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*His Highness Paduka Sri Sultan Iskandar Shah*  
G.C.M.G., K.C.V.O.



A  
HISTORY  
OF  
PERAK

BY

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## PREFACE.

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A great part of this book deals with the Victorian era. So perhaps one may be pardoned for recalling how Huxley once said that tragedy for Herbert Spencer was a deduction killed by a fact. So chimaerical have been the theories of historians that the modern student demands the evidence before he will accept the finding. Meticulous, even tiresome detail must precede generalisation. There is hardly a deduction in this book: it is a plain unvarnished record of facts. Certainly the scaffolding of history consists of facts and this book pretends no more than to provide scaffolding for a definitive history of Malaya.

Most of the Malay material for this work was collected by us in Perak a quarter of a century ago. Since that time many Portuguese, Dutch and English records have been made accessible.

His Highness Sri Sultan Iskandar, G.C.M.G., K.C.V.O. has graciously provided several illustrations. Doctors Bosch and van Stein Callenfels of the Archaeological Department of Netherlands India have been good enough to confirm my surmise that the dish figured in Plates VI—VIII is of Majapahit style. A note on the Sanskrit Coronation Address, has been obtained by the good offices of Dr. C. O. Blagden. Mr. H. D. Noone of the Perak Museum has supplied the latest scientific views on the Sakais, and Mr. T. D. Hughes, a Portuguese scholar in the Malayan Civil Service, has rendered assistance for the chapter on the Portuguese Period.

Chapters VII and VIII and part of X and Appendices (a) and (f) and much of (d) in their original form were the work of Mr. R. J. Wilkinson and have been printed in slightly different form elsewhere. For other chapters he is not responsible.

R.O.W.



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## INTRODUCTION.

On the stage of Perak's modern history there have been many actors: the Malays, the Portuguese, the Achinese, the Dutch, the Bugis from Riau and Selangor, Siam and her vassal Kedah, and the British. To some small degree it was dynastic pride that made Aceh and the Bugis her aggressors, and Siam had hardly any other conscious motive. But at the back of all Perak history has been trade. Trade alone attracted the Europeans, an unassuageable thirst for the purchase of tin and the sale of cloth. Of this thirst, as I have written elsewhere "the most evil symptom was monopoly, the confining of trade to one market, where the purchaser bought not at competitive prices but at prices fixed by the guns of his ships. As far back as we know, monopoly had been a feature of Eastern trade, Hindu, Parthian, Persian and Arab, and it was the desperate effort of the Gujeratis to maintain their monopoly that led to the clash between Malays and Portuguese at Malacca. It was the good fortune of England that the spirit abroad at the beginning of the XIXth century gave her no chance to establish monopolies and induced her to declare for free trade." Along with their struggle for monopoly, the powers also attempted to take toll of all shipping and compel it to resort to their ports. Long before the Portuguese, the great Sumatran state Srivijaya or old Palembang had derived large revenues from toll levied on sea-borne trade: as Chao Ju-Kua wrote in 1225 A.D., "If a merchant ship passes without entering, their boats go forth to make a combined attack and all are ready to die in the attempt; that is why this country is a great shipping centre."

From her foundation down to the time of British protection Perak suffered every sort of humiliation and defeat and domestic tragedy. The Portuguese built a fort at the mouth of her river in order to command a monopoly of her tin. Jealous of her dealings with the Portuguese, Aceh attacked Perak fifty years after the coming of her Malacca dynasty. It removed five thousand of her subjects and carried ruler after ruler into captivity, until royal descent on the male side was broken. It made treaties directly with the Dutch for the disposal of Perak's tin, and it sent Achinese officials to control the weighing-station at her estuary. For nearly a century the State was the vassal of Aceh. Moreover during half that century Perak was also plagued by the Dutch, who demanded her tin at a price concerted with Aceh, deducted a war indemnity from that price, erected a fort at the Dindings and blockaded the river-mouth. Long before the Dutch had gone, Perak was implicated in the Kedah wars between the Bugis and the Minangkabau followers of the famous Raja Kechil of Siak. The Bugis invaded her in 1728 and in 1742, later compelled her ruler to instal a Bugis chief as Sultan of Selangor and then sent their most notable warrior, Raja Haji, to obtain the hand of a Perak princess for the new potentate. From 1804 till 1806 Perak was



“ by right of powder and ball ” subject to Selangor. In 1818 she was conquered by Kedah at the dictates of Siam. In 1822 she turned to Selangor to expel the Siamese, who three years later re-established their suzerainty. Down to 1826 when the British intervened, Perak was no more than a shuttle-cock between Selangor and Siam. In truth she was always a shuttle-cock: between Portugal and Acheh, between Acheh and the Dutch, between Minangkabaus and Bugis, between Selangor and Siam. And after the Kedah wars at the beginning of the eighteenth century nearly every decade of her history was disfigured by fratricidal struggles between princes of her own royal house.

The most bigoted Little Englander, the most convinced supporter of the rights and customs of small people, must admire the *pax Britannica* in Perak and bless the work of British protection in bringing out of centuries of great tribulation this rich and beautiful country and her ancient line. Beset by Selangor, threatened by Siam, Sultan ‘Abdu’-Malik Mansur Shah could yet write with truth in 1816, “ I am the oldest of all the kings of these parts, such as the kings of Siak, Selangor, Riau, Kedah and Trengganu. I will not send tribute of Golden Flowers to Siam.”



PLATE II.



THE PENGKALAN (IPOH) BUDDHA.

## I

### EARLY CIVILISATIONS AND PRIMITIVE TRIBES.

Some seven thousand years ago the caves of Perak were inhabited by people who used palæoliths, namely stone scrapers and *coup-de-poing* in almond-shaped, oval and elongated forms, painted their bodies with a red pigment, used grinding slabs and pounding stones and fed on fresh-water and marine mollusks. The relics of this civilisation are associated not only with roughly shaped stone-implements of a type found in Sumatra having one side chipped and the other in its natural water-worn condition but also with proto-neoliths or artefacts chipped but having polished edges. The evidence points to the diffusion of palæolithic civilisation using implements of the Sumatra type through the south-eastern parts of Asia and as far as Sumatra. It has been traced in Perak at rock-shelters at Goa Kajang near Lenggong and at Gunong Pondok. Scientific excavation at Gunong Pondok discovered no pottery in the lower layers. Pottery plain and cord-marked was associated with the later protoneolithic remains. The makers of the protoneoliths, chipped artefacts with only edges polished, may have learnt the art of polishing on bone and horn or from contact with a neolithic people. So far as is known as yet, the mixed palæolithic and protoneolithic culture of the Perak caves did not reach Sumatra, though it occurs in Siam, Borneo and Luzon: from the abundance of its relics at Bak-son in northern Tonkin it has been called the Bacsonian civilisation.

In remains of a neolithic civilisation when tools completely polished took the place of chipped palæoliths Perak is rich. Specimens of West Indonesian types such as occur in Sumatra and Bali have been unearthed in the rice-fields and mines of Kinta and Larut and on the bank of the Bernam river at Tanjong Malim. This neolithic civilisation has been ascribed to the second millenium B.C.

Though there is still need of further *data* to complete the chain of evidence the surmise has been hazarded that the older palæolithic civilisation of the Perak caves may have been that of continental ancestors of the modern Papuans and that polishing may have been introduced by Indonesian tribes. This tentative surmise is based on the evidence of skulls from the caves of Tonkin.\*

A civilisation apparently associated with river-banks produced in Perak graves built of granite slabs. These graves have been unearthed at Changkat Mantri on the Bernam River, and at Sungai

\*On a trouvé, rien qu'en Indo-Chine, des crânes de race mélanésienne, indonésienne, australoid et negrito, c'est à dire de quatre races différentes. Mais de là quoi de plus probable aussi, que ce n'est bien pas dans une famille, mais même dans plusieurs familles de langues, qu'on pourrait arriver un jour à grouper les parlers de cette partie de L'Asie, c'est à dire que ce n'est pas une mais plusieurs familles austro-asiatiques auxquelles on pourrait aboutir." *Une Fausse Famille Linguistique "L' Austro-Asiatique."* G. de Hevesy. III Congrès International des Linguistes, Rome 1933.