 armed followers, and 300 women. Close to this village is a spot called Poongoor, where Mr. D'Wind had a house and grounds, but, the communication between it and Malacca being merely a narrow footpath leading through a dense jungle, Rajah Hadgi was convinced that regular troops would never think of passing through so dangerous a defile as long as there were more eligible points of attack. He therefore left the stockade open on this face,\* throwing up a simple *paggah*, or stout bamboo fence, in lieu of it: as an additional source of security he advanced a party to Mr. D'Wind's house."

"Meanwhile, the Rajah of Salangore, an independent State about forty miles to the westward of Malacca, who had married a daughter of Rajah Hadgi, sailed up the Linggy river, which disembogues itself about twenty-five miles from Malacca, and having captured some Malacca Klings (or natives of Coromandel) who were residing at Rumbow, returned down the river; he then sailed along the coast, reducing the whole country to the westward as far as Tanjong Kling, seven miles from Malacca."

"At the period of which I am treating, the now populous neighbourhood of Tranqueirah, which forms the western suburb of Malacca, consisted merely of a few houses spotted here and there in a thick jungle, which was peculiarly favourable for the operation of a Malayan enemy; the Dutch, thus beleaguered both eastward and westward, were unable to prevent the approach of the Rajah of Salangore to the second Tranqueirah bridge which is only about one mile from the fort of Malacca, whilst Rajah Hadgi advanced as far as Oojong Passir, the whole of the country to the northward, as far as Pangkallang Rammah, being in the hands of the confederates."

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\* "Oneside of a Malayan stockade is always left open for the convenience of retreat, as the defenders never wait for the bayonet. As this side is generally resting on the jungle, and all the paths, except those they retreat by, are planted with ranjows, their loss is generally trifling, being screened by their works from the enemy's fire in the first instance, and safe from pursuit in the second."

“At this crisis of their affairs, the Dutch were unhappily at variance amongst themselves. Togar Aboe, the commander of a 36-gun frigate, then lying in the Malacca roads, roundly charged D’Wind with treachery, and the latter was accordingly arrested. The charge not being substantiated he was subsequently set at liberty by order of the Batavian Government, and shortly afterwards the frigate accidentally blew up, thus adding to the difficulties of the Dutch.”

“They were at length considerably relieved by the appearance of a fleet consisting of three ships and two brigs from Batavia under the command of Admiral Van Braam, who dropped anchor between the Water islands and Katapang on the main land and maintained a constant fire on the stockade of Rajah Hadgi, who returned it as briskly. Van Braam, taking advantage of a dark night, laid down a succession of anchors, with hawsers attached to each, between his vessels and the shore. Having on board six hundred Javanese bayonets, he landed this party about four in the morning without noise by means of the hawsers, and directed it to remain concealed at Purnoo till daybreak. In order to divert the enemy’s attention from that quarter, the fleet continued its cannonade until the signal was made for the attack of the land column which, falling suddenly upon the stockade, dispersed the enemy with the loss of 450 killed. Rajah Hadgi was numbered amongst the slain having been killed by nearly the last round shot fired from the fleet.”

“Directly that the Admiral saw the Dutch colour flying over the stockade he landed, but, not having as yet learned the death of the Rajah, he concluded that he had marched for Malacca after having evacuated the stockade. He therefore put his troops in rapid motion for that place, but discovered the real state of affairs on arriving at Poongoor. Rajah Hadgi’s body was found after some search, and brought into Malacca, where it was interred on St. Paul’s Hill.”

The following is the Romanised text of the Malay ballad :—

SHA’IR RAJA HAJI.

1.      Bentangor batang merbau  
           Perling di-dalam perangkap  
 2      Raja Salangor tiba ka Rembau  
           Orang Kling habis ter-tangkap.

2. Perling di-dalam perangkap  
 Raya di hulu be-rampas-an  
 Orang Kling lalu ter-tangkap  
 Dato' Penghulu me-lepas-kan.
3. Raya di hulu be-rampas-an  
 Ter-layang batang lembing  
 Dato' Penghulu me-lepas-kan  
 Di-suruh Pa'Sayang \* membawa Kling
4. Ter-layang batang lembing  
 Rumpun temu di-dalam raga  
 Di-suruh Pa'Sayang membawa Kling  
 Lalu ber-temu pada Wolanda.
5. Rumpun temu di-dalam raga  
 Benang di kayu laka  
 Sudah ber-temu pada Wolanda  
 Pa'Sayang ter-bilang di Malaka.
6. Bilang pinang di kayu laka  
 China menampi di-dalam prahu  
 Pa'Sayang ter-bilang di Malaka  
 Shina Tambi † di-jumput men-jamu.
7. China menampi di-dalam prahu  
 Di-dalam dulang ikan belanak  
 Shina Tambi jumput men-jamu  
 Pa'Sayang pulang mengambil anak.
8. Di dalam dulang ikan belanak  
 Bentangor kayu ber-batang  
 Pa'Sayang pulang mengambil anak  
 Orang Salangor pun sudah datang.
9. Bentangor kayu ber-batang  
 Bunga tanjung ber-tali-tali  
 Orang Salangor pun sudah datang  
 Raiyat Tanjong ‡ pun sudah lari.
10. Bunga tanjung ber-tali-tali  
 Bentangor batang ber-duri  
 Orang Tanjong pun sudah lari  
 Raiyat Salangor masok men-churi.

\* *Pa'Sayang*: apparently an influential Malay. *Baba Sayang* is still the favourite burden of Malacca songs.

† *Shina Tambi*: a Malacca Kling.

‡ *Tanjong*: Tanjong Kling, about seven miles from Malacca.



11. Bentangor batang ber-duri  
 Sungei Raya negri Asahan  
 Raiyat Salangor masok men-churi  
 Sakalian kampong di-binasa-kan.
12. Sungei Raya negri Asahan  
 Merbu ber-bunyi di kayu ara  
 Habis raiyat di-binasa-kan  
 Kerbau di-churi muntah-kan darah.
13. Merbu ber-bunyi di kayu ara  
 Tetak akar pisang rajahan  
 Kerbau di-churi muntah-kan darah  
 Hilang asal ka-raja-an.
14. Tetak akar pisang rajahan  
 Bakul lama ber-isi duri  
 Hilang asal ka-raja-an  
 Tinggal-kan nama Raja penchuri.
15. Bakul ber-isi duri  
 Deri Ligor ka Manja Sanun  
 Tinggal-kan nama Raja penchuri  
 Raiyat Salangor masok menyamun.
16. Deri Ligor ka Manja Sanun  
 Bandéra ber-sri-sri  
 Orang Salangor masok menyamun,  
 Orang Tangkéra \* masok negri.
17. Bandéra ber-sri-sri  
 Serindit ber-duyun-duyun  
 Orang Tangkéra masok negri,  
 Orang Peringgit † pun habis turun.
18. Serindit ber-duyun-duyun  
 Tempurong di-buat sendok  
 Orang Peringgit habis turun  
 Orang Duyong ‡ pun sudah bilok.
19. Tempurong di-buat sendok  
 Buah laka di-dalam kedut  
 Orang Duyong pun sudah bilok  
 Di-dalam Malaka baharu gelut.

\* *Tangkéra* : Tranquéra, a suburb of Malacca.

† *Peringgit* : a Malay *kampong* near Malacca.

‡ *Duyong* : a river and sea-coast village south of Malacca, the inhabitants of which apparently joined the invaders.

20. Buah laka di-dalam kedut  
Pergi ka teluk menarah papan  
Di-dalam Malaka baharu gelut  
Nasi ter-sendok tidak ter-makan.
21. Pergi ka teluk menarah papan  
Gergaji belah-kan tampang  
Nasi ter-sendok tidak ter-makan  
Raja Haji tiba Teluk Katapang.
22. Gergaji belah-kan tampang  
Ikat pita tuntu-tuntu  
Raja Haji tiba Teluk Katapang  
Pasang palita sagenap pintu.
23. Ikat pita tuntu-tuntu  
Pijat-pijat banyak me-lata  
Pasang palita sagenap pintu  
Mahu di-lihat dengan nyata.
24. Pijat-pijat banyak me-lata  
Telepek di tudong saji  
Mahu di-lihat dengan nyata  
Takut-kan raiyat si Raja Haji.
25. Telepek di tudong saji  
Handak menyiram ka perigi  
Takut-kan raiyat si Raja Haji  
Masok menyelap di-dalam negri.
26. Handak menyiram ka perigi  
Kilat datang dengan chuacha-nya  
Masok menyelap di-dalam negri  
Kalau tidak dengan nyata-nya.
27. Kilat datang dengan chuacha-nya  
Di-dalam bilek permeisuri  
Kalau tidak dengan nyata-nya  
Membawa fa'il \* seperti penchuri.
28. Di-dalam bilek permeisuri  
Hiyu di Pulau Indra Giri  
Membawa fa'il seperti penchuri  
Mati bulur † dia sendiri.

\* *Fa'il*: behaviour.

† *Bulur*: hunger.